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The Editor-in-chief's Foreword

The tenth issue of the Journal of Humanities ETAGTSU features a diverse collection of papers exploring current debates in modern language theory, cognitive linguistics, and applied linguistics.

Nazi Iritspukhova's article, 'Metaphor in Web-based Promotional Tourism Discourse: A Quantitative Exploration,' investigates metaphor use on official tourism websites from Georgia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. N. Iritspukhova's analysis shows that metaphors are employed strategically rather than extensively, with verbs and prepositions shaping their distribution, reinforcing persuasive aims and aiding destination branding.

Ana Gelovani explores conceptual metaphors of the SOUL in classical philosophical texts by Plato and Aristotle. Using Steen's (2010b) MIPVU methodology, this study identifies 55 metaphors, classifies them as structural, ontological, or orientational, and illustrates their key role in making abstract philosophical ideas understandable long before the development of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

In 'Towards the Typology of Character Portraits in Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales,' Mariam Zedelashvili investigates Chaucer's techniques of verbal portraiture. Relying on established typological frameworks, the paper shows how Chaucer's descriptive methods create vivid, multidimensional characters, progressing scholarship on characters' linguistic and literary shaping. Sopio Totibadze's study, "*Ġvino*, Wine, *Vino* – The Study of Linguistic Landscape in Tbilisi,“ examines the presence of Georgian, English, and Russian in the city's central signage. Based on a dataset of 45 images, the findings highlight the dominance of English in commercial contexts, often surpassing Georgian, the official language. The study places these linguistic patterns within broader sociocultural, economic, and ideological contexts, contributing to research on linguistic landscapes in post-Soviet settings.

In *The Art of Manipulation:Exploring Gaslighting in James Thurber's Narratives*,

Valeria Purtseladze explores the linguistic aspects of gaslighting as a form of psychological manipulation through an analysis of James Thurber's The Unicorn in the Garden (1939), The Little Girl and the Wolf (1939), and The Great Quillow (1944). Drawing on speech act theory (Austin, 1961; Searle, 1979), Catapang Podoski's (2020) theory of the linguistic order of gaslighting, and insights from linguo-stylistics and discourse analysis (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981; Verdonk, 2002), she investigates how gaslighting is linguistically constructed in Thurber's narratives. The results show that gaslighting primarily operates through explicit assertive speech acts that meet both preparatory and sincerity conditions, producing manipulative perlocutionary effects. Stylistic devices such as metaphors, epithets, and similes amplify these manipulative tactics. The study emphasises language's role as a subtle yet powerful control tool in literary and real-world settings.

Sopiko Gvritishvili's article, "Breach of Conversational Maxims in Courtroom Discourse: A Conversation Analysis Approach," analyses the strategic use of implicature in legal communication. Using Grice's Cooperative Principle, the study shows how courtroom participants intentionally flout conversational maxims to create implied meanings that influence narratives, challenge testimonies, and impact judicial decisions. The analysis underscores implicature's role as a power, persuasion, and procedural strategy mechanism within adversarial legal environments.

Mariam Nebieridze's contribution, "Towards the Use of Backchannel Signals during Classroom Oral Presentations: Speakers' Perspective,' investigates how audience feedback affects student presentations. Employing a mixed-methods approach with 127 undergraduates at Tbilisi State University, the study finds

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that verbal and non-verbal backchannel cues significantly influence presenters' anxiety, confidence, and performance. These results reconceptualise oral presentations as co-constructed communicative events, with practical implications for teaching in higher education.

Nino Jojua's research, "Phonological Deviations in Georgian EFL Learners' Pronunciation within Academic Discourse," examines recurrent vowel deviations among Georgian learners of English. Classroom observations and audio recordings reveal difficulties with schwa pronunciation, vowel length contrasts, and diphthongs, caused by cross-linguistic transfer, orthographic influences, and interlanguage development. The study highlights the importance of prioritising clarity over native-like accuracy and proposes specific strategies for pronunciation teaching in EFL contexts.

Elene Khuskivadze's article, "Research on Dictionary Use in Teaching Languages (Findings of the Survey Conducted with School Teachers)," investigates how dictionaries are used in Georgian and foreign language education. Based on an adapted questionnaire from K. Márkus, Khuskivadze surveys teachers of Georgian, English, German, French, Spanish, and Russian, uncovering widespread deficiencies in dictionary skills, neglect of dictionary training, and broader linguistic consequences such as the spread of Anglicisms and calques. The study emphasises the pedagogical value of embedding dictionary literacy into language instruction. Farzin Ghobadighadikolaei's paper, 'Etymological Analysis of Six Mazandarani Toponymical Suffixes,' offers a historical-linguistic perspective on Mazandarani, a northwestern Iranian language. Analysing 1,184 rural toponyms, the research examines six semantically obscure suffixes, tracing their development from Proto-Indo-European through Proto-Indo-Iranian and noting parallels with Germanic and Balto-Slavic languages. Processes of grammaticalisation, semantic erosion, and metonymic generalisation transformed common nouns, such as marz ("border"), into productive toponymic markers with broader meanings, illustrating both the conservative character of Mazandarani and its value for understanding Iranian linguistic history.

The issue concludes with Ilia Tsetskhladze's paper, 'Ephrem Mtsire's Translation Technique Based on the Pseudo-Athanasius of Alexandria's Homily Sermo de descriptione Deiparae,' which explores Ephrem Mtsire's translational strategies in medieval Georgian Christian literature.

This study identifies additions, omissions, grammatical adjustments, and rhetorical adaptations through comparative analysis of the Old Georgian translation and its Greek source. It reveals a dynamic equivalence approach that balances fidelity to theological content with reader-oriented stylistic choices. The research enriches the understanding of Georgian translation practices and contributes to broader discussions on cultural mediation in Byzantine and Georgian literary traditions.

The contributions featured in this issue collectively shed light on the complex intersections of language, cognition, culture, and society. They span theoretical, empirical, and historical perspectives, encompassing metaphor, discourse, phonology, lexicography, and translation studies. Together, these studies demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary inquiry in the humanities, highlighting how rigorous linguistic and literary scholarship can deepen our understanding of contemporary communication and human thought and expression evolution.

Professor Manana Rusieshvili-Cartledge,
The Editor-in-Chief of the Online Journal of Humanities ETAGTSU

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Metaphor in Web-based Promotional Tourism Discourse: A Quantitative Exploration

Abstract

The paper aims at systematically examining the frequency and distribution of metaphor-related words in the web-based promotional tourism discourse, which can be regarded as an online hybrid info-promotional/persuasive register characterised by "description-with-the-aim-to-sell" (Biber and Egbert, 2018). The study employs frequency analysis and comparative statistical research to analyse texts from the official destination websites of an emerging tourist destination such as Georgia, and established touristic countries such as the UK, and the USA. This approach enables a rigorous evaluation of the role of metaphors in promotional tourism discourse and provides statistically grounded insights into how figurative language functions to construct brand identity, shape perceptions, and enhance visitor engagement. The choice of the destinations was motivated by the assumption that developing destinations rely more heavily on metaphors in their promotional discourse compared to the well-established tourism markets (Dann 1996; George 2010; Jaworska, 2017).

The results reveal that the metaphor density in web-based promotional tourism discourse is lower than in general discourse, at approximately 10%, which situates the info-promotional register between fiction and face-to-face conversation (Steen et al., 2010). This frequency reflects the dual informational and persuasive functions of this register and promotional discourse of tourism, where clarity and readability must be balanced with emotive and imaginative engagement.

The findings also demonstrate strategic rather than excessive use of metaphors: contrary to the commonly held idea that developing destinations employ more metaphors for their promotion, Georgia exhibited the lowest metaphor frequency, challenging the assumption that developing destinations strategically rely on metaphors to attract tourists. This suggests that there might be factors beyond a developmental status of a destination, such as target audiences, cultural considerations, etc, which might play a significant role in shaping metaphor use.

The overall distributional analysis of metaphors across word classes demonstrates a clear preference for verbs and prepositions, emphasising dynamic, relational, and persuasive functions rather than purely informational ones. Cross-destination comparison indicates shared tendencies alongside regional variations: the UK corpus demonstrates a strong preference for metaphorical adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions, whereas Georgia exhibits a more literal style with lower metaphor density, reflecting distinct promotional strategies and stylistic conventions.

Overall, this study provides important insights into how tourism marketers employ metaphor to balance informational clarity with persuasive impact, strategically shaping promotional narratives and destination brand images. While the research is limited by its focus on frequency and distribution, it highlights a significant role of metaphor in online tourism promotion and sets the stage for future research into metaphor types, cultural resonance, and the interaction of medium, genre, and marketing strategy in shaping persuasive tourism discourse.

Keywords: *metaphor, quantitative research, info-promotion, tourism discourse, tourist destinations*

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1. Introduction

Metaphor is a cognitive tool or process that enables us to understand one concept, often abstract or intangible — a target domain — in terms of another, usually concrete or tangible — the source domain (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). For example, the word 'spend' in 'You could spend weeks seeking out its hidden treasures' (https://www.visitbritain.com/gb/en/england) helps us concepttualise the target domain of TIME through the source domain of MONEY. In this instance, metaphor can emphasise certain facets of the target while hiding others (Kövecses, 2020), making it a potent tool for creating subtly persuasive messages that evoke emotions (Ortony, 1975: 50) and sway evaluations (Sopory and Dillan, 2002; Van Stee, 2018).

Empirical studies (Semino, 2008; Steen et al., 2010; Deignan, Littlemore and Semino, 2013; Semino & Demjén, 2017) have demonstrated that the use of metaphors varies across different discourses and registers, with some employing more metaphorical language than others (Steen, 2007). In promotional discourse, metaphors serve as attention-grabbing devices (Semino, 2008), shaping consumer perception and influencing behaviour (Thibodeau & Flusberg, 2022; Kövecses, 2020). They also play a role in ideological framing, branding, and enhancing ad memorability (Hidalgo-Downing and Kraljevic-Mujic, 2017).

Despite this, research into metaphors within promotional tourism discourse (PTD) remains limited (Iritspukhova, 2023). According to Dann (1996), tourism promotion functions as a form of social control, persuading individuals to become tourists and shaping their attitudes and behaviours through various media, thereby constructing their 'tourist gaze' during the pre-trip stage (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Unlike traditional advertising, tourism promotion markets intangible products, selling 'a dreamed experience' (Francesconi, 2008), with language playing a crucial role in this process. In this context, 'phrase precedes the gaze,' as tourism promotion develops its specialised discourse (Dann, 1996; Gotti, 2007)

1.1 Research Questions

While the recent review highlights important trends in metaphor use within PTD (Iritspukhova, 2023), systematic quantitative studies of metaphor frequency and distribution remain limited. This paper addresses this gap by analysing tourism promotional material from Georgia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, guided by the following research questions (RQs).

1. *How common is metaphor in the database?*

Researchers hold differing views on how common metaphors are in tourism advertising. Some argue that metaphors are 'massively used' (Dann, 1996, p. 172), while others suggest that the euphoric and emphatic language of PTD reduces the need for metaphorical devices (Narváez and Valverde Zambrana, 2014). A diachronic study by Djafarova and Anderson revealed a decline in metaphor use from 21.5% in the 1970s to 15% in 2005, suggesting that interpretive challenges may lessen metaphor effectiveness (Djafarova and Anderson, 2008). To contribute to this ongoing discussion, the study systematically examines tourism materials to provide a detailed quantitative assessment of metaphor use in web-based PTD. Additionally, the findings can support cross-register comparisons (Steen et al., 2010), enhancing our understanding of how metaphors function across different communicative contexts.

2. *Do metaphor frequencies differ between emerging destinations (Georgia) and established markets (the UK and USA)?*

Previous research indicates that metaphors in PTD primarily help manage unfamiliar destinations, portraying them as extraordinary yet relatable. Consequently, metaphor use is believed to increase when promoting places that are geographically or culturally distant (Dann, 1996, pp. 172–174) or in developing countries (Dann, 2002: 4).

Sylvia Jaworska's analysis (2017) of three corpora describing tourist destinations in Britain (Home-Corpus), Europe (Europe-Corpus), and far-flung tropical locations shows a notable quantitative difference, with more remote destinations employing more metaphors than those closer to 'home' (Jaworska, 2017). However, Jaworska's analysis was limited to the most frequent metaphors in 10% of the data. To address this, the current study thoroughly examines the entire dataset to assess metaphor density. It explores the possible relationship between destination status—emerging (e.g., Georgia) versus established (e.g., the UK and USA)—and metaphor use. It hypothesises that Georgia might use more metaphors to evoke a sense of uniqueness and attractiveness, while the UK and the USA may depend more on familiar cultural frameworks.

3. *How are metaphors distributed across word classes?*

No research has examined the distribution of metaphors across word classes within PTD. This study aims to be the first comprehensive analysis, exploring how metaphors operate across grammatical categories in a genre characterised by its persuasive "description-with-intent-to-sell" (Biber & Egbert, 2018). Identifying distributional patterns offers insights into how metaphors enhance engagement, reinforce persuasion, and shape perceptions of a destination.

4. *Does metaphor distribution vary by destinations, reflecting varying persuasive strategies in emerging versus established locations?*

Understanding how metaphors are used across different destinations is crucial in revealing how tourism promoters adapt their strategies to target diverse audiences. This research addresses these questions and adds to the growing work on metaphor use in tourism marketing. A systematic, data-driven analysis of metaphor frequency and distribution across different contexts uncovers how metaphors function in tourism promotion and highlights differences between emerging and established destinations. Connecting metaphor use to geographical and cultural contexts deepens our understanding of how metaphors influence perceptions and engagement within PTD.

2. Methodology

This study expands existing discourse-analytical research by analysing metaphor use in Georgia, the UK, and the US PTDS.

The analysis combines comparative statistical and frequency techniques within a discourse-analytical framework to study metaphor. Investigating metaphorical language—either quantitatively or qualitatively—requires attention to both linguistic and situational features of the discourse (e.g., participants, settings, etc.) (Semino, Deignan and Littlemore, 2013). Therefore, the study draws on Biber and colleagues' influential work on register variation (Biber and Conrad, 2009; Biber and Egbert, 2018), which suggests that linguistic features of each register are shaped by its situational context, resulting in different communicative functions. Steen et al. (2010) extended this approach by including metaphor analysis across registers (e.g., academic texts, news, conversation, and fiction), demonstrating that metaphor usage varies considerably across contexts.

Building on this foundation, the present study further explores discourse-analytical research by examining tourism promotional materials as a unique register. According to Biber and Egbert (2018), tourism promotional materials belong to the online info-promotional/persuasive register, specifically the sub-register of 'description-with-the-aim-to-sell' (Biber and Egbert, 2018: 36ff), which combines informative content with a persuasive intent. The following sections present the situational characteristics of this register, detailed data collection and preparation, and the metaphor identification process.

2.1 Situational Characteristics

To provide a comprehensive overview of the info-promotional register in the context of PTD, this study applies Biber and Conrad's situational analysis framework (2009: 39-40), integrates insights from Biber and Egbert's description of the "description-with-intent-to-sell" register (2018: 108ff), and the sociolinguistic studies of tourism (Dann, 1996; Cappelli, 2006, and others; see Appendix A).

These situational characteristics directly influence the linguistic features of tourism texts, shaping their style, structure, and communicative functions. They affect lexical choices, word class usage, and the frequency of metaphors. They also explain the everyday use of descriptive adjectives, dynamic verbs, and culturally significant metaphors that create an engaging and vivid narrative.

2.2. Data Collection and Preparation

The primary linguistic data were collected from official tourism promotional websites or official destination websites (Fernández-Cavia et al., 2020: 6), as well as ODWs of the UK, the US, and Georgia. The selection of countries was motivated by assumed differences in the frequency, distribution, and function of metaphors between well-established (the UK, USA) and emerging destinations (Georgia).

The data were manually compiled from three website sections: *Destinations, Facts about the Country,* and *Experience*s. All texts were initially produced in English for international tourists, providing current information on destinations and experiences. The final database consisted of 79 texts (Georgia: 31, UK: 24, USA: 24).

The dataset was organised into four corpora (see Appendix B, Figure 1): a combined corpus, including data from all destinations, and three individual corpora for Georgia (GEO), the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (USA). The texts in each corpus were categorised into two thematic groups: destinations (cities, states) and experiences (facts about the country, activities). The Destinations category included 34 texts/43% of the database (GEO: 10, UK: 12, USA: 12), while the Experiences category comprised 45 texts/57% (GEO: 21, UK: 12, USA: 12). This categorisation enabled a detailed examination of metaphor use across different thematic contexts.

The four corpora were then to be uploaded to the Wmatrix tool (Rayson, 2008) for lexico-grammatical tagging to analyse metaphor distribution across word classes in the data.

Since PTD is characterised by informal language and aims to foster a "friendship-like relationship" with readers (Maci, 2007: 60; Sulaiman and Wilson, 2019: 26), it often uses contracted forms. This creates challenges for the part-of-speech tagging process with the CLAWS tool, [1] thus potentially distorting the distribution of metaphors across word classes. All contracted forms were manually separated and treated as separate words or lemmas to ensure accurate analysis.

The cleaning and organisation process resulted in 57,206 orthographic words for the combined corpus, distributed as follows: GEO with 19,715 words, UK with 18,384, and USA with 19,107. Text lengths ranged from 130 to 1,846 words, with both extremes appearing in the UK corpus.

As the boxplot in Appendix B illustrates (Figure 2), GEO texts ranged from 160 to 1401 words, with one outlier at 1812 orthographic words [mean - 635.97; median - 618]. UK texts varied from 130 to 1241 words, with an outlier of 1846 [mean – 766; median - 721]. US texts ranged from 520 to 1465, with no outliers, indicating a relatively uniform distribution [mean - 796.1; median - 695.5].

[1] The CLAWS part-of-speech tagger represents a lexico-grammatical tagging system integrated into the Wmatrix tool (https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/).

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After organising the data, the four corpora were uploaded to the Wmatrix. Following an automatic horizontal conversion, the texts were exported as XML files with the lexico-grammatical tags. Despite the tool's reported accuracy of over 95% (https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/), errors were identified and manually corrected[1].

2.2.1.Data Analysis

For metaphor identification, I used the widely used context-based procedure: the Metaphor Identification Procedure, Vrije University, MIPVU (Steen et al., 2010). The initial step involved close reading of each text to establish overall meaning and identify lexical units in accordance with MIPVU[2]. This process reduced the total from 57,206 to 56,311 valid units of analysis: GEO: 19,405 (34.5%); UK: 18,058 (32.1%); USA: 18,848 (33.4%) (see Appendix B, Table 1), averaging approximately 18,770 words per destination.

This means that the destinations were balanced in terms of sample sizes, each destination comprising approximately one third of the corpus[3].

The next step involved identifying metaphor-related words. MIPVU captures a broad spectrum of metaphors — indirect, direct, and implicit — as well as borderline cases with unclear but potential metaphorical relations[4]. It also accounts for metaphor flags, which signal metaphors without being metaphors *per se*.

For *indirect metaphors*, the procedure compares word's contextual meaning with its basic (i.e., concrete, specific, and human-oriented) sense, using corpus-based dictionaries (e.g., Macmillan Online, Longman Online). In ambiguous cases, the VU Amsterdam Metaphor Corpus[5] was also consulted.

MIPVU strictly adheres to grammatical categories, prohibiting comparisons across word classes to ensure consistent metaphor identification (Steen et al., 2010). For instance, if *come* functions as a preposition (as in example 2), its verbal meanings are excluded from metaphor analysis.

(2) This picturesque region [...] provides a rich array food and drink *come*^{MRW} the autumn.
https://www.visitbritain.com/gb/en/stunning-british-countryside-surrounds-cities

However, I deviated from this approach, allowing cross-category comparisons, as per MIP (Pragglejaz Group, 2007), to better reflect the cognitive connections between meanings (Deignan, 2005). This adjustment acknowledges that readers of tourism texts, particularly those with diverse linguistic backgrounds, may interpret metaphors beyond strict grammatical boundaries. Consequently, the study combines MIP and MIPVU to enable a more flexible analysis tailored to tourism discourse.

Direct metaphors (or *similes*) explicitly signal cross-domain comparisons between referents, signalled by metaphor flags (e.g., *like, remind*, *etc*.), which do not represent the cases of metaphor (see Steen et al., 2010). *Implicit metaphors* function as cohesive elements (e.g., pronouns or ellipses referring to metaphorical

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1 For example, proper nouns were misclassified as verbs, Roman numerals - as letters, etc. Overall, 852 tags (1.51%) were corrected: 361 (1.9%) in GEO, 213 (1.2%) in UK, and 278 (1.5%) in USA.

2 Polywords, phrasal verbs, and compounds are treated as complex but single lexical units (e.g., *look out for* was consolidated into *lookoutfor*). These elements were manually combined as the CLAWS treats their parts as separate lemmas.
A minor deviation from MIPVU involved classifying all noun–noun combinations as compounds based on dictionary entries, rather than prosodic stress (Steen et al., 2010: 30–31). Additionally, *by the way, to boot, and in fact*—though absent from the BNC (Steen et al., 2010: 27)—were treated as polywords due to their functional use and dictionary recognition.

3 Complex lexical units were rare (957 instances, 1.69% of the dataset). Compounds were most frequent (429 cases/45%: GEO: 136, UK: 159, USA: 134), followed by polywords (233/ 31%: GEO: 119, UK: 85, USA: 91), and phrasal/phrasal-prepositional verbs (233/ 24%: GEO: 47, UK:119, USA: 67). Given their low frequency, separating these categories offers limited analytical value (Steen et al., 2010). Consequently, they are treated alongside simple lexical items in this study.

4 For instance, *chock-full* in the sentence "… the M Shed, a museum chock-full of local history" (https://www.visitbritain.com/gb/en/stunning-british-countryside-surrounds-cities) was classified as borderline. While dictionary definitions (e.g., "very full, especially with pleasant or enjoyable things" (MMOD); "completely full of people or things" (LDOCE) typically refer to concrete entities (e.g., a pond chock-full of weeds), its collocation with the abstract noun *history* suggests potential metaphorical use, warranting its borderline classification.

5 Available here: http://www.vismet.org/metcor/

antecedents). Given their low frequency (Steen et al., 2010), implicit metaphors were not categorised separately in this study. As for the direct metaphors, they are discussed in detail in Iritspukhova (submitted).

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents descriptive and inferential quantitative findings from applying MIPVU and synthesising all the instances of metaphors in the database. The quantitative data on metaphor frequency and distribution are examined statistically to identify significant trends and patterns. Before that, the broader linguistic characteristics of the dataset are presented.

3.1 Linguistic Characteristics: General Overview

The research on info-promotional/persuasive registers identifies 'description-with-intent-to-sell' as characterised by frequent nominalisations, long words, and complex noun phrases with premodifiers (Biber and Egbert, 2018: 116-117). This register also exhibits a high density of evaluative language (adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs) (Biber and Egbert, 2018: 126-127), reinforcing its promotional and persuasive functions.

These features align with tourism discourse strategies, where promotional language often employs exaggeration to aid persuasion (Febas Borra, 1978: 70, cited in Dann, 1996: 65). This effect is reinforced through superlatives, intensifying adverbs, hyperbole, and other emphatic expressions. Accordingly, tourism advertising relies heavily on "positive and glowing words" (Dann, 1996: 65; Cappelli, 2006: 63) and euphoric language (Sulaiman and Wilson, 2019) to evoke pleasure and excitement, emphasising the uniqueness of destinations (Pierini, 2009: 105, 107–109).

To determine whether these tendencies appear in the current database and identify distinctive language patterns, the frequency lists of the combined and individual corpora were compared against a larger normative corpus - the British National Corpus (BNC) written sample, available in Wmatrix. Although PTD typically exhibits conversational and informal elements, the written sample was opted for due to PTD's alignment with written discourse via setting, medium, production context, etc. (see above).

The keyword clouds in Appendix C visualise significant lexical differences between each corpus against the BNC written sample, with larger fonts indicating prominent items and italics - underused terms in relation to BNC (Log-Likelihood, LL>±6.63, *p<0.01*).

The combined corpus (Appendix C, Figure 1) reveals a strong emphasis on toponyms and place-related terms, highlighting the unique 'selling' points of the destinations. A prominent use of invitational imperatives *('explore', 'discover', etc.*) and activity-related terms *('offers', 'hiking', etc.*) reflects the re-gister's info-promotional/persuasive style (Manca, 2016). Evaluative adjectives (*'stunning', 'iconic', 'largest', 'unique', etc.*) are strategically employed to construct an idealised image of destinations, attracti-ons, and experiences, thereby enhancing their appeal.

Another significant difference is the excessive use of 'you' (LL=+445.04, p<0.01), strategically employed in PTD to create a sense of exclusivity and personal invitation (Mocini, 2005/2009: 160; Dann, 1996: 185–188; Cappelli, 2006: 64).

This direct engagement fosters a sense of closeness and familiarity via a 'pseudo-dialogue' (Manca, 2016: 47; Mocini, 2005/2009: 160), establishing a ''friendship-like relationship'' with readers (Maci, 2007: 60). Their overuse—contrasted with the relative absence of other pronouns[1] — emphasises the register's focus on personalised, experiential marketing.

[1] Compare the LL coefficient to other pronouns, exhibiting a significant underuse: '*I* ':L=-676.54, '*he'*:LL=-463.68; '*she'*:LL=-228.40; '*we'*:–LL=-142.44; and '*they'*:LL=-217.44

The word clouds of *individual destinations* reveal distinct patterns in their promotional strategies, reflecting their unique tourism offerings and priorities.

Georgia emphasises its rich cultural heritage and natural landscapes (Appendix C, Figure 2), with the key terms like *'cathedral', 'fortress', 'monastery'*, and '*mountains'*. The prominence of words like *'ancient', 'century'*, and *'unique'* indicates a heritage-oriented discourse, offering visitors experiences rooted in history, culture, and adventure. Nature-based activities—such as exploring caves, gorges, and resorts—also position Georgia as an adventure destination with unspoiled landscapes.

The UK focuses heavily on its urban and historic appeal (Appendix C, Figure 3). Toponyms like '*Belfast'*, '*Cardiff'*, '*Edinburgh'*, and '*London'* indicate an emphasis on city tourism. The terms '*historic'*, '*explore'* and '*tour'* promote engagement with the British rich cultural and historical heritage, particularly through city explorations and walking tours.

While natural attractions such as '*parks'* and '*routes'* are also mentioned, the discourse primarily positions the UK as a destination for city-based cultural experiences.

The USA corpus highlights a diverse tourism appeal, balancing urban and natural experiences (Appendix C, Figure 4). Keywords like '*California'*, '*historic'*, '*museum'*, and '*music'* emphasise cultural attractions, while '*park'*, '*beach'*, and '*outdoor'* reflect a strong focus on nature and recreation. This suggests the USA promotes its geographical and cultural variety, offering experiences that range from city exploration to outdoor adventures—appealing to a broad spectrum of traveller interests.

In summary, Georgia promotes its historical and natural beauty, the UK focuses on historic city tourism, while the USA offers a diverse mix of urban and natural attractions. These distinctions highlight the different marketing strategies employed by each destination to appeal to various types of tourists. Moreover, the keyness of the words directly addressing the audience (e.g., 'you') is slightly higher in GEO (LL=+219.72; $p<0.01$), compared to those from the UK (LL =+196.25; $p<0.01$), and significantly greater than in the USA (LL=+70.35; $p<0.01$). This suggests that Georgian marketers are particularly focused on creating a stronger *personal* connection with potential travellers while establishing its niche in the tourism industry.

Next, the frequencies and percentages of all (metaphor- and non-metaphor- related) words distributed across the six word classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and others (e.g., pronouns, determiners, conjunctions, existential 'there', etc.) per corpus (PTD/combined, GEO, UK, and USA) were examined (see Appendix C, Table 1).

Nouns dominate in the combined corpus with 20,023 occurrences (35 %), reflecting dense information packing, typical of promotional materials (Biber and Egbert, 2018). Others rank second (13,417/ 24%)-predominantly articles, possessive pronouns, and conjunctions, followed by verbs (7,443/ 13%), which enable descriptions of actions and experiences and support the persuasive function of tourism discourse (Manca, 2016). Prepositions reach 7,305 instances (13%), adding spatial and relational descriptions.

Adjectives, with 6,097 occurrences (11%), are pivotal for expressing positive evaluations, emphasising the uniqueness and allure of destinations (Manca, 2016; Biber and Egbert, 2018). Adverbs, though less frequent (2,026 instances, 4%), enrich descriptions and actions, adding nuance and intensity.

In conclusion, the distribution reflects the dual function of tourism discourse—informative and persuasive—with nouns delivering dense content, and verbs, adjectives, and adverbs enhancing engagement and appeal.

3.1.1. Destination-Specific Trends

To analyse the destination-specific distribution across the word classes, a contingency table of frequencies was constructed, incorporating two variables: *destination* (GEO, UK, USA) and *word class* (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, others). A chi-square test revealed a statistically significant yet weak association ($\chi^2(10)= 278.28$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V= 0.099), indicating differences in word class distributions across the destinations.

- *Georgia's* texts exhibit a higher-than-expected use of verbs (standardised residual, (SDR):+4.48), adverbs (SDR:+7.75), and others (SDR:+4.29), but lower-than-expected use of nouns (SDR:-7.48). This dynamic style underscores Georgia's strategic positioning as an emerging destination, using a persuasive and engaging narrative to appeal to tourists by evoking emotions and excitement.
- *The UK* texts show a balanced distribution of word classes, with a slight overuse of adverbs (SDR:+2.85) and prepositions (SDR:+2.94). This may indicate a blend of informational and persuasive intents, offering a nuanced and well-rounded portrayal of its destinations.
- *The USA* texts demonstrate a strong preference for nouns (SDR:+7.03) and lower-than-expected use of adverbs (SDR:-5.07), verbs (SDR:-3.53), and others (SDR:-2.42). This noun-heavy and less descriptive style suggests an emphasis on clear, factual presentation of attractions and features, reflecting a straightforward strategy for audiences preferring concrete and concise destination information.

The analysis highlights distinct approaches to word class usage in PTD across the destinations. While Georgia adopts a dynamic and emotive style, the UK maintains a balanced and nuanced approach. The USA prioritises clarity and factual descriptions over emotional engagement. These variations reflect the interplay between cultural and strategic considerations in shaping the language of tourism promotion.

3.2. Metaphorical Dimension

Having established a picture of general trends in the data, the metaphorical variable was incorporated to examine its relationship between the destinations and word classes.

3.2.1. RQ 1: Prevalence of Metaphors

To address RQ 1, all words were analysed with MIPVU as outlined above. Of 56,311 lexical units, 5,683 (10.1% of the database) were identified as metaphor-related[1] - lower than a typical metaphor frequency in general discourse (13.6%) (Steen et al., 2010), reflecting the need for clarity and accessibility in cross-cultural tourism communication. It is also lower than the figure reported by Djafarova and Anderson (2008), possibly suggesting medium-specific variations of metaphor use (e.g., in print and web-based PTD).

To further contextualise these findings, the info-promotional register was compared to other registers (Steen et al., 2010). PTD's metaphor density of 10.1% exceeds that of conversation (7.7%) but falls slightly below fiction (11.9%), and sharply below news (16.4%), and academic texts (18.5%)[2]. This reflects PTD's hybrid function: balancing clear, practical communication with persuasive and narrative-driven techniques to engage a cross-cultural audience.

3.2.2. RQ 2: Metaphor Frequency Across Destinations

A comparative statistical analysis was conducted to test whether developing destinations use more metaphors than established ones (Dann, 1996). The results revealed a significant yet weak interaction

[1] Within this subset, 168 were identified as borderline cases, distributed across the destinations as follows: Georgia – 49, the USA – 54, and the UK – 65.There cases were included in the group of all metaphor-related words.

[2] It should be noted that the metaphor frequency in this study exceeds what would have been identified under strict adherence to MIPVU, due to the incorporation of cross-part-of-speech comparisons, aligning with MIP's broader approach (see above).

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between *the word types* (metaphor- and non-metaphor-related) and *destinations* (GEO, UK, USA): $\chi^2(2)=98.91$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V= 0.04. Contrary to expectations, Georgia, as a developing destination, had the lowest proportion of metaphor-related words: 8.8% (1,710 MRWs) of its corpus while established destinations used them more frequently: 9.7% (1,834) in the USA and 11.8% (2,139) in the UK. The post-hoc analysis confirmed Georgia's significant underuse (SRD: -5.61) and the UK's overuse of MRWs (SRD:+7.41), and underuse of non-MRWs (SRD:-2.48). The USA fell within expected ranges for both groups.

These findings challenge the assumption that developing destinations rely more on metaphors for promotion (but see Iritspukhova, submitted), suggesting that metaphor usage in tourism advertising may be shaped by factors beyond destinations' perceived "strangeness" (Cohen, 2000).

3.2.3 RQs 3 and 4: Overall and Cross-Destination Distribution of MRWs across Word Classes

This section addresses the distribution of MRWs across word classes in the combined corpus, and their cross-destination variation to identify differences in persuasive strategies. To these ends, the analysis was conducted in two steps:

1. measuring the distribution of metaphor- and non-metaphor-related words by word class in both the combined corpus (to determine general trends) and each destination (to determine specific trends);
2. measuring the distribution of metaphor across the destinations for each word class (to elucidate on the cross-destination differences).

The analysis of the frequencies and percentages of metaphor- and non-metaphor-related words across the word classes reveal (see Appendix D, Table 1) that in the combined corpus, most MRWs are concentrated in verbs (32%) and prepositions (29%), collectively representing over 60% of all MRWs. This means that nearly every second metaphor-related word is either a verb or a preposition. Conversely, these word classes constitute only 22% of non-MRWs (each 11%). The SDRs further show significant overrepresentation of metaphorical verbs (+39.8) and prepositions (+32.8), and their marked underrepresentation in non-metaphor-related contexts (-13.33 and -11.003, respectively). These findings suggest that in the web-based PTD, verbs and prepositions play a larger role in expressing metaphors compared to non-metaphor-related language.

Nouns and others show a reverse pattern: non-metaphorical nouns are more frequent (38%, SDR:+7.44) than metaphorical ones (18%, SDR:–2.22), although nouns still occupy an important role in MRW group, ranking 3rd. Others are significantly overrepresented in non-MRWs (26%; SDR:+9.24) but drastically underrepresented as MRWs (6%; SDR:–27.58), indicating that PTD prefers content words as metaphors (especially verbs and prepositions) for vivid and more persuasive messages.

Adjectives and adverbs display a relatively balanced distribution between MRW and non-MRW groups. The metaphorical adjectives form 12% (SDR: +2.21) compared to 11% of non-metaphorical adjectives, while metaphor-related adverbs formed only 3% of all metaphors versus 4% of non-metaphor-related adverbs, with no significant deviations. Accordingly, in the web-based PTD, adjectives modestly contribute to metaphorical meaning while adverbs play a limited role in metaphorical framing of promotional messages.

Summarising, MRWs are unevenly distributed across word classes in the PTD. Despite the hybrid nature of the register, balancing information and promotion/persuasion, metaphors are predominantly used for persuasion, reflecting their higher concentration in verbs (Manca 2016), and less for conveying information, as evidenced by reduced number of metaphorical nouns. This supports the idea that tourism metaphors are strategically crafted to persuade than merely inform.

Regarding the cross-destination analysis, a separate two-way contingency table for each destination (Georgia, the UK, the USA) was constructed for the variables of *word* (MRWs and non-MRWs) and *word class* (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, others). The chi-square analyses showed significant differences for all the destinations, with moderate effect sizes: Georgia ($\chi^2(5)=1336.08$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.26), the UK ($\chi^2(5)=1541.99$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.29), and the USA ($\chi^2(5)=1581.17$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.29). Despite these variations, the overall distribution pattern aligns with the combined corpus.

In the Georgian corpus (see Appendix D, Table 1), verbs (32% of MRWs, SDR:+19.44) and prepositions (31%, SDR:+21.59) are strongly overrepresented in metaphorical use, while underrepresented among non-MRWs (verbs: 13%, SDR:-6.04). This suggests verbs are often used metaphorically in Georgia's tourism discourse. Conversely, nouns are more common in non-metaphorical contexts (34%, SDR:+4.17) and less so in MRWs (14%, SDR:-13.40), indicating a focus on factual content. Adjectives and adverbs show no significant variation, confirming their minimal role in metaphorical expression. Others are over-represented in non-MRWs (27%, SDR:+13.65) and underrepresented in MRWs (9%, SDR:-4.24).

In the UK corpus, verbs (31% of MRWs, SDR:+23.28) and prepositions (29%, SDR:+18.57) contribute significantly to metaphorical expressions, while both are underused in non-MRWs (verbs: 11%, SDR:-8.53; prepositions: SDR:-6.80). Nouns are prominent in non-metaphorical content (38%, SDR:+4.63) but underrepresented in MRWs (19%, SDR:-12.64), indicating a more literal use in the UK material. As in Georgia, adjectives and adverbs in the UK show no significant deviations, suggesting limited metaphorical function. Others are overrepresented in non-MRWs (26%, SDR:+17.56) and underrepresented in MRWs (25%, SDR:-6.44).

In the USA corpus, verbs dominate MRWs (34%, SDR:+26.77) and are underused in non-MRWs (10%, SDR:-8.79), highlighting their strong metaphorical role. Prepositions are also key in MRWs (26%, SDR:+16.6), though slightly less than in Georgia and the UK, and underused in non-MRWs (SDR:-5.45). Nouns are prevalent in non-metaphorical contexts (41%, SDR:+4.2) but underrepresented in MRWs (20%, SDR:-12.78), indicating a preference for literal use. Adjectives are slightly more frequent in MRWs (12%, SDR:+2.03), while adverbs show no notable difference. Others are overused in non-MRWs (23%, SDR:+16.32) and underused in MRWs (5%, SDR:-5.36).

To further explore how metaphor use varies by destination across word classes, the interaction was examined from *the viewpoint of the word class* (Step 2); six chi-square tests were conducted using separate contingency tables. Results showed statistically significant yet weak associations between the destinations and distribution of metaphorical and non-metaphorical words for all word classes: nouns ($\chi^2(2)=46.00$, $p<0.05$, V=0.05), verbs ($\chi^2(2)=61.42$, $p<0.05$, V=0.09), adjectives ($\chi^2(2)=17.36$, $p<0.05$, V=0.05), adverbs ($\chi^2(2)=26.999$, $p<0.05$, V=0.11), prepositions ($\chi^2(2)=13.576$, $p<0.05$, V=0.04), and others ($\chi^2(2)=10.225$, $p<0.05$, V=0.03).

The analysis revealed that nouns are predominantly used non-metaphorically across the destinations. In Georgia (see Appendix D, Figure 1), 96% of noun use is non-metaphorical, with metaphorical nouns significantly underrepresented at 4% (SDR:–4.61). Similarly, in the USA, 95% are non-metaphorical and 5% metaphorical. The UK shows the highest proportion of metaphorical nouns: 6% (SDR:+4.73), highlighting their role in descriptive content compared to the USA and Georgia

Others are predominantly non-metaphorical across all destinations, with MRWs at 3% in Georgia and 2% in the UK and USA. Chi-square analysis shows slight variation: Georgia overuses metaphorical others (SDR:+2.23), the USA underuses them (SDR:–2.23), and the UK shows no significant deviation.

Verbs play a key role in metaphors across all destinations, with notable regional differences. In the UK (see Appendix D, Figure 2), they are the most frequent MRWs (28%), showing overuse (SDR:+3.57) and

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underuse in non-MRWs (SDR:–2.05), indicating a strong preference for metaphorical verbs. In the USA, verbs also dominate MRWs (27%, SDR:+2.26), though less markedly. Georgia shows the lowest proportion of metaphorical verbs (20%, SDR:–5.32), ranking second after prepositions, with non-metaphorical verbs overused (SDR:+3.05), suggesting a greater reliance on literal verbs. Overall, verbs are central to metaphorical expression in the UK and USA, while Georgia demonstrates a preference for non-metaphorical verbs. The SDRs highlight verbs as the most variable word class, reflecting distinct regional strategies in representing actions and events in PTD.

Metaphorical prepositions are the most frequent MRWs in Georgia (22%), with non-metaphorical ones at 78%, showing minimal SDR deviations. In the UK, they rank second after verbs, making up 25% of prepositions and showing significant overuse (SDR:+2.52). The USA (see Appendix D, Figure 3) shows the lowest proportion (20%), with 80% non-metaphorical, and a slight underuse (SDR:–1.96). These patterns highlight the UK's stronger reliance on metaphorical prepositions compared to Georgia and the USA.

Adjectives and adverbs exhibit a more balanced distribution but with regional differences. The UK uses the most metaphorical adjectives and adverbs (13% and 14%), supporting a vivid promotional style. The USA uses lower proportions (11% and 9%), and Georgia the least (9% and 6%), preferring a more literal approach. Chi-square analysis shows significant underuse of metaphorical adjectives (SDR:–2.86) and adverbs (SDR:–2.97) in Georgia, and significant overuse in the UK (adjectives SDR:+2.69; adverbs SDR:+3.96). The USA shows no significant deviations. This highlights the UK’s preference for rich metaphorical language versus Georgia’s restrained style.

