



CROSSROADS

A Journal of English Studies

ISSUE 12

1/2016

An electronic journal published
by The University of Białystok



ISSUE 12

1/2016



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Publisher:

The University of Białystok
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e-ISSN 2300-6250

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10.15290/cr.2016.12.1.01

“Birds have Proustian capacity for making remembrance”

– a post-pastoral reading of John Lewis-Stempel’s *Meadowland* and the question of anthropomorphising animals

Abstract. The article proposes discussion of John Lewis-Stempel’s *Meadowland* (2015) developed along two perspectives. One is the post-pastoral reading as suggested by Terry Gifford. He offers a contemporary interpretative mode that draws from both the rich history of British pastoral and countryside writing and from recent ecocritical devices. Additionally, this paper aims to point out the manifold functions of anthropomorphism and presents it as the long-established strategy of making sense of the ‘outer’ nature. Both animating non-humans in literary representation and post-pastoral depiction of British countryside prevail to be an expression of spatial proximity, and apparently an indispensable prerequisite for co-existence, for sharing material place. Far from causing confusion or misunderstanding, anthropomorphisation has an enduring power of organizing human experience and expressing interconnectedness. In historical terms, it remains a fact that people have always responded to the natural world, and that they have seen animals respond as well, thus turning them into agents.

Keywords: animals in literature, anthropomorphisation, post-pastoral, *Meadowland*, Lewis-Stempel, natureculture.

John Lewis-Stempel in his utterly vivid and intimate account *Meadowland. The Private Life of an English Field* (2015) uses language to negotiate between nature, history, literature and time. He becomes a cartographer who enacts, with an appetising pinch of humour and realism, the old dream of countryside bliss. And in recognizing the pastoral tradition *Meadowland* constitutes a continuum of literary and cultural attitudes towards the world of nature. This narrative offers a multidimensional representation of the place – the meadow. This is realised through literary depiction of geographical material space, where the encounter between human and non-human oc-

curs. It further is a platform for meditating upon man's mutual entanglement with natural world. Finally, the place emerges as a point of departure into the realm of literature.

Following Terry Gifford's current postulate, this article proposes a 'post-pastoral', i.e. beyond pastoral, reading of *Meadowland*. On the one hand, Lewis-Stempel is arguably writing in the long tradition of countryside authors. On the other, however, the author's self is primarily exposed as an extension of the place; it becomes intertwined in the web of the larger system. The author/narrator is living the pastoral dream; he is observantly attuned to the breathing, animated space of the meadow.

Furthermore, the multiformity of the meadow is negotiated through anthropomorphic representations of animals, which elevates them to the position of agents. And in this respect again, the narrative maintains the dialogic relationships with long literary tradition of humanizing animals. Anthropomorphism seems to be the most expedient way of articulating this human/non-human interconnectedness.

Post-pastoral

In order to establish a broader context for what the concept of pastoral, and later post-pastoral, is, Terry Gifford defines it through analysing the functions of this long literary tradition:

[Through pastoral] we, in Western culture, have mediated and negotiated our relationship with the land upon which we depend and the forces of nature at work out there in 'outer nature,' as we have at the same time mediated and negotiated our relationships with each other and what we think of as our 'inner nature' (Gifford 2012:7).

From the first pages of *Meadowland* the reader is captured by Lewis-Stempel's ability to show the oneness of 'we' (humans) and 'nature' (the non-human world). This unity, as shown, for example, in the sentence "Ravens mate for life, and this pair has been here since we have" (Lewis-Stempel 2015:11), is generated by the long-established sharing of material space. What unites both worlds, that of the man and that of the beasts, is physical proximity. But this tangible closeness, it must be emphasized, exists additionally within the continuum (not dichotomy) of culture and nature, the language with its richness to describe human experience (poetically and scientifically), and its dialogue with ancient traditions and folklore.

But developing his argument of the pastoral Eden, Arcadia or the Golden Age, where the intended idealization of the natural offers a much desired retreat, Gifford also recognizes the 'anti-pastoral' tradition. This antipodal literary trend aims at subverting, negating or demythologizing the impeccable fantasy of Arcadia by concentrating mainly on the existing dissonance, realism and unattractiveness of rural surroundings (Gifford 2012:10-19). However, whereas the anti-pastoral opposes the idealized visions of the earthly paradise, it does not disestablish the pastoral entirely. Instead it adds this indispensable measure of realistic representations of country life.

The two practices, laudative pastoral and disapproving anti-pastoral, seem to be contrapositive. What Gifford proposes then as a middle ground is the concept of 'post-pastoral'. This way of read-

ing is to involve, among other postulates, instinctive human wonderment at the forces of nature and the exhibition of man's humility. Our species' "hubris" is curtailed. His next proposal is the awareness that the way of seeing and looking at nature is culturally charged and that the traditional culture-nature opposition is to be erased. Post-pastoral writing is also suggestive of how "inner" self correlates with the "outer" natural world. It also addresses the problem of human alienation from our natural surroundings. Finally, it involves contemporary awareness of an informed witness to environmental changes (Gifford 2012: 20-28). This modern reading template seems to be the handy tool to cope with narratives like *Meadowland*. It constitutes a way to re-connect contemporary Western reader with the world of nature.

Advocating the idea of post-pastoral in his other essay "Five Modes of 'Listening Deeply' to Pastoral Sounds", Gifford again expounds the two notions (pastoral and post-pastoral readings) in an attempt to enlarge his concept with ecocritical thought. He traces the ever-present denouncing of pastoral to the 1973 book by Raymond Williams *The Country and the City*. The book was highly influential in diminishing the role of countryside writing. Its publication, he argues, invited the deconstruction of pastoral and rendered this form of "listening mode" obsolete. It announced, prematurely, the demise of the pastoral literary tradition. The resulting negative and diminishing view of pastoral is attributable, Gifford explains, to Williams' "narrow historical range of country house literature" (Gifford 2016:12). Nature or countryside writing in a fuller sense than Williams addressed, however, still continues to integrate man with environment. Again Gifford proposes an explanation, or rather repetition of what post-pastoral really means. At the same time he distances the notion from the abundance of contemporary 'posts'. The prefixed 'post' is not what comes "after" in terms of historical chronology but what reaches "beyond" pastoral, extending its conceptual terms:

The post-pastoral is really best to describe works that successfully suggest a collapse of the human/nature divide while being aware of the problematics involved. It is more about connections than the disconnections essential to the pastoral (Gifford 2016:5).

In the view of such an inclusive definition, *Meadowland* does indeed represent a post-pastoral text. It transgresses the boundaries of culture and nature and, in departing from this dichotomy, it realizes Gifford's postulates. But the traditional chasm between country and city, the reader is reminded early in the book, still lurks, if only symbolically, just round the corner. On his way home to Hereford, the narrator notices:

Despite scarcity of population, I count at least five houses where the inhabitants have strimmed their roadside verge to within a centimeter of its life. Internally I rail at the suburbanity of such an aesthetic (why move to the country if you want to turn it Hyacinth Bucket's¹ Blossom Avenue?), and rather more honourably deplore the ecological holocaust (Lewis-Stempel 2015:18).

1 A symbolic middle-class snob from the BBC sitcom series *Keeping Up Appearances*.

The urbanites in their attempt to find a country retreat fail to “listen deeply”, as the title of Gifford’s essay suggests, and themselves fall victim to pastoral delusion. And in such actions as Lewis-Stempel describes, they attempt to transpose suburbia to the countryside.

In the course of the narrative, which reaches its climax in July entries of the journal, the farmer finds his sublime Arcadia. When the time of cutting hay starts, the narrator decides to make hay by hand, scything. Real authentic farming experience was killed, he says, in the 1950s when cabs were put on tractors (Lewis-Stempel 2015:170). So he enacts the chores of a medieval peasant in order to connect himself to the genuineness of life. This hay making description brings us again to the question of proximity. The authenticity of experience, the sublimity which the natural world can offer, is dependent of sensual reception delivered only by physical closeness. The aroma of scythed grass is like “deodorant in Arcadia” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:173) and the grass itself seems to act, to respond to the scyther’s moves: “(...) this morning the grass mostly bends before the blade, then pops back up giggling” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:172). The July diary entries become the guide through the folklore of mowing practices as well as through abundant literary tradition. Folk songs are quoted along with the verses of Robert Frost’s poem “Mowing” or the lines of John Stewart Collis’s *The Worm Forgives the Plough*². By saying: “John Clare found his poems in a field. Sometimes I find words. There is nothing like working land for growing and reaping lines of prose” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:178), the author shows how the farming experience and literary expression become related through a certain kind of consciousness. The rapture of mowing is demonstrated in the following example:

Penny [the author’s wife] appears angelically out of the waterfall of perspiration with a mug of tea. ‘How’s it going?’ she asks with a grimace.

‘Fantastically!’ I exclaim. Neither am I joking. Nothing in the last ten years of farming, with the exception of delivering calves, has given me such satisfaction.

I am in a state of near ecstasy (...) (Lewis-Stempel 2015:173)

His post-pastoral paradise, however, is already being discreetly subverted by the description of unrelenting attacks of blood-drinking horseflies.

One of the post-pastoral modes, furthermore, involves renunciation of narcissist self-indulgence and adoption of self-ironic distance towards one’s own nostalgia. This is a recurring leitmotif in Lewis-Stempel’s humorous account. Lofty tones are evoked, for instance, in paraphrasing Robert Browning’s famous poem “Home Thoughts From Abroad”: “Oh, the joy to be alive in England, in Meadowland, once May is here” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:113). But such elevation easily alternates with self-deprecating humor. A good illustration of this strategy is the sheep shearing scene which dispels any misconceptions about carefree rural bliss, inviting post-pastoral realism. Again, with a humorous effect, the author recounts:

² First published in 1975, the book is an account of the author’s working on a farm during the Second World War.

Shearing is fine in your twenties; in your forties it kills. (...) I start off at a reasonable(ish) rate of a sheep every two minutes, the clippers neatly sliding under the line of yellow risen lanolin in the fleece; by sheep number 21 I am down to a sheep every five minutes, (...) by sheep number 26 I am 140 years old. By sheep number 31 I cheat. (...) But I can never tell anyone about it because it is so seriously uncool. My back is broken, and the exertion turned me into the portrait in Dorian Gray's attic (Lewis-Stempel 2015:142-3).

Gifford proposes a “dialectic” listening mode, which, by his own admission, seems perfectly accordant with E. O. Wilson's theory of biophilia³. It involves adopting such form of “listening” to the place, landscape, nature that will enhance interconnectedness (Gifford 2016:6). In this light, *Meadowland's* territory, which is in itself the state of in-between, between open nature and nature worked by man, seems perfectly relevant for accommodating the pastoral ideal. In the narrative the meadow is as much a material place with real inhabitants as a metaphor for what is neither natural nor civilized. Interposed at the junction of traditional dichotomy of the wild and the cultivated, the meadow is rather a continuum of both. Its natural state must be maintained by man but at the same time it is neglect that brings abundance. The meadow is an ecosystem, hence its dependence on intricate interconnectedness of all forms of agency. Consequently, you can never comprehend what it is without comprehending how it works, its workings being represented only through intricate interdependence among its agents. Lewis-Stempel says: “A meadow is not natural habitat; it is a relationship between nature, man and beast. At its best, it is also equilibrium, artistry” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:15). So how, on the literary plain, can the authorial voice affirm the interconnectedness of human and non-human actors? How to show that nature, history, literature, and environmental knowledge intersect in order that an intricate topography of the place may emerge?

