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Front Pages

JOHN M. RYAN & VÍCTOR PARRA-GUINALDO

**Trends of Diminutive Relexification in Neapolitan: A
Lexicographic Analysis with Comparisons to Spanish and Italian**

VICTORIA MAGABA

**English Writing Challenges of First-Year Students: A Case Study of
a University in the Eastern Cape**

OANA-MARIA PĂSTAE

**The Effectiveness of Online Teaching: A Study in the Romanian
Context**

SUN XUEKE

**A Corpus-based Study on the Translation Strategies of Metaphors
in President Xi's New Year's Speeches –
A Case Study of New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022**

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Volume 10, Issue 1, March 2023

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Front Pages

i-viii

**Trends of Diminutive Relexification in Neapolitan:
A Lexicographic Analysis with Comparisons to Spanish
and Italian**

9

John M. Ryan & Víctor Parra-Guinaldo

**English Writing Challenges of First-Year Students: A Case
Study of a University in the Eastern Cape**

35

Victoria Magaba

**The Effectiveness of Online Teaching: A Study in the
Romanian Context**

53

Oana-Maria Păstae

**A Corpus-based Study on the Translation Strategies of
Metaphors in President Xi's New Year's Speeches –
A Case Study of New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022**

71

Sun Xueke

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Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **28 February 2023**
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Trends of Diminutive Relexification in Neapolitan: A Lexicographic Analysis with Comparisons to Spanish and Italian

By John M. Ryan* & Víctor Parra-Guinaldo[±]

This study marks the third phase of a larger project on diminutive relexification across the Romance languages and provides a quantitative lexicographic analysis of diminutives that have relexified in the history of Neapolitan. When compared to previous results for Spanish and Italian, namely, Phases I and II of the larger study, data suggest that Neapolitan has favored relexification with the -i(e)llo suffix, in both Latin and modern periods, and although much like Italian and Spanish that have relexified with modern non-L-form reflexes such as -ino/-ín and -etto/-ito, it is unlike Italian in that Neapolitan has favored -i(e)llo over -ino, making -etto slightly more common than -ino. The paper concludes that Neapolitan, like its Spanish and Italian counterparts, also supports the early Pan-Romance Diminutive Diasystem as asserted previously by the authors (2021). The theory suggests that the same array of both L-form and non-L-form diminutive endings have served for purposes of diminutivization Romance-wide, but each language differs in accordance with the degree of contact between each region and the center of the Empire during the Latin era, as well as any ensuing contact among each other during the post-Latin period. Such was the four-hundred-year Spanish rule and occupation over the Kingdom of Naples, and the influence Spanish exerted on the Neapolitan lexicon during this period.

Keywords: morphology, lexicon, diminutives, Neapolitan, Italian, Spanish

Introduction

This paper marks the third phase of a large-scale collaborative effort that examines the different ways diminutivized words relexify and are recycled as new words across the different Romance languages. An example of this process that readers will be familiar with is the Spanish word *tortilla* ‘tortilla’ which was originally formed from the simple combination of a root word *torta* ‘cake’ and a diminutive suffix *-illa* ‘little,’ and although its meaning would have originally meant nothing other than the sum of its parts, that is, ‘little cake,’ it has instead evolved over time to mean a more specialized food item. Although English too has historically created new words through diminutivization (e.g., the word *knuckle* was once a diminutive of the word *knee*), it has not done so to the same considerable extent that the Romance languages have and continue to do so. Since these root and suffix combinations change their meaning over time, they earn their own

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separate entries in the dictionary, and therefore, they are easy to track and study. It is precisely because this process is so unique and productive among the Romance languages that the authors have undertaken this large-scale dictionary study to determine the extent to which this process has occurred for each of the Romance languages. Work conducted on the two initial phases of the project (Phase I: Spanish and Phase II: Italian) is now complete and accounts for two published scholarly papers (Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo 2016, 2021), respectively. As our research on Spanish and Italian suggests, the process appears to manifest itself among each language in different ways, and so this paper, which represents Phase III of the project, explores this same process for Neapolitan and compares the new data with that previously reported for Spanish and Italian.

The work my collaborator and I have thus far conducted on relexified diminutives is unique since most of the research done on diminutive endings up to now has focused not on their role in the creation of new words, but rather on what we call their *ad hoc* or simple usage, that is, an initial stage where diminutive suffixes simply combine with root words to enhance the meaning of a word only slightly; such enhancements include notions of smallness (e.g., Italian *casetta* or Spanish *casita* ‘little house’), endearment (e.g., Italian *nonnina* or Spanish *abuelita* ‘grandma’), or politeness (e.g., Italian *grossetto* or Spanish *gordito* ‘chubby’) (Rohlf 1969, Maiden 1995). Aside from the work the authors have done for Spanish and Italian, scarce attention has been paid to this process whereby diminutives are responsible for the creation of new words in other languages. As such, this paper embraces this task of exploring other languages by providing a comprehensive, quantitative and historical classification of relexified diminutives for Neapolitan that will shed light on the diminutive relexification process in that language, as well as its more general implications for the Romance languages. In addition to filling the apparent gap in studies of this type, this project also provides results that can then be compared with those of our previous Spanish and Italian studies for a better understanding of the nuances behind how all three languages have evolved in terms of relexification. Lastly, the larger project demonstrates how and why dictionaries, arguably the best concrete representations of our mental lexicons, can and should be used as reliable corpora for projects that analyze forms which bridge morphology and the lexicon.

The Choice of Neapolitan for Linguistic Analysis

Neapolitan is a second Romance language that is spoken today alongside Italian in the south of Italy. The reason for diglossia in this region is that up until the late nineteenth century, Italy was not a single nation-state, but rather a large territory consisting of a patchwork of separate kingdoms, the largest being the Kingdom of Naples in the south, where not Italian, but Neapolitan was the language that had developed from Latin and was spoken there exclusively. This all changed in 1861 when the north, being a powerful epicenter of arts and letters and of industrial, financial and political sophistication, would unite the disparate Italian kingdoms into a single “Kingdom of Italy,” and impose its own language, i.e.,

Italian, as the new nation's official language. This politico-cultural shift would have disastrous effects on the future of Neapolitan, which until that time was spoken as a first language by a far greater number of speakers than Tuscan or any other language spoken on the Italian peninsula, and which by this time had already started to develop its own rich literary and cultural tradition. It did not take long before Neapolitan and the other minority languages of the peninsula would be demoted to dialect status, regardless of whether they were intelligible or not to speakers of Italian in the north or had been classified before that time by these same speakers as entirely different languages.

One might argue that this overall devaluation of Neapolitan has contributed furthermore to its eventual relative insignificance in the field of linguistics, where it continues to be excluded among any of the major comparative studies of the Romance languages, all of which settle on Italian as a single most representative language of Italy and ignore completely Neapolitan's rich linguistic history as well as its one-time greater prominence on the Italian peninsula. Recent examples of this exclusionary tendency are: 1) *Ethnologue's* (Simons and Fennig 2017) popular lexical similarity studies, 2) comparative grammars like Petrunin (2018), Rudder (2012), and others, all being cases in which Neapolitan has been overlooked among the Romance languages being showcased, or 3) the absence of a reputable Neapolitan reverse dictionary that alphabetizes words from right to left according to their endings, a critical tool for linguists like the authors who study morphology and the lexicon. All too many cases like these have led the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in its *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* to declare Neapolitan as one of the European languages currently at risk of extinction, despite it being the second most spoken language in Italy (Moseley 2010).

One final, and no less important motivation for the choice of Neapolitan as the third language of this comprehensive multilingual analysis of diminutive relexification in Romance is not only the significance it bears alongside Italian for the obvious historical reasons cited above, but in addition, its ties to Spanish for over 400 years during the occupation and rule of the Spanish over the Kingdom of Naples, specifically, 1443 through 1860 CE, a stretch of time coinciding with a period that Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) refer to as a so-called diminutive "renaissance" observed for diminutivization for both Spanish and Italian.¹ A quantitative lexical analysis by Thomas (2009), which like this study was also

¹Thomas (2009) specifies three sub-periods comprising Spanish domination over the Kingdom of Naples, a) the Crown of Aragon (1443-1502); b) the Viceroyalty (1502-1702); and c) the House of Bourbon (1734-1860). According to Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021), beginning around the fifteenth century, the repertoire of diminutive forms appears to have expanded significantly for both Spanish and Italian, including primarily such new suffixes as *-ín*, *-ico*, or *-ito* in Spanish and *-ino*, *-etto* and *-uccio* in Italian. For this reason, Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) have dubbed this period a diminutive "renaissance". The new suffixes, although they too drew upon original Latin suffixes (*-INU*, *-ITTU*, *-ICCU* and *-UCEU*), were not actually employed in Latin as diminutives originally, but were gradually adopted as diminutives during this period. Eventually, certain ones among the new variety, like *-ito* for Spanish and both *-ino* and *-etto* for Italian would replace older Latin *ad hoc* diminutive suffixes, primarily *-illo* or *-ello*, as the new preferred forms for simple or *ad hoc* diminutivization in those languages.

based on Altamura (1956), documents 400 hispanicisms borrowed into Neapolitan during this time and so it makes sense that relexified diminutives possessing their own entries in modern dictionaries, might also be affected in some way by Spanish domination in the area. And so, this study sets out to determine what influence Spanish might have had on Neapolitan in the use of diminutives and their subsequent relexification.

Methodology

Project Design

In order to remain consistent with the overall goals of the larger project, all work conducted on the Neapolitan component employed the same methodology that was used for the previously completed Spanish and Italian components, specified at greater length in both Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2016) and (2021) and summarized here with the following steps for the sake of brevity:

- Step I: Search and identification of potential forms in Neapolitan dictionaries²
- Step II: Data retrieval, entry, sorting and removal of non-diminutive forms
- Step III: Further disambiguation of data according to diminutive category
- Step IV: Data analysis, interpretation and comparison to previous results (in this case, those for Spanish and Italian)

Identification of Diminutive Forms

The following diminutive suffixes in Neapolitan are similar to those of Italian as were specified in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021): *-etto/a*, *-ino/a*, *-olo/a*, *-otto/a*, *-ulo/a*, *-(V)ccio/a* and *-(V)cchio/a*, where (V) represents any of the five vowels (e.g., *-acc(h)io/a*, *-icc(h)io/a*, etc.). The difference between the two languages lies in the modern masculine reflexes of the Classical Latin *-ELLU* suffix, where, unlike the single Italian form *-ello*, two possibilities exist in Neapolitan, these being either *-illo* or *-iello* (represented throughout this paper by the single form *-i(e)llo*). The difference of this form between the two languages is the result of metaphony which occurs in Neapolitan, a vowel-raising process resulting from the coexistence with other high vowels in the word. The feminine counterpart of *-i(e)llo* is typically the single form *-ella*, just as it appears in Italian. However, variation in this form does appear in a limited number of words that were borrowed from Spanish, where the ending *-illa* is transliterated as *-iglia* in

²Because a reverse dictionary that alphabetizes words from right to left according to their endings has never been published for Neapolitan, data collection required greater effort than that which was required for work on Spanish and Italian. In order to obtain the data needed for this project, the Neapolitan dictionaries and glossaries that were selected had to be scanned utilizing OCR optical character recognition software, further enabling the search for entries in the scanned document of all words with endings that are homophonous with diminutive forms. Once isolated these forms could then be analyzed.

Neapolitan in an effort to preserve the palatal liquid of Spanish, as opposed to a geminate alveolar liquid that would result if the Spanish spelling were retained. All variations indicated here were searched and analyzed as part of this study.

Sources of Project Data

After careful consideration of possible data sources, it was decided that the following five lexical sources, consisting of dictionaries, glossaries and one doctoral dissertation, should all be consulted for the project in an effort to provide the broadest coverage possible of likely items. The *Dizionario dialettale napoletano* (Altamura 1956) was chosen as this project's principal corpus because of its comparably abundant number of entries as well as its previous authoritative use among the canon of existing Neapolitan dictionaries, including the previously mentioned lexicographic work of Thomas (2009). Two additional dictionaries, *Dizionario napoletano* (Amato and Pardo 2019) and *Dizionario napoletano semantico-etimologico* (Iandolo 2009) were employed as more recent sources to supplement information provided by Altamura with any lexemes not found in Altamura. Additionally, though not a dictionary *per se*, a fourth resource, the *Vocabolario etimológico odierno napoletano-italiano* (Bello 2015), which like Amato & Pardo and Iandolo, also served to supplement Altamura with more current vocabulary. Finally, a fifth resource also consulted for its etymological information was the doctoral dissertation by Vinciguerra (2011) on the topic of Emmanuele Rocco's *Vocabolario del dialetto napoletano*.

An important fact to mention here is that, unlike Spanish and Italian dictionaries, such as those that were used for the first two phases of the larger project, Neapolitan dictionaries are usually never monolingual, but rather bilingual in the sense they are written for an audience of Italian speakers, some of whom may speak Neapolitan, but most of whom are not speakers of the language. In other words, unlike standard monolingual usage dictionaries for other languages like Spanish and Italian that provide definitions and all other lexical data for entries in those languages, Neapolitan dictionaries, including those of this study, typically provide this information for their entries in Italian, and not Neapolitan. In this way they are more like the types of bilingual dictionaries produced for and utilized by language students. This topic of dictionary type will be important to revisit and address later in this paper when we discuss how this may impact some of the outcomes of this study in terms of their comparability to those of the first two phases of Spanish and Italian.³

³There are several reasons why Neapolitan dictionaries are designed this way. As explained earlier in this paper, Neapolitan is considered a dialect, and therefore subordinate to Italian in the hierarchy of languages spoken in the Italian peninsula. In fact, it is common for most dialect dictionaries of the peninsula (such is also the case for those of Romanesco or Sicilian) to be produced this way because they all view Italian as the "base" language, and so from an end-user perspective this is the most practical format for dictionaries of dialectal languages like Neapolitan. Some individuals who use or purchase these dictionaries may indeed be speakers of the dialect, but the truth is that most will minimally be speakers of Italian. If these dictionaries were entirely monolingual in the dialect, they would be less useful, and hence, less marketable, because of the low rate of intelligibility by monolingual speakers of Italian, as reported by Simons and Fennig (2017).

Previous Work on Latin and Romance Relexification

Research on diminutive suffixation in the Romance languages has been approached from varying viewpoints, including a more traditional functional/semantic approach, morphopragmatic analysis, diachronic studies based on corpus data, as well as generative theory. Work such as that of Rohlfs (1969) or Maiden (1995) for Italian and Pharies (2002) and González Ollé (1962) for Spanish focused on categorizations at the level of the word, typical of structural analysis of the time, yielding traditional categorizations of smallness, endearment, or political correctness/politeness. Dressler and Barbaresi (1994) would expand the analysis of these suffixes beyond the level of the word with their theory of morphopragmatics, namely, an account of diminutive use that incorporates the role of context in addition to the meaning of the word itself. Dressler and Barbaresi studied such contexts as playfulness, pet-centered situations, emotion, sympathy and empathy, sarcasm, downgrading of illocutionary strength, euphemism and understatement.

In the course of this work, certain observations were made about *ad hoc* diminutive suffixation, particularly in regard to the suffix *-ino/a* in Italian. Napoli and Reynolds (1994) asserted that *-ino/a* is a much more productive suffix than *-etto/a*, and that *-ino/a* appears to have a default value as opposed to *-etto/a* in terms of its freedom of distribution, number of neologisms, and frequency of use. Dressler and Barbaresi also observed that *-ino/a* allows recursiveness and is the diminutive which is most preferred by children. Moreover, Dardano (1978) observed that *-ino/a* conveys more affection than do the other suffixes.

Other work by Butler (1971) has had less to do with the functional/ semantic use of diminutives like those previously mentioned and more with their historical origins or development. Mayerthaler (1981) suggests that *-ino/a* was the most adopted during Italian medieval times because of the sound-iconic vowel [i], and in that sense it is more natural as compared to others. Also worth noting is the work by Rainer (1994) on *-etto/a*, Weidhase (1967) on reflexes of Latin -(C)ULU/A, as well as Meyer-Lubke (1895), Leumann (1977), Kühner and Holzweissig (1912), Väänänen (1967), and Ettinger (1980) on reflexes of -ELLU/A. Moreover, Rohlfs (1969), though now dated, also serves as an excellent review of dialectal usage of the different forms throughout the Italian peninsula, including the use of *-uzzo/a* as an alternate to *-uccio/a*.

The aforementioned studies have made valuable contributions to the overall knowledge base of the usage and history of diminutives in Spanish and Italian. What seemed to be missing among this earlier research were quantitative, dictionary-based studies with regard to the phenomenon of relexification of these forms. With the advent and greater availability of reverse dictionaries that isolate words by their endings, many of which are now electronic and searchable, and by virtue of the fact that relexified diminutive words are entirely new lexemes that over time have acquired their own dictionary entries, the moment seemed propitious for the authors to undertake first our analysis of Spanish (Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo 2016) and subsequently Italian (same authors 2021) toward a

project whose overall goal is to determine and compare the entirety of relexified diminutives across the Romance languages.⁴

*Results of Phases I and II: Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2016 and 2021)*⁵

As explained in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2016), the process of relexification of diminutives was one that was inherited from a process already robust in Latin as can be seen in such everyday common Latin words as PUER ‘boy’ and the diminutivized variant PUELLA ‘girl.’ As illustrated in Ryan and Parra Guinaldo (2021), many words that would eventually evolve into Spanish and Italian with endings that are homophonous with modern diminutive Spanish and Italian endings, did not diminutivize in the modern languages. Rather, they underwent both processes of diminutivization and relexification during the Latin era itself. An example is the word CASTELLU, a word that began as a simple diminutive combination of CASTRU ‘camp’ plus the diminutive suffix -ELLU ‘little,’ but relexified to its new meaning as ‘castle’ during the Latin era, before subsequently evolving into the daughter languages as *castillo* in Spanish, *castello* in Italian, and *castiello* in Neapolitan. The following summarizes Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo’s (2016, 2021) findings for diminutive relexification in Spanish and Italian during both Latin and post Latin periods. Moreover, these findings provide the baseline against which we will compare results of the present study of Neapolitan.

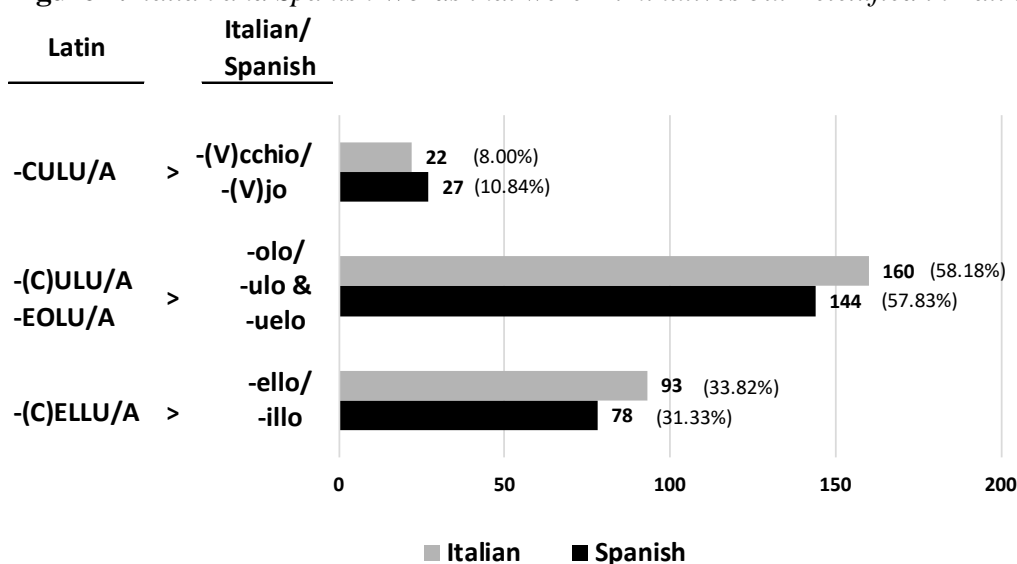
Relexification of L-form Diminutives During the Latin Era⁶

According to the comparative data in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021), both Spanish and Italian were observed to have shared a similar early historical trajectory in terms of relexified L-form diminutives they would have inherited from Latin, namely reflexes of the standard -(C)ULU/A, -(C)ELLU/A and -EOLU/A diminutive system. Figure 1 (repeated here from Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo 2021) compares the percentage distribution of how such words were relexified during the Latin period.

