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Terminological aspects of modern language policy

Abstract. Terminological aspects of language policy are discussed with a suggestion of introducing a new scientific discipline – linguopolitology with the respective conceptual and terminological systems; arguments for founding language planning on terminological basis and examples of regulating terminology are presented.

Keywords: language policy, language planning, advancing terminology, terminology design.

There is already a substantial amount of research on language policy, but relatively few publications touch upon terminological aspects of the subject, aside from mentioning that in the area of respective terminology there are many ambiguities, complicated by the fact that the field has a different terminological structure in different languages (Cillia and Busch 2006). In this article we are going to address the following tasks:

1. presenting the basic conceptual system of this field of knowledge as viewed in the East Europe and suggesting the respective terminological system;
2. briefly introducing modern language situation in Russia;
3. considering terminological aspects of language policy and terminological experience in Russia, both negative and positive.

Exploration of political aspects of language and language policy has a considerable history. The beginning of scientific reflection on language policies and politics as an independent field was undertaken particularly in the 1960s and the focus was initially on the aspect of language planning. However, in the East Europe, particularly in the former USSR, already beginning in the 1920-s in connection with the large-scale elaboration of national languages there was a number of publications on the subject of language policy. Language planning activities were based on belief that in the socialist society all languages are equal and may be successfully controlled. Later on these ideas were incorporated in the Russian model of sociolinguistics though nowadays language policy as a field of study has outgrown the framework of sociolinguistics.

It should be mentioned that at the present time there is no consensus even on the name of the new science. According to B. Spolsky and R.D. Lambert just as with many new fields, there continues

to be disagreement over the name of this one, variously called *language policy*, *language treatment*, *language cultivation*, *language engineering*, *language planning*, and *language management* (Spolsky and Lambert 2006). From the point of view of terminology science this is a normal situation – at the initial stage there usually are various names of a new science, reflecting different approaches and possible aspects to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless it is already possible to establish the general structure of a new science, its main divisions and direction of research on the basis of proposed definitions and the material under investigation. As for naming theoretical foundations of language policy we would like to suggest the term **linguopolitology** taking into consideration the existence of *politology* as the established science and on the analogy with the already existing science *linguoculturology*.

There is much in common in approaches to understanding language policy in the West and the East Europe. Whether **language policy** is defined as the commonly agreed set of choices of language varieties and the ideologies associated with those choices in a speech community, realised in language practices or in formal policy decisions such as laws, constitutions, or regulations (Spolsky and Lambert 2006) or the conception and planning of political activity with respect to language (Cillia and Busch 2006), or sum total of ideological principles and practical activities in solving language problems in community or state as part of national policy (Desheriev 1990), we may see as its main parts **language ideology** and **language politics**.

Language ideology is claimed to have emerged as a separate field of linguistic-anthropological study in the last decades of the 20th century, combining linguistic ethnography with insights from the social-scientific study of ideology (Blommaert 2006). In our opinion, when we speak of **language ideology** we usually mean language strategy based on the existing language situation and on the assessment of the particular language or languages state – language estimation.

In language situation the following aspects may be distinguished:

- number of existing idioms (understanding idiom as the speech proper to a people or place; a dialect or local language);
- character of components of language situation (languages, dialects or sub-dialects);
- genetic relations of idioms (related, unrelated);
- functions of particular idioms;
- character of dominating idiom – native or imported (cf. Vinogradov 1990).

There are various types of language situation. It may be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual; exoglossal, being the sum total of different languages or endoglossal – the sum total of territorial and social dialects of the same language; balanced, if its components (languages or dialects) are functionally equipollent, or unbalanced, when its components are distributed by various spheres of communication and social groups (Shvejtser 1990).

In language estimation (language assessment) according to V.A. Vinogradov the quantitative characteristics are usually taken into consideration, such as demographic power (the number of native speakers in proportion to the whole number of inhabitants of the territory); communicative possibilities (the number of functions of particular idioms as related to total number of such

functions); political status; prestigiousness; level of development; rate of change (development); lingual tendencies (cf. Vinogradov 1990).

The above mentioned factors should be taken into consideration in **language strategy** – overt or implicit intensions concerning a language (or languages) – taking shape in respective approaches and realised in politics. Such strategy may be retrospective – directed at preservation of the existing state of a language (maintaining language culture, limiting overflows of borrowings, etc.) or perspective – aiming at language development, and also take form of lingual nationalism when minority languages are threatened and marginalized by the dominance of established national languages or lingual pluralism (language situation in Switzerland or Belgium where national languages have equal rights).

Language politics may be defined as actual political activity with respect to language and can be distinguished from language policy, i.e., the conception and planning of such activity (Ammon 2006) or as practical activities in connection with language in community or state as part of national policy (Desheriev 1990). Objectives of language politics can vary greatly depending on interests and motives – e.g., ‘purifying’ one’s own national language of foreign loans to shape it into a more adequate symbol of national identity, or spreading the language within the state or beyond. Language politics has to reckon with existing language rights and may result in new language rights (Paulston, 1997).

According to Ammon (2005), internal language politics regulates language within the polity, while external language politics aims beyond it. For the state, the former is part of interior politics, the latter of exterior politics. Internal language politics can be directed at language structure (language corpus politics) or language status and function (language status politics). Typical aims of corpus politics are introducing or regulating script and orthography; standardization, including selection and codification of norms of spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and style or texts; purification – eliminating foreign loans; and modernization (developing modern terminology). Typical aims of status politics are spreading the norm of a standard variety and, in the case of multilingual communities, allocating languages to certain regions or domains and functions – for example, official, educational (medium or subject of teaching on various educational levels; religious, the media, or the military. Politics of language promotion, language maintenance, or language revival can comprise corpus politics, such as constructing or reconstructing vocabulary, as well as status politics, such as encouraging use in the family or institutionalization in school (Ammon 2005).

Judging by the accumulation of names (apart from *language politics*) for this concept in the last 40 years – such as *language treatment*, *language cultivation*, *language engineering*, *language planning*, and *language management* – it is a very important concept implying a wide spectre of activities. As in many similar cases those synonyms should be rather used, in accordance with their usual meanings, as names for particular aspects of language politics. In our opinion two general aspects of language politics should be distinguished first of all – language approach and language management.

There are two types of *language approach* – either language cultivation or hindering of language development. In the case of language cultivation creating beneficial conditions for development of language may take various forms – simply promoting language by improving its state, raising its prestige, advancing its vocabulary, simplifying its orthography and grammar, introducing benefits for its usage (preferences in communication, availability of literature, widening the scope of its usage, etc.), launching campaigns of promotion, state measures, such as standardization of a chosen language.

In some cases, language cultivation may take form of language reviving. It may also take the form of language imposing, which contradicts the universally accepted notion of language rights but is still practiced in some European countries.

Hindering (hampering, oppressing) language also may take various forms beginning with language retarding by official and unofficial means, direct language blocking (obstructing its development) and language extermination.

Language management has three components: the development of explicit language plans and policies which we suggest to call language planning proper, their implementation (by rules or laws or resource allocation), which we suggest to call language regulation, and the evaluation of results and effects.

When we speak about various actions constituting language management we should first consider terminological activities for a number of reasons. Firstly, language development primarily consists of vocabulary growth, the lexical level of the language system being more inclined to changes than other levels. As was already pointed out in a number of publications (cf. Griniewicz 2006, Grinev-Griniewicz 2008), the growth of scientific and technical vocabularies is much faster than that of the everyday speech vocabulary, so at present the number of terms in some sciences (for example chemistry or biology) greatly exceeds the number of common words. We can compare the following figures: the largest Russian 17-volume dictionary treats some 120,000 words (though already there are bilingual Russian dictionaries containing about 200,000 words); at the same time Russian construction terminology numbers more than 150,000 words and in chemistry more than 1 million substances are known, each with its own name. According to Wikipedia modern biological terminology may now reach even up to 100 million names for varieties of living beings, and probably nowadays special lexical units comprise not 90%, but rather more than 99 percent of new words in modern languages. This tendency would remain, because special vocabulary not only already constitutes the major part of any advanced national language but also is the most dynamic strata of language, for every 25 years the number of sciences and scientific disciplines grows twice, and every new science brings its own terminology. If we consider the fact that according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica in the 20th century as much as 2,500 new sciences and scientific disciplines came into being, then the problem of terminology in the 21st century takes it proper shape.

Secondly, lately there appeared definite political reasons to pay more attention to regulation of special vocabulary. Presently terminology science concerns itself with globalisation of the industry,

economics, culture, even everyday life that results in forming new conditions of the existence and interaction of national languages. One of them is the lessening of the number of the actively used languages. According to some calculations during the current century approximately 90% of the presently functioning 6,000 languages will disappear from active usage. These statements sound tragically but the source of such statements may be rather terminological mistake when not only dialects, but sometimes even sub-dialects (one-village dialects) as well are erroneously viewed as languages (all sources maintain that it is difficult to give an exact figure of the number of languages that exist in the world, because the difference between a language and a dialect is not always clear).

For example, in Dagestan some of the languages, such as *chamalinskij*, *bagvalinskij*, *botlihsnij*, *godoberihskij*, *bezhtinskij*, *hvarshinskij*, *gunzibskij*, *ginuhskij*, *archinskij*, *buduhsnij* and *hinalugsnij* – are used by less than 5 thousand people each and do not have written form. They are close to losing the status of independent languages. It does not mean that they would completely disappear – rather they would be rightly called dialects of the closest wider used languages (some of them are already called dialects in the latest linguistic publications). Disappearance of dialects is a quite natural process – due to centralisation tendencies at the period of forming new states in Europe in Modern Times local dialects stepped aside and the central dialect served as the basis for a national language. Narrowing of the sphere of application of a language transforming it into a local dialect is sometimes accelerated by the influence of a closely related language with the traditionally wide spectre of functioning (such is the case of the Ukrainian and the Byelorussian languages which at the end of the 1980-s were being almost completely ousted by the Russian language).

It follows that the surviving languages will widen their functional domain and sometimes even territory outside the countries of their origin (it might be mentioned as a curious fact that at the present time both the British and the Russians constitute national minorities among the native speakers of the respective languages). And here the question of the sound national language policy arises.

The emergence of the independent national states in the place of the former USSR was followed by lending official statuses to many national languages and this caused some difficulties. Some of these languages were not enough developed to fulfil the role of means of official and scientific communication. Often a large part of the inhabitants of the newly found states had no knowledge of the official language and would not like to learn it. At the same time, due to the pressure of the nationalist movements, laws considering language policy became more and more strict.

In the Russian Federation with the disbanding of the Soviet Union, there appeared a new set of republics, many being formed from the previous Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (e.g., the Chuvash Republic or the Republic of Tatarstan). Of the 21 Republics in the Russian Federation at the end of the 20th century, 15 had instituted language laws to grant their titular language equal official status with Russian. In addition, the Constitutions of these Republics include language-specific articles in most cases granting official status to the titular language and Russian, and sometimes other languages as well. At present, a number of languages have official status in the Russian Federation, Russian being the state language for the entire country (Grenoble 2006).

At the beginning of the 1990s, it seemed that every language would be used in all spheres of communication. The first Russian “Law of the languages of the peoples of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic” from 1991 envisaged creating translating offices in all central institutions to enable communication with minorities in all possible languages. It was found impossible and at the end of 1990s this item disappeared from the amended law. Russian is used as lingua franca and as for now cannot be substituted by any other means. For example, according to V.M. Alpatov, in Kalmyk Republic in 1993 it was planned to completely abolish Russian and turn to Kalmyk in the country and English in outside communication. It failed for a number of reasons. In the Soviet period lots of books, journals and newspapers were published in Kalmyk, while now most journals and newspapers disappeared, there are almost no books in Kalmyk and the only central newspaper remains bilingual, where official news are presented in Kalmyk and the rest in Russian. At the Soviet period publications in Kalmyk were financed by the state, now they became commercial. At the Soviet period literature in national languages was artificially supported, some foreign books translated into national languages, but not Russian – for example Somerset Maugham’s “Cakes and Ale” for a long time was available in Ukrainian, but not in Russian. Some minority languages now function only in oral form. In Khakass when the primary school manuals were published in Khakass, it turned out that the absolute majority of Khakass children know only Russian and can not use them. In Komi-Permiak republic attempts to introduce native language into any official sphere failed completely. In languages of the peoples of North the majority of languages, having a small number of native speakers are now disappearing. It seems that with the advent of capitalism position of the Russian language became even stronger (Alpatov 2005).

