Schwa

Language and Linguistics

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About *Schwa*

We are an academic journal produced by the students of Brigham Young University. Our mission is to increase the amount and the accessibility of linguistic scholarship—especially for those without graduate school experience—while simultaneously training editors and designers in the ways of modern publishing. Some of our articles are strictly theoretical and academic. Others are less technical and more personal in nature. Experiments, surveys, corpus analyses, and essays are all acceptable. We have published on all the following subdisciplines of linguistics and more:

- Phonetics, the perception and production of speech sounds
- Phonology, the system of speech sounds used in a given context
- Semantics, the meaning constructs of words and sentences
- Syntax, the structure of permissible and meaningful sentences
- Pragmatics, real-world language use and other speech-related actions
- Sociolinguistics, language variation based on sociological factors
- Psycholinguistics, the cognitive tasks necessary for language
- Fieldwork notes from living in a foreign language-speaking community
- Forensics linguistics, the role of language in law

We are always accepting submissions. Papers on any language are welcome, including cross-linguistic studies, but papers must be written in English. To maintain a high standard of quality, our staff includes both editors and graphic designers. We extend an open invitation for new staff members. Go to schwa.byu.edu to submit a paper or join our staff.

Editor's Note

The range of topics in this issue of *Schwa: Language and Linguistics* delights me. From the role of language in interpersonal relationships to the broader scale of community interactions, these articles demonstrate just how integral to our lives the principles of linguistics are.

This publication would truly not be possible without the efforts of many willing and hardworking students. I am grateful to our wonderful staff members; through their enthusiasm and proactivity, the production of *Schwa* this semester has gone more smoothly than ever before. I also offer my gratitude to the authors and their unique insights and voices. It's easy to underestimate how much work goes into preparing an article for publication, and I feel indebted to their willingness to take on this extra load. I'm also grateful to our faculty advisor, Dirk Elzinga, and to the Linguistics Department for their support of this journal.

I hope that as you read issue 25 of *Schwa: Language and Linguistics* that the variety of topics captures your interest, enlightens you, and proivdes evidence that language truly is life.

Mikaela Wilkins
Editor in Chief

A Review of the Effects of Revitalization Efforts on Alaska Native Communities

Sarah Carlson

This article is a review of previous research on language revitalization efforts in Alaska Native communities as well as other Indigenous communities across North America. While some of the research does not explicitly address language revitalization, the authors' contributions offer a great deal of value to the conversation. Despite these contributions, much work remains to be done in Alaska Native communities. Thus, ideas for further research are also suggested in order to deepen understanding of Alaska Native communities' efforts for language revitalization.

In 2010, the future of the Eyak community in Cordova, Alaska, changed forever (Jeantet, 2012). A young man by the name of Guillaume LeDuey of Le Havre, France, visited Cordova and brought hope of revival for the Eyak culture. He was one of only two fluent non-native Eyak speakers in the world, the other being Michael Krauss, a linguist who had dedicated much of his life to revitalizing Alaska Native languages. Before LeDuey's visit, descendants of the Eyak people had very little hope for the survival of their heritage. The last native speaker, Marie Smith Jones, had passed away in 2008, increasing the urgency to preserve the Eyak language and culture (Krauss, 2006; Jeantet, 2012). LeDuey assisted Krauss in digitizing previous work on the Eyak language. He aided in making dictionaries and grammars accessible to the public to allow younger generations to begin learning the language, thus reviving the heritage that many thought was unsalvageable (Jeantet, 2012). LeDuey's story captures some of the potential effects of implementing revitalization projects in Indigenous communities. However, to explore other possible effects, this article discusses the available literature concerning revitalization efforts in Alaska Native communities.

Following a brief description of the definitions of language revitalization and endangered languages, this article will be divided into three main parts. The first section will cover the effects of revitalization on Indigenous community members as individuals and will touch mainly on the issues concerning self-identity rooted in belonging to an Indigenous heritage. The second section will address revitalization efforts in the context of education, emphasizing specifically the effects observed in Alaska Native school systems. Finally, the third section will discuss how revitalization efforts affect Indigenous communities as a whole. While most studies focus on either individuals or a whole community, this article will discuss both of these concepts separately. An exploration of the strengths, limitations, and gaps of the perspectives discussed will follow each section.

# Defining Language Revitalization and Endangered Languages

The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages defines language revitalization as a community initiative to expand the use of an endangered language to ensure that it continues to be passed down to new generations (Austin & Sallabank, 2011). Due to the large number of ways an endangered language can be defined, Austin and Sallabank (2011) further clarify that an endangered language is one that may cease to exist after a few more generations, because it is no longer being learned as a first language. This definition agrees with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Language Vitality and Endangerment Framework, which states that the lowest level of endangerment corresponds to a language which is no longer being learned by children (Moseley, 2010). Today, about 7,000 languages exist in the world, though linguists believe that this number will drop by about half within a few generations, making language revitalization a priority in order to maintain linguistic heritage (Austin & Sallabank, 2011). This priority is especially relevant in Alaska ("Endangered Languages Project"), as can be seen in the high levels of endangerment of several Alaska Native languages (see Figure 1).

Effects of Language Revitalization on Individual Community Members

For many Indigenous community members, a sense of belonging within their Native heritage has been threatened due to intermarriage with outsiders and loss of their mother tongue (Sprott, 1994). These influences are the most common causes of individual assimilation to a "standardized" culture, as Sprott (1994) explains. She further notes that this causes many members of Alaska Native communities to be uncertain of the survival of their language and culture. But as McCarty et al. (2006) indicate, language

Figure 1

Speakers of Alaska's Most Endangered Languages
(Adapted from "Endangered Languages Project")
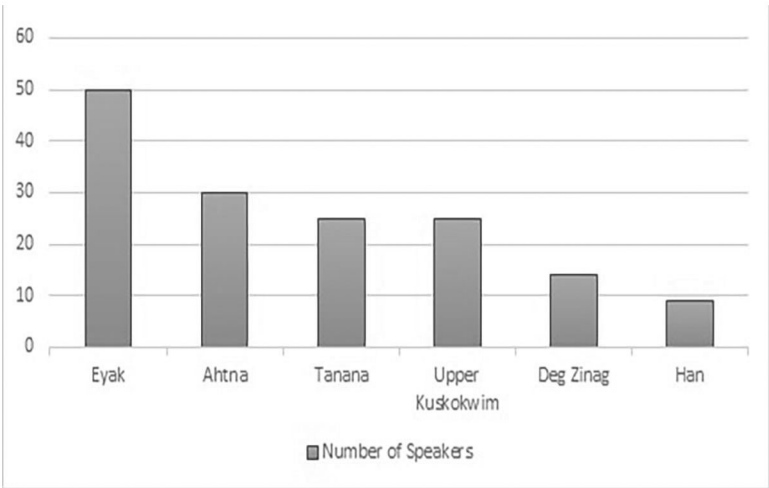
revitalization serves not only to reawaken an endangered language, but also to "reassert linguistic self-determination as an inherent human right" (p. 44). In other words, restoring an individual's identity as a member of an Indigenous community through language revitalization is a priority. As part of their study, McCarty et al. interviewed several youth of the Navajo community and found that many felt a connection between their Native language and their identity. One young man stated that being spoken to in his Native language helps him view Navajo as "integral to his identity and, moreover, as central to his ability to bring about positive change in this colonial world" (McCarty et al, 2006, p. 36).

Revitalization and Self-identity as an Indigenous Community Member

Lara-Cooper and Cooper (2016) observed the journey of Annabelle, an Indigenous schoolgirl from Northern California, as she navigated the struggles of maintaining a positive self-image regarding her heritage. The authors explain that the way people perceive themselves as an adult is largely

dependent on how they were viewed by their peers as a child. Annabelle's peers reportedly perceived her heritage as savage and uncivilized, which coincides with the stereotype for many Native American cultures. Her experiences show that such stereotyping increases psychological distress among Indigenous children, which causes them to feel pressured to abandon their heritage and assimilate with their peers (Sprott, 1994). Lara-Cooper and Cooper (2016) claim that helping individuals from dominant communities understand the heritage of Indigenous people would lead to a decrease in stereotyping and an increase in desire to preserve Indigenous cultures.

Another influence that pressures individuals to give up their heritage comes from common misunderstandings about the status of the language (Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore, 1999). Many members of Indigenous communities feel that their language is used so little because the younger generations opt to learn English as a matter of convenience, and their motivation to preserve their Native tongue decreases (Reyhner & Hurtado, 2008). They do not see any potential for the language surviving, so they choose to assimilate linguistically (Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore, 1999). This choice is a result of limitations in a community's resources to preserve their culture and language. With the help of the Tanana Chiefs Conference (a tribal consortium of forty-two Alaskan villages), Dementi-Leonard and Gilmore (1999) conducted a revitalization project for twenty Alaska Native communities in order to correct this detrimental misconception of the languages' potential. They determined that the project strengthened the overall sense of identity of individuals, as well as the unity of the communities as a whole.

Strengths, Limitations, and Gaps of Research on the Effects of Revitalization on Individual Community Members

The issue of restoring and maintaining a sense of identity in individual community members is generally well addressed, especially in the context of the younger generations

(Lara-Cooper & Cooper, 2016). Although Lara-Cooper and Cooper (2016) claim that their research can be applied to other diverse groups, their study focused primarily on one individual belonging to the younger age group, which created a limitation for their study. They do not provide any evidence that other age groups would respond to stereotyping in the same manner as children and youth do. This lack of consideration of all age groups in the community creates a gap in the context of preserving a person's Indigenous identity.

Sprott's (1994) study effectively shows how outside causes, including marriage to outsiders and language loss, push Indigenous people to assimilate to a more dominant culture. However, she mentions that, despite external influences, there is no trend pertaining to whether a person identifies with any of their cultural affiliations. She explains that, while it is necessary to ethnic identity, knowing one's ancestry does not guarantee meaningful perception of self. This observation provides an opportunity to research other reasons people may choose to maintain, obscure, or subconsciously neglect their Native identity. Future research could include how revitalization affects individuals in Alaska Native communities specifically, since most existing studies focus on Indigenous community members in general.

Effects of Revitalization in Alaska Native Education Systems

Problems in Alaska Native Education Systems

Cultural assimilation has been identified as one of the main issues arising from the education systems in Alaska Native communities (Barnhardt, 2001). Assimilation stems from implementing systems that force the Indigenous community to conform to the norms of the more standardized surrounding communities (Reyhner & Hurtado, 2008; Barnhardt, 2001). Barnhardt (2001) expands on this as she touches on several national policies regarding education for Native American students. She argues that these policies

have been effective in improving the quality of education for Native American communities but are lacking in cultural consideration for Alaska Natives. This lack of awareness creates the impression that these policies are attempting to replace Alaska Native heritage, rather than maintain it (Barnhardt, 2001).

Another inadequacy in education systems is the students' and teachers' limited understanding of the Indigenous cultures (Waziyatawin, 2004), which is demonstrated in a story recounted by Sprott (1994). She describes a situation involving a young Alaska Native child's reaction to an Easter egg hunt in a school consisting mainly of non-Indigenous children. Differences in cultural norms created a social barrier between this child and the other students when she observed the children running sporadically to find the eggs. Sprott explains that in this child's Native culture, the norms in a similarly competitive situation require a person to stand still and let others pass by them, rather than pushing them out of the way without legitimate reason. This intercultural misunderstanding resulted in the child feeling inferior to her classmates, as she was unsuccessful in gathering any of the Easter eggs.

Benefits of Embracing Native Heritage in Education

Waziyatawin (2004) points out that some educational programs encourage students to embrace their Native heritage, rather than conceal or neglect it. The effectiveness of these programs was analyzed by Morcom and Roy (2017) in their study of Indigenous language immersion programs for kindergarteners. They concluded that, because mainstream education systems can lower Indigenous students' self-esteem, incorporating the Native language into the children's learning was advantageous for the students. According to Reyhner and Hurtado (2008), if the students do not see how what they are learning will benefit them in the future, prototypical education systems can cause a lack of motivation to learn. They explain that many Indigenous communities value learning for the ways it can be used to contribute

to their society. This means that if students are being taught concepts without an explanation of how it pertains to them culturally, it is difficult to instill in them a desire to participate actively and learn in school. To illustrate this point, these researchers further reported that education systems that teach English and other academic subjects in a way that complements the learning of the Native language and culture have proven to be successful in improving the academic performance of Indigenous students.

Strengths, Limitations, and Gaps of Research on the Effects of Revitalization in Alaska Native Education Systems

The benefits of implementing Native language learning in education systems are well covered by the studies referenced above (Waziyatawin, 2004; Reyhner & Hurtado, 2008; Morcom & Roy, 2017). Problems stemming from a lack of cultural awareness in schools are also outlined, which gives a clear picture of the reasons why it is important to keep each Indigenous community in mind when creating an education system (Sprott, 1994; Barnhardt, 2001). However, any downsides to implementing this type of education are not discussed. This allows for the opportunity to do more research to explore the possibility of disadvantages that may come from this level of accommodation, such as feasibility, cost, or amount of community support.

The studies discussed are also mainly focused on children and youth, which limits the immediate application of the findings to a relatively small portion of the community (Sprott, 1994; Waziayatawin, 2004; Morcom & Roy, 2017). Future research could include exploring how teachers and other community members are affected by the implementation of culturally oriented education systems, since students were the main subjects of previous research.

Effects of Revitalization in Alaska Native Communities

As mentioned in the section relating to individuals, Dementi-Leonard and Gilmore (1999) concluded that the sense of identity in Alaska Native individuals and

communities had increased because of their revitalization efforts. Waziyatawin (2004) gives perspective to this finding by exploring how culture and language revitalization help reverse the negative effects of colonization. Concerning these revitalization efforts, she asserts the following: "The more knowledge that stays in the community, the more Indigenous or community-specific knowledge becomes an evolving, strengthening community process" (Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 367). She explains that the imposition of Western lifestyles lowered the quality of health in Indigenous communities as well as their accompanying ecosystems. Because of the destruction to their ecosystems, Indigenous communities struggled to adapt to new ways of acquiring needed supplies, which resulted in a reduction of self-sufficiency. Waziayatawin (2004) admits, however, that Western education has brought some benefits to Indigenous communities, such as learning the skills necessary to improve their quality of living. Although she remarks that these benefits would not have been possible without Western education, she claims that the way it has been implemented in certain schools has had detrimental effects on the children's sense of identity, which is felt by many members of the community.

Sociopolitical Effects of Revitalization

There are two dimensions of the culture and language revitalization process: sociopolitical and cultural (Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore, 1999; McCarty et al., 2006; Kroskrity, 2011). The first, discussed by Dementi-Leonard and Gilmore (1999), led to a project that sought to break the unproductive habit of labeling the Native language as "dying" or "moribund" in order to increase the community's motivation to preserve their culture. Their efforts led to the establishment of several successful organizations. These organizations encouraged community members to participate in cultural events, such as conferences, and improved the quality of Native language education in Alaskan school systems.

Kroskrity (2011) mentions an issue affecting the sociopolitical goals of revitalization projects in his study of linguistic racism. He explains that endangered languages are often

subconsciously seen as universal property. This means that, on occasion, people are inclined to hastily take initiative to preserve a language without the consent of the community. Kroskrity's (2011) research also explains that because this misconception is difficult to sort out, some members of a community will forcefully take control of the linguistic situation themselves. This results in a revitalization project that only serves to manipulate the community and keep the project director in control. Kroskrity (2011) concludes that great care should be taken when planning a revitalization project, since there could be irreparable damages if the right protocols are not taken.

Cultural Effects of Revitalization

The second context of reasoning for revitalization efforts is cultural heritage preservation (McCarty et al., 2006). In their study of Native language loss and revitalization, McCarty et al. (2006) point out that when even one language is lost, the world loses an enormous amount of perspective and knowledge. They add that this knowledge often includes the only means for sacred communication and traditions in a community. This point of view motivated Krauss (2006) in his efforts to preserve the Native Eyak culture to its fullest potential. Many tangible results have come from Krauss's (2006) work, including dictionaries, books, corpora, audio recordings, videos, and more. He believes that his work will allow future generations to study the Eyak language and preserve their heritage.

As Ainsworth (1997) reported, another advantage to preserving a community's heritage is that studying the narratives and traditions of a culture can help a person understand the moral values of that community. She discussed this advantage as she analyzed a compilation of Eyak narratives written by Anna Nelson Harry, a respected member of the Eyak community. She further explains that Mrs. Harry wrote the narratives in such a way that they reflected compelling moral issues, making her writings a gold mine for extracting the moral code of the Eyak community. Sprott (1994) adds even more perspective by explaining that

understanding the moral values of one's heritage increases the desire for Native language usage and self-identification as a member of the community.