⁴Although Gaeta and Ricca (2003) have conducted some lexicographic work on frequency and productivity in Italian derivation, they did not include diminutive forms in their analysis. Also, more recently, Thomas (2009), like this study utilized Altamura (1956) to determine the totality of words identified as Hispanisms in Neapolitan, but his study does not broach the topic of diminutives.

⁵Since Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) encompasses previous work conducted and reported for Spanish in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2016) in the form of comparisons found between trends in Italian and Spanish relexification, this paper reports primarily the comparative results of the 2021 article here.

⁶All diminutivizing suffixes during the Latin era possessed an -L- in their forms and yet, through certain natural phonological processes as syncope, palatalization, etc., some modern Spanish and Italian reflexes of words that were inherited from original Latin-era relexified diminutives have over time lost the lateral, particularly those developing from the -CULU/A suffix (e.g., OCULU > *occhio* (It)/*ojo* (Sp) ‘eye’).

Figure 1. Italian and Spanish Words that were Diminutives but Relexified in Latin

Source: Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021)

As previously reported in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) and repeated here as Figure 1, according to the *Dizionario Garzanti* (2018) for Italian and the *DRAE* (2016)⁷ for Spanish, the total number of words that were originally diminutive forms but were relexified during the Latin period was 275 for Italian and 249 for Spanish, respectively. It makes perfect sense that these totals are not equal given the large distance between Tuscany (upon which standard Italian is based) and the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the unlikelihood that the same relexified words would persist into both languages at the same rate over two millennia. However, what is in fact surprising about these data, as Figure 1 further illustrates, is the striking similarity in percentage distribution of these endings between both languages. For Latin words ending in -(C)ULU/A, evolving into -(V)cchio or -(V)jo, both languages relexified between 31 and 34%. For those ending in -(C)ULU/A or -EOLU/A, evolving into -olo or -ulo and -uelo, both languages relexified at a rate of around 58%. Words ending in -ELLU/A, evolving into -ello/-illo, relexified between 8 and 11%. This similarity in rates between the two languages in terms of words that had relexified during the Latin era makes sense if one considers the notion that such words would have been common to both regions at an earlier point of the Empire.

Relexification of L-form and Non-L-form Diminutives in the Post Latin or Modern Era

As Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) point out, diminutivization and relexification were not only popular processes during the Latin period, as the data of the previous section show, but as this section will also show, these processes would continue into the modern period in Italian and Spanish as well, and with even greater force, leading to what the authors have called a type of “diminutive renaissance.” This happened in two ways, the first of which was to continue

⁷Diccionario de la Real Academia Española.

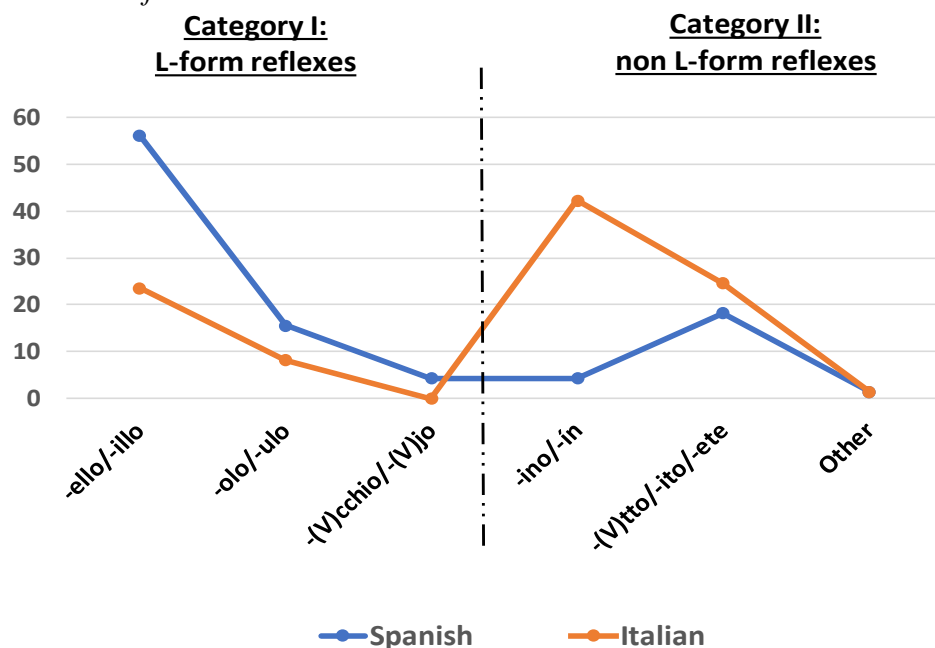
employing reflexes of the former Latin L-form endings, namely, *-ello* (It)/*-illo* (Sp), which replaced *-ELLU*, *-(V)cchio* (It)/*-(V)jo* (Sp), which replaced *-(C)ULU*, and *-iolo* (It)/*-uelo* (Sp), which replaced *-EOLU*. The second way, which was an innovation in the modern era, was the extension of diminutive function to other suffixes, also of Latin origin, but which had possessed neither a diminutive meaning nor an *-L-* in their Latin form. These endings consisted primarily of: 1) *-ino* (It)/*-ín* (Sp), both originating in the Latin categorial (and limited hypocoristic) suffix *-INU*; 2) *-(V)tto* (It)/*-ito* and *-ete* (Sp), originating in the Latin hypocoristic suffix *-ITTU*, and 3) a small variety of others, such as *-(V)ccio* (It), originating in Latin adjectival suffix *-UCEU* or *-ico* (Sp), originating in Latin, also hypocoristic *-ICCU*.⁸

Figure 2 groups the Spanish and Italian data of Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) according to both options mentioned above. Appearing to the left of the dotted line in the figure are the modern reflexes of Latin era L-form diminutive suffixes that continued to be used for diminutivization and subsequently, relexification. Appearing to the right of the dotted line in the figure are the modern reflexes of Latin NON-L form diminutive forms that began to supplement those of the first category, for purposes of diminutivization and relexification, such as *-ino/a*, *-etto/a*, etc.⁹

⁸Both the *Dizionario Garzanti* (2018) and the *DRAE* (2016) dictionaries specify that forms in this category resulted from the process of diminutivization and relexification of not Latin, but rather, Italian or Spanish word roots.

⁹The purpose of Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) was not to specify precisely when *ad hoc* diminutive words in Spanish or Italian relexified within the language. Although both the *Garzanti* and *DRAE* dictionaries do specify older forms among some of their entries (e.g., *castella* ‘castles’ as a former feminine plural form of *castello* ‘castle’), such information is not consistently provided and neither dictionary specifies such information for diminutives in a regular fashion.

Figure 2. Percentage Frequency of Italian and Spanish Diminutive Words that were relexified in the Post Latin Era



	Spanish		Italian	
	#	%	#	%
Category I: L-forms:				
- <i>(i)ello/-illo</i>	469	56.17%	132	23.53%
- <i>olo/-ulo</i>	130	15.57%	46	8.20%
- <i>(V)cchio/-(V)jo</i>	36	4.31%	0	0.00%
Total L-forms:	635	76.05%	178	31.73%
Category II: non-L-forms:				
- <i>ino/-ín</i>	36	4.31%	237	42.25%
- <i>(V)tto/-ito/-ete</i>	152	18.20%	138	24.60%
Other (-<i>(V)ccio/-ico</i>)	<u>12</u>	<u>1.00%</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1.00%</u>
Total non-L-forms:	200	23.51%	383	67.84%
Grand total L- forms and non-L forms:	835	100%	561	100%

Source: De Agostini Scuola S.p.A. - Garzanti Linguistica (2018) and Real Academia Española (2016)

Because of the two different options available to both languages for diminutivization and relexification in the post Latin era, Figure 2 suggests a more complicated array and distribution among diminutive suffixes during the post Latin period. Unlike the case of Latin-era relexification of diminutives that showed strikingly similar patterns for Italian and Spanish in terms of both forms and frequencies, comparisons of Italian and Spanish relexification data for the post Latin period shows quite a different scenario for the following two options.

Option 1: Continued Use of Latin-era Diminutive Suffixes in Modern Reflex Form

Focusing on the left-hand side of the dotted line in Figure 2, one sees that both Spanish and Italian continued to relexify words beyond the Latin period using reflexes of the Latin diminutive suffixes; however, according to the chart, Spanish continued to use these beyond the Latin period in a much more overwhelming fashion (total $n = 635$) than Italian (total $n = 178$), making up a total of 76.5% of all relexified diminutives in Spanish, as compared to 31.73% of all relexified words in Italian. Spanish *-illo/a* and Italian *-ello/a* reflexes of Latin (C)ELLU/A were the most relexified of the Latin L-form diminutives, in part due to the long period of time during which *-ELLU/A* was preferred as both *ad hoc* and relexified suffix, stretching all throughout later Latin and into Romance. A particularly interesting observation here is that Spanish continued to relexify with *-illo/a* ($n = 469$), a full 56.17% of all post Latin era relexified diminutives in Spanish, to a much greater extent than Italian would ($n = 132$) with *-ello/a*, a mere 23.53% of all post Latin era relexified diminutives for that language. The larger extent to which Spanish relexified using *-illo/a* than did Italian is supported by both Pharies (2002) and González Ollé (1962) who asserted that it would not be until the fifteenth century when *-ito/a* began ousting *-illo/a* as an *ad hoc* diminutive in Spanish, much in the same way *-ELLU/A* replaced *-V-(C)ULU/A* in post Classical Latin. One finds a similar pattern in distribution when one compares the relexification of words ending in *-olo* (It) and *-ulo/-uelo* (Sp), for which Spanish ($n = 130$) again outpaces Italian ($n = 46$) as with the Italian non-diminutivized form *avi* ‘grandparents’ versus Spanish diminutivized form *abuelos* ‘grandparents.’ Finally, only Spanish has continued to relexify with the *-(V)jo/a* suffix, during the post Latin era, albeit to a small extent ($n = 36$), while no words ending in its *-(V)cchio/a* Italian counterpart relexified during this time.

Option 2: New Use of Latin Era Non-L-form (Non-diminutive) Suffixes in Modern Reflex Form

The fact that Italian did not relexify to the same extent as Spanish in drawing upon reflexes of Latin L-form diminutive suffixes does not mean that it did not relexify in its own right. Instead, according to Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021), Italian would depend to a much greater extent (total $n = 383$) on the innovative use of reflexes of Latin era non-diminutive suffixes, making up a total of 68.27% of all post-Latin era relexified diminutives in the language, as compared to Spanish ($n = 200$) for which only 23.95% of all relexified words are based on these newly employed suffixes.

Another way in which Italian’s system diverged from that of Spanish in the post Latin era was that *-etto/a* (the reflex of Spanish *-ito/a*, both from *-ITTU/A*) is only one of two productive endings used for *ad hoc* diminutivization, with Italian speakers also using *-ino/a*, the reflex of *-INU/A*. Moreover, although *-ino/a* and *-etto/a* are found in many cases to be interchangeable, *-ino/a* would eventually become what some have observed to be a primary *ad hoc* form over *-etto/a* in terms of achieving default status and greater overall productivity (Napoli and

Reynolds 1994) or being the suffix that allows recursiveness and is most preferred by children (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994). In similar fashion, the data of Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo's (2021) study also indicated the prominence of *-ino/a* over *-etto/a* in terms of historically relexified forms. This correlation between *ad hoc* and relexified forms would stand to reason from a historical point of view in that only an *ad hoc* form with preferred status, such as that which *-ino/a* is suggested to have had, would have been able to generate the sheer quantity of relexified forms necessary (42.25% of all historically relexified diminutives according to Figure 2) in order to achieve the substantial lead of 17.65% that it has attained over its *-etto/a* competitor (24.60% of all historically relexified diminutives according to the same figure). Another observable difference between the two languages is that both *-etto/a* and *-ino/a* already appear to have been relexifying to a much larger degree in Italian to the point of exceeding those of the -(C)ELLU/A type, while Spanish *-ito/a* has relexified so only minimally.

Unlike Spanish, Italian appears to not have incorporated -ICCU/A as part of its diminutive repertoire, lending support to the theories of either Celtic or African origins of this suffix (González Ollé 1962). Italian has also undergone a similar replacement of -ELLU/A with new primary *ad hoc* forms. Yet another modern Italian diminutive form that is not very productive is the suffix *-uccio/a*. According to Rohlf's (1969), this form originates in the Latin adjectival suffix -UCEU/A more or less meaning 'made from'. According to Pharies (2002) the reflex *-uzo/a* does not exist in modern Spanish except in a few rare cases, and in some dialects such as Aragonese. According to their data, Ryan and Parra Guinaldo (2021) found that Spanish and Italian shared a strikingly similar trajectory between both languages in terms of the distribution of words that had been relexified using the three L-form diminutive suffixes. Figure 1 (reprinted earlier in this paper) shows this distribution.

Results and Discussion

Frequency Distribution of Diminutive Forms

This section of the paper presents the Neapolitan data of this study and considers the extent to which trends of *ad hoc* and relexified diminutive forms in the data align more with previous findings for Spanish (2016) and Italian (2021). Consider Table 1 which shows the frequency breakdown of all 1,372 Neapolitan words that were identified as having their origins in diminutive forms of either the *ad hoc* (simple) or relexified variety, based on definitional and etymological information retrieved in the lexical sources of this study:

Table 1. Overall Distribution of Ad Hoc (Simple) and Relexified Diminutives in Neapolitan

	<u>-i(e)llo/-ella</u>		<u>-olo/a</u>		<u>-(V)cchio/a</u>		<u>-ino/a</u>		<u>-(V)tto/a</u>		<u>Other</u>		<u>Totals</u>	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
A. Simple (<i>ad hoc</i>)	396	76.01%	19	3.65%	0	0.00%	44	8.45%	58	11.13%	4	0.77%	521	100.00%
B. Relexified (by source):														
i. Latin (inherited)	73	41.01%	69	38.76%	36	20.22%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	178	100.00%
ii. Neapolitan	372	59.81%	75	12.06%	0	0.00%	68	10.93%	89	14.31%	18	2.89%	622	100.00%
iii. Other (borrowed)														
a. Spanish	32	100.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	32	100.00%
b. French, etc.	<u>9</u>	<u>47.37%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00%</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>52.63%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00%</u>	19	100.00%
subtotal relexified	<u>486</u>	<u>57.11%</u>	<u>144</u>	<u>16.92%</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>4.23%</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>7.99%</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>11.63%</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>2.12%</u>	<u>851</u>	100.00%
Combined totals	882	64.29%	163	11.88%	36	2.62%	112	8.16%	157	11.44%	22	1.60%	1,372	100.00%

Table 1 shows that the Neapolitan dictionaries of this study identify a total of 1,372 diminutive forms, 521 of which are of the simple or *ad hoc* nature, and 851 of the relexified type. The table also shows that words that end in *-i(e)llo/-ella* far outnumber words formed with all other diminutive suffixes (76.01% of all *ad hoc* diminutives and 57.11% of all those that have been relexified). The following two sections address in more detail the study's results as they pertain to *ad hoc* and relexified diminutives in Neapolitan.

A. Frequencies and Distribution of Neapolitan Ad Hoc Diminutives

Table 1 shows that a full 76.01% of all *ad hoc* diminutives end in the suffix *-i(e)llo/-ella*, as compared to all other endings, which altogether total 23.99% in frequency, and appeared in the data in the following order, from highest to lowest: 1) *-(V)tto/a* (11.13%), 2) *-ino/a* (8.45%), 3) *-olo/a* (3.65%), and 4) other endings (0.77%). No cases of *-(V)cchio/a* were found among Neapolitan suffixes used for *ad hoc* diminutivization. As suggested by Pharies (2002) and as will be seen in the historical analysis later in this paper, the predominance of *-i(e)llo/-ella* in the dictionary data over all other *ad hoc* suffixes is due to the preference of the *-ELLU/A ad hoc* suffix in Latin times and its continuation into both early and modern Neapolitan.¹⁰

Neapolitan is a special case in that, unlike its sisters Spanish and Italian, it never underwent the same process of replacement and continued to employ the reflexes of *-ELLU/A*, i.e., *-i(e)llo/-ella*, and its allomorph *-EOLU/A*, i.e., *-iolo/a* instead of the many other suffixes which came into later use by the other two languages. By way of comparison, (1) (a) through (c) illustrate the different uses of *ad hoc* diminutives to express the same three notions in all three languages.

<u>Neapolitan</u>	<u>Italian</u> ¹¹	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
(1) (a) <i>vasillo</i>	<i>bacino</i>	<i>besito</i>	'little kiss'
(b) <i>vucchella</i>	<i>bocchina</i>	<i>boquita</i>	'little mouth'
(c) <i>piccerillo</i>	<i>piccino</i>	<i>pequeñito</i>	'little one'

Examples (1) (a) through (c) show that Neapolitan prefers the *-i(e)llo/a* suffix for purposes of simple or *ad hoc* diminutivization, while Italian prefers *-ino/a* and Spanish *-ito/a*. What this suggests for Neapolitan is that even though, like both Spanish and Italian, it too would expand its repertoire to include other suffixes, it did not innovate to the same extent as Spanish and Italian for purposes of *ad hoc* diminutivization. Rather, it continued to employ the *-i(e)llo* reflex of *-ELLU* as its primary *ad hoc* diminutive suffix.

¹⁰This resembles more the situation of *ad hoc* diminutives in Spanish than in Italian, as pointed out in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021). In Italian, the suffixes *-etto/a* and *-ino/a* were together the two most used suffixes for purposes of *ad hoc* diminutivization in modern Italian, confirming Rohlfs's (1969) anecdotal observations of this phenomenon. In Italian, unlike Spanish and Neapolitan, *-ello/a* is the third most used suffix.

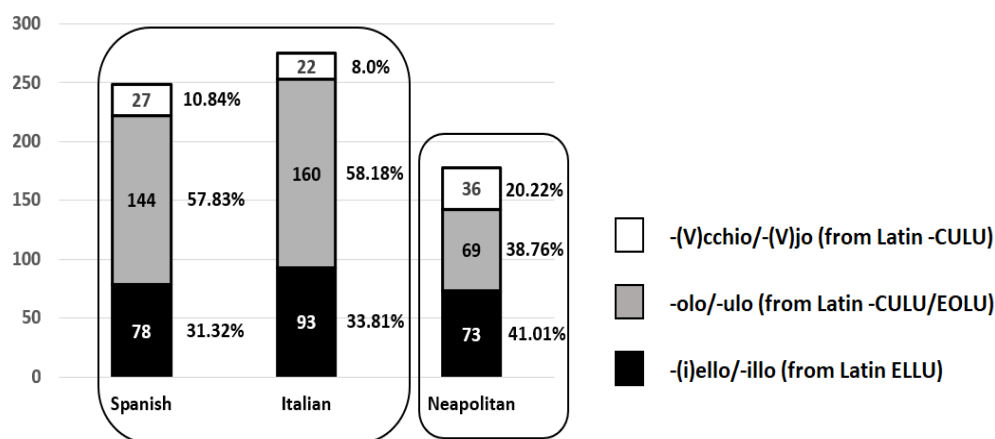
¹¹As observed in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021), although *-ino* is presented here as the most predominant *ad hoc* suffix in Italian, *-etto* is the second most used.

B. Frequencies and Distribution of Neapolitan Relexified Diminutives

Neapolitan Diminutives Relexified During the Latin Era

Recall from Figure 1 that our previous studies of Spanish and Italian (Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo 2016, 2021) exhibited strikingly similar distributions in the relexification of the three L-form diminutive suffixes during the Latin era. Consider now Figure 3 that compares the similarities in distribution of Spanish and Italian with what, according to the lexicographic sources of this study, appears to be a very different alignment of L-form diminutives that were relexified during the Latin era for Neapolitan.