Overall, Step 2 reveals verbs and prepositions as the most metaphorically overrepresented word classes across all destinations, especially in the UK and USA. Nouns mainly appear in non-metaphorical contexts in all three countries. Adjectives and adverbs are evenly distributed between metaphorical and non-metaphorical uses, with minor regional variations. Others contribute minimally to metaphorical contexts across destinations.

3.2.4. Section-Based Perspective

The analysis above revealed important insights into the distribution of MRWs across word classes and destinations. However, for a more granular understanding, the difference between the text types within the database was examined to reveal trends within Destinations and Experience sections. To this aim, additional research questions were posed:

RQ 5:

a) *What proportion of words in the 'Destinations' and 'Experiences' sections are metaphor-related; and*

b) *How do these proportions vary across the destinations?*

To address these questions, the first step involved analysing the distribution of MRWs and non-MRWs within *two text types* (Destinations and Experiences) across different *word classes* (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and others) for *each corpus* (combined, GEO, UK, and USA).

Table 1in Appendix E presents the overall distribution of metaphor- and non-metaphor-related words across the word classes in the combined corpus, revealing that the *Experiences* section contains a slightly higher proportion of metaphors (10.6%) than *Destinations* (9.2%).

Across the word classes, verbs exhibit the highest MRW proportion in both text types (Destinations- 24.6%, and Experiences- 24.8%). Prepositions also show a higher metaphorical use in Experiences (23%) than Destinations (21.3%). Adjectives and nouns follow, with higher metaphorical rates in Experiences (11.7% and 5.4%) than Destinations (9.8% and 4.7%). This suggests a stronger focus on emotionally engaging, descriptive language in the Experiences section. Interestingly, metaphorical adverbs are more frequent in Destinations (10.6%) than in Experiences (8.3%). Although not statistically significant, this variation may reflect strategic differences in rhetorical strategies between sections[1]. Conversely, others display a statistically significant difference, with a higher proportion in Experiences (3.2%) than in Destinations (1.4%), supported by post-hoc analysis (SDRs:+3.87 and -5.11).

The findings reveal a slight divergence in metaphor use between text types. Experiences employ a higher proportion of MRWs to create vivid, emotive, and immersive descriptions, while Destinations use metaphors more sparingly, maintaining an informative, fact-based tone. These patterns reflect differing rhetorical strategies: *Experiences* focus on abstract, emotive qualities, while *Destinations* prioritise concrete, tangible aspects of the location. This distinction can inform targeted marketing approaches, with metaphor use potentially shaped by the type of content and the intended audience.

The results in Table 2 (Appendix E) illustrate the section-based distribution of MRWs for GEO corpus. Texts in Georgia exhibits the most pronounced disparity in MRW proportions between Destinations and Experiences, with Experiences showing 9.85% MRWs compared to 6.44% in Destinations. This pattern is evident across all major word classes.

Metaphorical nouns significantly exceed in Experiences (4.8%, SDR +4.56) than in Destinations (1.9%, SDR -3.32). Similarly, metaphorical verbs are higher in Experiences (21.2%) than Destinations (15.6%), with Destinations showing a significant underuse (SDR -2.56). Metaphorical adjectives also differ significantly: 10.4% in Experiences (SDR +2) versus 4.8% in Destinations (SDR -3.25). Prepositions are slightly more metaphorical in Experiences (22.9%) than Destinations (19.2%). Others have a small MRW proportion, 1.9% in Destinations and 3.5% in Experiences.

Similarly to the combined corpus, the Georgian Destinations section exhibits a higher proportion of metaphorical adverbs (10.3%, SDR +2.32) than Experiences (4.95%), reflecting their strategic use in spatial descriptions.

Experiences texts in Georgia use more metaphorical nouns, verbs, and adjectives, creating vivid, engaging depictions that appeal to emotions while Destinations rely on metaphorical adverbs to emphasise physical locations and movements, supporting spatial orientation and physical appeal of the destination.

The USA corpus (Appendix E, Table 3) exhibits a relatively more balanced distribution of MRWs between the Destinations and Experiences sections. Similarly to the combined and GEO corpora, the Experiences section demonstrates a slightly higher overall proportion of MRWs compared to the Destinations section (10.5% vs. 9.1%). Metaphor-related nouns are slightly more frequent in Experiences (5.3%) than Destinations (4.9%), indicating a modest focus on activities over places. Both sections share an equal proportion of metaphorical verbs (27.1%). Experiences also show a significantly higher proportion of metaphorical adjectives (13.5% vs. 9.4%, SDR +2.07) and slightly more metaphorical prepositions (21.3% vs. 19.6%), reflecting greater metaphorical use in experiential content. Others have low MRW percentages (1.6% Destinations, 2.4% Experiences). Unlike other corpora, metaphorical adverbs are less frequent in Destinations (6.5%) but notably higher in Experiences (10.1%).

Overall, in the USA corpus, the Experiences section demonstrates a slightly higher frequency of metaphor-related adjectives and adverbs, which could reflect a more vivid and emotionally engaging portrayal of experiences.

[1] In Experiences, adverbs (e.g., harmoniously, closely, together, gently) evoke sensory, emotional, or relational imagery, creating vivid and engaging descriptions. In Destinations, adverbs (e.g., widely, around, up, down, over) emphasise spatial orientation, movement, or scale, highlighting geographical features and enhancing factual descriptions by conveying scope and distance. This suggests that adverbs in Destinations strategically emphasise location scale and geography.

The UK (Appendix E, Table 4) is the only destination in which the Destinations section has a slightly higher overall proportion of MRWs (12.5%) compared to Experiences (11.5%). This trend is consistent across the word classes.

In the UK corpus, metaphor-related nouns constitute 7.4% in Destinations and 6% in Experiences. Metaphorical verbs account for 29.7% in Destinations and 28% in Experiences. Adjectives show 15.5% in Destinations versus 12% in Experiences. Metaphorical adverbs are higher in Destinations (16.3%) than Experiences (12.8%), while prepositions are 26% in Destinations and 24% in Experiences. Others have a low MRW proportion in Destinations (0.5%) but higher in Experiences (3.4%), with significant SDRs (-4.5 and +3.05).

The UK database shows that the Destinations section consistently uses a higher proportion of MRWs across most word classes, emphasising its strategic use of metaphorical language to create vivid imagery and forge a strong connection to place. In contrast, the Experiences section employs metaphors less often, especially in nouns and adjectives. These differences indicate that the Destinations section strategically boosts place-based appeal, likely supporting the overall brand image, while the Experiences section takes a more restrained approach to highlight specific actions and experiences.

In summary, the section analysis uncovers a consistent pattern: the Experiences section contains a higher proportion of MRWs—especially in nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions—indicating a more vivid and immersive rhetorical style. Conversely, metaphorical adverbs are more common in Destinations, likely supporting spatial and geographical descriptions.

These findings reflect distinct communicative functions, with Experiences evoking emotions through metaphor, while Destinations adopt a more factual, location-focused approach. The second analysis investigates metaphor usage by destination (Georgia, UK, USA) across six word classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, others) and two text types to explore differences between destinations further.

The statistical analysis indicates the Destination texts demonstrate a greater variation in MRW distribution across the countries than the Experience texts, probably reflecting underlying cultural differences in how destinations conceptualise landscapes, attractions, and features, particularly in the use of symbolic, historical, or nature-oriented metaphors.

Destination Texts (see Appendix E, Table 5):

- **Nouns:** The analysis revealed statistically significant yet weak association in the use of metaphorical nouns across the destinations ($\chi^2(2)=70.34$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.09.) Georgia underuses metaphorical nouns (SDR:-6.06), the UK overuses them (+5.47), and the USA aligns with expectations (SDR:+0.57), indicating the UK's stronger preference for metaphorical nouns.
- **Verb** analysis demonstrated the strongest cross-regional variation ($\chi^2(2)=46.84$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.13). Georgia significantly underuses metaphorical verbs (SDR:−4.94) and overuses non-metaphorical ones (+2.82) whereas the UK shows a notable overuse of metaphorical verbs (+2.84), with non-MRWs close to expected (−1.6). The USA's distribution of MRWs and non-MRWs aligns closely with expected values, showing no significant deviations. These results suggest regional differences in action-oriented metaphor use.
- **Adjective** use shows a significant association across destinations ($\chi^2(2)=38.61$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.13). The USA displays no significant deviation in the use of metaphorical or non-metaphorical adjectives, indicating a balanced approach. Georgia underuses metaphorical adjectives (SDR:–3.88), indicating limited reliance on figurative evaluation. The UK significantly overuses them (+4.43), suggesting a more metaphor-rich promotional style.
- **Adverbs:** The association between destinations and the distribution of metaphorical and non-metaphorical adverbs is also statistically significant ($\chi^2(2)=9.93$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.13). The UK exhibits a significant overrepresentation of metaphorical adverbs (+2.30) while Georgia's and USA's uses of adverbs align closely with expected values, showing no significant deviations.

• **Prepositions** show a statistically significant yet weak association in the distribution of metaphorical and non-metaphorical prepositions ($\chi^2(2)=15.22$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.07). The UK overuses metaphorical prepositions (SDR:+2.93), while Georgia and the USA display balanced distributions with no notable deviations.

• **Others** exhibit a significant yet the weakest association across destinations ($\chi^2(2)=9.84$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.04). Georgia and the USA maintain a balanced use, while the UK slightly overuses metaphorical others (SDR:+2.59). Although conjunctions, pronouns, and determiners play a limited role in conveying regional metaphorical variation, their contribution still shapes how experiences are framed.

Summarising, the analysis reveals regional variation in metaphor usage within destination texts. The UK relies more heavily on metaphorical nouns, verbs, and adjectives, while Georgia adopts a more restrained approach, especially with metaphorical nouns and verbs. The USA maintains a balanced use of metaphorical and non-metaphorical language. These differences likely stem from cultural preferences and regional approaches to tourism promotion, highlighting metaphor's role in framing destinations to align with specific cultural contexts.

Regarding the Experiences texts (see Appendix E, Table 6), the analysis reveals two distinct patterns in metaphor usage across the word classes:

• Minimal variations are exhibited by most word classes, including prepositions ($\chi^2(2)=2.70$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.03), others ($\chi^2(2)=6.04$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.03), and nouns ($\chi^2(2)=6.35$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.02), and almost no variation in adjectives ($\chi^2(2)=5.04$, $p>0.05$, Cramer's V=0.04). This suggests that metaphor use in these word classes remains relatively stable and are less culturally distinct in experience texts across the destinations.

• Conversely, verbs ($\chi^2(2)=25.11$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.07) and adverbs ($\chi^2(2)=23.16$, $p<0.05$, Cramer's V=0.13) show significant variation, highlighting their role in encoding cultural perspectives. Verbs are especially sensitive to regional differences, shaping metaphorical framing of actions and participation (e.g., *immerse*, *discover*, *soak up*), while adverbs refine these frames with nuance and intensity. Together, they convey emotion, reflect culturally specific patterns, and support destination branding by shaping the tone, personality, and experiential appeal of a place.

Summarising, destination texts show greater cross-regional variation in metaphor-related words than experience texts. Destination texts primarily describe places, landscapes, and attractions, often using figurative language to evoke symbolic, historical, or nature-related meanings. This explains the significant variation in metaphorical nouns, verbs, and adjectives across Georgia, the UK, and the USA, reflecting culturally distinct framing. These metaphors play a key role in place branding and cultural representation, driving regional differences in promotional language. In contrast, experience texts focus on activities and engagement, emphasising personal involvement and transformation. As a result, these texts are more functionally consistent across cultures. However, verbs and adverbs still show some variation, reflecting cultural differences in how action-based experiences are marketed.

4. Conclusion

This paper examined the use of metaphorical language in promotional tourism discourse through a quantitative analysis, focusing on two established: the UK and the USA, and the developing destination: Georgia. Destination marketing organisations strategically use language to shape brand identity and influence visitor perceptions. As powerful rhetorical tools, metaphors can reinforce key themes—whether historical, natural, dynamic, or immersive—thereby contributing to a destination's unique appeal.

The findings position PTD within a broader metaphorical spectrum of discourse, revealing its distinctive hybrid info-promotional function. While its metaphor density is lower than that of general discourse, this aligns with its need to balance clarity with engagement. The lower metaphor frequency in web-based PTD compared to print-based formats suggests medium-specific adaptations, warranting further investigation into how metaphors function across different tourism communication channels.

The quantitative results challenge the assumption that developing destinations rely more heavily on metaphors for promotion. Georgia exhibited the lowest metaphor usage, indicating that metaphor frequency in tourism discourse is shaped by factors beyond a destination's status. Future research should examine metaphor types, cultural context, marketing strategies, and target audiences, with a focus on novel vs. conventional metaphors (Iritspukhova, submitted), genre and section within PTD, and qualitative analyses of metaphor functions in shaping promotional narratives.

The findings also reveal an uneven distribution of metaphors across word classes, with verbs and prepositions playing a dominant role in metaphorical expression. This suggests that metaphors in PTD primarily serve persuasive rather than informational functions. The limited presence of metaphorical nouns further supports this, indicating a strategic emphasis on dynamic and relational language to enhance engagement.

The cross-destination analysis highlights both shared patterns and regional variations in metaphor usage. While all destinations prioritise verbs and prepositions for metaphorical expression and rely on nouns for non-metaphorical content, the extent of this usage varies. The UK corpus exhibits the strongest preference for metaphorical adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions while Georgia favours a more literal style, with fewer metaphorical verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, reflecting distinct regional approaches to tourism promotion.

The section-based analysis further highlights these differences. Across all the corpora, the Experiences sections exhibit a higher proportion of MRWs, reinforcing their role in creating immersive and emotionally resonant narratives, whereas Destinations sections exhibit a more restrained use of metaphor, consistent with their factual and spatially oriented function. However, the UK corpus displays a higher metaphor density in the Destinations section, suggesting a strategy that emphasises place-based appeal, potentially contributing to the formation of a distinctive brand image. The strategic deployment of metaphor in this section may aim to highlight the destination's unique qualities—whether its historical significance, natural landscapes, or cultural heritage—which can foster a stronger emotional connection with potential visitors and enhance the destination's overall marketability. Conversely, Georgia's and the USA's Experiences sections rely more heavily on metaphor, indicating a preference for evocative storytelling to enhance engagement.

While this study provides valuable insights into metaphor usage in promotional tourism discourse, certain limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study primarily examines metaphor frequency and distribution across word classes but does not extensively analyse metaphor types (e.g., conventional vs. novel) or their cultural and psychological impact on audiences. Investigating these aspects could enhance our understanding of how metaphor functions within PTD. Second, the study assumes that linguistic patterns in ODWs reflect intentional marketing strategies; however, variations in metaphor use may also be influenced by broader linguistic and editorial practices within each destination's marketing team. A more detailed investigation of content creation processes could help disentangle strategic language choices from stylistic conventions. Additionally, as the identification of metaphors was conducted solely by the author, potential biases or errors may exist.

Nevertheless, the findings highlight the strategic deployment of metaphor in tourism discourse, where text type and regional priorities shape metaphor use to align with communicative goals - whether emphasising spatial orientation, historical allure, or experiential immersion, and ultimately shaping the brand image of the destination.

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Appendix A: Situational Characteristics

Web-based promotional tourism discourse /Description-with-intent-to-sell Sub-Register

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
I PARTICIPANTS	The author is typically not acknowledged, representing an institutional voice. This enhances credibility by presenting evaluations as objective facts, targeting a diverse, global audience of prospective tourists.
II RELATIONS AMONG PARTICIPANTS	The communication is expert-to-non-expert, with low to medium level of specialisation. Given a cross-cultural context, the language is explicit, universally comprehensible, friendly and engaging to foster rapport and establish a 'pseudo-dialogue' with the readership (Manca, 2016: 47; Mocini, 2005/2009: 160; Sulaiman and Wilson, 2019).
III CHANNEL	Texts are published in electronic format by public institutions and are freely accessible to the public. The electronic format allows for multimodal communication through text, images, video, and interactive features.
IV PRODUCTION CIRCUMSTANCES	Content is produced by teams of writers, marketers, and designers specialising in persuasive and engaging texts. Writers have time to plan, draft, edit, and proofread the content, ensuring high-quality output. However, regular updates are necessary to maintain relevance in the rapidly changing tourism market.
V SETTING	Authors and readers are typically distant in both physical and cultural terms. This separation requires linguistic choices that bridge potential gaps in understanding, such as the use of inclusive, neutral, and universally relatable language. Additionally, there is often a time delay between the production of texts and their consumption by potential tourists, further emphasising the importance of universally engaging content.
VI COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE	The primary aim is to ostensibly describe destinations and related experiences positively, subtly persuading the audience to visit the promoted destinations. This dual purpose influences the linguistic choices, combining factual descriptions with persuasive devices such as emotive and evaluative language, and vivid imagery.
VII TOPIC	Tourism promotional texts encompass a wide range of topics, including gastronomy, art, culture, sports, nature, etc. The diversity of topics often necessitates the use of specialised terminology (e.g., 'gastrolingo', etc.).

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Appendix B: Database Details

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of destination and experience texts per corpus.

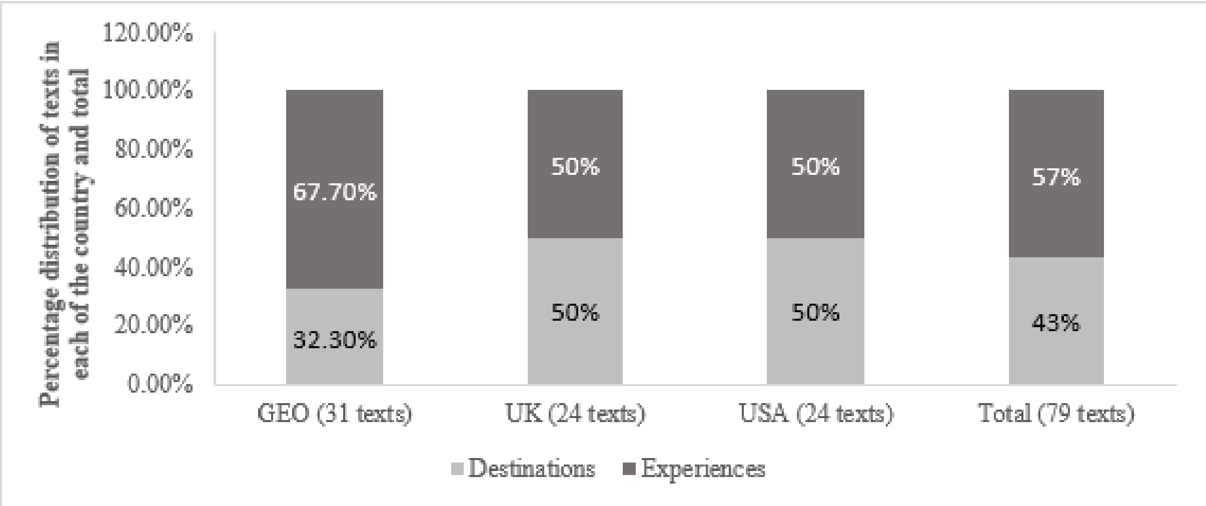

Figure 2: Text Length Per Country

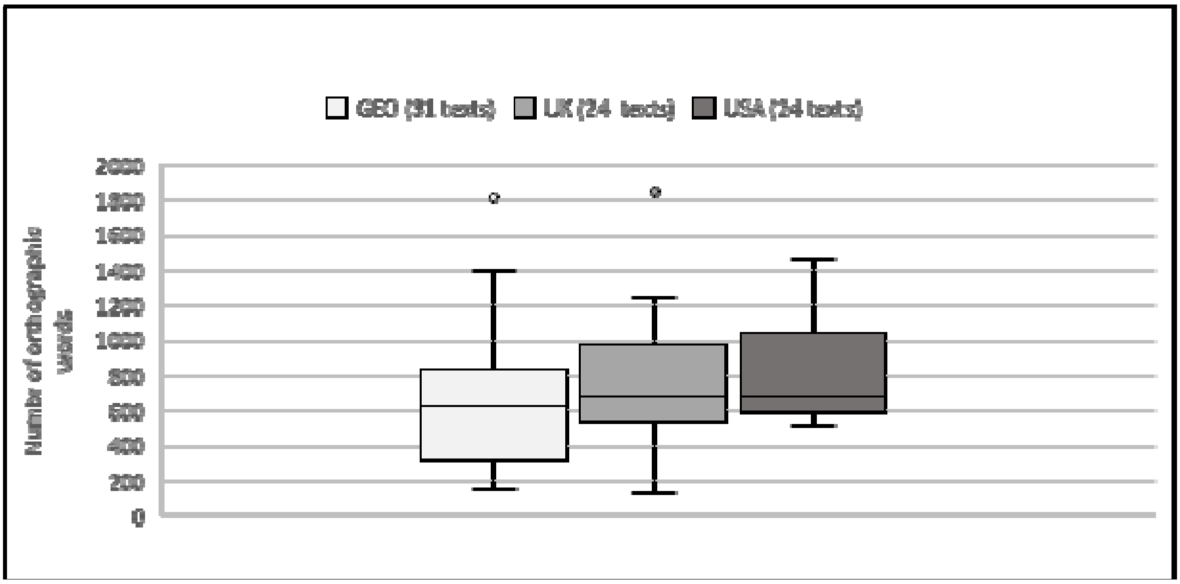

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Table 1: Sample Size per Destination

Destination	*Absolute Frequency*	*Relative Frequency %*
Georgia	19405	34.5
The UK	18058	32
The USA	18848	33.5
Total	56311	100

Appendix C: General Linguistic Characteristics of the Database

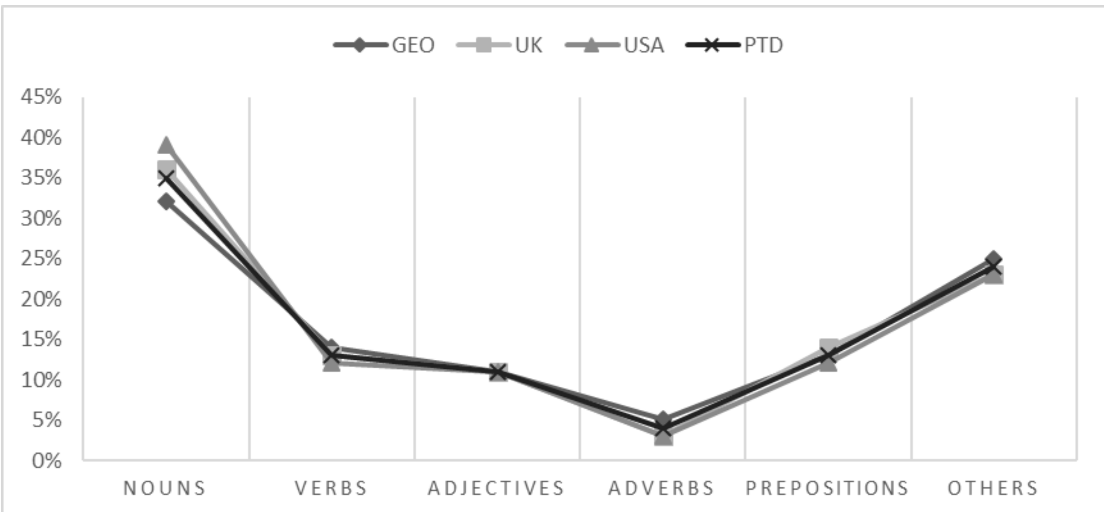
Figure 1: Keyword cloud for the combined corpus compared to BNC sample written

Figure 2: Keyword cloud for GEO compared to BNC sample written

Figure 3: Keyword cloud for the British corpus compared to BNC sample written

Figure 4: Keyword cloud for the American corpus compared to BNC sample written

Table 1: Distributional profile of word class frequency per corpus



Appendix D: Metaphorical Dimension

Table 1: Distribution of Metaphor- and Non-Metaphor-Related Words Across Word Classes

Destinations	**Georgia**		**UK**		**USA**		**COMBINED**	
Groups ***Word Classes***	Non-MRWs	MRWs	Non-MRWs	MRWs	Non-MRWs	MRWs	Non-MRWs	MRWs
Nouns % within the group	6041 **34% (+)***	238 **14%(-)**	6050 **38% (+)**	416 **19%(-)**	6910 **41% (+)**	368 **20%(-)**	19001 **38% (+)**	1022 **18%(-)**
Verbs	2241 **13% (-)**	551 **32%(+)**	1672 **11% (-)**	664 **31%(+)**	1688 **10% (-)**	627 **34%(+)**	5601 **11% (-)**	1842 **32%(+)**
Adjectives	1865 11%	182 11%	1758 11%	262 12%	1804 11%	226 **12%(+)**	5427 11%	670 **12%(+)**
Adverbs	849 5%	54 **3% (-)**	497 3%	80 4%	499 3%	47 3%	1845 4%	181 3%
Prepositions	1933 **11% (-)**	536 **31%(+)**	1872 **12% (+)**	613 **29%(-)**	1871 **11% (-)**	480 **26%(+)**	5677 **11% (-)**	1629 **29%(+)**
Others	4766 **27% (+)**	149 **9% (-)**	4070 **26% (-)**	104 **5% (+)**	4242 **25% (+)**	86 **5% (-)**	13078 **26% (+)**	339 **6% (-)**
Total	17695 100 %	1710 100%	15919 100 %	2139 100%	17014 100 %	1834 100%	50629 100 %	5683 100%

Statistically significant deviations are given* ***in bold**, marking overrepresentation (+) and underrepresentation (-), with the critical value for the SDR±1.96, at alpha = .05 level of significance.*

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Figure 1: Percentage distribution of MRWs and non-MRWs across word classes in Georgia

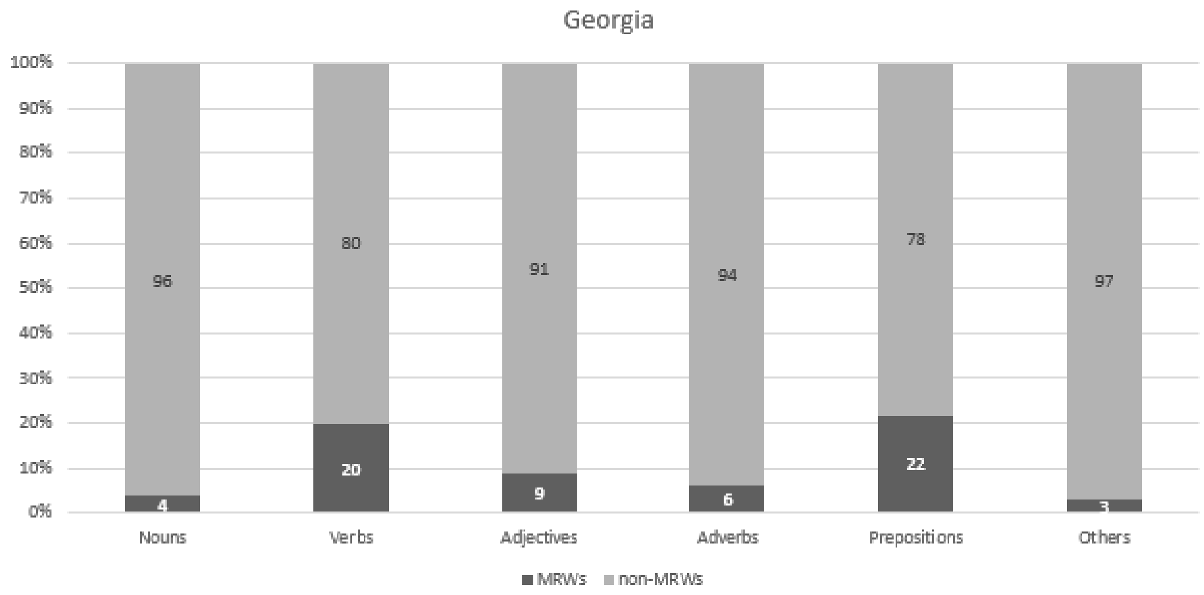


Figure 2: Percentage distribution of MRWs and non-MRWs across word classes in the UK

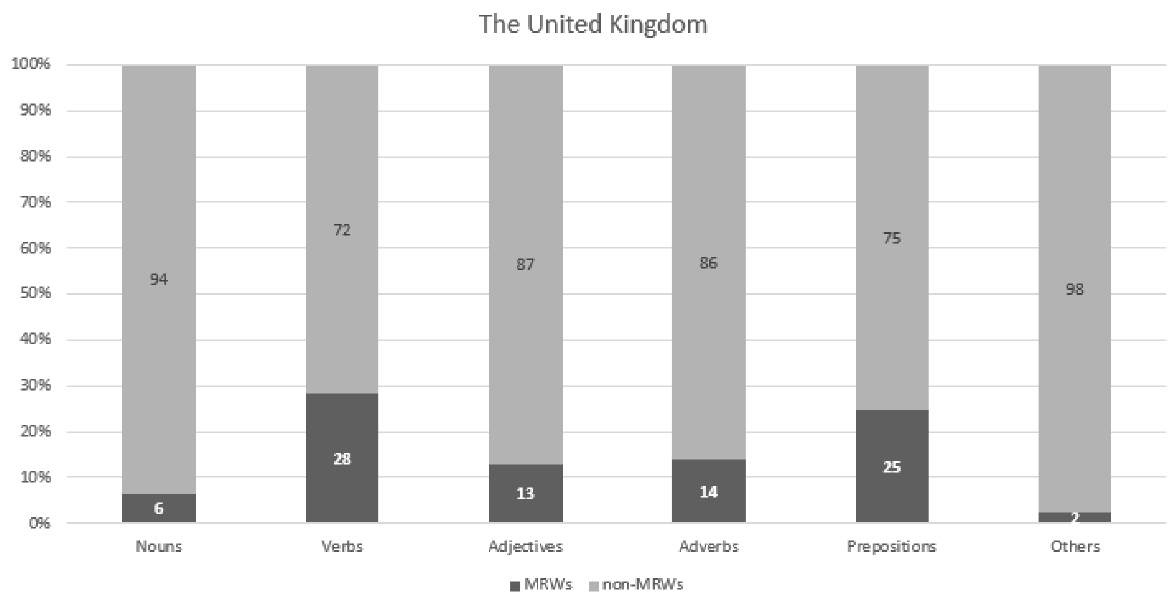
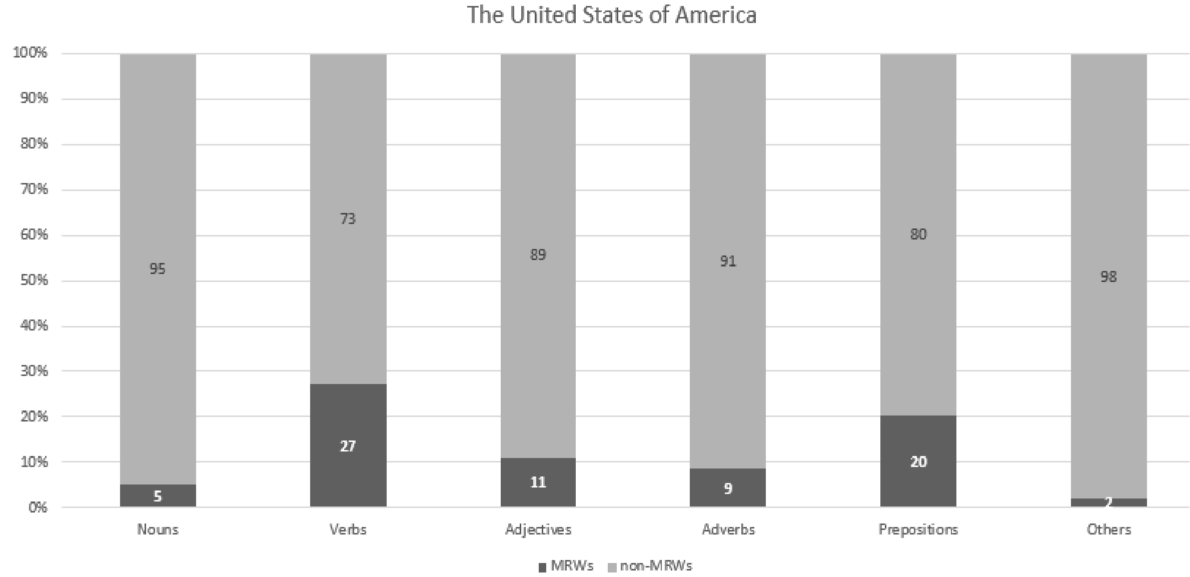


Figure 3: Percentage distribution of MRWs and non-MRWs across word classes in the USA



Appendix E: Section-based perspective

Table 1: The combined corpus

Types of text	Destinations		Experiences		Total	
Word classes	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*
Nouns	393 4.7%	7959 95.3%	629 5.4%	11042 94.6%	1022 5.1%	19001 94.9%
Verbs	638 24.6%	1958 75.4%	1204 24.8%	3643 75.2%	1842 24.7%	5601 75.3%
Adjectives	225 9.8%	2072 90.2%	445 11.7%	3355 88.3%	670 11%	5427 89%
Adverbs	61 10.6%	516 89.4%	120 8.3%	1329 91.7%	181 8.9%	1845 91.1%
Prepositions	614 21.3%	2271 78.7%	1015 23%	3405 77%	1629 22.3%	5676 77.7%
Others	67 **1.4%(-)***	4833 98.6%	272 **3.2%(-)**	8245 96.4%	339 2.5%	13078 97.5%
Total	1998 9.2%	19609 90.8%	3685 10.6%	31019 89.4%	5683 10.1%	50628 89.9%

**Significant deviations are given in bold, with the critical value for the SDR±1.96, at alpha = .05 level of significance.*

Table 2. Georgia

Types of text	Destinations		Experiences		Total	
Word classes	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*
Nouns	41 **1.9%(-)**	2133 98.1%	197 **4.8%(+)**	3908 95.2%	238 3.8%	6041 96.2%
Verbs	114 **15.6%(-)**	620 84.4%	437 21.2%	1621 78.8%	551 19.7%	2241 80.3%
Adjectives	27 **4.8%(-)**	535 95.2%	155 **10.4%(+)**	1330 89.6%	182 8.9%	1865 91.1%
Adverbs	18 **10.3%(+)**	157 89.7%	36 4.95%	692 95.05%	54 6%	849 94%
Prepositions	153 19.2%	645 80.8%	383 22.9%	1288 77.1%	536 21%	1933 78.3%
Others	27 **1.9%(-)**	1433 98.1%	122 3.5%	3333 96.5%	149 3%	4766 97%
Total	380 6.44%	5523 93.56%	1330 9.85%	12172 90.15%	1710 8.8%	17695 91.2%

Table 3. The USA

Types of text	Destinations		Experiences		Total	
Word classes	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*
Nouns	204 4.9%	3961 95.1%	164 5.3%	2949 94.7%	368 5.1%	6910 94.9%
Verbs	302 27.1%	813 72.9%	325 27.1%	875 72.9%	627 27.1%	1688 72.9%
Adjectives	109 9.4%	1053 90.6%	117 **13.5%(+)**	751 86.5%	226 11.1%	2030 88.9%
Adverbs	15 6.5%	215 93.5%	32 10.1%	284 89.9%	47 8.6%	499 91.4%
Prepositions	249 19.6%	1023 80.4%	231 21.3%	848 78.7%	480 20.4%	2350 79.6%
Rest	33 1.6%	2093 98.4%	53 2.4%	2149 97.6%	86 2%	4242 98%
Total	912 9.1%	9158 90.9%	922 10.5%	7856 89.5%	1834 9.7%	17014 90.3%

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Table 4. The UK

Types of text	Destinations		Experiences		Total	
Word classes	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*
Nouns	148 7.4%	1865 9.6%	268 6%	4185 94%	416 6.4%	6050 93.4%
Verbs	222 29.7%	525 70.3%	442 28%	1147 72%	664 28.4%	1672 71.6%
Adjectives	89 15.5%	484 84.5%	173 12%	1274 88%	262 13%	1758 87%
Adverbs	28 16.3%	144 83.7%	52 12.8%	353 87.2%	80 13.9%	497 75.3%
Prepositions	212 26%	603 74%	401 24%	1269 76%	613 24.7	1872 75.3%
Others	**7** **0.5%(-)**	1307 99.5%	97 **3.4%(+)**	2763 96.6%	104 2.5%	4070 97.5%
Total	706 12.5%	4928 87.5%	1433 11.5%	10991 88.5%	2139 11.8%	15919 88.2%

Table 5: Destination section: Cross-destination comparison in SDRs

Destinations	Geo		UK		USA	
Word class	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*
Nouns	-	+	+	NS	NS	NS
Verbs	-	+	+	NS	NS	NS
Adjectives	-	NS	+	NS	NS	NS
Adverbs	NS*	NS	+	NS	NS	NS
Prepositions	NS	NS	+	NS	NS	NS
Others	NS	NS	-	NS	NS	NS

**Non-significant deviation with the critical value for the standardised residual ±1.96, at alpha = .05 level of significance.*

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Table 6: Experience section: Cross-destination comparison in SDRs

Destinations	**Geo**		**UK**		**USA**	
Word class	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*	*MRWs*	*Non-MRWs*
Nouns	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Verbs	-	NS	+	NS	NS	NS
Adjectives	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Adverbs	-	NS	+	NS	NS	NS
Prepositions	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Others	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

Author's Biographical Data:

Nazi Iritspukhova's research encompasses cognitive and discourse-analytical studies of figuration, alongside sociolinguistic and cultural analyses of tourism discourse. Her doctoral thesis combines comparative quantitative and qualitative methods to examine how tourism marketers use figuration to enhance the persuasive impact of promotional messages. Her research has been published in high-impact journals, including those by John Benjamins Publishing Company. She has presented her work at conferences organised by Edge Hill University, the Thessaloniki Cognitive Linguistics Research Group, and participated in the 15th RAAM.

Nazi is also an ESL teacher and mentor in the British Council (Georgia). She holds CELTA, TYLEC, is a NILE- and American Councils-accredited teacher trainer, and plans to pursue DELTA soon.

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Conceptual Metaphors of Soul in Philosophical Discourse

Abstract

Philosophy has historically engaged with fundamental metaphysical questions concerning human life and death, the nature of mind, truth, knowledge, "the existence of God, the immortality of the soul and the freedom of the will" (Broad, 1923, p. 1). Its primary aim has been to clarify human understanding of the external world and the internal structures of thought and reasoning. Among the earliest systematic explorations, Plato and Aristotle developed influential theories of the *soul*, employing numerous analogies to render this abstract concept more comprehensible. In doing so, they unknowingly employed metaphors.

The emergence of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in the 1980s, which posits that metaphors arise from and structure our conceptual system, significantly expanded the scope of metaphor studies. Johnson (2008), after examining the concept of causality, argued that all abstract concepts are necessarily conceptualised metaphorically. From this perspective, philosophy—a discipline concerned with abstract and theoretical constructs—can be regarded as fundamentally engaged in studying metaphor. Nevertheless, relatively little scholarship has examined philosophical discourse through the lens of CMT.

This study therefore sets out to: (a) analyse philosophical discourse, focusing on classical philosophy, to identify conceptual metaphors on the *soul*; (b) classify these metaphors into three principal subtypes—structural, ontological, and orientational; and (c) evaluate their functions and significance. The analysis draws on Steen's (2010b) Metaphor Identification Procedure in Discourse (MIPVU), supplemented by procedures for transforming linguistic metaphors into conceptual ones (Steen, 1999). The empirical material consists primarily of the works of ancient philosophers, particularly Plato and Aristotle, thereby demonstrating that metaphor has always served as a crucial means of rendering abstract ideas accessible, long before the formalisation of CMT.

The findings reveal 55 examples of linguistic metaphor, which were subsequently grouped into distinct conceptual metaphors. The data underscore the central role of metaphorisation in philosophical discourse: the theories of the *soul* advanced by ancient philosophers were deeply reliant on metaphorical analogies. This emphasises the importance of continued research into the metaphorical dimensions of philosophical texts to enhance our understanding of philosophical reasoning and trace the evolution of metaphoric paradigms across intellectual history.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphor theory, philosophy discourse, soul*

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1. Introduction

In Metaphors *We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) introduced conceptual metaphor theory, which shifted the focus of metaphor from language to cognition. According to their theory, metaphor is not simply an "imaginative employment of words" (Davidson, 1978, p. 33) or solely a literary device demonstrating the writer's skill at expressing ideas in prose or poetry, as Aristotle believed. Instead, it helps us understand the world around us, as "being tools for exploration, metaphors provide entrée into possible worlds." (Miller, 2000, p. 163).

The concept of the *soul* has not been extensively examined from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory, especially within the philosophical context. Relevant works on this subject include Wierzbica's (1992) analysis of the concept of the *soul* from semantic and cultural perspectives in Russian and English, studies of contemporary metaphors of the *soul* and their significance in popular American culture (Cervantes, 1998), research on metaphorical idioms with the lexeme "soul" in Georgian and English (Rusieshvili-Cartledge, et al., 2023), the linguistic realisation of the *soul* in poetic discourse (Safyanova, 2019), and metaphoric conceptions of the *soul* in Slavic languages (Despot, et al., 2012), among others.