At present we can see that some of the political decisions concerning language in the new states have only momentary political reasons with complete ignorance of the natural tendencies of language development and cannot therefore be taken seriously. Some of the new official languages still lack words to denote quite common ideas and are now hastily being enlarged. In the Tajik language words like *student*, *university* and *institute* which had international character and were extensively used were hastily replaced by clumsy national constructions which created and still create many inconveniences. I am acquainted with the author of the Tajik medical dictionary containing 300 thousand terms, whose colleague told me that the only person using those terms is the author, because medical students have to learn Latin, Russian and English terminology and have no time to learn terms not used in practice.

Therefore, working out sound impartial recommendations based on the analysis of natural processes of evolution and, in particular, international interaction of languages becomes a necessity. Such recommendations should be concerned with terminology for a number of reasons.

Firstly, in contrast to the common everyday vocabulary that is relatively stable and is not susceptible to administrative changes, the special vocabulary may be regulated. Terminology always is a result of agreement on usage of certain names of concepts in the respective field of knowledge. Therefore special vocabulary is quite probably the only part of language that might be consciously manipulated and controlled. In many languages it is possible to work out sets of rules

for coining new special lexical units and regulating the existing ones. There are reasons to believe that the most numerous layer of special word-stock consisting of the so-called *nomens* may be successfully regulated and developed according to the pre-established sets of rules.

Secondly, it should be mentioned that some linguistic problems, especially of the semantic nature (such as polysemy or synonymy) could be much more clearly appraised in the domain of terminology due to the precise nature of terms.

Thirdly, controlling special vocabulary may enhance the progress of science and technology. The success of contemporary research of the laws of thinking (especially creative) and simulating thinking processes, investigating development of human civilisation and stimulating scientific and technological progress largely depend on solving a number of terminological problems.

Finally, the latest anthropolinguistic data give reason to believe in certain correspondences between the size of national vocabulary and the level of the national mentality. Therefore terminological aspects ought to be necessarily taken into consideration in language strategy decisions. Conscious language policy in the form of language management (especially in preserving and advancing minor languages) should concern itself first of all with advancing special vocabulary.

Language planning, especially long-term planning should be based on systemic over-all analysis of the existing state of terminology and close examination of the present trends and tendencies some of which are already known (Grinev 1993), prognostication of language development and establishing directions and modes of regulating special vocabulary.

Practical terminological work as a crucial part of language policy should presuppose systemic approach based on sound knowledge of main characteristics of terminologies. Experience of terminological work in the former USSR showed this to be quite a difficult task. As was mentioned in (Grinev 1994) the peculiar character of the Soviet terminological activities and the respective theory was strongly influenced by the initial belief that language development could be managed and taken under the human control based on Marx' saying that language would be one of the things to be taken under control by the victorious proletariat. Later (up to the present time) the idea of the human control was substituted by the idea of the state control which was reflected in the obligatory character of terminological standardization in the USSR. It is difficult to find in the Soviet standards permitted synonyms or polysemic terms which we can view in the British, Indian, Australian or New Zealand terminological standards; and that is also why discussions of terminological standards in Russia sometimes take very fierce character.

The first attempts to bring the language to the proper ordered state and to substitute the current terms by the ideal ones were unsuccessful. According to the evidence of the founder of the Russian terminology school D.S. Lotte, the cause of this failure was the complete ignorance of the character of the object of ordering (language) and the absence of the principles of terminology ordering. Therefore terminology science appeared as means of theoretical foundation of the practical work.

Unfortunately now in Russia and some other countries we evidence lack of conscious systematic terminological work based on elementary principles of planning and knowledge of language

tendencies. Enormous amount of terminological standards prepared in the 1960s and 1970s were carried out unsystematically and without sound principles, some of them being of poor quality. Terminological standards of the Comecon countries were much better, but were based not on the overall systemic approach, but rather on choosing separate subject fields. Much closer to the optimal conditions was the All-Union endeavour to elaborate linguistic means of the branch information-retrieval systems to be united in an overall system that was undertaken at the end of the 1970s. Unfortunately this work was not correctly finished.

Nowadays when terminological efforts in Russia are determined by financial means and are not supported by the state the situation is much worse. There is no evidence of any attempts to organise planned wide-scale regulation of special lexis as yet. One of the reasons that governments pay no attention to opportunities for developing national special languages is that the cases of immediate losses from hampering of scientific progress could not be exactly measured. Therefore the development of special vocabulary, creating conditions for scientific, industrial and cultural development, which should be one of the priorities in planning and financing, in many countries is sadly neglected and only carried out by the efforts of a small number of enthusiasts. Some terminological activities are necessarily accompanying scientific research, but in the absence of special training and co-ordination, these activities are carried out in an unsystematic way, based only on commonsense, which is characteristic of primitive cultures and states of cognition.

At the same time some principles and successful attempts at designing optimal forms for terms and nomens were worked out on the basis of practical experience and theoretical analysis (terminology design projects carried out by P.V. Veselov, N.I. Kulish, E.A. Sorokina). We already mentioned some principles of convergent policy of related languages concerning borrowing (Griniewicz 2006: 14-15); a similar approach may be used in coordinating means of derivation. Already in the 1980s it was found that enormous quantities of nomens could be easily constructed according to the optimal forms and some principles of designing nomens were elaborated (Grinev 1986, 1987). There were formulated other recommendations concerning the choice of terminological forms and organizing terminological work.

Terminology advancing proper as part of national policy should consist of a number of directions and stages. One of the most important and traditional directions is ordering special vocabulary, that includes special vocabulary inventory, systematisation of special vocabulary, unification of special vocabulary and optimising special vocabulary. Another, less known, but very important direction is vocabulary construction, presupposing elaboration of banks of morphemes to be used as building material and design and construction systems of terms and nomens. Development of terminology science created possibilities of rational regulation and advancement of national languages vocabularies. However the present political situation in many newly found states rather gives ground to pessimistic prognoses concerning successful use of these possibilities.

The ideal terminology policy presupposes a number of steps, such as

1. Choice and approval of the terminological agencies
2. Preparing the terminologists

3. Analysis of the existing situation – inventory of existing documents (standards, recommendations, thesauri), choice or preparation of an upper level classification in the form of macrothesaurus or classification; analysis of the possible lacunas and concept areas to be corrected.
4. Analysis of the terminologies that need correcting and updating – collecting terms, systematisation and defining the concepts, **analysis of terminology**, which is carried out with the aim of establishing the existing drawbacks and consists first of semantic analysis, with the aim to find out various deviations from the one-to-one correspondence between the lexical and terminological meanings of terms; then etymological analysis – to establish the most effective means and patterns of producing terms in the chosen subject field as well as the existing unsuitable forms and means of their improvement or substitution; functional analysis to find peculiarities of usage of terms and finally diachronic analysis to discover tendencies of development of the chosen terminology.
5. Ordering terminology, preparing new term systems
6. Introducing terminological systems – preparing standards, recommendations, thesauri and manuals
7. Expertise of the state documents, beginning with the constitution and legal acts (cf. Terminology Planning).

In this work the results of applied research should be considered, such as an optimal model of forming new terms, suggested by P.V. Veselov in the domain of imitation leather products, which may be used in other domains, or recommendations on the choice of preferable means of forming new terms on various stages of development of terminologies in European languages presented in (Grinev 1979).

Another example of successful terminological work was elaboration of terminology of carpology. In 1991, such a project was launched by the Russian Institute of Carpology. It was long felt that the abundance of incidental foreign terms in the modern Russian botanical terminology upsets its lucidity, simplicity and systemic character. This terminology has been founded on the Russian roots in the early 19 century by the Russian botanists. But then, lots of terms, either borrowed or clumsily translated were introduced by various specialists in the 19 century, which lead to the existence of various names for the same concept; in many cases there is a complete discrepancy between the lexical meaning of the Latin base and current definitions, some Latin roots have many meanings, sometimes quite different, even the opposite, which causes ambiguity in the whole system of concepts. Some suggested Russian terms were too clumsy, i.e. *mnogovenechnik*, *obdiplostimonnij* and similar forms. A similar situation was observed in the terminology of flowers as the result of the rapid development of flower morphology and anatomy. Generally speaking, almost every author of a manual on botany (and there were more than twenty) suggested his own terms, which lead to an extremely complicated terminological situation, some concepts having up to 40 names.

The development of carpology resulted in a new classification of fruits, quite different from what was introduced by Linnaeus in the 18 century. Instead of the original four classes – *berry*,

capsule, nut and stone fruit (jagoda, korobochka, oreh, kostjanka) eight classes are singled out now. Updating the whole fruit classification required introduction of more than sixty new terms for naming newly found varieties of fruit. It was found that transliteration of Latin names would result in some unpronounceable forms and inconsistency with the existing Russian basic terms. Therefore, it was suggested that the formation of the Russian botanical term system on the Russian roots should continue with the aim of producing forms that would be easy to pronounce, easy to understand, easy to produce derived forms and having no negative connotations. A thorough investigation the Russian derivational resources was carried out and as the result a whole system of the basic and derived terms was proposed for types of fruit – additionally – *kora* (bark), *jadro* (nucleus), *kost'* (bone) and *kozha* (peel). With the derivatives that would make a paradigm, for example:

- *jagoda* (berry) – *jagodovnik* – *jagodka* – *jagodovinka*, *jagodovka*, *jagodovina*, *jagodinka*, *jagodinovka*, *jagodina*;
- *jadro* (nucleus) – *jadrec* – *jadrovník* – *jadreshék* – *jadrovinka* – *jadrovka* – *jadrovina* – *jadrinka* – *jadrinovka* – *jadrina*

Some foreign terms have been changed to the newly proposed terms which are formed on the basis of the Russian roots *andropetalý* – *lepestiki*, *ekzokarpíj* – *naplodíje*, *mezokarpíj* – *mezhpłodíje*, *hipantíj* – *chashecwetnik*, *karcerula* – *kostec*, *apocarpus* – *raznoplodnyj*.

This endeavour was not limited to the Russian language, because according to the existing rules, the whole system had to be constructed and presented for approval at the nearest Paris congress in 12 main European languages. It was approved with small changes in some languages and what is most important – the new manual based on the newly constructed terminological system clearly reflecting the respective system of concepts was published ten years ago and there are already several generations of specialists whose knowledge is based on these terms.

Thus we should recognize an advent of a new, very effective terminological product – a manual based on the preliminary ordered term system. It is known that usually there is reluctance of specialists to change to new terms. In this ideal case there is no reluctance because the students did not know of the existence of a previous very intricate terminological situation and those who knew were enticed by the strict logics and transparency of the new term system. Such approach helps building systemic personal special knowledge and beliefs.

Another case was elaboration of international terminology of surgical operations in abdominal surgery by prof. N.I. Kulish. More than 200 terms constructed as a system on the basis of the widely known medical and biological term-elements were even patented by him and used in a number of methodical and teaching materials.

Presently, we evidence the emergence of a new, very broad-scoped and important science dealing with making vital decisions concerning languages which we suggest to name linguopolitology. At the present time, there are no reasons to view many political decisions concerning languages as a planned activity. However, progress in a number of adjacent fields of knowledge, such as sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, anthropolinguistics and terminology science creates possibilities

of working out rational systemic foundations of language policy, first of all in terminology planning and management. It is still problematic, whether these possibilities would be realised; there are reasons to believe that rather not. Still, appearance of a new linguistic discipline having both highly interesting theoretical and important practical aspects should be considered as an important step in cultural progress.

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Jack London: a writing sailor, a sailing writer

Abstract. The following paper analyzes how the experience of sailing shaped Jack London's life and works. On the one hand, the paper recounts those events from the writer's biography which contributed to his emotional attachment to the sea and created a realistic background for his texts. On the other hand, it focuses on a selection of London's works—"Typhoon Off the Coast of Japan", "Chris Farrington: Able Seaman", *The Sea-Wolf*, and *Martin Eden*—in order to investigate how the experience of sea and sailing affects a character's morality/personality, and to examine how the chosen narratives reflect and preserve London's own memories of life on board.

Keywords: Jack London, sea, ocean, sailing.