Figure 3. Frequency Distribution of Words in Spanish, Italian and Neapolitan that Relexified During the Latin Era



Source: De Agostini Scuola S.p.A. - Garzanti Linguistica (2018), Real Academia Española (2016), Altamura (1956) and others

Figure 3 shows that Spanish and Italian bear striking similarities (hence, the reason for their having been grouped together on the left of the figure) in the percentage distribution of the three L-form diminutives that relexified during the Latin era and evolved into modern reflexes of these languages. In addition to what appears to be this parallel distribution, one can also observe that all three types are spread across a wide range, the highest being *-olo/-ulo* at 57.83% (Sp) and 58.18% (It), *-(i)ello/-illo* as an intermediate type at 31.32% (Sp) and 33.81% (It), and *-(V)cchio/-(V)jo* the lowest of all three at 10.84% (Sp) and 8% (It).

The distribution of Neapolitan's data, on the other hand, looks very different from that of Spanish and Italian and for that reason it is isolated as its own category and appears on its own to the far right of Figure 3. Not only does Neapolitan exhibit a much different distribution than the other two languages, but the reader will notice that the spread among the suffixes is not as wide as that which was observed for Spanish and Italian. More specifically, whereas both Italian and Spanish were found to inherit the *-olo/-ulo* suffix to a strikingly similar higher degree (in excess of 57%), according to the data of this study, this same suffix appears to have been inherited, at least on initial observation, to a much more moderate degree of 38.8% in Neapolitan. In contrast, according to the data, the *-(i)ello/-illo* suffix was inherited to a lesser extent in both Spanish and Italian

(31.3% and 33.8% respectively) than it was in Neapolitan (41.1%). In all three languages, the *-(V)cchio* *-(V)jo* suffix was found to be inherited the least. Implications for the divergence observed for Neapolitan from the trend shared by Spanish and Italian, particularly the comparably larger percentage distribution of *-i(e)llo/-illo* will be considered with the data presented for the post Latin era in the following section.

Before drawing any conclusions about what the foregoing percentages might mean in terms of language comparisons, consider another important difference we observe in Figure 3 that sets Neapolitan apart from Spanish and Italian as a single group, namely, its significantly lower number of tokens found (178) as compared to those found for Spanish (249) and Italian (275). As argued previously in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo 2021, the small difference in the total number of tokens between Spanish and Italian (i.e., 26), seemed reasonable, even with a strikingly similar distribution in suffix type, given that each would adopt already relexified Latin forms in ways that were particular to their own language, precisely because of the large geographical distance between the regions where the two languages developed. One illustration of this difference is the comparison of the words used for ‘grandparents’ in each language. The word in Spanish for ‘grandparents’ is *abuelos* which was a relexification of the base word AVUS plus the *-IOLo* diminutive suffix. By contrast, the Italian word *avi* is used (though less common than *nonni*) for the same purpose. Historically, unlike *abuelos* in Spanish, *avi* is not the result of a diminutive combination. The point is that even with such individual differences between Spanish and Italian, the overall distribution of suffixes still turns out to be strikingly similar between both languages.

If this is true for Spanish and Italian, then it would have seemed reasonable for Neapolitan to follow a similar pattern, and if not, we should explore reasons why the Neapolitan pattern is so different from the pattern found for Spanish and Italian. What the authors propose as the reason for similarity in data between Spanish and Italian and the difference found for Neapolitan may have less to do with the nature of Neapolitan as a language, and more to do with the nature of existing Neapolitan dictionaries. As stated earlier, Neapolitan dictionaries are typically produced for an Italian-speaking audience, and therefore, they may as a result limit words to those that are formally different from their Italian counterparts. To illustrate this idea, consider Table 2 that shows examples of modern Neapolitan words that prominently appear as their own entries in Altamura’s dictionary (1956), all of which are inherited from diminutive words that relexified from L-form suffixes during the Latin period.

Table 2. Examples of Modern Neapolitan Words from Altamura (1956) Inherited from Latin Relexified (L form) Diminutives with Comparisons to Italian

<u>Latin form</u>	<u>Neapolitan reflex</u>	<u>Previously relexified Latin form</u>	<u>Neapolitan form</u>	<u>Italian form</u>
A. <u>-(C)ULU/A</u>	1) <u>-(V)cchio/a:</u>	AURICULA 'ear'	<i>recchia</i>	<i>orecchia</i>
		PEDICULU > 'louse'	<i>peducchio</i>	<i>pidocchio</i>
	2) <u>-(C)chio/a:</u>	CARBONCULU > 'coal'	<i>cravunchio</i>	<i>carbonchio</i>
	3) <u>-(C)olo/a:</u>	PERGOLU > 'throne', GLANDULA > 'gland'	<i>piercolo</i> <i>gliannola</i>	<i>pergola</i> <i>glandola</i>
	4) <u>-(C)ulo/a:</u>	CAPITULU > 'chapter'	<i>capitulo</i>	<i>capitolo</i>
B. <u>-(C)ELLU/A</u>	1) <u>-iello/a;</u>	CASTELLU > 'castle'	<i>castiello</i>	<i>castello</i>
	2) <u>-(c)iello/a</u>	VERMICELLU > 'small'	<i>vermicello</i>	<i>vermicello</i>
C. <u>-EOLU/A</u>	1) <u>-uolo/a</u>	LINTEOLU > 'sheet'	<i>lenzulo</i>	<i>lenzuolo</i>

Source: Altamura (1956)

All nine examples in Table 2 are Neapolitan words whose Italian counterparts are different in form in some way. Take for example the first two words appearing on the list, *recchia* 'ear' and *peducchio* 'louse.' It stands to reason that these words, much like the others on the list, because they deviate in form from the Italian standard *orecchio* and *pidocchio*, are included in the dictionary. In contrast, words like *figliolo* 'young boy' or *figliola* 'young girl,' both also originating in former L-form diminutive words that relexified during the Latin era (i.e., FILIOLU or FILIOLA) although they exist in Neapolitan as well, were not found as main entries in the Neapolitan dictionaries of this study.

To further test and confirm this hypothesis that bilingual Neapolitan dictionaries only include those words that are different in form from their Italian counterparts, we took the following 10 very basic, non-diminutive words that either share an identical form in Italian or only differ by a single letter or more to determine whether, or how if at all, these were represented in Altamura (1956). Table 3 shows the results of this brief inquiry.

Table 3. Examples of Appearance (or not) in Altamura (1956) of Common Neapolitan Words Whose Spelling is Identical or Differs with Italian by One or More Letters

<u>Italian form</u>	<u>Neapolitan form</u>	<u>English gloss</u>	<u>Same word in both languages</u>		<u>Appears in dictionary</u>	
			<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>
1) <i>casa</i>	<i>casa</i>	'house'	x			x
2) <i>cane</i>	<i>cane</i>	'dog'	x			x
3) <i>facile</i>	<i>facile</i>	'easy'	x			x
4) <i>zio</i>	<i>zio</i>	'uncle'	x			x
5) <i>prezzo</i>	<i>prezzo</i>	'price'	x			x
6) <i>tavola</i>	<i>tavula</i>	'table'		x	x	
7) <i>braccio</i>	<i>vraccio</i>	'arm'		x	x	
8) <i>camicia</i>	<i>cammissa</i>	'shirt'		x	x	
9) <i>finestra</i>	<i>fenesta</i>	'window'		x	x	
10) <i>mano</i>	<i>mana/ mano</i>	'hand'		x	x	

Source: Altamura (1956).

As the data in Table 3 clearly confirm, Altamura (1956) only lists as main entries those words that are different from their Italian counterpart. As examples 1) through 5) of the figure attest, words like *casa* ‘house,’ *cane* ‘dog,’ or *zio* ‘uncle,’ do not appear as entries in the dictionary even though these are Neapolitan, as they are Italian, words. It is only examples 6) through 10) that words like *tavula* ‘table,’ *vraccio* ‘arm,’ or *fenesta* ‘window’ do in fact appear in the dictionary because they differ in either one or more letters in spelling from their Italian equivalents. In the case of 10) *mana/mano* ‘hand,’ the authors believe that this entry was deemed obligatory because of the existence of the option *mana* whose spelling is different from Italian *mano*, albeit by a single letter. This seems to explain the reason for the large difference in distribution of Neapolitan L-form diminutives that relexified during the Latin era as compared to that of Spanish and Italian which may be due more to the fact that the Neapolitan dictionaries do not include them because of their resemblance to Italian, and therefore for Italian readers, this would be redundant. Also, when comparing the list of Neapolitan L-word suffixes to those in Italian, particularly those ending in *-olo* or *-ola*, it appears that a great majority of these words are cultisms, though not entirely (such as our previous examples of *figliolo* or *figliola*).

Diminutives Relexified in Neapolitan during the Post Latin Era

As stated previously, diminutivization and subsequent relexification did not end with the Latin era with words that have been inherited from that time, but rather, these processes have extended in substantial ways into the Romance languages today. As was observed for both Spanish and Italian in the first two phases of the overall study, these processes likewise extended into Neapolitan with both L-form and non-L-form suffixes. This section of the paper explores Neapolitan words that relexified from both types in the post Latin period. Consider Table 4 that shows an overall snapshot of these forms with examples.

Table 4. Examples of Words that Relexified from Diminutives in the Post Latin Era with both L-form and non-L-form Suffixes

		<u>Source of relexification</u>			
	<i>Latin form</i>	<i>Original use</i>	<i>Neapolitan reflex</i>	<i>Neapolitan</i>	<i>Borrowed</i>
Category I: Latin L-forms	A. -(C)ULU/A	(diminutive)	-(c)olo/a:	<i>passaricolo</i> 'young sparrow'	
	B. -(C)ELLU/A	(diminutive)	1) -iello/a	<i>pagnutiello</i> 'block of dough'	<i>casetiello</i> 'traditional Easter bread' from Spanish <i>quesadilla</i> 'culinary dish made with flour tortillas')
			2) -illo/a	<i>vasillo</i> 'little kiss'	
			3) -iglia		<i>mantechiglia</i> 'pomade' from Spanish <i>mantequilla</i> 'butter'
4) -(c)iello/a		<i>ficuciello</i> 'unripe fig'			
C. -EOLU/A	(diminutive)	-iolo/a	<i>carrucchio</i> 'skateboard'		
Category II: Latin non L-forms	A. -INU/A	(non-diminutive--categorical--adjectival suffix (e.g., <i>DIVINA</i> 'of or relating to a god') as well as some limited evidence as an anthroponymous suffix (e.g., <i>MODESTINA</i> , anthroponym of the female name <i>MODESTA</i>))	-ino/a:	<i>festino</i> 'party'; or <i>mappina</i> 'dish cloth'	
	B. -ITTU/A	(non-diminutive--anthroponymous suffix (e.g., <i>BONITU</i> anthroponym of the male name <i>BONU</i> or <i>JULITTA</i> anthroponym of the female name <i>JULIA</i>))	1) -etto/a:	<i>bastunetto</i> 'small tube made of terracotta' or <i>facetta</i> 'said of an imprudent person'	<i>curzetto</i> from Old French <i>corset</i> 'corset'
			2) -otto/a:	<i>pasticcio</i> 'type of pastry'	
C. -UCEU/A	(non diminutive--adjectival suffix) (e.g., <i>PANNUCEU</i> 'ragged')	1) -uccio/a 2) -uzzo/a:	<i>caffetuccio</i> 'small café' <i>aucelluzzo</i> 'little bird'		

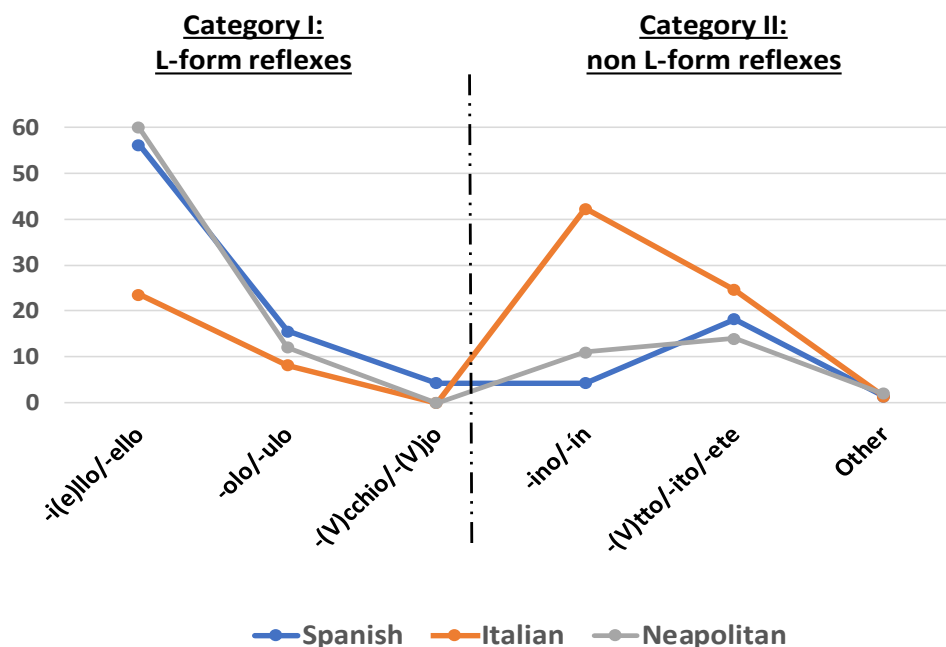
Source: Altamura (1956)

Just as was observed by Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) for Italian, Table 4 provides for Neapolitan examples of the same dual categorization of modern-day diminutive forms, namely: Category I, consisting of words that were relexified based on Neapolitan reflexes of continued Latin diminutive (L-form) suffixes; and Category II, consisting of words that are based on Neapolitan reflexes of Latin non-diminutive (non-L-form) suffixes. Examples under Category I such as *passaricolo* 'young sparrow,' *pagnutiello* 'block of dough,' or *carrucchio* 'skateboard' are similar in form to those that were relexified during the Latin era, the only difference being that the words of Table 4 did not relexify as Latin words, but rather relexified during the modern era. As Table 4 also indicates, other words of Category I were borrowed from Spanish during the 400-year period of Spanish rule. Notice that, according to Altamura (1956), some words were adopted to fit the Neapolitan formula (e.g., Neapolitan *casetiello* 'Easter bread' from Spanish *quesadilla* 'culinary dish'), while others were adopted more directly by means of transliteration (e.g., Neapolitan *mantechiglia* 'pomade' from Spanish *mantequilla* 'butter'). Examples from Category II demonstrate the wide variety of suffixes

adopted in the post-Latin era such as *-ino*, *-(V)tto* and *-uccio/-uzzo*, with some borrowings from Old French as well, as in *curzetto* ‘corset.’

Having reviewed some examples of both types of words (L-form and non-L-form) that have relexified in the post Latin era, let us now consider Figure 4 which compares the percentage distribution of Neapolitan forms (gray line) to that of Spanish (blue line) and Italian (orange line) in the post Latin era:

Figure 4. Percentage Frequency Distribution of Words in Spanish, Italian and Neapolitan that Relexified in the Post Latin Era



	Spanish		Italian		Neapolitan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Category I: L-forms:						
1) <i>-(i)ello/-illo</i>	469	56.17%	132	23.53%	372	59.81%
2) <i>-olo/-ulo</i>	130	15.57%	46	8.20%	75	12.06%
3) <i>-(V)ccio/-(V)jo</i>	36	4.31%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total L-forms:	635	76.05%	178	31.73%	447	71.86%
Category II: non-L-forms:						
4) <i>-ino/-in</i>	36	4.31%	237	42.25%	68	10.93%
5) <i>-(V)tto/-ito/-ete</i>	152	18.20%	138	24.60%	89	14.31%
6) <i>Other (-(V)ccio/-ico)</i>	12	1.00%	8	1.00%	18	2.89%
Total non-L-forms:	200	23.51%	383	67.84%	175	28.14%
Grand total L- forms and non-L forms:	835	100%	561	100%	622	100%

Source: Altamura (1956)

The reader will recall from Figure 2 of this paper that Spanish and Italian differed quite significantly in terms of their percentage distributions of L-form and non-L-form relexified diminutives in the post-Latin era. According to the data presented in Figure 4, which expands Figure 2 to now include Neapolitan data of this study with the addition of the gray line, we see how Neapolitan bears more of

a resemblance to Spanish than it does to Italian in terms of its distribution of both diminutive types in the post Latin era. According to the figure, Neapolitan, like Spanish is observed to prefer relexification using L-forms in a much more overwhelming fashion than non-L-forms. Neapolitan prefers L-forms overall at a rate 71.86%, while Spanish does only slightly more so at a rate of 76.05%. In sharp contrast, as we found in our previous study, Italian relexifies with L-forms at a significantly much lower rate of 31.73%. The figure also shows that these higher percentages for both Spanish and Neapolitan are primarily due to the strong preference for the *-i(e)llo/-illo* suffix with rates of 56.17% for Spanish and 59.81% for Neapolitan. Meanwhile, Italian was found to relexify with *-ello* at a rate of only 23.53% among all diminutive suffixes.

Moving to the right of the dotted line in Figure 4, we see how the three languages compare in terms of their respective distributions of non-L-form suffixes. It is here where we clearly observe the propensity for Italian to relexify with non-L-form suffixes, preferring these at an overall rate 67.84% among all diminutive suffixes. The suffix with the largest representation was *-ino/-in* at 42.25%, followed by *-(V)tto* at 24.60%, and it is not until third place do we find *-i(e)llo/-illo* at a close 23.53%. The figure shows that Neapolitan uses non-L-form suffixes for relexification only slightly more frequently (at a rate of 28.14%) than does Spanish (at 23.51%), but both are similar in that they occur comparably less frequently than Italian (at 67.84%).

Conclusions

As Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo observed in their previous studies for Spanish and Italian, data of this third phase as presented in this paper likewise illustrate that Neapolitan has its own unique history with regards to the relexification of diminutivized forms, exhibiting a unique pattern during the Latin era, and another that appears very much like Spanish and unlike Italian in the post Latin period. It was observed here that Neapolitan, like Spanish has had an overwhelming preference for *-i(e)llo* for both *ad hoc* and relexified varieties in both Latin and post-Latin eras, but unlike Spanish which has replaced this with *-ito* as its primary *ad hoc* diminutivizer, Neapolitan continues to this day to prefer *-i(e)llo* as a primary means for *ad hoc* diminutivization. This section of the paper suggests what factors, both external and internal, might have contributed to these particular characteristics of Neapolitan diminutivization and subsequent relexification.

External Factors

One might expect diminutivization in Neapolitan to resemble Italian more than Spanish during both the Latin era or post Latin periods, precisely because of the historical geographical proximity of the regions where Neapolitan and Italian (or Tuscan) have developed. After, all, both developed on the Italian peninsula, and one might reasonably expect aerial factors to produce similar behavior between the two languages. One must remember, however, that throughout the history of

these languages as they were forming, they were not united under the same political power, but rather existed as two separate kingdoms where each language developed along its own trajectory, and even during the early post Latin period when diminutives began to expand to other non-L-form suffixes, the Kingdom of Naples was under Spanish rule for 400 years. As pointed out in Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2016) for Spanish, *-illo* was the predominant diminutivizing suffix in Spanish during this time and so its influence might have been felt in Naples under Spanish occupation. Spanish occupation was limited to the south and so this influence would have never reached Tuscany.