Humanizing the field and its agents

Culture and nature merge frequently in this apparently insignificant place. And, even the narrator's arachnological reflections may recall cultural undertones. For instance, his documentary-like musings on a black wolf spider (*Pardosa amentata*), a hunter with as many as eight eyes on its head are followed by “all the better to see with”, reminiscent of the Red Riding Hood fairy tale (Lewis-Stempel 2015:148). The narrative introduces hilarious observations of hunting spiders mating in which scenes the innocent male suitor is threatened by the voluptuous but deadly female. The intimate moment develops dangerously when later that very same lady wolf spider “stares malevolently” contemplating whether or not to eat her male cavalier. She finally opts not to, to the relief of the sympathetic narrator; the whole scene offering itself as a comic invitation to male solidarity. The events in the field or landscape description often promote aesthetic engagement: “27 JUNE Under the two old shading apple trees of Bank Field the cows are standing waiting for Constable

3 Edward O. Wilson, an American biologist, researcher, naturalist and author proposed the biophilia hypothesis in his book *Biophilia* (1984). It develops the idea of human inborn propensity to seek connections with nature and non-human forms of life. Source: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biophilia_hypothesis (19 February 2017).

to paint them” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:145). The *Meadowland* is a literary realization of what Gifford refers to as “natureculture”⁴.

But it is through anthropomorphising that the place becomes a living creature, breathing its rhythm through spring, awakening towards the July climax of its existence – haying – and later falling into natural autumnal tranquillity. The field is the doer, the place in which subject and object coalesce into one. By humanizing the place, the man expects a response and elevates the natural world to the position of agency. When still frozen in January, the field “groans and protests” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:15) under the man’s weight; in February when “an empty meadow is always in a state of waiting, of anticipation,” the author finds that “a wood gets on with things by itself, naturally” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:55); in May, because of dandelion flowers, it “has all the allure of dandruff on a school blazer” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:125). The field may be “in a mood” or “drowsed” when artificially fertilized with nitrogen; trees do not “give up”, they “try” to re-forest. All the elements that belong to the place are endowed with human emotional states or features of character. They become agents.

There is no denying the fact that the animation of the place would not be possible if the author didn’t extend the artistic licence of anthropomorphisation onto all inhabitants of the system, with no exceptions. He has the works of all the local and national naturalists, folklorists, and writers (from Chaucer to Orwell) to draw from. For example, the animal agents are characteristically endowed with human disposition to indecency. And in the course of the narrative some (vixen, mole, badger) become more than merely background extras. So, the parade of human, or all too human, ineptitudes in animal shapes has twofold effect. First, it strengthens the bond with literary anthropomorphising predecessors. Secondly, it easily evokes the spirit of acceptance and compassion, and it creates the sense of belonging to a shared place. And so while a male blackbird is “oblivious”, the little wren with his promiscuous mating habits “is not a moral giant. (...) [he] travels between his families, a bigamous commercial traveler in a 1930s thriller” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:73-4). But, warned by William Blake, the reader knows that “He who shall hurt the little Wren / Shall never be belov’d by Men”⁵ and so the little bird’s vices are easily forgiven. The narrator’s old acquaintance – the vixen, escaping with a murdered mallard – is “a pretty killer”, however, “a spiv with a fag would look less shifty” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:114). The frequent literary references also testify to the fact that not only did artists of all times humanize animals but that their convictions were, on occasion, completely incorrect. For example, there is “14 February, St Valentine’s Day, the day that Geoffrey Chaucer was convinced that the birds became betrothed” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:46).

4 Terry Gifford uses the amalgam term “natureculture” in his article “From Countryside to Environment” after Donna Haraway. She is a distinguished American professor whose works helped develop post-humanist thought in philosophy. Source: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donna_Haraway (25.02.2017).

5 William Blake “Auguries of Innocence”. The poem was written about 1801–3 as part of *The Ballads (or Pickering) Manuscript*.

Anthropomorphizing is proved to have always been a natural propensity of man to make guesses about animals.

Doubtless, humanizing non-humans is a way of bringing Constable's cows to life, of making them act. Erica Fudge, a British historian writing about animal history, points out to the limitations of studying animals in historical perspective. Unlike humans, they can be investigated as natural history museum artefacts, mounted monuments of the art of taxidermy rather than as doers of actions. She poses a question whether animals can be considered as "historical agents" (Fudge 2006). Consequently, pondering on the question of animal agency in the past, she cannot but presume their *incapacity* for such agency. While non-humans are undoubtedly capable of acting as agents, it is impossible to trace this agency back in time. Rather, we inscribe them as we would a "blank page" with meanings that stem from our anthropocentric perspective. This is the difference, she notes, between subjectivity and agency. Nonetheless, Fudge points to the fact that animal agency formulates the interaction, the interspecies synergy which shifts, and always has shifted, our landscape and our way of seeing that landscape (Fudge 2006). It is only humans who are, for the time being, ineffective in their perception of that shift. In *Meadowland*, Lewis-Stempel elevates birds to the position of catalysts whose occurrence immediately precipitates memories. They are agents empowered with "Proustian capacity for making remembrance" (Lewis-Stempel 2015:103). The birds can evoke both literary references, as in "Shakespeare too had a particular liking for the 'martlet'"⁶ and personal intimate memories: "I only have to see a house martin and I am in my childhood home (...)" (Lewis-Stempel 2015:103).

In addition, in discussing anthropomorphism, one cannot overlook the fact that humanizing other species is not only a literary claim. On the contrary, it has long attracted interdisciplinary interest. Extensive research substantiates the intuitive assumption that anthropomorphisation is an inborn mental capacity of humans. This argument is advanced by Sowon S. Park, who explores the relationship between literature and, among other forms of knowledge, cognitive neuroscience. She claims that anthropomorphism is "a process of inductive inference" (Park 2013:150) whose aim is to transgress the species categories in order to moderate our own epistemic ineffectiveness of non-human, that is of what animals are to us and how we are related. Rather than being a "fallacy", humanizing animals may bridge the eternal divide between species. It may, so the argument goes, clarify certain distortions and misinformation that surround interspecies relations. Anthropomorphising animals may be more than intuitive. This inherent capacity of human mind aims to enable interspecies communication. Projecting human perspectives on other species may be unconscious and automatic. Uncertainty still prevails, however, as to what extent this automatization of such projections is culturally driven. Park also warns about the possible ethical ramifications of anti-anthropomorphic perspective, specifically, about cultural othering. Her conclusions clearly take the argument beyond the realm of literary:

6 A house martin

If othering dehumanizes the human by transforming differences into ideological hierarchies and diminishing other species with whom we share life, anthropomorphism humanizes the non-human with no less transformative implications (...) Even while we acknowledge ultimate unknowability, the process of reasoning and inferring has deep political and ethical implications. For treating agents as human or nonhuman has a powerful impact on whether those agents are going to be treated as moral agents (Park 2013:160).

The anthropocentric split into the self and the other may lead to refusal to recognize the existence of common ground, of shared understanding of the world intrinsic to all species. As history has shown, this may further lead to appropriation, marginalization, exclusion and exploitation.

Heterogeneity of animal representation and physical-linguistic proximity

The over generalised term ‘animal’ and the simplified human/animal dualism fail to communicate the complexity of non-human entities. This suspicion towards the simplifying nominal use of ‘animal’ is also articulated in Derrida’s famous lecture “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)”: “The animal is a word, it is an appellation that men have instituted, a name they have given themselves the right and the authority to give to another living creature [*a l’autre vivant*]” (Derrida 2002:392). But is it “the Animal”, asks Derrida, or “animals”? The non-humans seem “encamped” in the singularity of the concept, or they remain within the strict enclosure of a definite article (the) as “an irreducible living multiplicity of mortals” (Derrida 2002:409). Derrida speaks publicly against such a conceptual simplification of the word ‘animals’, choosing to refer to particular animal species rather than using the common (plural) concept. This refusal to oversimplify “the animal” is what, by his own admission, distinguishes him from other philosophers. But, as he adds, not from writers.⁷

Who would be more privileged in representing the heterogeneity of non-humans than the author of *Meadowland*, a farmer himself? Lewis-Stempel is virtually living within the pastoral. Combining a distinct way of looking with his own farming experience, the writer allows agency of a non-human field. But he does more than that. He also acknowledges the potential of linguistic expression. Here language is a tool which restores subjectivity of human perception. For without the human ability to name or animal capacity for being named, non-human agents easily run the risk of merging into a uniform anonymous entity. So, when he is “in the mood for lists” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:271), starting with the snipe hiding in the grass, through mallard, dipper or kestrel, the narrator introduces us to many dozen field inhabitants, including floral agents as well. Throughout the narrative, which in its calendar organization resembles a farmer’s almanac⁸, he

⁷ For his recorded commentary on the issue see the interview available on YouTube channel: *Jacques Derrida and the Question of “The Animal”*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry49Jr0TFjk> (24 February 2017)

⁸ The organization is a distant echo of Edmund Spenser’s 16th century pastoral collection *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579).

takes notes of the present ones as though making a checklist of livestock: “14 September (...) The chiffchaff has flown” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:216). Naturally, he is perceptive enough to notice some “conspicuous absentees”, for instance, tree sparrow and brambling are missing this season (Lewis-Stempel 2015:271). Only through such meticulously detailed representations can the language of the book become inclusive. Physical proximity invariably involves naming, and in *Meadowland*, whatever lives with people is given a name.

To dwell on this argument further, it is interesting to notice that the vast bio-nomenclature performs an additional function here. Namely, it demonstrates how the natural and cultural merge in the linguistic representations of species. At times, then, Lewis-Stempel offers a detailed discussion of vernacularisms, the preserves of local colour. Regional names, which were historically prior to accurate taxonomic objectivity, are yet one more endorsement of “natureculture”. Objective scientific universalism with its standardised nomenclature seems to have limited value for literary representations of life, of place, of the meadow. Lewis-Stempel reminds us, for example, that those flowers which are given traditional local names prove to have either culinary or medical value. By the same token, he observes that “almost no birds today have vernacular names. Bird names have become standardized, homogenized, conscripted into what is considered proper by scientists for classification” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:97). The growing process of urbanization isolates man from the natural world but also diminishes his potential to use the knowledge humankind had stored for centuries. The ensuing disconnection and marginalization accompanies changes in the language. Being depreciated by culture and civilisation in physical terms, non-humans slip into linguistic oblivion. The names by which they were long known gradually disappear. The capacity for being named diminishes; the uniform term ‘animal’ threatens natural diversity of life. In *Meadowland*, on the other hand, anthropomorphism offers a way of preserving nature within the human imaginarium.

John Berger, in his well-known essay *Why look at animals?* [first published in 1980], states that it is through imagination that animals first entered human consciousness. Prior to becoming, only as late as the 19th century, the source of food or leather, animals were primarily considered as “messengers and promises”. Not even the cattle were essentially a source of meat, but they had mysterious, prophetic or sacrificial powers. “And the choice of a given species as magical, tameable *and* alimentary was originally determined by the habits, proximity and ‘invitation’ of the animal in question” (Berger 2009:12). It is a fact that presently the original context for physical encounter with animals is gradually becoming limited. Given that, the ancient way of reading, seeing and listening to non-human world is being transformed into standardized, mechanical categorization. The non-human entities are becoming “animals of the mind” (Berger 2009:25).

This ever-growing cognitive distance, despite the accumulation of scientific data, is best illustrated by Lewis-Stempel’s accidental encounter with an otter performing its “ablutions” by the river (Lewis-Stempel 2015:146). True, the narrator captures this rare moment enthusiastically, but its sublimity quickly vanishes. It is depreciated because he recollects having seen other otters before in a zoo. The imposed closeness of a zoo shatters the present wonderment. So, now, his own sighting of one is narrowed, abridged, encapsulated by his previous experience:

In a moment of unpleasant realisation I understand that viewing the otter in the tank at Bristol Zoo diminished this sighting in the wild. I saw the copy before the real thing. I saw the manufactured spectacle before the natural sighting.