The biography of Jack London's life is a model example of a "rags to riches" story. Thanks to his diligence, hard work, and unyielding passion for knowledge and literature, London became one of the most renowned writers of his time, popular both in the US and abroad. According to Harold Bloom, even today London "remains both a phenomenon of our imaginative literature and a permanent figure in the American mythology" (2011: 1). One of the reasons for the past and present appeal of London's works is the author's ability to capture the beauty of nature, which he discovered in the barren lands of the north, the impenetrable forests and the open waters. In London's fiction, landscapes and seascapes are far more than decorative backgrounds for the development of the plot. The vividness and realism with which London evokes the natural sceneries can truly mesmerize the reader. The following passage comes from "The White Silence" (originally published in 1899):

Nature has many tricks wherewith she convinces man of his finity, — the ceaseless flow of the tides, the fury of the storm, the shock of the earthquake, the long roll of heaven's artillery, — but the most tremendous, the most stupefying of all, is the passive phase of the White Silence. All movement ceases, the sky clears, the heavens are as brass; the slightest whisper seems sacrilege, and man becomes timid, affrighted at the sound of his own voice. Sole speck of life journeying across the ghostly wastes of a dead world, he trembles at his audacity, realizes that his is a maggot's life, nothing more. Strange

thoughts arise unsummoned, and the mystery of all things strives for utterance. And the fear of death, of God, of the universe, comes over him, — he hope of the Resurrection and the Life, the yearning for immortality, the vain striving of the imprisoned essence, — it is then, if ever, man walks alone with God. (London, 1899: n.p.) 1

Given the above fragment, Bloom is correct to say that it is the “worship of the wild [that] still marks London’s difference from nearly everyone else and accounts for London’s permanent appeal to readers throughout the world” (2011: 2).

London’s works have already been studied countless times for their political manifestos, development of masculinity, and heart-wrenching descriptions of the natural environment—which, however, tend to concentrate on his Alaskan stories. If the sea and sailing are mentioned, it is usually in addition to the study of the heroes from *The Sea-Wolf* or in the context of the articles and short stories written during the author’s oceanic cruise on the *Snark*. The aim of this paper is to adopt the sea/ocean as the main prism for analyzing Jack London’s biography and works. By turning the sea into a prominent and active agent of his narratives, London was able to do several things: portray the threatening beauty of the open waters, develop the personalities of his heroes, experiment with his literary alter egos, and forever preserve his own memories of sailing. Rebecca Steffoff warns, however, that

one cannot simply take London’s writing as an accurate record of his life. In order to make a point or tell a more powerful story, he often exaggerated things or added fictional elements to writing that was mostly autobiographical. We cannot always untangle the thread of “real life” and “storytelling” that London wove together so well. (2002: 10)

In other words, London’s literary versions of himself and his adventures need to be analyzed with a sensible dose of skepticism, because London could have deliberately refashioned his persona in order to disseminate the image of himself—of an adventurous and powerful man—that he always carried in his mind.

Jack London’s passion for sailing began in his early childhood. Together with his stepfather, John London, he often went fishing in the estuary lying between Oakland and Alameda (London, vol.1, 1921: 54).² After school and work, he would frequently visit the Oakland docks, because the sight of ships and sailors—just like his favorite books—allowed him to fantasize about the vastness and richness of the world (Stone, 1938: 32-45). Jack managed to buy his first boat before he was thirteen, and this purchase revealed the strength of his passion: a boy whose family had no money

1 Jack London’s works are available in the public domain, so in my paper (if not indicated otherwise) I quote the electronic editions of his and his wife’s, Charmian London’s, articles, short stories and novels available at *The World of Jack London* (www.jacklondon.net), managed by David A. Hartzell. The publication data given in the Works Cited section include information about the original medium and date of publication provided by the website.

2 Charmian London’s *The Book of Jack London* (1921) is frequently perceived as a rather sentimental and romanticized account of her late husband. This is evident in such lines as, “And, like Jack’s, John’s wide-set, gray-blue, dancing eyes and sweeping ways were not to be resisted by mortal woman” (18). Nevertheless, Charmian, the undaunted companion of Jack’s journeys, best understood his passion for adventures and sailing.

to waste decided to spend the fruit of his hard labor on a boat, because sailing offered him the first taste of unlimited freedom and a temporary escape from the dull reality filled with constant work.

Eventually, Jack found a way to combine his love for sailing and the necessity to support his family. Instead of working in the cannery, he bought a boat, the *Razzle-Dazzle*, and became a young oyster-pirate in San Francisco Bay. He recounts his elation about the new occupation in his autobiographical novel *John Barleycorn* (1913):

There it was, the smack and slap of the spirit of revolt, of adventure, of romance, of the things forbidden and done defiantly and grandly. [...] And at last my dream would be realised: I would sleep upon the water. And next morning I would wake upon the water; and thereafter all my days and nights would be on the water. (London, 1913: n.p.)

The job of an oyster-pirate introduced the teenage boy to the world of brutal men, alcohol and adventures; it allowed him not only to earn money, but also to gather experiences that would later create reliable backgrounds and realistic characters for his narratives. Jack resigned from being an oyster-pirate when he was caught by the fish patrol, which he subsequently joined; the adventures from that period of time were later immortalized in his collection of short stories entitled “Tales of the Fish Patrol” (1906).

In his later life, London was very proud of his skills as a small-boat sailor which he acquired in his teenage years. In one of his articles, “Small-Boat Sailing” (1912), he even wrote: “Barring captains and mates of big ships, the small-boat sailor is the real sailor” (London, 1912: n.p.).³ In the article London enumerates various activities which a small-boat sailor must be able to perform on his own (and quickly), and which the deepwater sailors are not acquainted with. London also recounts his meeting with a runaway English sailor with whom he sailed on his own boat. When the man took command over the small vessel, young Jack was prepared to see a true sailor at work. But the man hardly knew what to do:

My mouth remained open, for I learned what a real sailor was in a small boat. He couldn't trim the sheet to save himself, he nearly capsized several times in squalls, and, once again, by blunderingly jibing over; [...] And yet he was a really truly sailor fresh from the vasty deep. (London, 1912: n.p.)

In terms of small-boat sailing, the boy proved to be a more experienced sailor than his grown-up companion. London claimed that the skills he acquired during his teenage voyages prepared him for becoming a deepwater sailor, which, however, he generally considered a less demanding occupation if compared to small-boat cruises.

London became a deepwater sailor—a decision that could have been predicted after he had bought his first boat (Stone, 1938: 46)—at the age of seventeen, when he joined the crew of the *Sophia Sutherland*, a seal-hunting, three-top-mast schooner going on a seven-months' cruise across

³ “Small-Boat Sailing” was first published in *Yachting Monthly*, August 1912. The article is now available at *The World of Jack London*.

the Pacific. Thus, he could finally explore the lands beyond the landscapes of his childhood. But he also had to face the ferocity of the ocean and brave the challenges of older men, who at first did not accept him as an “able-bodied” sailor and their equal. During the cruise Jack managed to prove both his worth and skill. Yet despite his success, after his return from the voyage he did not sign up for another one. One of the reasons for the decision was his constant search for novelty: though he was fond of his achievements as an able-bodied sailor, he wanted to gather other experiences, available in other places and with other people. There was also a more practical reason behind his decision: he had to find a more stable job to support his family. Yet given London’s personality, thirst for adventures and craving for knowledge, it would be impossible for him to secure one menial job for several years, to be a factory worker whose life would be immersed in routine and monotony. Fortunately, the short story he submitted for a local contest won him first prize and marked the beginning of his literary career. “The Typhoon Off the Coast of Japan” (1893), written in first-person narration, is an account of London’s own adventure on the *Sophia Sutherland*. The tale is a realistic description of sailors’ life, a detailed account of the art of sailing, and an expression of Jack’s delight with the beauty of the ocean, which the readers are invited to share with him:

The waves were holding high carnival, performing the strangest antics, as with wild glee they danced along in fierce pursuit [...]. In the sun’s path they wandered, where every ripple, great or small, every little spit or spray looked like molten silver, where the water lost its dark green color and became a dazzling, silvery flood, only to vanish and become a wild waste of sullen turbulence, each dark foreboding sea rising and breaking, then rolling on again. (London, 1922: n.p.)

But Jack, his heroes and readers learn that this beauty can become lethally dangerous in a matter of hours; the crew is forced to struggle for survival in the midst of a typhoon. The success of “The Typhoon...” motivated London to pursue the career of a writer; the sea and sailing became recurring motifs of his fiction.

London returns to the image of a battle between the sailors and a storm in another short story, “Chris Farrington: Able Seaman” (1901). In contrast to the previous tale, this one is devoted entirely to the efforts of one man—young Chris Farrington—who is one of London’s numerous literary alter egos. The whole story is London’s thinly concealed admiration of his own early achievements in sailing. In fact, London considered his standing at the schooner’s wheel during the storm “the proudest achievement of [his] life” and his “moment of highest living” (1911, ch.1: n.p.).

Like young Jack on the *Sophia Sutherland*, Chris Farrington has to face adult sailors and prove that he is their equal, an able seaman, which he does by saving the schooner (also called the *Sophia Sutherland* and also hunting for seals) from a storm, when only two other men are present on board. While the ocean is raging with storm, the bruised and battered Chris does everything he can to keep the ship afloat. The narrator emphasizes the magnitude of the challenge and complements it with dramatic descriptions of the ocean’s rage:

The least fraction of carelessness and the heave of the sea under the quarter was liable to thrust her into the trough. So, a boy of one hundred and forty pounds, he clung to his herculean task of guiding the two hundred straining tons of fabric amid the chaos of the great storm forces. [...]

So small and insignificant the schooner seemed on the long Pacific roll! Rushing up a maddening mountain, she would poise like a cockle-shell on the giddy summit, breathless and rolling, leap outward and down into the yawning chasm beneath, and bury herself in the smother of foam at the bottom. Then the recovery, another mountain, another sickening upward rush, another poise, and the downward crash. (London, 1922: n.p.)

The seventeen-year-old Chris takes command of the ship, does not give in to exhaustion, and—after the storm is over—immediately returns to search for the abandoned hunters. Though he is burdened with great responsibility, he manages to cope with everything and earns the respect of other sailors. Through Chris and his success (which nevertheless seems a bit exaggerated), London commemorates his own teenage adventure and acceptance into the world of adult men.

A similar pattern also appears in his other early stories, thus providing evidence of how strongly London felt about his first sailing voyages. In “The Lost Poacher” (1901), the crew of the *Mary Thomas* is captured by a Russian patrol, accused of poaching, and subsequently threatened with the possibility of being sent to Siberia. Bub, the young cabin-boy, is taken by the Russians, questioned, and later left unattended on their ship. At night, Bub courageously cuts off the ropes linking the *Mary Thomas* to the Russian ship, and the schooner is quickly retaken by its crew. Bub is left with the Russians who, fortunately, recognize his courage and loyalty, so they set him free. The boy is later reunited with the *Mary Thomas* and praised by his comrades. “In Yeddo Bay” (1903) features a sixteen-year-old Alf Davis, a sailor on the *Annie Mine*, who has to return to his schooner in the Yokohama harbor, but has no money to pay the boat fare. When none of the local people is willing to help him, Alf decides to swim to the schooner. This act of independence and courage earns him the respect of the local men and the entire crew. These and other short stories are a portrayal of youthful pride, courage, and a desire for recognition, which were so characteristic of young London.

As if in contrast, one of London’s later short stories, “The Sea Farmer”⁴ (1914), describes his complete opposite—Captain MacElrath, for whom sailing is just a means of earning a living:

Captain MacElrath did not like the sea, and had never liked it. He wrung his livelihood from it, and that was all the sea was, the place where he worked, as the mill, the shop, and the counting-house were the places where other men worked. Romance never sang to him her siren song, and Adventure had never shouted in his sluggish blood. He lacked imagination. The wonders of the deep were without significance to him. Tornadoes, hurricanes, waterspouts, and tidal waves were so many obstacles to the way of a ship on the sea and of a master on the bridge—they were that to him, and nothing more. (London, 1914: n.p.)

⁴ “The Sea Farmer” was part of the collection entitled *The Strength of the Strong* published by Macmillan in 1914. The collection is available at *The World of Jack London*.

Though the passage provides no explicit comparison between MacElrath and London himself, an implicit comparison is hard to miss: for a man such as London, sailing was always the embodiment of adventure and fuel for the imagination, not simply a means of earning his living. He was deeply convinced that

A sailor is born, not made. And by "sailor" is meant, not the average efficient and hopeless creature who is found to-day in the forecabin of deepwater ships, but the man who will take a fabric compounded of wood and iron and rope and canvas and compel it to obey his will on the surface of the sea. [...]