Based on the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) and further developed by scholars such as Grady (1997), Kövecses (2010, 2017), and Jäkel (2002), the aim of this paper is to: 1. identify conceptual metaphors related to the concept of the *soul* within philosophical discourse; 2. categorise these metaphors into ontological, orientational, or structural types; 3. explore the role these metaphors play in shaping our understanding of the *soul* and their importance in developing philosophical thought.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), introduced by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980, recognises metaphor primarily as a cognitive phenomenon. Metaphors originate in our minds and are later expressed through language as linguistic metaphors, i.e. "…metaphor in language can eventually be seen as a reflection of metaphor in thought…" (Steen et al, 2010a, p. 789). Consequently, our conceptual system is inherently metaphorical, shaping and guiding our daily functions.

A conceptual metaphor involves a mapping — a set of systematic correspondences — between two domains: target and source. This process uses a more concrete concept (source) to understand a more abstract one (target). Metaphors can be succinctly represented as: A (target) IS B (source) (Kövecses, 2010; Forceville, 2016). Since we generally possess greater knowledge of concrete concepts, it is logical that they form the basis for understanding more abstract domains. That is why "in most cases of everyday metaphors the source and target domains are not reversible" (Kövecses, 2010, p. 7). This is known as the principle of unidirectionality.

Not everything from a source domain can be mapped onto a target; later explained by Lakoff (1993) as the "invariance hypothesis," which states that by preserving the image-schematic structure of the source, only elements that do not conflict with the image-schematic structure of the target domain can be transferred. Additionally, when creating a metaphor, only certain aspects of the target are highlighted while others remain hidden. This explains why multiple metaphors can exist for the same targets, as "different metaphors highlight different aspects of the same target concept and at the same time hide its other aspects" (Kövecses, 2010, p. 93).

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Several factors serve as the basis for conceptual metaphors, including the similarity between objects and the correlation of experience between two concepts or image-schemas – skeletal preconceptual structures derived from our recurrent experiences of the world. “Such skeletal preconceptual structures include container, source-path-goal, force, verticality and several others” (Kövecses, 2017, p. 18).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) identified three types of metaphors: structural, where target A is understood through source B’s structure; ontological, where understanding of target concepts is grounded in substances or physical objects; and orientational, where a target concept is understood as a source concept based on spatial orientation. Among ontological metaphors are specific cases of personification, where a target concept is personified by adopting various human aspects. Kövecses (2010) argues that ontological metaphors serve a cognitive function by assigning a new ontological status to abstract targets, which are then elaborately structured through structural metaphors.

Jäkel (2002) also presents the necessity hypothesis, which suggests that conceptual metaphors mainly serve an explanatory function. This applies particularly to highly abstract concepts, which are difficult to grasp without metaphor, as it “serves to make the unfamiliar more graspable” (Grady, 1997, p. 29).

2.2 Towards the Relationship Between Philosophy and Metaphor

As mentioned earlier, Aristotle, a philosopher himself, was among the first to develop a theory of metaphor. However, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) note that he failed to identify his conceptual metaphors due to the nature of his theory.

Jäkel (1999) mentions two philosophers — Kant and Blumenberg — as contributors to the cognitive theory of metaphor before Lakoff and Johnson finally presented it in 1980. Although Kant (1790) does not directly use the term "metaphor”, he speaks of symbols. Jäkel claims that these symbols are what we understand to be a metaphor. Kant also wrote about the importance of recognising analogy as a means of rational conceptualisation of phenomena that were otherwise unknown to him, thus hinting at the concept of metaphor while critically examining human understanding.

Blumenberg (1960) was particularly interested in the language of philosophy and how metaphors fostered its development. The linguistic material he chose for his analysis was taken from philosophy, science, and literary classics. However, his theory can be applied to language in general. He distinguished between absolute metaphors, a fundamental component of philosophical language, and background metaphors, which Jäkel (1999) identifies as equivalent to conceptual metaphors. Blumenberg thought that comparing linguistic metaphors could reveal parts of the core structure of human cognition.

According to Johnson (2008), the role of metaphor is immeasurable in philosophy. Western philosophy, especially those supporting the classic objectivist/literalist view, dismissed metaphor as merely a dispensable linguistic phenomenon. Johnson acknowledges Nietzsche as a proponent of the pervasiveness of metaphor in thought. By analysing the concept of “causation” from a metaphoric standpoint (previously in *Philosophy in the Flash* with Lakoff in 1999), he aimed to prove that humans use metaphors to define abstract concepts, including all philosophical concepts. Thus, philosophy’s primary purpose would be conducting a metaphor analysis, as “philosophy is metaphor” (Johnson, 2008, p. 44).

3. Methodology

The empirical data in the paper include written works on ancient and modern philosophy by Kenny (2004, 2007) and Plato’s *Phaedo* (380 BC/2021). Regarding the methodology, a technique for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse — MIPVU — and Steen’s *From Linguistic to Conceptual Metaphor in Five Steps* were applied.

As a result of the study, 55 examples were selected based on their distinctiveness and originality from 280 and 27 examples containing the lexeme *'soul'* in Kenny's 2004 and 2007 books, respectively, and 161 sentences from Plato's *Phaedo*.

MIPVU is an expanded version of MIP, developed by the Pragglejaz group in 2007 and revised by Steen in 2010. After analysing a text, this method aims to identify metaphorically used words (linguistic metaphors) by comparing these words with their indirect meanings, including not only indirect expressions but also instances of direct (such as similes and analogies) and implicit expressions (ellipsis, substitution).

Steen's (1999) *From Linguistic to Conceptual Metaphor in Five Steps* goes beyond merely indicating linguistic metaphors by providing a comprehensive five-step process for creating nonliteral mappings.

Based on the abovementioned methods, the following procedures were undertaken for the data analyses:

1.The sections of the texts related to the concept of *soul* were examined on a word-by-word basis;

2. Non-literally used lexical units were detected and marked as metaphors;

3.The identified metaphorical expressions were analysed to reveal their connection to the concept of *soul*;

4. Finally, the underlying metaphorical image schemas were established.

4. Results and Discussion

"Once philosophy began, the possibility of an afterlife and the nature of the soul became central concerns, bridging the gap between religion and science." (Kenny, 2004, p. 229). The concept of the *soul* has been defined by many philosophers in various, often conflicting ways. Lorenz (2024), for example, states that in the 5th century BC, before Socrates' death, the *soul* was seen as the defining feature of living beings (specifically humans), serving as a container for virtues such as bravery and justice. The theories of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics are some of the most notable hypotheses from antiquity, discussed below.

4.1 Metaphor – SOUL IS A HUMAN BEING

According to the analysed data, the *soul* is generally depicted as a being possessing humanlike qualities – it sins, feels, reflects, has free will, etc. (Cervantes (1998) outlines the same metaphors - Soul as Human, particularly, "inner man", and an Emotional Human):

(1) *…the soul* ***sins*** *by necessity*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 254)

(2) *…the soul is* ***willing*** *it does not so act as to abandon what is higher for what is lower… the soul* ***is doing what it wants***. (Kenny, 2004, p. 255)

(3) *…there is one part of the soul that* ***reflects*** *and a different one that* ***feels*** *bodily desires.* (Kenny, 2004, p. 238)

(4) *The soul itself* ***contemplates*** *the common terms that apply to the deliverances of all of the senses.* (Kenny, 2004, p. 154)

(5) *The soul is* ***wallowing i****n total ignorance*… (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 28)

(6) *… the soul…* ***wanders****,* ***is confused****, and it* ***is dizzy as though drunk*** *because it is in contact with things of that sort.* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 24)

Soul is sometimes referred to with a female pronoun, as in "*… it is impossible for soul to perish whenever death approaches* ***her***" (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 51). We can argue that the soul is not just a human being but a female.

As for example (6), ***SOUL IS A DRUNK PERSON*** who wanders this earth "*in utter **perplexity***" (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 53), this unknown world, deprived of its (*soul*'s) home. The conceptualisation of *soul* as a wanderer is discussed later in greater details.

One of the ways in which the relationship between body and *soul* is explained is through marriage: "*…they **wander** until they are **bound** once more in a body by the desire belonging to the bodily form, their close **consort**"* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 27). Body and soul are bound together as a united whole, obliged to go through life together until death parts them.

In some cases, the *soul* is not just perceived as a human being but as a homunculus – a small, fully formed human being residing in the body:

(7) *Some say that the body does not perceive or sense anything, but only the soul, conceived as an **inner homunculus***. (Kenny, 2004, p. 249)

(8) *… later philosophers were more inclined to view the soul as an **internal homunculus** than as an internal arthropod*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 232)

Among other examples of ontological personification, the following are noteworthy:

4.2 Metaphor – SOUL IS A PRISONER

In *Phaedo*, Plato explores various conceptions of the *soul* to understand it thoroughly, including the idea that the *soul* is imprisoned in the body as a punishment for its misdeeds. Life is lived "to pay the penalty" (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 27), to redeem its sins until God releases it, or to return to existence in another form. Therefore, based on the structural metaphor – ***LIFE IS A PUNISHMENT*** – we can point out the following mappings: ***SOUL IS A PRISONER*** (an example of ontological personification)***; HUMAN BODY IS A PRISON/PRISON CELL; HUMAN IS AN IMPRISONED SOUL.***

(9) *… soul's union with the body is in some way a **punishment** for evil done in an earlier life*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 78)

(10) *… a human being as a soul **imprisoned** in a body*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 234)

(11) *In the case of human beings, he himself made the immortal soul, leaving it to the lesser gods to **encase** this in a skull and add the rest of the body below it.* (Kenny, 2004, p. 294)

(12) *… it is literally **fettered within** the body, **glued to** it, and the soul is compelled to view things that are, through the body **as if it were a prison**…* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 28)

(13) *… soul… being **set free from** the body **as though from bonds**?* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 11)

Not only is the *soul* encased in the body, but it is also bound, bonded, and fettered to it. Example (11) does not merely describe the body as a prison for the *soul* but specifies that the skull is the locus of the *soul*, with the rest of the body just an addition. This could be explained by the idea that many philosophers, including Aristotle, considered the mind and reason/brain the seat of the *soul*.

This metaphor can also give rise to a different kind of mapping. Since Plato, many philosophers have viewed the body "*as a **corrupter** of the soul*" (Kenny, 2004, p. 258). However, Democritus developed an opposite view. He regarded the ***BODY AS A VICTIM***, while the ***SOUL is a CULPRIT*** responsible for the suffering of the body.

(14) *If a body, at the end of life, were to **sue** the soul for the pains and ills it had suffered, a fair judge would find for the body. If some parts of the body have been damaged by neglect or ruined by debauchery, that is the soul's **fault**…* (Kenny, 2004, p. 258)

He then utilises an analogy of the owner (*soul*) and the tool (body) to prove his point: "*…but if **a tool** is in a bad shape you blame not the tool but its **owner**.*" (Kenny, 2004, p. 258). The *soul* controls and bends its body to its will, therefore making it responsible for its (body's) state. This idea will be developed below as well.

Death, generally a negative phenomenon, is presented as a desired event as the *soul* becomes capable of "***a happier life*** *when disembodied*" (Kenny, 2004, p. 66). Every person or philosopher should strive for death, as it is the only way for the *soul* to be set free and acquire the truth. Therefore, ***DEATH IS A DESIRED EVENT/THE END OF THE PUNISHMENT***:

(15) *... a true philosopher has throughout his life in effect been* ***craving for*** *death*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 234)

4.3 Metaphor – SOUL IS A TRAVELLER

Another example of an ontological personification is ***SOUL IS A TRAVELLER*** metaphor supported by Pythagoras. According to this mapping, the human body is a temporary residence for a soul. Simultaneously, life itself is depicted as a journey, relating to the metaphor ***LIFE IS A JOURNEY*** outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Plato regarded the *soul* as "*ill-housed in a base body*" (Kenny, 2004, p. 242), emphasising that a body is not a natural environment or home, but an uncomfortable place for the *soul* to dwell. This is also reflected in example (16):

(16) *…this body is not a* ***home*** *but a* ***short-term hostelry*** *which one must* ***leave*** *as soon as one sees one is becoming a burden on one's* ***host***. (Kenny, 2004, p. 107)

(17) *Souls could* ***transmigrate*** *in this way…* (Kenny, 2004, p. 229)

(18) *…* ***journeys*** *in the underworld of the soul after it survives death*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 46)

(19) *But once it* ***has arrived*** *and then* ***departed****, couldn't it too then come to an end and be* ***destroyed****?* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 22)

According to this metaphor, the body functions as a short-term house/building for the banished *soul*, "***an exile*** *from a better world*" (Kenny, 2004, p. 242), which it is incapable of leaving until the body is destroyed.

Death, on the other hand, is shown as a final point, the end of the journey, once again a positive event of coming back home (example (20)) or a beginning of a new journey (examples (18) and (21)):

(20) *To die is to* ***return*** *to one's real home*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 67)

(21) *… at death the soul* ***entered*** *a different and shadowy world…* (Kenny, 2004, p. 229)

Empedocles then specifies that the human body is not a sole dwelling place for a *soul* ("***wandering*** *spirit*"). Murderers and perjurers are reborn in many different forms, including animals and even plants: "*Since the bodies of animals are thus the* ***dwelling places*** *of punished souls...*" (Kenny, 2004, p. 231).

4.4 Metaphor – SOUL IS A MASTER

The relationship between a *soul* and a body is also compared to that of a master and its subordinate. The *soul* is represented as a controlling force, a responsible being, which "***has*** *the major* ***responsibility*** *for sensation*" (Kenny, 2004, p. 248), but only through its bond with the body.

(22) *…the souls that* ***control*** *our own bodies…* (Kenny, 2004, p. 37)

(23) *… the soul that* ***keeps*** *the body* ***in order***. (Kenny, 2004, p. 236)

(24) *… it is the soul's function to* ***direct*** *the person whose soul it is*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 160)

(25) *Once soul and body are together, nature directs the body* ***to serve*** *and* ***be ruled****, and the soul* ***to rule*** *and* ***dominate***. (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 25)

As stated in example (25), the *soul* is superior to the body it commands. ***BODY IS A SERVANT*** expected to obey its ruler. The idea of the *soul* as a master controlling its body is developed even further by some philosophers. It is an entity of its own, continuing its life after the human body dies, joining the World Soul, which guides the entire universe and the sun, thereby establishing it as a god itself (27). The latter presents an interesting case of conceptual metaphor, where we do not see a more concrete concept being defined by a more abstract one – God and *soul* can be regarded as equally abstract and unknown to humans. The analogy can be explained as being based on the immortal and intangible nature of both, as they are divine entities that transcend humans.

(26) *Soul is the immanent, **controlling element** in the universe of nature*… (Kenny, 2004, p. 314)

(27) *Soul… or rather souls, that **control** the heavens… which is in contact with the sun and **impels** it on its course; or the soul is entirely immaterial, and **guides** the sun on its path by some spiritual force… the soul is clearly a **god** of some kind*... (Kenny, 2004, p. 295)

However, some argue that the relationship between the two has an opposite nature – it is the body that subdues the soul and commands it to act according to its will, holding the body accountable for the evil deeds of human beings.

(28) *And in fact, it is only the body and its desires which bring about wars, insurrections, and fighting. For all wars arise on account of the possession of wealth, and we are compelled to acquire wealth because of the body, as **we are slaves in its service***. (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 10)

(29) *… it departs from the body, sullied and impure, because the soul constantly associates with it, **serving it** and loving it and being **enchanted by** it through desires and pleasures*… (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 26)

4.5 Metaphor – SOUL IS A WEAVER

By the analogy between a human body covered by garments/clothes, or a coat as seen in example (31), the body functions as a covering coat of the *soul*, hence the following mapping – ***BODY IS GARMENT***. Furthermore, as people replace their worn-out garments, *soul* similarly continues to live in a new body after the death of the former.

(30) *… the body suffers frequent **wear** and **tear** and needs constant **repair** by the soul.* (Kenny, 2004, p. 236);

(31) *Even if it transmigrates from body to body, perhaps one day it will pass away, **just as a weaver**, who has made and **worn out** many **coats** in his lifetime, one day meets his death and **leaves a coat behind***. (Kenny, 2004, p. 236);

(32) *… each of the souls **wears out** numerous bodies… the soul is constantly **weaving anew** whatever has been **worn away***. (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 32)

Positive qualities and virtues are presented as adornments of the soul:

(33) *… **adorned** the soul, not with an alien adornment but with its own, with **sound-mindedness, justice, courage, freedom** and **truth***. (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 58)

Pleasure is not viewed as a virtue; it appears "*as the **crony** of the lowest part of the soul*" (Kenny, 2004, pp. 264-65). Situated in the lowest part, it acts as a crony (personification) of the disgraceful part of the *soul*. Thus, we can say that ***NEGATIVE QUALITIES (VICE) ARE DOWN***, whereas ***VIRTUES*** such as mind and reason ***ARE UP***: "*For Aristotle as for Plato the **highest part** of the soul is **occupied** by mind or reason, **the locus** of thought and understanding*." (Kenny, 2004, p. 245).

We also come across the following conceptualisation: ***NEGATIVE PERSONAL TRAITS ARE AILMENTS (VICE IS A DISEASE)*** tarnishing the purity of the human soul, while the existence of positive characteristics proves the health of the soul:

(34) … *Vice is the characteristic* ***disease*** *of the soul: but it does not destroy the soul… the soul's own disease cannot kill it…* (Kenny, 2004, p. 240)

(35) *Justice and injustice in the soul are* ***like health*** *and* ***disease*** *in the body*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 264)

4.6 Metaphor – SOUL IS A SOURCE OF LIFE

Aristotle (in *De Anima*) argued against the conception of the *soul* by Plato. For him, the *soul* is the body's sustaining cause. Many philosophers agreed that the *soul* was the only distinguishing factor between animate and inanimate entities, making it the ***PROOF OF LIFE INSIDE A BODY****:*

(36) *the* ***actuality*** *of a body that has life* (Kenny, 2004, p. 242);

(37) *Living bodies are* ***kept alive*** *by the soul, which is their* ***sustaining*** *cause.* (Kenny, 2004, p. 193)

(38) *The soul… is also the* ***origin of change*** *and* ***motion*** *in the body, and above all it is also the* ***final cause****…* (Kenny, 2004, p. 243)

4.7 Metaphor – SOUL IS A PHYSICAL STRUCTURE/BUILDING

Some of the qualities that can be assigned to *soul* are strength and endurance, which are typical vocabulary items employed while speaking of structures.

(39) … *the soul is so* ***strong*** *by nature that it can* ***withstand*** *being born many times*. (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 32);

(40) … ***destruction*** *to the soul…* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 32);

In some cases, it is specified as being a building or a room with windows and corners – ***SOUL IS A ROOM***:

(41) *Freud, on the other hand, wanted to* ***turn up the lights on the dark corners of*** *the soul in order to rid the world of enchantment*. (Kenny, 2007, p. 314)

(42) *... those who are asleep have the* ***windows*** *of their soul* ***blocked up*** *and keep contact with nature only through their breathing*. (Kenny, 2004, p. 15)

4.8 Metaphor – SOUL IS A MATERIAL OBJECT

As a highly abstract and invisible entity, the *soul* is presented as a material object that has beauty: "***beautiful*** *souls*" (Kenny, 2004, p. 293), can be inherited, dragged or nailed as per the following examples:

(43) *He himself claimed to have* ***inherited*** *his soul from a distinguished line of spiritual ancestors*, … (Kenny, 2004, p. 229)

(44) *... the kind of soul which possesses this is* ***weighed down*** *and* ***dragged*** *once more into the visible realm…* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, pp. 26-27)

(45) … *each pleasure and pain has a sort of* ***nail*** *which* ***fastens and pins*** *the soul to the body and makes it* ***corporeal****…* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 28)

4.9 Metaphor – SOUL IS A LIQUID

While trying to prove that both body and *soul* are mortals, he proposes an analogy of water that flows out of its broken vessel, therefore introducing the mapping: ***HUMAN BODY IS A VESSEL FOR THE***

SOUL (46). In a different water-based conception (48), ***BODY IS A NET*** and ***SOUL IS A SEA***, which directs the body as it wills:

(46) … *how much faster must soul's tenuous* ***fluid leak*** *away once the body is* ***broken****!* (Kenny, 2004, p. 249)

(47) … *the souls of the wise after death can be* ***absorbed*** *into the divine World Soul that permeates and* ***governs*** *the universe.* (Kenny, 2004, p. 250)

(48) *Body* ***floats*** *in soul,* ***as a net floats in the sea****…* (Kenny, 2004, p. 315)

(49) *… it always departs* ***contaminated with*** *the body, so that it quickly* ***falls into*** *another body and* ***grows there like a seed that is sown***. (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 29)

On the other hand, Plato maintains that the *soul* is not dissoluble – "… *the soul is most like the divine, immortal, single in form and* ***indissoluble****…*" (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 25), thereby making it impossible for the *soul* to be liquid – it is a solid, indestructible entity. Example (49) not only presents the *soul* as a contaminated liquid but also as a plant that grows inside the body after it replaces its former one. This conceptualisation is uncommon, as the *soul* is predominantly seen as a fully developed entity that settles into the body.

4.10 Metaphor – SOUL IS A PUFF OF SMOKE

This analogy is based on the lightness of both *soul* and smoke, which cannot be grasped or held on the earth once it leaves the body. Some philosophers believed that *souls* cease to exist with the death of the body, disappearing like smoke (50). However, arguably, based on (51) and (52), the *soul* does not necessarily cease to exist once it leaves the body. It simply becomes invisible to the eye until it finds another dwelling.

(50) … *at death the soul ceases to exist, vanishing into nothingness* ***like a puff of smoke***. (Kenny, 2004, p. 234)

(51) … *as soon as it is separated from the body, and going forth,* ***dispersed like breath or smoke****, it* ***takes flight****…* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 13)

(52) … *the wind* ***will blow*** *the soul* ***away*** *and* ***scatter*** *it when it* ***departs*** *from the body…* (Plato, 380 BC/2023, p. 22)

4.11 Metaphor – SOUL IS AN OCTOPUS

Stoics compare the *soul* to the octopus, in which every single tentacle is responsible for the functioning of various human parts.

(53) … ***eight tentacles sprouted out*** *from the master-faculty into the body, five of them being the senses, one being a motor agent to effect the movement of the limbs, one controlling the organs of speech, and the final one a tube to carry semen to the generative organs. Each of these tentacles was made out of breath.* (Kenny, 2004, p. 250)

4.12 Metaphor – SOUL IS A CHARIOTEER

Plato compared soul to a charioteer; however, he never fully explained the analogy:

(54) … ***a charioteer with a pair of horses****, one good and one bad,* ***driving towards*** *a heavenly banquet. The good horse strives upwards, while the bad horse constantly pulls the chariot downwards. The horses are clearly meant to represent two different parts of the soul…* (Kenny, 2004, p. 237)

4.13 Metaphor – SOUL IS A CITY

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates introduces an analogy between the *soul* and the city in order to explain that justice is not just a method devised to avoid crimes:

(55) *In his imagined **city** the virtues are **allotted** to the **different classes of the state**: the city's wisdom is the wisdom of its rulers, its courage is the courage of its soldiers, and its temperance is the obedience of the artisans to the ruling class. Justice is the harmony of the three classes: it consists in each citizen, and each class, doing that for which they are most suited. The three parts of the soul correspond to **the three classes in the state**, and the virtues in the soul are distributed **like the virtues in the state**. Courage belongs to temper, temperance is the subservience of the lower elements, wisdom is located in reason, which rules and **looks after** the whole soul. Justice is the harmony of the psychic elements.* (Kenny, 2004, p. 264)

5. Conclusion

As demonstrated by the study, a wide range of conceptual metaphors were employed in classical philosophy to describe the *soul*. The prevalence of ontological personifications can be attributed to the essential role of the *soul* itself: life is impossible without it, as the *soul* sustains human beings through its connection with the body. Yet, owing to its invisible and highly abstract nature, the *soul* has remained an unresolved mystery. In their efforts to articulate what it is, ancient philosophers turned to analogy and metaphor as their primary tools for theorisation.

The total number of conceptual metaphors identified in this study comprises 27 can be classified into the following subtypes: Orientational metapors with 2 instances make up approximately 7.4% of the total amount; Ontological metaphors form the largest subgroup with 21 instances (77.7%) in which 9 (33.3%) are the examples of personification (which constitute 42.8% of the ontological subset); and Structural metaphors which account for 14.8% (4 metaphors) of overall metaphors examined. These metaphors include:

Orientational: ***VICE OF THE SOUL IS DOWN; VIRTUE OF THE SOUL IS UP***.

Ontological: ***HUMAN BODY IS A PRISON/PRISON CELL; BODY IS GARMENT; VICE OF THE SOUL IS A DISEAS; SOUL IS A SOURCE OF LIFE**; **SOUL IS A MATERIAL OBJECT; SOUL IS A LIQUID; HUMAN BODY IS A VESSEL FOR THE SOUL; BODY IS A NET; SOUL IS A SEA; SOUL IS A PUFF OF SMOKE; SOUL IS AN OCTOPUS; SOUL IS A CHARIOTEER.***

Ontological personification: ***SOUL IS A HUMAN BEING; SOUL IS A DRUNK PERSON; SOUL IS A PRISONER***; ***SOUL IS A CULPRIT; BODY IS A VICTIM; SOUL IS A TREVELLER; SOUL IS A MASTER; BODY IS SERVANT***; ***SOUL IS A WEAVER.***

Structural: ***LIFE IS A PUNISHMENT***; ***SOUL IS A PHYSICAL STRUCTURE/BUILDING; SOUL IS A ROOM; SOUL IS A CITY***.

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Towards the Typology of Character Portraits in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*

Abstract

The verbal portrait, viewed as the textual depiction of a fictional character, represents one of the most complex yet relatively underexplored aspects of literary art from a linguistic perspective.

This paper investigates the role of verbal portraiture in Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales, with particular emphasis on the general prologue. Methodologically, it employs a qualitative framework that integrates typological, stylistic, semantic, and literary approaches. Three influential models—Gabel's minimalist versus extended portraits (1964), Bazilova and Suleimanova's concentrated versus deconcentrated portraits (2012), and Bespalov's sketchy, evaluative, situational, and descriptive portraits (2001)—are analysed in comparison. The analysis uses linguo-stylistics and semantics to trace how lexical and structural choices shape meaning, while framing theory and narratology clarify how cognitive and cultural stereotypes influence interpretation. Seven representative figures—the Prioress, the Clerk, the Merchant, the Friar, the Parson, the Miller, and the Wife of Bath—are examined in depth.

The findings demonstrate that Chaucer's portraits are rarely confined to a single type but instead exhibit hybrid, layered strategies that combine evaluative, symbolic, and situational functions. This hybridity illustrates how verbal portraiture in the General Prologue individualises characters, critiques medieval society, and enhances the text's realism and satirical effect.

Keywords: *verbal portrait, medieval literature, Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, portrait typology*

1. Introduction

A fictional character's verbal portrait is one of the essential components of a literary work. It fulfils multiple functions within the text. A character's physical characteristics may hint at their personality, background, or role in the narrative. It may also reveal the author's attitude and worldview and better engage and immerse the reader by creating a vivid mental image (Heier, 1976).

There are many reasons for grouping physical features, primarily to provide structure, clarity, and precision in description. Physical features are usually grouped into several categories. Depending on the writer's goal and literary movement, various combinations of these categories exist.

The analysis of the verbal portrait from a diachronic perspective has shown that the description of a character's appearance does not adhere to a single, fixed principle. The amount and organisation of conveyed information vary across literary movements, as does the sequence of descriptive elements within the text.

This paper discusses different classifications of character portraits and examines them using samples from Geoffrey Chaucer's collection of stories *The Canterbury Tales.* It will demonstrate how Chaucer combines personal traits with common social archetypes, creating vivid and dynamic characters.

This paper aims to:

- Explore the functions of a fictional character's verbal portrait.
- Review and compare existing classifications (typologies) of character descriptions.
- Analyse character portraits in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales.*
- Demonstrate how Chaucer creates vivid and dynamic characters that correspond to various typologies.
- Reveal underlying cognitive structures (frames) associated with the portrait types under analysis.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design at the intersection of linguistics and literary studies. The methodology combines close reading with typological, stylistic, semantic, and literary approaches. The analysis proceeds by applying three major typological frameworks of character portraits: Gabel's minimalist and extended classification (1964), Bazilova and Suleimanova's distinction between concentrated and deconcentrated portraits (2012), and Bespalov's typology of sketchy, evaluative, situational, and descriptive portraits (2001). These models are not treated in isolation but compared and integrated to reveal the complexity of Chaucer's verbal portraits. Linguo-stylistics provides the foundation for analysing the expressive function of description (Wales, 2011; Leech & Short, 2007; Toolan, 1990; Verdonk, 2002; Widdowson, 1992; Galperin, 1977; Turner, 1973), while semantics (Leech, 1983; Cruse, 2000; Geeraerts, 2010) is used to trace how particular lexical choices construct meaning. Discourse analysis (Cook, 2007; Brown & Yule, 1983) offers tools for examining narrative organisation and the distribution of descriptive detail. Literary studies and framing theory (Stockwell, 2002; Minsky, cited in Brown & Yule, 1983) help explain how readers activate cultural stereotypes and cognitive structures when interpreting portraits. Narratological perspectives (Fludernik, 2009) and broader literary approaches (Guerin, 1998; Childs & Fowler, 2006; Heier, 1976) situate the analysis within traditions of characterisation. In addition, contextual studies on physiognomy, irony, and medieval culture (Dempster, 1932; Pace, 1962; Horobin, 2003; Horobin & Smith, 2002; Taubert et al., 2011; Srivastava, 2021; Ward, 2006; Matoušková, 2020; Alanazi, 2023) are drawn upon to deepen interpretation.

The empirical material for this research consists of verbal portraits from Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales as presented in the Penguin Popular Classics edition (1996). The focus is placed on the General Prologue, since it contains the fullest and most systematic character descriptions. Seven figures have been selected for detailed analysis: the Prioress, the Clerk, the Merchant, the Friar, the Parson, the Miller, and the Wife of Bath. These characters were chosen because they represent a broad spectrum of medieval society - religious, academic, mercantile, rural, and female roles - and illustrate different portraiture types identified in the theoretical models. Each passage is analysed with attention to its linguistic features, descriptive order, and symbolic functions. The study aims to demonstrate how Chaucer's portraits embody textual artistry and broader cultural meanings by combining typological frameworks with stylistic, semantic, and discourse analysis.

3. Different Classifications of Character Portraits

The theoretical classifications of character portraits suggested in the scholarly literature are based on different principles.

In his work (Gabel, 1964), Gabel distinguishes two types of verbal portraits based on the number of descriptive elements: **the minimalist** and **the extended portrait.**

According to this theory, from the Renaissance to the mid-19th century, the extended portrait, characterised by a detailed description of a character's appearance, was prominent. Characters were depicted in a way that mimics real life. Therefore, the conventional order of physical description was often followed—moving "from top to bottom"—to align with a natural perception of a human being. When perceiving a new individual, people typically form a general impression and then focus on more specific details, including facial features, complexion, body type, and attire (Taubert et al., 2011).

Through observation, it became clear that although medieval literature and later literary periods employ extended portraits, the details serve quite different purposes. For example, in *The Canterbury Tales*, face and skin (blemishes and scars) symbolise inner virtues or vices, while clothing directly indicates class and values (Horobin & Smith, 2002). Meanwhile, in realism, scars and wrinkles are associated with real-life struggles, and clothing reflects either economic status or changing emotional states. Chaucer frequently uses this technique in his descriptions, adorning some of his characters with various physical features that serve specific purposes and emphasise their materialism. A notable example of such a mimetic portrait is Madam Eglantine, the Prioress.

The Prioress plays a leading role in the church and oversees a small Catholic convent. Chaucer provides a detailed depiction of his character, including her facial features, physique, and attire. She has a delicate, graceful appearance. Her nose is well-shaped, and her light blue eyes and soft red lips enhance her charm. Her fingers are slender and elegant, and her broad, pale forehead lends her a dignified look.

Her nose was fine; her eyes were blue as glass;
Her mouth was small and therewith soft and red;
But certainly she had a fair forehead;
It was almost a full span broad, I own,
For, truth to tell, she was not undergrown. (Chaucer, 1996, p.5)

The Prioress is tall and dressed in a delicate gown that suits her perfectly. On her wrist, instead of a simple black rosary, one can see a coral bracelet, and around her neck — a golden brooch with the following inscription: "Amor Vincit Omnia"—"Love Conquers All." This inscription is rather worldly than religious. This overall description exposes the Prioress: Madame Eglantine is trying to look religious, however, her appearance and choice of clothing bring to life her true nature.

Neat was her cloak, as I was well aware.
Of coral small about her arm she'd bear
A string of beads and gauded all with green;
And therefrom hung a brooch of golden sheen
Whereon there was first written a crowned "A,"
And under, Amor vincit omnia. (Chaucer, 1996, p.5)

Chaucer employs contrasts multiple times in his verbal portrait of the Prioress. Her height and broad forehead contrast her small, delicate nose and mouth, and make her appearance somewhat out of proportion. She wants to appear graceful and elegant, but her broad forehead subtly reveals her true self. Further supporting this idea, Chaucer adorns her character with thin, arched eyebrows that ultimately clash with her other more massive features. (Matoušková, 2020)

The minimalist portrait is a brief, concise and simple character description. Both Chaucer and modernist writers use this technique. However, the purpose and function vary from author to author. Chaucer emphasises the morality of characters without going deep into their psychology. On the contrary, modernists focus on psychological depth. These details are solely individual and help reveal the character's inner struggles.

Chaucer employs the minimalist portrait mainly to portray more or less dignified characters. A good example of this is the Clerk. He is the classic image of a poor scholar—spending every coin on books rather than food or clothing. His horse, just like him, is thin and pale, with a somber look. His clothes are worn and shabby, but none of that matters to him since his only true passion is learning.

Nor he himself too fat, I'll undertake,
But he looked hollow and went soberly.
Right threadbare was his overcoat; for he. (Chaucer, 1996, p.9)

As this passage suggests, we are dealing with a minimalist portrait. The reader cannot create a mental image of the student, nor is it necessary; unlike other characters, he places no value on food, drinks, or clothing.

Another classification proposed by Bazilova and Suleimanova (Bazilova & Suleimanova, 2012) is based on the distribution of the portrait within the text. They distinguish between **concentrated** and **deconcentrated** portraits.

A concentrated portrait captures a character's appearance within a single, specific passage of the text. The purpose of such a technique is to provide a reader with a complete and immediate understanding of a character, often without further elaboration. In *The Canterbury Tales*, the Merchant's description appears at the very beginning of the passage, detailing his facial features and clothing. After this initial portrayal, the author does not return to it anymore.

One of the Merchant's distinguishing features is a forked beard. At first glance, this might seem like a personal choice of style, however, the split beard hints at his two-faceted nature.

His clothing also plays an important role. From the passage, we learn that he is wearing a motley cloak—a brightly coloured outfit. These vivid colours symbolise both his wealth and his ability to adapt, thus resembling a chameleon. (Srivastava, 2021)

Chaucer's Merchant follows the fashion which can be assumed from his hat type. A Flemish beaver hat, which was highly fashionable then, was soft and flexible, allowing it to take different shapes. This detail reinforces the idea that the Merchant knows how to fit in wherever he goes.

There was a merchant with forked beard, and girt
In motley gown, and high on horse he sat,
Upon his head a Flemish beaver hat;
His boots were fastened rather elegantly. (Chaucer, 1996, p.8)

His boots are elegantly crafted which is another clear sign of his financial success.

In contrast, a **deconcentrated portrait** disperses the character's description throughout the text, allowing the reader to become acquainted with their appearance gradually. This technique mimics real-life perception since no one can remain inalterable over time.

For Chaucer, a deconstructed portrait serves several purposes, specifically to add realism to his narrative; engage the reader in constructing the character's appearance and allow for irony and satire. For instance, the Friar, another pleasure-seeking and carefree clergyman, whose duty is to care for the poor, something he never actually does. The details of the Friar's appearance are scattered throughout the text.

The author begins by describing the Friar's physical appearance, notably comparing his white neck to a lily of May. However, this comparison is not merely meant to highlight the whiteness of his skin. The Lily of May traditionally symbolises purity and love—the qualities that hardly define the Friar. This suggests Chaucer's sarcastic tone in the portrayal. (Dempster, 1932)

His throat was white as lily of the May; (Chaucer, 1996, p.7)

Chaucer then focuses on the Friar's love for spending time in taverns. Only after that do we learn about his rounded physique and lavish clothing, which resemble the attire of a pope or a nobleman rather than that of a humble clergyman.

But he was like a lord or like a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
That rounded like a bell, as you may guess. (Chaucer, 1996, p.8)

Chaucer tells us about the Friar's smooth-talking nature, thus emphasising his habit of flattering and gossiping. Finally, at the end of the passage, we become aware of his twinkling eyes. This final image further intensifies the irony of comparing him to the Lily of May—purity is contrasted with his deceptive nature, while love is replaced by lust and indulgence.

His two eyes twinkled in his head as bright
As do the stars within the frosty night. (Chaucer, 1996, p.8)

One more classification of the verbal portrait is put forward by Bespalov (Bespalov, 2006). The author identifies four types of verbal portraits:

1. Sketchy portrait
2. Evaluative portrait
3. Situational portrait
4. Descriptive portrait

The sketchy portrait briefly depicts a character's key traits with one or two distinctive features. To some extent, it aligns with the minimalist portrait described by Gabel. While Gabel calls this type of character description a "minimalist portrait", emphasising its conciseness, simplicity, and selective details, Bespalov prefers to term it a "sketchy portrait". Essentially, both styles aim to create a quick and purposeful image in the reader's mind—a character depicted with a few carefully chosen details, helping the author avoid overloading the text with lengthy descriptions. However, research indicates a slight distinction: in a sketchy portrait, the details given to a character tend to take on symbolic significance.

According to Bespalov, this type of description is mainly used for secondary or episodic characters. This is somewhat true for medieval literature. For instance, there is almost no physical description of the Plowman, an honest, hardworking, pious man who does not even have a tale assigned to him. We only know one detail about his clothing.

In a tabard he rode upon a mare. (Chaucer, 1996, p.15)

From this line, it becomes obvious that the Plowman wore a tabard (a simple workman's smock) and rode a mare (a female horse). The tabard was a loose-fitting, sleeveless outer garment, commonly worn by laborers, emphasizing his humble and hardworking nature.

The evaluative portrait reflects the author's explicit attitude toward a character. This type frequently appears in literary works of various movements. However, a purely evaluative portrait does not exist in its absolute form: each of the portrait types discussed in the paper contains implicitly or explicitly expressed evaluative elements. In reality, portrait types often blend together, reflecting the complexity of character representation in literature. Thus, it is not always possible to draw sharp distinctions between them.

Chaucer is particularly famous for his evaluative portraits, as each description reflects his attitude toward the characters. This is evident in his choice of words, use of contrasts, and subtle irony. The greater the number of physical features is, the more negative the author's disposition toward the character becomes. Let's compare the Parson and the Miller.

The priest embodies Christian virtues; he is flawless and one of the few characters whom Chaucer presents in a purely positive light. The only physical detail we know about him is his thin physique.

He was a learned man also, a clerk, (Chaucer, 1996, p.14)

Chaucer does not describe his clothing, but given that he donates even his small income to those in need, it is reasonable to assume that his attire is modest, neat, yet worn over time.

This character is not preoccupied with material wealth, and consequently, the author did not find it necessary to provide a detailed verbal portrait of him. He prefers to concentrate on his good deeds.

The Miller, on the other hand, is described in detail. He is burly and large-boned, of broad, muscular build. He has a red beard which is compared to a fox's fur, somehow indicating his deceitful and cunning nature. The Miller has a very distinguishing feature, a hairy wart on his nose, along with large nostrils and an enormous mouth which is compared to a furnace, suggesting that his speech serves to mask both his physical and moral coarseness (Horobin, 2003).

He was a chunky fellow, broad of build;
He'd heave a door from hinges if he willed,
Or break it through, by running, with his head.
His beard, as any sow or fox, was red,
And broad it was as if it were a spade.
Upon the coping of his nose he had
A wart, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs (Chaucer, 1996, p.16).

As for his attire, Chaucer dresses him in a hooded cloak in white and blue, a striking contrast to his rough exterior. A hooded cloak also carries a deep symbolic meaning. The hood hides the face, creating an illusion of secrecy or deception. Thus, with his clothing, the Miller is trying to conceal his lust for pleasure.

A white coat and blue hood he wore, this lad (Chaucer, 1996, p.16).

The character's verbal portrait evokes a strongly negative impression. It highlights his inner corruption, reinforcing the idea that his outward appearance reflects his flawed nature. In the Prologue, almost the entire passage is dedicated to him focusing on his physical traits and emphasising his crude and untrustworthy personality.