If Spanish influence has had anything to do with the preference for *-i(e)llo* as the predominant *ad hoc* diminutive suffix, then another question arises as to why Neapolitan would continue to prefer this suffix for *ad hoc* diminutivization, while Spanish has instead since replaced it with *-ito*. One possibility for this divergence is that Spanish occupation and influence of the region might have lasted only long enough for *-i(e)llo* to be reinforced, but by the time *-ito* was gaining ground in the Iberian Peninsula as a new form, *-i(e)llo* had already become sufficiently embedded in Italy's south and continued its popularity even until today.¹²

Internal Factors

One of the reasons that has been proposed in the literature on Italian for the eventual adoption of *-ino* over both *-etto* and *-ello* as *ad hoc* diminutivizing suffixes is the preference for the iconic front high vowel sound [i] to convey the notion of diminutivization (Mayerthaler 1981).¹³ Unlike Spanish and Neapolitan, where the middle vowel of *-ELLU* has either raised to [i] or diphthongized to [ie], Italian has instead maintained the middle vowel. And so, if the assertion of the front high vowel is true, it makes perfect sense that *-ino* would take priority over both *-etto* and *-ello* in Italian. What we propose here as an “internal” reason that Neapolitan has not eventually adopted *-ino* like Italian is that it could continue to convey diminutivization with the high vowel or glide in *-i(e)llo* and therefore, does not fill the space otherwise occupied by *-ino* in Italian. The net effect on the system is that *-ino* is relegated not to second place, as one would expect, but to third place, with *-(V)tto* instead taking the second place position. The high front vowel theory also rings true for diminutives in Spanish in the sense that it would eventually replace *-ELLU* with *-ito* as a preferred suffix.

Viability of Assertions for Post Latin Era Relexification in Neapolitan

Before concluding this paper, it would seem appropriate to make a comment about the viability of post Latin era results in terms of comparability among the three languages. After all, we suggested in our discussion of Latin era results the

¹²The data show that *-etto* is albeit narrowly the second most used *ad hoc* diminutive suffix in Neapolitan. It could be that the replacement of *-illo* by *-ito* in Spanish has also influenced occupation by *-etto* in second place over *-ino*.

¹³We see a similar phenomenon in English with such expressions as *teeny weeny*, *cutie*, *chubby*, etc., as well as in hypocoristic use, such as, *Sammy*, *Billy*, *Cathy*, etc.

tendency for Neapolitan dictionaries to exclude words that Neapolitan shared with Italian and so there might be a concern that this same scenario would also play out for post Latin era results. However, after careful consideration, the authors of this paper feel that this is less of an issue for post Latin era relexification. As we saw in Table 1, usage of the *-i(e)llo* suffix was quite high (i.e., 59.81%) not only for relexified diminutives, but even more astoundingly for the simple or *ad hoc* variety (76.01%). Examples (1) (a) through (c) of this paper further corroborated this fact showing that *-i(e)llo* is in fact the modern go-to suffix for simple diminutivization, just as *-ino* is for Italian and *-ito* is for Spanish. It stands to reason that if *-i(e)llo* is the predominant *ad hoc* suffix of choice, that its sheer number as compared to the others will in turn produce more of the relexified variety. Another indication for the viability of post Latin era results of this study is the fact that the Latin era results were of much smaller number, totalling a mere 178 tokens (according to Table 1), while results for the post-Latin period totaled 622. We must remind ourselves that the two periods in question produced two very different word types. Latin era relexified words were those that have been inherited from Latin, and so these were words that have simply evolved into the modern era. Conversely, post Latin era words were relexified much later when the diminutive “renaissance” would provide a panoply of suffixes available for diminutivization and therefore would provide the divergence that we see among the three languages of this study.

Further Support for the Pan-Romance Diminutive Diasystem

To conclude, we propose that Neapolitan, like its Spanish and Italian counterparts, also appears to support the notion of an early Pan-Romance diminutive diasystem as proposed previously by Ryan and Parra-Guinaldo (2021) for these other languages. The theory of a Pan Romance originally proposed by Wright (2002) suggests that early Romance was actually quite uniform in the sense that all Roman colonies drew upon the same repertoire of possibilities of expression, hence a “Pan Romance” approach, and would only eventually adopt the variation specific to that locality. Our theory of a Pan Romance diminutive diasystem draws on this same notion and proposes that the same array of both L-form and non-L-form diminutive endings have served for purposes of diminutivization Romance-wide, but the nature and degree of contact between each of the regions and the center of the Empire during the Latin era, as well as any ensuing contact among each other during the post-Latin period, are both necessary factors to be considered in any attempt to explain variations in the resulting distributions of the suffixes among these languages. Such evidence in the case of Neapolitan would be the four-hundred-year Spanish rule and occupation of the region where Neapolitan is spoken, and the influence Spanish exerted on the Neapolitan lexicon during this period. This historical relationship helps explain the striking similarities found to exist between Neapolitan and Spanish, and not Italian, in the percentage distribution of forms relexified during the modern era. This also helps explain the greater degree of resultant borrowing into Neapolitan of several Spanish words of diminutive origin that had already relexified in

Spanish, such as *mantechiglia* ‘pomade,’ and which are not found to the same degree in Italian.

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English Writing Challenges of First-Year Students: A Case Study of a University in the Eastern Cape

By Victoria Magaba*

Writing is a productive skill, which means that the emphasis is on the output. The fact that most students in South Africa learn English as a second language (L2) presents challenges concerning English writing proficiency, because writing is different from speaking since it utilises higher-order cognitive skills. The study analysed 184 students' scripts showing different forms of students' writing, such as, reports, creative writing assignments, language tests, business correspondence, research papers, answering open-ended questions on extracts and the like. A qualitative method was used to explore and describe challenges encountered by students in English writing by collecting students' scripts to identify problem areas where interventions needed to be applied. Purposive sampling was employed for the study as the focus was specifically on first-year University students registered for different modules, but all taking Communication (English), which is a compulsory module. Various theories such as the writing process, error analysis and proficiency theory were explored in order to understand the processes that underpin academic writing. The hypothesis is that mother-tongue linguistic features will pose challenges as they are embedded in the students' cognitive language skills, and they will therefore interfere in English writing since the students' mother tongue and English have different linguistic rules. Possible solutions for the many and varied challenges are the application of different processes that include different pedagogical methodologies. Error analysis played a crucial role in the study since it has a bearing on students who speak English as a second language because it investigates errors which are systematic and which result from language interference (this can manifest in intralingual and/or interlingual interference). In order to address these challenges, facilitators must employ pedagogical strategies that will encompass different teaching methods and different assessment methods that will link language exercises to other forms of writing such that there is a correlation between different aspects of language skills.

Keywords: *English writing challenges, language interference, error analysis, teaching methods, assessment methods, language skills*

Introduction

English writing at tertiary level is a very important skill because students' academic performance is graded mainly on their written work. However, studies conducted on first-year written work show that there are gaps in this literacy because the assumption is that students who enrol at university have the required level of writing proficiency to cope with the demands of academic discourse that

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will help them better understand concepts that form the focus of lessons. This assumption makes lecturers overlook the fact that most school leavers who enter South African universities are not adequately prepared for higher education studies. At high school, writing is viewed mainly as a tool for the practice and reinforcement of grammatical and lexical patterns, however at university; the emphasis is on academic writing, which is a skill that requires critical thinking and argumentation. Lecturers must take cognisance of such challenges and communicate with the writing centre so that appropriate measures can be put in place to support students in academic writing. In most cases, writing centres operate as separate entities covering a syllabus that does not contribute to the academic development of students who use this service. In essence, writing centres do students a disservice, as there is no synergy between writing centres and improvement of students' writing skills. The same issues became apparent at the university where the study was conducted as content covered by the writing centre and information imparted in lecture halls are not harmonised. The focus at the writing centre is mainly on grammar (and study skills), whereas academic writing requires skills that go way beyond the knowledge of grammar.

Of the four language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing, writing is the one that should most likely be used to determine whether students would progress to the next level/year. For this reason, it is crucial that students acquire writing proficiency, especially students who study English as a second language, because they are prone to encounter challenges in this discourse. Richard et al. (in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005) have explored proficiency, defining it as the degree of understanding that one employs when engaging with language. Academic English writing proficiency denotes having the knowledge and skills within the form and function of the written language, which then enables students to engage themselves in whatever form is presented, thereby enabling them to fully demonstrate their content knowledge.

At the selected institution of the study population in the Eastern Cape, there is a writing centre where students are equipped with basic writing skills. However, writing centres generally focus on supporting students in the correct application of grammar, which is the case at this campus, but the writing centre does not delve into the writing process, which constitutes far more than the knowledge of grammar. A proficient writer is able to write appropriately and efficiently, therefore students need to apply the correct discourse in order to attain writing proficiency. Myles (2002) alluded to the importance of writing when stating that 'writing skills must be practised and learned through experience.' This emphasises the importance of the writing process, which encompasses various phases that students have to go through before they are able to self-edit their work.

Studies on writing challenges have been conducted both in South Africa and abroad. Heinemann and Horne (2003) conducted a study on the level of understanding of the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) where the aim was to specifically address challenges in teaching English in South Africa. Interestingly, many books have been published on second language English teaching, but according to Heinemann and Horne, 'they did not cover language issues in South Africa' (Heinemann and Horn 2003, x). Consequently, these

researchers co-authored a book aiming specifically at addressing issues encountered by first-year tertiary students in South Africa.

Academic writing is an area that has piqued researchers' interest in recent years in South Africa, and as a result, studies in writing have been conducted at various universities. However, no study has been conducted on writing at this historically black university in the Eastern Cape. This province is an important area of concern in this regard, as it is mainly rural and underprivileged where many schools are under resourced. For this reason, a study focusing on students' academic writing challenges will highlight if the challenges experienced in this rural province are the same as in other provinces, or if there are additional challenges.

Studies conducted on this topic include Kruger's (2011) study that measured the writing progress made by first-year students at North-West University (Vaal Triangle campus). Mkonto's (2015) investigation of first-year students' expectations of academic integration at the University of the Western Cape, and Chili's (2016) study which focused on students' writing success to measure the impact of the Academic Development Programme at Rhodes University, are some examples of studies conducted in this discipline. Studies conducted abroad have also investigated first-year students' writing. Crusan (2002) examined first-year writing placement assessment at Ohio University and found that students struggled with writing coherent discourse. Jordan (1997) studied English language problems of overseas students in higher education in the United Kingdom and concluded that writing challenges resulting in academic and career constraints for students, meaning that students who do not have this discourse will struggle in their studies and this might affect their future career endeavours. Abedi (2010) also examined students' writing performance in order to highlight the need to have a programme that would address first-year students' writing challenges. He acknowledged that research on first-year students' writing performance was lacking. However, although findings from studies have indicated challenges in writing proficiency, there are no measures to address the highlighted production challenges. Some writing challenges are general and they can be addressed through available writing models, other challenges are encountered in a particular group (for example, mother-tongue interference, poor teaching, lack of exposure to the language, etc.). This study will therefore address interventions that will curb students' writing challenges and also highlight what has influenced these and what can be done to alleviate problems in English academic writing. Failure to address these challenges mean that challenges will persist unabated and will hinder progress for current and future students as English is the language that is used as the language of learning and teaching in many institutions of higher learning.

Being fluent in English or in any other language enables interlocutors to use the language to persuade, to convert and to compel; this is because 'language is one of the rudimentary means of fostering relations among people' (Magaba 2019, p. 2). However, writing transcends these succinct traits of verbal communication since it requires a more complex communication skill, which is attained through practice, which is pivotal in academic writing. Technological advancements have opened new avenues for millions of people to engage with the written form

through emails, blogs, social media, texting and the like. When using technology, users apply their knowledge of literacy to encode and decode messages. However, these forums do not necessarily follow the standard English writing format; therefore, knowledge of these formats will not assist students in academic writing as its format differs markedly from the other writing genres. Students must be reminded that writing is distance-bound, therefore the written text must be methodical so that it conveys the writer's intended meaning where the correct inference will be drawn to avoid misinterpretation or communication breakdown. Written texts must satisfy three components, namely, the writer, the message and the receiver. This means that writing needs a careful plan and an explicit end product. In order for students to be proficient writers, they need to demonstrate good structure and fluency.

When they start their university studies, students are expected to have acquired a reasonable level of English proficiency to help them cope with academic writing discourse. This greatly places strain on first-year students because they are expected to be able to read tasks individually and display a high level of reading ability, which will enable them to write well-structured and fluent academic assignments. Lack of good academic writing skills can lead to a high failure rate, which in turn is likely to lead to a high dropout rate and loss of government subsidy by the university. Academic literacy programmes must address these concerns to help first-year students to cope with the transition from Grade 12 to tertiary education.

Background and Context to the Study

According to Graham and Harris (2013) the fact that English is a second language for most learners can negatively influence their academic achievements, particularly in higher education. If students lack competence in the LOLT, they will feel restricted, which will ultimately make them feel inadequate. Maxwell and Meiser (2001) concur with this when positing that students who encounter challenges at tertiary institutions as a result of poor language skill, will not succeed, thus adding to the high level of drop-outs. English proficiency therefore becomes imperative because students need to be able to read and write proficiently in order to attain success in their studies. Banjo and Bisang (1985) emphasise the importance of mastering the LOLT when they infer that students will only be fully able to understand the subject content if they understand the LOLT. Language competence is important, as it is a prescript for language proficiency, hence it is important that students' writing must be analysed at first-year level to ensure that they acquire the requisite proficiency in the writing skill. Lack of this prerequisite will culminate in poor productive skill, which will negatively affect students' success in their academic work, as they will struggle with the subject content in different learning areas and they will ultimately fail to reach their academic and career potential.

Lack of exposure to English earlier on in life and outside of school hinders progress and ultimately has a negative impact on language proficiency later on in

the learners' school life. It is imperative for English learners to be introduced to the language as early as possible so that by the time they leave school at the end of grade 12; they can speak, read and write English well and are ready for tertiary education. Magaba (2019) concurs, stating that it is paramount to pave the way for everyone to access opportunities through a fair and just educational system. This means that earlier exposure to the language will assist in addressing overt and covert challenges in the LOLT.

Writing is cognitively demanding, therefore it is incorrect to assume that being able to speak English fluently automatically makes one a good writer. Based on this, even mother-tongue speakers of English need guidance in academic writing (Wingate 2015). This is apparent in the writing process, that includes planning, which manifests in an opening framework in the form of key words relating to the topic (taxonomy). Drafting (writing down information relating to the content) and revising (checking the sequence of events or arguments, substituting words that will make the topic more interesting or stronger) are important steps to ensure good organisation and structure. The final step in the writing process is editing (meaning, checking grammar, spelling and whether the meaning intended is written in a methodical and explicit manner to avoid ambiguity) for appropriate diction and clarity.

Good academic writing focuses not just on grammar, but also on the content and style of writing. Previous studies on academic writing have focused on the root causes of students' lack of writing proficiency, but have not suggested strategies that can be employed to deal with these challenges. Hinkel (2006) posits that proficiency in writing requires explicit pedagogy in grammar and lexis. Grammar is a term used by linguists to refer to both the structure of words and their arrangements in sentences (Stock and Widdonson 1974). Other than the basic requirement for grammar to follow a particular sequence, for example, subject-verb concord, the text must have meaning (Bell, 1981). Knowledge of grammar plays an important role in any language, particularly in the construction of written work where the writer must follow the underlying rules governing language use (Bachman and Palmer 2010, Debata 2013, Mbau and Muhsin 2014). Research has shown that teaching grammar and lexis overtly does not enable students to write coherently (Odlin 1989). In order for students to achieve writing proficiency, they need to be taken through the writing process from the moment they start preparing themselves to do a writing task until they eventually produce the final product.

Wingate (2015) contradicts earlier studies and argues that academic literacy is more than what it is generally perceived to be. Many studies have indicated that it is mostly students who are second language learners who struggle with academic writing discourse. However, Wingate is of the view that challenges in writing happen across the board and they are not just challenges experienced by students from underprivileged backgrounds or second language learners. She is of the view that problems in literacy transcends race, and that is why these challenges are encountered globally. Wingate (2015), like Corder (1967), Cummings (1984), and Hakuta and Lee (2009) deviate from the perceived norm as cited by Kruger (2006; 2009) and Rees (2008) that being fluent in a language automatically makes one a good writer.

Aim of the Study, Research Questions and Research Objectives

The aim is to highlight areas of concern in academic writing for first-year university students.

1. What problems do first-year university students encounter in academic writing?
 2. What are the causes of academic writing challenges?
 3. Which writing trends do first-year university students commonly use?
 4. How does academic writing affect students' performance?
 5. Which measures can be applied to address challenges in academic writing?
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1. To find out what problems do first-year university students commonly encounter in academic writing.
 2. To determine the root causes of challenges in academic writing.
 3. To explore writing trends of first-year students.
 4. To analyse the impact of academic writing on students' performance.
 5. To provide recommendations that will help resolve some of the issues causing challenges in academic writing.

Research Design and Methodology

Research design may be exploratory, experimental, descriptive, etc. and each design underpins research methodology through a myriad of forms. The research design applied in this study is exploratory and descriptive as the researcher wants to uncover the underlying reasons that contribute to challenges in academic writing and analyse students' written work under different forms, namely, reports, business correspondence, language tests, etc. The exploratory design focuses on the trends in relation to the writing style and use of vocabulary, while the descriptive design manifests in analysing students' written materials and giving an account of any area that poses a challenge in academic writing.

The study used the qualitative method as the bedrock for exploring students' traits that impede them from attaining writing proficiency. The qualitative method has been chosen because it focuses on inductive reasoning, which analyses patterns and observations of the sampled population to enable the researcher to reach conclusions, which can be applied to broader generalisations. The information was obtained from students during unstructured interviews, focus group discussions and the submission of scripts, as these provided insights into the problem and uncovered underlying trends in academic writing. The writing output of 184 students in four different departments was collected and analysed for similarities and differences. Writing challenges are cross-curricula; hence, purposive sampling of first-year students was employed to gauge the level of writing challenges in different departments. The researcher was also involved in the study as an observer, took notes, and recorded events, which assisted in analysing the data (Creswell 2009). Students' scripts were collected and analysed over a semester so that a

varied sample could be collected to address the contentious issue that knowledge of grammar is the answer to writing challenges. An array of students' scripts collected included: answers to open-ended texts, unprepared creative writing tasks, writing and responding to business correspondence, summarising extracts and notes, writing reports, and the like. All written scripts made available were analysed by the researcher. The students were given feedback on the tasks completed after the lecturer graded their scripts and the students had to do corrections. The researcher explored the correlation between the graded task and the corrections not only to check whether there was any progression/understanding of not just the content, but also to ascertain whether the writing discourse was applied when correcting mistakes and errors. The overall writing style was also noted. Follow-up tasks were used to determine whether the suggested correction forms would be applied in other tasks to show broader understanding of concepts such as content and academic writing. Glasgow and Farrell (2007), who emphasised the importance of viewing students' writing as a process that needs to be nurtured through different stages, have alluded to this. A number of studies have explored the importance of the writing process to highlight the pivotal role that students need to embark on in order to be proficient writers. In essence, checking students' corrections of previously analysed texts is crucial because it will indicate whether there are embedded trends in the students' writing style.

The researcher incorporated an ethnographic design informed by the qualitative method where the researcher observed participants in their natural setting (the interaction was conducted in the university lecture halls and tutorial sessions). Data was then compiled from the point of view of the participants during unstructured interviews and during focus group discussions where active interaction took place between students. The researcher played the role of observer to avoid influencing opinions or stifling the atmosphere. Primary data was mainly collected on a continuous basis over the semester whenever there were written tasks. These were collected from different settings and then analysed.

Data Collection

Methods of data collection:

- Collecting students' scripts (this was done in every writing session regardless of the format of the writing, which could be a character sketch, a business plan, answers to open-ended questions, essays, etc.). This serves to analyse academic language use.
- Observations (to check the level of support given and/or engagement with the task in both individual and paired/group written tasks).
- Unstructured interviews (to address issues as and when they arise using open-ended questions to gain clarity).
- Focus group discussions (to obtain a general perspective from a number of students).

The researcher continually collected data from students' written work and conducted unstructured interviews to get the students' opinions on the written work covered in each lesson. The collection of data happened at the end of each writing lesson. First-year lecturers were also interviewed to obtain their views on what they thought were the writing challenges experienced by first-year students. Using different data collection methods allowed the researcher to implement triangulation to ensure research validity. As the students were involved in the writing process, they made corrections at each phase of the process. Scripts where students wrote corrections were also collected to gauge whether changes were implemented in accordance with academic writing. Data collected was used in the design of the suggested writing model.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of students' writing became an on-going process as the study covered a number of lessons over a semester. After each writing session, students' work was collected for analysis. The research methodology applied in this study incorporated an ethnographic method, which means that data collection and data analysis were concurrent.