Is this not what happens to us all today? Has *Autumnwatch*⁹ not killed the experience of being an amateur naturalist? (Lewis-Stempel 2015:147-148)

In consequence, such moments of ultimate encounter will not yield the (pastoral) effect one could wish for. Can the informed naturalist still continue to have access to the authenticity of experience? As Berger observes, the more we have seen and “the more we know, the further away they are” (Berger 2009:27). For Lewis-Stempel, a zoo had already provided animal imagery which now erodes the uniqueness, mystery and wildness of the real thing. The knowledge then destroys the need for the anthropomorphic or anecdotal which originally had an explanatory function. Lewis-Stempel is quite explicit in his nostalgia about the past and, when remembering James Herriot¹⁰, he says: “[Even] vets today dress like forensic scientists at the scene of a crime” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:217).

Humanization of non-humans, seen as a cognitive mistake by scientists, is a consequence of spatial closeness. How to recognize the very existence of your neighbours without being allowed to bestow names and qualities upon them? Language, including human propensity to anthropomorphise, organizes human experience and sharing of space. And until the 19th century humanization of other species was the conveyor of this closeness (Berger 2009:21). Today, however, since the physical adjacency changed into the isolation of man and animal, this seclusion may be (as noted by Berger, Derrida and Braidotti) the source of uneasiness, confusion and falsity.

Around anthropomorphising

Almost four decades after Berger noticed the growing detachment between man and animals, this process of turning non-humans into cultural constructs is addressed by Rosi Braidotti in her post-humanist reflections on “becoming-animal”. In her book *The Posthuman*, she recalls the travestied animal taxonomy which currently appears to reduce human/non-human relationship. Under this grouping, animals fall into simplified, generalized classes of companion species, commodities (e.g. food suppliers) or the nearly extinct phantasmata. What she sees between man and beast is the oedipal bond, based on ambivalence and manipulation. And, paradoxically, it is here that the strategy of metaphorisation seems to be a most potent device.

⁹ *Autumnwatch* – popular BBC wildlife series. Source: Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Springwatch> (2 February 2017).

¹⁰ James Herriot is a pen name used by a well-known British veterinarian and writer whose real name was James Alfred ‘Alf’ Wright. In 1975 he published his omnibus volume *All Creatures Great and Small*, which included his first two books *If Only They Could Talk* and *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, with three chapters from *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*. The success was followed by two more omnibus volumes: *All Things Bright and Beautiful* and *All Things Wise and Wonderful*. The semi-autobiographical accounts of his life and veterinarian career were filmed into a TV series by BBC under the title *All Creatures Great and Small*. Both the narrative series and its cinematographic adaptation became enormously popular in the UK and across the world.

Animals are humanized, bestowed with man's properties, norms, features of character. Such anthropomorphism, however, leads further to forcing on them the status of phantasm, encamping them in the dimension of unreality, turning them into sentimental misinterpretations or cultural constructs (Braidotti 2014:150-154). While there is a substantial time-lapse between both works (Berger wrote his essay in 1977 and Braidotti is reflecting on the issue early in 21st century), both authors repudiate the 20th century pageant where animals are turned into "human puppets" (Berger 2009:25). Whereas she denounces certain contemporary forms of humanizing animals, Braidotti does not in fact criticize or reject anthropomorphism entirely. The complex question of metaphorising non-humans is rather signalled here and the contemporary human (post-human) map is oriented beyond *anthropos*. Could then post-humanism, in this respect, mean shifting the focal point of analysis from man to the bond with non-humans? Therefore, if it is the interspecies bond, the connection that needs to be studied, anthropomorphism is simply the enactment of this connection.

In strictly scientific terms, to declare oneself anthropomorphiser is to take sides and to be exposed to various charges of pretentious sentimentality, subjective prejudice, or even delusional naïveté, etc. Berger provides insightful observations of this ancient human inclination to metaphorise animals and turn them into signs which helped to map the intricate meanings of surrounding world. Historically speaking, humanizing other species indicated the search for universal explanations. It was a way of "chartering" the experience of the world: "Every animals offered explanations, or, more precisely, lent their name or character to a quality, which like all qualities was, in its essence, mysterious" (Berger 2009:18). Drawing from the context of the vast body of scientific data, Dominique Lestel, a French philosopher, in his article "Epistemological Interlude" defends anthropomorphism. He offers a compelling discussion of how anthropomorphism and the use of anecdote in ethology, the study of animal behaviour, are seen as a menace to the objective scientific observation by certain part of academia (Lestel 2014:152). But is it possible to study animal behavior while not projecting human emotions onto the objects of study? Is animal behavior separable from animal emotions? The article reveals the impossibility of such proposals:

To speak of anthropomorphism with disgust implies, on the one hand, that it is possible and appropriate to describe animals as if they had no relationship with humans, and, second, that it is possible to form an "objective" representation of them that is truly independent of the observer who develops it (Lestel 2014:153-4).

Lestel denounces such claims of objectivity. He further indicates that denying anthropomorphism legitimacy in ethologic research is "a type of mental rigidity" (Lestel 2014:154). In conclusion, animals have emotional, physical, psychological and semiotic needs in that their actions convey and also interpret meaning.

In *Meadowland*, which describes a physical space, not an imaginary realm, the old boar badger is called "a Nazi, a follower of Goering's maxim 'Guns Before Butter'", and his territorial boundary overlaps with that of humans: "(...) he has adopted the human's stock fence as his national border"

(Lewis-Stempel 2015:7). Drawing from the abundance of literary tradition, Lewis-Stempel ostentatiously allows himself to fall into anthropomorphism when he admits: “And the worst anthropomorphisers of all are country people. I have never known a sow badger to be anything but an ‘old girl’, and when the gender of an animal is unknown it is always ‘he’ and never ‘it’” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:113). So, duly, Moldy Warp – arguably the most common object of humanization – is described as “the most violent diner”. The insatiable species whose pantry is named as “a chamber of horrors” is, however, presented with all the knowledge of an informed naturalist (Lewis-Stempel 2015:61). In the narrative the animals act. And if Erica Fudge identifies their historical agency only through preserved artefacts, *Meadowland* is a record of their ongoing performance: the buzzard “looks none too pleased” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:67) and a crow is “hopping about with evil intent” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:145). Even the speechless earthworms speak metaphorically because once drowned in January pools they remain “a silent white S” (Lewis-Stempel 2015:20). Far from exhausting the meadowland menagerie, the green woodpecker “violates” God’s commandments, and a moth “wears gaudy dress” to avoid being eaten.

Jacques Derrida in his essay on Animal asks a persuasive question: “Can animals suffer?” It is the modality inscribed in the very semantics of the verb ‘can’ that is so meaningful for the philosopher. The verb that indicates potential, power, being able, changes its meaning in this very question. Derrida argues:

The question is disturbed by a certain *passivity*. It bears witness, manifesting already, as question, the response that testifies to a sufferance, a passion, a not-being-able. The word can [*pouvoir*] changes sense and sign here once one asks “can they suffer?” (Derrida 2002:396)

The answer, Derrida concludes, is self-evident. It is older than the question itself. The truth of this fact was recognizable even before humans were capable of asking the question: “No one can deny the suffering, fear or panic, the terror or fright that humans witness in certain animals. (Descartes himself was not able to claim that animals were insensitive to suffering)” (Derrida 2002:396).

Lewis-Stempel does address, albeit in a more light-hearted example, the question of animal agency, or rather ability. Again, the modal ‘can’ (Derrida’s *pouvoir*) is evoked in the context of animal behaviour. As the following illustration demonstrates, projecting human ways on animals can function as a source of humour but also as manifestation of interconnectedness.

The equines continue circling the hut, until Zeb, my horse, breaks out of the circle and runs, with absolute deliberation, up to me. And gently tugs on the sleeve of my shirt. He pulls the sleeve again with infinite courtesy. Animals can, of course, talk. In that moment he and I are one, indivisible. I can see inside his great impenetrable chestnut head, see every slow bestial process. I am a fellow animal and he wants me to play (Lewis-Stempel 2015:144).

Man’s reading of animal ways derives from years of proximity, careful observation and empathy. It is undeniably intuitive and, as such, counter-scientific.

Ecocritical anguish

Terry Gifford's conceptual frame for post-pastoral offers a broad platform for how man interacts with the surrounding natural world. As his words cited earlier in the article indicate, post-pastoral reading does more than nullify the nature/culture divide. It also responds to the current problematics of the issue, namely modern anxiety concerning climatic change. Sadly, given the recent scientific facts concerning climate change and human-induced changes of natural landscape, it remains clear that one way in which nature becomes an agent is when it 'threatens' with extinction or climatic doom. It nowadays remains impossible for literary representations of nature or landscape to disregard the environmental transformations of the past decades. The old-fashioned strong tincture of idealization in countryside literature became disrupted around the 1960s and this paved way for literary discussions about environment. This shift and cultural and literary responses to it are discussed in detail by the aforementioned article "From Countryside to Environment" locating the change historically within the decades between 1960s and 1980s.¹¹

In *Meadowland* Lewis-Stempel's dialectic listening to nature cannot fail to illustrate the environmental issues. He observes: "I fret eschatologically about the curlews, as though it is their migratory wingbeats that turn the earth, and should they fail to appear we will have entered some ecological end time" (Lewis-Stempel 2015:77). This end-of-the-world anguish is suspended somewhere between Ted Hughes' confirmation that the returning swifts mean that "the globe's still working"¹² and modern environmental knowledge of species' disappearance and the fear of this absence.

The above passage from *Meadowland* provides perhaps the most explicit illustration of ecological angst, which is otherwise infrequently hinted at throughout the narrative. It is, nonetheless, hard to escape the obvious conclusion that even the most humorous, apparently light-hearted depictions of countryside must encompass this distressing post-pastoral knowledge.

Conclusions

The foregoing discussion of *Meadowland* has attempted to prove the vitality of post-pastoral countryside writing. Its aim is also to point out the manifold functions of anthropomorphism, this long-established strategy of making sense of the outer nature. Both animating non-humans in literary representation and post-pastoral depiction of British countryside are expressions of spatial proximity, apparently an indispensable prerequisite for co-existence, for sharing material place. Far from causing confusion or misunderstanding, anthropomorphisation has an enduring power of organizing human experience and expressing interconnectedness. And speaking

11 Gifford also provides an analysis of literary works concerning nature of the decades between 1960s and 1980s and their mutual influences or lack of thereof. Interestingly, he dispels the popular views concerning the sweeping influence of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962) in the United Kingdom. Instead, he identifies Richard Mabey's *The Common Ground* (1980) as the turning point in British nature writing (Gifford 2016:9).

12 Ted Hughes "Swifts".

in historical terms, it remains a fact that people have always responded to natural world, turning animals into agents.

Following the civilization schism into a number of bipolarities, such as country/city, nature/culture, human/animal, the post-pastoralist position utilizes the language as a means of mediating between these apparently separate realms. By animating landscape and its inhabitants, John Lewis-Stempel preserves the world of nature within a human imaginarium. Humanizing non-humans allows man to seek connections. Similarly, by anecdotal projection of man's attributes, the narrative's author finds the artistic correspondence with the habitat, his "equilibrium".

In addition to extending human perception of the environment, anthropomorphism entails giving voice to animals. For, as Derrida points out, animal has no language; it is deprived of the power to respond, which in a way is the sole property of humans (Derrida 2002:400).

Finally, in presenting how the species intersect in terrain of the meadow, the narrator proves the concurrence of animal agents. At the same time, by effacing himself from the central position within the narrative, Lewis-Stempel melts into the meadowland. Indicative of this position are tiny grasshoppers which, with their 300-million-year lineage, "are another landowner with a prior claim to humans" (Lewis-Stempel 2015:145). Thus human self-importance is diminished.