Strengths, Limitations, and Gaps of Research on the Effects of Revitalization in Alaska Native Communities

These studies offer more perspective on the reasons for implementing revitalization projects in Indigenous communities (McCarty et al., 2006). The research is thorough as far as the benefits of revitalization projects are concerned. However, there is still much to be researched and discussed regarding the inherent problems in setting revitalization efforts in motion. The question of whether the benefits outweigh the issues that accompany these projects also ought to be studied. Only one article discussed above adequately addresses the negative aspects of revitalization efforts, which indicates a bias toward the implementation of revitalization projects. More research should be done on the negative effects of revitalization in order to understand the holistic nature of similar projects. Additionally, research in the context of sociopolitical issues focuses mainly on Native American communities outside of Alaska (Kroskrity, 2011). This gap could be filled by future research on the sociopolitical dynamics within specific Alaska Native communities, as there could be some differences from the research done on Native American communities due to the uniqueness of Alaska Native cultures (Sprott, 1994).

Overview of Future Research on the Effects of Revitalization

Research on the effects of revitalization has great potential for expansion, specifically in the context of older community members. A study could be done observing how implementing revitalization efforts in a community affects the attitudes of older generations, as well as what some of the drawbacks would be from such efforts. There is also a need to explore how revitalization affects Alaska Native communities, as

opposed to other Native American groups. The studies mentioned in this review are qualitative in nature, but very rarely do they make use of quantitative methods. The suggested research could be done qualitatively and quantitatively; however, a quantitative study might be more effective for observing the trends of the effects of revitalization in these various contexts. This could lead to a higher level of precision when determining how to improve revitalization efforts for Alaska Native communities.

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If It Was the Subjunctive, Would It Be Wrong?

Stacey Clark

The use of the English subjunctive form has decreased significantly over time, with phrases such as "if I were" being replaced with "if I was." Though the use of the indicative is increasing, traditional rules still encourage the use of the subjunctive, leading the author to examine English corpora to determine current usage patterns. The results indicate that only very recently has the use of first-person indicative surpassed the subjunctive. Furthermore, the usage of the indicative form is only higher when used with a predicate adjective; with predicate nominatives, the subjunctive is still more common.

Why does it sound equally natural to say, "If I was younger . . . " and "If I were younger . . . "? Why does Meghan Trainor sing, "If I was you"? Why is it so widely accepted in our language to vary this usage? Two years ago, these questions inspired me to dive deeper into studying English structure and conjugation, beginning with the subjunctive form. I wrote an article about how the use of the subjunctive *if I were you* was more common than the indicative *if I was you*. I then left home for eighteen months to serve as a missionary, and when I returned, I reexamined my research and the results given by my corpora search had changed: the indicative form had become more common! I was blown away by how quickly language could change. What follows is a revised version of my article, indicating research from over the years about this fascinating debated usage and how it has changed over time.

The debate over the use of the subjunctive form (typically used to express a requirement, suggestion, desire, or hypothetical situation) and indicative form (typically used to express a simple statement or question) has been around for decades. Even *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language,* written in 1985, explains that the past subjunctive, also known as the *were*-subjunctive, "is nowadays a less usual alternative to the hypothetical past indicative" (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 158). In contrast to the indicative, the subjunctive mood is often considered more formal and referred to as an "optional and stylistically somewhat marked variant of other constructions" (Quirk et al., 1985 p. 155). But is the informal usage of the indicative form technically incorrect? Evidence points to the idea that one form may be better, but *incorrect* could be too strong of a word for living languages, such as English, that constantly evolve.

More recent academic studies show that the overall use of the subjunctive seems to have no concrete declaration of an increase or decrease in frequency, correctness, or formality. However, according to Kovacs (2009) and Waller (2017), the subjunctive forms and functions have been reduced in present-day English; the ways people use the subjunctive have

changed, and some forms have disappeared. Kovacs (2009) reports that the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) from 1990–2008 shows a significant drop in the use of the subjunctive, from 5.5 per million to 3.6 per million (p. 81), and Waller (2017) acknowledges that there was a substantial shift away from the use of the *were*-subjunctive specifically (p. 104). In agreement with Quirk et al. (1985) and other studies, Waller (2017) also states that "the mandative subjunctive [the type of construction that expresses requirement, suggestion, or desire] is vastly more common in writing than in speech" (p. 79), which implies formality. However, he also claims that, in general, the subjunctive association with formality seems to be less evident in American English (AmE) than British English (BrE) and other English varieties (p. 88). Kovacs (2009) believes that the AmE use of the mandative subjunctive is still "formal and rather legalistic in style" (p. 80). In summary, both sources agree that the subjunctive is commonly used in the mandative construction, but they vary in their conclusions on subjunctive formality and popularity.

These different claims about the decreasing use of the subjunctive led me to search the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) to see which claim the data supported. I searched the indicative phrase *if I was* and found that its frequency has increased significantly over the past two hundred years (see figure 1). I then searched the subjunctive phrase *if I were* and found that its usage has decreased over the past two hundred years (see figure 2). In fact, according to COHA, since 2010 the usage of *if I were* (occurring 13.96 times per million words) has a lower frequency than the usage of *if I was* (occurring 14.24 times per million words). Similarly, according to COCA, from 2015–2019 *if I were* occurred 9.38 per million words and *if I was* occurred 10.42 per million words.

After those searches, I searched how often the subjunctive and indicative forms have been used specifically with subject complements. Some subject complements are predicate adjectives, as in *if I were right* and *if I were younger*. Other subject complements are predicate nominatives, as in *if I*

Figure 1

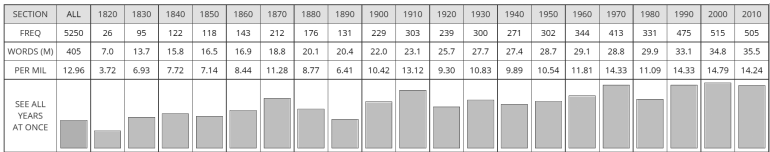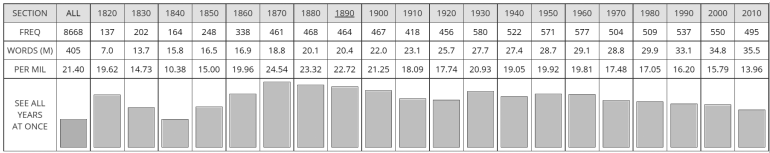*Frequency of the phrase* if I was *according to COHA*

SECTION	ALL	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
FREQ	5250	26	95	122	118	143	212	176	131	229	303	239	300	271	302	344	413	331	475	515	505
WORDS (M)	405	7.0	13.7	15.8	16.5	16.9	18.8	20.1	20.4	22.0	23.1	25.7	27.7	27.4	28.7	29.1	28.8	29.9	33.1	34.8	35.5
PER MIL	12.96	3.72	6.93	7.72	7.14	8.44	11.28	8.77	6.41	10.42	13.12	9.30	10.83	9.89	10.54	11.81	14.33	11.09	14.33	14.79	14.24
SEE ALL YEARS AT ONCE																					

Figure 2

Frequency of the phrase if I were *according to COHA*

SECTION	ALL	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
FREQ	8668	137	202	164	248	338	461	468	464	467	418	456	580	522	571	577	504	509	537	550	495
WORDS (M)	405	7.0	13.7	15.8	16.5	16.9	18.8	20.1	20.4	22.0	23.1	25.7	27.7	27.4	28.7	29.1	28.8	29.9	33.1	34.8	35.5
PER MIL	21.40	19.62	14.73	10.38	15.00	19.96	24.54	23.32	22.72	21.25	18.09	17.74	20.93	19.05	19.92	19.81	17.48	17.05	16.20	15.79	13.96
SEE ALL YEARS AT ONCE																					

were you and *if I were president*. Surprisingly, when used with a predicate adjective, the indicative form is cited significantly more often (2.45 occurrences per million words in COHA and 1.76 occurrences per million in COCA) than the subjunctive (1.04 occurrences per million words in COHA and .83 occurrences per million in COCA), but, when used with a predicate nominative, the subjunctive is still slightly more common (.32 as opposed to .25 in COHA and .31 as opposed to .20 in COCA; note that these statistics are based on overall citations listed by COCA since 1990 and COHA since the early 1800s.). This shows that, whereas the subjunctive used to be more common (and is still more common when used with predicate nominatives), the indicative has crept into our language more and more, especially among use with predicate adjectives.

The frequency of the indicative may be higher overall in recent years, but the following analysis suggests that the subjunctive is still considered more academic, and as such, more formal (Davies, 2008–). According to COCA, in overall usage since the 1990s, the indicative phrase *if I was* is only more common than its subjunctive alternative in TV and News (as shown by figures 3 and 4). By dividing the total usage per million by the academic usage for both the subjunctive and indicative phrases, I found that the use of the

Figure 3

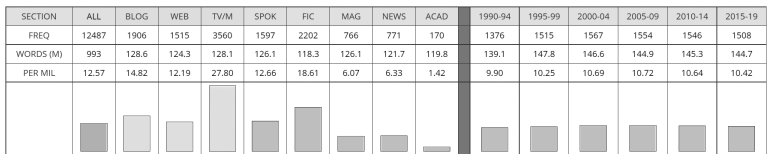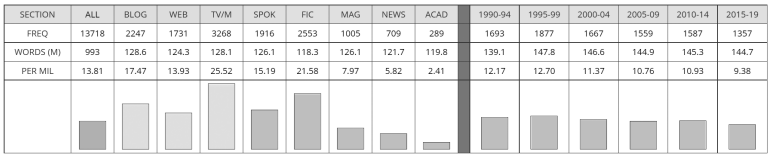*Usage of the phrase* if I was *according to COCA*

SECTION	ALL	BLOG	WEB	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19
FREQ	12487	1906	1515	3560	1597	2202	766	771	170	1376	1515	1567	1554	1546	1508
WORDS (M)	993	128.6	124.3	128.1	126.1	118.3	126.1	121.7	119.8	139.1	147.8	146.6	144.9	145.3	144.7
PER MIL	12.57	14.82	12.19	27.80	12.66	18.61	6.07	6.33	1.42	9.90	10.25	10.69	10.72	10.64	10.42

Figure 4

Usage of the phrase if I were *according to COCA*

SECTION	ALL	BLOG	WEB	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19
FREQ	13718	2247	1731	3268	1916	2553	1005	709	289	1693	1877	1667	1559	1587	1357
WORDS (M)	993	128.6	124.3	128.1	126.1	118.3	126.1	121.7	119.8	139.1	147.8	146.6	144.9	145.3	144.7
PER MIL	13.81	17.47	13.93	25.52	15.19	21.58	7.97	5.82	2.41	12.17	12.70	11.37	10.76	10.93	9.38

subjunctive form is used in academic settings approximately seventeen percent of the time, and the indicative form is used in academic settings approximately eleven percent of the time. By combining these statistics with the fact that the subjunctive has had more overall usage (since the corpora started collecting the data), the implication is that the subjunctive is more traditional, formal, and academic.

This rise in the use of the indicative form, despite its informality, is represented in contemporary media. For example, in Meghan Trainor's hit song "Me Too," the chorus repeats "If I was you," exemplifying the informal tone associated with the indicative use (2016). President Donald Trump also employed the indicative form when he stated, "I think if I was, you know, more modified, more moderate in that sense, I don't think I would have done half of the things that I was able to get completed" (Saldivia, 2018). This example is particularly interesting because President Trump is a rather authoritative political figure, yet he often displays an informal tone, as in this case where he uses the indicative mood. Lastly, the popular movie *The Polar Express* (2004) demonstrates usage of both the indicative and subjunctive forms. The train conductor, who is an authoritative, well-spoken character, says to the protagonist, "If I were you, I would think about climbing on board." The ghost, however, is a

less formal, mysterious character who says to the protagonist, "If I was you . . . I['d] keep all my valuables right here." Each of these examples reflect what I have observed in my personal experiences, and they support the conclusion that the indicative is rising in popularity yet is considered less formal.

By pulling these various sources together, we see that although the traditional rule implies that the subjunctive *were* is technically correct, both COCA and COHA demonstrate that the indicative form is more common in general modern usage. This shift has occurred gradually and is especially dramatic with predicate adjectives and predicate nominatives. The fact that neither form is incorrect should be recognized by linguists, teachers, and other academics. If I were you, I'd use the subjunctive because it's the safest option to build credibility and formality, especially in professional settings. But, if I was you, I'd stick to using the indicative to sound more casual and modern.

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The Use of Singular *They* in Professional Writing

Savannah Taylor

This literature review investigates the appropriateness of using singular they *in professional writing. Although singular* they *has been used for centuries, there have long been disputes over whether or not it is considered proper usage. In this article, the author provides recent and accurate suggestions on whether or not singular* they *has come back into general usage by reviewing current style guidelines and recent studies conducted on specific and generic third person genderless pronoun usage in the English language. Based on the evidence presented in this literature review, it can be concluded that singular* they *is gaining traction in many circumstances and is acceptable for use in professional writing.*

Whether you are aware of it or not, language plays a vital role in defining the human experience. What is said, how it is said, and the connotation of the words all have an effect on how a person's words are received and how the narration of existence is developed. This idea, the impact of language, has brought about the rules of language that are adhered to today. Most of the rules of language, specifically English, are followed without much thought, but within the last few decades, one particular rule has been called into question more than most. This sensitive subject is the banning of *they* as a genderless, singular pronoun.

When writing, especially in professional circumstances, correct grammar usage is vital if the writing is to be taken seriously. The process of developing a uniform language requires rules to be made about the language. The battle between those who wish to prescribe usage and those who believe in simply describing usage has been waged in the English language since its inception. One casualty of the current contention is singular *they*. When discussing the disagreement around this construction, there are many advantages and disadvantages that arise. After considering arguments from the feminist movement, the LGBTQ+ movement, the history and usage of *they* in written and spoken language, and modern style guide recommendations, I conclude that singular *they* is an appropriate construction that should be utilized in all settings including professional writing.

The History of Singular *They*

Before approaching the appropriateness of using *they* as a genderless singular pronoun, it is vital to understand why the argument exists at all. The history of this topic starts at the beginning of English itself and relies on the debate of prescriptivism versus descriptivism. Prescriptivism refers to when grammarians and language professionals prescribe, or tell, speakers of a language how they should speak that language. In contrast, descriptivism refers to when grammarians simply observe and describe how native speakers

naturally use the language. Both approaches are vital to the development of language, but the issue arises in situations, such as the use of singular *they,* where we question whether language should be prescribed or described.

English began to take shape in the fifth century when Germanic tribes came to England (Oxford International English Schools, 2020). The language evolved over many centuries, and there came a period where the scholars of the language worried about how quickly the changes were occurring, inspiring them to begin keeping track of what was deemed "proper" English. Linguistic scholars were soon separated into two camps: prescriptivists and descriptivists. Prescriptive scholars were in favor of creating dictionaries and rule books for the English language. They wanted to tell people how to properly speak the language. Descriptivists disagreed. They wanted to allow the language to develop on its own and then describe how people used it. Over the centuries these two schools of thought have both won and lost battles as evidenced by the many modern grammar dictionaries and style guides and the 520 new words added to Merriam-Webster's dictionary just this year (Merriam-Webster, 2021). One topic that has recently reignited the conflict between language scholars is the usage of singular *they.*

They first appeared in written English language as a singular genderless pronoun in 1375, but most likely the construction had been employed in verbal speech long before it made its way into writing (OED Online, n.d.). From there it was used frequently and unspectacularly until the eighteenth century when prescriptivist grammarians decided that *they* as a plural pronoun should only be allowed to refer to plural antecedents (Oxford English Dictionary, 2019). Part of what made the banning of singular *they* so unusual at the time was that the same prescriptivists were allowing singular *you* to pass by unnoticed. Until this point, *you* had been used exclusively as a plural pronoun like *they* (Oxford English Dictionary, 2019). However, just as *you* was becoming acceptable as a singular pronoun, *they* was shoved back

into its box of plurality. This meant that in the English language there was no third person, singular, genderless pronoun to be used in writing. Third-person options included she, her, hers, etc. for women, he, his, him, etc. for men, or it, its, etc. for nonhuman objects, but no pronoun for an unspecified, genderless, singular human.

Scholars then presented generic *he* as a solution to the problem by claiming that *he* already encompassed *she*. In 1850, this replacement was accepted as the official usage in an act of Parliament (Baranowski, 2002). Authors' need for a third-person, genderless, singular pronoun had been ignored, and they were now forced to either use generic *he* or change the sentence to passive voice if they wanted to comply with the regulations. Despite its prohibition, singular *they* was still a constant presence in verbal communication, and respected authors including Shakespeare, C.S. Lewis, and Oscar Wilde continued to employ the prohibited pronoun (Altieri, 2003). But, anyone who continued to use the singular *they* did it at great risk. The grammar books, dictionaries, and prescriptive literature then and now are so powerful that one small slip in writing has the power to discredit the work and education of the writer. To use singular *they* and ignore the prescriptivists' "proper English" guidelines essentially illustrated lack of intelligence—not something worth risking.

Advantages of Using Singular *They* in Professional Writing

Changing a language is not an easy feat; English has been evolving for centuries to get to the point it is at now. One impressive feature of many evolving languages is that they tend to keep or add aspects that are useful while the less useful parts are lost to time and niche dialects. Singular *they* is just one of these small aspects of language that is waiting for its sentencing: useful or not. While deciding whether singular *they* should be an acceptable construction in professional writing and English in general, it is important to

look at the advantages it will bring to the language. This section discusses the advantages of singular *they* found in recent research on spoken and written language, sexism, and gender inclusivity.