And if a man is a born sailor, and has gone to the school of the sea, never in all his life can he get away from the sea again. The salt of it is in his bones as well as his nostrils, and the sea will call to him until he dies. (London, 1912: n.p.)

Yet London's description of the Captain, who perceives everything as obstacles "and nothing more", does not seem scornful. Rather than chide MacElrath, London seems sad that the Captain, like so many people bound to life on land, fails to recognize and to indulge in the beauty of marine life—two mistakes which London did not make, since his passion for sea voyages continued to re-emerge in different periods of his life.

Moreover, the experience of being on the open waters seemed to have a soothing effect on London's mind. Charmian London, his second wife, wrote: "Whenever Jack London set foot upon deck-planking, he left behind more than the solid earth. Whatsoever load of soul-sickness or care he had borne to the water's edge fell from him, or, more fitly, shrank to its true scant measure under the springing arch of life" (vol.1, 1921: 111). It was so because

The wide sea and dome of sky, with all their moods of color and motion, pervaded him with a never-palling joyance of eye and spirit. In the night watches, swinging majestically under the wintry steel-blue stars, or fighting through big seas beneath low scudding moonlit cloud-masses, with only the pale-glimmering binnacle for company, he knew again those lofty, cool levels of contemplation wherein his vision was extended into ever-receding distances of thought. (London, vol.1, 1921: 119-120)

Clarice Stasz also argues that London "was most at peace on the water, and would escape to boats all his life" (Stasz, 2001: 27); it was a yacht that became London's temporary escape from marital problems when he was divorcing his first wife, Bess. In addition, the freedom offered by sailing seemed to stimulate London's literary skills. In a letter to his friend Cloudesley Johns (1899) London wrote: "Many who know me, ask why I, with my knowledge of the sea, do not write some sea fiction. But you see I have been away from it so long that I have lost touch. I must first get back and saturate myself with its atmosphere" (qtd. in London, vol.1, 1921: 309). Thus, it was his escape to the boat that allowed him to finish *The Sea-Wolf* (1904) in spite of personal dilemmas. *The Sea-Wolf*, written on the *Spray* (bought from the sale of *The Call of the Wild* in 1903), where London could feel the breeze on his face and the waves beneath his feet, is the epitome of his relationship with sailing and perhaps his personal tribute to Herman Melville, whose works he devoured as a child.

In *The Sea-Wolf*, London uses Humphrey van Weyden's voyage on the seal-hunting schooner, the *Ghost*, as a background for developing several themes: his interest in certain philosophical doctrines, delight in the open waters, observation about the brutal world of seamen, and a reflection on his troublesome love life. As a result, the sea and the ship become witness to the sailors' lives of unending toil, Wolf Larsen's tyranny, and Hump's struggle to survive and become a man. The *Ghost* is a self-sustaining reality, separated from the rest of the world by the vastness of the sea, and dominated by violence in its most primitive form. Under such circumstances, the so-far pampered Hump finally becomes an independent and self-reliant man. Hump shares the process of reaching maturity with Maud Brewster, the woman rescued by Larsen. In the course of the journey, Maud (who seems to be a reflection of London's second wife, Charmian) proves that apart from being an object of Hump's love interest, she can also be his companion and support in the fight for survival. The stark conditions of the sea voyage are an active agent in the process of shaping their personalities and in allowing them to discover their skills. When Maud and Hump return home and reclaim their place in society, their perception of class and gender is greatly affected by their experience of the sea. Sam S. Baskett argues in "Sea Change in *The Sea-Wolf*" that there is even a "change toward androgyny" (in Bloom, 2011: 29), because the evolution of Hump's and Maud's perception of masculinity and femininity allows them to complement each other's endeavors in several new ways.

The portrayals of other characters reveal more ways in which people can be shaped by their experience of the sea and the conditions of an oceanic voyage. London's interest in the philosophies of Darwin, Spencer and Nietzsche, as well as his disillusionment with life, contributed to the creation of Wolf Larsen, the ship's captain, whose actions and conversations are permeated by cynical materialism, and for whom life is nothing more than "yeast". Larsen is the most brutal man on the *Ghost* and has no regard for morality whatsoever. Such behavior, paired with his capricious nature, indifference to human suffering, and inhuman strength elevate Larsen beyond and above humanity, and turn him into a symbolic incarnation of the sea, which is equally ferocious, capricious and indifferent to human struggle. This connection between Larsen and the sea is strengthened by the look in his eyes, which Hump in turn describes as resembling the "azure of the deep sea" or "bleak, and cold, and grey as the sea itself" (London, 1904, ch.3: n.p.), and by the fact that Larsen's entire life has been devoted to sailing. Thus, it is only natural that when Larsen dies, he is given the traditional sea burial, which reunites his spirit with the primal element that molded it. That the sea and sailing are able to shape people and their behavior is also visible in Hump's description of other seamen: in their indifference to violence and suffering, in their rough manners, and even in their laughter, which is as "harsh and frank as the sea itself; that arose out of coarse feelings and blunted sensibilities, from natures that knew neither courtesy nor gentleness" (London, 1904, ch.3: n.p.).

London was not, however, satisfied by only *writing* about oceanic adventures in his adult life. "At sea, by testing himself to the limit of his physical endurance, he could reinvent himself as a legendary traveler, a man who could face any challenge and still conquer" (Kershaw, 1997:

177). London had one particular dream connected with sailing, which he managed to partially fulfill, encouraged by Charmian. He planned a cruise around the globe: to Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia and India, through the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic, with San Francisco as the final destination point—a journey whose “itinerary seems ambitious even today” (Riedl and Tietze in Berkove, 2012: 294). To make the enterprise even more exciting, London decided to build his own boat, the *Snark*, so he spent weeks learning about the art of building ships. He calculated that he would need about seven thousand dollars to have his dream boat, but he was ready to spend every cent he had. Which he actually did, because from the very beginning the enterprise seemed doomed to fail. Work was constantly interrupted and delayed by several minor and major problems that required more and more money, which London managed to earn or borrow, only to learn that his employees and sub-contractors were cheating him in every possible way. He postponed the date of departure several times—something “inconceivable and monstrous” (London, 1911, ch.2: n.p.)⁵—and eventually became the laughing stock of the country. London was in turn angry, frustrated and depressed, but he never admitted defeat, as if the ship had become “an all-consuming obsession” (Kershaw 1997: 173). Many people thought that the ship would either never be completed or would sink during the first days of the cruise.

At the same time, however, other people wrote to London pleading for a chance to participate in the cruise. People from all walks of life were ready to work for free just to escape from the monotony or problems of everyday existence. London had to decline most offers. Later, in *The Cruise of the Snark* (1911), he wrote:

Some day, when I have made a lot of money, I'm going to build a big ship, with room in it for a thousand volunteers. They will have to do all the work of navigating that boat around the world, or they'll stay at home. I believe that they'll work the boat around the world, for I know that Adventure is not dead. I know Adventure is not dead because I have had a long and intimate correspondence with Adventure. (ch.3: n.p.)

The *Snark* eventually cost London about thirty thousand dollars and became the epitome of his stubbornness, pride, and naivety (Stone, 1938: 223-236). In theory, the boat's design allowed for both sea cruises and inland trips, e.g. up the Thames to London, or up the Seine to Paris, since the masts could be lowered and the boat could be then powered by an engine. In practice, the original itinerary was never completed.

When the journey finally began (in April 1907), London almost immediately had to struggle with several problems in the ship's construction and equipment. It was amongst that chaos and misery that he started to write *Martin Eden* (published in 1909), a heavily autobiographical novel which is permeated by the specters of melancholy, frustration and ultimate failure. Martin Eden, an uneducated sailor from a working-class background, struggles to become a writer and to win

⁵ The quote comes from *The Cruise of the Snark*, published by Macmillan in 1911. The entire book is available at *The World of Jack London*.

the love of Ruth Morse from a bourgeois family. Before Martin achieves literary recognition, he is rejected by Ruth, so eventually even his successful career cannot diminish his disillusionment with love and society. When life becomes too painful, Martin jumps off the *Mariposa* and commits a suicide by drowning himself in the sea.

This scene of drowning is an echo of London's own experience (Stone, 1938: 43). One night, when he was still an oyster-pirate, London fell into the water, and because he was drunk and in a melancholic mood, he started to contemplate a suicidal death by drowning, which seemed romantic and tragic enough for his tastes. When he finally came to his senses, he drifted for hours and was eventually rescued by a fisherman. London recollected this memory in *John Barleycorn* (1913), an autobiographical novel which deals mostly with the problem of excessive drinking (Stasz, 2001: 29-30). The novel also provides an account of London's first contact with and enthusiasm for marine life:

It was the first sea-interior I had ever seen. The clothing on the wall smelled musty. But what of that? Was it not the sea-gear of men? [...] And everywhere was in evidence the economy of space--the narrow bunks, the swinging tables, the incredible lockers. There were the tell-tale compass, the sea-lamps in their gimbals, the blue-backed charts carelessly rolled and tucked away, the signal-flags in alphabetical order, and a mariner's dividers jammed into the woodwork to hold a calendar. At last I was living.
(London, 1913, ch.6: n.p.)

Jonathan Auerbach points out (1996: 185) that the motif of death by drowning frequently appears in London's early works, e.g. in "Frisco Kid's Story" (1895), *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902), and *The Call of the Wild* (1903). Some of the heroes, e.g. the protagonist from "A Thousand Deaths" (1899) and Van Weyden from *The Sea-Wolf*, are saved from drowning, but some, like the tragic protagonist of *Martin Eden*, are not. Auerbach argues that

In all these examples, drowning signifies social death, so that being saved from such a fate represents a reprieve from the abyss of failure [...] we can begin to grasp the powerful hold this scene had on London's imagination: what it meant in terms of his fear that he might never amount to anything, might never make a name for himself. (Auerbach, 1996: 185)

But even "making a name for himself" is ultimately not enough to overpower Martin Eden's death wish, since he commits suicide at the top of his career. He chooses drowning because for him—for a sailor—that is the only acceptable kind of death; a death through which he, like Wolf Larsen, is reunited with the primal element that had shaped his life. It is also symbolic that he chooses to leave the ship through a porthole, instead of jumping straight from the deck. Charles Watson suggests: "The porthole is the orifice of the womb, the door of the world, but Martin is passing through it backwards [feet first], returning to the dark womb of the maternal sea" (1983: 160)—a sailor returning to the embrace of his mother. The suicide is foreshadowed by Martin's quotation of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *Christus: A Mystery* (1872):

The sea is still and deep;
 All things within its bosom sleep;
 A single step and all is o'er,
 A plunge, a bubble, and no more. (in London, 1909, ch.30: n.p.)

Moreover, the name of Martin Eden's ship—the *Mariposa*—is also symbolic. Firstly, it was the name of the ship on which London sailed back to San Francisco when his cruise on the *Snark* was temporarily interrupted by several financial issues he had to tend to at home (Stone, 1938: 245). London's thoughts during the return journey were probably not the happiest ones if he immortalized the *Mariposa* as the ship bearing witness to Eden's death. Another explanation is uncovered through the translation of the ship's name. *Mariposa* is the Spanish word for a butterfly, and "the butterfly has been associated with the spirits of the dead and with the passage from death to life and vice versa" (DeGuzmán and López in Hodson and Campbell Reesman, 2002: 118).

Despite his alter ego's tragic death, London was still hungry for life and Adventure, so he returned to the *Snark* in spite of the several voices which insisted that he had already proved his point and would do better staying in San Francisco. Charmian's support proved invaluable since she, London's "mate-woman" (Stasz in Berkove, 2012: 221),

was the best of shipmates. Unmistakably feminine and deeply in love with Jack, she yet was far from the stereotype of the delicately reserved and sheltered Edwardian woman. She thrilled at the thought of real adventure and eagerly took part in every aspect of the voyage, including putting herself in danger of bodily harm from perils of remote seas, exotic diseases, and threats from islanders widely reputed to be savages. (Riedl and Tietze in Berkove, 2012: 296)

Charmian also shared her husband's passion for sailing and marine life, which is visible in her own descriptions of their cruise:

It is all a piece of wonder, the sea, to such as we: still magic of calms, where one's boat lies with motionless grace upon a shadow-flecked expanse of mirror; or when one laughs in the pelt of warm sea-rain from a ragged gray sky of clouds; or peers for blue-black squalls darkling upon the silver moonlit waves; or lifts prideful, fond eyes to the small ship's goodly spars standing fast in a white gale; or gazes in marvel at those same spars lighted to flame by the red-gilt morning sunrays from over some green and purple savage isle feared of God and man; or braces to the Pacific rollers bowling upon the surface of the eternal unagitated depths; or scans the configuration of coasts from inadequate charts; or steers, tense, breathless, through the gateways of but half-known reefs [. . .] (vol. 2, 1921: 168)

Supported by his enthusiastic wife, London remained impervious to negative opinions and continued the cruise, sometimes even claiming that the months spent on the *Snark* were the happiest in his life (Stone, 1938: 253-254). As usual, adventures gave impetus to his writing, and apart from creating *Martin Eden*, London produced several journalistic articles and short stories which described the people and cultures he encountered on the way.