Table 1. *Data Collection and Analysis of Written Work*

Activities	Method of collection	Method of data analysis
Writing proficiency	Students' scripts.	Is there a general flow (coherency) and appropriate link of arguments?
Error analysis	Individual students exposed to a standardised text.	Checking for mother-tongue interference/interlanguage.
Socio-cognitive theory of writing	Written scripts such as an essay, a text or answers to open-ended questions.	Checking students' scripts to see if there is negotiated interaction with interlocutors (Is the intended meaning clear?)

Findings

First-year students' challenges in academic writing are many and varied, for example, poor language skills, lack of coherency and consistency in arguing/supporting a point, poor organisation and many others. The main problem is that challenges in academic writing lead to poor academic performance. Academic performance refers to a measure that is used to determine if a student has attained the set goal in a particular task, for example, in a test, an assignment, an exam, etc.

To demonstrate how widespread writing challenges are, a group of first-year students discussed their experiences of academic writing across the curricula. The discussion touched on some of the areas that were raised in a different group the previous year. That group of students were asked to write their expectations of university before they enrolled and experiences at university towards the end of their first year. The students were made aware that the papers collected would not

be graded and they were asked to be as frank as possible as their contributions might highlight areas of teaching and learning that needed to be reviewed and possibly amended. These are some of the general comments and concerns from some of the focus group members for this study (a number of students shared their comments in their mother tongue (mostly Xhosa) and the researcher translated them into English. The information is based on students' views relating to English, which is their medium of instruction, and how it affects their academic performance, particularly in written tasks.

- My English is generally poor, but writing poses a greater challenge than speaking as there are rules to adhere to for formal writing.
- I have no problems with writing prepared pieces; the problem arises when I have to write information on a new topic.
- What I see as contributing to some of our problems is that we were mostly taught in our home language, so being at university and expected to write good English is a problem.
- I don't have problems with speaking English, but I find writing quite challenging, especially at university. My mother suggested that I should read more to improve as she thought that my poor performance was that I was not applying myself fully. My lecturer advised me to take notes in class, go through them later, and then summarise them so that I can get used to the writing discourse.
- There are certain ways that I have always applied in my writing, and because they were hardly ever corrected, it is hard for me to change how I write and this style of writing isn't helping me with serious pieces of writing like business correspondence.
- If we were given the rubric for our written tasks like reports and research, that will help us do better because we will use it to streamline our work, so without such information, we often end up performing poorly.
- I think my academic performance would improve if I were taught in my home language because English is posing problems for me, especially when it comes to writing. If we had a choice, some of us would write in our mother tongue because it will be easier to demonstrate our knowledge of content in the different modules.
- Writing in a language that you're not even fluent in speaking is bound to be challenging. My written work is often written in simple sentences, regardless of the task/s because I struggle to formulate sentences using complex and compound sentences. If I attempt to incorporate longer and better-structured sentences, I end up making too many mistakes and errors because I am not sure of the correct format.
- My writing has improved since I started university because the writing style that I have learned in my English Communication class has made me more conscious of how I should write.
- I don't think my challenges at university are just language-based. I am generally not an academically strong student, so I can't blame English as the source of my poor performance.

- For me, speaking English is not a problem, so it would help if some modules would be assessed through oral presentations like those that we do in some of our Communication tasks.
- Our performance might improve if the marked scripts from all our lecturers had specific guidelines on how we should correct our work and not just a cross or a question mark for incorrect answers. This will improve our writing and we will get better marks.
- According to me, most of us would greatly improve our English writing if all our lecturers encouraged us to write in this formal style of writing, but since most of them don't enforce this, then we concentrate on applying correct writing skills only in our English Communication tasks.
- Group work or paired written tasks would help us improve so that when we do individual academic written tasks later, we would at least have had practice.
- We are used to the kind of English writing that we use in social media where the form of writing is different. This creates problems for us because we must now unlearn some of our writing styles since they do not conform to academic writing style.
- Remedial support would help students who struggle with writing good English, but this should be part of the lessons throughout the curriculum. There is no academic writing support that we are aware of outside of what is covered in the Communication class.
- Continuous short assessments in formal English writing will help most students to improve their writing skills.
- Students would benefit if individual writing was stressed and encouraged in high school because in high school, we mostly worked on previous question papers as a class to prepare us for exams. We were not fully prepared for academic writing and that is why some of us are struggling in our studies now.
- The students who struggle with English academic writing must be offered extra support since without this support, they are unlikely to do well or even pass. This will have a negative impact on them because most students here are on NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme), and if a student fails, they will lose part of their funding or the affected students might not even get funding at all.
- English is our second language, therefore, expressing subject knowledge in writing persuasive, exploratory, narrative and creative pieces of writing is challenging for most of us.
- Students would generally do better if lecturers would be considerate when setting students' assessments. Assessments should be conducted using different formats, because they are currently based mostly on testing knowledge through writing. For examinations, it is just writing, this is unfair because not all students are good at expressing their knowledge in writing.
- Continuous assessments must have a higher percentage than examinations (60/40 or even 70/30) because examinations are stressful, so students are

unlikely to demonstrate good writing skills under enormous pressure where they are expected to not only demonstrate their subject knowledge, but also must do so in the allocated period.

Writing trends of first-year students rely heavily on plagiarism (academic theft where someone copies information without acknowledging the source and claiming that information or idea as their own) and group writing (working on individual tasks as a group and submitting the same or similar answers). Plagiarism is common in research-based questions and/or where students are expected to analyse concepts. In other cases, they apply plagiarism by paraphrasing information and then failing to acknowledge the source. In research-based questions, students also use google search to get related information. When analysing concepts, many students consult published online sources and copy information as it stands. Group writing leads to poor understanding of concepts as there is no thorough engagement with tasks.

Many students rely on rote learning where they regurgitate information in the same way that it was imparted. Rote learning affects performance because it relies on students recalling information word for word where it is generally repetition without understanding; therefore, if students cannot recall certain information, they are highly likely to perform poorly as there is no meaningful learning.

In order to address these challenges, some measures can be incorporated in lessons to help students better understand concepts. One way of doing this is for comprehension of tasks to be reinforced by applying teaching practices that are multimodal (where meaning is communicated through different forms to help with understanding).

Exposure to different formats of formal writing through recommended links, websites, publications, etc. will reinforce measures that underpin good writing skills, which will ultimately result in improved academic performance.

Furthermore, unstructured interviews conducted with first-year university students support the view that there are writing challenges that students are encountering, and students are hoping for a solution to these challenges to boost their academic performance. Based on writing skills analysed in students' scripts, some suggested recommendations that can help solve some of these challenges are listed below.

Analysis of students' writing highlighted challenges in the following areas:

- The students' focus was primarily on content, hence writing proficiency remains a challenge.
- Poor application of punctuation, which leads to run-on sentences, and/or changing the intended meaning altogether.
- Rote learning; students tend to regurgitate memorised subject content information, but cannot engage with the text/information in a critical manner.
- Literal translation from the mother tongue to the language of learning and teaching.

- Poor language use at different levels (morphology – at the word level and incorrect use at the syntactical level – sentence level).
- Use of informal language in formal writing tasks; this is because students struggle to differentiate between the two.
- Poor spelling, which might cause confusion (especially concerning homonyms, which are words that have the same pronunciation, but have different meanings, e.g., flower/flour, fore/four, seen/scene, etc.).
- Poor transition from one section to the next. This leads to a lack of clarity in controlling ideas/arguments.
- Poor vocabulary, which prevents students from conveying the intended meaning; this results in challenges when they are required to use more appropriate diction.
- Poor usage of different sentence structures to demonstrate good academic writing (simple sentences, complex sentences, compound sentences, etc.)
- Unsatisfactory engagement with the topic using own words to demonstrate comprehension. This was especially common when answering questions based on an extract, as some students ‘copied’ answers directly from the text word for word.
- Substandard organisation – this leads to incoherency as there is no consistency.

Other areas that contribute to these challenges are practical things that are needed to give students the option of having the mother tongue as a medium of instruction since a number of students indicated that such an option would help them perform better. These challenges are the shortage of trained teachers who can teach in African languages up to higher levels, lack of learning resources in African languages and funding to support this process in different languages as South Africa is a multilingual country. To counteract these three challenges, some people feel that these challenges can be overcome with government support. In support of this, Prof Schoole (in Govender 2022) stated that if the promotion of African languages can be made a national priority the same way that Afrikaans (a dialect of Dutch spoken in South Africa) was supported, then having African languages as medium of instruction is a feasible prospect. A point raised in favour of the African language as a medium of instruction is that this will elevate the position of African languages, which are currently on the periphery. Siluma (2022) concurs when highlighting that black languages have been historically discriminated against and marginalised, but it is time that these languages get national support to allow them to make inroads in education. Such a venture might enhance the academic performance of many students whose mother tongue is not English.

Conversely, “if learners and parents still cling to the notion that English is the only language that will provide opportunities and a future for learning in South Africa, they will not opt for mother-tongue education” (Prof Kaiser, in Govender 2022). This view is supported because English is an international language that is mostly used in commerce, on the internet and other fields used by an overwhelming majority of people.

Areas highlighting that there is Potential for Improvement

- Students' satisfactory performance when answering questions that required short answers.
- Satisfactory performance when writing information that the students have written before, although engaging with any section that was unfamiliar proved a bit challenging, even within the same text.
- Students performed well when correcting mistakes and errors shortly after being taken through the process for the written task/s.
- There was improved performance when writing was reassessed, because not only did the content improve, but the phrasing of statements improved as well.
- Improvement was noticed when students were given more time to draft their pieces of work and then submitting them for guidelines before writing a final draft.

Conclusion

The South African government is studying the feasibility of mother-tongue instruction in some schools which are showing an interest in this endeavour; hence, the government has established a task team to gauge how the process can be implemented. The primary focus of this task team is to encourage the teaching of different subjects in the mother tongue from grade 4 (Govender 2022). This initiative is supported not only for promoting marginalised languages, but also to improve students' performance as expert opinions state that "learning and conceptualisation improve significantly when children are taught in a language they are most familiar with" (Prof Jita, in Govender 2022). Some schools have taken part in this pilot project and general results shared indicate that mother-tongue instruction indeed helps students perform better in their studies. From the results shared, the Eastern Cape Province (the province where this study was conducted) was one of the areas where students were taught in their mother tongue (Xhosa). There was a marked improvement in performance from 40% and 50%, to more than 60% (Govender 2022). There are suggestions that all schools must make it compulsory to teach at least one African language to help promote indigenous languages across the spectrum as part of language in education policy (Siluma 2022).

According to Prof Madiba (in Govender 2022), a contributing factor to poor academic performance at tertiary level is attributed to English being the medium of instruction from grade 4 to tertiary education when not enough time has been granted to learners to grasp English. To highlight this problem, Madiba states that, "Three years is not enough for learners to switch to learning everything in English as the majority of learners come from an environment where English is not even spoken, so they cannot develop cognitive language proficiency skills in English."

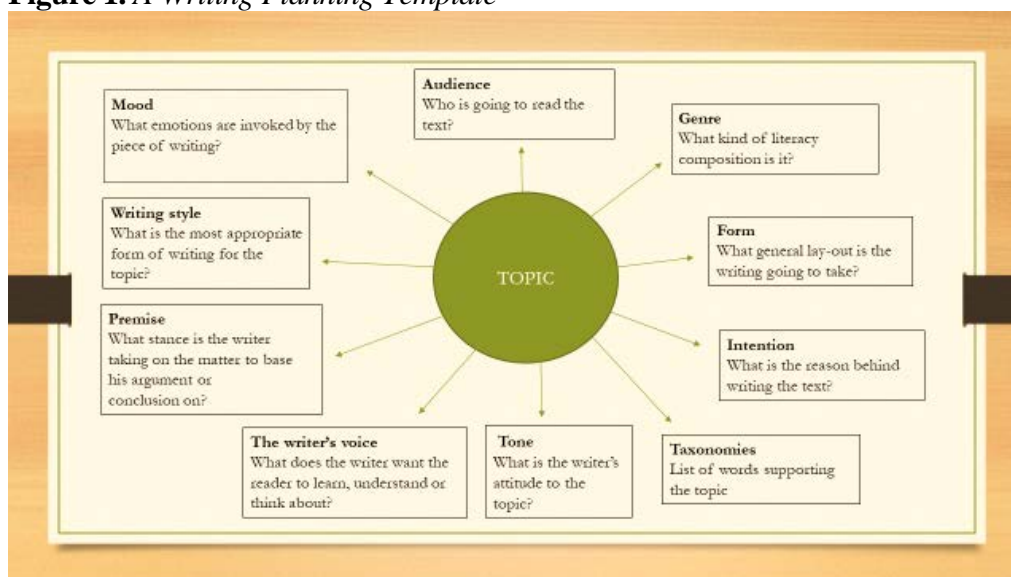
Other than the medium of instruction contributing to challenges in coping with tasks, teaching practice can also play a role in poor academic performance,

regardless of the language of teaching and learning and regardless of where in the world this happens. Di Zhang and Yu (2022) conducted a study in mainland China which was prompted by the students' challenges in engaging proficiently with creative writing and analysing texts for meaning. The analysis of data collected indicated that multimodal modes (where meaning is communicated through combinations of two or more forms like posters, newspapers, reports, etc.) helped students to express their creative ideas fully. What teachers must learn from this is that their teaching practice must incorporate tasks that are multimodal to enable students to have a broad scope of engagement, which is likely to improve performance.

Most first-year students struggle with their academic work mainly because of the language issue, but particularly because of poor writing skills. Although the majority of students are articulate in English, this does not necessarily imply that they can cope with the writing discourse. If emphasis on the knowledge of grammar was coupled with a format that assisted students to become proficient writers, this would lead to significant progress in students' writing skills, hence, a planning template as demonstrated in Figure 1 is supplied to act as a guide. This serves to highlight the different areas of focus in a piece of writing to help maintain good organisation and consistency in the writing process. In addition, the content and style of writing resulting from a discourse that encompasses rigorous engagement with the writing task through phases should include among other things:

1. A planning template (focusing on: the audience, the intention, taxonomies, the tone, genre, writing style, the mood, etc.).
2. Drafting (the background to the topic, ideas on explaining the message the student is writing to promote, supplying reasons for applying the tone and the mood, displaying how the different subsections are co-related).
3. Revising (clarifying any ambiguity, checking for relevance and correcting diction)
4. Editing (correcting grammar and spelling, checking for the consistency and coherency of the writer's point/s on the issue, etc.).

Based on the findings of the study, a good starting point for tackling students' writing challenges is a writing model, which can be used to assist students in their writing practice to avoid any chance of students going off track. The writing task would determine whether the focus should be on the writing style, the writer's voice, taxonomies and the like.

Figure 1. A Writing Planning Template

In summarising the study, the writing centre should cover areas that students struggle with, as indicated by lecturers, and the two parties must review this at the end of every semester in order to determine whether the process is yielding positive results for students or not. If there are any unforeseen challenges surfacing before the scheduled meeting, either of the two parties must intercede to prevent students from falling through the cracks, as this is pivotal for students' success.

Some areas of concern are that students might not be forthcoming with information pertaining to all the areas of concern during unstructured interviews. Some lecturers tend to view an exercise where students' challenges are highlighted as an area of weakness in the way they conduct lessons, so they might not be open to the process where they speak openly and honestly about any challenges that they encounter with their classes or with the delivery of lessons.

Ethical Issues

No students were singled out as having problems in writing, hence all the students' writing covering different formats was analysed to gauge the students' levels. No students were named or identified in anyway as the purpose of the study was solely to highlight problem areas and suggest solutions to help students cope with critical writing analysis in higher education.

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The Effectiveness of Online Teaching: A Study in the Romanian Context

By Oana-Maria Păstae*

This article focuses on the effectiveness of online teaching in the academic environment and outlines the research method, data collection, and instrument development used in the study. The survey seeks to explore students' perceptions of online learning usage, frequency, and overall satisfaction at the "Constantin Brancusi" University, the Faculty of Medical and Behavioural Sciences, carefully considering their experience and performance in order to determine whether online teaching is a viable substitute for face-to-face teaching. It was found that students liked the online experience and most viewed the Internet as a rich source of information and authentic materials having offered more resources in the online environment than in face-to-face, but a few things need to be changed such as new investments in course design, instructor support, and course evaluations. Research suggests that teachers were prepared for the online teaching and most students had almost the same outcomes in the online environment as in the face-to-face format.

Keywords: *online teaching, face-to-face teaching, survey, digital tools, higher education*

Introduction

The success of e-learning depends on appropriate teaching methods, course content, assessment criteria, students' motivation, flexibility, time efficiency, resources and interaction. Curriculum development for online learning courses requires more than simply moving traditional instruction methods into the online environment, it is about transforming them. In synchronous learning teachers use media such as video conferencing, live chatting, podcasts and live-streaming lectures because in this way learners are encouraged to participate rather than feeling isolated.

Telling is not teaching and listening is not learning. Santhi et al. (2017) consider that in such a situation, adopting interactive teaching methodology in the language classroom is the only way to make the learners get motivated and enthusiastic in the learning process. Even if teaching and learning experiences are demanding of both teachers and students, there are tools to support online courses and do almost everything that could be done in face-to-face courses. Boettcher and Conrad (2016) consider that we have social media tools and the "Internet of things" connecting everyone with everything, we have real-time synchronous classrooms, massive open online courses (MOOCs), spontaneous collaboration tools, an almost infinite number of web tools, smart phones, and wearables that support synchronous chat, video messaging, and more than that learners can be

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engaged in extensive collaborative and reflective activities, from anywhere, at any time.

Suresh et al. (2018) believe that e-learning platforms offer many advantages to learners such as control over the content, control over the time spent learning, and thus the process can be adapted according to the learner needs and objectives of learning.

Yusuf and Al-Banawi (2013) consider that when using e-learning platforms there are also some obstacles in students' process of learning, such as decreased motivation in students, delayed feedback or help because teachers are not always available and the feeling of isolation due to lack of physical presence of classmates.

This paper aims to illustrate students' perceptions on the effectiveness of online teaching and learning in a university that used for the first time the e-learning platform Microsoft Teams and the online environment because of the pandemic. It provides conclusive results which show that e-learning was attractive to students but improvements need to be done in course design, instructor support, evaluations and Internet connection.

Literature Review

Distance education is not new, the technology is new. It has evolved from correspondence courses to what we have today. E-learning or online learning is a relatively new phenomenon associated with the development of the Internet in the 1990s and has its origins in distance education both using media to support massive learning without face-to-face interaction. The evolution of the e-learning model has been linked to the evolution of the World Wide Web and there are many definitions of e-learning.

Academic experts in the field of education and Information and Communications Technology gave explicit definitions of the term "e-learning". Rosenberg (2001, p. 48), an independent consultant specializing in knowledge management and e-learning strategy, describes e-learning as "the use of internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance." In 2003, Stockley defined e-learning as "the delivery of a learning, training or education program by electronic means. E-learning involves the use of a computer or electronic device (e.g., a mobile phone) in some way to provide training, educational or learning material." Horton (2006, p. 1) provides a succinct working definition of e-learning: "E-learning is the use of information and computer technologies to create learning experiences." McVay Lynch and Roecker (2007) elaborate the following definition:

E-learning is facilitated and supported through the use of information and communication technology, e-learning can cover a spectrum of activities from supported learning, to blended learning (the combination of traditional and e-learning practices), to learning that is entirely online. (p. 6)

Garrison (2017, p. 21) describes e-learning as "the utilization of electronically mediated asynchronous and synchronous communication for the purpose of

thinking and learning collaboratively.” Cambridge dictionary gives the following definition: “learning done by studying at home using computers and courses provided on the internet.” Wright (2015) thinks that e-learning transformed education pushing teaching and learning to evolve:

E-learning is pushing teaching and learning design to evolve and reflect a more authentic and accurate representation of how we as humans, actually learn. What appears to be a “new” era of knowledge delivery, actually reflects how humans have traded in knowledge for millions of years. Our individualistic educational culture is beginning to recognize the wisdom of collective principles in learning and knowledge. (p. 20)

As our smartphone became glued to our hands, M-Learning or Mobile Learning has also changed the education being around in one form or the other since the early 2000s. Cambridge dictionary defines M-learning as: “the use of electronic devices such as smart phones, laptop computers, and tablets as teaching devices.” Some of the advantages of M-learning are: providing learning on the go because the content is available in your pockets, supporting all types of media to create a dynamic and engaging experience, enabling students to learn at their own pace and simplifying communication. But as any other type of device, mobiles can distract learners who open the mobile to learn something and end up using social media; a lack of Internet connection or poor connection quality lead to frustration and it is not conducive to recall the material and, more than that, it is more a review of information rather than prolonged learning. Brown and Mbatia (2015, p. 116) consider that it is not simply learning while in motion and that mobile learning can offer “seamless access to learning support.”