Singular *They* and Spoken and Written Language in Professional Contexts

As often happens with languages, certain words, phrases, and constructions are vocally used for many years before being written down. As previously mentioned, once language begins to be written down, there will be people who want to create rules for it. Thankfully, most people are unaware that this system exists, allowing our language to continue to develop and create discussions around aspects such as singular *they* (Altieri, 2003). While researching the acceptance of singular *they* usage into professional writing, three distinct advantages came to light.

One of the greatest advantages of accepting singular *they* is the fact that it is already in use, and has been in use for centuries, in informal English (Baranowski, 2002). Even today, despite the prescription, research done by Altieri demonstrates that singular *they* is often used in speech by the same people who will avoid its usage in their writing. Altieri discusses this dissonance by suggesting that people believe the rules of language apply in the same absolute way that the rules of mathematics do (2003). In mathematics, if you add two numbers, the result should always be the same; the laws are absolute and never changing. Language is not like this. The rules of language exist to provide organization and consistency, but these rules are constantly changing and updating to keep language usage consistent, not concrete. This is not the case, however, as while grammarians discount singular *they* due to its natural plurality, speakers of English have always used *they* to represent singular genderless antecedents when speaking and it is widely understood. Some writers' failure to use singular *they* is simply due to the prescription rules surrounding the construction. The most fatal mistake to make as a writer is writing something

that looks uneducated or even illiterate. This then makes challenging the rules of language even more difficult as doing so may create such a look. If the prohibition of singular *they* is to be thrown out, then many people will have to collectively take the risk. The only thing keeping English speakers and writers from utilizing singular *they* is those who define the rules around it. According to Altieri, it is up to English speakers to decide whether they will continue to listen to these rules or not (Altieri, 2003).

Another advantage of singular *they* is that it is still commonly used in speech. In these studies, verbal and written usage of singular *they* were researched to investigate the commonality of singular *they* in verbal communication despite its scarcity in written communication. In his study, LaScotte had native English speakers take a survey about language and then answer several free-response questions about "the ideal student" to collect information on which pronouns the respondents would use to refer to this singular, genderless antecedent. The majority of participants used singular *they* in their responses, but *he or she* was the top answer when they were asked which pronoun would be best for formal circumstances (LaScotte, 2016). In another study, Balhorn compares the usage rates of singular *they* to generic *he* and the alternative *he or she* by using examples from five newspapers. He relates the usage in each to a variety of factors and discovers that singular *they* is the preferred pronoun in the newspapers (Balhorn, 2009). What is especially interesting about this study is that the direct quotes in the newspapers used singular *they* 247 times while the text written by the journalists only used it 172 times (Balhorn, 2009). The difference between singular *they*'s usage in quotes versus written text illustrates that the prescription of singular *they* is the only thing keeping writers from using it in professional circumstances.

The advantage of using singular *they* is emphasized again in a study by Baranowski. Baranowski investigated the usage of singular *they* as it compares to other epicene pronouns—pronouns that have characteristics of both sexes or no characteristics of either sex—by using corpora of news articles.

The study found that *they* was the most popular pronoun and when compared with *he*, *they* was used significantly more times in all articles (Baranowski, 2002). The article concludes that there are now three main epicene pronouns that can be used, and singular *they* is the highest-ranking among them with generic *he* on its way out. Singular *they* is illustrated to be the most likely choice in all linguistic situations, so why is it not generally accepted and used in professional writing (Baranowski, 2002)?

Overall, the three advantages to accepting singular into professional writing and speaking contexts are that *they* has been used as a singular, genderless pronoun before, it is already commonly used in speech and other forms of writing despite its prohibition, and it is the most natural and popular choice in circumstances requiring singular, genderless pronouns. While investigating current spoken and written English, usage of singular *they* is obviously invaluable, but there are other factors that are also affecting the approval rates of this construction.

Singular *They* and Sexism in Professional Writing

In the 1970s, the prescriptions against singular *they* were challenged by the feminist movement (Altieri, 2003). As a part of the attack on male dominance, the movement vehemently denounced the generic *he* as sexist and exclusive of women. By using generic *he*, writers may have been accounting for the plurality of the antecedent but were ignoring the gender of the antecedent. The movement argued that this put men at the forefront of people's minds when speaking. It was during this time that singular *they* started to arise as an alternative that promoted equality (Altieri, 2003). Although the feminist movement had brought singular *they* back into the conversation as a viable option in writing, it was still regarded as a deadly sin by grammarians. This section discusses the advantages of allowing singular *they* to enter into professional writing as it relates to sexism.

In every professional circumstance, women benefit greatly from the usage of singular *they*. Without this genderless pronoun, workplaces would refer to their general

employee as *he*. Although generic *he* is said to encompass *she* as well, it does not. The generic *he* automatically generates a male connotation as it is used to specifically denote *male* when referring to a man, and thus allows businesses and other professional arenas to cater towards men and exclude women. This exclusion in language then makes it more difficult for women to gain the same status as men because they are linguistically at a disadvantage. By utilizing singular *they* in professional writing, women are now on the same level as men. In the article *To Each Reader His, Their or Her Pronoun*, Adami uses English Corpora to study generic *he* in academic writing, and by extension professional writing. Adami discusses how since *he* as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun has become inappropriate, other usage options, such as singular *they*, have become more prevalent. While this study finds singular *they* unlikely to be used in academic writing, it concludes that singular *they* is especially useful in areas where sex is irrelevant (Adami, 2009). In professional writing, there are many circumstances where sex is and should be irrelevant, making singular *they* a perfect choice.

In his article, Evan Bradley investigates the reasons why people are against using singular *they*, specifically sexism and grammatical prescription, to find out which is having more influence on the person's choice. The participants of the study were asked to rate sentences with varying pronoun uses, sentences that displayed benevolent or hostile sexism, and sentences that illustrated frequent grammatical beliefs. Based on these ratings, Bradley discovered that singular *they* is generally used if the antecedent is vague, but not if the antecedent is known, meaning that hesitation to use *they* as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun comes from both grammatical and gender conservatism (Bradley, 2020). This article illustrates that language helps define a person's world. For centuries, generic *he* has been the norm, and this has allowed unconscious sexism to enter into the views of English speakers. If singular *they* is accepted into the language and used more often, then people will unlearn sexist ideas that come from sexist language. By increasing experiences with singular *they*, speakers will become more

comfortable with gender equality. By adding singular *they* into the English language, grammarians will be helping women gain rightful equality with men by dissolving linguistic sexism. A similar area that is having a great effect on the reintroduction of singular *they* into the English language is gender inclusivity.

Singular *They* and Gender Inclusivity in Professional Writing

In the early 2000s, there came a wave that would push singular *they* into the spotlight and force prescriptivists to start grappling with the situation: the LGBTQ+ movement. During this time, LGBTQ+ groups became more outspoken about the discrimination they were facing, and they pushed for inclusiveness. The issue was—and is—that a large part of the community doesn't identify with the biological gender they were born with or, for some, any binary gender at all. While before grammarians were only dealing with unspecified genderless antecedents matching a pronoun, there were now definite genderless antecedents that needed pronouns to allow for nonbinary persons to be included. Singular *they*, while most commonly used as a pronoun to refer to an unspecified genderless antecedent such as "the perfect student," can also be used to refer to a definite and gender-specific person who does not identify as male or female. As members of the movement began to choose *they/them* as their preferred pronouns, singular *they* was once again brought into the light as an issue that grammarians had to address.

The research done by Bradley exhibits advantages of singular *they* in terms of gender inclusivity as well as gender equality. Bradley reminds readers that although *they* is beginning to be accepted in some circumstances, there is no definite, gender-neutral, third-person pronoun in English that is acceptable to use in all professional writing (Bradley, 2020). To study the reason for this gap, Bradley researched how people reacted to singular *they* being used as a pronoun for a specific individual. Before starting the research, Bradley took a poll of the participants and discovered that out

of the 250 respondents that completed the study, 57 percent had known or met someone who used gender-neutral pronouns such as *they/them* (Bradley, 2020). This high level of interaction with individuals who use nonstandard pronouns showed a strong relationship with the grammatical ratings of sentences including nonstandard pronoun usage. The more experience a participant had with singular *they* as a personal pronoun, the more likely the participant would accept a sentence that uses it as grammatically correct (Bradley, 2020). Another important discovery in this paper was that the sexism scores found were clearly broken up by the personal gender of the participant. Nonbinary participants' responses exhibited the least amount of sexism, followed by women. Men came in far last with the highest amounts of sexism displayed (Bradley, 2020). This once again illustrates the advantage of using singular *they* as those who used it more often, female and nonbinary participants, are proven to be less sexist and more inclusive of all genders.

Pauwels and Winter conducted a study to examine the effects of using singular *they* in the classroom. English teachers are among the many professionals struggling to know if singular *they* is appropriate to use (Pauwels, 2006). These teachers are under a lot of pressure to teach students correct grammar principles and to nurture them emotionally. With the current debate over singular *they*, it is difficult to know what to do since supporting a student by using preferred pronouns would contradict what is being taught in the classroom. Likewise, what is being taught in the classroom could be mentally and emotionally harmful for a nonbinary learner. In the article, research is presented on 20 personal interviews and 182 survey responses from English teachers (Pauwels, 2006). The study was focused on the teachers' opinions and use of pronouns such as generic *he*, generic *she*, *he or she*, and singular *they*. Teachers reported that they used gender-inclusive language, such as singular *they* and *he or she* both inside and outside the classroom and researchers found that there was a large preference for singular *they*. Singular *they* was reportedly commonly heard in speech and surprisingly,

commonly seen in formal writing. Despite this usage by the teachers, singular *they* only had a 62 percent approval for students, and more teachers said they would correct the construction rather than ignore it (Pauwels, 2006). This study illustrates that the double standard held for English students today is enforced by educators. While the teacher may consistently use singular *they* in speech and writing, the student must not. This creates unnecessary confusion in the language for all concerned while also potentially harming the students who identify with nonconforming pronouns by perpetuating homophobic attitudes. The clear advantage of accepting singular *they* here is the acknowledgment of nonbinary individuals and the addition of gender inclusivity to the language and professional writing.

Lastly, a study done by Bjorkman sets out that an important advantage of accepting singular *they* is that it is already a word used in English. This advantage was previously noted, but in this separate context, allowing singular *they* into the language would include allowing the construction to refer to definite genderless individuals and not just hypothetical ones. Here, instead of grammarians needing to create and disburse an entirely new word to relate to those who are nonbinary, they would just have to allow the usage of singular *they* into professional writing to expand to what it already is in speech (Bjorkman, 2017).

As illustrated, there are many advantages to accepting singular *they* into professional writing as it relates to gender inclusivity. Not only will the language become more inclusive, but so will mindsets. Allowing singular *they* into English as not only a generic genderless pronoun, but also a specific genderless pronoun will help clarify usage for educators and students, bring inclusivity to writing and language, and help actively reform sexist and homophobic views. By including singular *they* in professional writing and becoming more comfortable with all forms of singular *they*, we will be able to accept, include, and love all those around us more fully.

Disadvantages of Using Singular *They* in Professional Writing

Despite these advantages, there are still some arguments against using the singular *they* in professional writing. The greatest disadvantage for using singular *they* in written and spoken language will always be the long-lasting prohibition of it. Baranowski reminds readers that not long ago in a corpus of 108 sources, researchers found absolutely no instances of singular *they*. Through the years singular *they* has slowly been returning to the language, but Baranowski's study discovered that singular *they* is often passed up for *he or she* due to its severe prohibition (Baranowski, 2002). If singular *they* was accepted into the language it would take a long time for writers to adopt the new rule and get used to seeing the usage. Even though authors admit that *he or she* is more awkward and difficult to use than singular *they*, they continue to stick to the arbitrary rules in order to be accepted.

Another disadvantage of using singular *they* is discussed in an article from 2007 by Sanford and Filik. In this article the authors discuss how using singular *they* affects a reader's ability to process language. The study had 36 native English-speaking University students read passages using different antecedents and pronouns. Participants then responded to comprehension questions about the passages while having their eye movement tracked. The study discovered that pronouns and antecedents with mismatched number and gender created longer processing times (Sanford, 2007). This illustrates the difference between a spoken singular *they* and a written one. In speech, singular *they* is often used as naturally as any other pronoun. Due to its prohibition in writing, it is slightly more difficult to understand the mismatched gender or number when reading—a distinctly negative effect.

These disadvantages, while few in number, require reflection for all prescriptivists and writers when deciding on the appropriate usage of the singular *they*. It would be easy to think these difficulties could quickly disappear as the construction becomes more normal and accepted. For now

though, as the ultimate goal of language is to express ideas and communicate meaning, constructions that confuse readers and go against the standards for language are disfavored.

Current Style Guidance

The research presented in this review has all been done within the last two decades and adds vital information to the conversation on singular *they*. This research is what builds the foundation and gives the evidence needed to encourage the updating of style guides. When discussing whether singular *they* is appropriate to use in professional writing today, however, it is the style guides that hold the majority of the weight. Adami's article stated the importance of following style guides and prescriptions in writing for academic purposes and cited this as the reason why more gender-inclusive pronouns have not yet entered the sphere of professional writing (2009). In 2020, research done by Charlotte Stormbom on singular *they* usage found that the most commonly used pronoun in international academic articles was singular *they*, but that there were rarely any style guides that mentioned gender-inclusive language preferences (2020). Now in 2021, just a year later, style guidance has changed. This section will review the most recently available style guidance from the Modern Language Association (MLA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) to give the most up-to-date recommendations on the use of singular *they*.

Modern Language Association on Singular *They*

On March 4, 2020, the MLA posted a blog titled "How Do I Use Singular *They*?" This post began by addressing the use of singular *they* as a pronoun for nonbinary individuals. MLA states that writers should always follow the preferred personal pronouns of the people they are writing about and thus it accepts singular *they* as a specific genderless pronoun. In a second section, the guide references the use of singular *they* as a generic genderless pronoun. While MLA

has previously discouraged this use of singular *they* because of the lack of number agreement, it now welcomes and "encourages" the use of singular *they* to promote inclusion in formal writing. Despite MLA clearly accepting the construction of singular *they,* the rest of the article gives suggestions on how to revise sentences to avoid using it (MLA Style Center, 2020). This simple web page illustrates that although MLA has accepted singular *they* there are still preferences against it.

American Psychological Association on Singular *They*

On October 31, 2019, with a similar style blog post entitled "Welcome, Singular *They,*" the APA style guide also demonstrates its acceptance of the long-prohibited construction. The post begins by clearly stating that singular *they* is now accepted and considered "good practice" in formal writing (Lee, 2019). APA's reasoning for accepting singular *they* is that by using *he or she* there is still a wide range of genders being excluded. In the APA's examples, singular *they* is now seen as acceptable to use as a pronoun for a specific gender nonbinary person and for a generic genderless third person. The guide even explicitly states that writers must use a person's preferred pronoun even if the writer doesn't approve of it (Lee, 2019). This is a telling example of how the LGBTQ+ movement has been able to further the acceptance of singular *they.*

Chicago Manual of Style on Singular *They*

Unlike the aforementioned style guides that have more recently accepted singular *they,* CMOS has been changing its stance on the issue of singular *they* since the CMOS 17 version was announced in 2017. CMOS has taken a similar stance as the other guides on the use of *they* as a personal pronoun: preferred personal pronouns, including *they* must be used (CMOS Online, n.d.). In other situations of singular *they,* however, the guide is less generous. CMOS recommends avoiding singular *they* at all costs and gives nine revision suggestions to do so (CMOS Online, n.d.).

The guide specifically states that although singular *they* is becoming popular, under its guidance, it is not acceptable to use in formal writing (CMOS Shop Talk, 2017). Although CMOS does not fully accept singular *they* in all its constructions yet, it is clear that times are changing, and the guide is reluctantly evolving with them.

While all style guides now champion the usage of singular *they* as a specific genderless pronoun, not all of them are fond of using singular *they* as a generic genderless pronoun. These changes have all been very recent and it may take some time before singular *they* is fully incorporated into the English language, but it is safe to say that using it in professional writing is now acceptable and even encouraged by many modern style guides.

Conclusion

As is the case with many linguistic constructions, the writer must make the ultimate decision of whether or not to use singular *they*. This article gives solid evidence for the acceptance of singular *they* as a useful and often correct construction, but it also comes with some drawbacks. In general singular *they* is a beneficial construction since it is already widely used in speech and writing as the most popular epicene pronoun. In situations of gender inclusivity and equality, singular *they* is celebrated as it includes women and those in the LGBTQ+ community while simultaneously reducing sexism and homophobia. Accepting singular *they* also makes the lives of all English speakers easier as it removes the confusion around its usage. In situations of conservative prescriptivism, it is discouraged due to the mismatching gender and number that can make it difficult to understand in reading. In the case of style guides, many have chosen to accept singular *they* in all its forms while some specifically request that it be avoided as much as possible. Future research should be done on the disadvantages of accepting singular *they* into the English language. This article reviewed recent studies according to the criteria mentioned, but few had any negative suggestions towards

accepting the construction. This lack of disadvantages represents a gap in current knowledge that could vastly change the acceptance of singular *they*. Overall, this research illustrates that singular *they* is again gaining traction in the English language and becoming largely acceptable.