The journey lasted only about two years. It came to an abrupt end in September 1908, in Sydney, where due to health problems London had to forsake his plans. Despite his emotional attachment to the boat, he sold the ruined ship and in June 1909 returned to San Francisco (people would occasionally report to the Londons that they had seen the *Snark*, but they eventually lost track of her whereabouts). Summing up the entire enterprise, on the one hand, London survived the mockery and criticism in order to have his dream adventure, which offered him invaluable experiences that he could transform into literature. On the other hand, the journey was fraught with several difficulties, and when London finally returned to San Francisco he was ill, exhausted and in debt. He also had to deal with the thought that his dreams of a grand oceanic voyage were not fulfilled. He did organize, together with Charmian, many shorter cruises, e.g. on the inland yacht, the *Roamer*, which he bought in 1910. They also went on a longer journey and sailed around Cape Horn, from Baltimore to Seattle. Nevertheless, London did not undertake, or given his premature death, did not have time to undertake, another cruise around the world.

Jack London was a man of letters and, at the same time, a man of the sea, who read and wrote extensively, both on land and on board. Charmian London confirmed that

it was upon the liquid two-thirds of earth's surface that I saw him the most blissfully content. Dawn or twilight, he loved the way of a boat upon the sea. [...] "Seamen have at all times been a people apart," curiously so, from the rest of their kind; and the sailor Jack London was a man apart from the rest of himself. Imagination, nerves, work, pleasure, all ran in smoother grooves when his feet stood between the moving surface and the blowing sky, his own intelligence the equalizing force amidst unstable elements. Seldom in waking hours without books or spoken argument exerting upon his wheeling brain, yet at the helm of his boat, braced for day-long hours, he would stand rapt in healthful ecstasy of sheer being, lord of life and the harnessed powers of nature, unheedful of physical strain, his own hand directing fate. (vol.1, 1921: 64-65)

London successfully established the ocean and sailing as prominent elements of his narratives, and preserved his own experiences of sailing through the adventures of his literary alter egos. Of course, this does not mean that his other works, those not related to sailing, e.g. *Before Adam* (1907), *The Iron Heel* (1908), or *The Star Rover* (1915), are of lesser importance. Nevertheless, writing and sailing were two activities which equally shaped his private life and fiction. In the end, London himself wrote, in "Small-Boat Sailing": "once a sailor, always a sailor. The savour of the salt never stales. The sailor never grows so old that he does not care to go back for one more wrestling bout with wind and wave. I know it of myself" (London, 1912: n.p.).

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⁶ Charmian London's and Jack London's works are available at *The World of Jack London*. <http://jacklondons.net>, date of retrieval 20 March 2015. The following publication data are those provided by the website.

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Graphic and semantic organizers as cognitive strategies in reading instruction

Abstract: The present article extends prior research on graphic and semantic organizers principally applied as a reading strategy. Visual representation of information in a text and graphic and semantic organizers refer to different approaches to reading from the traditional, linear text representation. Research demonstrates that powerful metacognitive strategies can be taught to help students monitor and improve their own reading comprehension. This study constitutes an attempt to shed light on the research evidence regarding the effectiveness of graphic and semantic organizers on text learning. As such, it highlights the nature of reading comprehension, various strategies applied in the process of teaching reading, and examples of graphic and semantic organizers for classroom applications.

Keywords: graphic and semantic organizers, reading comprehension, reading strategies.

Introduction

Reading comprehension is one of the most important processes while learning a foreign language. There is a spectrum of definitions concerning reading. Reading is regarded as “a psycholinguistic process by which the reader, a language user, reconstructs as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display” (Goodman, 1971: 22). “Reading comprehension is a process of making sense of a written text. However, it is not a passive one-way decoding process. Instead, it is an active two-way process in which the reader and the text interact, i.e. the reader tests clues from the text against his knowledge to arrive at an understanding of the text acceptable to the reader” (Wong Kee, 1997: 9). Reading comprehension is a complex process involving many subcomponent skills and abilities. Variability in comprehension outcomes has been linked to differences that concern the reader, the text, and factors related to the activity and the level of engagement (Sweet & Snow, 2003).

What does reading involve? A number of studies have been carried out concerning the subject, nature and factors determining reading comprehension. Researchers and educators are making efforts to build a comprehensive understanding of reading comprehension and its development

(Alexander & The Disciplined Reading and Learning Research Laboratory, 2012; Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). Some educators and researchers also try to identify the reasons why some students struggle with the reading tasks they have to carry out at school (e.g., Kamil, 2003; Perie, Grigg & Donahue, 2005; Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983). The aim of this article is to analyse the most crucial aspects of teaching reading comprehension with the help of graphic and semantic organizers, and to discuss their nature and factors determining the process of comprehending a text. The author also aims to suggest the implementation of some of the examples of the aforementioned organizers in classroom teaching.

Metacognition in the process of reading comprehension

Metacognition is defined as “cognition about cognition”, or “knowing about knowing”. It comes from the root word *meta*, meaning ‘beyond’. It can take many forms; it includes knowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or for problem solving. There are generally two components of metacognition: knowledge about cognition, and regulation of cognition.⁷ In other words, metacognition can be regarded as “thinking about thinking”. Good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading. They implement diverse strategies in the three stages of the process of reading comprehension. Before reading, they define their reading purpose and preview the text. During reading, they monitor their understanding and adjust their reading speed to the difficulty of the text. After reading, they check their understanding of the read text.

There are certain aspects which should be discussed when analyzing the process of reading. Of utmost importance is readers’ awareness of the way in which language is used, whether reading in a first or second language. The development of this ability takes a remarkable amount of instructional time and effort. There are two groups of language skills involved in the integration of information across sentences and ideas in a text, namely higher level language skills and lower language skills. The former includes inference and integration, comprehension monitoring, and knowledge about text structure. All of them are essential in order for a reader to construct an integrated and coherent model of a text’s meaning. The latter group of language skills represents word reading accuracy and verbal and semantic skills.

Reading comprehension is associated with the creation of a meaning-based representation of the text, often called a mental model or a situation model (Gernsbacher, 1990; Johnson-Laird, 1983; Kintsch, 1998). In order to create an integrated and coherent model of a text both processes, namely integration and inference, are necessary. The local coherence is established due to the integration between adjacent clauses, whereas inferences about different events, actions, and states make the text cohere as a whole (Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994). In the case of these two processes, it is necessary that the relevant information, either from the text or world knowledge,

⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metacognition>

be both attainable and accessible. Inference making is regarded as a central component of skilled reading (e.g. Garnham & Oakhill, 1996; Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994). Although less skilled readers are capable of inferential processing, they do not generate as many inferences as more skilled readers do (e.g. Casteel, 1993; Casteel & Simpson, 1991; Long, Paris & Upton, 1976). Thus, it is important to establish which factors limit inference making within such populations. An inference can be made only when the requisite general knowledge, necessary to make that inference, is available (e.g. Ackerman, Silver, & Glickman, 1990; Casteel, 1993). Potential individual differences in inference are often caused by general knowledge differences. There is an example of an inference worksheet attached below.

Name: _____

Inferences Worksheet 2

Directions: Read each passage and then respond to the questions. Each question will ask you to make a logical inference based on textual details. Explain your answer by referencing the text.

Kyle ran into his house, slamming the door behind him. He threw his book bag on the floor and plopped on the couch. After six hours of playing *Grand Larceny VII*, he ate some pizza and fell asleep with a slice in on his belly and his feet on his book bag. When Kyle came home from school the next day, he was noticeably distraught. He balled up his report card and placed it inside of a soup can in the garbage. He then flipped the soup can upside down and relocated garbage from other parts of the can, arranging over the soup can. He then plopped down on the couch and picked up his controller.

1. Why is Kyle distraught? _____

How do you know this?

2. Why does Kyle put the report card in a soup can? _____

How do you know this?

3. Was Kyle's report card good or bad and why was it like that? _____

How do you know this?

Anastasia sat by the fountain in the park with her head in her palms. She was weeping mournfully and wearing all black. In between gasps and sobs, Anastasia cried out a name: "Oh... John..." And then her cell phone beeped. Her hand ran into her purse and her heart fluttered. The text message was from John. She opened up the message and read the few bare words, "*I need to get my jacket back from you.*" Anastasia threw her head into her arms and continued sobbing.

4. What relationship do John and Anastasia have? _____

Why do you feel this way?

5. Why is Anastasia sad? _____

How do you know this?

Source: <http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/free-r>

Reading comprehension strategies

There are various strategies applied in the process of reading comprehension. They are different at the stages of production, comprehension, and reproduction of discourse. One group of these may be called linguistic strategies, as it links textual and sentential structures with underlying semantic representations. The second group constitutes the cognitive strategies, as it involves the use of world knowledge, episodic knowledge and cognitive information, for instance opinions, beliefs, attitudes or plans. Before analyzing major strategies of reading comprehension, it is most appropriate to get some insight into the notion of strategy in general.

What exactly does a strategy mean? Is the use of strategies in comprehending a text crucial? There are numerous definitions of strategy to be found. A strategy is “a high level plan to achieve one or more goals under conditions of uncertainty. In the sense of the “art of the general”, which included several subsets of skills including “tactics”, siegecraft, logistics etc. (Freedman 2013 at IS 1). Mintzberg defined strategy as “a pattern in a stream of decisions” (Mintzberg, 1996: 119). This definition can be contrasted with McKenon’s (2011), who argues that “strategy is about shaping the future” and is the human attempt to get to “desirable ends with available means” (McKenon, 2011: 49). Strategy can also be perceived as a type of problem solving (Rumelt, 2011). Rumelt writes that a good strategy has an underlying structure he calls a kernel. The kernel has three parts, namely the diagnosis that explains the nature of the challenge, a guiding policy in order to cope with the challenge, and coherent actions designed to carry out the guiding policy (Rumelt, 2011).

In general, strategies involve various actions, objectives and the concept of optimality. In other words, a strategy is the most relevant way which leads to achieving an aim. A strategy is often described as a cognitive representation of the same actions undertaken to understand something or reach a certain goal. It pertains to complex action sequences, which means that it is related to the notion of a plan. Finally, another common notion usually used in connection with strategies, even as a synonym, is heuristics. This is a system of discovery procedures, namely operations undertaken to acquire knowledge which enables an agent to accomplish a goal or solve precise problems. A heuristic involves typical sorts of strategies which focus on acquiring knowledge that cannot be obtained automatically or obviously. It is often called a general path of proceeding or an outline for finding something (Rumelt, 2011).

The notion of a strategy also presents actions in the strict sense, that is the intended doings of humans. These actions include thinking, problem solving, specific operations and mental steps in order to reach an explicit goal. They are performed under our conscious control, and that is why we cannot or can only partly verbalize or analyze them. In general, strategies are the result of a mental process linked with much information. Cognitive strategies appear if the process of gaining knowledge is consciously controlled and each step yields the information decisive for the next steps. What is crucial in the whole process? It is extremely vital to select or come up with a strategy that is good and fast in the understanding of new knowledge. A strategy will, in general, encompass higher levels of information processing, that is, the high-level strategic attempts of a problem solver (Newell and Simon, 1972). It also happens that the problem is analyzed as being

divided into sub problems if it is perceived as complex or with no obvious solution. There is another more general strategic procedure which compares the nature of the obtained goal at the beginning and in the final stage of analyzing. A strategy is often understood as a production system which gives information about problematic phenomena (Newell and Simon, 1972). The integration of newly found information into the knowledge set and old information leads to acquiring a certain strategy. It is important for our analysis that strategies in these cases also consist of stepwise, complex acts which lead to a certain aim. Moreover, at each stage of the dispute several options are viable, and at the same time defined knowledge is accessible about context, consequences, participants and actions.