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10.15290/cr.2016.12.1.02

Polysemy in language and thought

Abstract. This paper focuses on the present state of investigation into polysemy, taking into account drawbacks of the existing definitions of this phenomenon. It was found that in Polish and Russian linguistic manuals and encyclopaedias, polysemy as a phenomenon is equalled with a quality for which a new term – polysemantism may be suggested. A brief survey of some of the existing directions in the research of this phenomenon from the point of view of terminology science, translation, terminography and cognition makes it possible to identify some new types of polysemy. A peculiar character of relations between polysemy and homonymy is shown, three sources of polysemy are indicated and such varieties of polysemy as regular polysemy, hyponymic polysemy and consubstantivity are revealed. In translation we come across interlingual hidden polysemy. The development of terminography leads to discovering artificial polysemy and misleading polysemy which are causes of spoiling quality of both dictionaries and translation. In cognition evolution research anthropolinguistic studies made it possible to discover diachronic hidden polysemy of the early words. There are reasons to believe that the development of cognition is based on and results in eliminating this type of hidden polysemy. The resulting tentative classification of types of polysemy reflects progress in investigating this phenomenon and may be used in further research.

Keywords: types of polysemy, terminology, translation, translating dictionaries, evolution of cognition.

Introduction

Though polysemy has been known for more than 25 centuries, and used as an argument against the theory of words formed by the nature of objects, there are still some unclear points about this phenomenon. In the chapter “Polysemy” in the modern English manual on lexicology we read that “...Despite the apparent simplicity, the concept of polysemy is complex and involves a certain number of problems” (Jackson, Amvela 2007: 69). The authors mention the problems of the difficulty in recognizing polysemy (as opposed to homonymy), transference of meanings and the problem of the number of meanings isolated by different specialists, but there are other problems too. In this paper some of these problems, namely terminological problems of naming and defining polysemy, as well as advances in investigating polysemy in a number of directions, such as terminology science, translation, terminography and cognition are going to be discussed.

Terminological problems of naming polysemy

It is well known in terminology science that the state of terminology may influence the rate of growth of knowledge. For example, the term “chemical analysis” introduced by R. Boyle played an important role in the understanding of manipulations with substances as purposeful activities and contributed to establishing chemistry as a science. Even more influence on development of science came with an introduction of a system of terms (which usually presupposes systematising respective concepts). Thus, the introduction of biological nomenclature in the 18th century led to the extraordinary flourishing of biological sciences and stimulated the analogous activities in chemistry. On the other hand, there are many instances of stagnation or complete absence of progress in sciences due to inadequate terminology or absence of the necessary terminology. Such was the case with polysemy – this phenomenon received its name (introduced by M. Breal) only at the end of the 19th century. Since the absence of a name makes analysis of the corresponding concept very difficult this means that for a very long period polysemy was not properly investigated. With introducing the term there appeared possibilities of more detailed research of this phenomenon in the 20th century.

Nowadays there are certain difficulties with defining polysemy in some languages, especially Slavonic, though the notion of polysemy seems to be well-known even outside linguistics. In Polish and Russian linguistic manuals and encyclopedias polysemy is equated with a quality of having several meanings (polysemantism).

In *Encyklopedia Języka Polskiego* [Encyclopedia of the Polish Language] (1994) we read: “polisemia (wieloznaczność) polega na tym, iż jakiś element językowy posiada dwa lub kilka różnych znaczeń” [polysemy (polysemantism) is based on the fact that a certain language element has two or several different meanings; transl. author: S.G.-G.].

According to *Encyklopedia Językoznawstwa Ogólnego* [Encyclopedia of General Linguistics] (1999) “polisemia or wieloznaczność – posiadanie przez wyrażenie językowe kilku znaczeń [polysemy or polysemantism – the possession by a linguistic expression of several meanings; transl. author: S.G.-G.]”.

Czesław Lachur states that “Wieloznaczność (polisemia) polega na tym, że dany leksem ma kilka (co najmniej dwa – wtedy mówi się o “dwuznaczności” jako przypadku polisemii) dających się wyodrębnić znaczeń (zakresów znaczeniowych), które łącznie dają się podporządkować określone pojęciu nadrzędnemu [Polysemantism (polysemy) is based on the fact that a given lexeme has several (at least two – then it is called “ambiguity”, a type of polysemy) possible to discriminate between meanings (semantic domains) which collectively might be subordinated to a definite subordinate concept; transl. author: S.G.-G.]” (Lachur 2004: 175).

In Russian manuals and encyclopedias we find the same approach:

“Polysemy – polysemantism of a word, one word having several lexical meanings” (Кондаков 1976; transl. author);

“Polysemy, i.e. ‘polysemantism’ is a feature of majority of everyday words” (Реформатский 1996: 81; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“Polysemy – the presence in one and the same word of several lexical meanings; polysemantism” (Ефремова 2000; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“Polysemy – polysemantism of a word” (Ганеев 2001: 64; transl. author: S.G.-G.)

“Polysemy *ling.* polysemantism of a word, the presence of several meanings” (Крысин 2008; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“Polysemy. In linguistics: the presence of more than one meaning in a word, polysemantism” (Ожегов 2008-2009; transl. author: S.G.-G.)

“Polysemy – polysemantism, multi-variance, that is the presence in a word (language unit, term) of two or more meanings, historically conditioned or inter-related in meaning and origin” (ru.wikipedia.org; transl. author: S.G.-G.).

Equating polysemy with polysemantism may take the form of simply presenting the two terms as synonyms:

“...relation “one more than to one”, one phonetic word in relation to many objects and meanings, i.e. polysemantism of a word. Sometimes the same phenomenon is called by the term polysemy” (Степанов 1975: 20; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“...the ability of words to have several meanings is called polysemantism, or polysemy” (Фомина 1978: 37; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“...for the vast majority of words of language polysemantism or polysemy is typical” (Маслов 1987: 102; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“Polysemy (polysemantism) – the presence in a language unit of more than one – two or more – meanings” (Лингвистический... 1990; transl. author: S.G.-G.).

“Polysemy, polysemantism – the presence of more than one meaning in a word” (Энциклопедия “Русский Язык” 1997; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“polysemantism of a word, or polysemy – is a presence in one and the same word of several interconnected meanings” (Вендина 2002: 136; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“polysemantism or polysemy of a word (from Latin *poly* – «many»+ *sema* – «sign») – is a presence in a language unit of more than one meaning on condition of semantic relation between them or of transfer of the common or adjacent features of functions from one denotate to another” (Елисеева 2003: 17; transl. author: S.G.-G.);

“...one of the results of development of lexical meaning is polysemantism of a word (polysemy)” (Головин 2005: 62; transl. author: S.G.-G.).

Equating the two terms may also be noticed in descriptions of the phenomenon in question in which these terms are used as synonyms:

“Polysemy – the ability of a word to have more than one meaning. ... Polysemantism – is a universal language phenomenon, existing in a vast majority of words of any “living” (modern) language” (Алефиренко 2007: 207, 209; transl. author: S.G.-G.).

Jan Malczewski who defines polysemy as a phenomenon – “Zjawisko polegające na tym, że jeden element językowy ... posiada więcej niż jedno znaczenie” [A phenomenon which is based on the fact that one language element ... has more than one meaning; transl. author: S.G.-G.], presents “wieloznaczność (polysemantism)” as another name for this phenomenon (Malczewski 1993).

Thus both in Polish and in Russian, polysemy, which is a phenomenon, is equated with “polysemantism” – a quality of having several meanings. It is clearly seen in the form of the two terms – “polisemia (polysemy)” and “wieloznaczność (polysemantism)” that only the first one is formally suitable to name a phenomenon, while the second is proper to name a quality. Confusing phenomena and properties which are different ontological and epistemological categories constitutes an epistemological outrage which unfortunately may be noticed in many basic manuals and encyclopaedias.

In some publications the term “wieloznaczność (polysemantism)” is used to name the phenomenon, i.e. Danuta Butler views “wieloznaczność wyrazów (polysemantism of words)” as a phenomenon (Butler 1987: 132). What is quite surprising is the absence of information on polysemy in some linguistic publications. Thus Władysław Miodunka in a manual of lexicology and lexicography (where polysemy should be given special attention) completely ignores polysemy (Miodunka 1989). The only Polish author who notices the danger of confusing two different concepts is Adam Weinsberg, who differentiates between “polisemia (polysemy)” and “polisemiczność (polysemantism)”, suggesting a new appropriate term for the quality (Weinsberg 1983: 42, 45).

Another approach towards this problem (in conformity with the well-known tendency for divergence of meanings of synonyms) might be using the term polisemia (polysemy) for the phenomenon and wieloznaczność (polysemantism) for the quality. This approach is used by A. Ja. Szajkiewicz – “If between several similarly expressed meanings may be established a semantic relation, they are regarded as different meanings of one and the same word. Such a word is called mnogoznaczny (polysemantic), and the phenomenon itself is called polysemy (Шайкевич 2005: 141; transl. author: S.G.-G.). In both cases the authors evade confusing phenomenon and property.

In English publications this problem does not exist, since there is only one term used; the authors of linguistic publications understand polysemy only as a phenomenon (Lyons 1976: 447; McArthur 1992, Koskela and Murphy 2006: 742; Jackson and Amvela 2007). In this case the respective quality is ignored and lacks a name, which may hinder research in this direction. We may suggest a respective name – “polysemanticity” or “polysemantism” (which both exist in English as shown in the Oxford English dictionary).

Quite a separate position is taken by Pius ten Hacken from the Swansea University who firmly rejects the possibility of applying a quantitative approach in exploring polysemy, stating: “I see the entire enterprise of counting the number of senses for a particular word as rather dubious”. He is critical of the existing practice of presenting polysemic words in dictionaries by enumerating their meanings. Nevertheless, though sometimes it is quite difficult to separate between close meanings lexicologists and lexicographers still present numerous examples of polysemy, while in the majority of modern defining, translating, educational dictionaries, and dictionaries of synonymy most entries contain several definitions, translations or groups of synonyms. Unfortunately, a hesitant attitude towards the phenomenon of polysemy does not seem to solve this problem.

We may also observe the insufficient state of exploration of polysemy as reflected in failing to perceive varieties of this phenomenon in the manuals, dictionaries and encyclopedias. The few exceptions are manuals of Czesław Lachur and A.Ja. Szajkiewicz and works of Ju. D. Apresjan.

Czesław Lachur, besides noting the traditional radial and chain (concatenation) types of polysemy (cf. Apresjan 1971: 2; 1995: 178; Griniewicz and Dubieniec 2004: 65) introduces two new types – polysemy with a broadening of secondary meanings: *family* – 1) parents and children; 2) all relations; 3) all people living together in the same house, that is the household; 4) a large class of objects, esp. in biology; and polysemy with narrowing meanings: *number* – 1) a place in order; 2) size (of boots, etc.); 3) next copy (of newspaper); 4) next performance in a concert; 5) a hotel room (Lachur 2004: 175-176).

A. Ja. Szajkiewicz in a separate chapter devoted to polysemy introduces monocentric polysemy (with one original meaning) and polycentric polysemy, presupposing two or more semantic centres (Шайкевич 2005: 144).

In his works Ju. D. Apresjan conducts a profound analysis of polysemy and introduces a number of new types of this phenomenon. Firstly, on the basis of the way of meaning transfer he discerns between metonymic and metaphorical motivated polysemantism. It should be mentioned that those ways of semantic change in connection with polysemy are discussed in many publications, but without proposing any respective types of polysemy. Moreover, from the point of view of regularity in forming derivative meanings of a certain type he suggests establishing regular (in which the relation between the senses is predictable in that any word of a particular semantic class potentially has the same variety of meanings) and non-regular polysemy or polysemantism (Апресян 1971: 2, 7; 1995: 178, 189-190; Apresjan 1995: 174, 181-204).

Fourthly, in the last 50 years some new aspects of investigating polysemy from the point of view of terminology science, translation theory, terminography, evolution of cognition and human mentality have appeared. As the result of that, new types of polysemy have been discovered.