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A Syntactical Analysis of Sentence Fragments in *No Country for Old Men* and *Ulysses*

Simon Laraway

This article draws on existing literature to develop a more nuanced understanding of sentence fragments and how they can be implemented in writing while maintaining clarity. According to these parameters, select passages containing sentence fragments from Ulysses *and* No Country for Old Men *are then analyzed with the goal of exposing why some sentence fragments in the former are disorienting, whereas those in the latter are more easily comprehensible. Ultimately, the article concludes that* Ulysses *seems to shun certain guidelines of clarity while* No Country *adheres to them, though they both use sentence fragments to achieve their rhetorical goals.*

The sentence fragment. It is a bugbear for English teachers and a boogeyman for student writers, yet it is still frequently used in accomplished literary prose. What are we to make of this seeming discrepancy? In an attempt to shed some light on this perennial grammatical conundrum, we will first lay out some commonly accepted rules for clarity when writing with sentence fragments. Then we will go on to show that sentence fragments can be and are used effectively in English literature, and we will examine the usage of sentence fragments in select passages of two different novels, *No Country for Old Men* and *Ulysses,* with the intent to identify whether the selected sentence fragments adhere to established rules of clarity.

The Rules of Using Sentence Fragments

First, we will attempt to define the notion of "sentence fragment" based on what grammarians have said on the subject. It seems relatively easy to distinguish sentence fragments in a grammatical sense; nearly every grammar website notes that sentence fragments are demarcated as single sentences with end punctuation and capitalization, but they lack some essential clause element. This omission supposedly renders them incorrect and incomplete. However, this textbook definition of sentence fragments does not begin to cover the way that sentence fragments are actually used.

To develop a more nuanced understanding of sentence fragments, we must first recognize that the spoken and written linguistic constructions we use consist of both sentences and non-sentences. Charles R. Kline Jr. and W. Dean Memering explore this distinction, suggesting that "minor sentences" make up the majority of non-sentence constructions we use (1977, p. 12). Minor sentences lack essential clause elements (Kline & Memering, 1977, p. 13). Minor sentences are typically subjects and verbs that stand alone from "major sentences" (that is, grammatically complete sentences containing both an independent subject and a verb), but minor sentences carry an implied subject or

verb based on the previous sentence or the speaker's context (Kline & Memering, 1977, p. 13). Eugene Nida gives an example of two minor sentences as utilized in a spoken interaction:

"How much for these?"

   "Fifty cents a dozen." (Nida, 1966, as cited in Kline, 1976, p. 4)

According to our initial definition, both of these would be sentence fragments, since they both lack essential clause elements. The first lacks a verb, whereas the second seems to lack both a verb and a subject complement (assuming that this phrase would function as a subject in a construction such as "fifty cents a dozen is how much they cost"). However, because they would make sense in context, we can call these minor sentences rather than sentence fragments. In the above example, the latter phrase refers contextually to the item implied in the first phrase. Rather than replying with a grammatically complete sentence, the speaker simply states the subject, assuming that the listener would understand the implied clause elements in context.

Kline (1976) concludes that in writing, minor sentences are perfectly acceptable, but he asserts a condition: "Dependent Minor Sentences should be contiguously placed and related to either an Independent Minor Sentence or a (Major) Sentence" (p. 7). It is the combination of sentence fragments with related coherent sentences that renders them comprehensible and thereby "minor sentences." If sentences that are missing a clause element are *not* placed contiguously with appropriate complete sentences, Kline and Memering (1977) propose that we call them "broken sentences" (p. 13). We will refer to both minor sentences and broken sentences as "sentence fragments" for the remainder of this article.

When writers use sentence fragments in creative fiction, do they adhere to Kline's rule? We will investigate this by examining select passages of two different novels: *No Country for Old Men* (hereafter *No Country*) and *Ulysses*.

Sentence Fragments in *No Country*

No Country is a 2005 novel by Cormac McCarthy. McCarthy is known to employ stripped-down style choices in his narratives, with his prose being described as consisting of "direct, almost scriptural language" which includes many sentence fragments (Johnson, 2019, para. 3). Here is a short passage with the fragments numbered and italicized, taken from a scene where the main character, Moss, stumbles upon a crime scene:

> [Moss] raised his head and looked out across the bajada. [1] *A light wind from the north.* [2] *Cool.* [3] *Sunny.* [4] *One oclock in the afternoon.* He looked at the man lying dead in the grass. [5] *His good crocodile boots that were filled with blood and turning black.* [6] *The end of his life.* [7] *Here in this place.* [8] *The distant mountains to the south.* [9] *The wind in the grass.* [10] *The quiet.* (McCarthy, 2005, p. 18)

There are ten sentence fragments in this short passage, but it still reads quite easily. Fragments 1–4 seem to tie in closely with the first complete sentence. "A light wind from the north" is a detail that is clearly connected with his survey of the landscape suggested in the previous sentence. His next two fragments are simply adjectives which note other details that tie in thematically with the previous dependent minor sentence. Because they are presented in succession with the minor sentence, they clearly serve to further describe the scene. Rather than including some redundant variation of "it was," we can assume that many of these sentence fragments are simply Moss taking in and categorizing the world around him in the form of simple noun phrases. The same is true for fragments 8–10; the scenic details of less importance are presented as economically as possible and in immediate succession.

Fragment 5, the longest fragment, is still a descriptive noun phrase, but now the content does not have to do with the scenery but with the real object of Moss's attention: the crime scene. This longer fragment seems to signal a shift in Moss's perception from simple categorization of the scene to inductive appraisal of what occurred there.

Fragments 6 and 7 especially stand out when compared with the other sentence fragments in this passage. They do not supply tangential details about the setting. Instead, we get a noun phrase (fragment 6) followed by an adverbial phrase (fragment 7), both of which would form a coherent sentence if they were linked with any verb meaning "occur." The prepositional phrase clearly modifies the preceding noun phrase. The close syntactic relation of these sentences sets them apart from the rest of the sentence fragments. This seems to be because the meaningful content of fragments 6 and 7 is more important than the extraneous and largely omittable survey-oriented noun phrases; the main content of this passage has to do with the dead body and Moss's consideration of what events led to its being there.

Thus we can see that in this passage, McCarthy utilizes a lot of sentence fragments, yet they follow logical rules. Especially when sentence fragments carry important information, they are syntactically and thematically related to comprehensible sentences in order to preserve clarity. If sentence fragments contain relatively extraneous details, they are presented consecutively alongside more readily comprehensible fragments. The most important information is presented in complete sentences. We can thereby see a fulfillment of Kline's (1976) condition that sentence fragments must be placed alongside complete sentences or related sentence fragments in order to maintain clarity.

Sentence Fragments in *Ulysses*

The second novel which we will examine is *Ulysses* by James Joyce, which is known for its comparatively dense and experimental prose style and that also frequently uses fragments. This passage, in which a character reflects on his dead mother, contains six sentence fragments:

In a dream, silently, she had come to him, her wasted body within its loose graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, bent over him with mute secret words, a faint odour of wetted ashes.

[1] *Her glazing eyes, staring out of death, to shake and bend my soul.* [2] *On me alone.* [3] *The ghostcandle to light her agony.* [4] *Ghostly light on the tortured face.* [5] *Her hoarse loud breath rattling in horror, while all prayed on their knees.* [6] *Her eyes on me to strike me down.* (Joyce, 1946, p. 12)

There are six sentence fragments in this passage compared to the nine in *No Country,* but here they do not read smoothly—they cause the reader to stumble and backtrack, creating a much more disorienting experience. This is due largely to a lack of finite verbs, arbitrary isolation of prepositional phrases, and use of pronouns that have no apparent antecedent.

Fragment 1 is almost a complete independent clause, but an infinitive verb is used instead of a tensed verb, rendering it a complex noun phrase with the head noun "eyes." The same is true for fragment 6; it has a highly similar structure and the same head noun. Sentence fragment 3 is similarly disorienting; we would expect the verb "light" to be finite here, but instead it is an infinitive, creating another noun phrase.

Sentence fragment 2, a lone prepositional phrase, seems to connect thematically with fragment 1, but it does not connect syntactically because "on" would have to come before the nonfinite modifier "to shake and bend my soul." Fragments 4 and 5, however, each connect a prepositional phrase to the noun phrase each modifies, so the isolation of "on me alone" in fragment 2 is particularly disorienting.

Fragment 5 is perhaps the most incomprehensible in the passage, as it contains several pronouns that do not refer to any obvious antecedent. Usually, pronouns replace a clear antecedent, but there is nothing in this sentence or passage that suggests what "all" and "their" refer to. This means that this sentence fragment contains two examples of ambiguous pronoun reference.

The sentence that begins the above passage ties the other fragments together thematically but not syntactically. These fragments are not placed in proximity to a comprehensible independent clause on which they can rely for implied syntactic elements and semantic context. Because

the sentence fragments in this passage are connected only thematically, they violate Kline's (1976) rule.

That said, are we to conclude that Joyce's writing is poor or somehow flawed? Absolutely not—partly because there is a myriad of literature professors that would disagree, but also because we must consider that creative writing affords a writer license to prioritize stylistic choices over conventionally accepted axioms of clarity. The sentence fragments that Joyce uses seem to suggest a retreat into an unstable character's inner psyche, so it makes sense to present it in an unconventional and ungrammatical manner.

Indeed, with regard to the number and comprehensibility of fragments in *Ulysses,* commentators have pointed out that "the degree of fragmentation in such sentences corresponds to the intensity of [this character's] emotions and . . . excitement" (Runtić & Varga, 2013, p. 4). McCarthy, in a similar vein, is said to use sentence fragments to "relay thoughts to the readers in the same manner characters would think them . . . to close the gap between the reader and the protagonist" (Furey, 2011, p. 2). So we can draw an interesting correlation between the desired rhetorical effects of using sentence fragments in both of these novels, even if they do not follow the same grammatical rules. Both writers seem to implement sentence fragments to convey the thought process and mental makeup of characters.

Conclusion

The simplistic assertion that sentence fragments are incorrect and should be avoided was never true: a simple glance at accomplished writing in a myriad of contexts debunks this. But not all sentence fragments are created equal. There are indeed rules of using sentence fragments that we should uphold if we want to maintain clarity in our writing—yet even these rules can clearly be broken if a writer so desires and if the situation calls for it. In *No Country,* we find an example of a writer adhering to these rules, whereas in *Ulysses,* we find a writer eschewing these rules entirely. Interestingly, in the passages examined, both writers employ

sentence fragments to achieve a similar literary effect, show-ing that fragments can be a valuable tool in the arsenal of prudent writers.

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Code–Switching in Foreign Language Classes

Kiersten Meyer

Language immersion during class time is currently considered the best foreign language teaching method, but using only the target language during class is rare. While some studies have examined patterns of code-switching in K–12 schools and non-academic settings, few have examined such behavior in college classrooms. This study considers language-internal and language-external factors that govern code-switching for college students and teachers in one beginner and one advanced Italian language classroom. The collected data reveals code-switching patterns and evidence that code-switching in advanced language classes can enhance communication in both the native and target languages.

Brigham Young University (BYU) is home to one of the most diverse language programs in the United States. Its course offerings range from Afrikaans to Welsh, and over 130 languages are spoken on campus. However, no matter the language being taught, the teaching method is generally the same: immersion. Language immersion has been proven to improve reading and listening comprehension as well as provide students with countless opportunities for language improvement (Savage, 2014, pp. 109–110). These benefits, along with guidance from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Lloyd, 2016, p. 1), have pushed department heads and training programs to insist on language immersion in foreign language classes at BYU. While complete language immersion during class is ideal, it is not the reality. Small instances of code-switching do occur, even in the highest levels of foreign language classes.

Gardner-Chloros defines code-switching as "the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people" (2009, p. 4). In foreign language immersion classes, this means speaking the L1 (the native or first language) in a context where the L2 (the target or second language) is expected. Because this is technically not supposed to happen, it is important to understand what motivates code-switching in foreign language classes and what patterns govern it.

Lloyd's study on foreign language use in the classroom found several factors that influence the teacher when choosing to use the L1 or the L2. These factors included students' level of language ability, complexity of the academic task being performed, and restrictions of time (2016, pp. 46, 57). However, this research was conducted in a variety of foreign language K–12 classrooms and included only limited information about foreign language classes at the university level.

Gardner-Chloros also comments that in language immersion schools, code-switching can be used by teachers to include students with varying levels of language capability, ensure students less competent in the L2 understand at least a portion of the instruction, and even inadvertently reflect

code-switching practices outside of the classroom (2009, p. 159). Students participate in code-switching as well, but they are more likely to switch to their L1 for content words if they are less comfortable with the L2 and for function words if they are more comfortable with the L2 (161).

Both of these studies are helpful in determining several motivating factors for code-switching, but neither observes code-switching in a university-level course where language immersion happens for one hour a day at most. To better understand these patterns in this type of situation, this research will identify patterns in code-switching and propose possible forces behind these patterns as found in two Italian foreign language classes at BYU.

Background

Any situation in which a speaker switches between two or more languages or varieties can be considered code-switching. The code-switching that occurs between languages is often viewed negatively (Bell, 2014, p. 114). These views are age old and may be rooted in feelings of nationalism and us-versus-them mentalities. Until the 1950s, even linguists were influenced by these biases and did not consider studying code-switching, preferring more "pure" language studies. However, linguists have recently become interested in this phenomenon and have studied code-switching in countless contexts to better understand language-internal and language-external mechanisms that often trigger the changes observed in code-switching.

The language-internal and language-external causes of code-switching are varied and nearly infinite. Language-internal mechanisms can include not knowing a word in a language, preferring a simpler syntax or form of expression, or even utilizing words or other morphemes that do not translate well from one language to another. Language-external mechanisms can include the audience or setting, the purpose of the communication, and even the communication of subtle nuances in narration (Bell, 2014, pp. 115–117).

Today, studies in code-switching range from conversational analyses to classroom practices. The phenomenon can be observed between and within most languages, so the possibilities for research are endless and ongoing.

Methods

To better understand the patterns and motivations behind code-switching in foreign language immersion classes, data was collected from two Italian language immersion classes, Italian 101 and Italian 340, both taught at BYU. Italian 101 is a beginner course where students who have no experience speaking Italian learn basic vocabulary and grammar. This course was taught by a student instructor who has about three years of Italian experience and one year of teaching experience. Italian 340 is an advanced language course where advanced speakers study Italian literature. The course was taught by a professor who has about seventeen years of Italian experience and ten years of teaching experience. In both classes, most of the students have English as their L1 and Italian as the L2, or target language, though some students did speak Spanish or Portuguese as a first language.

In each course, a researcher recorded each occurrence of code-switching, the time and date, which individual performed it, what was said, and the context for the code switch. A code switch was considered to be performed each time any participant in the class used English, whether it was an extended discourse or a small morpheme. For the Italian 101 course, one class period was observed. For the Italian 340 class, three class periods were observed.

In addition, a questionnaire about patterns of and attitudes about code-switching was sent to both teachers. Asking about teacher observations and opinions ensured that the patterns observed during class time were consistent with the attitudes of the teachers. The questions included were as follows:

1. When do you use code-switching in your language immersion classes, if ever? Are there specific

situations or audiences that make you more likely to use one language over another?

2. When do you observe students code-switching in your language immersion classes, if ever? Do they use code-switching more in personal conversations with other students, when addressing you, or when addressing the whole class?

3. What patterns do you see in code-switching? Do you or students usually just say one word in a different language, or is it usually a longer phrase? Are words and morphemes from different languages ever combined?

4. In your opinion, does code-switching help or hinder language learning?

One limitation of the observational data was the limited extent to which student code-switching was able to be observed. The classes observed were conducted over the videoconferencing platform Zoom. While this allowed for excellent audio recordings of the teachers, it was often difficult to hear the students. In addition, the use of the "breakout room" feature in Zoom meetings made it so that some groups of students were inaccessible to observation for large portions of the class period. However, even though the data is much more descriptive of teacher code-switching, a few instances of student code-switching were recorded and considered in this study, despite their brevity. Further research could be conducted on the extent to which students participate in code-switching in language immersion courses and in which contexts they feel comfortable doing so.

To analyze the observational data, each recorded observance of code-switching was labeled with information about the speaker, context, switch pattern, and L1 utterance length. It was then possible to see the frequency of each factor for each speaker individually and for each class collectively. By grouping evidence in this way, patterns and possible motivations emerged that were then compared with the responses from the questionnaire. When a pattern was observed in

the observational data and in the teacher questionnaire, it was considered to be confirmed.

Results

The results of this research can be divided into two broad categories. The first is language-internal patterns, and the second is language-external patterns.

Language-internal patterns, or patterns driven by morphology, syntax, grammar, and similar factors intrinsic to the language, were most obvious in the Italian 340 course. The professor of this course answered that he was most likely to switch into the L1 "when a word in English doesn't translate well to Italian (e.g., 'awkward' doesn't really have a good corresponding word in Italian so I often use the English)." Semantic constraints of the language make a quick switch to the L1 more comfortable and more useful for communication in the foreign language classroom setting. This is clearly seen in the code-switching data for Italian 340. Some phrases uttered by the professor follow a pattern of single-word L1 switches:

- "È uno *stretch* secondo me." (In my opinion, it's a stretch.)
- "È sempre importante dare questi *props* dove *props* sono dovuti." (It's always important to give these props where props are due.)
- "Abbiamo il nostro *spring break* questo *weekend*." (We have our spring break this weekend.)