The situational portrait refers to the depiction of a character within a specific situation, where their actions, emotions, and surrounding environment collectively shape their overall image.

Since the character portraits are only presented in the General Prologue, each described in just a few lines, and we do not see characters undergoing dynamic development.

The descriptive portrait offers a detailed account of a character's appearance. This style of characterisation was widespread among early writers, whose primary aim was to depict their characters vividly. A descriptive portrait often coincides with an extended type, providing a thorough view of the character's physical features, personality, and sometimes even their background or social status. The portrait of the Wife of Bath exemplifies a descriptive portrait.

The Wife of Bath is an exceptionally cheerful and bon vivant woman. Her clothing is of outstanding quality. She wears red stockings, which at that time were seen as a symbol of passion and temptation (Ward, 2006). Her shoes are soft and stylish, and her pale face is highlighted by rosy cheeks and lips.

Her hose were of the choicest scarlet red,
Close gartered, and her shoes were soft and new.
Bold was her face, and fair, and red of hue (Chaucer, 1996, p.13).

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Chaucer continues his narrative by describing her attire, mentioning her large hat, well-fitted clothing (which also emphasises her full figure).

Well wimpled, aye, and over all a hat
As broad as is a buckler or a targe;
A rug was tucked around her buttocks large (Chaucer, 1996, p.14).

Although the details of the Wife of Bath's appearance and attire are scattered throughout the narrative without a strict structural order, the reader can still vividly imagine her character to the fullest. Although she leads an unconventional lifestyle, the reader does not despise her. This is because she does not pretend to be something she is not.

4. The Frame Structure of Character Portraits in *The Canterbury Tales'*

As Minsky suggests, our knowledge is stored in memory in the form of data structures (frames), which represent stereotyped situations. 'This is a remembered framework to be adapted to fit reality by changing details as necessary' (Brown&Yule 1983, 238). The paper argues that each portrait type is associated with a particular stereotyped situation reflected in an underlying cognitive structure (or a frame) stored in memory. Consequently, one of the aims of the study was to reveal the frames linked to the portrait types under analysis and show how they are realised in *The Canterbury Tales*. The table below displays: (a) general tendencies in the physical descriptions of Chaucer's characters; (b) symbolic readings of the appearance features and their link to deeper moral and social traits; (c) the narrative technique and descriptive sequence used in the portrait types under analysis.

Character	**Physical Traits**	**Symbolic Meaning**	**Description Type**	**Order of Description**
Knight	Modest dress, stained tunic	Humility, honour, devotion, nobility	Minimalist + Evaluative	General impression → Clothing
Squire	Curly hair, embroidered clothes, youthful, fresh face	Youth, vanity, romantic inclination, vitality	Extended + Evaluative	General impression → Hair → Face → Clothing
Yeoman	Green hood, brown face, well-equipped (bow, arrows)	Outdoorsman, reliability, practical skill	Concentrated	Clothing → Skin tone → Equipment
Prioress	Elegant nose, soft red mouth, blue eyes, wide forehead, small, slender fingers	Beauty, affectation, courtly pretension	Extended + Evaluative + Concentrated	Face → Eyes → Forehead → Hands → Clothing
Monk	Fat, bald, shiny face, prominent eyeballs, fine clothes (fur-lined, gold pin)	Worldliness, sensuality, corruption of religious ideals	Extended + Evaluative	Body type → Head → Eyes → Clothing
Friar	Twinkling eyes, white neck, rounded physique, well-dressed	Immorality, indulgence, social climbing	Extended + Evaluative + Deconcentrated	Neck → Physique → Clothing → Eyes

Merchant	Forking beard, motley dress, Flemish beaver hat	Self-importance, social aspiration, deception	Concentrated + Evaluative	Beard → Clothing → Headwear
Clerk (Oxford)	Hollow look, threadbare clothes	Intellectualism, poverty, virtue	Minimalist + Evaluative	Face → Clothing
Sergeant at Law	Homely, discreet dress, wise appearance	Respectability, intelligence, possible manipulation	Minimalist	Clothing → General impression
Franklin	White beard, rosy complexion, jolly appearance	Wealth, hospitality, hedonism	Concentrated + Evaluative	Beard → Complexion → Overall appearance
Guildsmen	Well-dressed, polished gear	Social ambition, pride in craft	Deconcentrated	Clothing → Accessories
Cook	Ulcer on his knee	Physical repulsiveness, moral decay	Minimalist + Evaluative	Specific detail (ulcer)
Shipman	Tan skin, dagger around neck	Danger, boldness, lack of morality	Minimalist	Skin tone → Weapon
Doctor of Medicine	Red and blue garments, loves gold	Greed, commercialism in medicine	Extended + Evaluative	Clothing → Preferences
Wife of Bath	Pale face, gap teeth, red cheeks and lips, large hips, red stockings, large hat, shoes	Lust, strong will, sexual confidence	Extended + Evaluative + Concentrated	Clothing → Shoes → Face → Teeth → Body shape
Parson	Lean	Spiritual purity, moral integrity	Minimalist	Physique →General impression
Plowman	Simple dress, honest appearance	Christian virtue, humility	Minimalist + Evaluative	Clothing → General impression
Miller	Broad, red beard, wart on nose, black nostrils, wide mouth, stout build, hooded cloak	Aggression, vulgarity	Concentrated + Evaluative	Build → Beard → Nose → Mouth → Clothing
Manciple	No detailed description	Cleverness, shrewdness	Minimalist	Not applicable
Reeve	Slender, choleric, short hair, shaven beard, long legs, blue coat	Secretiveness, bitterness	Deconcentrated + Evaluative	Build → Hair → Beard → Legs → Clothing
Summoner	Fire-red face, carbuncles, scabby brows, narrow eyes, stinking breath	Corruption, lust, drunkenness	Extended + Concentrated + Evaluative	Face → Skin problems → Eyes → Breath
Pardoner	Long yellow hair, bulging eyes, smooth face, high-pitched voice	Deceit, greed, spiritual emptiness	Extended + Evaluative + Concentrated	Hair → Eyes → Face → Voice

Conclusion

This paper examines the verbal portrait of literary characters and their classification based on Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. The study demonstrates the significance of verbal portraiture as a powerful stylistic and semantic tool in literature. In The Canterbury Tales, Chaucer employs physical descriptions to illuminate characters' moral traits and social roles within medieval society.

Various typologies about the issue highlight different aspects of character portraits, such as length, structural distribution, and narrative function. The analysis draws on three principal frameworks: Gabel's minimalist and extended portraits (Gabel, 1964), Bazilova and Suleimanova's concentrated and deconcentrated portraits (Bazilova & Suleimanova, 2012), and Bespalov's sketchy, evaluative, situational, and descriptive portraits (Bespalov, 2001).

Character portraits are not rigid; they evolve with the narrative and often serve multiple functions. Consequently, these categories are fluid and frequently overlap. Minimalist portraits depict noble characters (the Knight, the Clerk, the Parson, the Plowman) or those primarily defined by professional roles (the Yeoman, the Sergeant at Law, the Cook, the Shipman, the Manciple). Extended portraits emphasise materialistic traits, with greater attention to physical detail correlating with moral corruption.

Both concentrated and deconcentrated portraits may depict virtuous or flawed characters. In deconcentrated portraits, Chaucer highlights appearance, actions, and moral qualities. Evaluative portraits often appear alongside other types, enriching characterisation and reinforcing authorial ideology. Attractive or sparsely described characters tend to possess positive traits, while unattractive characters are associated with negative qualities.

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Ġvino, Wine, Vino ─ The Study of Linguistic Landscape in Tbilisi

Abstract

This study investigates the linguistic landscape of Tbilisi's city centre, with a particular focus on the visibility and spatial distribution of Georgian, English, and Russian across public signage. As a rapidly globalizing urban space with a complex sociolinguistic history, Tbilisi offers a compelling case for examining how language is used in public settings and what this reveals about identity, power relations, and sociopolitical dynamics in contemporary Georgia. The research aims to explore the symbolic and communicative roles of these three languages in the city's central and touristically attractive areas, where commercial and cultural activity is dense and language use is often strategic.

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative analysis with qualitative interpretation. The dataset comprises 45 photographs of business signs, restaurant menus, and graffiti collected through purposive sampling in Tbilisi's urban core. The images were selected based on their diversity of language use, visibility, and relevance to both local and tourist audiences. Each image was analysed using a set of linguistic landscape analytical criteria, including language prominence, script type, placement, and intended audience. Special attention was paid to whether languages appeared monolingually or multilingually, and how language choice might reflect broader economic or political motivations.

Findings indicate that English has become the most prominent language in Tbilisi's city centre signage, often appearing independently or as the primary language in multilingual signs. This dominance reflects English's global status and the growing emphasis on tourism, international business, and modernity. Georgian, despite being the official state language and a central component of national identity, more often appears alongside English rather than as a standalone medium, particularly in commercial contexts. This pattern raises important questions about the symbolic status of the Georgian language in spaces of high visibility and economic activity. Russian, once a dominant language in public and private domains during the Soviet era, now appears less frequently, reflecting both shifts in language policy and demographic changes, including decreased Russian-speaking populations and evolving political relationships.

This research contributes to the growing field of linguistic landscape studies by offering empirical evidence from a post-Soviet, multilingual context. It highlights how language in public spaces is not only a matter of communication but also a reflection of broader sociocultural hierarchies, economic forces, and political ideologies. The study's findings have implications for language policy, urban planning, and debates surrounding cultural identity in Georgia and comparable transitional societies.

Keywords: *linguistic landscape (LL), multilingualism, language policy, language planning*

1. Introduction

The study of Linguistic Landscapes (LL) is a relatively new yet essential field within sociolinguistics and language planning, with the term being officially introduced by Landry and Bourhis in 1997. The research questions in this field have evolved from merely examining signs in public spaces to addressing more complex phenomena, considering which languages are visible on public signage and their social meanings in the effort to establish political or social dominance. In this context, the linguistic landscape of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, serves as a captivating case study, illustrating the link between local language policies and multilingualism. To date, the linguistic landscape of Tbilisi and Georgia remains less studied overall. Consequently, this research seeks to address this gap. As demonstrated in this paper, the presence and arrangement of Georgian, English, and Russian on Tbilisi's public signage in the city centre reveal significant insights into the community's evolving identities and power relations. By examining the visibility and distribution of these languages, this study aims to understand how well the Tbilisian linguistic landscape reflects the official language policy and the broader social, cultural, and political influences shaping contemporary Georgia.

2. Linguistic Landscape

The term "Linguistic Landscapes" (LL) was first formally used by Landry and Bourhis in 1997 when they discussed multilingual societies (such as Canada or Belgium) and the importance of linguistic planning in urban spaces, particularly in terms of the symbolic role of language and the invisible struggle for power between linguistic communities. This research was groundbreaking because it linked the language used on public signs to broader sociolinguistic issues, such as identity and power dynamics. According to the authors, language planners in Belgium, in 1980, were the first to recognise the significance of marking linguistic boundaries and regulating the visibility of languages on public signs. This marked the start of the unofficial understanding of Linguistic Landscapes.

Linguistic Landscape “refers to the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region” (Landry and Bourhis, 1997, p. 23). As the authors state, despite seeming simple at first glance, this term carries an important and symbolic function, subconsciously conveying a strong message about the vitality of a language within a society. In turn, the vitality of a language influences the status or prestige of a particular speech community and the extent of institutional support it receives from the government. Therefore, the authors argue that the languages most prominently displayed in public spaces tend to have higher status and institutional backing. In contrast, the absence of languages from urban areas may indicate lower prestige or marginalisation of their speakers (1997). Consequently, LL can be crucial in shaping society's identity and reflecting power dynamics. The presence or absence of specific languages in public spaces can signal dominance or coexistence among different speech groups.

A wide range of research analysing linguistic choices in public spaces followed the seminal study by Landry and Bourhis (1997). One notable example is the research conducted by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), which examined billboards and signs in Israel, Brussels, and Tokyo, demonstrating that the linguistic landscape mirrors societal, political, cultural, or demographic power structures. They argue that signs serve as tools for navigating physical spaces and are also deeply intertwined with power and identity, making each sign significant in analysing ongoing struggles over space. The authors distinguish between two main types of linguistic signs—top-down and bottom-up. The state or institutions regulate top-down signs and typically conform to official language policies. In contrast, bottom-up signs are created by private actors and often exhibit resilience against these policies, more accurately reflecting societal linguistic preferences.

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In their study, Cenoz and Gorter (2006) focus on minority languages and their representation in signage. They argue that LL can act as a mirror reflecting the vitality of minority languages and their efforts to maintain identity in a multilingual society. The authors examined the Basque language and Frisian alongside Spanish and Dutch, respectively, and found that while minority languages are visible in public signage and official places, Dutch and Spanish dominate the commercial and private sectors, indicating societal power disparities. Notably, despite the bilingual nature of the Basque Country and Friesland, the Dutch and Spanish still hold dominance, illustrating ongoing power struggles.

Similarly, Totibadze et al. (2018) explore the linguistic landscape of restaurants in several Dutch cities—Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague. They highlight how the use of languages such as English, Chinese, Italian, and Spanish in restaurant windows or menus often exceeds the use of Dutch. According to them, these linguistic choices are often linked to the identity and ethnicity of the cuisine. They are made intuitively by restaurant owners to attract diverse clientele and evoke cultural perceptions rather than through deliberate marketing strategies. As a result, they suggest that much of the private linguistic landscape in these cities is shaped more by instinct than formal planning, offering valuable insights into multilingual societies and how identity is constructed.

2.1 Geosemiotics

Scollon & Scollon (2003), in their work Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World, examine the connection between language, space, and semiotics. They use sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and semiotics to explain how language is presented in physical environments. Language is deeply tied to public signage and spatial surroundings, creating meaning around us, shaping social interactions and power structures, and constructing social realities. The term Scollon coined to describe the relationship between language and the physical world is geosemiotics. It examines how language, whether linguistic or non-linguistic, appears on public signs and how it influences how people interpret and perceive it. The authors also stress the importance of “discourse in place”. They believe that where and how language is placed in public spaces carries meaning and is not an arbitrary system.

2.2 Multilingualism

Gorter (2006) introduces the concept of the linguistic landscape, through which one can analyse multilingualism and the symbolic meanings of languages in various societies. As the author argues, multilingual societies continually grapple with issues of power and dominance, which can be observed in public signage. These signs offer valuable insights into the power dynamics within a region. Furthermore, some countries regulate multilingualism on public signs, with the government mandating and controlling language use in public spaces. In some areas, multilingualism is encouraged; in others, it is discouraged. Gorter (2006) also suggests that informal or commercial signs and the languages used on them can provide a deeper understanding of societal power relations and identity, as they are less regulated and more reflective of community language practices. Commercial signs often aim for economic advantages, such as serving diverse linguistic groups.

English increasingly appears in public spaces, even in regions with no historical or official status. The widespread use of this language is attributed to its role as a global lingua franca, making it a prominent feature on signage and billboards and signalling modernity and prestige by appealing to a broader market of consumers (Blommaert, 2010; Piller, 2003).

2.3 Tbilisian Linguistic Landscape

Government language policies often influence the languages displayed in public spaces. Some countries have explicit rules about which languages can be used in public signage. In contrast, others may adopt more inclusive language policies that do not prohibit using multiple languages in public areas. The Georgian constitution declares Georgian as the official language of the state and requires public signs, especially on government or state buildings, to be written in Georgian. The Law on the State Language (2015) reaffirms Georgian as the primary language in public signage: “Texts of statements, notifications, titles, posters, signboards, placards, advertisements, and other visual information intended to inform the public are prepared in the official language. If necessary, appropriate information may be indicated in a non-official language and in those municipalities where representatives of national minorities reside, appropriate information may also be provided in the language of those minorities” (Article 24). Furthermore, any public signage in a foreign language must include Georgian text, with the size and placement being more prominent (Law of Georgia on official language, 2015).).

3. Methodology

The paper aims to analyse the linguistic landscape of a small tourist street in the centre of Tbilisi. Specifically, the study examines (1) which languages are visible on private signage in the street and (2) the social meanings conveyed through these displays. The analysis was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative analysis determines the frequency of each language in the collected data, providing a statistical overview of the linguistic landscape in Tbilisi. In contrast, the qualitative study explores the sociocultural implications of the languages used in the area. Overall, 45 photographs were taken by the author on a small street, reflecting the languages employed in the tourist hotspot. This street was deliberately chosen for its central location; it is in the city's heart and is one of the most frequently visited places. Consequently, it clearly illustrates which languages are prioritised in public signage and reveals the power dynamics, where the arrangement of languages underscores prestige, accessibility, or national identity. The images include small or large private businesses, graffiti, and restaurant menus.

4. Results and Discussion

According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (2025), the highest number of tourists between 2022 and the first quarter of 2025 came from Russia, followed by visitors from Turkey and Armenia, indicating that their main reasons were holidays, leisure, and recreation (GeoStat, 2025). Moreover, during the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022, Georgia experienced an influx of 100,000 wartime Russians relocating to the country and seeking permanent residence. However, by 2023, more than 30,000 had left due to the “anti-Russian sentiment” in society. While the Russians contributed to some economic growth, they also caused inflation of the Georgian Lari and a spike in rental prices, making life much more challenging for many Georgians (Kucera, 2024). Given these circumstances, it is unsurprising that the Russian language has recently appeared on public signage, especially in tourist areas.

By analysing 45 photos collected for the study, three main language groups—Georgian, English, and Russian—were identified. Below are the number of signs for each language and the order in which the languages were presented.

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Only Georgian	0
Only English	19
Only Russian	1
Georgian, English, Russian	8
Georgian, Russian, English	2
English, Georgian, Russian	1
English, Russian, Georgian	1
Russian, English, Georgian	0
Georgian, English	5
English, Georgian	2
English, Russian	5
Russian, English	1
Other*	Chinese 1, Arabic 2

* These languages were not presented alone. They were always in combination with either Georgian, English, Russian or all of the above.

The presented table highlights the linguistic landscape of Tbilisi's city centre and the use of Georgian, English, and Russian on various bottom-up signs. Based on the data, the following observations can be made:

English is the predominant language, standing alone and appearing most frequently in combinations. Specifically, there are 19 cases where signs solely employ English. Additionally, English appears 17 times alongside other languages, such as Georgian and Russian. This results in 36 instances out of 45 where English is used, making it the most prevalent language in the city centre. This trend can be explained by the nature of the language. As mentioned earlier, English is the global language and an obvious choice for businesses targeting tourists, as it facilitates broader communication.

Despite being the country's official language and with the government establishing clear guidelines for public signage, Georgian never appears as the sole language on signs in the city centre; it is only found in multilingual signs. Georgian is used in 18 cases, combined with English and/or Russian (Georgian-English-Russian in 8 cases; Georgian-English in 5 instances; English-Georgian in 2 cases). This is quite surprising, given that Georgian is the official language and that the state requires business owners to display it in their signs and advertisements. Ideally, it should be visible on every sign.

The presence of the Russian language is also notable, owing to the reasons discussed above. However, it appears less frequently than the English language. Interestingly, only one Russian sign was observed in the area under study. The linguistic landscape of the city centre suggests that, although Russian remains popular, it is not as dominant as English.

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The most common multilingual signage order features Georgian, English, and Russian. Tbilisi's city centre displays a layered linguistic landscape, where English is central, with Georgian and Russian playing secondary roles. This likely reflects the area's status as a tourist hotspot and the primary source of income for many small businesses. Consequently, owners choose English as the primary language to communicate their message efficiently and attract customers. The status of Georgian as the secondary language is concerning, particularly given that the country's language policy mandates the inclusion of the state language on public signs. These findings emphasise the need for more sensitive language planning aligned with the country's official language. At the same time, they acknowledge the practical realities of language use in Tbilisi's evolving linguistic landscape.

5. Conclusions

The study of the linguistic landscape has progressed over recent decades from merely documenting signs in cities to analysing the deeper socio-cultural meanings behind language choices in public spaces. Many sociolinguists aim to understand the ongoing struggle for dominance and political power. The linguistic landscape of Tbilisi vividly reflects the intricate relationship between local language policies, global linguistic trends, and the country's socio-political realities. Through a small study of the visibility and distribution of Georgian, English, and Russian on public signage in a representative part of Tbilisi's city centre, this research highlights the crucial role language choices play in shaping identity and signalling power dynamics in Georgia's capital.

The results reveal a surprising prevalence of English in the city centre, despite it having no official status or historical significance in Georgia. The visibility of English on public signs indicates its globalised character. It underscores the city's focus on tourism and economic integration, as it is predominantly used by businesses seeking to attract diverse clientele. This emphasises the commercial motivations of private owners who prioritise accessibility over adherence to local language policies. Conversely, Georgian, the official language of the country and a legal requirement for public signage, often occupies a secondary position in multilingual displays and rarely appears as the sole language in tourist areas. The findings suggest a discrepancy between the official linguistic policy that mandates the prominence of Georgian and the informal practices of business owners, who respond to market demands and customer preferences. This demonstrates that language visibility negotiates social, economic, and cultural realities. The increasing presence of Russian is largely context-dependent and partly attributable to recent demographic shifts, including the influx of Russian-speaking residents and tourists due to regional conflicts. The limited study results show just one instance of Russian appearing as the sole language, which is neither thoroughly dominant nor entirely invisible, and its usage remains politically sensitive.

The linguistic landscape of Tbilisi is a complex, layered phenomenon embodying multiple, sometimes conflicting, identities and power structures. For policymakers and language planners, these findings indicate the need for a more rigorous or flexible approach to language planning in urban environments, considering the realities of multilingual practices in public spaces.

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Breach of Conversational Maxims in Courtroom Discourse: A Conversation Analysis Approach

Abstract

This article explores the phenomenon of implicature within courtroom discourse, adopting a qualitative research perspective to provide a nuanced understanding of how implied meanings function in legal interactions. Courtroom communication is inherently strategic, as participants—including judges, lawyers, defendants, and witnesses—navigate a complex network of linguistic and pragmatic choices. In such settings, conversational implicature becomes a powerful tool for shaping narratives, influencing perceptions, and advancing legal arguments.

In courtroom interactions, participants often diverge from the conventional norms of cooperative communication, as described in Grice's Cooperative Principle. Rather than merely exchanging information, they frequently engage in deliberate manipulations of language, creating implied meanings that serve their procedural and strategic goals. These deviations from expected conversational norms result in various implicatures instrumental in supporting or undermining particular legal positions.

The primary aim of this study is to identify and analyze the types of implicatures used to challenge and discredit opposing testimonies. By detecting violations of Grice's Maxims—quality, quantity, relation, and manner—the study seeks to uncover how legal representatives construct implications that cast doubt on opposing witnesses' reliability, consistency, or truthfulness. Lawyers, in particular, employ implicature to expose contradictions, highlight ambiguities, and subtly suggest dishonesty without directly accusing a witness of lying. Through careful questioning and selective framing of evidence, they generate meanings that go beyond the literal interpretation of words.

Defendants, on the other hand, utilize implicature defensively, often to assert their innocence or to strengthen the credibility of their testimonies. They may rely on indirect statements, omissions, or suggestive phrasing to avoid self-incrimination while conveying persuasive narratives. This dynamic interaction between legal actors creates a layered and complex discourse, where what is left unsaid can be as significant as what is explicitly stated.

The findings of this study demonstrate that implicature plays a pivotal role in the adversarial structure of courtroom proceedings. Lawyers strategically exploit implicature to weaken opposing arguments and influence judges and juries, while defendants leverage it to protect their positions and gain sympathy or trust. As a result, implicature emerges not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but as a central mechanism through which power, persuasion, and legal outcomes are negotiated in the courtroom. This highlights the importance of understanding pragmatic elements in forensic linguistics, as they provide critical insights into how meaning is constructed and contested in legal discourse.

Keywords: *courtroom discourse, implicature, conversational analysis, Grice's maxims*

1. Introduction

In legal discourse, language is both a medium for presenting facts and a strategic tool for influencing perceptions of truth. Courtroom conversations, in particular, are characterized by complex communicative strategies where the literal meaning of utterances may differ from the intended implication. One such strategy is conversational implicature, through which speakers convey meaning indirectly by relying on context, shared knowledge, and inference rather than explicit statements.

In courtroom settings, legal actors, especially attorneys and defendants, frequently employ implicatures to support or challenge credibility, subtly guide interpretations, and manoeuvre within the constraints of legal procedures. These interactions often involve deliberate violations of the cooperative principles proposed by Grice, such as the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. In many cases, such violations are not accidental but purposeful, serving rhetorical or strategic ends in adversarial dialogues. Thus, the aims of this paper are as follows:

- to investigate how implicature operates as a subtle yet strategic tool in courtroom discourse to erode the credibility of opposing testimony;
- to identify which of Grice's Maxims are most frequently violated in these interactions, along with the pragmatic intentions behind such violations.

1.1. Theoretical Framework of Conversational Analysis (CA)

Conversation analysis involves studying social interactions within everyday situations, encompassing verbal and non-verbal behaviors. It is a common technique in sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and psychology. Grice (1967) introduced four conversational maxims, elucidating the link between utterances and their inferred meanings. As components of the cooperative principle, the maxims are of relevance, quality, quantity, and manner (Grice, 1967).

Grice presumed that conversational implicature involves utterances with implicated meaning in communication. Similarly, according to May (2002), in our daily communication, we tend to utter propositions in our speech, relying on conversational maxims to infer things from overt statements.

Grice's (1975) concept of conversational implicature has been widely expanded, with scholars applying it across diverse discourse types. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) developed this work by creating a systematic approach to spoken interaction, highlighting turn-taking as a key organizational principle. Their analysis reveals how speakers follow implicit social rules, emphasizing the structured nature of seemingly spontaneous conversation (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974).

Heritage (1984) argued that conversation analysis uncovers how institutions are "talked into being," as interaction patterns reflect and reproduce broader social structures. Within this framework, implicature functions within dominant systems of relevance, shaping how meaning is inferred and negotiated (Ma, 2015).

In legal discourse, these theoretical insights are particularly salient. Danet (1980) described courtroom interaction as a form of institutional talk shaped by asymmetrical power, where implicatures are strategically manipulated to serve adversarial aims (Ma, 2015).

Further exploring the strategic use of implicature in legal contexts, Harris (2001) noted that attorneys frequently exploit the maxim of relevance to imply discrediting information about witness testimony without making direct accusations. Such uses of implicature enable legal actors to insinuate doubt while maintaining plausible deniability, thus enhancing rhetorical effect without overtly violating court decorum (Harris, 2001).

Eades (2008) brought a cross-cultural perspective to the discussion, highlighting differing pragmatic norms such as silence, directness, and question-and-answer sequences. Indigenous witnesses can lead to

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serious misunderstandings in court, emphasizing the importance of culturally sensitive discourse interpretation (Eades, 2008). Ehrlich and Sidnell (2006) analyzed the sequential organization of courtroom talk, revealing how it enables strategic ambiguity. They argue that implicature operates in individual utterances and throughout extended institutional interactions, influencing the construction and contestation of legal facts (Ehrlich & Sidnell, 2006).

From a critical discourse perspective, Fairclough (2013) argued that institutional power is often embedded in conversational patterns, where certain implicatures are presented as neutral or self-evident, thereby masking their ideological foundations and reinforcing hierarchical structures. Expanding this analysis, Carr (2010) examined how expert witnesses may use technically dense language that violates the maxim of manner, thereby generating an implicature of authority and credibility to enhance their perceived trustworthiness.

Conversation Analysis (CA) examines the structure and dynamics of talk-in-interaction, focusing on how participants organize communication, negotiate meaning, and co-construct social realities. Researchers analyze detailed transcripts of naturally occurring audio or video-recorded interactions to identify recurring patterns and strategies used to achieve communicative goals such as information exchange, power assertion, meaning negotiation, social relationship management, and conflict resolution. It examines how speakers take turns in conversation, including the interlocutors' timing, pauses, and transitions (Zidros, 2015).

CA emerged in the 1960s and 1970s primarily through the work of scholars such as Harvey Sacks, Emanuel A. Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson. They developed CA to systematically analyze naturally occurring talk in various settings, including everyday conversations, institutional interactions, and professional discourse (Zidros, 2015). Conversation Analysis (CA) closely studies audio or video recordings of spontaneous interactions, transcribing verbal and nonverbal elements—such as pauses, overlaps, intonation, and gestures—using specialized notation. This rigorous analysis uncovers patterns like turn-taking, repair sequences, and other interactional features (Aceron, 2015).

A key aspect of Conversation Analysis (CA) is its focus on the sequential organization of talk, where each turn builds on or redirects previous ones. This sequential analysis reveals how meaning is collaboratively constructed and negotiated in real time. CA also examines participants 'interactional competence—their ability to follow conversational norms, manage turn-taking, repair misunderstandings, and demonstrate cultural and contextual awareness (Aceron, 2015).

CA has been applied across various fields, including sociology, linguistics, communication studies, psychology, anthropology, and education. Researchers use CA to study phenomena such as doctor-patient interactions, courtroom discourse, classroom interactions, media interviews, and online communication. It is closely linked to ethnomethodology, which examines how individuals interpret and navigate their social world. Ethnomethodologists contend that social order is actively produced and maintained through everyday interactions, and CA offers a detailed, micro-analytical approach to studying these processes (Sidnell, 2010).

CA research continues to evolve through refined methods, expanded contexts, and integration with fields like discursive psychology and interactional sociolinguistics (Sidnell, 2010).

As Grice suggested, it is a form of communication where specific meanings are embedded or implied within the conversation. Implicature refers to the meaning indirectly communicated through an utterance rather than being explicitly stated (Grice, 1967). Yuan (2012) describes implicature as an implicit aspect of language use, requiring both the speaker and the listener to draw on shared knowledge and infer meaning. Unlike semantic inference, implicature depends not only on literal sense but also on contextual assumptions. Speakers may intentionally violate conversational maxims to convey intentions indirectly, enabling listeners to interpret the implied meaning—a process known as conversational implicature (Yuan 2012).

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2. Co-operative Principle in CD

In courtroom communication, participants use various language strategies to achieve their goals, often navigating complex institutional rules and expectations. One particularly revealing strategy involves manipulating conversational maxims—principles outlined in H.P. Grice‘s Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1967). While the Cooperative Principle suggests that speakers cooperate to communicate clearly and effectively, courtroom discourse often features deliberate breaches of these maxims. Examining how and why such breaches happen allows us to uncover the subtle, often strategic, ways meaning is negotiated or implied within this highly structured communicative environment. Conversational implicature provides a valuable framework for analyzing how implied meanings arise when conversational norms are intentionally flouted. Below is an outline of how breaches occur and their implications:

- **Maxim of Quantity** suggests that speakers provide appropriate information without being overly verbose or withholding crucial details. In the courtroom, violations of this maxim might involve lawyers deliberately withholding information to manipulate the narrative in favor of their client or overloading the opposing party with excessive details to confuse or overwhelm them**.**
- **Maxim of Quality** concerns the truthfulness and accuracy of conveyed information. In courtroom discourse, violations occur when witnesses give false testimony, or lawyers present misleading evidence, undermining legal credibility and the pursuit of justice.
- **Maxim of Relevance** requires contributions to be relevant and directly related to the topic. In courtroom discourse, violations may include introducing irrelevant information or pursuing unrelated lines of questioning to strategically discredit the opposition or sway the jury.
- **Maxim of Manner** pertains to clarity, coherence, and manner of expression. In courtroom discourse, violations may include ambiguous or convoluted statements designed to obscure meaning. Lawyers often use complex legal jargon or rhetorical strategies to influence judges or juries without offering clear arguments (Grice, 1967). Here‘s a breakdown of the manner maxim:

1. **Be Clear:** Speakers should express their thoughts directly and unambiguously, avoiding unnecessarily complicated or convoluted language**.**
2. **Be Concise:** Speakers should convey information briefly and efficiently, providing enough detail to be understood without unnecessary verbosity**.**
3. **Be Organized:** Speakers should present information logically and coherently, making it easier for listeners to follow the flow of ideas.
4. **Avoid Obscurity:** Speakers should avoid using language that is vague, overly abstract, or difficult to interpret, ensuring that their message is easily comprehensible.

3. Methodology

This article's theoretical framework is based on Grice‘s Maxims theory and Conversational Analysis (CA), as outlined in the introduction. The linguistic data for this research come from the ”10 Official Transcripts of the U.S. Supreme Court,” which are publicly accessible and serve as authentic examples of legal discourse in a high-stakes institutional setting. The study adopts a qualitative approach to answering these questions, analyzing courtroom conversation transcripts and focusing on how implicatures function within the legal context. Special attention is given to exchanges between attorneys and witnesses and between defendants and legal representatives to uncover the pragmatic strategies embedded in their speech.

The data collection involved selecting complete transcripts from various Supreme Court cases, ensuring a diversity of topics and participants. Selection criteria focused on extended witness-lawyer or judge-witness interactions relevant for pragmatic analysis. Priority was given to transcripts containing spontaneous responses, argumentation, and dialogic exchanges where implicatures, hedging, or deviations from expected cooperative behaviour could be observed.

The analysis was conducted in three stages**:**

1. **Data Selection and Extraction**: Relevant excerpts were manually chosen based on their potential to demonstrate violations of Gricean maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relevance and Manner). These included segments with unclear, irrelevant, exaggerated, or misleading statements, often found in witness testimonies or attorney questioning.
2. **Categorization**: Each excerpt was classified according to the specific maxim(s) it breached. Particular attention was paid to vagueness, irrelevance, hedging, emotive language, or over-explanation—each indicating potential violations of conversational norms.
3. **Conversational Analysis** (CA): Using CA techniques, the selected dialogues were further examined for interactional patterns such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs, and repair strategies. These elements helped reveal how participants manage miscommunication, assert power, or strategically breach maxims to influence courtroom narratives.

Throughout the analysis, emphasis was placed on the contextual relevance and implications of each utterance, examining how certain conversational choice may affect the perceived credibility, fairness, or objectivity of the legal process. This multi-layered approach provided an understanding of how linguistic strategies and pragmatic violations function within the judicial system.

4. Findings

Empirical analysis of courtroom discourse reveals systematic patterns in how conversational principles function within legal settings, often exposing how speakers, particularly attorneys and witnesses, strategically manipulate Gricean maxims to serve adversarial aims. The following case studies show that strategic manipulation of conversational norms fulfils specific legal objectives and can influence judicial outcomes. The subsequent extracts illustrate case studies demonstrating how implicature operates within authentic legal exchanges. Each extract underscores the pragmatic mechanisms involved, such as implicature through maxim flouting, silence, indirectness, or presupposition, and demonstrates how the rules and aims of the courtroom shape these strategies.

EXTRACT: 1

Violation of Maxim of Quantity

[1] ***Barrister:*** *Did you pick up her near your neighborhood?*
Defendant: *Unfortunately, I did.*
Barrister *: Unfortunately for the victim as well.* (Supreme Court of the United States. (2023). *Groff v. DeJoy, 22-174* [Oral argument transcript]).

From the above-mentioned extract [1], the defendant's response breaches the Maxim of Quantity. The phrase "Unfortunately, I did," hints that their relationship was a mistake. As proposed by Grice, the Maxim of Quantity requires that a speaker provide just the right amount of information—neither too much nor too little—for the conversation to proceed effectively. There are two main reasons why the defendant offers an overly detailed response. The answer could include additional reasons, motivations, and causes, each serving different purposes. On the one hand, the information the defendant provides primarily aims to prove his innocence; conversely, it influences the interaction. The witness's response, "Unfortunately, I did, "suggests a sense of regret or acknowledgement that picking up had negative consequences or implications. The Barrister's reply, "Unfortunately for the victim as well, " recognizes and highlights that the witness's actions had adverse repercussions for the victim, supporting the suggestion that harm or wrongdoing took place.

Implicature: Witness's Response: "Unfortunately," suggests the witness acknowledges their involvement but implies that they regret it or recognize it was not a positive action.

Barrister's Response: By stating, "Unfortunately for the victim as well," the prosecutor implies that the victim suffered due to the witness's action, possibly suggesting harm or negative impact.

This exchange uses implicature effectively to convey emotional and contextual meaning without explicitly detailing the crime or incident. It allows the witness's acknowledgement of their action and the prosecutor's emphasis on the victim's plight to resonate with the judge and jury, potentially influencing perceptions and decisions.

EX: ***[2]***

Barrister: The problem in your family exists a long time.

Defendant: Yes, the problem is my mother.

Barrister: But Why?

Defendant: I was not raised by my mother, but by grandmother.

Barrister:: Can you tell us the reason of it?

Defendant: My mother is somewhat neglectful. She is self-centered and hot-tempered. I strongly wish to confront her. (Supreme Court of the United States. (2023). *Groff v. DeJoy, 22-174* [Oral argument transcript]).

In this courtroom exchange, the defendant's responses breach the Maxim of Quantity. The defendant provides more information than necessary in reply to the lawyer's questions, subtly implying messages about his family situation and his relationship with his mother. He offers detailed and emotionally charged answers, even when the barrister's questions require minimal or neutral responses. Instead, he adds emotive assessments (”self-centered,” “hot-tempered”) and a personal wish (”I strongly wish to confront her”), which are unnecessary for responding to the barrister's enquiry. This emotionally laden language exceeds what is informationally required and introduces implicit accusations and lingering tension.

When the lawyer states, "The problem in your family exists a long time," the defendant responds, "Yes, the problem is my mother," which exceeds the expected brevity. By solely blaming his mother for the entire family issue, the defendant implies blame and encourages the court to infer that her character and behavior are at the heart of the conflict.

Upon further inquiry by the lawyer, the defendant elaborates on his mother's negative traits, including adjectives like "neglectful, self-centered, hot-tempered, emphasizing a volatile and emotionally unstable relationship. Moreover, the defendant expresses a desire to commit a violent act against his mother, indicating deep-seated resentment and emotional distress. His final statement—“I strongly wish to confront her”—adds emotional intensity, implying a strong urge to challenge her directly. While the word ”confront” does not necessarily denote violence, in this context, it contrasts sharply with the formal setting of the courtroom and reveals an underlying emotional charge. The choice of language conveys unresolved anger, frustration, and possibly hostility, which exceeds the informational requirements of the barrister‘s questions and reshapes the courtroom narrative by foregrounding the defendant‘s troubled upbringing and complex familial tensions.

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Violation of Maxim of Quality

In courtroom interactions, violations of the maxims of quality are common. This can be expressed as courtroom participants contravening the principle of providing high-quality information. The principle of quality requires that contributions be truthful and supported by sufficient evidence. This adherence to truthfulness is not only a legal obligation but also a crucial aspect of maintaining the integrity of the judicial process, ensuring witnesses give genuine, relevant testimony rather than committing perjury, which is strictly prohibited by law. The standard ensures that evidence presented in court is based on factual accuracy. It is a strict legal requirement for witnesses to provide honest and relevant testimony, following legal standards to prevent perjury. The paraphrased text explains that in legal settings, it is vital for participants to provide accurate and truthful information supported by solid evidence to uphold the integrity and fairness of legal proceedings.

EXTRACT 2.
[3] Lawyer: *Can you describe the events leading up to the altercation?*
Witness: *The defendant was clearly aggressive towards the victim.*
(Territory of Guam v. United States, No. 20-382. (2021). *Transcript of oral argument*. Supreme Court of the United States).

This response demonstrates a violation of the Maxim of Quality. The witness offers a subjective evaluation ("clearly aggressive") without providing observable or verifiable details to support the claim. In legal discourse, particularly during witness testimony, statements should be grounded in factual evidence rather than personal interpretation or emotive language. Since the witness does not elaborate further, the response lacks the specificity to justify the evaluative claim.

From a pragmatic perspective, when a witness makes a claim without offering precise details or evidence, it can be problematic, especially in a courtroom, where accuracy and objectivity are crucial. In this case, the witness' statement depends more on personal opinion than observable facts, opening the door to bias and misinterpretation. As a result, this kind of response can weaken the credibility of the testimony and influence how the court understands the events.

[4] Judge: *Did you witness the defendant leaving the scene of the accident?*
Witness: *I believe I saw them driving away.*
(Territory of Guam v. United States, No. 20-382. (2021). *Transcript of oral argument*. Supreme Court of the United States).

In this example, using hedging language ("I believe") indicates uncertainty or a lack of confidence in their observation. Scientifically, such statements undermine the reliability of testimony as they suggest the witness may not have a clear memory or direct experience of the event, thereby compromising the accuracy and credibility of the information presented in court.

[5] Prosecutor*: Were you there when the argument happened?*
Witness*: No, but I know the defendant started it—he always causes trouble.. ((Territory of Guam v. United States*, No. 20-382. (2021). *Transcript of oral argument*. Supreme Court of the United States).

The witness presents something as fact without proof, making the statement unreliable or misleading. Therefore, it breaches the Maxim of Quality because the speaker lacks sufficient evidence but speaks as if they are certain.

In each of the analyzed examples, violations of the Maxim of Quality show how inaccuracies, subjective judgments, hearsay, and uncertainty can weaken the integrity of courtroom testimony. From a pragmatic perspective, such deviations can be problematic because they shift the basis of legal discourse from objective, verifiable facts to personal interpretation or unreliable information.