Polysemy from the point of view of terminology science

In terminology science the problem of polysemy took a controversial character. In the 1960-70s many terminologists disputed the existence of such phenomena as polysemy in terminology, because, due to strict definiteness of scientific and technical concepts the respective terminological meanings must be also strictly defined and separated. Therefore, in reality we are dealing not with meanings of one and the same term, but with homonymous terms (i.e. terminological form *morphology* is used in quite different meanings in linguistics, biology and geology). Even in the process of metaphorical formation of a new term, semantic analogy or common characteristics are realised only immediately at the moment of formation of a new term and soon after that are consciously ignored. Usually new terms belong to different terminologies and this promotes alienation of kindred meanings and gaining by respective terms the status of homonyms, i.e. terms *glyba* in construction (cob, angular stone more than 200 mm in size) and in pedology (clod 10-200 mm in size), *rehabilitation* in medicine and law (Grinev 1993: 7; 1994: 52; Гринеv-Гринеvич 2008: 96-97).

Then it was noticed that in some cases of metaphorical formation of a new term, both terms often stay in the same terminology and their kinship is quite visible. For example, *assimilation* in linguistics has 2 meanings:

- *Assimilation /1/* – a process of adjusting the articulation of the adjacent sounds that happens between the same types (usually consonants) of sounds.
- *Assimilation /2/* – a process of bringing a borrowed word into correspondence with the graphic, phonetic, grammatical and lexical norms of the accepting language.

There are three such cases. Firstly, in creating new terms with the help of metonymic transfer there is a tendency to use names of processes also for the results of these processes e.g. *roofing, flooring, carpeting, classification, definition, borrowing, assimilation, isolation, cladding*. This phenomenon has a regular character and according to the results of our research in Russian, it happens in 65% cases (Гринеv-Гринеvич 2008: 133). In such cases, the old and the new terms exist side-by-side, which is inconvenient.

Secondly, there are cases when the same form is used simultaneously in the broader and the narrower meanings. For example, the term *walls* in its broader meaning includes *partitions*, but in a narrow meaning it is opposed to *partitions* because inner walls carry loads, while partitions do not. In the same way *water treatment* is divided into *mineral water treatment* and *water treatment proper*. *Balneology* in a broader meaning includes *fangothrapy* (mud treatment) while in the narrow meaning is opposed to it. In these cases the same form functions as hypernym and hyponym, and situation of hyponymic relation between meanings constitutes hyponymic polysemy.

Thirdly, in a number of cases in the same discipline independently appear terms with the same form and similar meanings: in linguistics we have *idiom/1/* (language or dialect) and *idiom/2/* (phraseological unit functioning only in a given language) (McArthur 1992), also *assimilation/1/* and *assimilation/2/*. In lexicology we have *doublets/1/* (two or more words originating from one source) and *doublets/2/* (absolute synonyms).

This leads to hesitations in viewing such cases as homonymy or polysemy and though the former seems to be preferable from the point of view of logic, now in terminological practice, as well as in theory, the second case of using of one and the same lexeme to denote two related concepts within the boundaries of a subject field is considered polysemy.

Thus in terminology, we may find both homonymy and polysemy where in both cases one lexical form is used for naming different concepts. The criterion for discriminating between them in terminology was proposed by V.M. Leichik. If in the process of splitting of the meaning or transfer of the name in the semantic structure of the resulting terms the main seme remains common and the secondary semes differentiate then we have polysemy; if the main seme is different then we have homonymy (Лейчик 1991: 119). This is true for the third case when it is clearly seen that the same form is used to denote similar but different concepts. Additionally at the annual international terminological conference organized in 2011 by the Russian Technical Committee 55 “Terminology” an agreement was reached to regard the transfer of names of processes on the results of these processes as homonymy, since processes and their results belong to different ontological and logical categories.

Thus we may consider the existence in terminology of both homonymy and polysemy as established. The difference between them lies in the fact that in polysemy in the meaning of both terms the common seme is principal, while in homonymy the common seme is secondary. At

the same time there are types of polysemy which are generally unknown and not yet sufficiently investigated, especially various types of hidden polysemy. Generally speaking we may divide polysemy types into *overt* (open, explicit) and *covert* (hidden, implicit) types. The latter may be said to include consubstantibility – the use of the same form in different functional types of lexemes – words, terms and proto-terms.

Polysemy in professional translating

Since the end of the 20th century in **translating** special vocabulary, numerous cases of the so-called hidden polysemy have been identified, when a term in one language corresponds to two or more terms in another language due to the disparity of national terminologies. Disparity and peculiarities of national terminologies in many cases result from their unrelated autonomous developments. For example, the most popular translation of the Polish term *budownictwo* is *building*, which is not always correct because the English term has a much narrower meaning and refers only to building dwellings. It is supplemented by the term *civil engineering*, which should be used in a number of cases. Historically, the term *building* was used only with reference to living houses. Everything else built (such as roads, bridges and tunnels, waterworks, etc.) was regarded as *engineering*. Roads and accompanying artificial structures (such as bridges, tunnels, retaining walls, etc) initially were built for military purposes and, together with defence structures were referred to as *military engineering*. Some communal buildings and structures as, for example, water supply, sewage system, and waterside structures were the domain of *civil engineering*. Therefore the Polish term corresponded to two English terms. Finally lately there came into usage industrial structures, large agricultural buildings and irrigation structures, communication structures, main pipelines – that were out of this scheme. Therefore, the term *construction* appeared, that unites nowadays all kinds of building activities. Thus, in translating we have to pay attention to the proper use of various equivalents (Griniewicz 2010: 80).

Problems of treating polysemy in terminography

Terminography, which is the theory and practice of compiling terminological dictionaries, is closely connected with translation. We should bear in mind that the dictionary is a main tool of the translator and influences both the quality of translation and the time needed to find the necessary term or to choose between the proposed variants of translating a term. Unfortunately the majority of the present dictionaries have faults and perhaps the most grave is the excess of the variants of translation making the choice of the right equivalent a painstaking job.

For example, in the most popular English-Russian building dictionary (Амбуреп 1961) the term *aeration* is translated as *aeracija* (the right translation), *prowetriwanije* (*airing*, slightly different, narrower term), and *ventilacija* (*ventilation*, quite a different term, wrong translation). To the right translation *ballast* of the term *ballast* (in railroads) two unnecessary and somewhat wrong translations are added – *shcheben'* (*crushed stone*) and *gravij* (*gravel*). The term *boulder* is also translated as *bulyzchnik* (for which we have the exact equivalent – *cobble*), *gal'ka* (for which we have

the exact equivalent – *pebble*), and *zpaбуў* (for which we have an exact equivalent – *gravel*). In the internet the present situation looks even worse. On the site *translate.yandex.ru* we find the following variants of translating *boulder* – *valun* (the exact equivalent), *kamen'* (*stone* – a much broader general concept), *glyba* (angular stone of the same size, a different concept), *bulyzhnik* (*cobble* – smaller stones), *skala* (*rock* – quite a different concept). The last four variants are erroneous and lead to fallacious translations.

Numerous similar examples of superfluous and erroneous equivalents in English-German – German-English special dictionaries were presented in Grinev (1999). I think we may call such practice of supplying unnecessary equivalents creating an artificial polysemy and misleading polysemy in the case of providing erroneous equivalents.

In the domain of professional medicine we also come across artificial polysemy in translating dictionaries. In the Occupational Safety and Health Glossary we find: *bezpieczenstwo pracy* – *occupational safety, industrial safety* (the second term is narrower and not an exact equivalent, it is redundant); *candidiasis* – *kandidoz, kandidamikoz; moniliaz; drozhzhevoj mikoz; oidiomikoz; poverhnostnyj blastomikoz* (the last 5 terms are exact equivalents, but in the presence of the first, preferable term they are unnecessary and misleading), *danger symbol, hazard symbol* – *preduprezhdajushchij (predosteregajushchij) simvol; znak bezopasnosti; simvol opasnosti* – the right Russian term is *preduprezhdajushchij znak*, while the second variant of translation is a disorienting antonym; *inspector truda* – *labour inspector, factory inspector* (the second term is narrower, not an exact equivalent, and therefore redundant); *fabrichnaja inspekcija* – *labour inspectorate, factory inspectorate* (here the first variant of translation is a broader term); *loss of pigmentation (of the skin), achromy, depigmentation, vitiligo* – *ischeznovenije pigmentaciji na kozhe* – this variant of translation is not a term, while there are accepted terms, i.e. *vitiligo*; *machine guard, guard* – *zashitnoje ustrojstvo, predohranitelnoje ustrojstvo; ograzhdenije* – the second variant is a term denoting quite a different concept. According to our estimates, more than 90% of the existing translating dictionaries contain excessive and often – misleading translations. Even when the additional translation variants are correct, they induce hesitation; create an illusion of slight differences between the offered equivalents and cause embarrassment of the translator. In our opinion such artificial polysemy is unnecessary and therefore harmful.

The role of polysemy in the evolution of cognition

Diachronic investigation of terminologies has led to the discovery of one more type of hidden polysemy – multitemporal (or diachronic) hidden polysemy, taking the form of semantic syncretism. In a number of cases the original meaning was quite dissimilar from the modern one – the analysis of the basic terms of emotion showed that in many cases the initial meaning was different. In some cases it firstly named the cause of emotion: *wonder* – something causing surprise; *fear* – danger, *grief* – something causing suffering; *anger* – something causing pain or irritation, *distress* – stress, *fun* – practical joke.

It was also found that in the history of human evolution there is hidden fused polysemy in the semantic characteristics of the early word-stock. We can find rich evidence of loose bunches of meanings in old languages or old stages of modern languages. One of the remarkable features of Anglo-Saxon words is the diversity of meanings included in their semantic structure, e.g. *beodan* – to bid, command, proclaim, offer, give; *bliþ* – joyful, merry, gentle, kind, sweet, calm; *brucan* – to use, enjoy, eat, employ. In many cases the meaning of an Anglo-Saxon word encompasses many present-day notions, e.g. *aldor* – life, age, parent; *cynn* – a sort, kind, race, family, nation; *cyst* – choice, election, what is chosen, excellence, virtue, goodness; *cræft* – power, might, art, skill, trade, knowledge, cunning, any kind of ship; *feoh* – cattle, money, value, fee, reward, property; *rūn* – whisper, mystery, secret, letter; *talū* – tale, story, talk, account.

From the modern point of view, the next remarkable feature of initial polysemy is combining hardly compatible meanings, e.g. *feolah* – to cleave, stick, adhere, to reach, come, pass; *dreorig* – bloody, sorry, sorrowful, cruel, wounded; *duguð* – manhood, multitude, glory, power, advantage, prosperity. Sometimes it even takes the form of enantiosemy: *dreogan* – to do, to work, to perform, to endure, to suffer; to enjoy; *gretan* – to welcome, to bid farewell.

There are reasons to believe that what we now describe as polysemy in old languages took the shape of vagueness of meaning based on the absence of differentiation between notions which are quite different from the present-day, but which are somewhat similar or may have something in common. In many cases we may observe the absence of stable borders of meanings of an old word such as in the following OE words: *dōm* – judgement, decree, law, command, power, dignity, free will, choice; *lāþ* – something hateful, something harmful, something evil, injury, grief, pain, enmity; *searo* – device, design, craft, artifice, arms, equipment.

In some cases the meaning of an Old English word points to a certain general idea underlying particular meanings: *ansyn* – face, countenance; sight, form, figure; *beah* – ring, bracelet, collar; *flota* – ship, fleet, sailor; *facen* – deceit, evil, crime; *greot* – sand, dust, grit (Griniewicz 2007: 39-41). Commenting on polysemy of Old English words one of the investigators concludes that it is practically impossible to differentiate between the meanings even with the help of the context, because we are dealing here rather with a broad meaning combining into dissoluble whole notions which are quite diverse for the present-day reader (Добрунова 1980: 9). We may suspect that what we now apprehend as polysemy of the majority of words was not viewed as such by the contemporary speakers. Perhaps they did not see the need to differentiate between the kinds of a notion they had not yet fully investigated.