Motaghian et al. (2013) carried out a survey in Iran collecting data from 115 universities in order to measure adoption of e-learning systems. Results showed that there is an increase in the adoption of the e-learning system among the instructors.

Distance learning has continued to grow in many different directions, another form that helps students get engaged and supports learning is the virtual reality defined as a computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional image or environment a person using special electronic equipment such as a headset can interact within a seemingly real or physical way. VR headsets aim to create an immersive language learning environment where users can move, talk, make decisions, and interact with the world around them in a virtual way. This revolutionizes the way that people learn and practice language because users can talk to a passenger on a train, order food in a restaurant, so they can practice their knowledge in real-time conditions.

Hansson (2005) gives the example of Nordplus, a Nordic network of educators and a successful innovation in game design, today called modern massive multiplayer online game (MMOG). The overall idea of the mother-network is to provide a comprehensive ‘edutainment’ design being mediated by a software platform—a virtual 3D-server hosting a platform containing a chat, a world (D-tale) to move about in, and a building-function.

Hodges et al. (2020) distinguish between online education and emergency remote teaching considering that online education presupposes an existing organizational infrastructure, serving the purposes of online teaching and learning.

Methodology

The purpose of this research study is to explore students' perceptions on the effectiveness of online learning usage, frequency, and overall satisfaction at the "Constantin Brancusi" University, the Faculty of Medical and Behavioural Sciences. The target population is represented by students from "Constantin Brancusi" University of Tg-Jiu who share common e-learning courses. 105 respondents of the study described the experiences in the e-learning environment they have used in the higher education setting. They were also selected on the basis of convenience sampling. The students from the first year of study don't know each other outside the e-learning environment and the students from the other years of study have the possibility to attend both face-to-face and online courses. The environment framework is within the Microsoft Teams platform which allows meetings for free with up to 300 students, access persistent chat, organizing classrooms and assignments, collaborating and sharing files, and access class materials. Some of the most important features of the online platform are: assignments, screen sharing, whiteboard, raise your hand, custom background, breakout rooms.

Fowler and Floyd (2008) point out that survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by using questionnaires and interviews for data collection. He considers that a survey brings together three methodologies: sampling, designing questions and data collecting.

This quantitative research study used a survey questionnaire to obtain feedback from students on their perceptions of the use and satisfaction with online learning through e-learning platforms. The research consisted of a survey based on a questionnaire of 15 questions. Data were analyzed using SPSS 26 statistics programme. The analyzed sample was 105 students, distributed by 7 specializations as follows: 15 Pharmacy Assistant students in the 1st year of study, 15 Pharmacy Assistant students in the 3rd year of study, 15 Nursing students in the 1st year of study, 15 Physical education and sport students in the 2nd year of study, 15 Kinesiotherapy students in the 2nd year of study, 15 Midwives students in the 1st year of study, 15 Midwives students in the 4th year of study within Constantin Brancusi University.

The survey had two goals: (1) to determine how effective the e-learning was, and (2) to gather feedback from students about online learning usage, frequency, and overall satisfaction.

Data Collection Method

Data was collected online by filling a questionnaire that was sent by e-mail and uploaded on the e-platform during the first semester of the 2020–2021

academic year. The participants in the study received information about the purpose of the survey and approved the participation to the study. The e-mail addresses were not collected in order to respect anonymity and confidentiality.

The Research Instrument

The questionnaire included items corresponding to the fifteen research questions. For the first research question, concerning the experience with online education, a 5 point scale was used (5=excellent, 4=good, 3=average, 2=below average, 1-poor). For the second question, participants chose the device they used (laptop, smartphone, tablet, desktop). For the third question concerning the time spent online, they had 5 multiple choices (1-3 hours, 3-5 hours, 5-7 hours, 7-10 hours, 10+ hours). For the fourth question about the effectiveness of remote learning, a 5 point scale was also used (5=extremely effective, 4=very effective, 3=moderately effective, 2=slightly effective, 1=not at all effective). For the fifth, the seventh, the eighth, the ninth, the tenth, the eleventh, the twelfth, the thirteenth, the fourteenth and the fifteenth question, a 4-point scale was used (yes, absolutely; yes, but with someone else's help/yes, but it depended on the course/yes, but I had less interaction/yes, but not sufficient; not really; no, not at all). For the sixth question concerning how helpful teachers have been in the online environment, a 5 point scale was used, where, 5=extremely helpful, 4=very helpful, 3=moderately helpful, 2=slightly helpful, 1=not at all helpful.

Research question 1: How was your experience with the online education?

Research question 2: What device have you used for online learning?

Research question 3: How much time have you spent each day in the online environment?

Research question 4: How effective has remote learning been for you?

Research question 5: Have you enjoyed learning remotely?

Research question 6: How helpful have your teachers been while studying online?

Research question 7: Has online teaching been frustrating because of technical problems?

Research question 8: Have teachers been prepared for online teaching and using online tools?

Research question 9: Have you had more interaction in online learning or in face-to-face learning?

Research question 10: Have the teachers provided you with the necessary learning materials – PowerPoint presentations, course syllabus etc.?

Research question 11: Have teachers assigned you homework/tasks during online teaching?

Research question 12: Have you achieved the same learning outcomes that are at least equivalent to those of in-person courses?

Research question 13: Have you had more resources (PowerPoint presentation, course syllabus, visual and audio material) when teaching online compared to traditional teaching?

Research question 14: Has it been convenient to you that you could access your online courses any time and from any place?

Research question 15: Has it been easy for you to use the remote learning tools: MS Teams, Zoom, UCB platform etc.?

Results of the Empirical Analysis

The survey developed for the study was designed to collect quantitative data for analysis. The 105 students, distributed by 7 specializations expressed their opinions concerning online learning. This descriptive survey research study sought to answer the 15 research questions through the collection of convenience sampling of students.

The centralized data, in absolute value and in values expressed as a percentage, are presented in Tables 1-8 and Figures 1-7.

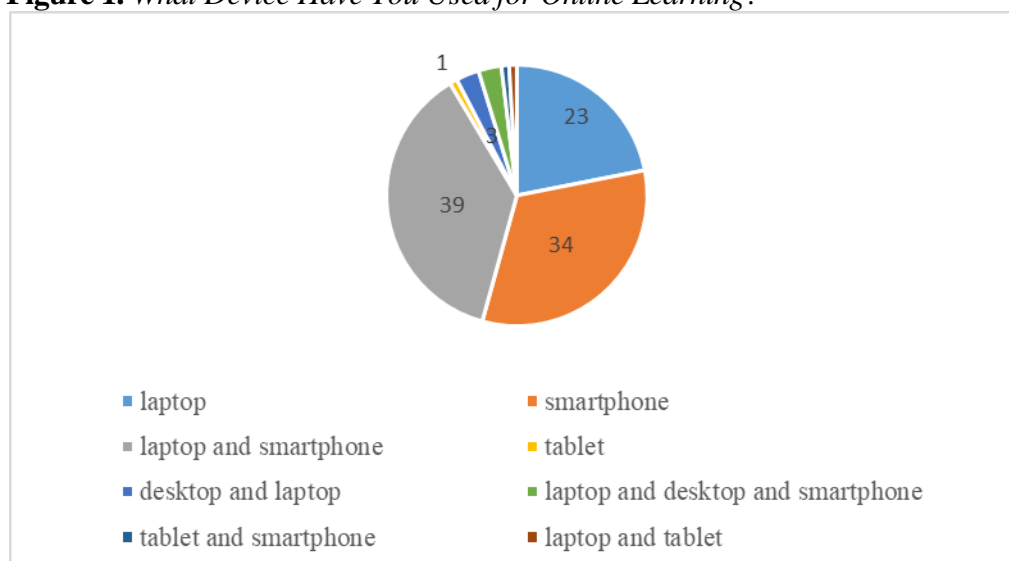
Table 1. How Was Your Experience with Online Education?

Academic specialization	Answers										Total
	Poor		Below average		Average		Good		Excellent		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Pharmacy Assistant I	0	0%	0	0%	2	13.34%	13	86.66%	0	0%	15
Pharmacy Assistant III	0	0%	1	6.67%	3	20%	11	73.33%	0	0%	15
Nursing I	0	0%	0	0%	2	13.33%	10	66.67%	3	20%	15
Physical education and sport II	0	0%	0	0%	3	20%	11	73.33%	1	6.67%	15
Kinesiotherapy II	0	0%	0	0%	3	20%	10	66.67%	2	13.34%	15
Midwives I	0	0%	0	0%	1	6.67%	13	86.66%	1	6.67%	15
Midwives IV	1	6.67%	0	0%	0	0%	14	93.33%	0	0%	15
Total	1	0.95%	1	0.95%	14	13.33%	82	78.10%	7	6.67%	105

*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

*N- is the number of students who chose that option; % represents the percentage of students who opted for that answer from the total of the sample (15, respectively 105 in the TOTAL column).

We note that 78.10% of the 105 students consider that their experience of online learning was *good*, 6.67% consider that the experience was *excellent*, 13.33% consider it *average*, 0.95% of students rate online learning as *poor* and 0.95% *below average*. Midwives students from the 1st year of study are the most enthusiastic about online learning, with 6.67% of them appreciating it as *excellent* and 86.66% of them appreciating it as *good*, followed by Midwives students in the 4th year of study, 93.33% of them appreciating the online interaction as *good*. We also notice that 20% of Nursing students from the 1st year of study appreciated the online learning as *excellent*. (Here these results would be related to the typology of the courses. Pharmacy students need practice in a laboratory, and those from Physical education and sport need practice in gym or on sport grounds etc.).

Figure 1. *What Device Have You Used for Online Learning?*

*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

Figure 1 presents the distribution of the 105 students analyzed according to the answer to the second question, Q2. We note that 39 of the 105 students used a laptop and smartphone for their online learning, 34 used a smartphone, 23 a laptop, 3 used a desktop and laptop or a laptop/desktop/smartphone and 1 used only a tablet, a tablet and a laptop, a tablet and a smartphone at the same time. Consequently, students preferred smartphones for communication because they have easily access to the Internet. Most students did not have laptops so taking part in courses on a smartphone was not so convenient especially when writing and uploading homework.

Table 2. *How Much Time Have You Spent Each Day on Online Education?*

Academic specialization	Answers										Total N
	1-3 hours		3-5 hours		5-7 hours		7-10 hours		10+ hours		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Pharmacy Assistant I	1	6.67%	7	46.66%	3	20%	2	13.33%	2	13.34%	15
Pharmacy Assistant III	3	20%	6	40%	5	33.33%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Nursing I	6	40%	6	40%	1	6.67%	2	13.33%	0	0%	15
Physical education and sport II	3	20%	11	73.33%	1	6.67%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Kinesiotherapy II	2	13.33%	7	46.66%	6	40%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Midwives I	3	20%	12	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Midwives IV	0	0%	14	93.33%	1	6.67%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Total	18	17.14%	63	60%	17	16.19%	5	4.76%	2	1.91%	105

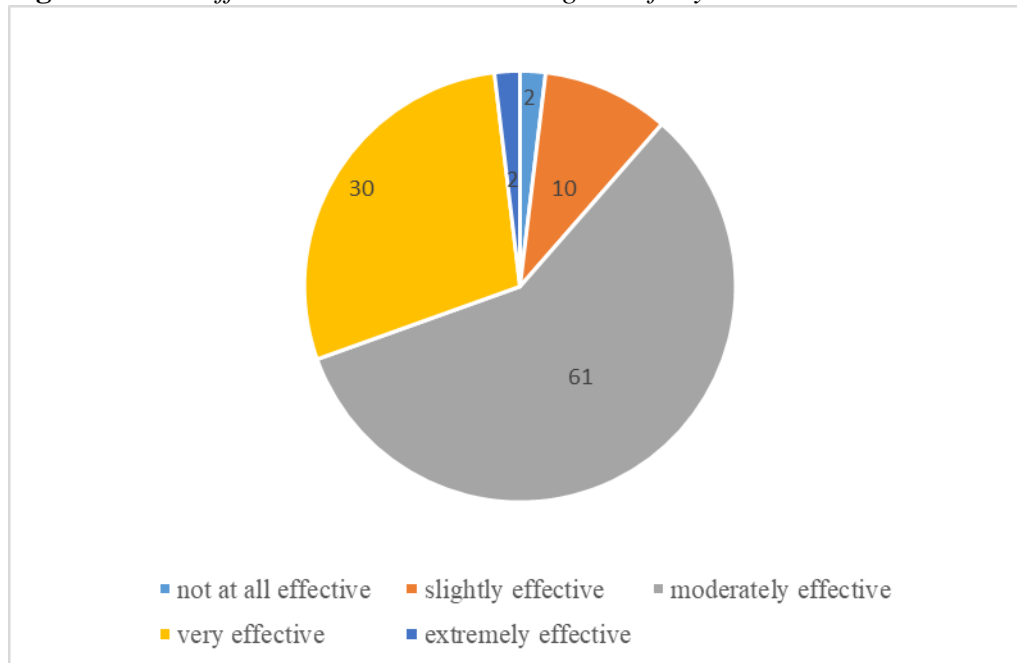
*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

*N- is the number of students who chose that option; % represents the percentage of students who opted for that answer from the total of the sample (15, respectively 105 in the TOTAL column).

The data in Table 2 show that 60% of respondents spent 3-5 hours on the platform, 17.14% spent 1-3 hours, 16.19% spent 5-7 hours, 4.76% spent 7-10 hours and only 1.91% spent over 10 hours in the online environment.

We are living in ultra-connected times so most of the students spend more time on social media, online games and streaming media instead of revising or studying so they pack around 10-14 hours a day. If they attend 3 courses a day, do some homework, read the teaching material and after that watch a movie, play a game or check Facebook and Instagram, they will spend the whole day online.

Figure 2. How Effective has Remote Learning been for you?



*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

Figure 2 shows how effective the remote learning was for the students. For 61% the remote learning was *moderately effective*, for 30% was *very effective* and for 10% *slightly effective*. 2% of respondents do not consider remote learning effective and 1% think that it is *extremely effective*.

In Figure 2, we present the distribution of the 105 students analyzed according to the answer to the fourth question, Q4.

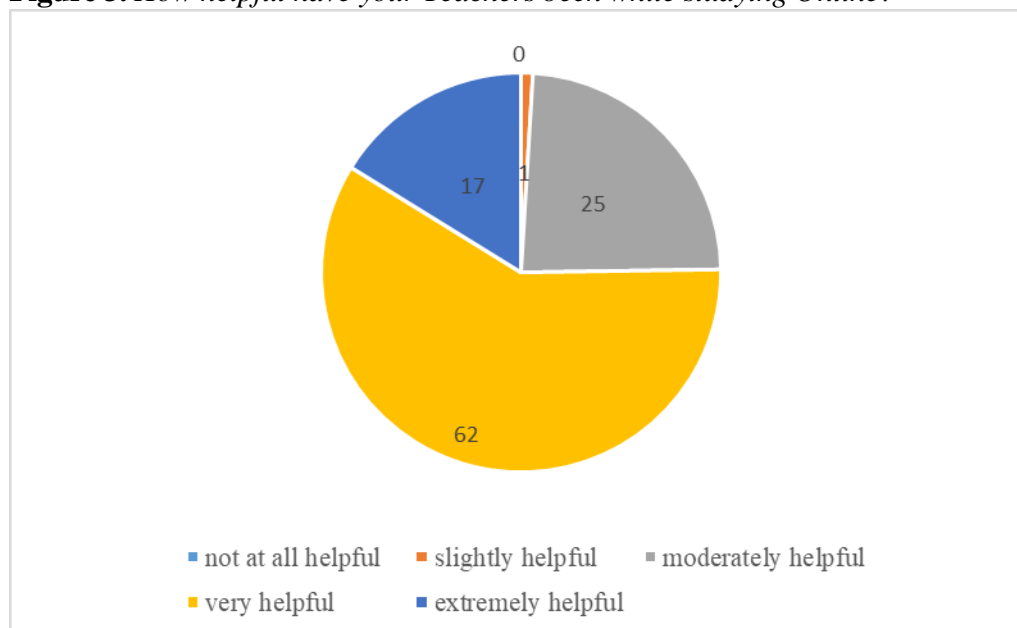
Table 3. *Have you Enjoyed Learning Remotely?*

Academic specialization	Answers								Total
	Yes, absolutely		Yes, but I would like to change a few things		Not really		No, not at all		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Pharmacy Assistant I	6	40%	8	53.33%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Pharmacy Assistant III	6	40%	3	20%	6	40%	0	0%	15
Nursing I	6	40%	6	40%	3	20%	0	0%	15
Physical education and sport II	9	60%	5	33.33%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Kinesiotherapy II	3	20%	8	53.33%	4	26.67%	0	0%	15
Midwives I	4	26.67%	9	60%	2	13.33%	0	0%	15
Midwives IV	1	6.67%	9	60%	5	33.33%	0	0%	15
Total	35	33.33%	48	45.72%	22	20.95%	0	0%	105

*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

*N- is the number of students who chose that option; % represents the percentage of students who opted for that answer from the total of the sample (15, respectively 105 in the TOTAL column).

Clearly, the transition to online learning is not without its challenges. Table 3 shows us that 45.72% of the students liked the experience but they would like to change a few things, 33.33% absolutely liked to learn online while 20.95% did not really like it. Now that we know how students feel about this new learning environment, however, better remote learning solutions could be built.

Figure 3. *How helpful have your Teachers been while studying Online?*

*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

Online teachers need to be tech-savvy and comfortable with the latest online tools and technology. Using technology regularly in their day-to-day life can help teachers stay up to date with the latest innovations. Teachers need to help students

to use education technology platforms for uploading homework, accessing teaching materials, doing tasks etc. As Figure 3 shows us, 62 of respondents considered that teachers were *very helpful* while 25 considered teachers were *moderately helpful*. For 17 students, teachers were *extremely helpful* and for 2 students, they were *slightly helpful* in the online environment.

Table 4. *Has Online Teaching been Frustrating because of Technical Problems?*

Academic specialization	Answers								Total
	Yes, absolutely		Sometimes		Not really		No, not at all		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Pharmacy Assistant I	1	6.67%	12	80%	0	0%	2	13.33%	15
Pharmacy Assistant III	1	6.67%	12	80%	0	0%	2	13.33%	15
Nursing I	2	13.33%	10	66.67%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%	15
Physical education and sport II	0	0%	4	26.67%	9	60%	2	13.33%	15
Kinesiotherapy II	0	0%	13	86.67%	2	13.33%	0	0%	15
Midwives I	1	6.67%	11	73.33%	1	6.67%	2	13.33%	15
Midwives IV	1	6.67%	13	86.67%	0	0%	1	6.67%	15
Total	6	5.71%	75	71.43%	14	13.34%	10	9.52%	105

*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

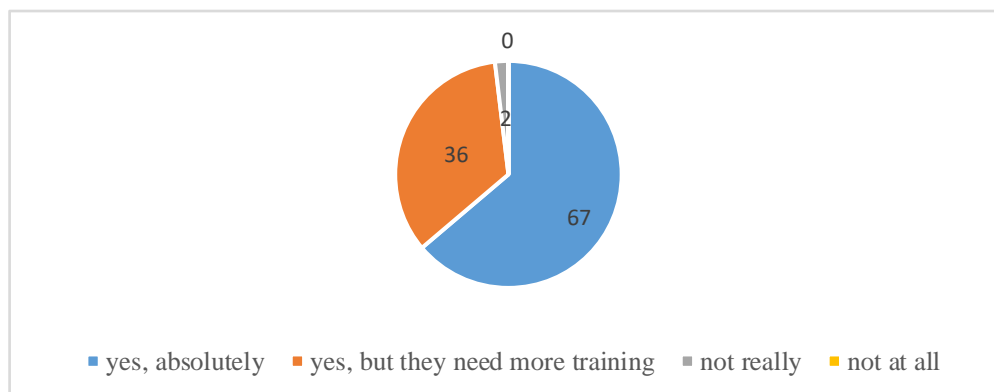
*N- is the number of students who chose that option; % represents the percentage of students who opted for that answer from the total of the sample (15, respectively 105 in the TOTAL column).