Adherence to the Maxim of Quality is both a pragmatic ideal and a legal requirement. It ensures that courtroom communication is truthful for fair decision-making. Violations compromise the reliability of testimony, potentially misleading judges and juries and undermining judicial outcomes. Therefore, maintaining accurate, evidence-based communication is essential to preserving the credibility and fairness of the legal process.

Violation of Maxim of Relevance

In legal contexts, maintaining relevance is essential for effective communication and the fair administration of justice. The principle of relevance ensures that information presented in court directly addresses the issues, avoiding distractions and fostering clear understanding among all participants. Violations of this principle can obscure important facts, mislead arguments, and hinder the determination of truth and justice in legal proceedings. Therefore, following the principle of relevance is crucial for upholding the integrity and efficiency of courtroom interactions.

Violating the principle of relevance in a courtroom can significantly weaken the clarity and effectiveness of communication during legal proceedings. Here are practical examples that show how this principle can be breached and their consequences:

[6] ***Judge:*** *Please describe what you witnessed at the scene of the incident.*
Witness: *I was wearing a blue shirt that day.*

(Minerva Surgical, Inc. v. Hologic, Inc., No. 20-440. (2021). *Transcript of oral argument*. Supreme Court of the United States).

The witness's response fails to address the judge's request for relevant information about the incident. Instead, it introduces unrelated details about personal attire that do not contribute to understanding the incident's events. This breach of relevance may cause confusion and disrupt courtroom efficiency by steering focus away from the essential facts.

[7] ***Lawyer****: Can you tell us what time you arrived at the crime scene?*
Witness*: I used to work at a bakery three years ago.*

(Minerva Surgical, Inc. v. Hologic, Inc., No. 20-440. (2021). *Transcript of oral argument*. Supreme Court of the United States).

The witness‘s response provides irrelevant background information instead of directly addressing the question about arrival time. This unrelated detail interrupts the flow of testimony, may confuse the jury, or cause delays in proceedings. It violates the Maxim of Relevance, as the response is not connected to the legal issue discussed.

[8] ***Prosecutor****: Did you hear any sounds during the incident?*
Witness*: My neighbor has a really loud dog that barks every night.*

(Criminal Court. (2024, September 5). *Transcript of proceedings: The Prosecutor v. Mahamat Said Abdel Kani).*

The witness shifts the focus from the specific incident to a general complaint about their neighbor‘s dog. While the statement may involve sound, it does not relate to the incident and misleads the prosecutor's line of inquiry. This again breaches the principle of relevance, obscuring crucial details that could support or oppose the case.

Violating the Maxim of Relevance usually involves failing to ensure communication pertains to the current topic. According to Grice, relevance requires connecting an utterance to the speaker‘s intended meaning, depending on cognitive processes for understanding. Effective communication depends on speakers providing meaningful evidence, enabling listeners to infer their intentions. This mutual understanding relies on both contextual and cognitive factors, highlighting the importance of considering the context and mental processing.

Therefore, strict adherence to the principle of relevance is vital for clarity in communication and for maintaining fairness and procedural integrity within the justice system.

Violation of Maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner emphasizes clarity, conciseness, and directness in expression to ensure sufficient participant understanding. Following it aids effective communication by reducing misunderstandings and clarifying intent. It urges speakers to think about what they say and how they say it to ensure their message is clear and easily understood by their audience.

In courtroom interactions, speakers often stray from this guideline for various reasons, intentionally breaching the maxim of manner and leading to confusion. This intentional deviation often results in conversational implications understood only by the participants. In courtroom discourse, participants may still intentionally flout the maxim of manner despite expecting clear and straightforward communication. For example, a witness might avoid giving relevant information about a case, prompting the lawyer to ask the same question repeatedly to ensure clarity and remove doubt.

EXTRACT: 4

[9] Lawyer: *Can you describe what you observed on the day of the incident?*

Witness: *Well, it was a bright sunny day, and I remember feeling quite anxious as I approached the building where the incident occurred. As I walked closer, I saw a crowd gathered around, and people were shouting and pointing towards the defendant. I quickly realized something serious had happened, so I began taking notes on my phone to document everything I could see.*

(Criminal Court. (2024, July 23). *Transcript of proceedings: The Prosecutor v. Joseph Kony).*

This statement breaches the Maxim of Manner by being overly detailed and wandering. The witness provides unnecessary details about the weather ("bright sunny day") and personal feelings ("feeling quite anxious"), which distract from the main account of what was observed during the incident. Such verbosity may confuse listeners and hide the key facts of the case. The statement also breaches the Maxim of Relevance, not just the Maxim of Manner. Although the witness offers a detailed and structured account, much of the information (like the weather and personal feelings) does not directly answer the lawyer‘s question, focusing on what the witness saw during the incident.

As a result, the response breaches:

• **The Maxim of Manner** - it is too detailed and includes unnecessary information that may obscure the main point.

• **The Maxim of Relevance** - parts of the answer are not directly related to the specific question and do not add meaningfully to the legal issue.

Therefore, it is a dual breach, potentially reducing the clarity and focus of courtroom communication.

[10] ***Prosecutor:*** *Did the defendant say anything to you?*
Witness: *He said something… kind of like, you know, "whatever," but not exactly that—it was more like a "you'll see" kind of tone.*
(Supreme Court of the United States. (2021, January 11). Transcript of oral argument: Pham v. Guzman Chavez (No. 19-897)).

The use of unclear, hedged language ("kind of like," "you'll see kind of tone") introduces ambiguity, which violates the Maxim of Manner. The response lacks precision and may confuse the court.

[11] ***Prosecutor:*** *Mr. Thomas, you believe that you know Watson's girlfriend, Tyra Jackson, right?*
Witness: *I never testified I knew her or not.*
Prosecutor: *You believe that you may have met her once or twice, right?*
Witnesss: *Maybe.*
(Supreme Court of the United States. (2021, January 11). *Transcript of oral argument: Pham v. Guzman Chavez (No. 19-897))*.

The responses are vague and non-committal, lacking clarity. Using "maybe" and denying prior testimony without providing a clear answer introduce ambiguity, violating the Maxim of Manner by failing to be clear and orderly.

[12] ***Judge:*** *Please explain your relationship with the plaintiff.*
Witness: *Our families have known each other for years, and I've always considered them to be like family to me. We've shared many meals and holidays together, and I've seen firsthand how caring they are towards each other. I never imagined that our bond would be tested in this courtroom today.* (Smith v. United States, 599 U.S. 236 (2023).

This response demonstrates a violation of the Maxim of Manner, as outlined by Grice's Cooperative Principle. The witness includes emotionally charged and overly elaborate statements that exceed the scope of the judge's question. Instead of providing a concise, clear, and factual account of the relationship, the witness offers subjective reflections such as "like family to me" and "our bond would be tested." These statements introduce unnecessary emotion and personal commentary, which may confuse the court or influence perceptions of the testimony. While the topic remains technically relevant, the manner of delivery—being verbose and emotionally expressive—hinders clarity.

[13] ***Prosecutor:*** *Can you recount the events leading up to the altercation?*
Witness: *Absolutely, it all started when I received a frantic call from the victim, who was in tears and described a heated argument with the defendant over financial matters. I rushed to the scene and found the victim visibly shaken, with bruises on their arms. The defendant was pacing back and forth, shouting accusations, and I tried to intervene to de-escalate the situation.* (Reed v. Goertz, 598 U.S. 230 (2023)).

This statement breaches the manner maxim by including excessive detail and unnecessary narrative. Although it offers a chronological account of events, the witness adds emotional descriptors ("frantic call," "in tears," "visibly shaken") and subjective interpretations ("tried to intervene to de-escalate") that could confuse the listener and obscure the factual sequence of what occurred. Such deviations from a clear, factual account can weaken the credibility of the witness's testimony. The same occurs in the following example:

[14] **Judge:** *Could you clarify your observations regarding the defendant's behavior?*
Witness: *Certainly, Your Honor. From what I observed, the defendant appeared agitated and restless during the proceedings. They frequently interrupted the proceedings with objections and seemed dismissive of the plaintiff's testimony. It was evident that their demeanor was defensive, and they appeared uncomfortable in the courtroom environment.* (Wisconsin v. Kizer, 2024).

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Providing subjective interpretations ("appeared agitated," "frequently interrupted," "seemed dismissive") without specific behavioral observations or objective evidence to support these claims can breach good manners. The witness‘s vague description of the defendant‘s behaviour, lacking detailed factual information, weakens the clarity and strength of the testimony.

In each case, violations of the manner maxim hinder effective courtroom communication by adding unnecessary details, emotional commentary, and subjective opinions. Following the Maxim of Manner is essential in legal proceedings to ensure that statements are clear, concise, and objectively presented, thereby enhancing the reliability and influence of witness testimony and arguments in court.

4. Conclusion

When Grice's conversational maxims are violated in courtroom discourse, the consequences extend beyond linguistic breakdowns and directly affect the clarity, credibility, and fairness of legal proceedings. Breaches of the maxims of relevance, quality, and manner often result in obscured communication. For instance, introducing irrelevant details or emotionally charged statements can distract from key facts, thereby hindering judges and juries in identifying the central issues within testimony or argumentation. Such violations may occur when participants expect listeners to infer implied meanings or conversational implicatures rather than relying on explicit clarity.

An analysis of these violations reveals that they are not always accidental; instead, they can be employed strategically to shape interpretations, control narratives, or challenge assumptions within the courtroom. Therefore, the concept of conversational implicature is crucial for understanding how meaning is negotiated, constructed, and contested in legal settings. Nevertheless, the deliberate or inadvertent violation of maxims can undermine the credibility of witnesses and the persuasiveness of legal arguments. A failure to uphold the maxim of quality (truthfulness) or manner (clarity) may lead judges and jurors to question the reliability of testimony, particularly when such accounts serve as pivotal evidence.

Adherence to Grice's maxims fosters fairness in legal proceedings by ensuring that communication remains truthful, relevant, and comprehensible. Conversely, violations can distort facts, create bias, and grant undue advantage, ultimately compromising the integrity of judicial processes. Observing the principles of relevance, quality, and manner thus strengthens objectivity, reinforces trust in judicial outcomes, and upholds the principles of justice.

Courtroom discourse also highlights the inherently goal-oriented nature of legal communication. Barristers, for example, strategically challenge testimony to test credibility, while defendants employ language to assert innocence and authenticity. Such exchanges underscore the persuasive function of language in legal contexts. However, when participants breach conversational maxims—whether through irrelevance, ambiguity, or falsehood—the effectiveness and fairness of proceedings are significantly diminished. Upholding these maxims is therefore essential to safeguarding clarity, credibility, and justice within the legal process.

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Towards The Use of Backchannel Signals during Classroom Oral Presentations: Speakers' Perspective

Abstract

Classroom oral presentations are crucial across many higher education courses. They also play a key role in developing communication skills and preparing students for future careers. Although oral presentations have long been recognised as important for communication development and are widely integrated into curricula, much existing research has mainly focused on delivery techniques, assessment methods, and presentation design. Conversely, comparatively little attention has been given to the role of the audience, especially the impact of verbal and non-verbal feedback signals on presenters. This paper addresses this gap by exploring how undergraduate students perceive audience backchannel signals—such as verbal cues (e.g., "aha," "no," "yeah") and non-verbal reactions (e.g., eye contact, nodding, shaking the head, smiling)—and how these influence their levels of nervousness, self-confidence, and delivery performance during classroom oral presentations.

The novelty of this study lies in its speaker-centred perspective. While previous research has largely viewed the audience as passive recipients of information, this research emphasises the audience as active participants in shaping the speaker's psychological state and performance. Understanding this dynamic is especially important in higher education, where anxiety around public speaking often hampers learning outcomes.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2012). Data were collected through an online questionnaire created in Google Forms and distributed among first-, second-, and fourth-year undergraduate students of the Department of English Philology at the Faculty of Humanities, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. One hundred twenty-seven valid responses were received, ensuring representation across different academic years. The questionnaire included closed and open-ended items, allowing for statistical analysis of trends and a deeper understanding of students' experiences and perceptions. The data were systematically analysed to identify patterns of anxiety, common triggers, and the role of audience reactions in either exacerbating or alleviating stress.

Findings show that most students experience notable nervousness when delivering oral presentations, with the fear of negative evaluation being among the strongest causes of anxiety. However, the data also indicate that positive audience feedback—whether through reassuring verbal cues or encouraging non-verbal behaviours—plays a crucial role in boosting confidence, reducing stress, and improving delivery effectiveness. These results suggest that oral presentations should be viewed as co-constructed communicative events, where the audience's active role is acknowledged and emphasised. This study highlights the importance of training both presenters and audiences in effective communication practices, fostering more supportive classroom dynamics, and incorporating feedback-awareness strategies into academic presentation training.

***Keywords**: oral presentation, audience feedback, backchannel signals, student anxiety*

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, classroom oral presentations play a vital role in developing students' communication skills. For many years, oral presentations have been widely used in language teaching to provide opportunities for language practice. According to Schmidt (2018), oral presentations are a common requirement in numerous academic courses. They can be delivered individually or in groups, with or without visual aids (Bui et al., 2022). Furthermore, an oral presentation is a crucial skill that students must master at higher education levels. Accordingly, a student majoring in English philology at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University must deliver an oral presentation on a specific topic, either assigned by an instructor or chosen by the students, in nearly every course throughout the programme.

The Undergraduate Programme in English Philology at Tbilisi State University offers students a curriculum covering a wide range of practical courses in English, including Phonetics, Analytical Reading, Speaking, Grammar, Reading, Text Interpretation, Legal English, Business English, Language of the Newspaper, FCE course, and Writing. Within these courses, emphasis is placed on developing the four conventional language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Most of these courses focus on practical aspects, requiring students to engage in weekly in-class activities, critically analyse and synthesise written arguments or literary texts, prepare oral presentations, participate in class discussions and debates, and write various types of essays. Oral presentations are essential to formal assessment in nearly all aspects taught within the English philology programme.

Having taught the course - Text Interpretation - within the framework of the English Philology programme for over a decade, I have observed students' experiences with oral presentations as part of either a mid-term exam or, currently, as a skills component. Consequently, I have noticed students' anxiety before and during these presentations. Additionally, I observed the significant influence of audience behaviour on the presenter. Positive backchannel signals, such as smiling or nodding, can significantly boost the student's confidence, motivation, and overall performance. Conversely, a lack of such supportive feedback often has the opposite effect.

While numerous studies have explored effective delivery techniques, the challenges students face during presentations, the importance of oral presentation skills, and the specific role of audience interaction and backchannels have been largely overlooked. Most research emphasises delivery methods or audience assessment but neglects how audience behaviour impacts speaker performance and emotional state during presentations.

Accordingly, this study addresses this gap by examining students' perceptions of audience feedback during presentations.

Therefore, the study's objectives are a) to investigate students' experiences with oral presentations, b) to examine the backchannel signals provided by the audience from the speakers' perspectives, and c) to explore the impact of these signals on speaker performance and emotional well-being.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Oral Presentation and Audience

According to the Learning Centre of the University of New South Wales, an oral presentation can be considered a speech delivered in a structured manner on a predetermined topic for a specific audience (Zakaria et al., 2023). As mentioned above, oral presentations have become an essential part of higher education, particularly in ESL classrooms (Yeereem, 2013).

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An oral presentation, or public speaking, is a speech where a speaker addresses an audience on a particular subject. Levin and Topping (2006) stated that "presentation is not only given to the audience; it is given for the audience" (p.4). Similarly, good speakers understand that the audience is not just people sitting in front of them but the individuals for whom they must prepare their speeches. Therefore, a speaker must consider the audience in advance and conduct audience analysis, which involves taking into account the audience's demographic characteristics (age, culture, gender, physical and mental abilities) and tailoring the presentation accordingly (Floyd, 2018).

On the other hand, an audience must listen actively and effectively to a speaker's oral presentation and demonstrate their attitude either verbally or nonverbally (by using backchannel signals).

2.2. Oral Presentations and their Challenges

A classroom oral presentation is a form of public speaking. Delivering an oral presentation can benefit students; however, it is widely recognised that giving a speech can be challenging for many people, even in front of a small group in class. According to poll results from the Gallup organisation regarding adult Americans' fears, the most commonly mentioned fear was of snakes, and public speaking—delivering presentations—ranked second (Floyd, 2018).

One of the most common challenges students face during oral presentations is public speaking anxiety, or nervousness about performing in front of an audience (Floyd, 2018; Al-Nouh et al., 2015). This anxiety may be caused either by worrying it might be difficult to make a presentation or by a lack of confidence (Whai & Mei, 2012). Additionally, sometimes anxiety occurs during an oral presentation due to the audience's reactions (Tian and Mahmud, 2018).

Another challenge is students' language proficiency. Often, students feel anxious before an oral presentation because they lack specific language skills—such as pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence structure, and fluency (Chen, 2015).

Students also find it challenging to have adequate prior preparation and practice for oral presentations. A lack of practice may stem from limited experience in delivering presentations, as students often do not prepare thoroughly (Al-Darwish & Taqi, 2015). Furthermore, the presentation topic and insufficient knowledge can also heighten students' anxiety.

Sometimes, the challenge arises from how students perceive their audience. It is widely recognised that speaking in front of others can feel threatening due to the presence of the audience. Just having someone there, even a peer, can make students feel anxious (Chen, 2015). Many student presenters also believe that others are closely watching them to catch mistakes or figure out what they are saying (Al-Darwish & Taqi, 2015). Ultimately, some presenters become distracted when late students enter the room or when others talk and laugh during their presentations (Al-Nouh et al., 2015).

2.3. Oral Presentations and Backchannel Signals

Speakers prepare oral presentations in advance. However, during the presentation, not only the speaker but also the audience play a vital role. They must act appropriately and listen actively. Correspondingly, they must use suitable verbal and non-verbal signals to demonstrate their engagement.

According to Goffman (Hatch, 1992), every communication involves specific signals that indicate to a speaker that their message is being understood. This is especially important during oral presentations. Backchannel signals can include sounds, words, phrases, gestures, facial expressions, nods, and smiles; thus, they can be verbal or non-verbal. As Hatch (1994) explains, "Even when it is not our turn to speak, we might

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nod or make sounds like 'umhm,' 'uh-huh,' 'yeah,' or 'yeah right,' providing backchannel feedback that encourages the speaker to proceed. These signals do not interrupt the speaker's turn” (Hatch, 1994: 15). In any form of oral communication, such backchannel signals are crucial as they show the participants’ engagement. Classroom oral presentations are no exception.

Fries (1952) was probably the first to analyse backchannel cues in telephone conversations. He considered backchannels as signals that did not take the turn from a speaker. However, the term backchannel was first introduced and coined by Yngve (1970) to describe signals like “mm-hmmm,” eye contact, smiles, and head nods from a listener. According to Yule (1996), backchannels are “vocal indications of attention when someone else is speaking” (p. 127). They serve as feedback to a speaker, indicating that the message is being received. The form of both verbal and non-verbal backchannel signals can vary depending on the context (Hatch, 1994). This type of feedback is essential during oral presentations, as speakers need to see that the audience understands and acknowledges their message.

Backchannel signals have been the subject of extensive study, and various classifications exist in academic literature. Tottie (1991) classifies backchannels based on their structure as simple (a single backchannel item, e.g., “yeah”), double (multiple repetitions of the same item, e.g., “mhm mhm, yeah yeah”), or complex (a combination of different backchannel items, e.g., “yeah, I know, yeah, right”) (Tottie 1991: 263). Hayashi and Hayashi (1991) categorise backchannel signals into four functional subtypes: a) continuers, b) repairers, c) reinforcers and claimers, and d) prompters and clarifiers. Coulthard et al. assert that backchannels are used to acknowledge, accept, or endorse the information provided by the current speaker (White 1997).

3. Methodology

3.1. Methods

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods, adopting a “mixed method approach” (Creswell, 2012). Primarily, a survey questionnaire was used to gather data, which was then analysed through descriptive and content analysis to provide not only numerical data but also to highlight the hypothetical relationships between different variables and patterns.

In this study, a convenience sampling method was used to select respondents based on their willingness and availability to participate. Participation was entirely voluntary, responses remained anonymous, and participants could withdraw at any time without submitting their answers. The sample comprised 127 participants selected from a target population of approximately 700. The target group consisted of undergraduate students (majoring in English Philology) at Tbilisi State University who had enrolled through the state university based on the unified NAEC (National Assessment and Examination Centre) exam within the years 2021-2024. Participants were informed that the survey was anonymous and their privacy would be protected. Accordingly, they were encouraged to provide honest responses.

To describe the teaching and learning background of the Undergraduate Program in English Philology at Tbilisi State University, students are required to take courses such as English Phonetics, Grammar, Analytical Reading, Speaking, Reading, Text Interpretation, Writing, Legal English, Business English, Language of Newspapers, and FCE. These practical courses involve students producing various written and oral assignments. Therefore, through the survey, students were asked to reflect on their experiences during oral presentations.

3.2. Research Design and Procedure

The research tool used in the present study was a survey questionnaire designed on Google Forms and circulated among students online through personal emails, messenger chats, and Facebook groups. The questionnaire was open online from February to March 2025.

The survey consisted of 7 questions. Most of these were multiple-choice questions for quick and easy responses. Two open-ended questions were also utilised alongside the multiple-choice questions to gather additional information and students' perceptions of the issue discussed. The questions used for the study are the following:

1. What is your current year of study?
   a. I year   b. II year   c. III year   d. IV year
2. How frequently do you have to give oral presentations?
   a. Never   b. almost never   c. sometimes   d. almost always   e. always
3. Do you feel nervous during oral presentations?
   a. Never   b. almost never   c. sometimes   d. almost always   e. always
4. If you feel nervous, what do you think is the reason of your anxiety?
   a. I am not nervous
   b. I am not well prepared
   c. I do not have adequate language competence
   d. I do not like performing in front of the audience
   e. I am afraid of negative feedback from the audience
   f. Other (please specify)
5. During oral presentations, do you pay attention to backchannel signals from the audience?
   a. Never   b. almost never   c. sometimes   d. almost always   e. always
6. Which backchannel signals from the audience has the most positive effect on you as a speaker (you can select more than one answer)?
   a. Smile   b. head nod   c. eye contact   d. verbal signals (uuhmm, yeah, yeah right   e. other (please, specify)
7. Which backchannel signals from the audience has the most negative effect on you as a speaker?
   a. Gazing in different direction   b. frowning   c. Talk among audience members   d. Head shake   e. Verbal backchannel signals (no, I don't know, etc.)   f. other (please, specify)

3.3. Limitations

Using a survey questionnaire as the data collection tool means that the empirical data relied solely on students' responses. Furthermore, most survey questions were closed-ended, meaning participants were provided with predefined answer options. While this type of question makes participation easier for respondents, it restricts the depth and richness of the information collected.

Another limitation is the lack of gender diversity among the participants. Since most students at the TSU Bachelor Educational Program in English philology are female, all respondents to the survey were female. Consequently, the findings may not fully reflect the experiences or perspectives of male students

4. Results and Discussion

127 TSU students majoring in English philology participated in the survey. More than half of the respondents were first-year students, making up 54.3% (n=69), followed by third-year students at 22.8%

(n=29). Additionally, second-year students accounted for 13.4% (n=17), while fourth-year students represented the smallest group at 9.45% (n=12) (Figure 1)

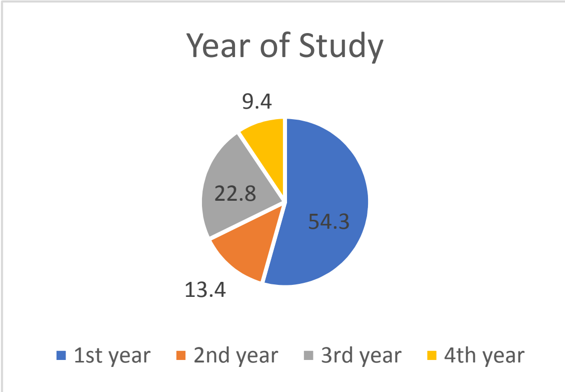

Figure 1. *Current Year of Study*

Based on the demographic profile of respondents, especially their year of study, students were asked to reflect on the frequency of their oral presentations. An equal proportion, 39.4% (n=50), reported giving oral presentations almost always or sometimes, while 16.5% (n=21) said they always had to deliver presentations. Only a small percentage of respondents admitted that they either never (0.8%, n=1) or rarely (3.9%, n=5) gave oral presentations (Figure 2).

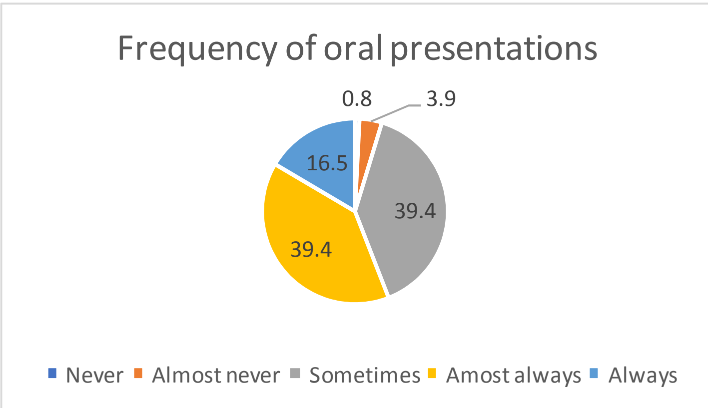

Figure 2: *Frequency of giving oral presentations*

The data analysis revealed that, as expected, most students (95.3%, n=121) made classroom oral presentations more or less frequently, irrespective of their year of study. Furthermore, the research participants were asked whether they felt nervous while delivering an oral presentation. The majority of the respondents admitted to having felt nervous more or less. For 25.2 % (n=32), oral presentations always caused anxiety, 19.7 % (n=25) stated that they felt nervousness almost constantly, and the vast majority of respondents (40%, n=51) felt anxiety sometimes. Only a small portion of the respondents (14.9%, n=19) claimed never or rarely to have experienced nervousness during oral presentations (Figure 3).

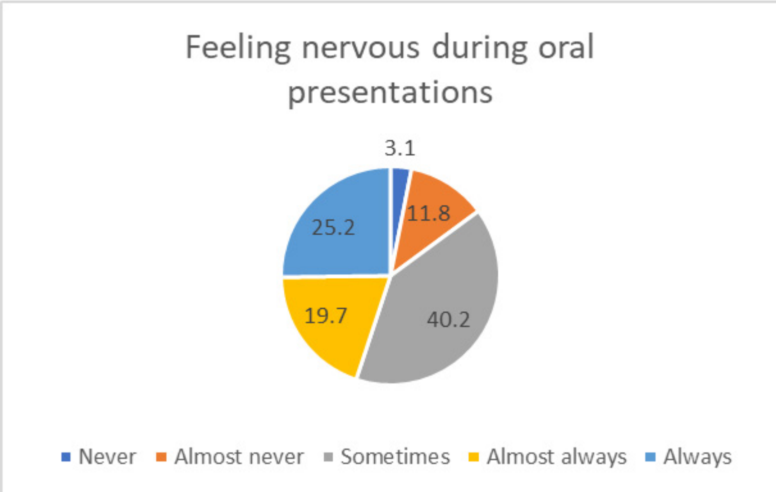

Figure 3. *Feeling nervous during oral presentations*

The survey showed that classroom oral presentations caused nervousness among students with varying frequencies (sometimes, almost always, and always) in the vast majority (85.1%), regardless of their year of study. This suggests that, no matter how often they had to give presentations, most still found the experience stressful. Additionally, an attempt was made to identify the main reason for students' anxiety. The data from the survey revealed that 59.1% (n=75) of students felt nervous because they disliked performing in front of an audience, 37.8% (n=48) were anxious about negative feedback, 9.4% (n=12) felt nervous due to lack of preparation, 6.3% (n=8) experienced anxiety because of their language skills, and 12.6% (n=16) cited other reasons. Only 11.8% (n=15) of respondents reported not feeling nervous during an oral presentation (see Figure 4).

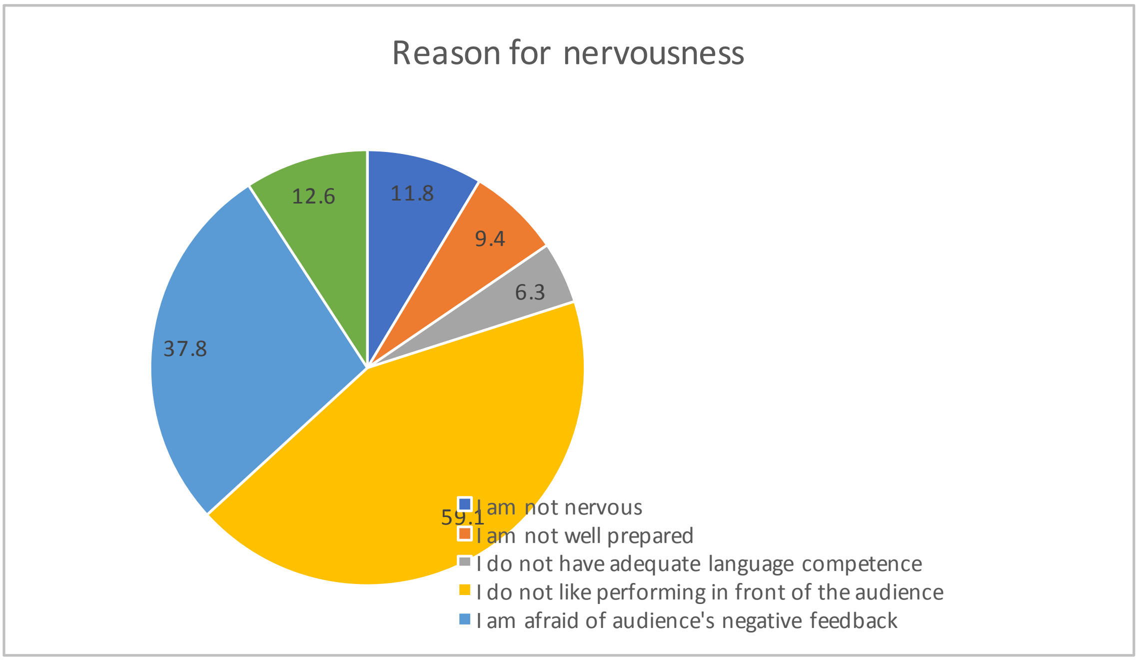

Figure 4. *Reason for nervousness during oral presentations*

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Additionally, respondents who selected "other" had to specify their reason for nervousness. The survey revealed that respondents' concerns during oral presentations primarily focus on four main areas: fear of the audience, fear of an instructor/professor, the level of preparedness, and personal issues (Table 1).

Table 1. *Respondents concerns during oral presentations*

Fear of Audience	Fear of Instructor/Professor	Level of Preparedness	Personal issues
The number of audience members.	I think an instructor might not like it		I am afraid that I might fail
I feel stresses, I am afraid of audience's negative comments.	I worry whether a lecturer will like it or not		I have complexes
I am afraid of performing in front of the audience.	I am nervous about how an instructor will grade me.		I feel tensed. I am very emotional.
I am nervous that I might not be interesting enough for the audience.			
I am afraid of other people			

The analysis of the survey data reveals that most students experienced some kind of anxiety during oral presentations, with fear of audience judgment and negative feedback being the most significant factors. This highlights the importance of a supportive environment in educational settings, where the focus should be on encouraging and educating the audience to give positive feedback. Additionally, the data show that public speaking anxiety during oral presentations is caused by both external and internal pressures, such as fear of the audience or the instructor, the student's level of preparedness, and personal issues. The questionnaire also asked respondents whether they pay attention to backchannel signals from the audience during oral presentations. The majority, 94.4% (n=119), responded positively, admitting that they almost always or sometimes pay attention to the audience's verbal and non-verbal backchannels. Only a small percentage, 4.6% (n=7), responded negatively (Figure 5).

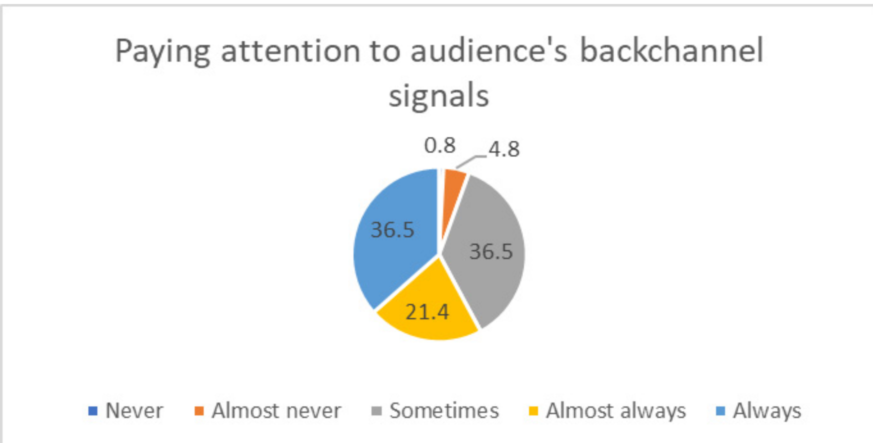
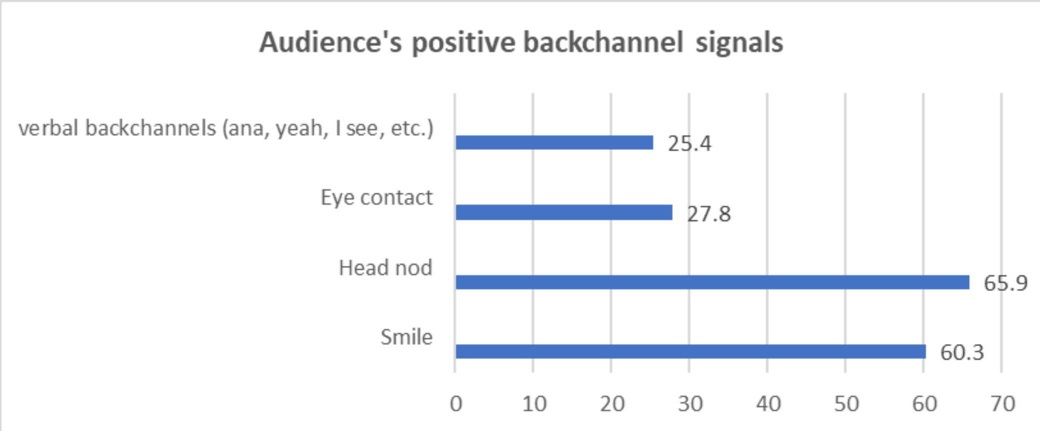


Figure 5. *Paying attention to audience's backchannel signals*

The survey also aimed to identify the audience's backchannel signals that positively influence a speaker. The results showed that, for most respondents, 65.9% (n=83) found nods most effective, 60.3%

(n=76) said a smile from the audience positively influenced them, 27.8% (n=35) considered eye contact important, and 25.4% (n=32) believed verbal backchannels (aha, yes, etc.) were effective (Figure 6).

Figure 6. *Audience's positive backchannel signals*



The analysis of the survey results indicates that non-verbal signals, especially nodding (65.9%) and smiling (60.3%), are the most effective backchannel signals for positively influencing a speaker. Additionally, through an open-ended question, the questionnaire asked respondents to add any other verbal or non-verbal backchannel signals used by the audience that positively affect a speaker. They identified audience applause as a beneficial backchannel signal impacting them. Finally, respondents were asked to select the verbal and non-verbal backchannel signals that negatively affect a speaker. The vast majority of respondents (68.3%, n=86) chose audience members talking to each other as such a backchannel signal; frowning had an adverse effect on 26.2% (n=33), while head shaking and gazing in different directions were negatively rated by 24.6% (n=31). Verbal backchannels, such as "no," "I do not think so," etc., were found to be stressful for 17.5% (n=22), and finally, 4.8% (n=6) of respondents stated that other backchannels negatively affected them as speakers (Figure 7).

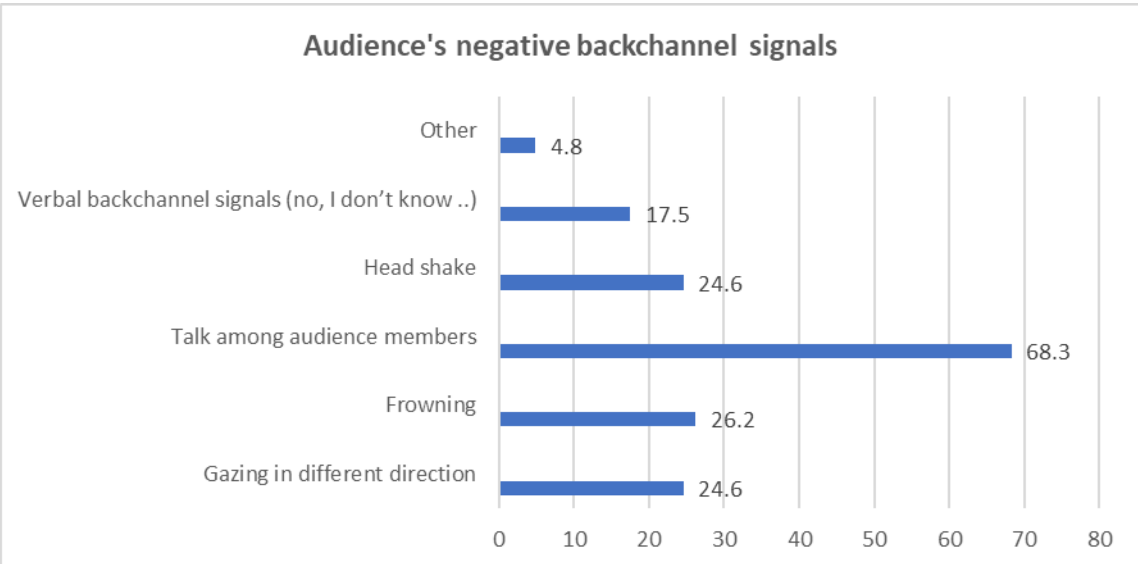


Figure 7. *Audience's negative backchannel signals*

Once again, the questionnaire asked respondents, through open-ended questions, to comment on any other verbal or nonverbal backchannel signals used by the audience that negatively affect a speaker. They identified using mobile phones as the signal that affected them negatively.

Therefore, the analysis of the survey results indicates that speakers are more affected by nonverbal backchannel signals (nod, smile, shake, frowning, eye contact, gazing elsewhere), whether positively or negatively. This is likely because speakers cannot hear the audience members' signals, but it is easier to see them. As a result, speakers tend to pay more attention to the audience's nonverbal backchannel signals.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

As a result of the empirical data analysis, which included 127 student responses, the following inferences can be made:

a) The vast majority of respondents (95.3% majoring in English philology at TSU) confirmed that they must give oral presentations in various courses. This finding highlights the importance of understanding and supporting students' experiences during oral presentations.
b) The survey revealed that classroom oral presentations are quite stressful for most students (85.1%), regardless of their year of study. This suggests that public speaking anxiety is not limited to first-year students but persists; therefore, creating a comfortable atmosphere for students is essential.
c) Many students face some level of anxiety during oral presentations, with fear of audience judgment and negative feedback identified as the most significant factors. This highlights the importance of fostering a supportive environment in educational settings and encourages the audience to focus on giving positive feedback. Instructors should educate students about how audience behaviour impacts them and promote giving constructive and positive feedback.
d) Speakers pay close attention to their audience, particularly their backchannels. The survey data analysis shows that nonverbal signals, especially nodding (65.9%) and smiling (60.3%), are the most effective forms of backchannel signals. Classroom activities should include mini-activities where students practice giving and receiving positive audience feedback.

Acknowledgements

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Phonological Deviations in Georgian EFL Learners' Pronunciation within Academic Discourse

Abstract

This study investigates phonological deviations in the English pronunciation of Georgian EFL learners, focusing on vowel production and its influence on oral fluency within academic discourse. Although fluency is often seen as a measure of language proficiency, pronunciation remains a persistent challenge for Georgian learners due to limited contact with native speakers, cross-linguistic transfer from Georgian, and interference from English orthography. Unlike English, Georgian lacks reduced vowels and phonemic vowel length distinctions, while its transparent orthographic system encourages learners to associate spelling with sound. These structural differences often lead to mispronunciations that decrease clarity in academic contexts.

The research was conducted at Tbilisi State University with 20 undergraduate participants enrolled in a Practical Phonetics course. Data were collected through classroom observations, audio recordings, and an error-focused checklist across 14 sessions, totaling approximately 200 minutes of student speech. A mixed-methods approach combined quantitative categorisation of frequent vowel errors with qualitative thematic analysis. The checklist targeted monophthong/diphthong quality, vowel length, and schwa realisation, allowing systematic identification of patterns and their possible causes.

Results revealed several consistent tendencies. High-frequency monophthong-to-monophthong substitutions often affected meaning (e.g., word → ward). Schwa was particularly unstable, often replaced by full vowels or diphthongs in suffixes (e.g., dangerous → /ˈdeɪndʒəroʊs/, government → /ˈgʌvərmənt/). Overgeneralisation of suffix pronunciation, such as treating -ate endings as verb forms (climate → /ˈklaɪmeɪt/), further highlighted orthographic influence. Vowel length inconsistencies, especially the substitution of /iː / with /ɪ/, indicated difficulties in perceiving and producing length contrasts absent in Georgian. Learners also displayed varying strategies with diphthongs: both monophthongisation (most → /mɒst/) and diphthongisation (country → /ˈkaʊntri/) were observed, reflecting unstable phonological representations.