From the preceding discussion, we can find out information about the definition and nature of strategies. For further dispute, it is still vital to establish the connection between applying the cognitive strategies and the process of teaching reading. It is necessary to present to what extent both aspects are dependent. Reading behaviours (i.e. strategies and skills applied while reading a text) in the emergent stage of literacy, when children are not yet conventionally decoding print, focus later reading comprehension. What do we understand by the expression reading comprehension strategies? They constitute a conscious plan or a set of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. They assist students in becoming determined, active readers who control their own reading comprehension. Readers differ in the way they comprehend texts. The differences are more often described in relation to two different levels of processing. The first level is reading accuracy and speed, and the second is about linguistic and cognitive abilities (e.g. working memory, integration of information, inference, and the use of metacognitive strategies; Cain, Oakhill, Barnes & Bryant, 2001). Both levels are of the same importance. In addition, the insufficient development of lower level skills may prevent the deployment of higher level processes because of inaccurate or laborious reading (Hoover & Gough, 1990; Stanovich, 1991).

“Reading comprehension is a complex process which involves conscious and unconscious use of various strategies to build a model of the meaning which the writer is assumed to have intended. The model is constructed using schematic knowledge structures and the various cue systems the writer has given (e.g., words, syntax, macro – structures, social information) to generate hypotheses which are tested using various logical and pragmatic strategies” (Johnston, 1983: 103). There are seven in order to have a firm scientific basis for ameliorating text comprehension, namely: previewing, contextualizing, questioning to understand and remember, reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values, outlining and summarizing, evaluating an argument, and comparing and contrasting related readings. Students are already familiar with various reading strategies in their native language. However, it is extremely necessary to re-train them so that they can successfully apply the techniques to a second language.

Taxonomy of strategies

One of the fundamental aspects in the process of developing reading comprehension is language learning strategies. The long-term process of teaching various strategies takes place at school, since

students are taught how to synchronize traditional memory and comprehension strategies along with interpretative processes. Below, there are numerous strategies that can be adapted in the process of teaching reading comprehension.

DIRECT STRATEGIES		
category	definition/procedure	actions/exercises
MEMORY	Creating mental connections Applying images and sounds Reviewing Employing action	contextualizing/associating words, semantic mapping, creating mental images, providing keywords, reviewing words after longer intervals, applying mechanical techniques,
COGNITIVE	Practicing Receiving and sending messages Analyzing and reasoning Creating structure for input and output	repeating, recombining, using resources, quickly getting the idea, translating, transferring, deduction, taking notes, highlighting, summarizing
COMPENSATION STRATEGIES	Guessing intelligently Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	using various linguistic clues, approximating, selecting topics, applying gestures, coining words,
INDIRECT STRATEGIES		
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	Centering your learning Arranging and planning your learning Evaluating your learning	linking, overviewing, paying attention, metalinguistics, planning learning, establishing goals, self-monitoring, self-evaluating,
AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	Lowering your anxiety Encouraging yourself Taking your emotional temperature	relaxation, mediation, music, laughter, positive statements, rewarding yourself, body awareness, emotion checklist,
SOCIAL STRATEGIES	Asking questions Cooperating with others Empathizing with others	clarification, verification, correction, peer support, interaction, developing cultural understanding,

Source: R. Oxford, 1990 <http://mste.illinois.edu/courses/ci407su02/students/stansell/Strategies.htm>

Learning strategies are often characterized as “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques – such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult

language task – used by students to enhance their own learning”(Scarcella & Oxford, 1992: 63). Although there are numerous definitions concerning reading strategies, researchers agree that reading strategies are conscious actions undertaken by learners to achieve specific reading goals. Reading strategies constitute essential factors while developing effective reading practices. Researchers claim that both direct and indirect use of reading strategies lead to the improvement of reading comprehension ability.

Strategy training vs. motivation

Motivation is a fundamental factor when developing reading comprehension skills. Theories concerning motivational strategies aim to explain why learners behave and think as they do. Motivation is vital in the whole process of education, and there are various sources of it. Crump (1995) points out that the main sources of motivation include excitement, interest, keenness, and enthusiasm towards learning. The levels and kinds of motivation differ from individual to individual. In other words, students may have various levels and amounts of motivation, as well as different kinds of motivation. Teachers and students often perceive motivation as a factor which determines success or failure in learning. Undoubtedly, motivation and its strategies are the primary impetus to launch foreign language learning.

Cook (2000) claims that language acquisition varies with learners. Furthermore, he adds that there are three main elements which concern and influence the acquisition of foreign language, namely age, personality, and motivation. Moreover, he highlights that among the above three issues motivation is the most crucial element in foreign language learning.

Types of motivation	Definition
1. Integrative	learning the language with the objective of participating in the culture of its inhabitants
2. Instrumental	implies that a learner acquires the language in support of an aim relating to occupation
3. Intrinsic	involves eagerness to participate in certain activities because a learner feels that they are attractive
4. Extrinsic	constitutes a tendency to engage in activities because of reasons which are not linked to the activity (e.g. reward or punishment)

Source: Dörnyei, 1994; <http://seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/>

Collaborative reading

Collaboration is very significant in developing students' reading literacy, but abuse of it will be a waste of time and will not bring good results in teaching reading. It is important to support students' engagement with various reading behaviours, e.g. strategies and skills, and to engage

them in some social reading experiences such as peer reading at school, or adult-child reading at home. These social interactions are a critical aspect of emergent literacy instructions (Paterson, Henry, O'Quin, Ceprano & Blue, 2003). From a socio-constructivist perspective (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978) these social interactions support children's engagement with reading behaviours in two ways: (1) they model the use of reading behaviours, and (2) they structure reading behaviours through the use of questions or prompts to help children learn when and how to engage with reading behaviours. In order to better understand these methods, one should study the interactions that arise in these social reading contexts and analyze how they are related to children's engagement with reading behaviours. Vygotsky (1978), known for his theory of social constructivism, believes that learning and development is a collaborative activity. Students are cognitively developed in the context of socialization and education. For learning to occur, the child first makes contact with the social environment on an interpersonal level and then internalizes this experience. Earlier notions and new experiences influence the child, who then constructs new ideas (Vygotsky, 1978). According to the constructivist theories, learning is a social advancement that involves language, real world situations, and interaction and collaboration among learners. The learners are considered to be central in the learning process.

Monitoring comprehension

Monitoring one's reading comprehension means being able to understand what one reads. Such students possess strategies to "fix" obstacles in their understanding as the obstacle arises. Broad research in this field shows that instruction, even in the early grades, can help students become fluent at monitoring their comprehension. Applying comprehension monitoring instruction allows students to be aware of what they do to understand, pinpoint what they do not understand, or adopt appropriate strategies to resolve problems in reading comprehension. As Lehr & Osborne (2006) expressed it:

What they found was that good readers achieve comprehension because they are able to use certain procedures—labeled comprehension strategies by the researchers—to relate ideas in a text to what they already know; to keep track of how well they are understanding what they read; and, when understanding breaks down, to identify what is causing the problem and how to overcome it. (Lehr & Osborne, 2006).

Students use several comprehension monitoring strategies, for instance: they identify where the difficulty in the text occurs and what it is, restate the difficult sentence or passage in their own words, look back through the text, and look forward in the text for information that might help them to resolve the difficulty.

Graphic and semantic organizers

Graphic organizers help to illustrate concepts and relationships between concepts in a text. They are given different names, such as maps, webs, graphs, charts, frames, or clusters. They are

extremely helpful in the process of reading comprehension as they assist readers in focusing on concepts and the way they are connected to other concepts. Graphic and semantic organizers, originally called advanced organizers and then structured overviews, were primarily initiated by Richard Barron (Barron, 1969), but have their roots in Ausubel's work. According to his cognitive theory of meaningful verbal learning, the use of graphic and semantic organizers intensifies students' learning and retention of unfamiliar but meaningful materials (Ausubel, 1960). His assumption was that new information is acquired when it is linked to the learners' already existing cognitive structure (1968). Therefore, the function of these organizers is to stimulate students' prior knowledge and link the new material to the previously stored information, providing optimal anchorage and rendering the new material more familiar and meaningful (Ausubel, 1960).

Another theory which is consistent with the above-mentioned is the schema theory (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Those authors claimed that the mind is composed of cognitive structures of knowledge, known as background knowledge, which obtain and assimilate the newly acquired information in order to enhance learning and retention of information. One has to find a "mental home" for the information in the text, or alter an existing one in order to accommodate the new knowledge (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

There are numerous advantages of applying graphic organizers, for instance they: help students focus on text structure differences between fiction and nonfiction as they read; they provide students with tools they can use to examine and show relationships in a text; they help students write well-organized summaries of a text.

Graphic and semantic organizers are visual and spatial ways to construct and represent ideas from texts, such as using tables and grids, Venn diagrams, plot organizers, or concept webs. Teachers need to show students how to select and use graphic organizers as thinking tools, supporting them to activate prior knowledge, develop new vocabulary, or show relationships between concepts (Trehearne, 2006:159). Interestingly, English as a Second Language students and students with learning disabilities particularly benefit from their use (Trehearne, 2006). Some examples of graphic organizers:

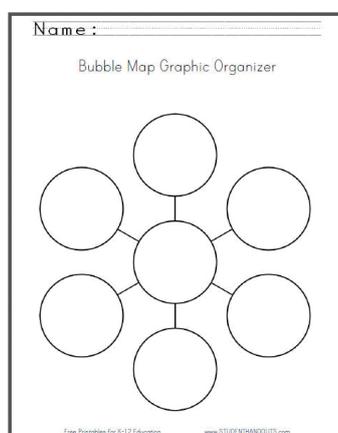


Figure 1. Concept map

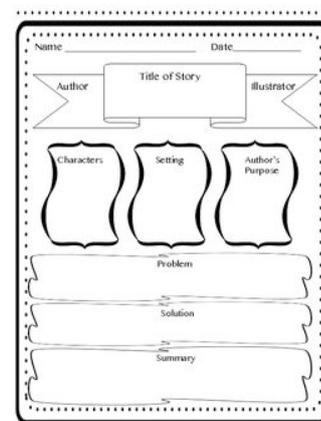


Figure 2. Concept map 1

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/8479440545>

Semantic maps or webs are visual tools to highlight relationships between facts after reading an information text (See Figure 1 and 2). Alternatively, they can be used to show relationships between characters, settings, or events after reading narratives. These techniques are equally useful for organizing concepts before reading about a topic, becoming a tool for activating prior knowledge.

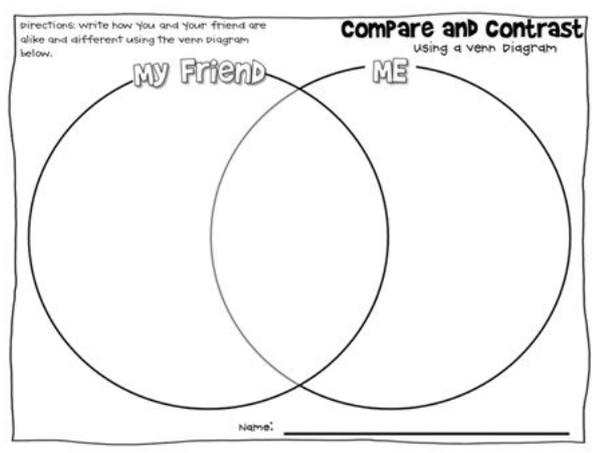


Figure 3. Venn diagram 1

Venn diagrams are useful graphics for comparing and contrasting the attributes of two or more things (See Figure 3 and 4). The teacher selects a non-fiction text about a research theme, such as regions in the UK, colonial times, or relationships, and students have to identify what is the same or different about two or three items. Alternatively, a fiction text can be used, with good character development, and students identify what is the same or different about two main characters.

Another type of graphic organizer (See Figure 5), which is mainly used in expository texts, is the matrix. This is a kind of input table, which confines the sum of the desired information within its square (Graney, 1992; Kang, 2004). It is used to delineate important categories or relationships, and depict similarities and disparities between two or more people, things, places or events (Graney, 1992; Jones, Pierce, & Hunter, 1989). In order to design a matrix, learners need to identify which main aspects they wish to focus on and what types of relationships they wish to highlight (Graney, 1992). The matrix has the additional advantage of presenting concept relations both hierarchically/vertically and horizontally in a two-dimensional form facilitating the extraction of information.