Conclusions

As a result of recent advancement in a number of directions of linguistics the number of the known types of polysemy has grown and may be organised into the following tentative classification: we start with dividing polysemy into **overt** (explicit, open) and **covert** (implicit, hidden) polysemy.

The first may be further subdivided (on the basis of ways of formation) into **metaphoric** and **metonymic** subtypes, and also (on basis of the character of development) into **radial** polysemy

(when the primary meaning stands in the centre and the secondary meanings proceed out of it like rays) and **concatenation** or chain polysemy (when secondary meanings of a word develop in succession like a chain). The same category comprises **systematic** (or **regular**) polysemy, in which the relation between the senses is predictable in that any word of a particular semantic class potentially has the same variety of meanings. In terminology we find polysemy with hyponymic relation between meanings of a term that may be called **hyponymic**. To these varieties of polysemy we should add the well-known in linguistics **enantiosemy** – combining the opposite meanings in one word, “...enantiosemy,’ the presence of polysemies in which one sense is in some respect the opposite of the other” (Traugott 2006: 129). Examples are: *scan* – 1) careful observation from point to point; 2) cursory glancing from point to point; *eye* – 1) to look at sth (ice-cream) with desire; 2) to look coolly. Traditionally it is viewed as antonymy (cf. Новиков 1990: 36).

To the covert polysemy belong **interlingual** polysemy (monosemic word having several meanings in a different language) and **diachronic** polysemy (almost every old word used to have several meanings).

Strictly speaking, since man began to form ideas about the surrounding world and to find words to name those ideas, eliminating hidden polysemy of initial words has been the most effective means in forging a better understanding of the world we live in, as well as ourselves. Removing such hidden diachronic polysemy contributes to enhancing our cognition, to the development of science and to the evolution of the human mind. However accurate and precise we may view meanings of words (even terms) belonging to the present-day vocabulary, there is no guarantee that in the next century they (or at least some of them) will not be perceived as inexact and ambiguous. Perhaps one of the essential characteristics of human knowledge growth and anthropogenesis in general is an eternal quest for the elimination of polysemy.

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10.15290/cr.2016.12.1.03

Genderlect as discourse in Yoruba movies

Abstract. This paper offers an analysis of gender discourse of Yoruba male and female movie characters. The Yoruba speech community is one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Their genderlect is examined and investigated in terms of their use of minimal responses, intensifiers, hedges, tag questions, polite and taboo words. The techniques of Media Monitoring and purposive sampling were employed to obtain relevant data. Randomly, four Yoruba movies were selected from which forty eight scenes were analyzed. From each movie twelve scenes, comprising single gender interaction and mixed gender interactions were considered. Social constructivism theory combined with the relevant aspects of Discourse Analysis was employed for the data analysis. In addition, a Chi-square analysis was done. The findings show significant differences between the gender groups in the use of hedges, intensifiers, minimal responses, taboos and euphemistic or polite words. The findings also corroborate the constructionist assumptions regarding gender-bound language taking context into consideration. Thus we conclude that the differences in the usage of male and female movie characters are determined, as empirically evidenced, by several sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and discourse features within the context of situation or interaction in the Yoruba milieu.

Keywords: Genderlect, Yoruba, discourse, hedges, intensifiers, minimal responses, taboo.

1. Introduction

This paper is a study of Yoruba discourse, focusing on the differences in the way Yoruba men and women speak in selected Nollywood movies. Recent research tends to depict the existence of differences between men and women's language use as one of the principal issues of sociolinguistics (Crawford 1995). Researchers such as Maltz and Borker (1982), Tannen (1990), Wardhaugh (1991), Coates (1993), Trudgill (1974) and Swann (2000) have observed that men and women differ significantly in their use of language and that these differences are always a product of context. The basic idea of social constructivism is that the world is socially constructed and the social order in which we perceive the world is in a constant state of change. It is believed that while meaning is constructed through interaction between different people and their relation to objects and other people, differences also vary from situation to situation (Bryman 2008: 19-20). What this means

is that meaning is created through language depending on how people use concepts and what the meanings of these concepts are. In this light, we attempt to examine the possible gender differences in language use and the functions of some linguistic features in Yoruba movies based on social constructivism theory and relevant tools of discourse analysis.

The movie has been noted, especially by Aitchison (1998), to form an aspect of media that conceptualizes world events and situations which people have accepted as a means of gathering information about what is happening around the world. Thus the movie, as a genre of a fictional character, may be said to be one of the most suitable and appropriate media for expressing, exploring and exploiting the richness and complexity of genderlect. This may be the main reason for the widespread interest in movies among people of various social groups globally, as aptly observed by Bleichenbacher (2008:21).

Just as in real life or non-fiction, genderlect tends to be reflected in the discourse of movie characters as determined by their ethnic, linguistic or cultural backgrounds or affiliations. Obviously, some of these features have been discussed from the point of view of the native speakers of English language but it appears that much has not been done from the context of non-native speakers of the English language. Also, it was observed that these linguistic features are distinctively used by each gender. Thus the primary goal of this study is to examine the differences in the usage of discourse features by male and female characters in selected Yoruba Nollywood movies and to explain the functions of those features of genderlect.

2. Statement of the problem

The general gender communication differences can be noted to reflect in most male and female discourses in relation to their contexts. From a critical discourse perspective, it may be claimed that imbalance of power between male and female members of the society is the principal factor behind gender speech differences. Though this claim has been debated and elaborated on by social constructionists, this perspective has been widely attributed to Lakoff (1975), whose view appears to be revolutionary as there was no substantial work on the relationship between gender and language before hers.

Curiously, there was little or no empirical data to substantiate some of her viewpoints on genderlect. Other works, such as Trudgill (1974) and Holmes (1996), that focused on several of the linguistic features she discussed also fall short of providing sufficient evidence on genderlect. Moreover, much of the research on gender discourse as a linguistic behaviour has focused on the native speakers of the English language. Thus it appears that there is very little knowledge about how gender discourse operates in various other languages of the world in form and structure. Thus this leaves a gap to fill. From our observations it is clear that genderlect in form of linguistic variables in the selected movies could provide substantive evidence that underlies differences in the speech of male and female movie characters.

Wardhaugh (1991) and others have investigated the speech behaviour of women and men at various levels using different methodologies. Owing to the many contradictory approaches, as-

sumptions and results, the need to develop a critically systemic approach and methodology on genderlect arises. Thus claims made about language used by women and men at different times, in different circumstances and with completely different samples, on the basis of different implicit ideologies should be examined, investigated and analysed carefully.

In this paper, the view that women use discourse features such as hedges, intensifiers, minimal responses, taboos, question tags, euphemisms and polite words more often than men and the need to examine the functions of these discourse features in different social contexts becomes a re-search problem to be investigated and resolved using Yoruba movies as a case study.

Operational definitions of terms

For the purpose of this study, we consider it necessary to define the following terms:

Hedges appear to be similar in form and structure in English and Yoruba. Examples are: *m`o rope* (I think), *se oori* (you see), *o dabi enipe* (it seems).

Intensifiers tend to be similar in form and structure in Yoruba and English. Examples are: *Oti poju* (too much), *eru yi le ju* (so enormous).

Language Use: Yoruba words used by males and females to communicate in the selected movies.

Minimal responses are also known as back-channel speech. They involve brief feedback or comments provided by listeners during the conversation interaction (*Hmmmm, ehennn, hunnn*).

Polite words (or euphemisms) are words associated with respect, etiquette, well-mannered behaviour. Examples: *ema binu* (sorry), *edakun* (please).

Taboo words and euphemism refer to prohibited words. They are forbidden because they are regarded as immoral or improper. Sexual organs and sexual acts in Yoruba culture are taboo words that should not be mentioned in the public. Euphemisms are used in their place.

Tag questions are the same in Yoruba and English. Examples of tag questions are: *abi beeko* (isn't it), *abi iwo ko* (aren't you), *se ohun ko ni* (wasn't it).

Yoruba Movies are movies produced by Yoruba movie industry in the Yoruba language.

3. Genderlect

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the term *genderlect* may be described as “the language of both male and female sexes” (Kramer 1977:122). This refers to language form and language use associated characteristically with either males or females. Just as “dialect” is defined as a variety of language of a people in a specific geographical area, genderlect can be defined as a variety of a language that is tied not to any geographical location or family background or a role but rather to the speaker's gender. The study of genderlect has been dominated by one word: difference. Differences between men and women and the way they speak have filled the pages of numerous articles and books.

Many of the approaches adopted in the study of genderlect have reflected different milieus ('Deficit' approach, 'dominance' approach, 'difference and discursive approach'). These approaches came one after another as a result of the shortcomings of the earlier ones. In a nut shell, the bot-

tom line is communication and differences. According to Tannen, a key advocate of the difference approach, communication is more or less cross-cultural and males and females are genetically unsuited to communicate successfully with each other. We learn to use language as we grow up, and since we grow up in different geographical areas, have different religious beliefs, class backgrounds, etc. – all these lead to different ways of speaking. Being male or female also leads to different conversational styles (Tannen 1990:42).

The 'discursive' approach which falls under the social constructionism sees context as the basis of the differences. The discursive approach is influenced by Michel Foucault as it focuses more on the production of knowledge and meaning, power/knowledge in correlation with history and historical events (Hall 1997: 51). Linguists working on genderlect now consider how gender is 'constructed' in its relation to cultural variables such as race, ethnicity, geography, class and economics; and how the factors which entail a society 'influence' how we construct gender. In other words, fresh insights have been gained on the various ways in which males and females verbally interact with one another and on the discourse problems that occur in the process. The most popular explanation given for the obvious differences is that the disparate verbal skills held by males and females are reflections of the disparate conditions of their gender in the society. Since male and female speakers of a language have different experiences, social roles and personal needs peculiar to their culture, it can only be expected that they develop different strategies and skills of speech to operate within and cope with sociolinguistic and cultural requirements in their society.

Findings from early works simply indicate changes and differences which can be observed in genderlect. For example, there are different opinions as regards the use of intensifiers, tag questions, minimal responses, euphemisms, polite words, and other forms. There is the view that women use tag questions more to get a confirmation of a personal opinion. There is also the view that men do not use tag questions as often as women as well as the one that says they do (McMillan, Clifton, McGrath & Gale 1977; Mulac & Lundell 1986). Similarly, there have been opposing views regarding (Dubois & Crouch 1975), further evidence that women use phrases that may communicate relative uncertainty. Uncertainty verb phrases, especially those combining first-person singular pronouns with perceptual or cognitive verbs (e.g., "I wonder if"), have been found more often in women's writing (Mulac & Lundell 1994) and speech (Hartman 1976; Poole 1979).

Similarly, the view that women use more hedges because of their reluctance to force their views on others appears to support Lakoff's claim that women are more likely than men, in the same situation, to use extra-polite forms such as, "Would you mind...". This claim has been supported by subsequent empirical works (Holmes 1995; McMillan *et al.* 1977).

Aitchison (1998) claims that women are more conservative when they talk by replacing imperatives or direct sentences with questions. For example, if a woman is asked "what time are we going to have the dinner?" she will answer "is it at 8?" instead of "it's at 8". However, this style of talking is specific to weak people who are afraid of provoking arguments and outrage. Women tend to use more standard forms than men and it is commonly alleged that women speak more correctly than men, but the real reason for this way of talking is still under question and only some justifications

have been proposed which can be right to some extent. For example, women are under pressure in patriarchal societies and are expected to be ladylike, so they have to behave more politely than men. Some people believe that talking properly is considered a part of their personality and associated with their femininity.

In conclusion, the literature reviewed above is considered germane to the study of genderlect as discourse in Yoruba Nollywood movies.