The analysis suggests these deviations originate from interactions of first-language transfer, reliance on spelling, and developmental interlanguage processes. While some patterns align with global EFL trends, others are specific to the Georgian phonological system, notably the absence of vowel reduction and the strong grapheme-phoneme correspondence in Georgian.

Pedagogically, the findings highlight the importance of targeted instruction prioritising intelligibility over native-like accuracy. Explicit training in vowel length distinctions, schwa usage, and stress placement should be combined with perception-based methods and contextual listening practice. Raising awareness of irregularities in English spelling–sound correspondence can reduce overreliance on orthography. Additionally, fostering learners' ability to perceive and produce high-functional-load vowel contrasts will likely improve overall communicative effectiveness.

In conclusion, the study emphasises both universal and Georgian-specific pronunciation challenges, offering empirical evidence for curriculum development and teaching strategies in EFL contexts. Future research with larger samples and automated acoustic analysis is recommended to validate these findings and monitor developmental changes in learners' phonological competence.

Keywords: *Georgian EFL learners, pronunciation errors, vowel modifications,
cross-linguistic transfer, orthographic interference*

1. Introduction

While teaching a foreign language by integrating the four skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – the most desirable skills to develop are often associated with the so-called "productive skills", such as writing and speaking. These are considered fundamental skills necessary for a learner's success in life; in fact, a person's fluency in speaking often measures their proficiency in that language. However, speaking a foreign language fluently is a multilayered process that requires mastery of various language areas, such as grammar, vocabulary, strategy, sociolinguistics, pronunciation, and the like (Chastain, 1998).

Regarding the English language, pronunciation is one of the most essential and complex skills to master, especially for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), due to limited exposure to authentic communicative discourse involving native speakers. This means that rather than naturally and unconsciously navigating all the necessary channels for comprehensible English speech production, EFL students must rely on effective classroom or personal teaching methods and consciously learn to produce clear pronunciation; essentially, they need to learn the same muscular patterns, articulation techniques, and train the vocal tract appropriately, creating the same mental representations as first language learners who have already developed these patterns and mental schemas for speech production in their native language. Consequently, pronunciation errors non-native EFL learners make during English oral performance are naturally frequent and multifaceted, as they are part of the learning process (Brown, 2000).

Although extensive research has addressed pronunciation challenges in global EFL contexts (Flege, 1995; Jenkins, 2000; Munro & Derwing, 2015), there is a noticeable gap concerning systematic, data-driven analyses of phonological deviations among Georgian EFL learners, particularly within academic discourse.

Therefore, this paper aims to investigate and analyse phonological deviations in Georgian students' pronunciation observed in academic discourse within the EFL classroom, reflect on the possible causes, and ultimately support the improvement of Georgian EFL students' phonetic fluency.

2. Challenges in Pronunciation for English Learners

English learners face various challenges when acquiring accurate pronunciation. One of the primary difficulties is the difference between the learner's first language (L1) phonetic system and the sounds of English. According to Flege (1995), cross-linguistic influences often result in accent errors, such as substituting non-native sounds with similar sounds from the L1. These errors can lead to communication breakdowns, especially when the pronunciation of key sounds diverges significantly from standard English pronunciation.

Another challenge is the role of stress, intonation, and rhythm in English. English is a stress-timed language, meaning that stressed syllables occur at roughly equal intervals, while unstressed syllables are shortened or reduced (Roach, 2009). This contrasts with syllable-timed languages, where each syllable is given equal time. Learners from syllable-timed language backgrounds often struggle to master stress patterns, leading to unnatural or unclear speech.

Furthermore, the schwa /ə/ sound, often reduced in unstressed syllables, is a common pronunciation challenge for learners. Schwa is the most frequent vowel sound in English, yet it is difficult for learners, particularly those whose first languages do not include a reduced vowel sound (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Incorrect or missing schwa pronunciation can lead to mispronunciations of common suffixes and word endings, which may affect intelligibility.

Another reason to consider is that, as an international language used for global communication, English exhibits a higher level of acceptance towards different accents and "pronunciations," which presupposes the existence of their diverse variants. Consequently, according to Zhang & Yin (2009), in natural conversation, English speakers might produce assimilated sounds that are difficult for a non-trained ear to grasp; additionally, the pronunciation of ending sounds can differ significantly from those deeply rooted in learners, ultimately causing difficulties in understanding native speech. This often weakens the learner's confidence in both speaking and listening. However, as the global use of English expands, clear and intelligible pronunciation has become a central criterion for assessing language competence (Jenkins, 2000) and for providing meaningful language instruction and interaction within academic discourse.

Recent studies emphasise the complex interaction between orthographic input, exposure to native speaker models, and learner attitudes in shaping second language pronunciation. Saito (2021) highlights that the accuracy of L2 pronunciation is closely linked to the quality and amount of input learners receive, especially in communicative settings where clarity is prioritised over a native-like accent. Additionally, exposure to English through digital media and online platforms has familiarised learners with a wide range of accents, causing variability in pronunciation development. While this broadens learners' awareness, it may also lead to confusion if consistent pronunciation standards are not emphasised during instruction (Trofimovich & Isaacs 2012).

Furthermore, the work on intelligibility-focused pronunciation instruction argues that comprehensibility—rather than native-like pronunciation—should be the main goal in EFL settings (Munro & Derwing, 2015). This change supports the global English model, where English functions as a lingua franca among non-native speakers. Studies by Levis (2020) and Walker (2021) back up the idea that customised pronunciation instruction, especially one that concentrates on high functional load features (e.g., vowel length and stress), significantly boosts learner communication results. These findings indicate that effective pronunciation teaching should incorporate both segmental and suprasegmental features, considering the influence of the learner's first language, their identity, and the contexts in which English is used in everyday life.

In the case of Georgian learners of English as a foreign language, these patterns are further complicated by cross-linguistic interference from Georgian, which lacks features like vowel length and reduced vowels. Additionally, due to the phonetic nature of Georgian orthography, Georgian EFL learners often encounter difficulties in English pronunciation. In Georgian, there is a nearly one-to-one correspondence between graphemes (letters) and phonemes (sounds), meaning words are generally pronounced exactly as they are written. This transparent orthographic system can lead learners to expect similar regularity in English spelling and pronunciation. However, English has a deep orthography, characterised by numerous inconsistencies between spelling and sound. As a result, Georgian learners may rely too heavily on English spelling when attempting to pronounce words, leading to frequent mispronunciations. Common errors might include incorrect vowel sounds, over-pronunciation of silent or reduced letters, and misplacement of stress—many of these stem from the assumption that English words should be articulated the way they appear in

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written form. This reliance on orthography rather than phonological rules emphasises the importance of developing learners' awareness of English pronunciation patterns, particularly the irregularities that differ significantly from their first language.

As the preceding discussion illustrates, although extensive research has explored pronunciation challenges faced by English learners, there remains a lack of focused investigation into the specific pronunciation changes Georgian EFL students exhibit within academic discourse.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants and Setting

The study was conducted at Tbilisi State University in Georgia and was part of the English Philology programme. The participants included 20 Georgian undergraduate students from a sample of approximately 200 students enrolled in a practical course in English Phonetics. The selection of participants was based on a) their enrolment in the course, ensuring that all were exposed to similar teaching methods and academic requirements; b) their general familiarity with the key concepts of introductory phonetics, enabling them to reflect on their learning process; c) their having the same formal educational background in English, meaning they had completed 12 classes of general secondary education and achieved at least A2 in the National Exam in English.

3.2. Data Collection Procedures

The study used a mixed-methods approach, collecting data through both quantitative and qualitative means for different purposes, including observational data. Specifically, classroom observations were carried out during regular sessions of an English Phonetics course over two academic semesters, from Spring 2024 to Fall 2025. The students had a 2-hour class each week for 14 academic weeks, with about 1 hour dedicated to practical activities such as retelling the text verbally, repeating words, or engaging in conversations with peers in pairs or groups under the teacher's passive supervision. These conversations were mainly controlled with a specific communicative purpose, context, or pre-taught vocabulary related to the known topics. Each student's performance lasted between approximately 3 and 10 minutes, depending on individual learning styles and personality types. As a result, the performances of 20 students, each approximately 10 minutes long (totalling 200 minutes), were systematically observed in a controlled classroom environment.

3.3. Research instrument

A detailed observation checklist was used to record specific phonetic errors. The checklist was designed by the researcher for the purposes of this study, drawing on established procedures for phonetic error analysis (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), including:

1. Vowel (Monophthong /diphthong) quality
2. Vowel length
3. Other vowel misarticulations

Observations were supplemented with audio recordings, allowing for a more precise acoustic analysis. The recorded data were analyzed through interpretive/thematic analysis (qualitative). manually to identify recurrent patterns in pronunciation errors made by different students. To assess the frequency and quantity of specific type of pronunciation changes the conditional, ad hoc formula: revealed in < 5 instances; revealed in 5-10 instances; revealed in > 10 instances was used.

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4. Results and findings

Based on the analysis of the observational data obtained from 20 Georgian EFL students through 14 EFL classes in the Practical Course of Phonetics, the following phonetic and phonological changes were revealed:

Table 1

Vowel Quality and Modification Patterns Observed in Georgian EFL Learners' Speech

Category	Target Sound	Realized Sound	Example	Notes
1A. Monophthong → Monophthong (Change in Meaning)	/ɜː/	/ɔː/	*word → ward*	>10 instances
	/ɔː/	/ɜː/	*curse → course*	
	/ɑː/	/ɜː/, /ʌ/	*heart → hurt, hut*	
1B. Monophthong → Monophthong (Same Meaning)	/ʌ/	/ʊ/	*product → produkt*	5–10 instances
	/ʌ/	/ɒ/	*among, above →* /əˈmɒŋ/, /əˈbɒv/	
1C. Schwa /ə/ → Diphthongs (Suffixes)	/əs/	/oʊs/	*obvious, dangerous, curious*	>10 instances
	/ə.bəl/	/eib.əl/	*Comfortable, vegetable*	
1D. -ain Endings (French Origin)	/ən/	/ein/	*certain, Britain, mountain*	>10 instances
1E. Schwa /ə/ → Monophthong (Suffixes)	/ər/, /mənt/	/er/, /ment/	*singer, writer, government*	>10 instances
1F. Diphthong Monophthongization	/əʊ/, /oʊ/	/ɒ/	*most, over, old, open*	>10 instances
	/ʊə/	/ʌ/	*during → dʌrɪŋ*	<5 instances
1G. Diphthongization of Monophthongs	/ʌ/, /ɒ/	/aʊ/	*country, because*	<5 instances
	/ɔː/, /ɒ/	/aʊ/	*Austria, author, audience*	5–10 instances
2A. Vowel Length Inconsistencies	/iː/	/ɪ/	*people, evening*	>10 instances
	/ɑː/	/ʌ/	*heart, classroom*	
	/ɔː/	/ɒ/	*door, store, short*	
2B. Tenseness Errors	/æ/	/e/	*Africa, actually*	>10 instances
3A. [-ate] Suffix Overgeneralization	/ət/	/eɪt/	*climate, private*	Morphological overgeneralization; pronounced like verbs (e.g., *activate*)
3B. Spelling-Based [que] Pronunciations	/k/, /g/	/kue/, /gue/	*Basque, plague, unique*	Overreliance on orthography

Note. Phonemic symbols follow IPA conventions. Frequency thresholds are defined as: >10 instances = frequently observed; 5–10 = moderate; <5 = rare.

5. Discussion

The analysis of vowel modifications among Georgian EFL learners uncovers several consistent patterns, highlighting phonological transfer from their L1 and developmental features typical in interlanguage phonology. These patterns provide insights into learners' challenges with segmental accuracy and stress placement, along with the influence of orthography on pronunciation.

A notable finding is the high frequency of monophthong-to-monophthong substitutions leading to semantic shifts. For example, confusion between /ɜː/ and /ɔː/, as seen in words like "word" versus "ward," or /ɑː/ becoming /ʌ/ or /ɜː/ in cases like "*heart" → "hurt"/"hut*," may result from attempts to approximate unfamiliar English vowels using native phonological categories. The lack of phonemic vowel length in Georgian might explain these confusions, as well as the substitution of /iː / with /□/ in words such as "*people" → "pipl*." This supports the idea that Georgian speakers may not reliably perceive or reproduce vowel length contrasts, consistent with earlier research on L1 interference in second-language phonology (Flege, 1995).

The schwa /ə/ appeared especially unstable, shifting to both diphthongs (e.g., "*dangerous" → /ˈdndʒərous/)* and full vowels *(e.g., "singer" → /sɪŋgər/ with /e/).* These modifications, notably in suffixes and unstressed syllables, indicate that Georgian learners might overgeneralise stress and vowel patterns based on spelling. The change from schwa to /e/ or diphthongal forms in suffixes such as -ous, -able, and -ment may reflect a tendency to treat all syllables as equally stressed or to match pronunciation with the written form.

Similarly, the diphthong monophthongisation (e.g., "most" /məʊ st/ → /məst/) and the diphthonggisation of monophthongs (e.g., "country" /ˈ kʌ ntri/ → /ˈ kaʊ ntri/) indicate fluctuating strategies in approximating English diphthongs. These opposing trends suggest learners have not yet stabilised their internal representations of diphthongal contrasts. Such variation is typical of intermediate L2 learners and may reflect developmental processes rather than purely L1 transfer (Best & Tyler, 2007). Similarly, the diphthong monophthongisation (e.g., "*most" /məʊst/ → /məst/*) and the diphthongisation of monophthongs (e.g., "*country" /ˈkʌntri/ → /ˈkaʊntri/*) indicate fluctuating strategies in approximating English diphthongs. These opposing trends suggest learners have not yet stabilised their internal representations of diphthongal contrasts. Such variation is typical of intermediate L2 learners and may reflect developmental processes rather than purely L1 transfer (Best & Tyler, 2007).

Overall, the results suggest a combination of L1 transfer, limited exposure to native-like models, and orthographic influence as key factors contributing to vowel misarticulations.

6. Limitations of the study

Although this research provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, classroom observations occurred in a controlled setting, which may not fully reflect students' pronunciation challenges in real-world communication. The manual analysis of errors introduces potential observer bias and human error in interpretation. Furthermore, factors such as regional differences, language backgrounds, and individual learning styles were not thoroughly considered, which could affect pronunciation difficulties and learning outcomes. Future studies should include sociolinguistic interviews with larger, more diverse participant groups, employ automated speech recognition tools for objective pronunciation evaluation, and conduct longitudinal research to monitor pronunciation progress.

7. Conclusion

The phonetic and phonological changes observed in the data highlight Georgian EFL students' difficulties in achieving native-like pronunciation. These include confusion between English vowels, especially where English phonemes lack direct Georgian equivalents; challenges with vowel length and stress patterns; and the influence of spelling patterns on pronunciation. The students' frequent monophthongisation of diphthongs and vice versa, along with inconsistent vowel length distinctions, clearly point to areas needing targeted focus in their phonetics training.

Finally, reflecting on the possible factors affecting Georgian EFL students' pronunciation, the following pedagogical implications emerge:

Addressing several contributing factors is crucial to reducing irregularities and deviations in English pronunciation among Georgian EFL learners. These factors include:

L1 interference, likely exacerbated by students' limited exposure to practising standardised pronunciation and a lack of phonetic transcription literacy.

To tackle these issues, further research should investigate the effectiveness of explicit instruction on specific aspects such as vowel length distinctions, schwa usage, and orthography–pronunciation mismatches. Moreover, greater emphasis should be placed on perception-based teaching methods and contextualised pronunciation practice, both of which can help learners develop more accurate and consistent phonological representations

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Research on Dictionary Use in Teaching Languages (Findings of the Survey Conducted with School Teachers)

Abstract

This article presents the findings of a study examining the use of dictionaries in teaching both Georgian and foreign languages in schools. The research involved teachers of Georgian and several foreign languages—including English, German, French, Spanish, and Russian—working in public schools in Tbilisi. Research on dictionary use dates back to the 1960s, with numerous international studies highlighting persistent challenges and shortcomings in dictionary utilisation (Barnhart, 1962; Quirk, 1973). Many scholars have concluded that the culture of dictionary use is in decline, a trend that carries negative pedagogical and linguistic implications (Gouws, 2022).

Georgia mirrors this global trend. Studies conducted within the country have revealed that many users lack fundamental dictionary skills, which has contributed to the growing influence of English on the Georgian language, including the spread of English-derived barbarisms and calques (Margalitadze, 2020). Drawing on the author's experience as a public-school English teacher, this study arises from recognising these challenges. Informal discussions with colleagues prompted the development of a survey for language teachers to understand their perspectives on fostering dictionary-use skills and identify factors contributing to the decline in dictionary literacy.

The study employs the methodology developed by Hungarian researcher P. Márkus, who investigated dictionary use among Hungarian students and teacher trainees of English and German (P. Márkus et al., 2023). For this research, Márkus's questionnaire was translated into Georgian and adapted to reflect the specific context of Georgian schools and the challenges unique to dictionary use in Georgia. Consequently, this study represents one of the first systematic attempts to examine dictionary use in language teaching in Georgian schools.

Keywords: *dictionary use, educational process, foreign language, language teaching, dictionary-use skills*

1. Introduction

Research on dictionary users is crucial to theoretical lexicography (Béjoint, 2010). Although this area of study was established in the 1960s, English lexicographer Samuel Johnson highlighted its importance in the 18th century (1755). Since then, numerous experiments have been conducted across various countries to examine this issue from different perspectives. One primary aim has been to assess

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users' attitudes towards dictionaries and consider their suggestions for improving the quality and structure of these resources (Lew, 2010, 2011; Rundell, 1999, 2016; Levy & Steel, 2015; Farina et al., 2019). A notable study by Kosem et al. (2019) evaluated respondents from 29 European countries regarding explanatory dictionaries. Additionally, experiments have sought to identify the most effective type of dictionary for learning a foreign language— explanatory, bilingual, or bilingualised (Laufer & Hadar, 1997; Chen, 2007). Researchers have also focused on understanding the dictionary skills of users (Nied Curcio, 2022; Gouws, 2022). Specialised studies have examined the purposes for which users consult dictionaries, such as checking spelling, seeking grammatical information, understanding a word's meaning, or solving crossword puzzles (Barnhart, 1962; Quirk, 1973; Bejoint, 2010).

Scholars believed that empirical studies would significantly advance lexicography. Such research aimed to establish the number of dictionary users and provide a basis for developing dictionaries tailored to users' needs. Emphasizing users' needs and their ability to utilise dictionaries has become vital in designing and planning dictionaries. Studies on dictionary users have revealed that many individuals struggle with the essential skills required for effective dictionary use. For instance, users often fail to recognise the contextual meanings of polysemous words and tend to understand only the first listed meaning in a dictionary entry (Mitchell, 1983; Tono, 1984). They also find it difficult to identify the correct part of speech in context, differentiate homonyms, and select appropriate contextual meanings (Rundell, 1999). Researchers have expressed concerns about a declining culture of dictionary use in several countries, which has negative consequences (Nied Curcio, 2022; Gouws, 2022).

In Georgia, several experiments were carried out to examine the habits of Georgian dictionary users. Some aimed to evaluate the public attitude towards dictionaries, while others investigated the effectiveness of monolingual, bilingual, or bilingualised dictionaries in teaching English (Kapanadze, 2017). Notably, experiments exploring the dictionary-use skills of Georgian learners of English have garnered particular interest (Margalitadze & Meladze, 2023). Results from studies, conducted in Georgia, aligned with those of comparable international studies, indicating that many Georgian learners lack the skills to use dictionaries effectively. They encounter difficulties navigating dictionary entries and are often unaware of the range of information dictionaries offer and the various types available for the Georgian language (Margalitadze & Meladze, 2023). This decline in dictionary culture has brought about numerous challenges for the Georgian language. T. Margalitadze attributes this decline to generational processes affecting modern Georgian, especially the rise of barbarisms and calques influenced by English (Margalitadze, 2018; 2020).

The issue of dictionary use has gained significant relevance due to the challenges faced by the modern Georgian language. This has made dictionary use a key method in the language acquisition framework developed by the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement. However, merely integrating this method into educational standards will not fully address the problems related to teaching dictionary use in schools.

This study, based on the author's experience as a public school English teacher, reflects an awareness of these challenges. Informal discussions with colleagues led to the development of a survey for language teachers in public schools.

Consequently, this research aims to identify the reasons behind the declining culture of dictionary use in Georgia. The findings are expected to guide future initiatives and foster positive changes within this field. It represents one of the first efforts in Georgia to study dictionary use within school-level language education.

2. Methodology

The survey involving Georgian teachers was conducted using a specially designed questionnaire. The questionnaire is a standard method for examining the use of a dictionary (Welker, 2010). This approach enables researchers to gather responses simultaneously, as the questionnaire was distributed electronically to teachers. The survey was carried out via the Google Forms platform. However, relying solely on quantitative methods is not always enough to thoroughly analyse a problem. Therefore, the study also included qualitative methods by interviewing 12 teachers after they completed the questionnaire (7 English teachers, 4 Russian teachers, and 1 French teacher). The primary focus of the questionnaire is on how teachers use dictionaries and incorporate them into language teaching. It was adapted from a survey conducted in Hungary, which investigated the habits of foreign language learners, particularly Hungarian students learning English and German, in dictionary use (P. Márkus et al., 2023). The questions from the Hungarian study were carefully reviewed, translated into Georgian, and modified to suit the linguistic and educational context of Georgian schools and their users. Notably, Georgian users face specific challenges, such as polysemy, conversion, and homonymy of lexical units (Margalitadze & Meladze, 2023; Khuskivadze, 2024). As a result, targeted questions were added to the Hungarian questionnaire to address these linguistic issues in language teaching.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections: 1) personal details (gender, age, languages taught, years of experience); 2) dictionary use (questions about the types of dictionaries used and their frequency); and 3) the role of dictionaries in the language teaching process, comprising a total of 26 questions. The results were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 27.0), calculating mean scores and standard deviations. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cohen et al., 2007) was also computed to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the study.

3. Teachers' Survey and Research Results

As mentioned above, the questionnaire used in this study comprises three parts: 1) personal data (gender, age, the language taught, length of service); 2) dictionary usage (questions about the types of dictionaries teachers use and how often they use them); and 3) the role of dictionaries in the language teaching process (26 questions in total). Thirty-eight teachers from public schools in Tbilisi completed the questionnaire. This group included teachers of both Georgian and foreign languages. The demographic breakdown was as follows: 100% female, with age distribution as follows: 3% aged 25-30, 16% aged 30-35, 18% aged 35-40, 29% aged 40-45, and 34% aged 50 and over. The majority of teachers were English language instructors (45%), followed by Russian language teachers (18%), Georgian language teachers (24%), German language teachers (5%), French language teachers (5%), and Spanish language teachers (3%). Concerning teachers' experience, the following questions were asked, along with the corresponding responses (see Table 1):

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Table N 1

N	Questions	Positive responses	Negative responses
1	Do you have experience teaching a language (in a public or private school)?	94.7%	5.3%
2	Language teaching, specifically Tutoring	92.1%	7.9%
3	Teaching at the primary level	82.2%	15.8%
4	Teaching at the basic level	94.7%	5.3%
5	Teaching at the secondary level	94.7%	5.3%

The data clearly show that most of the language teachers participating in the study (94.7%) are currently employed in public or private schools, and the majority (92.1%) also have tutoring experience. The study included novice teachers (with up to two years of experience) and experienced educators (with up to 36 years of professional service). Notably, most participants had 11 or more years of experience. Only five out of 38 teachers were novices, indicating that the teachers involved possess substantial teaching experience in languages. This strong representation allows for drawing relevant and reliable conclusions from the findings.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on teachers' use of dictionaries. The first question asked what types of dictionaries teachers currently own: printed, online, or applications installed on their devices. The results showed that most teachers (29) have online dictionaries, although many (20) also own printed dictionaries, as some respondents selected multiple options. However, fewer teachers (10) reported having applications loaded onto their devices.

Subsequent questions were rated on a 5-point scale: 1 to 5 (1 - never, 2 - rarely, 3 – sometimes, 4 - often, 5 - always). The average score from this scale was 3.00, indicating that responses below this threshold tended to be more negative, while those above were more positive.

Another question in this section asked about the types of dictionaries teachers use: explanatory, spelling, foreign word, or bilingual dictionaries. The data revealed that explanatory dictionaries of foreign words were the most frequently used, followed by explanatory dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, and spelling dictionaries.

When asked which dictionaries and online resources or applications teachers used most often – choosing from printed, electronic, or online dictionaries, applications on their devices, search engines, or machine translators – the results indicated that online dictionaries were used most frequently. Conversely, printed dictionaries and translation applications ranked lowest in usage. The final question presented a list of dictionaries, and teachers were asked to indicate their use. The table 2 outlines these dictionaries and their average ratings on a 5-point scale (1 - never, 2 - rarely, 3
- sometimes, 4 - often, 5 - always).

Table N 2

N	Georgian language dictionaries	Mean score
1	Explanatory Dictionary of the Georgian Language (https://ena.ge/explanatory-online)	2.58
2	Orthographic Dictionary of the Georgian Language (https://ena.ge/orthography-online)	2,47
3	Georgian Spelling Checker "Mtsdarptikilmdzebni" (https://spellchecker.ge/	1,97

N		Mean score
1	Russian-Georgian dictionary (http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gwdict/index.php?a=index&d=9)	2.03
2	Russian explanatory dictionary (https://slovarozhegova.ru/)	1.63
3	French explanatory dictionary (https://www.lexilogos.com/francais_dictionnaire.htm)	1.28
4	Italian explanatory dictionary (https://www.lexilogos.com/italien_dictionnaire.htm)	1.16
5	Spanish explanatory dictionaries (https://www.lexilogos.com/espagnol_dictionnaire.htm)	1.23
6	German explanatory dictionary - Duden (https://www.duden.de/woerterbuch)	1.38

N	English language dictionaries	Mean score
1	English-Georgian Learning Dictionary (https://en.bab.la/dictionary/english-georgian/)	2.38
2	The Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary (https://dictionary.ge)	2.75
3	Cambridge English Learning Dictionary (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english)	3.06
4	Longman English Learning Dictionary (https://www.ldoceonline.com)	2.56
5	Oxford English Learning Dictionary (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/)	3.06
6	The Free Dictionary (https://www.thefreedictionary.com)	2.37
7	Urban Dictionary (https://www.urbandictionary.com)	2.32

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Based on the results, it appears that the use of different types of dictionaries is relatively infrequent among both foreign and Georgian language teachers. English dictionaries reveal the highest indicator compared to others, which can be explained by the fact that the most significant number of participants in this survey are English language teachers. Among English language dictionaries, the Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries showed high usage rates, likely due to their widespread popularity. We did not calculate the standard deviation for this section of the questionnaire because the questionnaire listed dictionaries in different languages, and teachers of different languages answered them. English teachers did not indicate French, German or other language dictionaries. Also, teachers of Russian, German, French or other languages participating in the survey indicated dictionaries based on their speciality. Therefore, calculating the standard deviation for this part of the questionnaire was irrelevant. In this case, it was more interesting to see the general picture of teachers' use of dictionaries, which, as seen from the average response rate, is more negative than positive.

The third and most significant section of the questionnaire comprises 26 questions focusing specifically on the use of dictionaries within the language teaching process. In this section, teachers were asked to rate their responses on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated 'never', 2 'rarely', 3 'sometimes', 4 'often', and 5 'always'.

Table 3 presents all questions in this part of the questionnaire, as well as the average scores and standard deviations of the responses.

Table N 3

N	Research questions	Mean score	Standard deviation
1.	I use printed dictionaries in my class	2.87	1.38
2.	I use dictionaries in my class to do comprehension exercises.	3.05	1.31
3.	I devote part of my class to developing the skills of finding relevant information in a dictionary.	2.71	1.35
4.	I need training and professional development to teach how to use a dictionary.	1.84	1.13
5.	In my class, I use electronic dictionaries loaded on a computer or other device.	2.97	1.40
6.	In my class, a dictionary is used to look up the meaning of a word.	3.03	1.46
7.	I find it important to introduce my students to the existence of different types of dictionaries in class.	3.53	1.27
8.	I think that I could improve the teaching of dictionary use if appropriate teaching aids and materials were available (for example, special textbooks and exercise books).	3.42	1.24
9.	In my class, we use dictionaries to look up the correct pronunciation of a word.	3.11	1.43

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10.	In my class, I introduce students to the overall structure of a dictionary (introduction, abbreviations, appendices, etc.).	2.82	1.35
11.	In my class, we use online dictionaries.	2.95	1.43
12.	In my class, dictionaries are used to look up grammatical information.	2.42	1.33
13.	In the lesson, I will discuss the entry structure of the dictionary and coding systems (for example: accent, transcription, symbols, abbreviations, etc.).	2.63	1.34
14.	The study of dictionary use skills should be included in the national curriculum.	3.00	1.25
15.	The study of dictionary use skills should be included in school curricula.	2.76	1.32
16.	Search engines are used in my lesson (for example, Google)	3.00	1.34
17.	The dictionary is used in my lesson to check the correct spelling of a word.	2.13	1.09
18.	I am not motivated to teach students how to use a dictionary.	2.67	1.24
19.	Machine translators (for example, Google Translate) are used instead of dictionaries in the classroom.	2.26	1.22
20.	In my lesson, dictionaries are used to compose texts and write letters.	2.42	1.18
21.	In my lesson, dictionaries are used to enrich students' vocabulary.	3.26	1.31
22.	In my lesson, students use artificial intelligence to complete various exercises.	2.03	1.10
23.	In my lesson, we work with the help of a dictionary to identify the polysemic meaning of a word in a text.	2.26	1.20
24.	In my lesson, we discuss homonyms with the help of a dictionary.	2.34	1.15
25.	In my lesson, we determine the part of speech meaning of words with the help of a	2.24	1.22
26.	I learned to use a dictionary during a training course, a seminar.	1.34 1	0.71

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4. Discussion of the Research Findings

Using a dictionary involves a wide range of skills: understanding spelling and pronunciation, interpreting grammatical information, and engaging with various vocabulary-related aspects – homonymy, conversion, polysemy, collocations, idioms, phrasal verbs, and terminology. It also includes recognizing different types of linguistic labeling – stylistic, temporal, and regional. Each of these components requires systematic instruction and the development of specific, targeted skills.

The analysis of the responses to the questions revealed that the mean score for most answers is marginal, 3.00 or lower, indicating that teachers do not effectively teach students how to use a dictionary. Students are not explained what the structure of a dictionary is, or what are components of a dictionary entry. Students are not taught issues such as pronunciation or spelling of words, grammatical information which can be found in dictionaries. These results align with the findings of the Hungarian study (P. Márkus et al., 2023). While positive feedback was received regarding using a dictionary to look up word meanings or expand vocabulary, the negative responses to questions 23, 24, and 25 suggest that teachers largely overlook topics such as polysemy, homonymy, and conversion. Notably, responses to question 14, which asked whether teaching dictionary skills should be incorporated into the national curriculum, were predominantly negative, with an average score of 3.0. This indicates that teachers do not even consider dictionaries as important resources for teaching languages. Unlike Georgian teachers, their Hungarian colleagues consider it necessary to have a stronger presence of dictionary use in official documents (Márkus et al., 2023). However, the positive responses of Georgian teachers to the statement, "I think I could improve the teaching of dictionary use if appropriate teaching aids and materials (such as special textbooks and exercises) were available," (question 8) are significant and promising. Hungarian teachers also believe that they can improve teaching of dictionary use with the help of special textbooks and other teaching aids (Márkus et al., 2023).

The standard deviation of responses ranges from 0.71 to 1.46, with most responses exceeding 1, indicating a relatively wide range of opinions among teachers. The reliability and internal consistency of the results from this part of the study, measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was found to be $\alpha = 0.993$. This is a high indicator, reflecting the internal consistency of the questionnaire items, which measure the main research question concerning teachers' use of dictionaries and their perceptions of dictionary usage.

Interviews with Teachers

After completing the questionnaire, informal discussions were held with some of the surveyed teachers. These conversations were collegial rather than conducted in a survey format. Through direct interviews, it was discovered that several questions in the questionnaire intrigued the participants, particularly those regarding specialised textbooks and exercises designed to help teachers develop students' dictionary skills. Teachers also noted that the questionnaire included several questions they had not previously considered, emphasising the importance of dictionaries in language teaching.

Furthermore, many teachers found the questionnaire informative, as it introduced topics such as searching for contextual meanings of polysemous words using dictionary entries and issues related to conversion and homonymy. The questionnaire also prompted them to consider incorporating artificial intelligence and various applications into foreign language instruction.

Notably, after interviews, some teachers emphasised that they had not fully realised what was meant by dictionary skills before; they had not thought about the importance of teaching polysemy, homonymy and conversion before, but agreed that dictionary use should be introduced into the national curriculum after the interview.

The interviews revealed that answers to the question - “What does teaching or developing dictionary use skills involve”? - are often superficial and tend to equate teaching dictionary use with merely reading an introduction of a dictionary. In reality, the process is far more complex, multifaceted, and layered. I believe that reviving the culture of dictionary use in schools must begin with a clear understanding of this complexity.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The questionnaire was completed by 38 public school teachers in Tbilisi, including both Georgian and foreign language educators, all of whom possessed substantial pedagogical experience.

Analysis of the responses indicated that the majority of teachers predominantly used online dictionaries, which they considered the most effective resource. This finding aligns with research conducted in Hungary, which demonstrated that online dictionaries facilitate efficient access to word meanings and other linguistic information, thereby enhancing convenience for users (Márkus et al., 2023).

Regarding the frequency of dictionary use, results suggested that both foreign and Georgian language teachers employed dictionaries relatively infrequently. English dictionaries exhibited the highest usage rates, likely reflecting the significant representation of English language teachers among survey participants. Among these, Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries were the most frequently used. Comparable trends were observed in the Hungarian study, where these dictionaries received the highest mean scores of 3.62 and 3.64, respectively, with standard deviations of 1.40 and 1.44 (Márkus et al., 2023).

Further findings revealed that the integration of dictionaries into classroom instruction was limited. Many teachers appeared to lack sufficient knowledge of dictionary-use skills or had not prioritised this aspect of pedagogy. This observation is consistent with research conducted in Hungary and other countries, which reports minimal formal training in dictionary use within school curricula (Gouws, 2022; Márkus & Szöllősy, 2006; Margalitadze & Márkus, 2024; Nied, 2022). Moreover, many teachers still did not employ dictionaries in foreign language classes due to the absence of methodological guidance or instructional materials. Questions also arise regarding teachers’ competence in designing exercises and materials aimed at cultivating dictionary-use skills among learners (Margalitadze & Meladze, 2023; Nied, 2022).

As noted by Margalitadze and Márkus (2024), The lack of available textbooks and teaching aids is tangible in this area. Studies reveal that in Hungary and Georgia ‘dictionary awareness’ is generally rather low and that more attention to the teaching of dictionary skills would be needed in the curricula for English language learning. The major challenges that result from a weak dictionary culture, as well as teachers’ inability to incorporate dictionary pedagogy into regular teaching activities in primary and secondary schools, are readily obvious (p. 763).

Many respondents emphasised that having dedicated textbooks accompanied by methodological instructions and exercises would facilitate the integration of dictionary use into lesson plans. Interviews with several teachers reinforced the importance of incorporating dictionary-use skills into the national curriculum and highlighted the need for professional development opportunities, such as lectures and training programmes, to enhance teachers’ understanding of lexicography and their ability to teach dictionary use effectively.

The findings underscore the need for continued research involving teachers in regional areas and the development of specialised training programmes focused on modern lexicography, the pedagogical significance of dictionary use in foreign language teaching, and the consequences of diminishing dictionary culture.

Future studies should extend beyond the capital city to capture a more representative sample and consider the limitations inherent in questionnaire-based research. While surveys remain a common tool, self-reported data may not fully reflect actual practices (George & Pandey, 2017; Kosem et al., 2018). Consequently, complementary methods such as direct observation, think-aloud protocols, video recordings, and interviews are recommended to obtain more reliable insights into dictionary-use strategies (Müller-Spitzer et al., 2012). Additionally, advances in technology allow for innovative approaches, including monitoring user behaviour on digital platforms, eye-tracking analysis, and examination of interactions on Q&A forums and social media, which can illuminate the practical challenges faced by dictionary users.

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Etymological Analysis of Six Mazandarani Toponymical Suffixes

Abstract

Toponyms are among the most conservative elements of language, often preserving lexical, syntactic, and morphological features across centuries. Due to its relative geographic isolation from the Iranian plateau, Mazandarani—a northwestern Iranian language spoken in Mazandaran province—has retained lexical items traceable to Old Iranian, including archaisms absent in other Iranian languages. Mazandaran, historically known as Tabarestan, is a southern Caspian littoral region whose well-protected terrain, shielded by the Alborz Mountains, has safeguarded its linguistic heritage from invasions and external influence. Consequently, Mazandarani, or Tabari, preserves a rich inventory of Middle and Old Iranian vocabulary, including Avestan and Middle Iranian lexical items, as well as borrowings (Borjian, 2021). Spoken by approximately 2.5 million people, Mazandarani is also the only Iranian language with recorded written literature dating to the medieval period, including works such as *Nikināme*, *Marzbānnāme*, *Bāvandnāme*, and various Koranic exegeses, some of which have been later translated into Persian or lost (Borjian, 2021; Najafzadeh, 1989).

This study investigates the etymology and semantic development of six Mazandarani toponymic suffixes. From a dataset of 1,184 rural Mazandarani toponyms, 43 suffixes were extracted, of which six were selected for detailed analysis due to their semantic ambiguity. The results indicate that all six suffixes ultimately derive from Proto-Indo-European, via Proto-Indo-Iranian and Iranian stages, exhibiting parallels with other Indo-European language families, including Germanic and Balto-Slavic. Phonetic forms and semantic content, however, underwent transformations through processes of grammaticalization and semantic change, including decategorization, desemanticization, erosion, and metonymical generalization (Hopper & Traugott, 1993; Heine, 1993; Trask, 2003; Geeraerts, 2010). For example, the common noun *marz* (“border”) experienced decategorization, losing its nominal function and becoming a functional suffix; through desemanticization and metonymic processes (synecdoche), its meaning broadened from “border” to a general sense of “land.”

The findings corroborate Tame’s (2020) conclusion that many toponymic suffixes originate as ordinary lexical items that acquire specialized toponymic functions through semantic change. Suffixes such as *kelā* (“village”), *marz* (“border/field”), *male* (“village”), and *keti* (“hill”) illustrate this trajectory. Comparable suffixes appear in other Indo-European languages, particularly Germanic and Balto-Slavic groups, reflecting shared etymological roots and inherited tendencies in word formation. The recurrence of related phonetic forms with consistent semantic functions further suggests the impact of successive waves of Indo-Iranian settlement in Mazandaran, the retention of Indo-European archaic forms, and the subsequent influence of Persian as a regional lingua franca. Overall, this research highlights the significance of regional dialects in reconstructing lost etymologies, preserving linguistic archaisms, and understanding the mechanisms of toponymization

***Keywords**: toponyms, Mazandarani, Indo-European languages, etymological analysis, grammaticalisation, semantic change*

1. Introduction

1.1 Toponyms and Mazandarani

Toponyms are among the most conservative linguistic units and retain significant information about the places they refer to. They are classified into Oikonyms (residentials), Hydronyms (bodies of water), and Oronyms (hills, mountains, shores, canyons, valleys) based on their features. Furthermore, according to their constituent elements, they are divided into eleven categories as follows (Ahadian and Bakhtiari 2009):

1. Ethnotoponyms or toponyms named after tribes and clans, some of whom are no longer alive;
2. Zootoponyms or the names of animals that probably live or used to live in the region;
3. Phytotoponyms or the names of the plants;
4. Anthrotoponyms or the names of specific individuals who bear cultural or historical significance for the area and could be its founders or rulers;
5. Hydrotoponyms are the names of the rivers, seas and springs of the area;
6. Cosmotoponyms are the names of the celestial bodies;
7. Mythotoponyms are the names of the mythical heroes and figures;
8. Memotoponyms are named in memory of some individual in a city or a residency;
9. Theotoponyms are derived from a religious figure or concept;
10. Emmigrotoponyms are based on the migration of a group of people who name their new habitat after their former dwelling place;
11. Pathrotoponyms are formed directly from the surnames of some families and individuals.

Studying Mazandarani toponyms can reveal various aspects of the topological, historical, social, cultural, and political realities of Mazandaran and its inhabitants. Due to the relatively undocumented history of the language, Mazandarani toponyms involve considerable ambiguity regarding their meaning and etymology. The Current Mazandarani language is a northwestern Iranian language. It retains Old and Middle Iranian lexical items and grammatical features but significantly borrows from New Persian, which has been the dominant language of literary production and the lingua franca of the Iranian plateau.