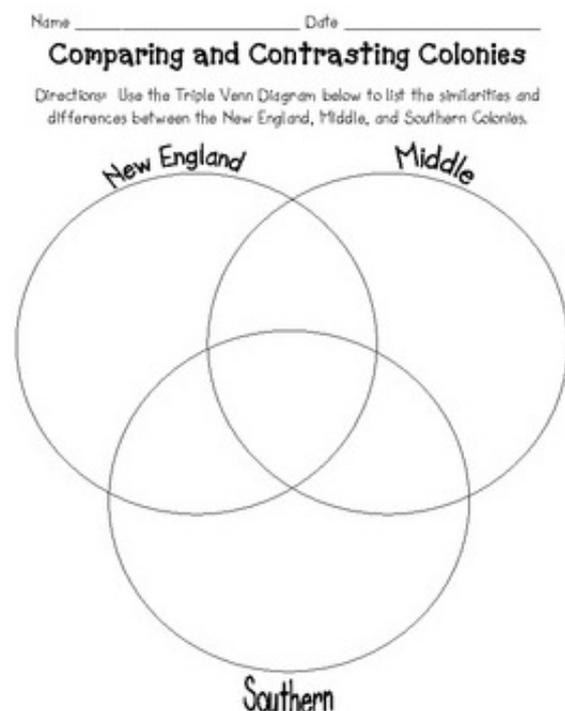


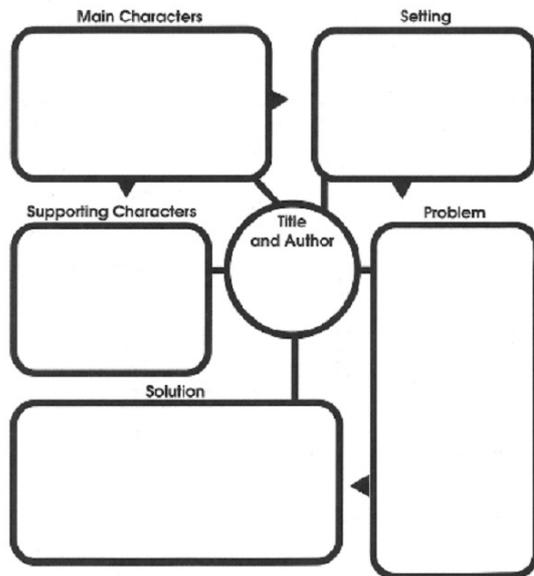
Figure 4. Venn diagram 2

Compare/Contrast Matrix

	Name 1	Name 2
Attribute 1		
Attribute 1		
Attribute 1		

Figure 5. Matrix

SCHOLASTIC
Story Map



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<http://teacher.scholastic.com>

Figure 6. Story map 1

Story Map		Instructions: Fill in the boxes to show how your story developed.	Name: _____
Characters:	Setting:	Problem:	
Title: Author:			
How the Characters Tried to Solve the Problem:		Solution:	
© Teacherfiles.com Graphic Organizers			

Figure 7. Story map 2

Source: <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies>

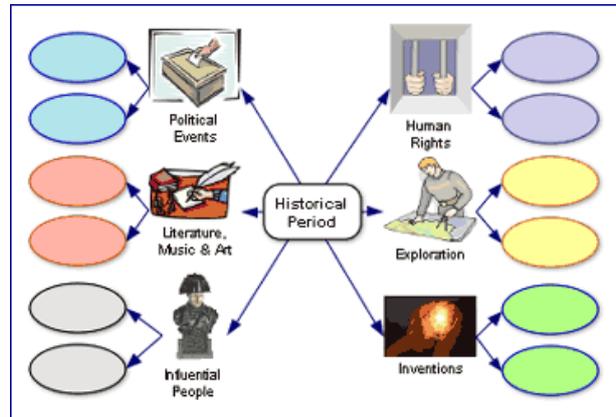
Another example of a graphic organizer connected with improving reading comprehension is the story map (See Figures 6 and 7, Story map). It uses a graphic organizer to help students learn the elements of a story or a book. Students become thoroughly engaged in the plot, setting, problem and solution, and learn the details. There are various types of story map graphic organizer. The most basic focus is at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Below is an example of such a story map.

Another example is the semantic map or, in other words, web-like organizers. There are various names for these, for instance: mind maps, spider maps or sunbursts. They look “like a sun or star with rays emanating from it, as they consist of a circle with lines radiating from the circle” (Graney, 1992: 164). They can be used to represent words, ideas, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea of the text, and depict relationships of the different components of an idea to the main idea, that is of the part to the whole (Graney, 1992). These maps place the main idea in the centre around the relevant notion. They offer an overview of key vocabulary and concepts, providing a link between what students know and what they will learn and read, a type of brainstorming activity mainly used before reading a passage to stimulate students’ background cognitive structure and to assess their knowledge in terms of the specific topic (Vaughn & Edmonds, 2006).

Some examples of online-generated techniques:

1. Webbing

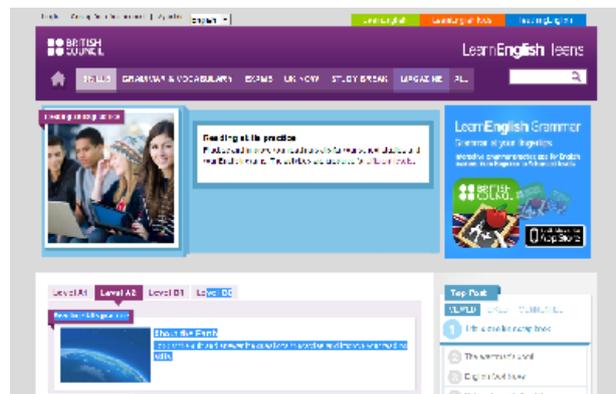
This is a visual map that presents different data related to one another. Webbing is typically used by learners, students, teachers and other professionals as brainstorming strategies for developing and connecting ideas while developing reading comprehension.



Source: <http://www.inspiration.com/visual-learning>

2. Online reading skills practice

Summing up, the literature review shows that graphic and semantic organizers have been successfully deployed with students during and after reading texts. As visual scaffolds they are conducive to activating prior knowledge, gaining an insight into text structure, and identifying as well as connecting the main ideas of a text, resulting thus in better recall and retention of information for the students. Bearing in mind all the benefits of graphic and semantic organizers, teachers should implement this strategy in classrooms and train students in using it in order to help them become independent and self-regulated learners, especially after long-term interventions.



Source: <http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil>



Source: <http://englishinteractive.net/reading.html>

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WORK IN PROGRESS

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Aspects of assimilation in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

Abstract. The aim of the article is the presentation of selected aspects of assimilation processes among Indian immigrants that arrived in the USA in the 1960s, as depicted in Jhumpa Lahiri's realistic novel *The Namesake*, with a particular focus on the differences between the first and second generation migrants. The life stories of Lahiri's characters, American Bengalis, illustrate several phases of assimilation, chief among them being structural assimilation and acculturation, as defined by Milton M. Gordon in his book *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*.

Keywords: *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri, assimilation, acculturation, Indian immigrants, Indian diaspora.

On assimilation

For centuries people have migrated for a variety of reasons, including social, political, economic, and educational ones. Their favoured destinations have usually been affluent countries with a high standard of living. In order to reduce the intimidating feeling of being an outsider, immigrants often attempt to blend in with the receiving society. The American nation has been described as a melting pot, where “different groups come together and contribute in roughly equal amounts to create a common culture and a new, unique society” (ISI), participating in and undergoing assimilation processes.

One of the early definitions of assimilation appeared in 1921 in *The Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, where Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess state that assimilation is “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated

in a common cultural life” (Park and Burgess in Gordon 1964:62-63), a definition to be modified by Park a few years later. In the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* we read that “assimilation is the name given to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain national existence” (Park in Gordon 1964:63). Such a view has met with some criticism. According to Healey, Park “did not specify a time frame for the completion of assimilation” (Healey 2007:46). He also failed to describe the nature of the assimilation processes and those aspects of the group behaviour that might change first.

The beginning of the 21st century brings us a less contentious view of assimilation processes, provided by Alba and Nee in their book *Remaking the American Mainstream* (2003). The authors admit that America’s immigrants “may not intentionally seek to assimilate, [but that] the cumulative effect of pragmatic decisions aimed at successful adaptation can give rise to changes in behavior that nevertheless lead to eventual assimilation” (Alba and Nee 2003:38). One of the examples given by the authors is social interaction that may lead towards intermarriage. Thus, assimilation is not a single event but a constant, complex process and, moreover, a slow and gradual one that occurs in stages, with some individuals and groups reaching more advanced stages in the process than others. An immigrant is usually considered assimilated “as soon as he acquire[s] the language and the social ritual of the native community and can participate, without encountering prejudice, in the common life, economic and political” (Park in Gordon 1964:63).

In *Assimilation in American Life* (1964) Gordon explains precisely the multiple aspects of assimilation as a process, identifying seven phases (or sub-processes) in which assimilation takes place. Varying in degree and length of time, these processes lead to a person’s total incorporation into the dominant society. These seven stages are as follows:

1. Acculturation – the change of cultural patterns (values, norms, ideas, religious beliefs) to those of the host society;
2. Structural assimilation – full entry into the social network of institutions and groups of the host society;
3. Marital assimilation or amalgamation – large scale inter-marriage;
4. Identificational assimilation – development of a sense of peoplehood based exclusively on the host society;
5. Attitude receptional assimilation – an absence of prejudice;
6. Behaviour receptional assimilation – an absence of discrimination;
7. Civic assimilation – an absence of value and power conflict (Gordon 1964: 77).

Polish sociologists’ views on assimilation have been presented in *Założenia teorii asymilacji* [*Assumptions of the Theory of Assimilation*], a collection of essays edited by Hieronim Kubiak and Andrzej K. Paluch, where several of Gordon’s sub-processes of assimilation receive attention, notably acculturation and structural assimilation. Kubiak maintains that “the final product of structural assimilation is the integration of members of ethnic minorities into the social structure of the host country” (Kubiak 1980: 17, translated by K.K.). For him, acculturation occurs when

ethnic minority groups acquire “the system of values, the lifestyle, and the ideology of the host society” (Kubiak 1980:17, translated by K. K.). To be more precise, acculturation is a process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviours of another group. Acculturation is usually in the direction of a minority group adopting the habits and language patterns of the dominant group. Initiating the process of assimilation, it is a transitional period, preceded by structural changes among immigrants (Markiewicz 1980:35).

Indian diaspora

Indians have a long history of migration to many parts of the world. The population of the Indian diaspora is estimated to be about twenty million, living in different countries and speaking various languages (Jayaram 2004:16). Interestingly, their Indian origin gives them their common identity, their consciousness of cultural heritage, and their deep attachment to India (Chaturvedi 2005:141). The Indian diaspora varies to such an extent that some countries are called ‘old diaspora’ countries, others ‘new diaspora’ countries. The most significant countries connected with the old Indian diaspora are Malaysia, Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago, Fiji, Guyana, and Suriname, whereas the new diaspora countries are the developed ones such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The old diaspora originates in the times of colonialism. People of Indian origin began to migrate overseas in significant numbers in the 19th century, driven by the economic compulsions generated by colonial expansion. A larger number of Indians were taken, under conditions of savage exploitation, to various British colonies as indentured labour, to work on sugar, tea and rubber plantations in such countries as Kanya, Uganda or Trinidad.

The first significant presence of Indians in the United States can be dated to over one hundred years ago, when peasants from the province of Punjab began appearing on the west coast, seeking work in Washington’s lumber mills and California’s vast agricultural fields. They came to America in the middle of the nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century there were around two thousand Indians, especially Sikhs, who left the Punjab to escape famine, poverty, and a quickly growing population, and settled on the west coast of the United States in search of economic opportunity. Most were uneducated agricultural peasants who found employment in agriculture and construction. Other Asian Indians came as merchants and traders. Many found employment in lumber mills and logging camps in the western states of Oregon, Washington, and California. Still others helped build tunnels and bridges for California’s railroad projects (IS2).