E-Learning, as a fairly new way of learning, provides a multitude of new opportunities but also presents difficulties for online students because of bad Internet connection, unclear instructions, lack of communication, course quality and presentation etc.

As we can see from the above data, 71.43% of the respondents sometimes had technical problems, 13.34% did not really have such problems, 9.52% did not have problems at all and 5.71% really had technical problems.

In Table 4, we presented the distribution of the 105 students analyzed according to the answer to the seventh question, Q7.

Figure 4. *Have Teachers been prepared for Online Teaching and using Online Tools?*



*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

Many teachers received a guide for using the platform and little support for using all the features of the platform. From my point of view, older teachers who are not accustomed to the new technology had a big problem of using the online platform.

67 of the respondents answered that teachers were *absolutely* prepared for online teaching, 36 considered that *they needed more training*, and 2 thought they are *not really prepared*.

In Figure 4, we presented the distribution of the 105 students analyzed according to the answer to the eighth question, Q8.

Table 5. *Have you had more Interaction in Online Learning or in Face-to-Face Learning?*

Academic specialization	Answers								Total
	Yes, absolutely		Yes, but it depended on the course		Not really		No, not at all		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Pharmacy Assistant I	5	33.33%	9	60%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Pharmacy Assistant III	0	0%	10	66.67%	4	26.67%	1	6.66%	15
Nursing I	4	26.67%	8	53.33%	3	20%	0	0%	15
Physical education and sport II	3	20%	5	33.33%	7	46.67%	0	0%	15
Kinesiotherapy II	0	0%	9	60%	6	40%	0	0%	15
Midwives I	1	6.67%	13	86.67%	1	6.66%	0	0%	15
Midwives IV	0	0%	14	93.33%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Total	13	12.38%	68	64.76%	23	21.91%	1	0.95%	105

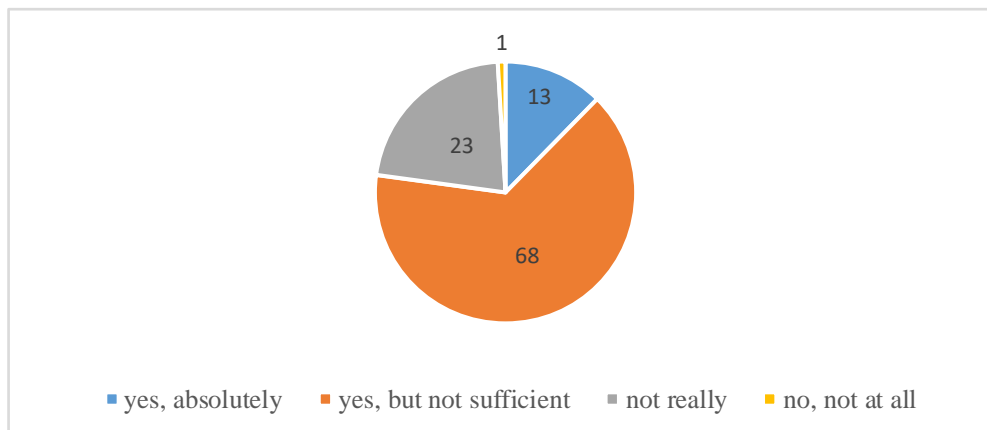
*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

*N- is the number of students who chose that option; % represents the percentage of students who opted for that answer from the total of the sample (15, respectively 105 in the TOTAL column).

For 64.76% of the students, interaction depended on the course while 21.91% did not really have interaction. 12.38% absolutely had interaction and 0.95% did not have at all.

Traditional learning is real-time or synchronous learning, while e-Learning can be both synchronous and asynchronous so one of the biggest challenges of online learning is, unfortunately, the common lack of guidance, communication, and support from teachers. That's why teachers have to make themselves available via email and even direct messaging apps to answer all of the questions and concerns in real-time. Engaging and motivating students in the process of teaching is a difficult but necessary aspect. Some disciplines provide the opportunity to engage and motivate students, but when a discipline like skiing is taught online without practicing on the slope, this make students believe that their effort will lead to learning only in theory not in practice.

Figure 5. Have the Teachers provided you with the Necessary Learning Materials – Power Point Presentations, Course Syllabus etc.?



*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

Because learners have different learning styles or a combination of styles, online teachers should design course materials in a way to answer all the students' needs.

The responses, illustrated in Figure 5, show a desire to have increased access to class/lecture notes and slides. 68 of students expressed the idea of not having sufficient learning material, 23 answered they were not really provided with learning materials, 13 absolutely had sufficient learning material and 1 did not get any materials at all.

In Figure 5, we presented the distribution of the 105 students analyzed according to the answer to the tenth question, Q10.

Table 6. Have Teachers assigned you Homework/Tasks during Online Teaching?

Academic specialization	Answers								Total
	Yes, absolutely		Yes, but not sufficient		Not really		No, not at all		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Pharmacy Assistant I	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Pharmacy Assistant III	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Nursing I	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Physical education and sport II	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Kinesiotherapy II	12	80%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Midwives I	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Midwives IV	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Total	102	97.14%	2	1.91%	1	0.95%	0	0%	105

*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

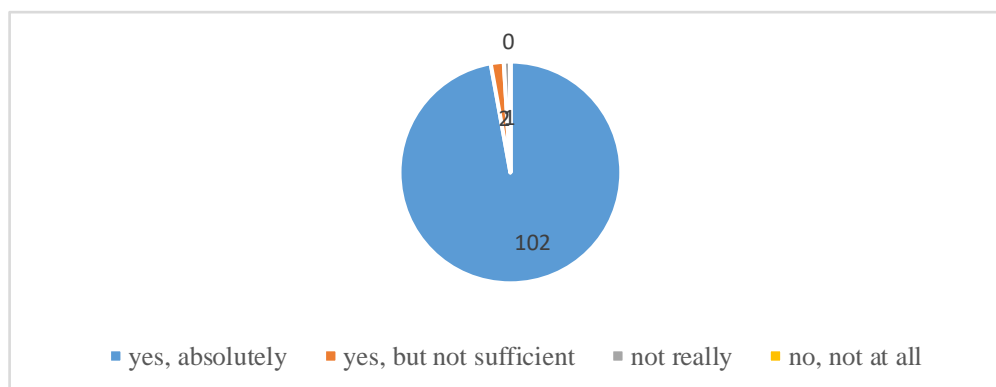
*N- is the number of students who chose that option; % represents the percentage of students who opted for that answer from the total of the sample (15, respectively 105 in the TOTAL column).

Homework remains as important as in traditional teaching because it helps students to retain information taught by the teacher, develops study habits and independent learning and bridges the gap between university and home. According

to our survey, 97.14% of respondents were given homework, 1.91% were given homework but not sufficient and 0.95% did not really have homework to do.

In Table 6, we presented the distribution of the 105 students analyzed according to the answer to the eleventh question, Q11.

Figure 6. *Have you achieved the Same Learning Outcomes that are at Least Equivalent to those of In-person Courses?*



*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students

The analysis of data from Figure 6 shows that 102 of respondents considered that they had the same learning outcomes, 2 thought they had outcomes, but not sufficient and 1 considered he did not really have the same outcomes. In Figure 6, we presented the distribution of the 105 students analyzed according to the answer to the twelfth question, Q12.

Table 7. *Have you had more Resources (Power Point Presentation, Course Syllabus, Visual and Audio Material) when teaching Online compared to Traditional Teaching?*

Academic specialization	Answers								Total
	Yes, absolutely		Yes, but it depended on the course		Not really		No, not at all		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Pharmacy Assistant I	8	53.33%	6	40%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Pharmacy Assistant III	4	26.67%	7	46.67%	4	26.66%	0	0%	15
Nursing I	6	40%	8	53.33%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Physical education and sport II	4	26.67%	4	26.66%	7	46.67%	0	0%	15
Kinesiotherapy II	6	40%	7	46.67%	2	13.33%	0	0%	15
Midwives I	5	33.33%	9	60%	1	6.67%	0	0%	15
Midwives IV	0	0%	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Total	33	31.43%	56	53.33%	16	15.24%	0	0%	105

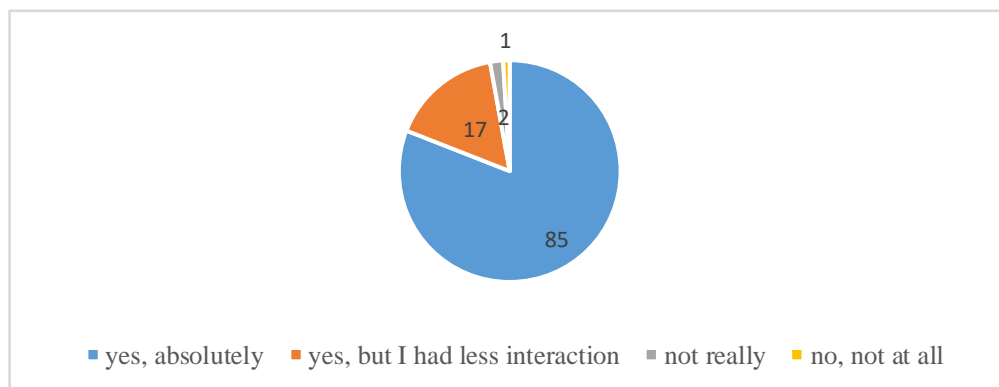
*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

*N- is the number of students who chose that option; % represents the percentage of students who opted for that answer from the total of the sample (15, respectively 105 in the TOTAL column).

Table 7 shows that 31.43% of students had more resources in the online environment than in face-to-face, 53.33% answered that it depended on the course

and 15.24% did not really have access to more resources. 53.33% of Pharmacy Assistant students absolutely had more resources and 46.67% of Physical education and sport students did not really have. 100% of Midwives students had absolutely more resources in the online environment but it depended on the course.

Figure 7. Has it been Convenient to you that you could Access your Online Courses any Time and from any Place?



*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

Figure 7 shows that for 85 of respondents it was convenient to access the online courses any time and from any place while 17 students considered the same but with less interaction than face-to-face. For 2 students, it was not really convenient to access the online courses any time and from anywhere and for 1 student is was not at all convenient. Nursing students from the 1st year of study are the most enthusiastic about accessing courses from anywhere followed by Midwives and Pharmacy Assistants students in the 1st year of study.

Table 8. Has it been easy for you to use the Remote Learning Tools: MS Teams, Zoom, UCB platform etc.?

Academic specialization	Answers								Total
	Yes, absolutely		Yes, but with someone else's help		Not really		No, not at all		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Pharmacy Assistant I	10	66.67%	3	20%	2	13.33%	0	0%	15
Pharmacy Assistant III	15	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Nursing I	5	33.33%	10	66.67%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Physical education and sport II	9	60%	6	40%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Kinesiotherapy II	9	60%	3	20%	3	20%	0	0%	15
Midwives I	13	86.67%	2	13.33%	0	0%	0	0%	15
Midwives IV	14	93.33%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6.67%	15
Total	75	71.43%	24	22.86%	5	4.76%	1	0.95%	105

*Data source: data processed by the author based on data collected through questionnaires distributed to students.

*N- is the number of students who chose that option; % represents the percentage of students who opted for that answer from the total of the sample (15, respectively 105 in the TOTAL column).

The analysis of data from Table 8 shows that 71.43% of respondents easily used the remote learning tools, 22.86% could use them with someone else's help while for 4.76% it was not really easy to use followed by 0.95% for whom it wasn't easy at all. Pharmacy Assistant students from the 3rd year of study did not have any problems using the remote learning tools, followed by the 4th year Midwives students with 93.33%. Most of the population of the world in general, and the learner community in particular, access the internet many times a day to look for information, establish communication or simply for entertainment. Since almost all of this content is available in English, some degree of facility with technology and language is already prevalent amongst students (Manssour 2021).

Garrison talks about three types of presence: social presence, cognitive presence and teaching presence. He defines social presence as "largely responsible for setting the academic climate and is defined by three overlapping components—interpersonal/affective communication, open communication, and sustained group cohesion." (Garrison 2017, p. 38).

Cognitive presence means "facilitating the analysis, construction and confirmation of meaning and understanding within a community of learners through sustained reflection and discourse." (Garrison 2017, p. 50).

Teaching presence is defined as performing "an essential role in identifying relevant societal knowledge, creating learning experiences that facilitate reflection and discourse, and diagnosing learning outcomes". (Garrison 2017, p. 70).

Discussion

As the results of our survey showed, this transition from paper to paperless environment suggests that most of the students enjoyed online learning and, in general, they have access to modern resources such as laptops, smartphones, Wi-Fi routers. Consequently, students preferred smartphones for communication because in this way they had easily access to the Internet. Most students did not have laptops so taking part in courses on a smartphone was not so convenient especially when writing and uploading homework. Reddy et al. (2022), who did a research on Pacific students' readiness and perception to use mobile phones for learning in higher education, proved that a significantly high percentage of the Pacific students perceived that mobile devices are a good learning and communication tool, make learning more engaging, and facilitate self-paced and self-directed learning and they viewed m-learning as an effective innovative tool for education. So, online learning, as a fairly new way of learning, provides a multitude of new opportunities but sometimes presents difficulties because of poor Internet connection, unclear instructions, lack of communication, course quality and presentation etc.

Thus, this remains the burden of the Romanian universities to provide updated online platforms for successful e-learning because 71.43% of the respondents sometimes had technical problems. Consequently, the findings indicate that the online platform Microsoft Teams needs to be supplemented by other online software and social media sites. The results of the study are consistent with the

findings of Rana et al. (2014) who analyzed students' challenges to access Mukuba University website. Twenty-six out of thirty students claimed that the Mukuba website was usually down on weekend and fifteen out of thirty lecturers had the similar challenge.

We also found that the relative effects of online learning varied across academic subject areas. 68 of students expressed the idea of not having sufficient learning material, 23 answered they were not really provided with learning materials, 13 absolutely had sufficient learning material and 1 did not get any materials at all. Our results show that there is a need to improve the quality of all online courses to ensure that their learning outcomes are equal to those of face-to-face courses, regardless of the academic course. Such an improvement strategy would require substantial new investments in course design, instructor support, and course evaluations.

Overall, our findings indicate that 78.10% of the 105 students consider their experience with online learning as a good one and are in line with Neema and Alfred (2014) who concluded that e-learning impacted positively on students' academic performance. 102 of respondents considered that they had the same learning outcomes in the online environment.

Our survey shows that 71.43% of respondents easily used the remote learning tools, 22.86% could use them with someone else's help, for 4.76% it was not really easy and for 0.95% it was not easy at all. Pharmacy Assistant students from the 3rd year of study did not have any problems using the remote learning tools, followed by the 4th year Midwives students with 93.33%.

The study led us to note that online teaching was effective for most students from "Constantin Brancusi" University of Tg-Jiu and their experience with the online teaching was good.

Conclusion

Focusing on students' experiences, the study investigated the effectiveness of online learning using e-learning platforms. It was found that students liked the online experience but they would like to change a few things, however, most participants agreed that online classes were generally of benefit to students, and most viewed the Internet as a rich source of information and authentic materials having offered more resources in the online environment than in face-to-face.

Online learning in the 21st century does offer learners a better way and allows both teachers and students to achieve learning outcomes more effectively and efficiently, but new paths, solutions and innovations need to be found by universities in order to better support online learning and teaching. The effectiveness of e-learning is determined, according to Tham and Werner (2005, p. 15), by three elements: "institution—which refers to teachers knowing how to use the tools in order to enhance learning, how to interact with students and create a comfortable learning environment and how to creatively bring students closer and capture their attention, students—that may feel isolated because of the absence of

physical colleagues, a case in which teachers should know how to establish connections and relationships with them, and technology”.

The paper offers a perspective regarding students’ perceptions on the educational process in a period of sudden changes in the Romanian universities. Their perception regarding online learning was a positive one despite the fact that 71.43% of the respondents sometimes had technical problems.

We must understand that by creating a high performance digital educational environment and by taking technology seriously this could be a solution for how educational institutions will support learning in the future.

Furthermore, this survey can also be done taking into account the student perspective for each course taught online comparing the theoretical ones to the practical ones because the latter require a higher degree of hands-on demonstration, practice and immediate feedback.

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A Corpus-based Study on the Translation Strategies of Metaphors in President Xi's New Year's Speeches – A Case Study of New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022

*By Sun Xueke**

The president's Speech for a New Year includes both the summary of the past year and the outlook for the coming year; which plays an important role in expressing good wishes and displaying the national image. Various types of metaphorical expressions frequently appear in President Xi's New Year's Speech. This paper selects the New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022 and builds a bilingual parallel corpus to explore the translation methods of metaphors in them. This study found that there are 4 main translation methods in them, which are literal translation for remaining metaphors, free translation to adjust metaphors, addition of similes or metaphors, and omission to delete metaphors. On this basis, this study proposed that different translation strategies should be adopted from the aspects of text type, cultural context, language characteristics, and readers' acceptance to maximize the effectiveness of the source text, so as to avoid cultural default and misreading.

Keywords: *New Year's speeches, metaphor, C-E translation strategy, Corpus-based*

Introduction

Metaphor is an important foundation of human cognition. The word metaphor originates from the Greek word "metaphora", which is used to describe the movement of an object and the change of its position. Then it is extended to use one thing to understand another thing. People recognize things by discovering and establishing the interrelation between different concepts. Throughout history, politicians have always used metaphors to connect political discourse with people's existing knowledge and experience to promote political ideas, which are easy to understand, shorten the distance with the audience and awaken their inner feelings. Nowadays, New Year's speeches, as an important vehicle for shaping and displaying the national image, have become the main forum for spreading mainstream ideology in various countries. New Year's greetings are words of good wishes to friends and relatives during the Spring Festival, while the New Year's speeches by national leaders are characterized by blessing the people, recalling the past, and shaping the national image. In the current strategic context of "going global" for Chinese culture, the translation of New Year's Speeches should achieve multiple goals, with political, nationalistic and artistic features. The New Year's speeches of contemporary Chinese leaders comprehensively review the growth trajectory of the Party, the country, and the people in the past year, and look forward to the development, opportunities, and challenges in the new year, which unite the

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consensus of the whole Party and the people of all nationalities. President Xi's New Year's speeches have used many characteristic metaphors close to people's lives, which have unique stylistic and pragmatic functions. The corresponding translation is also unique, and the study on its metaphorical translation is of strategic significance to promote Chinese culture and improve international discourse power.

The CNKI search reveals that there are only 11 research papers on the metaphors of New Year's speeches, published from 2012 to 2021, a short time span. Among them, there are only two papers on the translation of New Year's speeches, both of which were published in 2021. This shows that the academic community has paid little attention to the study of metaphors in New Year's speeches. Most of the existing studies focus on the universality and function of metaphors in New Year's speeches. But they do not fully integrate metaphors with translation studies and very few of them are involved. Based on the conceptual theory prosed by Lakoff and Johnson, this study takes the bilingual text of President Xi's New Year's speeches from 2017 to 2022 as the corpus, analyzes and summarizes the metaphorical types, and then summarizes the relevant Chinese to English (E-C) translation strategies of metaphors in the New Year's speeches. The purpose of this paper is to provide a reference for the translation of New Year's speeches and other political texts.