In each of these examples, the speaker switches to L1 to express sentiments, especially slang words, that don't have a simple equivalent in the L2. A seeming reversal of this pattern can be seen in one instance in which the professor added an L2 morpheme as a suffix onto an L1 word. His utterance included the phrase "spring break*tuccio*" (short, insignificant, and laughable spring break) where the L2 morpheme addition allowed for greater nuance than the L1 adjective addition. These examples show that in higher

level L2 classroom experiences, single word code-switching is common to communicate nuances or to express concepts that don't easily translate between the two languages.

Single word code-switching also occurred when discussing resources that were presented in English. For example, one day during the Italian 340 course, the students analyzed a poem written in English. The discussion mostly took place in the L2, but when referring to specific words or phrases in the poem, the students would switch into English to quote the material. For example, one student made the utterance "legge la poesia '*Sacrament Prayer*'" (he reads the poem "Sacrament Prayer"). Because the student was referring to the title of a poem written in English, he used English to refer to the poem, even though he had the linguistic capability to translate the title if he had needed to.

Similar patterns of switching a single word can be seen in the Italian 101 course, but for a slightly different reason. Code-switching in this class was very rarely used to convey nuance in meaning and was more often used to refer to or define specific vocabulary words. Phrases such as "come si dice *videogames*?" (How do you say videogames?) were very common and included single word code-switching to learn a new vocabulary word or to define unfamiliar vocabulary words. This phenomenon was accurately identified by the instructor, who commented in her questionnaire, "I definitely use English more when we are talking about vocabulary. I sometimes have to define words in English so that students know what I'm talking about. I also have seen that students will switch into English to ask about specific words they haven't learned yet."

The instructor for this course also inserted single words from Italian into longer phrases in English, as in the phrase "so, *nipote* is kind of a funny one because *nipote* can mean grandchild or niece or nephew." The insertion of the Italian word *nipote* was a direct reference to the vocabulary being discussed in class that day, showing that classroom discussion of new vocabulary, especially with beginning learners of an L2 language, is a context in which patterns

of single-word code-switching are very common. This pattern was also observed in the Italian 340 course, but not as often. One of the few examples observed was uttered by a student who said, "Sta dicendo, uh, *the futility* di essere" (He's saying, uh, the futility of being). Unfamiliarity with a vocabulary word caused a single-word code switch to the L1. This is confirmed by the Italian 340 professor response of "for the most part, I think I see students code-switching when they . . . don't have the vocabulary . . . necessary to convey their thoughts adequately."

There were also many patterns observed in the language-external factors, or factors related to audience, context, or language task. The most prevalent language-external factors in the collected data were related to audience. Both teachers noted that students were more likely to code switch when speaking with other students. The Italian 340 professor stated, "From my experience, students code switch more in small group work and other personal conversations with students. I think it happens less often when addressing the whole class and when addressing me directly." The Italian 101 instructor stated, "I often hear students talking in English when they are doing partner work, either to ask questions about what they're supposed to be doing or to make casual comments throughout their exercises." Unfortunately, not a lot of data was collected to document this observation due to the restrictions of online learning platforms; however, two short conversations in English were recorded between students. One occurred in the Italian 340 course in a breakout room where the professor was present but not participating. The other occurred in the 101 course between two students working together in a Zoom meeting (but not in a breakout room) while the instructor monitored other students. The ratio of code-switching to L1 was much higher in student-to-student interactions; however, since such little data was collected, it might be wise to repeat the study with better access to conversations between students before confirming these results. The broad scope of this study, which included both beginner and advanced Italian courses, may also have confounded the data.

Another common theme reflected in both the questionnaires and the data was switching to the L1 when the speaker questioned if the audience understood what they were attempting to communicate in the L2. This phenomenon was recorded in the Italian 340 class on several occasions from the professor. One example is in his utterance "suvverte, cioè *subverts* la poesia" (it subverts, that is it subverts the poem). The professor identified this kind of code-switching behavior in his questionnaire when he said, "I will code switch . . . when I'm explaining something and, either by asking questions or by the looks on people's faces, I feel like I need to clarify something or make sure that students really understand what I am telling them."

The Italian 101 instructor also commented on code-switching to ensure comprehension, saying, "If I'm talking to students and I can tell that we aren't on the same page, I will try repeating myself, and then switching to English if they still don't get it." This pattern of code-switching is reflected in the data collected from the Italian 101 course, where the instructor frequently switches into the L1 to give more in-depth explanations of directions or instruction originally given in Italian. One such example is in an explanation of the phrase "la famiglia dello sposo" (the spouse's family). After saying this phrase in Italian, the instructor continued to say, "So, if you're married, this is the family of your husband or your wife." For both classes, repetition of information in the L1 functions as an emphatic trigger that helps to ensure that everyone is understanding each other.

Conclusion

The data discussed above shows that code-switching in college-level foreign language classes follows many patterns discussed in Lloyd (2016) and Gardner-Chloros (2009). For example, both this study and that of Gardner-Chloros show students code-switching to the L1 for vocab and content words, especially if the students were less comfortable with the L2 (p. 161). In addition, this study corroborated the findings of Lloyd (2016) that teacher code-switching

will often reflect students' level of language ability (p. 46). However, this study also found that code-switching can be influenced by conversational nuance as well as the language of resources used in class discussions. The emphasis of this study on all speakers in the classroom also allowed for some interesting insights about the differences between code-switching in teachers and in students, which could be investigated further to make more sense of why students are more likely to speak in the L1 with each other than with the teacher.

One interesting discovery made during this research was the disparity in code-switching between language-internal and language-external issues. In both levels of the Italian classes studied, the language-external factors were fairly similar. However, when considering language internal factors, differences emerged between advanced and beginning speakers. While this difference is hinted at in the research of Gardner-Chloros (2009), it was not an area of focus. It would be interesting to recreate this study's observation with the intent of describing differences between beginner and advanced L2 language speakers.

In closing, it is important to note that, while this paper began by describing the value of language immersion, both teachers that were observed in this study commented on the value of code-switching. The push for one hundred percent communication in the target language is admirable, but it may sacrifice opportunities for students to make connections between languages and express themselves fully in a way that is meaningful to them and those in their classrooms. The Italian 340 professor may have expressed these sentiments best in his questionnaire. After discussing the value of circumlocution and new vocabulary acquisition in foreign language learning, he commented, "To some extent, I suppose code-switching has the ability to highlight where the L2 'falls short' in its ability to adequately express ideas or meaning and I think that in itself can lead to learning moments."

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Modality in the Writing of Virginia Woolf

Abbigail Clark

This article analyzes the way that both deontic and epistemic modal-ity function within the writing of Virginia Woolf to illuminate the female experience and communicate the complexity of truth. To the Lighthouse *and* A Room of One's Own *serve as examples of how modals are instrumental in representing themes of the Modern-ist literary movement as well as the gender dynamics often displayed in Woolf's writing. This article ultimately concludes that modals as a grammatical structure are not only effective in communicat-ing themes of uncertainty but also that they contribute to Woolf's unique writing style as an author.*

This article will focus on the use of the modals *may, might,* and *must* and the different semantic implications of their deontic and epistemic uses within the works of Virginia Woolf. Woolf's use of modality gives a distinctive voice to her characters, especially her female characters, allowing them to muse upon the epistemic forces that influence their lives—particularly societally enforced gender norms. Woolf is well known for her stream-of-consciousness style and her representation of the female experience; her use of modality contributes to this distinctive style. Woolf's use of modality as a popular Modernist writer reflects the Modernist themes of uncertainty and disillusionment that stemmed from the devastation of World War I. Her writing exhibits how these postwar sentiments prompted Modernists to confront traditional ideas and question the relativity of truth. This article will identify the uses of modality in two of Woolf's works, *To the Lighthouse* and *A Room of One's Own,* to examine the consistent use of these modals across various excerpts of her work and to demonstrate a recurring pattern that represents her manner of writing.

Defining Epistemic and Deontic Modality

Modals are useful tools for expressing a speaker's personal or logical understanding of a subject because they serve as a gradient between the positive and negative polarity conveyed by the words *yes* and *no* (Zupan, 2016, p. 7). There are several types of modality that create semantic nuances, and this article will analyze the difference between epistemic and deontic modality. Epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker's assessment of truth value. It is a deduction of facts and knowledge that results in a conclusion. This occurs in *To the Lighthouse* when Mrs. Ramsay concludes that the men who work at the lighthouse "*must* be bored to death" (italics added) based on her knowledge that they sit "all day with nothing to do but polish the lamp and trim the wick and rake about on their scrap of garden" (Woolf,

1927, p. 5; Zupan, 2016, pp. 6–7). Epistemic modality allows the speakers to acknowledge that there are circumstances of the human experience over which they have no control since they are forced to assemble meaning from the information available to them.

In contrast, deontic modality is the result of factors that condition a speaker's attitude external to the subject. It differs from epistemic modality in that it communicates an opinion or estimation based on the speaker's feelings rather than making an assumption based on evidence. Deontic modality is present when Mrs. Ramsay imparts her perspective to her daughters after pondering how she might cheer the lighthouse keepers in their supposedly pitiable condition. She says, "One *must* take them whatever comforts one can" (Woolf, 1927, p. 5; Zupan, 2016, p.7; italics added). Here, deontic modality illustrates that our personal opinions and philosophies are also influenced by the truths we choose to believe since Mrs. Ramsay wants to provide the lighthouse keepers with items of comfort because she sees their position as a sad and lonely one. These two modalities are useful in distinguishing types of truth and in recognizing that the qualification of truth depends on observation and experience. Both the truth gleaned from Mrs. Ramsay's observation and the belief that she asserts contribute to the Modernist perspective that life is uncertain and that the world is made of our own perceptions.

Functions of Modality in *To the Lighthouse*

While the section above utilized excerpts from *To the Lighthouse* to define epistemic and deontic modality, this section will explain exactly how the grammatical structure is effective in defining truth and conveying themes of uncertainty in the text. *To the Lighthouse* centers on the relationships and revelations of the Ramsay family and their guests that are revealed by events surrounding the desire for a trip to the nearby lighthouse. The novel emphasizes Mrs. Ramsay's central role in her family and community by paying

particular attention to how her presence and absence are both keenly felt by the other characters. Woolf employs epistemic modality as Mrs. Ramsay assesses her appearance: "When she looked in the glass and saw her hair grey, her cheek sunk, at fifty, she thought, possibly she *might* have managed things better—her husband; money; his books" (Woolf, 1927, p. 6; italics added). Her weathered visage leads her to deduce that she might have spent her life differently. The modal *might* conveys the uncertain conclusion that she draws from the evidence present and illustrates both the Modernist tendency to question and a woman's individual insecurity in her role and purpose.

Woolf also implements deontic modality in *To the Lighthouse* to portray how modals can convey resistance to negation and exemplify gender norms. Toward the beginning of the novel, Mrs. Ramsay's son James wants the family to venture out to the lighthouse. When he initially asks his mother if they can all go, her response is, "Yes, of course if it's fine tomorrow" (Woolf, 1927, p. 4). However, her positively polar statement is refuted by her husband and their guest, Mr. Tansley, who claims that the weather will not be fine and that "there'll be no landing at the lighthouse tomorrow" (Woolf, 1927, p. 7). While they use epistemic modality with the word *will* to indicate that the trip is not possible, Mrs. Ramsay uses deontic modality in saying, "But it *may* be fine—I expect it will be fine" to resist their negation and convey her optimism that the trip to the lighthouse could still be possible (Woolf, 1927, p. 5; italics added). The use of the word *may* in her response opposes the men's supposedly logical conclusion that the weather will not be suitable for the trip and implies a refusal to accept their negativity as truth. Her resistance to their statement of certainty distinguishes her from the men, portraying her, a woman, as hopeful while painting both of the men as doubtful and stagnant. Here, Woolf uses the language of her characters, especially their use of modality, to highlight distinctive characteristics of the genders and imply that uncertainty can portray hope as well as doubt.

Functions of Modality
in *A Room of One's Own*

Within *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf discusses the societal pressures that make it difficult for women authors to have the same opportunity and notoriety that a man might have, even though they may have the same degree of talent and ability. She also discusses the things that a woman must have in order to become an accomplished writer. She uses epistemic modals to define what exactly is meant by the phrase "women and fiction" (p. 1). The modals *may* and *might* allow her to grasp at the meaning of this specific term:

> Women and fiction *might* mean, and you *may* have meant it to mean, women and what they are like; or it *might* mean women and the fiction that they write; or it *might* mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it *might* mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. (Woolf, 1929, p. 1; italics added)

This instance demonstrates her use of epistemic modals because she is considering several factors and attempting to conclude what is meant by "women and fiction" (p. 1). The use of epistemic modality contributes to her theme of uncertainty regarding what is expected of her as a female author and what is expected of female authors in general. This usage aids in the construction of the recurring theme of gender roles in her writing and displays the disparity between men and women in literature as well as reality.

While Woolf employs epistemic modality in *A Room of One's Own* to exhibit the ambiguity of women in fiction, she utilizes deontic modality to indicate how women are to emerge from ambiguity. The modal *must* is particularly expedient in enabling her to express her view about what is necessary for women to create fiction. Woolf (1929) writes, "A woman *must* have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved" (p. 1; italics added). In this sentence, *must* conveys deontic modality because it establishes

Woolf's opinion. Her attitude implies that this is likely not a reality for most women but that it should be. The modal *must* makes this distinction between positive and negative polarity and perpetuates the uncertainty of reality. It also indicates that a room of one's own is something that should exist for every woman, though there is no indication that it does exist in actuality. The modality of this statement challenges tradition as is typical of the Modernist view of the world, portraying the disorder of life while the questions of women and fiction go unanswered.

Conclusion

Virginia Woolf consistently utilizes both epistemic and deontic modality in her work to convey the uncertainty that was characteristic of the Modernist literary movement and to create her own unique style. She uses modals to highlight characteristics unique to men and women respectively, which contributes to her persistent attempt to portray the female experience and the relationships between men and women. Her use of modality enables her to insinuate that truth is equivocal and is dependent on the life experience of each individual.

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Innate Simplification Processes as Seen in Hawaiian Creole and Bileez Kriol

Addison Mangum

This article compares phonological, morphological, and semantic features in English, Hawaiian Creole, and Bileez Kriol to determine if innate simplification processes exist that could support universalist theories of language genesis. The article provides brief social histories of Hawaii and Belize, and original recordings collected from native speakers of each language are transcribed and analyzed. This study of creole and pidgin languages reveals remarkable structural similarities in their simplification processes; however, the universalist theory fails to account for sociohistorical development, language ideology, and the role of speakers as agents in language creation.

One of the greatest areas of interest and debate in the study of pidgin and creole languages is the genesis of language itself. Linguist Mark Sebba asserts that, "there is, in fact, broad agreement that creole languages show similarities to each other which are not explainable by reference to their lexifier languages, and that there is a fair amount of agreement about what these similarities are. But there is no agreement over the reason or reasons for these similarities" (Sebba, 1997, p. 175). Some creolists believe that these structural similarities can be explained through the assumption that humans have, and make effective use of, innate simplification processes—this is the basis for universalist theories that claim such processes as evidence of the subconscious mental faculties used in all language genesis. Linguists have spent decades wrestling with this question: "Can the study of creoles reveal the role played by the universal faculties of language in language formation and interlingual communication?" (Jourdan, 1991, p. 187). More importantly, do these universal faculties even exist?

Study and Analysis Methods

To answer these questions, we must first recognize commonly occurring processes in creolized languages by identifying similarities and differences between creoles and their lexifiers, or the languages which provide the majority of the creoles' lexicons. Then we must decide whether these similarities and differences represent evidence of innate language design. To accomplish these aims, creoles must be compared to one another as well as to their lexifier languages. This study compared the phonological, morphological, and semantic features of English, Hawaiian Creole, and Bileez Kriol in search of features that could point toward an innate simplification process.

For this study, three native female speakers—one from Yakima, Washington, U.S., one from Molokai, Hawaii, U.S., and one from Corozal, Belize, C.A., who spoke English, Hawaiian Creole, and Bileez Kriol respectively—were each invited to record a reading of Luke 10:25–37 to be transcribed,

analyzed, and compared. A passage from the New Testament was chosen because it had been translated into all three languages. It also presented a distinct text with which all speakers would be familiar and would aid in semantic comparison and demonstrate clear feature changes. The voice recordings were slowed down with Adobe Audition software and transcribed by ear using sonic data from an interactive IPA (Isotalo, 2003). The data was then semantically organized into charts for ease of phonological comparison and to clearly identify syntactic alterations. Figures included in this article are excerpts from these charts, and each word provides the spelling and the phonetic transcription. Dictionaries and glossaries of Bileez Kriol (Crosbie, 2009) and Hawaiian Creole ('Ōlelo, 2010) proved useful since the orthography indicated significant changes in phonology, morphology, and semantics, but the conclusions were primarily based on phonetic transcription.