As more Indians became tenant farmers and landowners, they began to settle in communities throughout California with other Indians. The development of Indian societies allowed Indian immigrants to follow their traditions with little interference from the host community (Saxena 2009: 14-15). Between 1910 and 1920, as agricultural work in California began to become more profitable, many Indian immigrants turned to the fields and orchards for employment. For those immigrants who had come from villages in rural India, farming was both familiar and preferable.

The most contemporary phase of the political history of Asian Indians in the United States begins, however, with the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. The year 1965 was the time

when Indians began to migrate on the basis of the Hart-Celler Act, which made it possible for a great number of professionals, such as doctors and scientists, to arrive and settle in the US (Saxena 2009:19-20). Many more came under family reunification preferential categories. Education has become the factor that distinguishes newer immigrants from the early immigrants at the turn of the 20th century (Saxena 2009: 23). Contrary to the first wave of Indians, the new phase has seen a high percentage of Indians already fluent in English and specially trained in fields like medicine and engineering. The demand for professionals in a changing American economy made Indians an attractive asset and ensured a more positive reception in the United States than their forbearers had received. Moreover, in contrast to the early immigrants who came to the United States with few alternatives, the new Indian immigrants have had an unprecedented number of prospects. The new generation of Indians has also differed from the older generation in that it represents several regions throughout India, not just Punjab, with immigrants who are primarily Hindu and Muslim, rather than Sikh. They frequently migrate with spouses or families rather than as single labourers and pursue a variety of career options, the most popular of which include positions in the fields of medicine, technology, engineering, and other sciences. Though a sizeable number have settled in California like their predecessors, they are now concentrated in urban areas like Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco. Today, Indian-Americans are a large group and belong to the fastest growing populations in North America. According to the US Census Bureau for the year 2010 Indian Americans number 3.2 million and are the third largest Asian American community in the US (IS3). The census department reports that over 85% of Indians in the USA have graduated from high school, over 65% have college degrees, and around 43% have graduate or professionals degrees. These educational levels are the highest of any group in the USA, including whites and other Asian groups (IS4).

Various factors have served to unify the Indian American community in each area of settlement. Religious centres, e.g. Hindu and Sikh temples or Islamic mosques have often served as community centres as well, and have become havens for Indians from all across India. Additionally, Indian immigrants established a lot of Indian political organizations and joined the ranks of the Association of Indians in America and the National Association of Americans of Asian Indian Descent (Saxena 2009: 21-22). From simple and uneducated labourers Indians have risen in their social status to become highly educated professionals of great significance for the American economy and image.

The reason for such mass migration to the U.S (as a developed country) was economic. The Asian Indian community has preferred to settle in the larger American cities rather than smaller towns, especially in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago. It is a reflection of both the availability of jobs in larger cities, and of being a part of an urban, racially mixed environment (IS2).

The immigration of Indians to America was tightly controlled by the American government at the beginning of the 20th century, and Indians applying for visas to travel to the United States were often rejected by U.S. diplomats in major Indian cities like Bombay and Calcutta. In addition,

several pieces of legislation were introduced in the United States, specifically the congressional exclusion laws of 1917 and 1923, which attempted either to restrict the entry of Indians and other Asians or to deny them residence and citizenship rights in America. Some of these were defeated while others were adopted. For instance, a literacy clause was added to a number of bills, requiring that immigrants pass a literacy test to be considered eligible for citizenship, thus effectively barring many Indians from consideration for citizenship.

However, as stated above, after 1965, a great number of professionals from India were welcomed by the American economy. In her book *Return to India: An Immigrant Memoir* Shoba Narayan lists several reasons why many Indian immigrants found America an attractive place to live. She enumerates the following factors:

1. Global opportunities for a career (meritocracy encouraging you to be the best in your field);
2. America's multiculturalism (children having a chance to acquire a better insight into the differences between people that come from various cultures);
3. US dollar as a strong currency to purchase things easily;
4. Good educational opportunities;
5. Better health care (Narayan 2012: 162).

The above-mentioned aspects find reflection in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake*.

Lahiri's novel as a portrayal of two generations of Bengali Americans

Published in 2003, Lahiri's debut novel, *The Namesake*, spans over thirty years in the life of the Ganguli family. The Bengali parents, Ashoke and Ashima, emigrate from India to the US as young adults. Their children, Gogol and Sonia, are born, raised and educated on American soil. The novel depicts numerous differences between the two generations of Indian immigrants and their life in a new homeland. For Ashoke and Ashima, India is a real presence, while their children build an image of the culture of their ancestors on the information passed down by their parents. Ashima knows she is a foreigner and feels that

being a foreigner is a sort of lifelong pregnancy, a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. Like pregnancy, being a foreigner, Ashima believes, is something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect (Lahiri 2003: 50).

Ashima tries to keep in touch with her close family in India by writing letters, and awaits any news from her homeland. "Letters arrive from her parents, from her husband's parents, from aunts and uncles and cousins and friends (...)" (Lahiri 2003: 36).

Both she and Ashoke try to preserve Indian traditions through food and dress, as well as various rituals, such as Gogol's annaprasan (a rice ceremony that marks an infant's first intake of food other than milk). Lahiri explains: "There is no baptism for Bengali babies, no ritualistic naming in the eyes of God. Instead, the first ceremony of their lives centers around the consumption of solid food" (Lahiri 2003: 38). Thus, when Gogol is six months old, his parents invite all their

Bengali friends to a party, and maintaining the Indian tradition create a semblance of India in America. “Gogol is dressed as an infant Bengali groom, in a pale yellow pajama-punjabi from his grandmother in Calcutta ... His tiny forehead has been decorated ... with sandalwood paste to form six miniature beige moons floating above his brows” (Lahiri 2003:39). Ashima wears typical Bengali clothing, namely, a silvery sari “with the sleeves of her blouse reaching the crook of her elbow” (Lahiri 2003: 39). Ashoke “wears a transparent white Punjabi top over bell-bottom trousers” (Lahiri 2003:39). During the ceremony the hostess serves “the biryani, the carp in yoghurt sauce, the dal, the six different vegetable dishes” and “the guests will eat standing or sitting cross-legged on the floor” (Lahiri 2003: 39).

The parents’ adherence to tradition influences their decision to instill respect for Indian culture in their son. When Gogol is in the third grade, “they send him to Bengali language and culture lessons every other Saturday. In Bengali class, Gogol is taught to read and write his ancestral alphabet, and together with other children he reads “handouts written in English about the Bengali Renaissance” (Lahiri 2003: 66). Sadly, neither Gogol nor the other children are interested in this at all. Later, during various parties customarily held on Saturday evenings at the homes of Bengali families, only adults will speak Bengali while their children will be watching an American movie in another room.

As Gogol and Sonia grow up, Ashima and Ashoke have to accept more and more American traditions, introducing them to their American Bengali household, gradually becoming immersed in American culture. It is hard for them but they are conscious about their children’s dual identity. “For the sake of Gogol and Sonia they celebrate, with progressively increasing fanfare, the birth of Christ, an event the children look forward to far more than the worship of Durga and Saraswati” (Lahiri 2003:64). At Thanksgiving they learn to roast turkeys rubbed with cumin, garlic and cayenne; in December they hang a wreath on their door; at Easter, they colour boiled eggs violet and pink and hide them around the house. Ashima (herself a Hindu) prepares sandwiches with bologna or roast beef for the children, and once a week makes an American dinner: “Shake ‘n Bake chicken or Hamburger Helper prepared with ground lamb” (Lahiri 2003: 65).

The lives of the parents and the children start to follow a different pattern. For Gogol’s fourteenth birthday his parents throw two celebrations: one is typically American, “with pizzas that his father picked up on his way home from work, a baseball game watched together on television, some Ping-Pong in the den” (Lahiri 2003: 72). This event is addressed to Gogol’s school friends. However, “[f]or the first time in his life he [Gogol] has said no to the frosted cake, the box of harlequin ice cream, the hot dogs in buns, the balloons and streamers taped to the walls” (Lahiri 2003: 72). It is during the other celebration, the one among Bengali friends, that Gogol will eat his favourite things: “lamb curry with lots of potatoes, luchis, thick channa dal with swollen brown raisins, pineapple chutney, sandeshes molded out of saffron-tinted ricotta cheese”, lovingly prepared by his mother, who will find that “[a]ll this is less stressful to her than the task of feeding a handful of American children, half of whom always claim they are allergic to milk, all of whom refuse to eat the crusts of their bread” (Lahiri 2003: 72).

The growing gap between the first and second generations is visible when the Gangulis decide to go to Calcutta for eight months during Ashoke's sabbatical at the university. The children feel alienated in the country of their parents. Indian food makes them sick. There is not much for Gogol and Sonia to do to occupy themselves in a strange country, so they spend most of their time indoors. At the same time they observe the happiness and enthusiasm of their parents, who become "less complicated versions of themselves, their voices louder, their smiles wider" (Lahiri 2003: 81), while they themselves yearn to go back to their western ways and their American food. They feel relieved and pleased when the family returns to the house on Pemberton Road and when their life goes back to normal.

As an adult, Gogol lives a life similar to his American friends. He initiates intimate relationships with many women, accepts divorce as something natural, buys and eats typical American food, and spends his time having fun at parties and watching TV. He ignores his parents' objections concerning his profession. "Like the rest of their Bengali friends, his parents expect him to be, if not an engineer, then a doctor, a lawyer, an economist at the very least. These were the fields that brought them to America" (Lahiri 2003: 105). He becomes an architect and moves to New York City. "He prefers New York, a place which his parents do not know well, whose beauty they are blind to, which they fear" (Lahiri 2003: 126). When his mother tries to get in touch with him by calling, he ignores her calls. The death of his father comes as a shock, and Gogol gradually begins to comprehend who he is. He starts to bridge the gap between himself and his family, and to accept his Indian heritage, ready to become a totally new person.

For the second generation of the Gangulis, it is America that is perceived as 'home'. In America they are born and educated. In America they want to be accepted on their own terms. Indian values and culture define their ancestry but India can never be called home.

Conclusion

The Namesake reflects perpetual dilemmas of immigrants who arrive in a foreign country. The novel's characters struggle to maintain their identities, and face difficult choices in their daily lives. Adapting to a new way of life and simultaneously preserving their Indian customs and traditions, the first generation immigrants resist assimilation. Ashima always wears a traditional Indian dress (a sari) and prepares traditional Bengali food, mindful of the advice given by her Indian relatives "not to eat beef or wear skirts or cut off her hair or forget her family" (Lahiri 2003: 37).

One of the most difficult moments in her life is her pregnancy. It is a hard time for her because she regrets not being surrounded by her close family in hospital when her first child is born. She feels isolated with only her husband at her side. The fact that she is the only woman of Indian origin surrounded by American women in the hospital's maternity ward intensifies her feelings of alienation and loneliness. She is afraid of raising her son in a foreign country, "a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, and where life seems so tentative and spare" (Lahiri 2003:6).

The second generation of the Gangulis feels different. They consider themselves Americans and look forward more to Christmas celebrations than to the worship of Hindu gods. As they get older, their parents have to accept their hybrid identities. When doing shopping, they let Gogol and Sonia “fill the cart with items that he and Sonia, but not they, consume” (Lahiri 2003:65). In the supermarket, Gogol and Sonia take “individually wrapped slices of cheese, mayonnaise, tuna fish, hot dogs” (Lahiri 2003:65). With time, the children become fascinated with the American culture and way of life. Gogol starts doing the same things as his American companions. For example, he goes to late night parties, drinks alcohol and dates different American girls. One of the prominent relationships is with a girl named Maxine. There comes a time when he prefers her parents’ lifestyle to that of his parents. He adopts Maxine’s carefree attitudes, listens to Maxine’s music and drinks her wine. For a while he even lives in her house, all in an effort to build a wall between his present and his past.

With time, Gogol and Sonia become fully assimilated into the American culture, not caring much that they know so little about their parents’ homeland. The situation changes after Ashoke’s death, when Gogol tries to learn the customs and traditions of India, so deeply rooted in the first generation migrants.

Lahiri’s novel presents a fictional world of Bengali immigrants in the USA, with the characters’ stories strongly reflecting diverse aspects of assimilation processes. Both first and second generation Indians change and adapt to new circumstances, but it is the second generation that feels American. The findings of sociologists who distinguish several phases of assimilation, such as Milton Gordon and Hieronim Kubiak, prove helpful in understanding the identity dilemmas faced by Lahiri’s protagonists – Ashima and Gogol Ganguli.

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