4. Yoruba discourse

The Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria have been described as a group of people with rich culture and values whose verbal discourses feature proverbs, folktales, rituals, songs, prayers, succinct sayings and even drumming and singing to enrich the meaning of what they say (Adegbija 1989). This is especially true when they speak their native language, although many of these characteristics have been carried into their English language usage. Their language use reflects their peculiar culture and world view which intertwine, as aptly observed by Hymes (1964). In other words, their speech variation occurs due to a number of linguistic and non-linguistic factors or variables such as language contact, social context, age, gender and social or educational status of participants/interlocutors. These variables tend to account for the peculiar discourse features of their language use.

As espoused in this paper, discourse can be described as language in use (see Brown and Yule 1983; Fasold 1990). So by Yoruba discourse, we simply refer to Yoruba language in use. The analysis of Yoruba discourse in the movies may present clearly a new perspective and understanding of the language, its use as well as its functions. New discourse features may be found to be peculiar to social interactions in Yoruba movies as a result of the Yoruba socio-cultural milieu or world view. If discourse is assumed to be underlined by social relations, then our focus here is to shed more light on peculiar discourse features employed in the selected Yoruba movies by men and women in the course of interaction.

As discourse analysis involves the study of language in context, we, in this paper, consider each of these linguistic features as a continuous stretch of language larger or smaller than a sentence. The reason for this is that discourse elements cannot be studied in isolation because of their peculiar feature of being dependent on context for their interpretation. Thus texts are analyzed as also language use 'above the sentence' and not only as sentences, sentence elements or a conglomerate of ideas (literary or otherwise) that are generated through sentence elements or structures. This perspective is well-captured by Coulthard (1977) when she states that the largest unit of discourse may overlap with the largest unit of grammatical organization (see Olateju 1988).

Since male and female speakers of a language have different experiences, social roles and personal needs particular to their culture, it can be only expected that the genders develop different strategies and skills of speech to operate within those circumstances, and that these are reflected in movies. The most popular explanation given for these differences is that the disparate verbal skills held by males and females are reflections of the disparate conditions of the genders in society. A hierarchical male-female relationship is seen to exist in society which is manifested in cross-

sex discourse (White 2003). Tannen's view is that verbal differences between males and females are caused by different cultural backgrounds. Women are assumed to think more often in terms of closeness and support in order to preserve intimacy while men are assumed to focus more on status and independence. These traits may be responsible for the obviously different views which men and women have of the same or similar situation (Tannen 1990:42). The question then is, do Yoruba male and female characters reflect those traits in their discourse in movies? If yes, does that lead to significant verbal differences in their discourse? These are the main questions we set out to answer in this paper.

5. Methodology

In this paper, we employ an integration of qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach, as described by Keller & Erzberger (2004:174), enables the employment of complementary methods that facilitate a broadened perspective based on an indepth treatment, description and explanation of the subject area. Purposive sampling which involves media monitoring of both electronic and print media was employed. In this regard, series of films were viewed on DSTV Channels, especially on African Magic Yoruba, Okin TV, Galaxy Tv and lots more. Also, information was gathered online in respect to the comments of viewers and the total number of viewers of these movies. The data were sourced from selected Yoruba movies. After watching them severally with keen attention, the speeches/utterances of both male and female characters were transcribed in order to identify and select the relevant areas of interest. The data were then divided into three major groups: (1) cross gender, same period, (2) same gender, cross period.

The four selected Yoruba (Nollywood) movies are: *Oleku*, *Oga*, *Ainidariji* and *Gbaju*. They were selected because they contain scenes involving verbal exchanges between male and female characters, showing love, relationship, social and family life as their thematic centrality.

6. Presentation and analysis of data

6.1. Research question 1: Is there a significant difference in how men and women use intensifiers, taboo words, hedges, question tags, minimal responses and polite words in Yoruba movies?

The results of our analysis showing significant differences between men and women in the use of intensifiers, taboo words, hedges, question tags, minimal responses and polite words in our data are summarized in Tables 1a and 1b indicating the frequency and percentage of usage.

Table 1a. The frequency of selected variables in the speech of male and female characters

Linguistic variable	Male	%	Female	%
hedges	163	22.7	189	26.3
intensifier	122	29.1	92	21.9

question tag	59	30.7	55	28.6
minimal response	63	16.1	121	30.9
taboo words	106	30.9	68	19.8
politeness	14	12.9	48	44.4
total	527	100	573	100

Table 1b. The frequency of selected variables in the speech of male and female characters

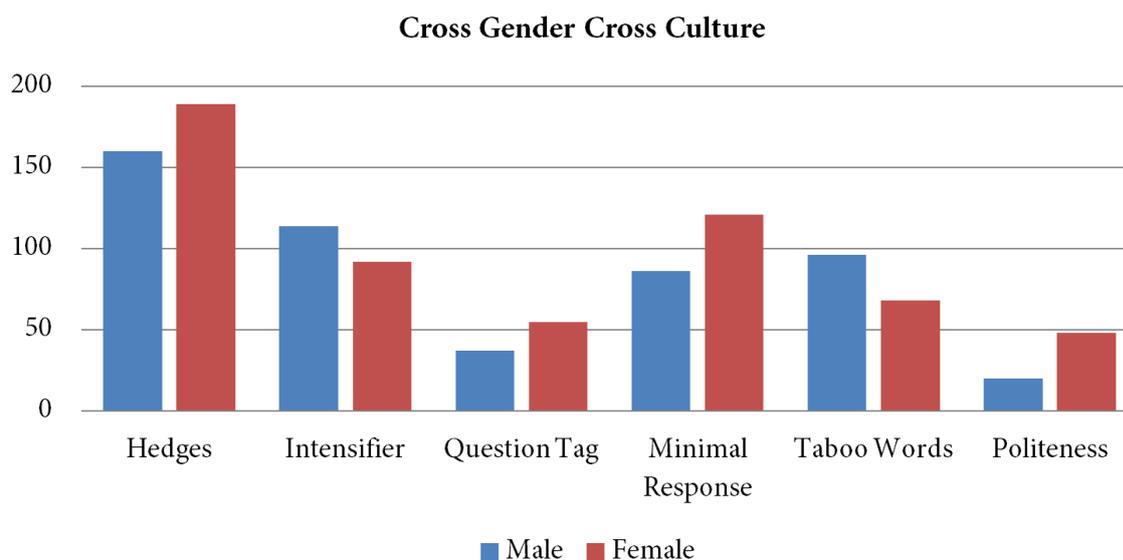


Table 2. Male Chi-square table

Linguistic variable	Observed N	Expected N	
hedges – 163	1	10	0
intensifier – 122	1	10	0
	1	10	0
question tag – 59	1	10	0
minimal response-63	1	10	0
taboo words – 106	1	10	0
politeness – 14	1	10	0
total	6		

Table 3. Female Chi-square table

	Observed N	Expected N	
hedges – 189	1	10	0
intensifier – 92	1	10	0
question tag – 55	1	10	0
minimal response121	1	10	0
taboo words-68	1	10	0

politeness – 48	1	10	0
total	6		

Table 4. Test statistics

	MALE	FEMALE
Chi Square	000	000
Df	5	5
Asymp. Sig	1.000	1.000

6 cells (100.05) have expected frequencies less than 5.

The minimum expected cell frequency is 1.0.

The Chi – square analysis reveals that men and women use these features differently as the 6 cells (100.05) have expected frequencies less than 5 while the minimum expected cell frequency is 1.0. This result shows that there is a significant difference in the usage of these variables by the male and female characters. In addition, the frequency count/percentage of our data confirms that females use hedges, minimal responses and polite words more than their male counterparts while males use question tags, intensifiers, and taboos more than females. Below are some samples illustrating the use of the forms by both male and female characters (M= male character/speech; F= female character/speech).

Extract from *Gbajue*

Bayo – M: *Oti wa lokan mi tipe* (I have had it in mind for a while).

Funke – F: *Mmm.*

Bayo – M: *Moro wipe tin base bayi, odara. Abibeeko?* (I think it is better for me to face it now, isn't it?).

Funke – F: *Well, t'o ba roo be* (Well, if you so think).

Bayo – M: *O mo pe, emi o fe si idi mi sita* (You know that I don't want my secret exposed).

Funke – F: *Mmm, oma dara gan! Well, se pe o le ronu bayi* (Mmm, So nice of you! Well, so could think now).

Ahmed wo'le (Ahmed enters)

Ahmed – M: *Ina nla, oye keemo...ninu amohunmaworan* (High energy...You probably know him...on air).

Bayo – M: *Mmm. Se National hero ni?* (Mmm, Is he a national hero?)

Toke – F: *Well,(rerin) iwo nko?* (Well (laugh)...what about you?).

Funke – F: *Uhhh...hu-hh*, can't stop laughing.

The above is a sample of conversations among four friends-two males and two females. From the ten turns, females use minimal responses (4) four times while men use it (1) once. Hedges were used by the female groups (3) thrice and (2) twice by the males while question tag is used (1) once by the male gender. Other features such as taboos, politeness were also identified in the passage. Tables 1a and 1b show the frequency and percentage of the occurrences of these linguistic variables in the data.

From our analysis of Yoruba discourse, men appear to use less of these features than women. Men also use taboo words and intensifiers more than women as a consequence of the value that has been placed on men in Yoruba culture. Even though taboo words are prohibited, that is, Yoruba culture does not approve the use of such words in the public by both genders, men often use them in both single and mixed gender settings. The analysis also reveals that women use hedges, polite words and minimal responses more than men as a result of the socio-cultural factors in the Yoruba setting. For instance, it is believed that a woman should be submissive and polite in all situations. There are acceptable rules for discourse especially when it involves mixed gender. In the movies, the women were at the receiving end as most of them had to wait for their men to finish talking before they could respond. These features, as used by women, indicate their submission and unassertiveness. The male characters in *Oga* (movie) employed a lot of taboo words associated with breast, sex organs and their prowess in bed, such as: *daluru* (women hunter), *oga* (deceiver), *ekun* (lion), *eru aya* (breast), *fisifun* (make love) unlike the females.

6.2. Research Question 2 – what are the functions of taboo words, politeness, intensifiers, minimal responses, tag questions and hedges in the movies?

From the data, we were able to identify the various functions of these variables as used by men and women in the movies. These are explicated as follows:

6.2.1. Hedges

After identifying all the lexical hedges in the data, we grouped them into five different categories for the analysis of the lexical hedges according to their functional similarity as proposed by Crompton (1997:282). This classification enables us to analyse the lexical hedges more effectively by comparing differences between males and females.

Personal evaluations. One of the functions of lexical hedges used in these movies is personal evaluation. Hedges such as: *morope*, *odabi eni wipe*, *simi*, etc. (I think; it seems to me; I guess; I suppose) and many more were used by both genders in our data. The use of hedges is related to a speaker's personal evaluation. It is precisely the element of personal evaluation that makes these expressions lexical hedges and renders the utterance they govern less threatening. The example below illustrates the difference:

F: *Morowipe, Tinuade korira ju elo* (I think Tinuade hates more than you).

M: *well, ma worry, mo mohun timase* (well, don't worry, I will see to it).

F: *sugbon, emi nro bakan pe kin bere funranlowo won.* (but I kind of think I should ask for help).

M: *min mo, odabi eni wipe oo ti sure* (I don't know...it seems you're not sure yet).

F: *ori, mo guess pe on ti mi ni* (you see, I guess you are joking).

Looking at the example above it is easy to see how removing the personal evaluation: *morowipe, moro bakan pe, odabi eniwipe* (I think, it seems) from the conversation would make it sound more direct and thus more threatening to the hearer. The fact that the whole utterance starts with the speaker marking the following speech as his or her personal evaluation of some sort is certainly important for softening his critical comment.

Expressions of approximation. Hedges were employed by both genders in the movies as approximate expressions, such as: *bakan, bee bee* (sort of; kind of; in a way; somewhat; somehow, etc). In the data, these expressions were regularly used to soften critical comments. It is clear that these words were not only used to make a specific semantic relationship fuzzier but also to make the relationship between the speaker and the content of his/her utterance fuzzier.