Sociohistorical Synopses of Hawaii and Belize

While linguists agree that creole languages are remarkably similar in their phonological, morphological, and semantic features—"even those that have unrelated lexifiers, unrelated substrate languages, and no geographical connections" (Sebba, 1997, p. 173)—understanding the sociohistorical situations in which these contact languages were created can provide insights into the genesis of such features. Although Hawaiian Creole and Bileez Kriol share English as their lexifier language, they have unrelated substrate languages (minor contributing languages which influence the creoles' grammatical structure) and no physical geographical connections. However, their social histories are remarkably similar: both were heavily influenced by colonization and servitude and remain in contact with their lexifier primarily due to tourism and government policy.

The development of Hawaiian Creole began in 1778 with the arrival of Europeans such as Captain James Cook. The

introduction of trade between North America, China, and Europe increased the foreigners' contact with the Hawaiian Islands as they established sugarcane plantations. Workers from the South Pacific as well as Asia and Europe immigrated to the islands as indentured servants. The Territory of Hawaii was created in 1898 and later annexed to the United States in 1959. Currently, Hawaii is known for its tourist economy and has a population of approximately 1.5 million; 600,000 are native Hawaiian Creole speakers (SIL International, 2021).

The development of Bileez Kriol began with the first permanent British settlement in Belize, established in the 1710s. Conflict between Britain and Spain over the territory prevented a formal government and plantation agriculture system from taking root until 1796, but British colonizers participated in the logging industry and slavery. Bileez Kriol was primarily influenced by Igbo, but also by other West African languages such as Akan, Efik, Ewe, Fula, Ga, Hausa, Kikongo, and Wolof. Contention in Central America, particularly between the United States and Britain, led to the independence of Belize in 1981. Belize also has a predominantly tourist-focused economy and a population of approximately 400,000, with 150,000 native Bileez Kriol speakers (SIL International, 2021).

Results of the Study

This analysis was unable to identify the origins of most linguistic features; however, it was able to describe similar features and simplification processes. Although distinctions exist between pidgins and creoles, "it is apparent that the structural difference between an expanded pidgin and an incipient creole will be minimal" (Romaine, 1988, p. 155). For the purposes of this study, the terms 'pidgin' and 'creole' will be used interchangeably.

Phonology

When it comes to the phonological processes and features of pidgins and creoles, "we may say that pidgins prefer sounds

which are common to the main languages involved . . .
tending to eliminate those contrasts that are rare or would
present difficulties for the speakers of one or more of the lan-
guages in contact" (Sebba, 1997, pp. 47, 109). A clear exam-
ple of this occurs in both Hawaiian Creole and Bileez Kriol
when the voiceless dental fricative /θ/ in English changes
to a voiced alveolar plosive /d/ regardless of its position as
a word initial or word final consonant. In consonant clus-
ters, /θ/ also seems to be of some concern and is changed
to a voiceless palato-alveolar affricate /t͡ʃ/. Bileez Kriol and
Hawaiian Creole also remove word-final, voiced alveolar
approximants /ɹ/. These changes are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Eliminating Contrasts and Consonant Clusters

English	**'with'** /wʰɪθ ˺/	**'the'** /θi/	**'three'** /θɹi/	**'forever'** /fœɹɛvəɹ/
Bileez Kriol	**'wid'** /wʰɪd ˺/	**'di'** /d ˺ə/	**'chree'** /t͡ʃɹiː/	**'fareva'** /fɛɹɛvɜ/
Hawaiian Creole	**'wit'** /wʰɪd ˺/	**'da'** /də/	**'three'** /t͡ʃɹiː/	**'foeva'** /foɛvə/

Because "pronunciation and phonology are the least sta-
ble elements of the grammar . . . pidgins tend to reduce
the number of sound contrasts . . . in comparison with the
source languages" (Sebba, 1997, p. 109). This also applies
to the deletion or reduction of English coda consonant clus-
ters. In Bileez Kriol, the English pronunciations of 'correct'
and 'exactly' undergo a deletion process in which the plo-
sive /t/ is completely removed from the pronunciation in
cases where the coda contains two plosives (Figures 2, 3).
In other cases, rather than reducing or deleting sound con-
trasts, simplification presents itself in the form of metathe-
sis, through which sounds are transposed within a word to
ease production. In both Hawaiian Creole and Bileez Kriol,

the fricative /s/ and the plosive /k/ are transposed to a preferred order in the word 'ask' (Figure 3).

Figure 2

Deletion Process

English	**'correct'** /kəɹɛkt/	**'exactly'** /ɛgzæktli/
Bileez Kriol	**'karek'** /kɐɹɛk/	**'egzakli'** /ɛgzækli/

Figure 3

Metathesis

English	**'ask'** /æsk/	**'next'** /nɛkst/
Bileez Kriol	**'aks'** /æks/	**'neks'** /nɛks/
Hawaiian Creole	**'aks'** /æks/	**'nex'** /nɛks/

Morphology and Morphophonology

Perhaps the most notable feature of pidgins and creoles is the minimal usage of inflectional morphology, or the alteration of words to fit different grammatical contexts; "languages with the creole sociohistorical profile are not always completely devoid of inflectional affixes, but they rarely have more than one or two [alteration processes]" (McWhorter, 1998, p. 792). Neither Bileez Kriol nor Hawaiian Creole express tense with the English suffix '-ed' or aspect with the suffix '-ing.' Hawaiian Creole occasionally marks plurality with the suffix '-s' as illustrated in Figure 4. However, this suffix expresses no allomorphy, meaning it does not vary in sound or spelling (although it does in English, such as when '-s' is pronounced as /z/ or '-en' is used with certain

nouns). This is to be expected, considering that "paradigms of allomorphs, so familiar in many [non-creole] languages, are alien to languages with the creole sociohistorical profile" (McWhorter, 1998, p. 793).

Figure 4

Expressing Plurality with Inflectional Morphology

English	**'thieve-s'** /θivs/
Bileez Kriol	**'guy-s'** /gɐis/

The minimal usage of affixes in pidgins and creoles "often implies the loss of grammatical categories like gender or tense which are indicated by means of inflectional morphology in the input languages" (Sebba, 1997, p. 44). Instead, these categories can be expressed by means of TMA (tense, modality, aspect) markers. TMA markers are distinct lexical items which have only one form and consist of morphemes that "are often not the ones which the lexifier would use, though they usually originate from the lexifier" (Sebba, 1997, p. 42). Bileez Kriol expresses plurality syntactically with the use of a TMA marker 'dehn,' which derives from the English 'them.' This marker always follows the nouns, except in cases where a specific number is also being expressed syntactically (Figure 5). Hawaiian Creole expresses past tense with the use of a TMA marker 'wen,' which derives from the English 'went' and always precedes the verb (Figure 6).

Figure 5

Expressing Plurality with a TMA Marker

English	**'thieves'** /θivs/		**'these'** /θis/	**'three'** [men] /θɹi/	
Bileez Kriol	**'teef'** /tiːf/	**'dehn'** /deĩn/	**'dehn'** /deĩn/	**'chree'** /t͡ʃɹiː/	**'man'** /mæn/

Figure 6

Expressing Tense with a TMA Marker

English	**'came'** /keim/	
Hawaiian Creole	**'wen'** /wʰɛn/	**'come'** /cəm/

The use of TMA markers is expected in pidgins and cre-oles due to "the fact that the rapid non-native adoption of a language as a lingua franca entails stripping down a system to its essentials for optimal learnability and processibility" (McWhorter, 1998, p. 793). This dismantling leads to a near elimination of inflectional affixes. In concurrence with the removal of inflection, derivational morphology develops to allow the lexicon of the pidgin or creole to expand rapidly. In Bileez Kriol, a possible instance of derivational morphol-ogy is found in the existence of two distinct third-person singular pronouns. Bileez Kriol does not mark gender on pronouns; rather, an abstract category of derogation is expressed (Figure 7). It's possible that the 'h-' and '-n' on 'hihn' are a circumfix that derives from the English 'him.' The addition of these pieces changes the lexical meaning of the pronoun and is not fully productive: in other words, it cannot be used on any word to denote derogation.

Figure 7

Derogation Using Derivational Morphology

English	**'he'** /hi/ 3SG.M.NOM		**'him'** /hɪm/ 3SG.M.ACC
Hawaiian Creole	**'ih'** /ɪʰ/ 3SG.NOM	**'hihn'** /hɪn/ 3SG.NOM (DEROGATORY)	**'ahn'** /ɛ̃n/ 3SG.ACC

Linguistic notation—3: third-person; SG: singular; M: masculine; ACC: accusative; NOM: nominative

Similarly, "reduplication is sometimes said to be a very widespread feature in pidgins and creoles but in fact the evidence on this is conflicting" (Sebba, 1997, p. 120). In this data, reduplication does not occur in Hawaiian Creole and only occurs in Bileez Kriol to express veracity, often taking the position of a modifier. The word 'chroo' can be glossed in English as 'truth' or 'true,' but when reduplicated, 'chroo chroo' expresses the truthfulness or trustworthiness of the noun or verb that follows.

Lexicon and Semantics

For the sake of simplification, a pidgin or creole engages "the referential power of its lexicon by taking existing words for common or familiar objects and extending their ranges of reference to things or concepts which are in some way similar" (Sebba, 1997, p. 119). Often, speakers of the lexifier—in this case, English—believe that a single word is unable to embody or incorporate various nuances of expression, but "[t]his line of reasoning . . . is deceptive because both languages share the same semantic domains, and hence their differences are superficial" (Clair, 1974, p. 79). Thus, pidgins and creoles invoke semantic neutralization to reduce their vocabulary while simultaneously maintaining their semantic domain; this is known as multifunctionality.

Hawaiian Creole and Bileez Kriol have fewer prepositions than English; "this is typical of pidgins, which often manage with only a handful of prepositions" (Sebba, 1997, p. 52). In Hawaiian Creole, the preposition 'fo' means 'for, of,' or 'towards.' In Bileez Kriol, 'a' means 'to' or 'of'; 'pahn' means 'on, upon, at,' or 'about'; and 'op' means both 'up' and 'down' depending on context. Bileez Kriol also extends multifunctionality to other function words: 'weh' encompasses 'what, who, because, that, which, where, why,' and 'away.' In this case, the word "indicates a perceptual field—its very lack of specificity is its strength" (De Bono, 1981, as cited in Sebba, 1997, p. 10).

Due to multifunctionality, homonyms often appear in pidgins and creoles: "many Kriol words sound like English words

but have different meanings and grammar, a phenomenon known as 'linguistic camouflage'" (Salmon, 2015, p. 608). Often, these words can be distinguished only through syntactic and semantic context. An example from Bileez Kriol is the word 'ahn' (Figure 8). The word means both 'him' and 'and.' Because it is the same orthographically and phonetically, a speaker must recognize its syntactic purpose as either a pronoun or a conjunction in order to identify its meaning.

Figure 8

Linguistic Camouflage and Multifunctionality

English	**'on'** /kəɹɛkt/	**'him,'** /hɪm/	**'and'** /æn/	**'help'** /hɛlp/	**'him'** /hɪm/
Bileez Kriol	**'pahn'** /pʰɛ̃n/	**'ahn,'** /ɛ̃n/	**'ahn'** /ɛ̃n/	**'help'** /hɛlp/	**'ahn'** /ɛ̃n/

Additionally, because creoles have few synonyms and "in the compact vocabulary of the pidgin, there is no room for two words with the same meaning" (Sebba, 1997, p. 53), pidgins and creoles will exchange nuanced words from the lexifier for the most simplified version of that word. Both Hawaiian Creole and Bileez Kriol exchange the words 'eternal,' 'beast,' and 'mercy' for the words 'forever,' 'donkey,' and 'pity.' Words from the substrate languages are also selectively chosen for their enhanced cultural significance or meaning. In Hawaiian Creole, 'mahke' replaces the English words 'death' and 'dead,' and 'ohana' replaces 'family.' As is the case in many pidgins and creoles, there are instances in which "lexifier-language words have been altered in meaning to fit a differently structured semantic field, in keeping with an indigenous culture or concept of the world" (Sebba, 1997, p. 117). In Bileez Kriol, the word 'lee' comes from the English 'little,' but does not refer only to the physical stature of a person or object; rather, it primarily implies inferior intelligence or social standing. Even after class separation due to colonization, West African slaves in Belize often stratified themselves socially based on their region of origin

and native language. 'Lee' was used to refer to persons who came from a perceived 'lesser' region of Africa and spoke an 'inferior' language. Today, it refers to people of low socioeconomic standing and poor education.

Pidgins and creoles also use circumlocution, "a strategy available in any language for giving a description of something that does not (yet) have a name in that language." (Sebba, 1997, p. 116). When circumlocuting, pidgins and creoles usually describe the function, purpose, and origin of the unnamed item. In both Hawaiian Creole and Bileez Kriol, there is no word for 'Levite.' Each language circumlocutes: Hawaiian Creole describes the origin and the function of a Levite while Bileez Kriol describes only the function (Figure 9). Circumlocution goes hand in hand with semantic neutralization: "while circumlocution or paraphrase does not actually increase the number of lexical items, it provides a means of increasing the referential range of the language" (Sebba, 1997, p. 116), allowing creole languages the same semantic field as non-creole languages.

Figure 9

Circumlocution

English	'Levite' /livaɪt ˩/								
Bileez Kriol	'man' /mæn/	'weh' /wʰɛ/	'werk' /wʰɛɹk/		'eena' /ɪːnɜ/	'di' /d ˩ə/		'templ' /tɛmpəl/	
Hawaiian Creole	'guy' /gɐi/	'from' /fɹəm/	'da' /də/	'Levi' /liːvɐi/	'ohana' /ohana/	'dat' /dət ˩/	'help' /hɛlp ˩/	'da' /də/	'prieses' /prisis/

Issues with Universalist Theories

Upon first glance, the data from English, Hawaiian Creole, and Bileez Kriol support the idea of innate simplification processes. "One might still suppose the structural uniformity of creole is derived . . . from certain structures of English, the language of the plantation owners" (Bickerton, 1983, p. 119), but this conjecture disregards the influence of the substrate languages. To account for the high level of mutual

intelligibility between Hawaiian Creole and English and the low level between Bileez Kriol and English, it makes sense that "the more homogeneous the substrate languages (i.e., as part of the same language family), the greater the chances that the substrate will significantly shape the pidgin or the creole created by their speakers" (Jourdan, 1991, p. 198). This appears to be the case in Bileez Kriol—the contributing substrate languages are primarily from West Africa. However, while it is obvious that the lexifier and the substrates play significant roles in shaping the structure of a pidgin or creole, it is more difficult to determine whether a feature comes from the lexifier, the substrates, a combination of the two, or neither. This inability to link most features directly to their contact languages could point to an innate simplification process. "It turns out that creole languages throughout the world exhibit the same uniformity and even the same grammatical structures that are observed in Hawaii" (Bickerton, 1983, p. 119), even ones with differing lexifiers and substrates.

However, while innate simplification processes likely exist in the formation of pidgins and creoles, we cannot assume that it explains the formation of all languages. In the cases of language evolution through isolation—including the first emergence of language in *Homo sapiens*—no language contact occurs. Additionally, some creolists who believe in universalist theories fail to consider the role of speakers as agents in language creation. They believe that language faculties provide "the child with a single and fairly specific grammatical model. . . . The innate grammar [is] then clothed in whatever vocabulary [is] locally available and [gives] rise to the creole languages heard today" (Bickerton, 1983, p. 119). This belief does not take into consideration the history, beliefs, attitudes, and decisions of the speakers.

Recently, the sociocultural history of the speakers and their points of view have altered the ways in which the formation of creole languages is studied. "Careful study of social relations in which speakers of pidgins have been immersed at the time when pidginization and creolization

took place changes the predominant image of development of these languages" (Jourdan, 1991, p. 188). Humans are inherently social creatures, but "languages as socially created, established, acknowledged, and controlled forms of knowledge would be surface elaborations—mere variations of deep designs innate to our species" (Jourdan, 1991, p. 198). This universalist belief is problematic because language is not simply an automation caused by social factors—it also serves as an expression of identity through conscious and unconscious choice.

Considering the sociocultural organization of the time can help identify why some simplification processes occurred, though "it is difficult, if not impossible, to know for certain the linguistic intentions of people in past contact situations" (Siegel, 2003, p. 190). Throughout Hawaiian and Belizean history, plantations and slavery were central in social life. Because the plantation served as the nexus of social, political, and economic activities, social classes were often determined by racial factors, and "the social organization and culture associated with plantation production [was] seen as a microcosm of the whole society" (Bolland, 1998, p. 5). Class stratification occurred substantially in Belize and could account for the grammatical markers denoting derogation, which are marked on pronouns in Bileez Kriol. However, this form of derogation does not appear in Hawaiian Creole. Creolization, then, does not always result in the same features, though creoles are developed through similar processes. Creolization is, rather, "a process of contention between people who are members of social formations and carriers of cultures, a process in which their own ethnicity is continually reexamined and redefined in terms of the relevant oppositions between different social formations at various historical moments" (Bolland, 1998, p. 26). Creolization begins with contact situations but is not independent of contention or an individual's view within their social organization.