In this study, the focus is on exploring the meaning and etymology of six Mazandarani toponymic suffixes. Mazandaran, formerly known as Tabarestan, a southern Caspian littoral province, preserves a rich lexicon of ancient vocabulary due to its well-protected territory by the Alborz Mountains, which shield it from internal and external invasions and military attacks. Therefore, Mazandarani, known as Tabari, the northwestern Iranian language spoken in Mazandaran, features Middle and Old Iranian vocabulary, including Avestan and Middle Iranian lexical items and borrowings (Borjian, 2021). Spoken by approximately two and a half million people, Mazandarani is the only Iranian language with recorded written literature dating back to medieval times. Materials written in Mazandarani include Nikināme, Marzbānnāme, Bāvandnāme, and many Koranic exegeses and translations, although some have been later translated into Persian and others no longer exist (Borjian 2021; Najafzadeh 1989).

1.2. Grammaticalisation

As Hopper and Traugott (2003) and Heine (1993) state, grammaticalisation suggests that content words change meaning and acquire a grammatical function. This process is often unidirectional from concrete to abstract. Over this process, a word undergoes different types and stages of change. Parameters of grammaticalisation include desemanticization, also called bleaching; the process in which a word experiences loss or generalisation of its older content meaning; decategorisation or loss of morphosyntactic properties characteristic of lexical or other, less grammaticalised forms; citisisation, the situation when one word in rapid speech blends with the next word and depends on another word phonologically, such as 'em in them, and finally, erosion or phonetic reduction and loss of phonetic features.

1.3. Semantic Change

One type of linguistic change is the alteration of meaning, which occurs over time mainly due to external factors. It is often classified into six main categories: Generalisation, Specialisation, Amelioration, Pejoration, Metaphor, and Metonymy. Semantic expansion broadens the range of a word's meaning, covering a broader scope than a specific instance. For example, the borrowed word *arrive* originally meant to reach a river in France, but in English today, it means to reach any place.

Conversely, semantic reduction or specialisation narrows a word's scope from a general area to a more specific, limited one, such as the English word *hound*, which initially referred to all types of dogs but now denotes only a particular type of hound. The enhancement or deterioration of a word's implied meanings gives it positive or negative connotations, affecting its emotional impact. For example, the word *queen* used to refer to women generally, but now denotes explicitly a female monarch, exemplifying semantic amelioration. Conversely, *villain* originally meant a villager or farmer, but today, it carries an offensive connotation of an evil, selfish person. In metaphorical usage, a word is employed because of a perceived similarity; for example, *head* refers to both the upper part of the body and the beginning or leader of something. Additionally, it is permissible to substitute one word for another based on some relationship, especially the whole-to-part or part-to-whole relationship, such as using *White House* to mean the residents of the White House or the US Board of Governors (Trask 2003; Dirksen 2008; Geeraerts 2010).

2. Literature Review

Several studies have addressed toponymy in Iran and, more narrowly, Mazandarani toponyms. Toponymic research in Iran has mainly concentrated on typology and morphological structure. Ahadian (2010) offers a linguistic definition of toponymy, proposes a method for analysing lexical elements, and presents a classification procedure for toponyms. However, focused studies on the Mazandarani language and its place-names remain comparatively scarce. Early European work was undertaken by the Polish Iranologist Aleksander Chodzko—the first European scholar to study Persian folklore—who investigated southern Caspian dialects and poetry, including material relevant to Mazandarani (*Encyclopaedia Iranica*, n.d.).

Subsequent local scholarship expanded the lexicographic and etymological base: Kia (1948) compiled a thematic list of Mazandarani vocabulary using the Persian alphabet; Houmand (1989) sketched the history of Mazandarani and discussed its phonology, morphology, syntax, and the etymology of selected items; Hejazi Kenari (1995) produced a concise Mazandarani lexicon with Pahlavi and other ancient-Iranian cognates; Mahdipour Omrani (2003) examined numerous Pahlavi elements in Mazandarani using textual sources; Koulaian (2008) offered a comparative etymology of Mazandarani–Sanskrit agricultural terms; and Borjian (2020) explored particular suffixes (e.g., “sul,” “us”) and discussed the element “div” in Mazandarani toponyms.

Tame (2020) analysed the morphological structure of Iranian toponyms, distinguishing simple from complex names and arguing that complex toponyms contain at least two semantically independent units—one of which may fossilize as a topoformant (a toponymic suffix) over time. Finally, through etymological analysis of many Baboli items, Fanaie, Hajiani, and Mahmoudi (2016) showed that some Mazandarani lexical items descend directly from Middle Persian and, in a few cases, ultimately from Avestan and Sanskrit.

3. Methodology

Mazandarani toponymy shows cases of semantic ambiguity in addition to the case of toponyms without a clear recorded meaning, neither in Mazandarani as the vernacular language nor in Persian as the historically official language of the region. Part of this semantic ambiguity relates to the vernacularity of Mazandarani and the lack of solid written records by which its linguistic history and developments could be distinguished and estimated. The present article attempts to conduct a diachronic, comparative and etymological research into the meanings of six Mazandarani toponymical suffixes that are semantically ambiguous to provide their meanings and etymology.

In order to collect data for the present research, four administrative districts were randomly chosen from the western, central and eastern regions of Mazandaran, providing 1184 rural toponyms, including compound and straightforward toponyms, out of 3035 Mazandarani toponyms attributed to rural areas. The choice of toponyms from rural areas was, firstly, due to their abundant number in contrast to 22 cities, and secondly, rural toponyms faced less linguistic standardisation and assimilation. Reviewing 1184 rural toponyms and excluding simple toponyms, 43 suffixal units were derived, of which 6 suffixal units were selected for analysis due to their ambiguous meaning, as the rest of the suffixal units, which were found, had clear and consistent meaning either in Mazandarani, Persian or even Arabic. Based on the frequencies counted within this list, kelā scored the highest with a total number of 196, -ābād 58, -mahalle 54, -deh 35, -keti 31, -ān 26, -si 25, -sar 22, -ben 19, -ek 18, -dašt 9, -serā 7, -sere 4, -marz 2, -māl 2, -pel 2. The other suffixes include -u 6, -(e)stān 3, -jār 5, -pey 4, -kaš 8, -xeyl 6, -lu 5, -in 1, -un 4, -em 1, -im 1, -um 1, -ām 2 , -et 1, -kuh 1, -kade 2, -restāγ 2, -taxt 2, āb 1, -gāh , -pošt 4, -kande 3, -rud 7, -band 2, -late 2, -darre 3, -čāl 8. Then, to shed light on the meaning and etymology of the selected suffixes, they were looked up in prominent books and dictionaries in the field of Indo-European, Iranian, Balto-Slavic and Germanic linguistics, such as Pokorny's seminal work Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, together with Mallory and Adam's Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture, specifically for Indo-European roots and sound correspondences. As for the Iranian semantics, etymology and sound correspondences, Hassandoust's An Etymological Dictionary of the Persian Language in five volumes, Khanlari's The History of the Persian Language, along with Dehkhoda's Persian encyclopedic dictionary in sixteen volumes, were drawn on. For Balto-Slavic and Germanic etymology, Vasmer's Russisches Etylologisches Wörterbuch, descriptive and etymological Oxford dictionaries and The Danish Dictionary (ordnet.dk) were studied respectively.

In order to start the analysis, the toponymical suffixes in question were studied based on grammaticalisation mechanisms and processes by Hopper and Traugott (2003) and Heine (1993), such as decategorisation, desemanticization, cliticisation and erosion. The semantic change processes were also studied, as stated by Trask (2003) and Geeraerts (2010). Investigating the data according to grammaticalisation and semantic change mechanisms and processes could clarify possible changes to toponymical suffixes. Next, referring to etymological and explanatory dictionaries, the meanings of the lexical units and suffixes were studied, compared and contrasted to related and unrelated Indo-European roots. Part of the study was based on the first-hand investigation of the article's author as a Mazandarani inhabitant and native-speaker.

4. Etymological Analysis

-sar, -serā,

The toponymical suffix, -*sar*, appears in place names such as Bābolsar, Anbārsar, Čāksar, Yānesar, Kiāsar, Čeftesar, Otağsar, Bādābsar, Xānesar, Visar, Kandusar, Čelāsar, and Tilpardeāsar, stretching across the eastern to the western regions of Mazandaran. It closely resembles another suffix *serā/sarā*, found in toponyms like *Serjeserā, Polserā, Ketāleserā, Tuleserā, Kelāgerserā, and Gaznāserā*. In modern Persian and Mazandarani, *sar* usually means *head* or a bodily organ, with connotations such as *chief, peak, beside of, on top of, between, and beginning*. This relates to Middle Persian *sar*, derived from Old Iranian **sarah*, and connected to Sanskrit *śíras* and Proto-Indo-European **k̂er-,* with parallels in Latin *cerebrum* and New German hirn (Hassandoust, 2016). *-Sar* is also used in combinations like *bāǧ-esar* (garden), *sere(-e)sar* (house), and *zamin(-e)sar* (farm, field), emphasising the idea of place and land. The suffix *-sar* in these toponyms and compounds cannot be linked to the meanings related to the bodily organ *head*' or its connotations. Etymological research suggests that *-sar* as a suffix for place names might be related to the Proto-Indo-European **k̂ēls-*, originally meaning a (store) room, with cognates such as Latin *cella*, English *hal*', Greek *Kalīā́*, and Sanskrit *śāla* (Mallory and Adams, 2006). This reflects phonetic correspondences like Indo-European **k̂* to Iranian *s*, **ē* to *ā*, and **l* to *r* (Mallory and Adams, 1997, p. 305). The semantic shift may be due to metonymical generalisation, where the original meaning of room or storeroom expanded to signify any place. Notably, the word for house in Mazandarani is *sere* (Nasri Ashrafi, 2002). However, no evidence exists to determine whether Mazandarani *sere* is a borrowed and altered form of Persian *sarā* or a native inheritance from Indo-European **k̂ēls-*. Additionally, *serā* in Mazandarani today refers to a shepherd's cottage in mountain regions, whereas Persian *sarā(y)* means *house*, *dwelling*, or *castle*. If *serā* in Mazandarani toponyms is borrowed from Persian *sarā*, it likely descends from Middle Persian *srād/srāi*, related to Old Iranian **srāda,* rooted in *sar-* meaning *to cover* or *to protect* (Hassandoust, 2016). Conversely, *sarā(y)* is associated with the Gothic *hrōt,* meaning *cover*, which was borrowed into Turkish as *sārāy* with meanings such as *castle*, *house*, or *manger* (Vasmer, 1958), due to semantic change. If this were the case, then -sar could be the end result of the dropping final *a* due to the erosion process converting *-sarā* to *-sar*. Another hypothesis links the root *-sar* to the Indo-European **ser-* meaning *to flow*, with cognates like Sanskrit *sarā́* (river, stream, brook), Avestan *haraiva* (flowing), related to *hāre* (river) (Pokorny, 1959). Rivers, a prominent feature in forming settlements and place names, especially in rainy and humid regions like Mazandaran and nearby Gilan, support this theory. However, this is less probable, especially considering the presence of other Indo-Iranian lexical items in the region, such as sur and *suraj* meaning *sun* (rendered as *serā*'), *raukma* meaning *light* or *brightness* (*rokne*), *vāsu* meaning *goddess* (*vāsu*), and *Jaina* goddess (*jene)* in toponyms like *Surkelā, Serājkelā, Roknekelā, Vāsukelā, and Jene* (standardised based on folk etymology as *joneyd*).

-kelā

Kelā is probably the most common toponymical suffix used in many Mazandarani toponyms such as *Qādikelā, Vestekelā* and *Xermākelā*. Lexically *Kelā* means a village, settlement in Mazandarani (Nasri Ashrafi, 2002). It is believed to be related to *kalāya* and *kalāt* (hence Arabic *qalʔat* قلعة fortress) which means *castle* or *big village* which has been built on top of a mountain or a heap. Thefore, it is related to **kata-* considering the conversion of *-t-> *-d-> *-δ-> *-l- (Hassandoust, 2016). Mazandarani *kelum* (*pen, barn*), *keli* (*roost)* (Nasri Ashrafi, 2002), Kurdish *kol* barn (Sharafkandi, 1990: 638) and Luri *kola* nest, shelter (Sarlak, 2002: 214) could be other related variants from this root. Actually, **kata-* is derived from Old Iranian **kataka-* that means *house, home, room* being derived from the root *kat-* meaning *cover, protect, surround*, which is itself derived from Indo-European **kot-/*ket-* which means *house, settlement* and is probably related to English *cot* from Old Teutonic **kotum* that means *small house, cottage* (Onions, 1992, Oxford Dictionary, 2009). The suffix *-kelā* is seen in toponyms in the Caucasus region in the Georgian *Nārikālā Fortress*, the Dagestani capital *Māxāčkālā* and the Kabardino-Balkarian city of *Nārtkālā* as well.

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Armenian *k'alak* and Georgian *k'alak'i* are related to this suffix though according to Hübschmann the Armenian word could be derived from Syraic *karxā* (Hassandoust, 2016). The Indo-European root **kel/kelə* to *tower, be high, hill*, OE. *Hyll*, Ger. *Holm*, Lith. *Keliu, kélti (heave, life)*, also Lith. *Kalvà* (*small hill*) and Latv. *Kalva (hill, river island*) could be relevant to this suffix (Pokorny, 1959). The latter Lith. *kélti* particularly draws attention when the word *keti,* in the Mazandarani language means *hill* (Nasr Ashrafi, 2002) and is also used as a suffix to form village toponyms in Mazandaran such as *Ketilate, Ketisar, Čemāzketi, Efrāketi, Bisketi, Ağuzketi, Palemket*i. The other Mazandarani word *keli* means *nest/roost* especially for poultry such as *kerk-keli* meaning *henhouse*. There is a visible change of meaning from a concrete *high spatial position* (tower, hill) to a broader abstract sense of *place* due to desemanticization in the toponymical suffix *-kelā*. Also, its usage as a topoformant is a clear instance of decategorization process.

-pel

-Pel is used as a toponymical suffix in many Mazandarani place names such as *Gālešpel, Efrāpel, Gerjipel, Akāpel, and Čalupel*. At first glance, *pel* is similar to the Persian *pol* and Mazandarani homonym *pel*, meaning *bridge*, which is related to Middle Persian *puhl*, descended from Old Iranian **pṛtu-* from *par*- present in Mazandarani toponyms *Tilpardesar* and *Pardesar*, where the term *–parde* is the remnant of the Old Iranian *pol* that means bridge from Indo-European **pṛ-tu-/*per-tu/*por-tu* in turn being related to **per* meaning *to cross*, cognate with Latin *portus*, German *furt* and English *ford* (Hassandoust, 2016). However, the other etymology could be related to **pel* meaning *fortified place, city*, with cognates such as Greek *polis* that means *city, citadel*, and Sanskrit *pū́r* seen as the second part of the Nagpur, Jaipur and Singapore. This root is also attested in Lithuanian *pilìs* and Latvian *pile*, meaning *city, lock* (Mallory and Adams, 2006; Pokorny, 1959). The evidence here for this interpretation comes from the fact that in some areas where these toponyms are used, there has been no river, massive body of water, or any topological condition for the construction of bridges. Also, some of these toponyms are named after tribes and communities, such as *Gerjipel*, where *Gerji* means *Georgian* in Mazandarani, and *Gālešpel*, where *gāleš* means a *stock-farmer* living in mountainous areas and forests (Nasri Ashrafi, 2002). The semantic change from *fortified place, city* to *place* and from being a common noun to a suffix are instances of desemanticization and decategorization respectively.

-marz

-marz is attached to several names and has formed toponyms such as *Lalemarz, Enārmarz, Zāğmarz, Nargesmarz, Miānkolmarz*. Lexically, *marz* means *border, land*, or *area* in Persian and is related to Middle Persian *marz*, descended from Old Iranian **marza*, which comes from the Proto-Indo-European *merĝ-/mereĝ-. This includes Old English *mearc*, Danish *mark*, Old High German *marcha*, and Old Irish *mruig* (Pokorny, 1959; Oxford Dictionary, 2009; Onions, 1992). In Danish, *mark* signifies a larger area of land used for growing crops or grazing livestock (ordnet.dk). The exact usage can be attributed to Mazandarani; for example, in the toponyms such as *Lalemarz, Enārmarz, and Nargesmarz*, *lale* means *reed; enār* means *pomegranate*, and *narges* means *lily, daffodil*. These toponyms could therefore refer to the land or field where reeds, pomegranates, and lilies grow. Other instances of Scandinavian *mark* include Finnmark and Telemark. Evidently the semantic change from *border* to *land* in general in an instance of metonymical generalization due to desemanticization. Also, the change from a common noun to a function word as a suffix is an instance of decategorization.

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-māl

The Mazandarani toponymical suffix *-māl* appears in *Umāl, Kenesmāl*, and *Le(h)māl*. According to standard Persian dictionaries, *māl* is an Arabic noun borrowed into Persian, meaning belongings, property, cattle, capital, cash, and figuratively referring to gold and silver, which are unrelated to toponymy. In Mazandarani, *u* signifies water, *Kenes* refers to *medlar*, a plant known scientifically as *Mespilus germanica*, and *le(h)* indicates *sediment*, the soft clay remaining after floods. *-māl* could stem from the root **mel/melə/mo*lā, meaning *increase, high, or riverbank*, and the New Persian *bar* (side) derived from Avestan *varu/vouru*, related to Sanskrit *uru* meaning *width* (Hassandoust, 2016). Furthermore, *- māl* might relate to Latvian *mala*, meaning *edge, riverside*, or *area*, as in *jūrmala*, which signifies *sea-coast*; and Lithuanian *malà* and *pamalis*, meaning land or border respectively. Another Mazandarani term, *male,* meaning village or residence (Nasri Ashrafi, 2002), could be a borrowing from the Arabic *mahalle*. Notably, Latvian *jūrmala* and Lithuanian *malà* align well with the use of *-māl* in Mazandarani toponyms, where for example, in *Umāl,* the second element could imply *bank* or *shore*, thus meaning *riverside*. In *Kenesmāl*, it might denote *land* or *field,* suggesting *medlarfield*. The German equivalent is *ufer*, meaning *riverbank*, which correlates with *Umāl* considering the correspondence among *m, b, f,* and *l, r* (Khanlari, 2003) based on the cognateness of Mazandarani-*māl*, Persian *bar*, and German *fer* (Pokorny, 1959; Mallory and Adams, 2006). The Persian *bar/bār* means *edge* or *coas*t, as in *daryābār*, meaning *sea-coast* (Dehkhoda Dictionary). *-māl* used as a toponymical suffix shows instances of desemanticization and decategorization.

5. Conclusion

The present research provided meaning and etymology for six semantically ambiguous toponymical suffixes exclusively used in Mazandaran and demonstrated that these suffixes were all related to Indo-European roots; however, due to grammaticalisation and semantic change processes, they acquired altered phonetic forms or semantic content. The research highlights the role and significance of regional dialects in examining lost etymologies and linguistic archaisms due to the less standardisation and preservation of older linguistic materials. The study showed that grammaticalisation and semantic change mechanisms, as stated by Hopper and Traugott (2993), Heine (1993), Trask (2003) and Geeraerts (2010), have occurred concerning the suffixes investigated in this research, particularly through the processes of decategorisation, desemanticization, erosion and metonymical generalisation. An example is the case of the common noun *marz* (border), which, based on decategorisation, lost its grammatical part of speech as a common noun and converted to a functional word as a suffix, also based on desemanticization and metonymical processes (synecdoche), underwent meaning change from the meaning *border* to a broader sense of *land*. The research results were consistent with Tame's (2020) conclusion that some toponymical suffixes started as ordinary lexical items that, through later semantic changes, gained their current function as toponymical suffixes. For instance, words such as *kelā* (*village*), *marz* (*border, field*), *male* (*villag*e), and *keti* (*hill*) are mainly Mazandarani words also utilised as suffixes in place names. The research also showed that equivalent suffixes were used similarly by other members of the Indo-European language family, particularly in the Germanic and Balto-Slavic groups, with which Indo-Iranian languages shared a common homeland. The employment of similar concepts *like house, hill, castle, bridge, border*, as well as lexical items like German *ufer*, Mazandarani *umāl*, and Lithuanian *jurmala,* reveals inherited genetic features and tendencies in word formation and borrowings—two active mechanisms of toponymization. Moreover, the coexistence and use of different related phonetic forms with relatively consistent meanings of the toponymical suffixes may reflect the influence of multiple waves of Indo-Iranian migrants settling in various parts of Mazandaran, the potential preservation of Indo-European archaic forms in their languages, and the later dominance of Persian as the lingua franca across the Iranian or Persian plateau.

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The Art of Manipulation: Exploring Gaslighting in James Thurber's Narratives

You can fool too many people, too much of the time.
James Thurber

Abstract

Gaslighting, a form of psychological manipulation, represents a complex discourse with significant linguistic dimensions. Despite its relevance, it has received relatively little attention in linguistic research. This paper investigates the linguistic manifestations of gaslighting in James Thurber's works, drawing on excerpts from *The Unicorn in the Garden (1939)*, *The Little Girl and the Wolf (1939)*, and *The Great Quillow (1944)*.

The theoretical framework integrates speech act theory (Austin, 1961; Searle, 1979), the theory of the linguistic order of gaslighting (Catapang Podoski, 2020), and approaches from linguo-stylistics and discourse analysis (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981; Verdonk, 2002). The analysis demonstrates that gaslighting in Thurber's stories is primarily enacted through explicit assertive speech acts. These assertives satisfy both preparatory and sincerity conditions, enabling the speaker to achieve the intended perlocutionary effect on the listener.

In Thurber's narratives, gaslighting is shown to operate predominantly as first-order gaslighting: it does not overtly negate the victim's perception of reality. Still, it subtly reshapes it to the manipulator's advantage. Moreover, stylistic devices such as epithets, similes, and metaphors enhance the linguistic construction of gaslighting, reinforcing manipulation strategies and rendering them more covert and insidious.

This study provides insights into how language functions as a tool of manipulation and control, offering implications for literary analysis and the understanding of real-world communicative practices.

Keywords: *gaslighting, language order, manipulation, speech act theory*

1.Introduction

A popular quote, often attributed to Sigmund Freud, says, *Everywhere I go, I find that a poet has been there before me.* One can hardly argue with this statement, as authors of literary works had been exploring the depths of the human psyche long before psychoanalysis emerged. In literature, we find remarkable portrayals of complex characters and detailed depictions of the sophisticated ways they behave and interact with others. Literary villains, in particular, often plot against the virtuous, demonstrating remarkable manipulation skills.

James Thurber (1894-1961), a master of humour and satire, is brilliant at portraying vivid human characters. His works often explore social and interpersonal contexts, revealing the absurdities of communication and relationships. Through sharp wit and keen observation, Thurber captures the peculiarities of individual interactions and reflects on broader societal issues. Not surprisingly, his stories exhibit elements of such socio-linguistic phenomena as gaslighting, illustrating skilled manipulators and their attempts to exert control in both interpersonal and social contexts.

This paper aims to explore the peculiarities of the linguistic realisation of gaslighting in James Thurber's narratives *(The Unicorn in the Garden, 1939; The Little Girl and the Wolf, 1939;* and *The Great Quillow, 1944)* from the standpoint of speech act theory (Austin, 1961; Searle, 1979) and the theory of linguistic order (Catapang Podosky, 2020). Additionally, the study examines the stylistic devices used to enhance manipulation.

Observations indicate that while gaslighting is typically a destructive manipulation tactic, in James Thurber's narratives, it often serves as a tool for the righteous to outwit evil and restore justice. Rather than being purely harmful, in Thurber's work, it becomes a strategic means of overcoming tyranny and deception. Nevertheless, from a linguistic standpoint, it comprises all the manipulative techniques inherent to gaslighting — a subject that will be explored in greater depth in this paper.

2. Theoretical Framework

Gaslighting, *a form of verbal, cognitively oriented psychological manipulation,* represents a complex discourse with significant linguistic implications (Purtseladze, 2024a). As one of the most destructive psychological manipulation tactics, gaslighting involves numerous linguistic strategies employed by the speaker (gaslighter), making it particularly harmful to the hearer (victim). Recent studies indicate that verbal manipulation in gaslighting mainly relies on assertive speech acts. Three distinct types of assertives commonly found in gaslighting discourse are explicit assertives, where the encoded message directly corresponds to the literal illocutionary act; covert assertives, in which an assertive speech act is embedded within a different illocutionary act; and inclusive assertives, which encode a message within an assertive speech act that implicitly contains another illocutionary act, such as a directive or a commissive (Purtseladze, 2024a).

The effectiveness of gaslighting can be attributed to the interplay of directions of fit that govern verbal manipulation. Specifically, gaslighters employ assertive speech acts aligned with reality, following the word-to-world direction of fit. Their statements, whether based on accurate or deceptive past or present observations, become felicitous due to interpersonal factors such as the hearer's *trust* (Searle, 1979, p. 44). As a result, these assertives may adopt a world-to-word fit orientation, as the hearer perceives them as reliable and unconsciously adjusts his or her perception accordingly. The pragmatic aspects of gaslighting extend beyond traditional speech act theory. In gaslighting scenarios, assertive speech acts demonstrate a double direction of fit, meaning they not only describe reality but also aim to alter it — an attribute not typically associated with assertives. Moreover, the gaslighter establishes predetermined felicity conditions that influence the communicative context. These factors play a crucial role in producing the intended perlocutionary effect, impacting the hearer's perception and interpretation of reality (Purtseladze, 2024a).

When subjected to gaslighting, individuals may start to question their perception of reality in various ways. According to P.M. Catapang Podosky, the level and nature of this doubt depend on the linguistic order in which the gaslighting interaction takes place. This distinction results in two types of gaslighting: first-order and second-order gaslighting. First-order gaslighting occurs when there is a disagreement about

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whether a shared concept applies to a specific aspect of reality. In this case, the speaker's use of language causes the hearer to doubt his or her ability to interpret a situation correctly. However, their confidence in the underlying concept remains intact. Second-order gaslighting, on the other hand, occurs when there is a disagreement over which concept should be applied in a particular context. Here, the speaker's language leads the hearer to doubt not only their interpretive abilities but also the validity of the concept being used. This deeper level of doubt makes the manipulation more profound, reshaping the hearer's fundamental understanding of reality. First-order gaslighting undermines perception within an established framework, while second-order gaslighting challenges that framework itself (Catapang Podosky, 2020).

In summary, from a linguistic perspective, gaslighting operates at the intersection of semantics and pragmatics, making it a highly effective form of psychological manipulation. Semantically, gaslighters manipulate the meanings of words and concepts to instil confusion and self-doubt in the hearer. (Purtseladze, 2024b) Pragmatically, they exploit speech acts and shape communicative contexts to alter the hearer's perception of reality.

3. Methodology

3.1. Instruments

This article employs a qualitative literary and linguistic analysis to examine the presence and function of gaslighting in James Thurber's works. The study focuses on close readings of selected texts, identifying narrative structures, character interaction patterns, and the linguistic means by which gaslighting functions as a central or underlying mechanism within the plot. (Haupt, 2022; Gillis, 2023; Holland, 2023; Wilson, 2024) Additionally, it applies linguistic frameworks, particularly speech act theory as proposed by J.L. Austin and J. Searle, to analyse how gaslighting is enacted through linguistic behaviour. The theory of linguistic order, developed by Catapang Podoski, is utilized in this study to explore how language patterns influence cognition and facilitate psychological manipulation within James Thurber's works.

3.2. Data Collection Procedures

The texts selected for analysis feature, either explicitly or implicitly, gaslighting as a key element of the plot. For this study, ten (10) conversation excerpts from the chosen literary works were examined. The identification of gaslighting in these excerpts relies on psychological definitions and linguistic markers commonly associated with the phenomenon. The excerpts were chosen based on their relevance to the concept of gaslighting, with particular attention to the harmful effects on the hearer as depicted within the narrative. This criterion aligns with the psychological core of gaslighting — a manipulative act aimed at affecting the hearer's perception of reality. In each of the selected excerpts, the linguistic interaction does not merely involve disagreement or conflict; rather, it results in confusion, self-doubt, or a shift in control that disempowers the victim.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed following a classification of assertive speech acts specific to gaslighting (Purtseladze, 2024a), built upon the traditional speech act classification proposed by J. Searle. (Searle, 1979) Particular attention was given to the analysis of felicity conditions (Austin, 1961) of the utterances produced by the speaker. Additional focus was placed on stylistic devices, if present, that contributed to the linguistic realisation of gaslighting. This approach enabled the identification and interpretation of the linguistic

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strategies employed in gaslighting scenarios depicted in James Thurber's works. Due to space limitations, only some excerpts will be discussed in this paper.

4. Findings and Discussion: Gaslighting in James Thurber's Narratives

James Thurber (1894–1961) was an American writer, cartoonist, and humorist renowned for his wit and satirical view of modern life. A long-standing contributor to The New Yorker, he combined humour with social critique. Politically, he was sceptical of authoritarianism and valued individual freedom, though he avoided overt partisanship. Nevertheless, he satirised contemporary society, mocking its rigid structures, pointless rules, and unquestioning adherence to convention.

Psychological manipulation is a subtle yet significant theme in James Thurber's works. His stories often feature characters who utilize language and social conventions to control, confuse, or undermine others. As stated earlier, in this paper, I will analyse *The Unicorn in the Garden (1939)*, *The Little Girl and the Wolf (1939)*, and *The Great Quillow (1944)*. These stories have been chosen for their distinct and original portrayal of gaslighting and their effectiveness in illustrating psychological manipulation. Rather than examining them chronologically, I will discuss them based on the complexity of the gaslighting depicted in each narrative, starting with the least sophisticated tactic and gradually progressing towards more original ones.

4.1. The Great Quillow

The Great Quillow (1944) is a short story by James Thurber in which a small, unassuming toymaker cleverly overcomes a fierce giant named Hunder and saves his town from destruction. Using his intelligence, creativity, and skillful manipulation, Quillow convinces the giant that he is suffering from a mysterious illness with strange symptoms, which Quillow orchestrates with the townspeople's help to make the illness appear real. He then persuades Hunder that the only possible cure is to bathe in yellow waters at dawn, in the middle of the vast blue sea. Believing this, the giant rushes to the sea in desperation, only to drown as he swims further, convinced he is following the recommended remedy.

Before analysing the selected excerpts, it is important to emphasise that gaslighting, as a sustained form of manipulation, develops gradually. For the gaslighter to achieve his or her intended effect, he or she must first establish the necessary conditions that allow the manipulation to succeed. In this context, timing is crucial, as it enables the speaker to create the illusion that their assertive speech acts meet two key felicity conditions: the preparatory condition and the sincerity condition (Purtseladze, 2024a).

According to Austin, the preparatory condition ensures that the circumstances and people involved are suitable for effectively executing a speech act. Conversely, the sincerity condition requires that the speaker genuinely believes in the truthfulness of their statements. (Austin, 1975:14f). The process of establishing these necessary conditions is clearly demonstrated in the following excerpt.

Once upon a time, […]a giant came to our town from a thousand leagues away, stepping over the hills and rivers. He was so mighty a giant that he could stamp upon the ground with his foot and cause the cows in the fields to turn flip-flops in the air and land on their feet again.

Garf, growled Hunder, I can stamp upon the ground with my foot and empty a lake of its water.

I have no doubt of that, O Hunder, said Quillow, for the thunder is your plaything and the mountains are your stool. But the giant who came over the hills and rivers many and many a year ago was a lesser giant than Hunder. He was weak. He fell ill of a curious malady. He was forced to run to the ocean and bathe in the yellow waters, for only the yellow waters in the middle of the sea could cure the giant.

Rowf, snarled Hunder, picking up another sheep. That giant was a goose, that giant was a grasshopper. Hunder is never sick. […]

This other giant, said Quillow, had no ailment of the chest or the stomach or the mouth or the ears or the eyes or the arms or the legs.

Where else can a giant have an ailment? demanded Hunder.

[…]In the mind, said Quillow. […]No one to this day knows what brought on this dreadful disease in the mind of the other giant, said Quillow. (The Great Quillow. J. Thurber, 1944)

This passage illustrates gaslighting as a language-based cognitive tactic in action. Quillow shapes Hunder's perception using explicit assertives, embedding his message within an innocent-sounding story. By suggesting that giants can suffer from a *disease of the mind*, he introduces doubt, prompting Hunder to question his invulnerability.

Quillow carefully constructs felicity conditions to make his manipulation effective. The preparatory condition is established by linking the illness to a past event, making it seem plausible. Hunder's engagement reinforces the sincerity condition — his question *Where else can a giant have an ailment*? indicates he is beginning to internalise Quillow's framing.

Ultimately, Quillow's strategy embodies the essence of gaslighting: the gradual erosion of confidence and perception. Here, Thurber skillfully depicts gaslighting involving triangulation[1], which includes diminishment and idealisation. Quillow introduces a fictional past giant as a comparative figure to influence Hunder's perception of himself. By portraying the other giant as inferior to Hunder, using epithets such as *lesser* and *weak*, Quillow diminishes him, reinforcing the idea that true giants — like Hunder — should be invincible. At the same time, Quillow idealises Hunder, boosting his ego with metaphors like *the thunder is your plaything and the mountains are your stool.* This strategic flattery makes Hunder more receptive to Quillow's claims, while planting the idea that even mighty giants might succumb to an unseen *disease of the mind.* Through these tactics, Quillow gradually shifts Hunder's perception, demonstrating the essence of gaslighting: undermining certainty through subtle yet calculated influence.

Let us now see how gaslighting unfolds in the next excerpt.

Did this goose, this grasshopper, have pains in his head? he asked. […]

This other giant, said Quillow, suffered no pain. His symptoms were marvelous and dismaying. First, he heard the word. For fifteen minutes one morning, beginning at a quarter of six, he heard the word. […]

What was the word the giant heard for fifteen minutes one day?

The word was 'woddly', said Quillow. All words were one word to him. All words were 'woddly'. […]

I shall bring you a better tale tomorrow, said Quillow. Meanwhile, be sure to see the first star over your left shoulder, do not drink facing downstream, and always sleep with your heart to the east.

Why should Hunder practice this foolish rigmarole? asked the giant.

No one knows to this day, said Quillow, what caused the weird illness in the mind of the other giant. (The Great Quillow . J. Thurber, 1944)

This passage demonstrates the use of explicit and covert assertives in Quillow's manipulation of Hunder. The explicit assertive occurs when Quillow describes the mysterious illness of the other giant, presenting it as a fact and subtly implying that giants are not immune to sickness. The covert assertive is employed when Quillow issues directives — instructing Hunder to follow specific rituals (*see the first star over your left shoulder,* etc.) — but embeds them within an assertive framework. This blurs the line between statement and command, making Hunder more likely to comply without questioning.

[1] *Triangulation* is the act of introducing a third party to influence or control the dynamics of a relationship. (Holland, 2023)

Additionally, Quillow employs *a double bind*[1], a classic gaslighting technique. He reassures Hunder that he is not affected by the illness, yet simultaneously introduces doubt by stating that the cause remains unknown. This contradiction creates psychological tension, making Hunder anxious and prompting him to focus on self-preservation rather than oppressing the townspeople. By shifting Hunder's attention to his vulnerability, Quillow strengthens his control over the situation, further isolating Hunder from independent reasoning. The following excerpt demonstrates how Quillow continues to use his manipulative approach.

The following excerpt demonstrates how Quillow continues to implement his manipulative approach.

It is the malady! I have heard the word! It is the malady! cried Hunder. What am I to do to cure the malady?[…]I heard the word, he said. All men said the word,

What word? asked Quillow.

Woddly, said the giant

'That is but the first symptom, said Quillow reassuringly, and it has passed. Look at the chimneys of the town. Are they not red?

Hunder looked. Yes, the chimneys are red, said Hunder. Why do you ask if the chimneys are red?

So long as the chimneys are red, said Quillow, you have no need to worry, for when the second symptom is upon you, the chimneys of the town turn black.

I see only red chimneys, said the giant. But what could have caused Hunder to hear the word? […]

Perhaps, said Quillow, you stepped on a centaur's grave or waked the sleeping unicorn or whistled on Saint Nillin's Day. (The Great Quillow . J. Thurber, 1944)

Quillow employs explicit assertives to manipulate Hunder, exploiting the preestablished felicity conditions in this passage. The first symptom, hearing the word *woddly,* is fabricated with the townspeople's assistance, who repeat the word to Hunder. This ensures the sincerity condition is fulfilled, as Hunder believes the event to be real, thereby making Quillow's subsequent statements more convincing.

Quillow also bolsters the deception by asserting that the second symptom will cause the chimneys to turn black. This shifts Hunder's focus from questioning his supposed illness to anxiously awaiting further signs, deepening his psychological confusion.

Furthermore, Quillow offers arbitrary explanations for the cause of the illness, such as stepping on a centaur's grave. These explanations generate an aura of mystery, enhancing the credibility of the manipulation. They also divert Hunder from doubting the illness, keeping him focused on avoiding additional symptoms. By establishing a system of symptoms and causes, Quillow increases his control over Hunder, exemplifying gaslighting in its most effective form.

Let us now examine the following example to trace the progression of gaslighting.

When you see the blue men, he said, it is the third and last symptom of the malady. If that should happen, you must rush to the sea and bathe in the yellow waters or your strength will become the strength of a kitten. […]

I will do as you say, teller of tales, said the giant, for you are wise beyond the manner of men. (The Great Quillow . J. Thurber, 1944)

In this passage, Quillow uses inclusive assertives to influence Hunder by embedding commands within descriptive statements. For example, when he says, *When you see the blue men, it is the third and last symptom of the malady,* he implies that Hunder should respond by rushing to the sea when faced with the final symptom. This method conceals the directive within an assertion, making it less obvious.

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1 *A double bind* is a situation where a person receives two conflicting messages, which makes it difficult to respond appropriately. This can be confusing and may influence the person's behaviour in a way that limits his/her ability to make a clear decision. (Bateson, Jackson, Haley & Weakland, 1956)

From the perspective of felicity conditions, the preparatory condition is met since Hunder already believes in the illness, and the sincerity condition is fulfilled because Quillow's words appear genuine to him. Hunder's trust in Quillow reflects his belief in the advice, which ensures the manipulation's success.

The subsequent excerpt exemplifies the peak of gaslighting and shows that Quillow has achieved his aim. At this stage, Hunder is completely convinced of his supposed ailment and reacts with panic to the imagined symptoms.

The blue men! cried Hunder. The blue men have come! The world is filled with little blue men!

I see no blue men, said Quillow, but you have begun to shrink like the brook in dry weather, and that is the sign of the third symptom.

The sea! The sea! Point me to the sea! (The Great Quillow . J. Thurber, 1944)

In this passage, Quillow skillfully employs gaslighting techniques through assertive speech acts. He begins with an explicit assertive, denying Hunder's claim of seeing the blue men and suggesting that Hunder's condition is worsening. This denial undermines Hunder's sense of reality, implying that his perception is flawed. Quillow then shifts to an inclusive assertive tone, combining an assertion about Hunder's shrinking with an implied directive, indirectly prompting him to rush to the sea. The felicity conditions of the speech acts are met: the preparatory condition is established by creating a sense of urgency and presenting Hunder's actions as necessary, while the sincerity condition is maintained as Quillow continually presents Hunder's symptoms as genuine.

Additionally, the simile *shrinking like the brook in dry weather* intensifies the illusion of illness, making Hunder more vulnerable to Quillow's manipulation. Using these linguistic techniques, Quillow guides Hunder to act according to his design.

In conclusion, *The Great Quillow* illustrates how the speaker uses explicit, covert, and inclusive assertives to manipulate the hearer's perception, gradually shifting his sense of reality. Thurber effectively makes Quillow's statements believable and convincing by skillfully fabricating felicity conditions, particularly the preparatory and sincerity conditions. Stylistic devices such as epithets, metaphors, and similes amplify the illusion of illness, making Hunder more susceptible to gaslighting.

It should be emphasised that what Thurber depicts in *The Great Quillow* can be identified as an instance of first-order gaslighting, because the main character manipulates the giant's perception, instilling a false belief into him without explicitly denying reality. As is well known, in first-order gaslighting, the speaker does not outright reject the hearer's reality but instead shapes his or her perception in a way that leads to false conclusions (Catapang Podosky, 2020). Unlike second-order gaslighting, where the victim's ability to trust his or her perceptions is eroded through denial and contradiction, first-order gaslighting operates by exploiting a person's existing beliefs or vulnerabilities and guiding him or her towards a false but seemingly logical conclusion. Quillow does not tell the giant he is imagining things — he provides him with a version of reality that leads to self-deception. First-order gaslighting is the optimal choice for Quillow, since it allows him to outsmart the giant without confrontation. This method works particularly well because the giant relies on his reasoning to reach the wrong conclusions, which renders him more susceptible to fear and retreat.