M: *Se kaku sope, Moji Ajasa n manage e beebie ni?* (Should we then conclude that Moji Ajasa is somehow reluctantly dating you?)

M: *Rara oo, emi gan ni mo n wo lona kan boya kin kuku koju si Asake nikan* (No, I am even the one considering whether I should stop double dating and focus on Asake alone).

F: *Helooo ni bi ooo, ahhh! Emi o ma risi bi ore e se n se bakan simi.* (Hello everyone. ahhh! I am not comfortable with the strange behaviour of your friend to me).

Expressions of limitation. Some lexical hedges were used in the movies to express a limitation of some sort. What this means, in practice, is that all the hedges in this category limit the scope of the utterance and thus soften the content of a critical comment. Examples: *di e* (a little/ little/ a bit), *di e loku* (just/ almost/ slightly). The function of these hedges is best illustrated with examples from the data:

M: *To me, oye ki Damola respect iyawo e die* (Damola ought to respect his wife a bit)

F: *Is quite unfortunate fun Adesewa tori mo warn ee daadaa.*

M: *Esa je kama gbadura fun won okere opo* (Well, let's just keep praying for them, whether little or much).

Expressions of hesitation. Some of the lexical hedges used by males and females in these movies explicitly mark hesitation. It is important to bear in mind that hesitation can be expressed in many ways, not just with single lexical hedges. Thus, certain hedges have a clear hesitant meaning, for instance, *boya* (perhaps; maybe; probably), to list some of the most common ones.

F: *Boya kin lo fejo damola sun ore e boya o ma yipada* (Maybe I should go and report Damola to his friend, perhaps he will change).

F: *Hhhmm, boya Lo gbijanju.* (Hhmmm, probably..... go and try your luck)

Expressions of insecurity/ uncertainty. Previous research by Coates (1988: 8) has shown that women use hedges to mitigate the force of what is being said. Men use them to reinforce what is being said as well. The use of *moro'pe* (I think, it seems) may signal that the person is unsure about what he/she is saying.

M: *Honey, igba wo lori Moji last* (Honey, when last did you see Moji).

F: *Emm, o da bi mpe mori ninu newspaper nigba pipe* (Emm, I think it is a long time I saw him, in the newspaper).

M: *Odun to k'oja abi igbawo* (Last year or when?) B'oya (May be)

F: *Mo n ro wipe odun to koja yini* (I think it was last year).

“F” is not very sure if she had seen “M” (meaning through his picture or interview) in the newspaper, and she shows this by using *I think* as an uncertainty marker. But *I think* does not always indicate insecurity; rather, it may be used when the speaker is trying to protect herself from possible indictment of falsehood, slander or generalisation. This seems to confirm previous research which shows that women use hedges in ways other than an indication of weakness.

6.2.2. Intensifiers and polite words

Generally, **intensifiers** are used by females and males in these movies while **polite words** are mainly used by females. Intensifiers are used more by males. In the movie *Ainidariji*, the way Adesewa's friends described her beauty when they wanted her to accompany them to the Club and how they complimented one another exemplify this.

F-Friends: *Woo, Adesewa, so mo pe hot cake ni e, irun ori e beautiful, shape wa lovely gan pelu beauty e. kodemawo je ki oruko e koro e now* (see, Adesewa, you know you are a hot cake, your hair is beautiful and your physique is lovely, allow your name to influence you now)(Her name, *Adesewa* literally means beauty queen).

F-Adesewa: *Please, mi o wa si school tori party, eyin naa dunju, edara pupo, so elo je gbogbo igbadun* (Please, I am not in school because of the party. You are all so sweet and beautiful! So, go and enjoy yourselves!)

All the women here used what is called empty adjectives and politeness markers to describe one another (Lakoff 1975). By their compliments, the conversation is facilitated. Also, in the movie *Oga* when Shina Ayo's mother came to talk with Yoyin's parents, both female speakers use polite words in their speech to each other.

Yoyin's mum: *E se gan ool! Eleyi tun daa gan* (Thank you a lot! This is very nice).

Shina ayo's mum: *Eleyi kere* (It was the least we could do).

Yoyin's mum: *Ile yin rewa o, lai ti wo ayika. Ike anabi niyi o* (Your house is really beautiful even though I haven't been in it. This is the Prophet's blessing)

Camille: *Looto, eje ka lo wo ayika* (Really, come on then let's move around).

From *Oleku*:

M-Ajani: *Asake rewa pupo ju* (Asake is so beautiful).

M-Ijaola: *oma n wumi ki omoge ri rumu rumu bayi* (I love to see a cute and chubby damsel).

This illustrates how female characters use polite words (or euphemisms) and intensifiers as devices to make sure they do not threaten their interlocutor's status, role or face, thereby keeping

good social relationships regardless of whether or not the relationship will continue in the future. The male characters in contrast use intensifiers to buttress and reinforce their points.

6.2.3. Minimal responses

In our data, minimal responses were produced by both genders in the course of the conversation; however, women used them more often than men. Examples are: *Yeah, mmm, uh huh, yes, yea* and *right* etc. especially when code mixing.

Bayo-M: *Oti wa lokan mi tipe* (I have thought about it for a while).

Funke-F: *Mmm.*

Bayo-M: *Moro wipe tin base bayi, odara. Abibeeko?* (I think it will be better to face it now, isn't it?).

Funke-F: *well, toba roobe* (well, if you think so)

Bayo-M: *omope, emi o fe si idi mi sita* (You know, I don't want my secret to be exposed).

Funke – F: *ermm, oma dara gan, well sepole ronu bayi* (Mmm. So nice of you, well, so could think now)

Ahmed wole (Ahmed enters)

Ahmed – M: *Ina nla, oye keemo...ninu amohunmaworan* (High energy...You probably know him...on air).

Bayo-M: *Mmm. Se National hero ni?* (Mmm, is he a national hero?)

Toke – F: *well, (rerin) iwo nko?* (well (laugh)...aren't you?)

Funke-F: *Uhhh...hu-hh* (can't stop laughing.)

Minimal responses, as used in the movies, tend to support the speaker indicating that the interlocutor was listening to (attentive to) or in agreement with what was being said. When used, they never seem to interrupt the flow of the conversation. This feature (or technique) seems to corroborate Coates's finding that since minimal responses are well placed in the conversations, they do not cause any interruption (Coates 2004: 129). Several researchers have found that, in casual conversations, it is women who take on the role of facilitators (Holmes 2001; Tannen 1990). It has been demonstrated that men are less sensitive to the interactional process. From the excerpt above it is clear that both male and female make use of minimal responses to show the listener's active participation in the conversation. The interpretation is that Bayo goes against the norms of male speech strategies by being more supportive and less competitive in the discourse process. Hence, a minimal response is used here to show that the listener is actively involved in the conversation and supportive.

6.2.4. Question Tags

Tag questions are used by both male and female characters in the movies to perform the following functions:

- a) an invitation of others to participate in a conversation or take their own turn;
- b) a polite facilitation of an addressee's entrance into or turn in a conversation;
- c) a certainty of the acceptability of the subject-matter to the addressee;

- d) an expression of uncertainty, circumspection; thoughtfulness, carefulness;
 c) a reflection of concerns for the addressee's feelings or emotion.

These are found in the extract below:

Well, inu mi ndun bakan sa. I mean pe emi nikan lo rewa ju l'oju e laarin gbogbo wa. I guess am the best for him. abi? (Well, I am somehow happy. I mean that I am the most beautiful of all of us here to him! Isn't it?)
O ga o, o ma nya mi lenun bi awon obirin ti se ma nfe iru eniyan bayi. You know!
Abi kot'oro ni? (It is a surprise that ladies love men of that sort. Isn't it?)
Ah, eleyi te ngbon kiri tele bobo leyin. O kan ma loyin s'ere ni. Woo, you see! Abi beeko? (As you dote on the man, he may end not been serious about the affair as you are. Isn't it?)

These uses of question tags are almost completely different from their functions in English where they are simply used for negating simple positive statements or affirm negative ones. This difference can be attributed to different cultural norms/ways of talking or conversing in Yoruba and English. Thus different conversational strategies are evident markers of a different cultural milieu.

6.2.5. Taboo words

In our data, taboo words were used by both men and women but were mostly produced by men. According to Jay (1999:84), there are many reasons for people to use taboo words; people have a desire to express their feelings, relieve their negative stress and establish their identities and status through their speech. This may differ in expression and form from culture to culture. Our data reveal that taboo words were used for **humorous effect, catharsis, or showing of power**. In some scenes, humorous effects are reached by mentioning some words that the society perceives to be forbidden. For example, words and expressions related to sex, sexual organs and the sexual act. Words such as *ibalopo* (fuck), *idi* (ass), *Oko* (dick), *Omu* (boob) etc. were used in the movies. In *Ainidariji*, Damola and his friends used taboo words for this purpose. For example, Damola humorously expressed his affection toward a woman in the following excerpt:

Damola: *Oluwa o, ewo idi yi. Kinti e le ponla* (good Lord, look at that ass! I wish I could have a feel of it).

Friend: *eru nla, oki sibe, yepa!* (big ass, so loaded, wow!).

The second function here is catharsis. This happens when we are extremely angry and need to express our anger in violence, the uttering of these forbidden words may provide a relatively harmless verbal substitute for other dangerous acts. For instance, when Shina Ayo in *Oga* realised that his best man wanted to have sexual intercourse with his fiancée, he used a lot of taboo words to express his anger. Also, a lot of taboo words were used in *Oleku* and other movies, *such as: Daluru, Oga, Ibale, Oja, Ekun, Aja, Ojo Weliweli, Esin, Opeke, Beleja yan, Asewo, Fisifun, Dasibe, Tosibe.*

Taboo words are used to stress the masculinity of the speaker, especially in conflict. Breaking the rules has connotations of strength and freedom which men find desirable as previously noted

by Trudgill (2000:18). This was justified by Damola in *Ainidariji* when he resorted to taboo words in his conversations with his wife and friends to show that he was the head of his family.

A cultural factor may be responsible for why men tend to use more taboo words than women in the movies. In the traditional Yoruba culture, women tended to be restrained from using strong and violent expressions. In fact, they were often trained as housewives who must be submissive to their parents and husbands in words and acts. Thus housewives would address their husbands using appellatives and praise-names instead of their actual names. A Yoruba woman who failed to exhibit this characteristic (or virtue) was seen as lacking in home training. With the influence of western education, some of the values appear to have been eroded.

7. Conclusion

The basic linguistic variables were identified in the movies and categorized under six heading: hedges, intensifiers, minimal responses, question tag, taboo words and politeness. We counted the number of tokens of a particular linguistic form used by each gender and compared it to the others. We also made use of frequency counts, percentage, chi square analysis and charts. In the application of the X^2 distribution, we attempted to test if an observed series of values differs significantly from what was expected.

In this study, we were able to establish a correlation between the six linguistic variables and the concept of gender. These variables were studied, analyzed and represented qualitatively and quantitatively under the form of frequency count, percentage represented in tables, chi-square analysis and charts. We also used the discourse analytic technique of transcribing and analyzing texts and discourses to investigate interactional patterns of men and women in the media genre. We were able to highlight and explicate the functions of the linguistic features (conversational strategies) in the selected movies. The findings from our analysis clearly show that women make use of hedges, minimal responses and polite words more than men while men use taboo words and intensifiers more than women in Yoruba movies. It is important to note that the differences in the functions of these features, especially question tags and intensifiers, in English and Yoruba are rooted in cross-cultural differences.

This study raises a number of questions requiring further research. It would be interesting to see how taboo words are used in other languages, in other regions of the world, and whether there are equivalent euphemisms that can replace them in similar contexts. It seems important also to know whether or not, why and how males use taboo words more than females in other languages. Can answers be found in cultural differences, affinity or universal culture? Other features may also need further probing in order to arrive at an enriched understanding of gender differences globally.

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