Examining the sociohistorical events surrounding the creation of a pidgin or creole also gives insight to the language

ideology of its speakers. History mirrors the linguistic development of a community and indicates reasons for language expansion and decreolization. Creating a creole identity promotes language expansion (Bolland, 1998). On the other hand, stigmatization and negative views toward creolized languages can cause a return to the lexifier through decreolization as "speakers progressively alter the grammar of the basilect [the most distinct form of the creole] so that the output comes to resemble the output of the acrolectal [the form most similar to the lexifier] grammar" (Sebba, 1997, p. 218). Understanding the sociocultural histories of Hawaii and Belize indicate reasons why Hawaiian Creole is currently expanding while Bileez Kriol is threatened by decreolization. The tourist economy of Hawaii encourages the learning and retention of Hawaiian Creole, and its status as a positive cultural identifier accounts for the language's relative stability. In Belize, however, Bileez Kriol is negatively viewed as 'broken English,' socially inferior, and crude in education and government settings. As such, fewer speakers of Bileez Kriol use the basilect, and over time it can be expected that the language will move towards the acrolect and merge with its lexifier unless a change in the language ideology of the speakers takes place.

Conclusion

A careful analysis of the phonological, morphological, and semantic features of Hawaiian Creole and Bileez Kriol in comparison to each other and their lexifier, shows evidence of innate simplification processes. While language genesis may be polygenetic, the universalist theory fails to acknowledge the role of speakers as agents in language creation. Analysis of pidgins and creoles under the lens of social history reveals possible reasons for the appearance or disappearance of features, for "it is our intuitions about what allows communication in the language we know, our abilities to simplify and strip off inessential surface marking, that allow us to negotiate meanings in intercultural communication" (Jourdan, 1991, p. 199). Greater attention to the language ideology of speakers and further study of

unique linguistic features could give insight into reasons for language expansion or decreolization and will help prevent the loss of creole languages as an expression of identity.

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Double Negation

Comparing the Weak Positive and Negative Concord

Taylor Bitton

*Using two forms of grammatical negation in the same clause charac-
terizes the double negative. However, this construction has two pos-
sible meanings: negative concord, in which the two negatives make
the negative idea more emphatic, and the weak positive, in which the
two negatives cancel out and yield a positive meaning. The author
presents a study of two example texts, Mark Twain's* Adventures
of Huckleberry Finn *and Jane Austen's* Pride and Prejudice,
*and examines how negative concord is used to portray dialect or low
educational level, and how the weak positive is used to create irony
and show high education level.*

What does the language of 1960s band The Rolling Stones and former American president Barack Obama have in common? They are connected by their use of the double negative. The Rolling Stones' hit song "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" uses the same construction that Obama used when he said "time is not unlimited" in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly (Obama, 2012). The double negative is characterized by two forms of grammatical negation in the same clause. However, this construction has multiple potential interpretations. "I Can't Get No Satisfaction," for example, is semantically negated only once; the intended meaning is that the speaker cannot get any satisfaction. The use of two negatives here serves to make the negative idea more emphatic. However, Obama's intended meaning when he said "time is not unlimited" was that time was actually limited. In this case, the two negative elements cancel each other out and make a weak positive. A strong understanding of the grammar in and the usage of these conflicting meanings is essential to navigating the double negative.

This variation in negation begs the following questions: How does each form function grammatically? How are they used? Is one form clearer than the other? It is important to make these distinctions because "when [the double negative] takes place, we do not face a minor, tangential misinterpretation of the speaker's intention, but rather its diametric reversal" (Moore, 1992, p. 308). The possible meanings are complete opposites of each other, so it is crucial to know the differences between them. A thorough study and comparison of two example texts, namely Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, can help us understand these differences. *Huckleberry Finn* contains multitudinous examples of negative concord, showing how it functions and how it can be used to portray dialect and low educational level. *Pride and Prejudice* contains several uses of the weak positive, showing how this form differs from negative concord and providing insight into how it can be used to portray high educational level and create an ironic writing style. Comparing the frequency with which

each construction appears in these two texts reveals how clear each meaning is. Examining these patterns reveals how writers can use the double negative to achieve their intended meaning.

Negative Concord in *Huckleberry Finn*

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is a particularly useful source of negative concord because the use is dialect specific. Both Huck and Jim, the story's main characters, use negative concord frequently. However, Jim speaks only a nonstandard variety of English while Huck speaks Standard English, revealing how the double negative can function in both varieties. For example, Jim employs negative concord when he explains "You wants to keep 'way . . . en don't run no resk" (Twain, 2011, p. 75). *Not* modifies *do* in this sentence, and *no* has the equivalent meaning that *any* would in Standard English. This intended meaning of *no* takes away the second grammatical negation, so the sentence is semantically negated only once. However, *no* is a negative word, so while the sentence is only negated once, the negative idea is still reinforced, making it more emphatic. The correlative *not . . . no* construction is by far the most common way Jim uses negative concord. This negative indefinite *no* is a distinctive feature of African American English, or AAE. In fact, negative concord in general "is a complex, clause-level syntactic process and is part of the negation system that many African American children develop in the acquisition of AAE grammar" (Coles-White, 2004, p. 213). Because negative concord is common in AAE but is not used in Standard English, its use is often associated with AAE and nonstandard dialects. Jim's use of negative concord, then, is meant to mark him as a speaker of AAE, demonstrating how negative concord can be used to indicate that the speaker does not speak Standard English.

Huck's use of negative concord, however, fulfills a different purpose than dialectal portrayal. When he says "I couldn't stand it no longer," he is using the same *not . . . no* construction that Jim often uses (Twain, 2011, p. 56). This

is also the most common way Huck expresses negative concord. *Not* modifies the verb *stand* in this example, and *no* is again a replacement for the Standard English use of the word *any*. However, it is clear that Huck does not speak AAE, where this construction is common and grammatically correct. Twain consistently alters the spelling in Jim's dialogue to make it sound more accented, while Huck's spelling is consistent with Standard English. We also know that Huck is taught Standard English because his caretaker speaks it. Huck, then, is simply an uneducated speaker of Standard English. His use of negative concord is a shibboleth, and Twain employs this construction to mark him as the poor, uneducated boy that he is.

The use of negative concord predates the use of the weak positive, and negative concord became a shibboleth in Standard English after the weak positive form was introduced. The English language underwent a grammatical renovation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a renovation that included prescribing a new rule for the double negative. Grammarian Robert Lowth prescribed the Latin rule for the double negative in English in 1764, stating that "two negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an affirmative" (p. 142). This change was embraced by other grammarians and thus became "correct." People began to use the double negative according to its new definition, and "since old forms persist the longest among the least educated, the double negative became generally associated with the speech of the unlettered" (Merriam-Webster, 1994, p. 366). So, speakers may also be marked as uneducated for their use of negative concord.

The Weak Positive in *Pride and Prejudice*

The double negative as a weak positive, however, has a different meaning and construction from negative concord. Jane Austen employs the weak positive when she writes in *Pride and Prejudice* that Elizabeth Bennet "was not so unwilling to comply with [Mr. Bingley's] proposal" (1991,

p. 37). In this sentence, the two negative elements come from the word *not* and the prefix *un-*. *Not* modifies *was*, and *un-* plainly modifies the connected word *willing*. This means that the sentence is semantically negated twice, contrary to the examples of negative concord in *Huckleberry Finn*. This true double negation comes because neither of the negative elements can be interpreted to mean something positive in Standard English, like the AAE use of the word *no*. Here, Austen is following Lowth's rule of double negation. When Austen writes that Elizabeth "was not so unwilling" (1991, p. 37), negating both *was* and *willing* cancels the negation of the phrase, making it positive. The positive idea is weak, however, because the negative elements make the positivity difficult to discern. The use of a second negative prefix is one of the most defining features that distinguishes the weak positive from negative concord. The *not . . . un-* construction is the most common way Austen forms the weak positive, but she uses several similar constructions with negative prefixes to create this form, including *not . . . de-*, *not . . . il-*, and *no . . . in-*. These prefixes notify readers that the weak positive form of the double negative is being used.

The weak positive use of the double negative has a few implications. First, since this construction is technically "correct" grammar, its use indicates education. While negative concord is grammatically incorrect in Standard English and "is no longer acceptable to educated people," speakers of Standard English who use the weak positive show their knowledge through their "correct" use of the double negative (Ebbitt, 1990, p. 95). This is reinforced by Austen's use of the construction. *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel of manners highlighting the lives of the upper middle class in Regency England. The speakers are meant to be educated, and Austen's grammatical choices, including her use of the weak positive, portray that idea. Second, the weak positive can be an appropriate choice when portraying an ironic style. Austen is well known for her style of writing, heralded because "as always she means the opposite of what, with apparent innocuousness, she is saying" (Conrad, 1991, p. x). The weak positive is a very effective way of creating this

ironic writing because the construction itself, with negative elements creating a positive one, is contradictory. When Austen writes that Sir William Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice* "received no inconsiderable pleasure from [a] sight," she is employing the weak positive for the ironic style (1991, p. 22). By using the weak positive, Austen downplays his pleasure, adding irony to the scene and creating the contradictory style of writing for which she is famous. The reader knows from context that this character was actually quite pleased with what he had seen.

Conclusion

The frequency with which each meaning of the double negative is used also gives insight into each construction's clarity. Negative concord is used extraordinarily often in *Huckleberry Finn*, with multiple examples on every page. Jane Austen is known to repeatedly use the weak positive, but instances thereof are significantly less common than *Huckleberry Finn*'s negative concord. The weak positive is used perhaps two or three times per chapter in *Pride and Prejudice*. This is because the weak positive is much more difficult to understand than negative concord. A weak positive "creates a momentary puzzle for the reader, who is then put to the task of deducing the intended meaning" (Copperud, 1980, p. 266). The meaning of a weak positive is not immediately apparent, so using this construction too frequently could make the writing tedious and convoluted. Renowned author George Orwell was no advocate of the weak positive and showed his contempt for it when he wrote, "a not unblack dog was chasing a not unsmall rabbit across a not ungreen field" (1968, p. 138). His sentence shows that the weak positive can be confusing and unnecessary. Negative concord is much more direct and understandable because the reader does not have to work to deduce the intended meaning. The negatives are easily seen, so the meaning is easily interpreted. However, just as the weak positive should be used sparingly because of its confusing nature, negative concord should also be

avoided in Standard English because it is considered grammatically incorrect.

Overall, then, a study of the double negative in *Huckleberry Finn* and *Pride and Prejudice* has yielded answers to our original questions. How does each form function grammatically? Negative concord is most often characterized by the *not . . . no* construction, and the weak positive most often uses *not . . . un-* or another negative prefix. How is each form used? Negative concord is used to portray dialect or low educational level; the weak positive shows high education and creates irony. Is one form clearer than the other? Negative concord is much easier for readers to understand while the weak positive is more convoluted. However, neither should be used excessively. These two constructions vary greatly in meaning, which makes the differences between our original examples of The Rolling Stones' song "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" and Obama's statement that "time is not unlimited" even more extreme. The fact that this construction can be used in rock songs, the most casual of writing, and in presidential speeches, the most formal of writing, speaks to its flexibility. The double negative can be applied to a wide spectrum of writing, so knowledge and correct use of this construction can add both flair to writing and nuance to meaning.

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Parents, Power, and Impoliteness

A Linguistic Analysis of the Increasing Impoliteness in Disney Animated Films

Kyli Ockey

Interactions between leading characters of Disney animated films demonstrate a shocking increase in impoliteness over the last several decades, yet little research has been conducted regarding this trend. This article explores linguistic impoliteness in parent-child interactions in Disney films and argues that this increasing impoliteness affects child social development. This will be accomplished by defining positive and negative impoliteness, discussing the effects of media on children, and examining the use of impoliteness in selected Disney films. Data for this study was gathered from The Little Mermaid *(1989) and* Brave *(2013) and shows that* Brave *exhibits nearly six times more impoliteness events.*

Introduction

Disney is generally accepted as one of the biggest brands in children's and family-friendly entertainment worldwide. Despite this family-oriented image, many of its titular and starring characters have increased the use of linguistic impoliteness in their dialogue. As modern children have more interaction with media and film and spend less time with their parents than in previous generations, they model their own interactions after social interactions in film (Binkley, 2016; Benabdellah, 2018). The more impoliteness children see in media, the more impolite they will become, reflecting what they perceive to be the societal norm (Binkley, 2016).

Until recently, these interactions have not been heavily scrutinized, and what little research has been done has focused on the impoliteness of modern Disney characters—especially across gender lines—but has not compared new films to older classics or studied the increase of impoliteness over time (Benabdellah, 2018). This study shows increased impoliteness to be particularly noticeable between parents and children in Disney animated films. Those who make films and those who choose to show them to their children should consider the effects of media consumption on children (Binkley, 2016).

This article will explore the use of positive and negative impoliteness in parent-child interactions as demonstrated by family-oriented Disney animated films. To this end, this article will first establish the linguistic context of impoliteness by defining positive and negative face, politeness, and impoliteness. Second, this article will review power, authority, and parent-child interactions in the context of children's psychology. It will then look at why films should even be discussed in this context and the effect of film on culture and psychology. Next, this article will look at data collected by other researchers on impoliteness in Disney films. And finally, it will address certain transcribed dialogues of parent-child interactions in two similar Disney animated films with over two decades between them: *The*

Little Mermaid (1989) and *Brave* (2012). This analysis will demonstrate the shift toward impoliteness over time.

Linguistic Context

To understand impoliteness, one must first understand the concept of face. Face is the public image of a person. Positive face is a person's desire to be liked, appreciated, or understood (Haugh & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2010). As discussed by Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003), positive politeness is characterized by compliments, hedging, offering excuses or apologies, and other forms of building a person's positive face. They continue by writing that negative face, on the other hand, is the desire not to be imposed upon or embarrassed. Negative politeness downplays embarrassing situations, usually by ignoring them. Events that could make a person look bad and lose face are called face threatening, and any social act that makes someone look better, such as making an excuse for not going to an event, involves saving face.

Bousfield and Locher (2008) clearly connect the concepts of politeness and face with impoliteness by stating that impoliteness generally involves either attacking face or simply not saving face. There are four kinds of impoliteness: bald on-record, mock politeness (sometimes called off-record), positive, and negative. Bald on-record impoliteness is a direct, clear attack on the speaker, such as name calling. There is no intention to hide the face attack in bald on-record impoliteness. The intention of mock politeness is to seem polite while being impolite. This often takes the form of sarcasm. Positive impoliteness attacks positive face, which aims to build connections, in the form of ignoring, excluding, interrupting, or otherwise showing that a person is not worth attention. Lastly, negative impoliteness attacks negative face by imposing on someone else or calling attention to things that politeness would overlook to save negative face—for example, pointing out flaws and debts or explicitly associating the other person with something negative. Quantifying impoliteness for research data is difficult, however, since it is more qualitative in nature and must be considered with other factors. Impoliteness can be impacted by

tone, which cannot be measured quantitively. Spencer-Oatey points out that "it is essential to hear the voice of participants" when analyzing impoliteness because intonation is crucial for understanding meaning (2011, p. 3565). He then adds that, among linguists, there is no consensus as to the best method to measure what is heard. Additionally, while some utterances are far more impolite than others, there is no scale on which to graph them.

This study will measure impoliteness by counting incidents and categorizing them into the four main types of impoliteness: positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, bald on-record, and mock politeness. These categories are further divided into several sub-types outlined later in this article. While this study does seek to define and measure certain instances of impoliteness, it is neither a comprehensive list of every possible act of impoliteness nor a qualitative study comparing the severity of various impolite utterances.

Children's Psychology

Having built the linguistic context of impoliteness, I will now address impoliteness in examples of daily interactions and finish laying the groundwork to examine the effects of impolite media on children. I will first address how power and authority generally affect conversation and relationships. Then, I will discuss parent-child interactions, focusing on how they differ from other interactions and the role impoliteness plays in that relationship outside of a media context.

Power and Authority in Interactions

Bousfield and Locher (2008) argue that impoliteness is heavily influenced by relationships of power and authority. They add that "there is and can be no interaction without power" and that "impoliteness is an exercise of power" (2008, p. 8). This power relationship can play out in various ways. Consider, for instance, the interactions of police officers with drivers and car owners. Such interactions are presented in a BBC television documentary filmed in London, which was analyzed by Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003). In

these situations, the officers are in a position of power over the civilians, but the civilians often initiate confrontation with the traffic wardens, leading to impoliteness. Interestingly, in these cases, it is the party with less power that exhibits more impoliteness. The authors argue this is because the goal of the officer is only "to perform actions consistent with the duties and constraints his job imposes" (2003, p. 1551).

O'Reilly (2008) uncovered a similar phenomenon in the multi-party interactions of family therapists with adult and minor clients. Although the therapists often interrupt their clients, these interruptions are not seen as face-threatening, but rather that the therapist is trying to maintain an agenda, which O'Reilly argues "reflects the power asymmetry inherent in the situation" (2008, p. 509). The therapist is there to direct the conversation as part of their role, so entering the conversation in the middle of someone else's sentence is not seen as impolite.

If some speech acts performed in an asymmetrical power relationship are not impolite, but rather the duty of the authority figure, at what point is a parent simply doing their duty to raise a well-behaved child, and at what point does it become impolite?