4.2. The Unicorn in the Garden

The Unicorn in the Garden (1939), one of Thurber's most renowned stories, skillfully portrays first-order gaslighting in personal relationships. The protagonist, a husband exhausted by his toxic marriage, manipulates his wife into believing he has lost his sanity by claiming to have seen a unicorn in their garden. Once the wife becomes convinced of his supposed mental instability and eagerly contacts the authorities to have him institutionalised, the husband reverses the narrative. As a result, it is the wife who appears delusional, leading to her being restrained in a straitjacket and taken away. Now, let us examine in more detail how gaslighting is linguistically constructed in this story.

There's a unicorn in the garden, he said. Eating roses. She opened one unfriendly eye and looked at him. The unicorn is a mythical beast, she said, and turned her back on him. […]

The unicorn, he said, ate a lily. His wife sat up in bed and looked at him coldly. You are a booby, she said, and I am going to have you put in the booby-hatch. […]

He has a golden horn in the middle of his forehead, he told her. […]

Did you tell your wife you saw a unicorn? asked the police. Of course not, said the husband. The unicorn is a mythical beast. That's all I wanted to know, said the psychiatrist. Take her away. I'm sorry sir, but your wife is as crazy as a jay bird. (The Unicorn in the Garden . J. Thurber, 1939)

As seen from the excerpt above, the husband repeatedly claims to see a unicorn in the garden, describing its actions in detail: *There's a unicorn in the garden. Eating roses.* His statements are explicit assertives, as they convey information about the external world. However, the hidden assertion within them — *I have lost touch with reality* — is never explicitly stated. Instead, the wife is led to infer this conclusion herself.

The felicity conditions are satisfied because the wife understands that unicorns do not exist: *The unicorn is a mythical beast.* Her prior knowledge acts as a condition that allows her to dismiss her husband's claims as absurd and to infer that he is no longer in touch with reality. Additionally, his insistence — *The unicorn ate a lily* — introduces ambiguity, as his detailed descriptions — *He has a golden horn in the middle of his forehead* — suggest he genuinely perceives the unicorn. The sincerity condition of his speech acts is thus fulfilled, further supporting the possibility that he may indeed be delusional.

When the wife, convinced of his madness, attempts to have him institutionalised, the husband suddenly changes his narrative. To the police, he denies ever claiming to have seen a unicorn: *Of course not. The unicorn is a mythical beast.* This final statement is also an assertive, but unlike his previous claims, it now aligns with reality, making it fully felicitous. Since his wife has already acted on the assumption of his insanity, she now appears irrational. Her earlier belief in a claim that contradicts his final assertion discredits her, leading to her institutionalisation while the husband remains in control.

Through this seemingly simple use of speech acts, manipulation of felicity conditions, and embedded meanings, Thurber illustrates the destructive effect of first-order gaslighting. The wife is not manipulated into questioning her own reality but into believing a false narrative about her husband, one that ultimately turns against her. This reversal is what sets Thurber's portrayal of psychological manipulation apart — it shows how gaslighting does not always involve making someone doubt his or her own sanity but can also operate by manipulating one into constructing and defending a false narrative that ultimately harms the hearer. This is precisely what makes this instance of gaslighting unique.

4.3. The Little Girl and the Wolf

James Thurber's *The Little Girl and the Wolf (1939)* is a satirical retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood.* In this version, the girl is notably more intelligent and perceptive than the traditional character. When she encounters the wolf disguised as her grandmother, she immediately recognises the deception and outsmarts him. Instead of being naïve, she applies logic and quick reasoning to turn the situation to her advantage, subverting the conventional fairy tale narrative. In this manner, Thurber emphasises intelligence over conformity, employing his characteristic irony and dark humour.

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This story is notable not so much for its linguistic depiction of gaslighting, but for its reversal of traditional gender stereotypes. In classic fairy tales, female characters are often portrayed as naïve, passive, or in need of rescue, while male figures — protectors or predators — dominate the narrative. (Meland, 2020) However, Thurber reverses this pattern. The girl in the story is neither gullible nor defenceless; she quickly recognises the wolf's deception and refuses to be misled. By using intelligence and critical thinking rather than fear or submission, she dismantles the expected victim-predator dichotomy. This can be observed in the following excerpt:

When the little girl opened the door of her grandmother's house, she saw that there was somebody in bed with a nightcap on. She had approached no nearer than twenty-five feet from the bed when she saw that it was not her grandmother but the wolf, for even in a nightcap a wolf does not look any more like your grandmother than the Metro-Goldwyn lion looks like Calvin Coolidge. So, the little girl took an automatic out of her basket and shot the wolf dead. (The Little Girl and the Wolf. J. Thurber, 1939)

In the original *Little Red Riding Hood,* the wolf's deception relies entirely on first-order gaslighting. He does not try to make the girl doubt her ability to perceive reality (which would be second-order gaslighting). Instead, he presents her with a false reality that she is expected to accept without question. By disguising himself as the grandmother, the wolf does not challenge the girl's mental faculties or try to make her believe she is imagining things. Instead, he creates a misleading situation and expects her to be fooled. The iconic dialogue (*What big eyes you have!* etc.) reinforces this illusion, leading her to engage with it rather than reject it outright. This aligns with first-order gaslighting, where the manipulator imposes false events rather than directly undermining the victim's sense of reason.

In Thurber's version, the expectation of this gaslighting scenario is set up but immediately subverted. Instead of being lured into questioning her perception, the girl recognises the wolf and acts decisively. The humorous analogy — *for even in a nightcap a wolf does not look any more like your grandmother than the Metro-Goldwyn lion looks like Calvin Coolidge* — undermines the very premise of gaslighting, as it emphasises the absurdity of mistaking the wolf for a human. Thurber eliminates the psychological manipulation, presenting a protagonist who is neither naïve, nor vulnerable. This sharp reversal not only satirises traditional fairy-tale gender roles but also dismantles the underlying mechanism of gaslighting by portraying a heroine who trusts her perception and takes immediate action. This shift challenges deeply ingrained social expectations, portraying the female protagonist as independent and capable rather than helpless. In doing so, Thurber critiques not just the conventions of fairy tales but broader societal assumptions about gender roles, illustrating how awareness and rationality can serve as tools of empowerment.

The story's moral — *It is not so easy to fool little girls nowadays as it used to be* — stresses the idea that the gaslighting effect depends on the victim's willingness to accept a false reality, which is vividly portrayed in the original fairy tale. Thurber's phrase *not so easy to fool little girls nowadays* constitutes a wider commentary on changing expectations concerning gender roles, implying that women (or society in general) have become more sceptical and resistant to manipulation. The story highlights the importance of critical thinking and autonomy by subverting the expected gaslighting scenario, suggesting that awareness and resilience are vital against deception.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that, although gaslighting is often associated with destructive, manipulative behaviour, in James Thurber's works, it paradoxically functions as a defence mechanism against perceived evil or oppression. Rather than portraying gaslighting as malicious, Thurber employs it as a strategic response to toxic influence in personal relationships and wider societal contexts.

The empirical analysis confirms that the linguistic expression of gaslighting in the examined texts predominantly involves explicit assertives — statements that perform assertive illocutionary acts while conveying implicit messages. These underlying assertions are carefully crafted to influence the hearer (victim) in favour of the speaker (gaslighter). Covert and inclusive assertives are less frequent in Thurber's works because his style tends towards directness and transparency, emphasising clear, explicit statements that highlight the irony for which he is renowned and align with the conventions of the fable genre. Such speech acts achieve their intended perlocutionary effect because they meet two key felicity conditions: the preparatory condition, which presupposes that the shared context allows the speaker to make the assertion, and the sincerity condition, which assumes that the speaker genuinely believes in what they are saying. However, in Thurber's narratives, these conditions are distorted — felicity is manufactured and sincerity feigned — a characteristic feature of gaslighting discourse.

The findings also indicate that the type of cognitively-oriented psychological manipulation depicted in Thurber's stories can be classified as first-order gaslighting. Unlike second-order gaslighting, which gradually causes the victim to question their sanity or judgment, first-order gaslighting in Thurber's work does not directly challenge the victim's perception of reality. Instead, it reinterprets the narrative to turn it against the victim. Thurber favours first-order gaslighting due to its subtlety, fitting the context of gradual and covert manipulation. Using this form of influence allows him to craft the irony and absurdity typical of his style, as the manipulation happens without overt conflict, making the distortion of reality more convincing within the story's framework.

Furthermore, Thurber enhances the effect of manipulation through stylistic devices such as epithets, similes, and metaphors.

This study emphasises the importance of analysing gaslighting through psychological perspectives, discourse analysis, and linguistic pragmatics. Understanding how language can shape perception and distort reality — even subtly, under the guise of humour — remains vital for raising awareness of the mechanisms behind real-world manipulation.

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Ephrem Mtsire's Translation Technique Based on the Pseudo-Athanasius of Alexandria's Homily "Sermo de descriptione Deiparae"[1]

Abstract

This study explores the translation methodology of Ephrem Mtsire, a significant figure in Georgian Christian literature, through a detailed examination of his Old Georgian translation of the homily *Sermo de descriptione Deiparae* (CPG 2269) attributed to Pseudo-Athanasius of Alexandria.

The research is based on a comparative textual analysis of the Georgian translation and the Greek original. The methodology employs a comprehensive, multi-layered approach that combines historical-paleographical analysis, textual criticism, and comparative philology. The paper underscores Ephrem's early, pre-Hellenophilic translational style by comparing the Georgian translation with the Greek source. The analysis uncovers frequent additions, omissions, grammatical modifications (such as changes in number and the substitution of participial constructions), and stylistic adaptations (e.g., hendiadyses and rhetorical devices). Particular attention is given to Ephrem's dual method of quoting Scripture: using existing translations for verbatim biblical quotations and translating paraphrastic or authorially modified scriptural references independently. The translation of the homily, preserved in the autograph manuscript S-1276, exemplifies a model of dynamic equivalence and suggests a reader-oriented strategy, while maintaining significant fidelity to the rhetorical structure and theological nuances of the Greek original. These features support attributing the translation to Ephrem Mtsire and situating the work within the earlier stage of his career, prior to the 1090s.

Keywords: *translation technique, Ephrem Mtsire, Pseudo-Athanasian homily*

1. Introduction

This article examines Ephrem Mtsire's translation technique through his old Georgian version of the homily *Sermo de descriptione Deiparae* (CPG 2269), attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria. By comparing the Georgian text with its Greek original and conducting a textual analysis, the study highlights the linguistic and stylistic features of the translation. Based on these observations, the paper aims to determine which phase of Ephrem's translational activity this work belongs to. Particular attention is given to elements indicating that the homily was translated during an early period of Ephrem's career. More broadly, the study

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of pseudepigraphic homilies in any language is acknowledged as a particularly difficult and complex field. Scholars consistently emphasize the challenges posed by questions of authorship, transmission, and textual adaptation in this corpus. The scholar of the Slavonic translations of the Pseudo-Athanasian writings notes that research has shown that a large part of these works does not belong to Athanasius but rather to various other authors: *As we have shown in an earlier study, most of these texts are translations from the known Greek originals. Two of them were possibly composed by Basil of Seleucia (d. ca 458), two others either again by Basil or John Chrysostom (349-407), or Athanasius. One text belongs to an anonymous author, and there is one whose Greek original we did not find, namely, the Homily on the Man Born Blind* (Gritsevskaya & Lytvynenko, 2020, p. 190).

Athanasius of Alexandria was consecrated as Archbishop of Alexandria in 328 by Alexander of Alexandria. During his 46-year episcopate (he died on May 2, 373), he faced numerous persecutions and trials. The Meletians, Arians, and Eusebians − supported by the imperial court and driven by slander − exerted enormous pressure on him, leading to his deposition and exile from the city on five occasions. Nonetheless, he successfully refuted all accusations in ecclesiastical councils and judicial proceedings, restoring his episcopal dignity each time (Gwynn, 2012, pp. 1-6).

In both the author's master's thesis and the introduction to the text published in the *Mravaltavi* of the National Center of Manuscripts (Tsetskhladze, 2022, pp. 172-198), the homily is attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria, following manuscript tradition.

The homily *Sermo de descriptione Deiparae et Josephum*, translated into old Georgian as *siţquai ağċerisatuis qovladċmidisa kalċulisa da ğmrtismšobelisa mariamisa da iosebistuis, romelman miitħova igi [Homily on the census involving the most holy virgin Mary, mother of God, and Joseph, her betrothed*], is attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria. It is an exposition of the Gospel episode describing Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7). The work presents its author as both rhetorician and exegete. The text includes a profound interpretation of the Scriptures and a theological perspective on the providential preparation for Christ's birth. The homily is preserved in twenty Georgian manuscripts, divided into two groups: an early group (11^{th}-14^{th} centuries) and a later group (15^{th}-19^{th} centuries). The earliest manuscripts, particularly S-1276, an autograph of Ephrem Mtsire, critically establish the text. This work has been published in the periodical *Mravaltavi* of the National Center of Manuscripts (Tsetskhladze, 2022, pp. 176-177). However, further research into other pseudepigraphic homilies strongly indicates that the homily should be classified as Pseudo-Athanasian due to several historical, stylistic, and theological factors.

In Byzantine literature, creating compilatory works was a common practice. Similarly, anonymous authors often attributed their writings to prominent, deceased figures, circulating these texts under their names. This practice facilitated the integration of such works into ecclesiastical tradition. The attribution of the homily to Athanasius likely reflects his theological authority and the prestige associated with his name (Sachot, 1977, p. 241). It is also possible that scribal errors accumulated over time during manuscript transmission contributed to this attribution.

According to Elene Metreveli's historical-paleographical research, Ephrem Mtsire is regarded as the translator of the homily. A textological study further corroborated her view by comparing the translation with the original Greek text and analysing the translation techniques. These studies uncovered a clear link between the methodology employed in translating the homily and Ephrem's translation approach in other works (Tsetskhladze, 2022, pp 174-175).

2. Methodology

The research methodology is a comprehensive, multifaceted approach integrating historical-paleographical analysis, textual criticism, and comparative philology. The attribution of the homily *Sermo de descriptione Deiparae* to Ephrem Mtsire is based on Elene Metreveli's historical and codicological research, which is supported by a detailed textual comparison between the old Georgian translation and the presumed Greek original. The core of the study is an examination of parallel examples of old Georgian texts translated from Greek, with a thematic classification of different translation strategies. These include instances where the Georgian translator introduces new terms, preserves certain Greek expressions, translates New Testament quotations, and constructs hendiadyses, among other translation techniques. The results are then compared with Ephrem Mtsire's other translated works, leading us to conclusions about the degree to which this particular text can be attributed to him. This comparative analysis of translation techniques supports the identification of Ephrem as a translator and provides a deeper understanding of his translation technique and approach.

3. Two Stages of Ephrem Mtsire's Translation Activity

Ephrem Mtsire's translation activity laid the foundation for developing Georgian philological principles. His translation technique has been thoroughly examined and is categorised into two periods: pre-Hellenophilic and Hellenophilic. Early on, like the Athonite Fathers, Ephrem aimed to produce translations that would appeal to the reader, which resulted in expansions and certain modifications in his initial works. However, from the 1090s onwards, Ephrem changed his approach, focusing more on accuracy in translation. This shift is believed to have been influenced by Greek criticism, which accused Georgian translations of inaccuracy. A notable example of this transition from the pre-Hellenophilic to the Hellenophilic period is Ephrem's translation of the 16 liturgical words of Gregory the Theologian, recognised for its exceptional precision (Otkhmezuri, 2011, pp. 19-23; Tvaltvadze, 2009, pp. 3-4; Tchelidze, 1996, pp. 545-555).

Amid Greek criticisms, Ephrem continued to refine his translation principles, aligning them more closely with the Greek original. The emphasis shifted towards the text itself and the accuracy of translation, as demonstrated by terminological, syntactic, and grammatical alignment with the Greek source. Passive constructions became more prevalent in the Georgian translation, replacing the active verb forms previously used. Nonetheless, unlike the Gelati school, Ephrem's translations do not display an ultra-Hellenophilic tendency (Jugheli, 2011, p. 355).

The homily examined in this study is a key example of Ephrem's intermediate stage in translation activity, which makes it particularly significant. The following examples are grouped thematically on the basis of intertextual comparison. The review of these examples will further substantiate the aims and conclusions of this study.

4. Comparison and Discussion of the Georgian Translation by Ephrem with its Greek Original

4.1. Additions

This section of the paper explores the additions in the Georgian translation of Ephrem Mtsire, focusing on how specific interpretative insertions demonstrate his early translation technique.

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Ephrem Mtsire occasionally translates certain lines or small text segments not literally, but with slight modifications in syntax and interpretation, which he refers to as explicative translation „siţquadartvit" (with additions). With this approach, Ephrem's methodology aligns more closely with that of the Athonite Fathers rather than the Hellenophilic tendencies seen in his translations from the 1090s onwards. In his notes and annotations from the second phase of his translation work, Ephrem explicitly states that he does not expand the text and, when necessary, adds explanatory insertions or comments not within the main text but in the margins. Ephrem maintains that every translation requires some additions – explicitations – to clarify its meaning. However, he prefers a straightforward translation, avoiding additions or excessive intervention. If a few words need to be inserted to convey the meaning better, he does not integrate them directly into the text but records them in the margins or includes them in a preface (Rapava, 1976, p. 67). In Pseudo-Athanasius's homily, we find similar semantically clarifying "ĵalisa ganmacħadebeli" [semantically clarifying] additions; however, these are present in the text itself, not in the margins, indicating that Ephrem considered the reader's interest and aimed for maximum clarity in translation. Ephrem probably refined his translation approach, placing such insertions in the margins or prefaces when translating more complex texts (Tvaltvadze, 2009, p. 24).

In the homily title, it is clear that Ephrem favours a dynamic-equivalent translation over a formal-equivalent one. Generally, the unit of translation is not an individual word or phrase but a larger segment − such as a sentence or a small semantic unit.

1. *Τοῦ ἐν Ἁγίοις Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀθανασίου εἰς Ἀπογραφὴν τῆς Ἁγίας Μαρίας, καὶ εἰς τὸν Ἰωσὴφ, Λόγος (PG 28, 944). (saķitħavi* ***tkümuli*** *ċmidisa* ***da neţarisa*** *mamisa čüenisa* ***Atanase Aleksandriel mtavarepiskoposisay.*** *Siţqüay aǧċerisatvis* ***qovlad****ċmidisa* ***kalċulisa da ǧmrtismšobelisa*** *Mariamisa da Iosebistws,* ***romelman miitħova igi*** *(S 1276, 64r)*[1] *[Homily Delivered by Our Father, Saint Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. on the Census Involving the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and Joseph, Her Betrothed]).*

2. *Ὡς γὰρ πρὸς τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ γεννηθέντος Δεσπότου μικρὰ καὶ σφόδρα μικρὰ τὰ παραναγνωσθέντα, σπάργανα, καὶ φάτνη, καὶ τόπος* <u>*ἀνεπιτήδειος*</u> *(944 B 41-44). (****rametu amas čuenca viţqwit****, vitarmed šemsgavsebulad ĵalisa šobilisa amis meupisa mcire arian, da priadca mcire aǧmokitħulni* ***ese siţqüani. da uproysǧa mattwis, romelta gareċarad aǧmoekitħnen*** *saħüevelni da bagay da* <u>*uǧonoebay*</u> *savanisay* ***da*** ***<u>arakonebay</u> adgilisay [****64r][For we too say this: that, in comparison with the power of the Begotten Lord, the words that have been read are small, and very small indeed. And even more so for those to whom the swaddling clothes, the manger, the inadequacy of the shelter, and the lack of any proper place were read unworthily]).*

3. *Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν μικρὰ, τὰ δὲ προκείμενα μυστικά· γαστὴρ ἀνερμήνευτος, κόλπος ἀκατάληπτος,*[2] *μαζὸς ἁγιόριζος, γάλα ξενοῤῥυὲς, θηλὴ τῆς φυσικῆς νομῆς ἀλλοτρία, ἡ Μήτηρ τοῦ Κυρίου ἐναπόγραφος γενομένη, ὁ μνηστὴρ Ἰωσὴφ ὀνόματος, καὶ οὐ πράγματος κοινωνίαν ἀσπαζόμενος (944 B 43 – 945 A 4). (garna daǧacatu ese qovelni mcire arian,* ***aramed priad didebul ars mat mier aǧsrulebuli igi saidumloy****, gamoukülevelobay ċiaǧta* ***kalċulisatay*** *da šeuħebelobay ĵuĵuta* ***dauklebelad mačovnebelisatay****, ucħo naķadulobay igi sĵisay da dedakaci zešta kmnuli šjulta bunebisay,* ***aǧċerilta tana šeracħvay*** *ǧmrtisa dedisay da mimtħoelad* ***misisa***

1 Already in the title, Ephrem provides the reader with detailed information regarding both the authorship and the content of the homily. As noted, the lack of a critical edition of the Greek original often makes it difficult to make definitive statements about the method of translation. For example, one version of the Greek title is: *τῆς ὑπεραγίας γεννήσσεως τοῦ Κυρίου καί Θεοῦ καί Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (PG, vol. 28, 944). While this version does not correspond to the Georgian translation, it is possible that the manuscript used by Ephrem − now lost − contained a different version of the text.

2 It is likely that Ephrem combines the two introductory expressions into one, or that the Greek manuscript he had before his eyes presented a different reading in this particular passage.

ċodebay ioseb ***martlisay*** *aratu ziarebita sakmisayta,* ***aramed čemebita ħolo saħelisayta*** *[64v] [And though all these are small, the mystery they reveal is truly great: the womb of the Virgin is incomprehensible, the bosom beyond understanding, the breast sacred, the milk flowing unnaturally, the nipple foreign to the laws of nature, the Mother of the Lord registered as part of the census, and Joseph the Righteous, the Betrothed, was called her husband − not as one who shared in the act, but only in name].*

As these examples show − and they represent only a small part of the additions in the homily − Ephrem's rendering of specific sentences is not verbatim, as might be expected in a Hellenophilic translation. Instead, he employs a "sense rendering" method with minor additions.[1] Comparing the Georgian translation of Pseudo-Athanasius' homily with the Greek original shows that Ephrem's additions are more common in passages where the context is ambiguous and needs clarification or simplification.

4.2. Omissions

There are instances where several phrases, syntagms, or words are left untranslated. While the omission of any part of the text contradicts Ephrem's translation principles: "I have not left a single word untranslated, neither by choice nor by necessity" (Tvaltvadze, 2009, pp. 128-129), such cases of omission may be explained by the specific features of the manuscript he had available. For this reason, the untranslated lexical units identified by comparison are presented below. Compared to additions, such cases are quite rare.

Although Ephrem frequently insists that it is unacceptable to leave any passage or word untranslated in the course of translating a work, his translations nonetheless include passages rendered with a freer approach, where specific segments or phrases are either omitted or translated only in their general sense rather than verbatim. Ephrem himself refers to this translation strategy as "omission-addition" (ķleba-maṭeba) when discussing the translation practices of Euthymius the Athonite (Otkhmezuri, 2011, pp. 35-36).

In the case of Pseudo-Athanasius' homily, complex terminology or syntactic constructions are not common. As a result, Ephrem does not need to imply a special translation technique or to adapt the translation to a great extent,[2] and thus the instances of omission are limited to the exclusion or modification of certain lexical units or phrases.

4. *καὶ οὐ κατόπιν ὁδεύουσι, μὴ πρότερον τὸν τόπον ἀμείβοντες, ἕως οὗ* ***τὸν φωλεὸν*** *τοῦ προκειμένου καταλάβωσι (944 A 27-30) ([da arca erti ray ačüenian dacadebay srbisay, arca tavs-idvian sħuad cvalebay adgilisay, vidremdis šemĵlebel ikmnian mimtħüevad saunjeta, ċinaše matsa mdebareta [64r][They do not display any hastiness in running, nor do they rashly rush to change their place, until they are able to attain the treasure that lies before them]).*

5. *Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν οὐρανῷ μία* ***ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ βασιλεία*** *κρατεῖ,* <u>*καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι τῷ θελήματι αὐτοῦ ὑποτάσσονται,*</u> *τῶν δαιμόνων δίκην βαρβάρων ἀφηνιασάντων (948 B 24-26).([rametu vitarca-igi zecas erti oden ipqrobs mtavrobasa* <u>*mravaltasa*</u>*, vinaintgan uĉino kmnil ars matgan mĵlavrebay ešmaktay, amitve saħita ikmna küeqanasaca zeda [66r] [As in heaven one reigns over the dominions of many, and the power of the demons has been overcome by them, so likewise was this fulfilled on earth]).*

Instead of a direct translation of the entire clause *πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι τῷ θελήματι αὐτοῦ ὑποτάσσονται* as *every angel obeys His (God's) will* (i.e., literal rendering), Ephrem renders the meaning with a single word – *"mravaltasa" [of many]* − as in the phrase: *"one reigns over the dominions of many."*

[1] Other researchers have pointed this out as well, see: Raphava, 1976, p. 45; Jugheli, 2011, p. 356; Otkhmezuri, 2011, pp. 35-38.

[2] As is well known, before translating each work, Ephrem engaged in extensive philological research and selected his translation method according to the specific features of the text. For instance, in translating the commentaries of Basil the Minim, he would often omit certain passages or render them only in terms of their content (Otkhmezuri, 2011, pp. 36-39)).

As mentioned, the few examples listed above involve leaving a single word, short phrase or small sentence untranslated. However, there are other instances in the translation where entire sentences are either omitted or only a small, altered portion of their meaning is conveyed.

For example, the following whole sentence was not translated by Ephrem:

οὐ σὺ εἶ Μαριὰμ, ἡ τὴν βιασθεῖσαν Θάμαρ ἀναλεγομένη, καὶ τὸν ἄτακτον Ἀμνον βδελυττομένη; (952 B 27-29)[1] *(Is it not you, Mariam, who read about the violence done to Themar and abhorred the lawless Amnon?)*

4.3. Hendiadys (ἓν διὰ δυοῖν)

There are instances in the translation where a single Greek word is rendered using two synonymous words. This method highlights several, subtly different, synonymous meanings of the Greek word. The following examples are provided as illustrations:

6. *"τόπος ἀνεπιτήδειος"(uğonoebay savanisay da arakonebay adgilisay [the inadequacy of the shelter, and the lack of any proper place]).* As we can see, this is a case of double hendiadys. On the one hand, „*τόπος*" is transposed as "*savanisay"*and "*adgilisay,"* and on the other hand, "*ἀνεπιτήδειος"* is translated as "*uğonoebay"* and "*arakonebay*." The latter highlights two aspects: 1. that the Mother of God lacked a suitable place for childbirth *(arakonebay)*, and 2. that the place where she ultimately gave birth was inappropriate for Christ *(uğonoebay)*.

7. "Ὁ λύων ἐδέδετο"– (šeiħüevis da šeikrvis mĥsneli [He who saves all was wrapped and bound]). The verb „*Δέω"* is defined in the Greek–Georgian documented lexicon as: to bind, to wrap, to tie. Through this hendiadys, the idea is intensified.

8. "Αὕτη γὰρ ἡ ἀπογραφὴ τῆς οἰκουμενικῆς εὐταξίας ἀῤῥαβὼν γεγένηται"(rametu ese ağċeray ekmna qovelsa sopelsa mizez ċesierebisa da ċind ganċesebulebisa [For this census became, for the whole world, a cause of order and a sign of harmony]). This sentence also exhibits double hendiadys. The word "*εὐταξίας"* corresponds to both "*ċesierebisa"*and "*ganċesebulebisa"*, while *"ἀῤῥαβὼν"* is rendered as both "*mizez"*and "*ċind*."

4.4. Participial Constructions

The frequent use of participles is a natural feature of the Greek, whereas it is not the case for Georgian, which typically favors finite verb forms. A distinctive characteristic of the Georgian translation of the homily is the consistent replacement of participial constructions with finite verbs. Several examples are provided below:

*9. "μετὰ χεῖρας **ἔχοντες**"(944 A 32). (ĥelta šina čüenta **ğwpqries** [64r] [We are holding it in our hands]).*

*10. "Τὸν Κύριον **κρατήσαντες**, καὶ θανάτῳ παραδοῦναι **σπεύδοντες**" (948 48-50) (dağacatu **šeipqres** upali da **ċadier iqvnes** sikudid micemasa missa [66v] [And even if they seized the Lord, they were willing to hand Him over to death]).*

[1] Latin translation: *"Nonne tu es, o Maria, quae vi stupratam Thamar saepe legebas, et impudicum Amnonem exsecrabare?" (951 B 27–29).* This passage refers to Themar (Θημ□ρ), the virgin daughter of King David and sister of Abessalom, who was raped by her half-brother Amnon. According to the biblical account: *"And Themar took ashes, and put them on her head; and she rent the variegated garment that was upon her: and she laid her hands on her head, and went crying continually" (2 Kings 13, 19).* Eventually, Abessalom killed Amnon and was forced to flee Jerusalem. In the Latin translation of the homily, however, there is a reference to Genesis chapter 38, 6-26. Yet this chapter concerns a different Thamar (Θάμαρ) – the wife of Er, Judah's son – who, after Er's death, secretly conceived a child by Judah. Therefore, the Latin citation is inaccurate. The context of the homily, which also mentions Amnon, clearly points to the Themar, Abessalom's sister.

In the Greek original of the homily, participial constructions are rarely found without being rendered by Ephrem with a personal (finite) verb form. The substitution of a linguistic trait typical of Greek with forms more characteristic of the Georgian language – specifically, the consistent replacement of participles with personal verb forms – is, as previously noted, a hallmark of Ephrem Mtsire's earlier, pre-Hellenophilic phase of translation work. This particular feature, identified in the Georgian translation of the homily attributed to Athanasius, further supports the view that Ephrem completed the translation before the 1090s, before ultimately establishing the translation principles mentioned earlier.

4.5. Softening of Contextual or Lexical Intensity

Numerous instances of contextual softening are observed in the translations of Ephrem Mtsire. For example, in Theodoret of Cyrrhus' Historia Philothea, three episodes describe the physical uncleanness of ascetics who practised the rule of not washing. Ephrem translates only one of these three cases, omitting the other two. Similarly, while Theodoret states that Symeon the Elder was filthy, Ephrem softens this portrayal and describes him merely as *"ḳaci ganĥmeli da šesulebuli" (A thin and smelly man)* (Jugheli, 2011, p. 362).

In a passage from the homily of Pseudo-Athanasius, which recounts the Gospel narrative of Christ's arrest and presentation before Pontius Pilate's tribunal, the hatred, anger, and violence of the Jews against the Saviour are clearly emphasised. In this context, the author does not hesitate to use strong language to describe their actions and intentions. He writes that the Jews wished to "cut His body to pieces" and, when they cried out to Pilate: "Take Him, take Him, and crucify Him!" (John 19,15), Pseudo-Athanasius states that they were "barking like dogs". In both passages, Ephrem avoids literal rendering and softens the intensity of the expressions. Firstly, he states that the Jews "desired to put Him to death, just as they had formerly stoned the prophets", and secondly, he writes "He saw how the Jews spoke with one voice".

4.6. Biblical Citations

Since Pseudo-Athanasius' homily is exegetical and interprets the Gospel of Luke, it contains numerous references to Holy Scriptures. These include both thematic passages from the Gospel of Luke itself and episodes from the Old and New Testaments.

Ephrem Mtsire's method of translating citations of Holy Scriptures is well known. He was familiar with the Georgian translations of the Scriptures available at that time. His commentary on John of Damascus's *Expositio fidei* shows that he employs two different approaches when citing Holy Scriptures: 1. If a citation from the Greek source is used without modification, Ephrem does not re-translate it but employs the existing Georgian translation of the Scriptures (Jugheli, 2011, p. 386). 2. If the Greek citation includes in-text modifications and the author's insertions, Ephrem follows the author's version and re-translates the referenced passage (Bezarashvili, 2004, p. 516). Regarding citations from the Prophets in the *Expositio fidei*, he states: "I did not translate the words of the prophets differently out of ignorance, but I translated them as they were written in the original text" (Miminoshvili, 1966, p. 123).

In Pseudo-Athanasius' homily, Ephrem's translation of the Holy Scriptures employs two methods: firstly, the existing Georgian translation, which stylistically differs from the rest of the narration and aligns with the translation of George the Athonite, also matching the Greek source and Greek critical edition of the Gospel; secondly, citations from Greek sources sometimes include the author's interpretation, resembling oral citations, which do not correspond to the Georgian translation or the Greek critical editions.

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a) Ephrem uses the already existing Georgian translation of Scripture

11. Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξῆλθε δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου, ἀπογράφεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην. Αὕτη ἡ ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο, ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου. Καὶ ἐπορεύοντο πάντες ἀπογράφεσθαι, ἕκαστος εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ πόλιν. Ἐπορεύθη δὲ καὶ Ἰωσὴφ ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐκ πόλεως Ναζαρὲθ, εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν, εἰς πόλιν Δαβὶδ, ἥτις καλεῖται Βηθλεὲμ, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐξ οἴκου καὶ πατριᾶς Δαβὶδ, ἀπογράφεσθαι σὺν Μαριὰμ τῇ μεμνηστευμένῃ αὐτῷ γυναικὶ, οὔσῃ ἐγκύῳ (945 A 5-15) (Aland & Karavidopoulos, 2012). (mat dġeta šina gamoĥda brĵanebay agwstos ḳeisrisagan aǧċerad qovlisa soplisa. ese aǧċeray pirveli iqo mtavrobasa asurets ḳwrinesa. da ċarvidodes qovelni aǧċerad, titoeuli – twssa kalaksa. aǧvida iosebca galileayt, kalakit nazaretit huriastanad, kalakad davitisa, romelsa eċodebis betlem, rametu iqo igi saħlisagan da ţomisa davitisa, aǧċerad mariamis tana, romeli ħovil iqo missa da iqo igi midgomil [65r[(Imnaishvili, 1979); [In those days, a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he belonged to the house and lineage of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was betrothed, who was with child (Luke 2, 1-5)].

12. Ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ, ἐπλήσθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ τεκεῖν αὐτὴν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον· καὶ ἐσπαργάνωσεν αὐτὸν, καὶ ἀνέκλινεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ φάτνῃ, ὅτι οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς τόπος ἐν τῷ καταλύματι (956 A 3-6).(da iqo, vidre iqvnesǧa igini mun, aǧivsnes dǧeni igi šobisa misisani da šva ĵēy igi misi pirmšoy da šeħwa igi saħüevlita da miaċvina igi bagasa, rametu ara iqo matda adgıl savanesa mas [68v] [While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn (Luke 2, 6-7)].

b) Ephrem himself translates the freely rendered citation of Scripture

***13.** Ὤφθη δὲ ἄγγελος Κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσὴφ, λέγων· Ἰωσὴφ υἱὸς Δαβὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῇς παραλαβεῖν Μαριὰμ τὴν γυναῖκά σου· τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν, ἐκ Πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου. Ἀναστὰς δὲ, φησὶν, Ἰωσὴφ, παρέλαβε Μαριὰμ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς Αἴγυπτον· καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν, ἕως οὐ ἔτεκε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον (956 D 45-52) (šeiċqnara ioseb čuwnebay angelozisay, rametu ečüwena mas angelozi ǧmrtisay čüenebit da hrküa: nu gešinin miqvanebad mariamisa colisa šenisa, rametu romeli-igi misgan išves, sulisagan ĉmidisa ars. ħolo igi aǧdga da ċariqvana mariam coli tvisi da ara icoda igi, vidremde šva ĵe igi misi pirmšoy [70r]; [Joseph accepted the revelation of the angel, for an angel of God had appeared to him in a vision and said: Do not be afraid to take Mary, your wife, for that which is born of her is from the Holy Spirit. Then he arose and took Mary, his wife, and did not know her until she had given birth to her firstborn son (cf. Matthew 1, 20-25]).*

4.7. Transferring the Rhetorical Devices of the Greek Original into the Georgian Translation

The Greek original of the homily possesses a remarkable rhetorical structure. Gregory the Theologian observes that its expressive and stylistic devices are woven together like purple in fabric. The narration within the text is lively and accessible to the reader, yet simultaneously rich in profound historical and exegetical passages. Simplicity and poetic language are harmoniously combined, providing the listener or reader with both an exegetical explanation of the Gospel and an aesthetic experience. The text is abundant in epithets, similes, and rhetorical questions that ensure full engagement from the audience during the delivery of the homily (for example, stable, refrain-like repetitions of phrases, antitheses, hendiadyses, etc.). Ephrem Mtsire endeavours to preserve these stylistic qualities of the Greek language in the Georgian translation, and for the most part, he succeeds. However, in many cases, it is not always easy to convey both the exact expressive forms of the Greek language and the artistic features of the original.

There are many instances where Ephrem employs imitative translation to preserve the Greek original's rhetorical structure. For instance, in his translations of Basil the Minimus's commentaries − where elevated language is achieved through the use of comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, frequent compound structures, and complex syntax – Ephrem successfully makes a verbatim translation while maintaining the original's rhetorical style through his skill as a translator (Otkhmezuri, 2011: 30-35). A similar method is used in translating Pseudo-Athanasius’s homily: its rhetorical tone is preserved alongside an accurate translation of the text.

Pseudo-Athanasius often uses antithetical pairs, contrasting, for example, the wickedness of the Jews with the simplicity and love of Christ, or Christ’s heavenly glory with his humiliation through incarnation. In such passages of the Greek original, logical connectives are frequently omitted − a common stylistic device in Greek − which enhances the rhetorical effect. In these cases, Ephrem sometimes omits the connective even when it appears in Greek. At other times, he supplies it where it is absent in Greek (these instances are more common in the translation than in the original).[1] Occasionally he renders the construction verbatim to preserve the rhetorical effect of the narrative.

Several phrases in the Greek original are repeated multiple times, emphasising one of the central messages of the text and leaving a strong impression on the audience. This particular phrase is especially notable for its inherent rhythm and alliteration. In the Georgian translation, the stylistic effect of the original is largely preserved, and most importantly, as in the Greek, the phrase is repeated in all three instances in the same form.

Εἰ γὰρ καὶ μικρὰ ἐν προοιμίοις τὰ ῥήματα, ἀλλ' ὅμως μεγάλα τῆς χαρᾶς τὰ μυσταγωγήματα ([944 A 37-39, 945 A 15-17, 956 A 7-8] rametu dağacatu mcire arian šesavalni sitqwsani, garna egretca didve arian madlni saħarulovanni amis saidumloysani [64r, 64v, 69v; For even if the words in the preface are small, the mysteries of joy they convey are nevertheless great].

Such paronomastic word combinations lend a distinctive rhetorical color to the Greek original, which Ephrem likewise skillfully renders in his translation.

*“Τί... ἀκρασίᾳ κρατοῦντες τὸν δίκαιον, καὶ **τὸν ἀνεύθυνον ὑπεύθυνον εἶναι θέλοντες**“ (949 A 12-13) raysa uċesobit šeipqrobt martalsa da amaoebit braleul-hqopt ubralosa[67r] [Why do you seize the righteous in lawlessness, and by vanity brand the blameless as blameworthy?].*

5. Conclusion

The examples outlined above—including additions, omissions, hendiadyses, substitution of participial forms, shifts in grammatical number, and other phenomena—allow us to draw specific conclusions about Ephrem Mtsire’s early translation activity. These cases clearly highlight Ephrem’s translation approach peculiarities, revealing a dynamic interplay between two textual levels: fidelity to the Greek original and adaptation to the Georgian literary tradition.

As demonstrated, the translation corresponds with Ephrem’s pre-Hellenophilic translation technique, dating before the 1090s. The text exhibits numerous instances of addition, contextual softening, interpretation, replacement of Greek participial forms with more natural finite verb forms in Georgian, and

[1] Similar cases are attested in Ephrem Mtsire’s translation of Basil the Minimus as well; cf. Otkhmezuri, 2011, p. 33.

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shifts in grammatical number. It also features Ephrem's characteristic use of highly artistic hendiadic expressions. Notably, in this homily, Ephrem employs the same method for biblical quotations as in his other translations: he uses existing Georgian translations—most notably that of George the Athonite—when the Greek text cites Scripture verbatim, but provides his own translations when the biblical passages in the Greek source are cited in a modified or paraphrased manner. The final part of the article presents several cases where rhetorical figures from the Greek original are successfully rendered in Georgian. The translator skillfully perceives and conveys the artistic and rhetorical nuances of the source text, a trait typical of Ephrem Mtsire's work.

Accordingly, the Georgian translation—considering its date, the origin of its earliest manuscript, and its stylistic features—clearly belongs to the first phase of Ephrem's translation activity. However, it should be noted that the critical edition of the Greek text of this homily, attributed to Pseudo-Athanasius, has not yet been published, and the text from the Patrologia Graeca was used for comparison in this study, which provides only minimal critical apparatus. Therefore, conclusions about Ephrem's translation method cannot be considered definitive. It is possible that the translator had access to a Greek manuscript that no longer exists. Additionally, the homily attributed to Pseudo-Athanasius is not a theologically or philosophically complex text rich in dogmatic terminology. Instead, it was intended as a liturgical reading before the Feast of the Nativity, which may explain Ephrem's relatively free approach and the methodology applied throughout this paper.

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