Impoliteness in Parent–Child Interactions

Parents are, ideally, in a position of power in the home. It is a parent's responsibility to raise their children to adhere to societal norms, praising good behavior and reprimanding bad behavior. Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003) argue that there are people in positions of authority—such as bosses, tutors, teachers, police officers, or parents—that must give criticism as part of their role. Along with others in their field (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1990; Greif, 1980; and O'Reilly, 2008), they explore the idea that in some instances, the criticism given by persons in authority is acceptable, though it may be impolite in other circumstances. This difference exists because the intention of for persons with authority is not to attack face, but instead to support the other person's development or to keep them in the right path. This view is

echoed by Sinafou (2012), who points out that disagreement discourse may not be inherently impolite, but far more complex, requiring more context to understand.

That said, uncovering the intention behind a speech act is problematic. Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann point out that "one cannot reconstruct the actual intentions of speakers, but rather that 'plausible' intentions can be reconstructed, given adequate evidence" (2003, p. 1552). And if the participants in studies were asked, researchers would not be able to gather accurate data because of the nature of self-reporting. Most parents would be slow to admit that any impoliteness toward their children stemmed from unkind intentions.

Additional research has further solidified the claim that familial interactions are not required to be polite. For instance, Blum-Kulka interviewed families from American, Israeli, and American Israeli backgrounds, the majority of whom voiced opinions that politeness should be exhibited with strangers and acquaintances but "'is irrelevant when it comes to the family'" (1990, p. 260). Despite the position of those participants, Blum-Kulka argues that "family discourse is polite, but it enacts its politeness in culturally and situationally specific ways" (1990, p. 261). That is to say, the directness and informality that characterize otherwise impolite utterances are hallmarks of the closeness found in familial relationships. Blum-Kulka (1990) points out that just as politeness varies from culture to culture, impoliteness is dramatically different from one culture to another. This distinction of cultures exists internationally but is also true of smaller units, such as states, cities, neighborhoods, and even families. What may be perceived as impolite in one culture may be perfectly acceptable in another.

Additionally, Blum-Kulka looks most closely at control acts issued by parents, which she defined as "utterances designed to bring about a change in the behavior of the [child]" (1990, p. 265). She found a wide range of directness and indirectness in the interactions between the parents and children that were observed. Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003) dive deeper into this by examining the use of impoliteness

by an adult toward a child in an emergency. In the examined scenario, the man speaking knows there is a bomb and is trying to coax his young nephew out of the place where the bomb is because he believes the boy is hiding there. Although he uses harsh language to command the child to come out, the man's primary concern is ensuring his nephew's safety, which requires immediate action. In this example, impolite utterances are not only acceptable in a familial situation, but also—at least in the mind of the speaker—absolutely necessary for the health and safety of the child.

The adult in this story is not one of the child's parents, which suggests that adults have social power over children in general, even outside of traditional familial boundaries. This phenomenon is further shown in O'Reilly's (2008) study, which finds that therapists interrupt children and adults differently and argues that this happens because children are not seen as full participants in conversations. The data presented by O'Reilly shows that adults sometimes discourage children from being full participants in the conversation "by taking the conversational floor from them" (2008, p. 509). Parents are not the only adults who interrupt their children, who are generally excluded from the conversation entirely.

This supports Greif's findings that "in our society, children are usually taught not to interrupt a person who is talking. Yet many adults themselves interrupt others" (1980, p. 253). The standard that adults enforce with their children is not one they tend to follow themselves, particularly when addressing children, but as discussed in the next section, children do not always do what they are told to, instead emulating the behaviors they observe from role models.

Children and Disney

As access to the silver screen has become ever more abundant, and on-demand streaming services have slowly replaced traditional television, the film industry has become a growing source of social education for children. As they observe interactions depicted in television, film, and other media, they take

mental note of the interpersonal communications they see in a wide variety of settings and emulate this behavior in their own lives (Binkley, 2016).

Disney and Culture

Binkley (2016) points out that children's development is heavily influenced by their perception of the world around them. The input children receive can shift their development and influence the identity they create for themselves. To this end, Benabdellah (2018) identifies the main characters of Disney films as role models for children; they teach them how to interact with other people and promote societal norms. This can be good or bad. For example, where one child may see a charismatic character who overcomes incredible odds to defeat the obstacles before them, another may see breaking the law as acceptable if one really needs or wants to break it. Both of these lessons could be gleaned from a film like *Aladdin* (1992), which Binkley (2016) points to as a promoter of cultural stereotypes and historical inaccuracies.

Binkley (2016) further shows that media consumption has been linked to a flurry of issues, such as "obesity, eating disorders, advanced sexual displays, violence, family stress, and an incapacitated ability to create" (2016, p. 13). This can be seen in various forms, such as trying to climb out the bedroom window after watching a character sneak out on television or hitting their sibling after seeing a boxing match. Binkley also argues that Disney films perpetuate beauty standards, gender roles, racial questions, stereotypes, and misrepresentations that may be unhealthy, claiming that "children mindlessly adopt these cultural values and relay them into their relationships, their learning, and their identity as a whole" (2016, p. 15). For example, a child may observe that the protagonists in their show are all beautiful, fit, and charismatic, while the villains are quiet and ugly, leading them to believe that their value is derived from their physique or social aptitude. All of this occurs because children emulate the examples they see in the media they consume.

Because children absorb the tendencies and interactions they observe in real life and in media, it is critical that the

interactions we raise them with—whether real or fictional—are the kinds of interactions we want to see from them. For this reason, this study seeks to gauge the impoliteness in a few Disney films and call attention to trends found there.

Literature Review on Impoliteness in Disney Films

Benabdellah (2018) transcribed interactions between the flag ship princesses and their male costars in *Frozen* (2013) and *Moana* (2016), two of the highest-grossing films that Walt Disney Animated Studios has ever produced. When the article was written, they were the number one and number two highest-grossing Disney princess films ever made (IMDB, 2020). Benabdellah found "that both genders perform impoliteness as a communicative speech event to convey certain feelings, emotions, and attitudes" (2018, p. 48), but in different ways. Benabdellah's data showed that the women in Disney films used fewer impolite utterances than the men did, which is consistent with data gathered by other studies (Binkley, 2016; Greif, 1980; O'Reilly, 2008), showing that women use more politeness markers than men, and men use more impoliteness markers than women. Interestingly, the men in Benabdellah's (2018) study used primarily dominance- and competition-oriented speech patterns, often dismissing the female protagonist and demanding obedience, whereas the women used more criticism, disapproval, and power challenges. For example, Kristoff's line, "Now, back up while I deal with this crook, here!" is a dismissal of Anna's previous statement, which had been a show of power. On the other hand, Anna's line, "Are you some sort of love expert?" acts as a challenging question to counteract his disagreement with her choices (Benabdellah 2018). But what does this mean for the next generation?

Binkley (2016, p. 17) declares, "Disney is a subliminal educator and displays cultural messages that teach children how to function in society, how they should look, how they should act, and ultimately, how they should develop." Children actively observe the world around them to better understand what is "normal." When they see heroes and heroines from their

favorite media acting a certain way, they mirror what they see, wanting to be heroes and heroines themselves. Thus, to understand what the modern child hopes to become, we need only examine the animated idols they love.

Further exploration of this point led Binkley (2016) to find that during the middle school years, racism and gender roles enter the Disney discussions, with students claiming that *The Princess and the Frog* "was only made to feature a black princess" and that for girls "to be worthy of anything they have to endure a struggle . . . before realizing her true value. Finally, at the end of that road, the reward of true love, getting married as a teenager, and happily ever after awaits them" (2016, p. 16–17). Whether parents realize it or not, the racism and gender roles present in Disney films teach children what to expect from life, from how to behave themselves to what they should look like.

The Study

To examine impoliteness in parent-child interactions in media, I analyzed parent-child conversations extracted from two Disney films: *The Little Mermaid* (1989) and *Brave* (2012). The methodology and results are laid out in this section, coupled with several examples from the interactions in these films.

Methodology

The conversations in question were transcribed and then coded for impoliteness. In both films, the dialogue analyzed occurs between the lead princess and one of her parents. In *The Little Mermaid*, conversations between Ariel and her father, King Triton are analyzed. In *Brave*, the recorded conversations occur between Merida and her mother, Queen Elinor. These two films were chosen because they resemble one another in plot line and character motivation (and, less significantly, hair color). In each film, the princess desires to change the course of her life and stray from her parent's expectations, desires, and restrictions. This leads to conflict with her parent, who in turn breaks something precious to her that the parent does not approve of her having. Then the

princess, out of spite and anger, visits a witch, who casts a spell of physical transformation, which fails to give the princess her desired outcome. Ultimately, to escape the negative consequences of the spell, the princess must gain her parent's help. In the end, the princess is reconciled with her parent, who sees how important the princess's desired path is and gives her the freedom to choose it for herself.

In both films, the princess and her parent interact almost exclusively for the first forty minutes of each film, after which the physical transformation occurs. At this time, one of the members of the highlighted parent-child relationship loses the capacity to speak for the majority of the film, specifically Ariel (*The Little Mermaid*) and Queen Elinor (*Brave*). It is worth noting that the films begin to differ after this point. King Triton and Ariel have no dialogue whatsoever after Ariel loses her ability to speak. Ariel apologizes for her decisions and later declares her love for her father, but he says nothing to her after destroying her sanctuary in the cave. Additionally, Ariel and King Triton are separated for almost the entirety of the film after that point, whereas Merida and Queen Elinor spend almost the entire film together—although the queen has been silenced—leading to only one-way conversation for nearly the remainder of the film. For this reason, only the first forty minutes of each film were transcribed and coded as part of this analysis. These decisions were made to nullify every possible difference other than impoliteness between the two films, which were chosen specifically because they are so similar.

The similarity between these stories lends itself well to comparison. A few key differences, however, greatly affect the analysis undertaken here. These differences include aspects of their family cultures, which may change what is acceptable and what is impolite within their family dynamic. First, Princess Ariel's mother is never shown in this film, while Merida has access to both of her parents. While she and her father, King Fergus, get along wonderfully, she is constantly at odds with her mother, Queen Elinor. Second, Merida is the oldest and is therefore under near-constant supervision and expected to

fulfill certain responsibilities, while her three younger brothers get away with anything they do. On the other hand, Ariel is the youngest and has been largely left on her own—likely due, in part, to the absence of her mother.

Results

The vast majority of impoliteness in *The Little Mermaid* and about half of the impoliteness in *Brave* is positive impoliteness, the majority of which consists of either ignoring or interrupting. Examples of characters being argumentative or using obscure, secretive language are also found. This emphasizes the difficulty the princesses and their parents have with listening to each other and communicating effectively. Interestingly, very early in the film, Merida is shown reaching out to her mother, who responds with positive impoliteness, dismissing and ignoring what Merida tries to tell her. One prime example of this occurs only ten minutes into the film (10:20–10:38):

> Merida: Mum, you'll never guess what I did today.
>
> Elinor: (distractedly) Mmm?
>
> Merida: I climbed the Crone's Tooth and drank from the Fire Falls.
>
> Fergus: (impressed) Fire Falls? They say only the ancient kings were brave enough to drink the fire. (chuckles)
>
> Elinor: (distractedly) What did you do, dear?
>
> Merida: (sighing) Nothing, Mum.

In this dialogue, Queen Elinor is reading some papers and only pays attention to Merida long enough to scold her for having a weapon on the table, then set up the conversation to tell her that she will be getting married.

This pattern of ignoring goes both ways. Later, Merida ignores her mother after serving her a magical pastry that is supposed to change her mother, asking for Queen Elinor's opinion on the marriage, rather than addressing the sickness that has suddenly beset the Queen.

In *The Little Mermaid*, King Triton interrupts Ariel just slightly more often than she interrupts him (five vs. three times), but

it seems that he is trying to be a firm parent and maintain control in the face of a rebellious teenager, as opposed to ignoring or discounting her opinion. The best example of this is about twelve minutes into the film (11:46–13:17):

> Triton: Do you think I want to see my youngest daughter snared by a fish-eater's hook?
>
> Ariel: (indignant, pulling away) I'm sixteen years old. I'm not a child—(anymore)
>
> Triton: (interrupting) Don't you take that tone of voice with me, young lady! As long as you live under my ocean, you'll obey my rules!
>
> Ariel: (smacks lips) But if you would just listen—
>
> Triton: (interrupting) Not another word! And I am never, *never*, to hear of you going to the surface again! Is that clear?!

In this quote, it becomes clear that Triton thinks Ariel's actions are putting her in danger, and he wants to keep her safe. Because of his concern, he starts with a mild tone and tries to reason with her. This conversation would likely be one that Blum-Kulka would argue "is *neutral*, or unmarked, in regard to politeness" (1990, p. 269, original italics), as his intention is clear—he is telling her not to break merpeople law. He only becomes louder, more forceful, and more direct as Ariel resists him.

After analyzing King Triton's possible reasoning, one must ask what Queen Elinor's motivation is in her impoliteness toward Merida. How much of her intent is to be impolite, and how much is simply a queen trying to raise a good princess? This is at least partially addressed by the film when Elinor expresses confusion and frustration at not being able to connect or communicate with Merida. King Fergus then tries to help Queen Elinor know what to say and how to say it by role-playing with her. Fergus pretends to be Merida while Elinor practices communicating.

One major difference in this regard between Queen Elinor and King Triton is that Ariel is Triton's seventh daughter. He has been a father to a moody teenage girl six times already, and he knows what he is doing. Merida is Queen Elinor's

oldest child. She is still new to having a teenager, especially when compared to Triton, and is very critical of Merida at the start of the film. About six minutes into the movie (from 6:15 to 6:48), *Brave* shows a montage of Queen Elinor criticizing everything Princess Merida does. These are the first instances of impoliteness shown in the film, and in those thirty-three seconds, Queen Elinor makes fourteen comments that draw attention to Merida's flaws and tell her what she must do to be perfect. This is her attempt at instructing Merida and helping her become what she will need to be to be a good queen in the future—a sentiment she expresses clearly to King Fergus but struggles to communicate to Merida.

Over the course of *Brave*, there are exactly as many instances of negative impoliteness (invading space, casting doubt, pointing out debt, highlighting flaws, etc.) as of positive impoliteness (twenty-eight instances of each), but the negative impoliteness came almost exclusively from Queen Elinor, who uses negative impoliteness in twenty-four of those twenty-eight instances, as opposed to Merida, who is shown using negative impoliteness only four times. All the data for this study is broken down by speaker, film, type, and subtype of impoliteness in Table 1 below.

As this table shows, the parents in both films exhibited more impoliteness than their daughters. Queen Elinor exhibited more impoliteness than Merida (thirty-six instances, compared to nineteen), and King Triton more so than Ariel (six instances to four). Additionally, there were nearly six times more instances of impoliteness in *Brave* than in *The Little Mermaid*. Both of these observations show that Disney princesses are getting less polite over time, supporting the claim that Disney princess films are growing ever more impolite.

This trend may stem from more than a simple, nameless desire to create a rude generation. Benabdellah (2018) argues that "females opt for impoliteness to claim power" (p. 44). In this way, Disney may be selecting more impolite language to create stronger female leads. This would teach the youth to speak up for themselves and fight against

perceived injustices—a popular opinion of our time. However, this would also imply that the female leads of the past, who emulated virtues like patience, kindness, forgiveness, and humility, were weak and that we no longer value those characteristics. Such changes may result in a sense of entitlement and the perceived approval of selfish actions and ideologies that hurt other people. Caution and a keen eye for

Table 1

Disney Film Impoliteness Counts

Movie	Person	Positive					Negative				Mock		Totals
		Interrupting	Ignoring	Being Argumentative	Using Obscure, Secretive Language	Total	Invading Space and Breaking Things	Doubting	Pointing Out Debt or Flaws	Total	Sarcasm	Total	
The Little Mermaid	Ariel	3	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Triton	5	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	1	0	0	6
	Total	8	0	1	0	9	1	0	0	1	0	0	10
Brave	Merida	1	10	2	0	13	1	1	2	4	2	2	19
	Elinor	4	8	0	3	15	2	1	21	24	0	0	39
	Total	5	18	2	3	28	3	2	23	28	2	2	58

unintended consequences should be employed when making any change that can affect future generations.

Conclusion

It is clear from the data that protagonists in Disney films are using more impoliteness than they have previously, but what is not clear is whether this increase is the result or cause of an increase in impoliteness in society at large. Impoliteness in media may well be merely a side effect of a far more global trend toward impoliteness, but it may also be driving that shift. As children see more impoliteness in the media they consume, they are raised to believe that the impoliteness found in film is not only acceptable but encouraged in their interactions with others. As these children grow, they become the adults that govern society and create media for their own children. They will have to decide whether to continue this cycle of increasing impoliteness or break this tradition and show more extensions of love and compassion in the media they create. As Binkley (2016) points out, in the eyes of Disney, "profit will always weigh heavier than ethicality" (2016, p. 17). Thus, if parents disapprove of the message Disney sends with its increasing impoliteness, they must personally take a stand rather than waiting for corporations to change their ways, either by making their opinion known or simply choosing something else to show their children.

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