Theory and Literature Review

In 1980, cognitive linguists Lakoff and Johnson published *Metaphors We Live By*, a book in which they first proposed the theory of conceptual metaphor. The book greatly shocked the linguistic community and set off another new wave of metaphor research. In 1989, Lakoff and Turner further elaborated on the working mechanism of metaphor by using the concept of "domain" on this basis, that is, people use metaphor to map part of the source domain into the target domain, thus forming a new understanding of the target domain (Lakoff et al. 1989, pp. 38–39).

According to Lakoff's metaphor theory, metaphor is mainly realized through semantic mapping between two semantic fields, that is, from a more familiar, concrete and easy-to-understand source domain to a less familiar, abstract and difficult-to-understand target domain. In short, it is a mapping from concrete things to abstract things, and from familiar categories to unfamiliar concepts. Meanwhile, Lakoff and Johnson classified conceptual metaphor into three categories, namely, structural metaphor, orientation metaphor, and ontological metaphor. Through this mapping across cognitive domains, people are able to understand the more abstract things. Due to the differences in cultural customs and cognitive styles among ethnic groups, conceptual metaphors are expressed differently. Therefore, the mapping relationship from the origin domain to the target domain is rooted in the unique culture of each ethnic group. Therefore, the translation process of conceptual metaphors is not a simple code-switching process, but a more complex one involving language, culture, and social psychology, and many other fields in various ethnic groups.

Studies on metaphor originated in the 1970s and started in the 1980s, mainly from the perspectives of rhetoric, cognitive linguistics and pragmatics, with few involving political discourse and even fewer studies on the combination of metaphor and translation. The traditional methods of metaphor translation include literal translation, substitution and free translation. Then it develops into different translation methods that distinguish the source language or the target language. In recent years, these translation methods have been promoted to a variety of theory-oriented studies on metaphor translation, such as rhetoric, component analysis, discourse analysis, pragmatics, culturology and cognitive linguistics (Hu 2019).

Different from traditional research approaches, cognitive metaphor translation research is based on conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), which explores how metaphor translation achieves cognitive correspondence at the conceptual level. According to this theory, conceptual metaphor is the mapping of concepts from the source domain to the target domain. This mapping is mainly based on image schema, that is, the abstract conceptual structure generated by the interaction between body experience and external environment, such as the sourcepath-goal schema. On this basis, the relevant knowledge of the source domain is mapped to the target domain to generate entailment. This knowledge involves rich encyclopedia knowledge in the source domain, which is not explicitly stated, but can be inferred from the mapping as an implicit meaning to help further understand the target domain (Lakoff 1993). From the perspective of the use of metaphor in discourse, speakers can use a source domain metaphor to represent the world from a specific perspective to achieve conceptual functions, as well as interpersonal functions such as persuasion, attitude and evaluation (Charteris-Black 2004, Semino 2008). Under the above background, cognitive metaphor translation studies are often combined with descriptive studies. For example, Deignan et al. (1997) found four translation methods: the target language uses conceptual metaphors that are identical with the source language and their metaphorical expressions, conceptual metaphors that are identical with the source language but different from the source language and their metaphorical expressions, and metaphorical expressions that have similar literal meanings but different metaphorical meanings with the source language. Chesterman (1997) believed that the target language could retain, replace or abandon the image schema of the source language or use the non-source language-driven image schema. Schäffner (2004) and Papadoudi (2010) also pointed out that the target language would explicate or refine the source language metaphor or stress other aspects. Beaton (2007) points out the influence of de-metaphorization and re-metaphorization on discourse function. Therefore, cognitive metaphor translation research is mostly based on the descriptive translation research paradigm, making a more detailed classification of metaphor translation strategies, and trying to reveal that metaphor strategies are not only affected by the conceptualization differences of different cultures, but also related to discourse functions, translators' decision-making preferences and translation norms in a specific period (Sheng 2021).

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of studies on metaphor translation, but most of them are related to political books and work reports, and most of them are traditional metaphorical translation methods. For example, Huang

and Luo (2021) have studied the Korean translation of metaphors in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* from the perspective of conceptual metaphor. Hou (2021) once studied the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* based on the attitudinal political metaphor translation model, and proposed three translation strategies of local mapping, domain switching mapping and domain de-mapping. From the perspective of "political equivalence", Ren and Ji (2021) have studied the translation strategies of metaphors in diplomatic discourse by taking the *Remarks at the Regular Press Conference of the Foreign Ministry* as an example, and put forward the translation strategies of preserving metaphors and switching metaphors. Sheng (2021) studies journey metaphor in Chinese-English conference interpretation based on corpus, and concludes with four translation strategies: metaphor equivalence, re-metaphor, de-metaphor and metaphorization. Yang and Zhao (2020) have proposed a translation method of image preservation, Transformation, Rejection and supplement in their research on *Strategies for Translating Diplomacy-serving Metaphors with Chinese Characteristics*. These studies organically combine political texts with metaphorical translation strategies and creatively propose some translation methods. But most of them are related to political papers, books and work reports. The research texts are monotonous, and most of the translation methods are based on traditional translation methods, which are too general and not specific enough. Therefore, the academic circle urgently needs to put forward new and specific metaphorical translation strategies to meet the needs of more and more diverse text types, and New Year's Speeches is a relatively new text type.

Methodology

This study adopts inductive analysis method. It collects the official Chinese and English bilingual versions of President Xi's New Year's speeches from 2017 to 2022, with a total of five. This study builds a small self-built Chinese-English parallel corpus that includes two parts namely the Chinese corpus and the corresponding English translation corpus. The bilingual corpus resources are from the official website of *China Daily*. According to statistics, in the corpus, the total number of words in Chinese is 9,587, and the total number of words in English is 7,652, which is 17,239 in total. Based on the existing corpus, this study uses manual annotation to analyze and summarize the metaphor types in New Year's speeches. The main metaphor types are war metaphor, architecture metaphor, journey metaphor, organism metaphor, climate metaphor and, culture metaphor, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Main Types of Metaphors in New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022

Metaphor	War	Architecture	Journey	Organism	Climate	Culture
Frequency	44	38	27	26	21	11

Among the metaphor types that appeared in the New Year's speeches from 2017 to 2022, war metaphors appeared 44 times, with the keywords being zhandou (battle), zhanlve (strategy), shengli (victory), zonggong (general attack), juezhan

(decisive battle), etc. Architectural metaphors appeared 38 times, with the keywords being jianshe (construct), jiancheng (finish building), goujian (build), gongjian (co-building), etc. Journey metaphors appeared 27 times, with the keywords being zhengcheng (journey), changzheng (long march), qianjin (go forward), daolu (road), etc. Organism metaphors appeared a total of 26 times, including human body metaphor 12 times, plant metaphor 13 times, and animal metaphor 1 time. The keywords are xinxue (heart blood), hanshui (sweat), yinggutou (hard bone), gengyun (cultivate), shouhuo (harvest), chengguo (fruit), laohu (tiger), cangying (fly), etc. Climate metaphors appeared 21 times, the keywords are feng (wind), yun (cloud), mai (haze), etc. Culture metaphors appeared 11 times, mainly poems, proverbs, etc. (See Table 2 for details).

Table 2. Main Metaphors and Key Words in New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022

隐喻类型 (次数) Metaphor (Frequency)	关键词 (次数) Key Words (Frequency)
战争隐喻 (44) War (44)	战斗zhandou(battle) (20) 战略zhanlue(strategy) (3) 胜利shengli(victory) (3) 攻坚战gongjianzhan(the battle against) (3) 上阵shangzhen(go into battle) (2) 决战juezhan(decisive battle) (2) 总攻zonggong(general attack) (1) 战胜zhansheng(defeat) (1) 战乱zhanluan(chaos caused by war) (1) 挑战tiaozhan(challenge) (1) 利剑lijian(sword) (1) 抗战kangzhan(War of Resistance) (1) 捷报jiebao(news of victory) (1) 奋战fenzhan(fight bravely) (1) 出战chuzhan(go out to fight) (1) 冲锋号chongfenghao(bugle call) (1) 保卫战baoweizhan(defense war) (1)
建筑隐喻 (38) Architecture (38)	建设jianshe(construct) (15) 建成jiancheng(finish building) (5) 构建goujian(build) (5) 共建gongjian(co-building) (3) 构筑gouzhu(construct) (2) 建立jianli(set up) (1) 建造jianzao(build) (1) 重建chongjian(rebuild) (1) 四梁八柱silibazhu(multiple pillars) (1) 主体框架zhutikuangjia(Main steel frames) (1) 钢铁长城gangtiechangcheng(great wall of steel) (1) 众志成城zhongzhichengcheng(unity is strength) (1) 铜墙铁壁tongqiangtiebi(impregnable fortress) (1)
旅途隐喻 (27) Journey (27)	征程zhengcheng(journey) (7) 长征changzheng(Long March) (5) 前进qianjin(go forward) (3) 道路daolu(road) (2) 里程碑lichengbei(milestone) (2) 前行qianxing(move ahead) (2) 奔波benbo(rush about) (1) 步伐bufa(step) (1) 奋进fenjin(advance bravely) (1) 奔驰benchi(run quickly) (1) 沿着yanzhe(along) (1) 进程jincheng(course) (1)
生物体隐喻 (26) Organism (26)	Human Body Metaphor (12) : 汗水hanshui(sweat) (3) 热泪盈眶reileyingshuang(be filled with tears) (1) 硬骨头yinggutou (hard bone) (1) 心血xinxue (heart blood) (1) 脊梁jiliang (1) 双臂shuangbi(arms) (1) 手shou(hands) (1) ; Plant Metaphor (13) : 收获shouhuo(harvest) (4) 成果chengguo(result/fruit) (2) 生机勃勃shengjibobo(full of vigor) (2) 落地生根luodishenggen(bryophyllum/life plant) (1) 生机勃勃shengjibofa(Vigorous Renewal) (1) 耕耘gengyun(cultivate) (1) 浇灌jiaoguan(irrigate) (1) 根基genji(foundation) (1) ; Animal Metaphor (1) : 打虎拍蝇dahupaiying(crack down on both "tigers" and "flies") (1)
气候隐喻 (21)	风feng(wind) (风雨fengyu (wind and

<p>Climate (21)</p>	<p>rain)、风平浪静fengpinglangjing(dead calm)、风云变换fengyunbianhuan(changes of wind and cloud)、风吹浪打fengchuilangda(be battered by a storm)等) (18) 乱云飞渡luanyunfeidu(riotous clouds past swiftly) (1) 惊涛骇浪jingtaohailang(terrifying waves) (1) 波涛汹涌botaoxiongyong(roaring waves) (1) 阴霾yinmai(haze/specter) (1)</p>
<p>文化隐喻 (11) Culture (11)</p>	<p>天眼tianyan(eye in the sky) (1) 悟空wukong(Goku) (1) 墨子Mozi(Mo-tse) (1) 神州shenzhou(the Divine Land) (1) 天宫tiangong(heavenly place) (1) 世界大同shijiedatong(a Utopia) (1) 上下同欲者胜shangxiatongyuzhesheng(Success comes to those who share in one purpose.) (1) 天上不会掉馅饼tianshangbuhuidiaoxianbing(There are no free lunches in life.) (1) 天道酬勤，日新月异tiandaochouqin, rixinyueyi(God rewards those who help themselves, and every day changes with each passing day) (1) 岁月不居，时节如流suiyuebuju, shijieruliu(time and tide wait, season is like a stream) (1) 安得广厦千万间，大庇天下寒士俱欢颜andeguangshaqianwanjian,dabitianxiahanshijuhuanyan("How I wish I could have ten thousand houses, to provide shelter for all who need it!") (1)</p>

Metaphors in New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022

These studies organically combine political texts with metaphorical translation strategies and creatively propose some translation methods, but most of them involve political papers, books and work reports. The research texts are too monotonous, and most of the translation methods are based on traditional translation methods, which are too general and not specific enough. Therefore, the academic circle urgently needs to put forward new and specific metaphorical translation strategies to meet the needs of more and more diverse text types, and New Year's speech is a relatively new text type.

Chinese to English Translation Strategies of Metaphors in New Year's Speeches - A Case Study of President Xi's New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022

Literal Translation to Remain Metaphors

Literal translation, or directed translation, is the rendering of text from one language to another "word-for-word" (Latin: "verbum pro verbo") with or without conveying the sense of the original. Many words in English have the same metaphorical meaning as their Chinese counterparts, and literal translation is the most commonly used method. Literal translation is a common translation strategy in which the source-domain conversion into literal translation method can be used to retain the same conceptual metaphor imagery in the translation as in the original if the same source-domain concept and target-domain concept both exist in the Chinese-English bilingual (Li 2021). In addition, the use of literal translation method to retain the image characteristics of the original metaphor helps to retain the cultural characteristics of the source language metaphor and enrich the expressive ability of the target language. Literal translation to remain the same metaphor imagery is commonly found in the English translation of New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022, which accurately conveys political ideas.

1.

只要我们13亿多人民和衷共济，只要我们党永远同人民站在一起，大家撸起袖子加油干，我们就一定能够走好我们这一代人的长征路。（旅途隐喻，2017）

Translation: As long as our 1.3 billion-plus people are pulled together for a common cause, as long as the Party stands together with the people and we roll up our sleeves to work harder, we will surely succeed in a Long March of our generation.

2.

人民子弟兵永远是保卫祖国的钢铁长城，让我们向守护家园的忠诚卫士们致敬！（建筑隐喻，2020）

Translation: The people's army will always serve as a great wall of steel that guards our motherland. Let's salute those loyal soldiers who safeguard our home.

3.

这些成就凝结着新时代奋斗者的心血和汗水，彰显了不同凡响的中国风采、中国力量。（人体隐喻，2020）

Translation: All these achievements are the result of the efforts and sweat of those who strive in the new era, and they demonstrate extraordinary Chinese splendor and Chinese strength.

In example 1, the original text uses "长征" to map "the reform and development process of the Party and the country", and it is a great victory and feat achieved by the Communist Party of China. The literal translation of the metaphor of the "长征" into "Long March" accurately conveys the political connotation of the original text. In example 2, the original text uses "钢铁长城" to describe the "the people's army", and it is an ancient Chinese military fortification. The construction metaphor "钢铁长城" is directly translated as "a great wall of steel", which accurately conveys the importance of the people's soldiers and reflects the profound connotation of the original text. In example 3, the original text uses "汗水" to map "the efforts of the strivers in the new era". "The word "s汗水" was originally the liquid secreted by people in ancient times due to their hard work, which is a common cognitive experience. The translation of the human body metaphor "汗水" as "sweat", which means "hard work", completes the image transformation and conveys the connotation of the original text more accurately. Literal translation to remain metaphors helps to keep the words in the original text with popular and colloquial features, showing President Xi's Speeches is distinct, and close to the people's lives (Cao and Wang 2017). When the metaphor translation is greatly influenced by the literary context and the metaphor concept of the original text plays an important role in the text, the translator will generally try to retain the metaphor concept of the original text in the translation operation.

Free Translation to Adjust Metaphors

Free translation is to translate something according to the general meaning of the original text, and it does not translate word by word, which is different from literal translation. Free translation reflects the difference among different nations in ecological culture, language culture, religious culture, material culture and social

culture. Since the difference of language and culture between Chinese and English, many things that are obviously known to the source-language audience may cause misunderstanding to target-language audience. Under this circumstance, free translation is commonly used to transfer language and cultural images to some words that foreigners are familiar with. Due to the differences in social, cultural background and thinking habits between the East and the West, English and Chinese people tend to use different metaphors when expressing the same concept for metaphor. Although human beings have the similar cognitive basis, when the mapped meaning of the same metaphor in the source language is different from its mapped meaning in the target language, the mapping from the source domain to the target domain in the target language cannot be realized, and even leads to confusion in the mapping (Su and Li 2009). In this case, we can adopt free translation by transforming or adjusting the metaphorical imagery according to the target language habits so that it can accurately convey the connotation of the original text while conforming to the target language habits.

4. 天上不会掉馅饼，努力奋斗才能梦想成真。（文化隐喻，2017）

Translation: There is no such thing as a free lunch, and only hard work will make dreams come true.

5. 中国人历来主张“世界大同，天下一家”。（文化隐喻，2017）

Translation: The Chinese people have always believed that the world is a commonwealth.

6.

我们向深度贫困堡垒发起总攻，啃下了最难啃的“硬骨头”。（人体隐喻，2021）

Translation: We launched the final assault on the fortress of entrenched rural poverty, and cracked this "hardest nut".

In example 4, the original word "馅饼" is translated as "a free lunch", "馅饼" refers to the idea of "to gain without work", "daydreaming", etc. The proverb "天上不会掉馅饼" corresponds to "a free lunch" in English, and the translation converts the cultural metaphor "馅饼" in the original text into the corresponding metaphor "a free lunch". This not only replaces the imagery of the original text but also conforms to the target language habits and accurately conveys the connotation of the original text. It cannot correspond to the source domain of the original text and has no relevant significance if translated directly as "pancake". In example 5, the word "大同、一家" is translated as "commonwealth", which is a unique cultural symbol of Chinese culture, emphasizing integrity, unity and solidarity. The source domain of the target language corresponding to the source domain of the original text is "commonwealth", which refers to the concepts of state, federation, political community, etc. in English. The translation of the cultural metaphor "大同、一家" in the original text into "commonwealth" not only conforms to the target language and cultural habits but also accurately conveys the political concept of the original text, which is easy for the target readers to understand. In example 6, the human body metaphor "硬骨头" in the original text is translated as "hardest nut", "硬骨头" means "difficult thing". If translated directly as "hard bone", this concept in English does not have the meaning of the Chinese source

domain, which may cause misinterpretation by readers. But the metaphor is translated as "hardest nut", which has the same meaning as "difficult situation or problem" in the English source domain, which could exactly convey the connotation of the original text. Free translation to adjust metaphors accurately conveys the political connotation of the original text in line with English habits, which makes it catchy and readable for English readers. It also reappears the colloquial and popular characteristics of the original text, and reflects the approachability and closeness of *President Xi's speeches*. The metaphorical meanings of a large number of English words are unique to English culture, and Chinese readers cannot associate their figurative meanings from the figurative images, so they can only translate their figurative meanings in translation, which is conducive to the understanding of Chinese readers and the fluency of the target language. Different languages and cultures inevitably form different thinking forms and expression habits, and often use different figurative bodies to express the same concept. Therefore, when translating some metaphorical words, it is necessary to change the figurative bodies and adopt the figurative images familiar to Chinese readers, so as to facilitate the expression of the translated language and the understanding of the readers.

Addition of Similes or Metaphors

Addition is to add some words semantically, rhetorically or syntactically to express the original meaning more faithfully. At semantic level, translator needs to supplement the part that is omitted in the source-language to keep the complete sentence structure and convey the content and style of the original text faithfully in translation. The simile is a rhetorical device that connects two different things that have some common characteristics, usually formed with "like" and "as". Unlike similes, metaphors do not use figurative words such as "such as" or "like" to express themselves but are a rhetorical device to hide comparisons. Addition of similes means adding metaphors to the translation so that the conceptual metaphors in the original text are presented in the form of similes for readers to understand. Addition of metaphors refers to adding metaphorical imagery in the translation process to convert the non-conceptual metaphorical expressions in the original text into metaphorical expressions in order to make the target language readers understand the meaning of the original text more vividly (Wang 2021).

7. 历史长河奔腾不息，有风平浪静，也有波涛汹涌。（河流隐喻，2020）

Translation: Human history, like a river, runs forever, witnessing both peaceful moments and great disturbances.

8.

人民子弟兵永远是保卫祖国的钢铁长城，让我们向守护家园的忠诚卫士们致敬！（建筑隐喻，2020）

Translation: The people's army will always serve as a great wall of steel that guards our motherland. Let's salute those loyal soldiers who safeguard our home.

9.

2019年，有机遇也有挑战，大家还要一起拼搏、一起奋斗。（人体隐喻，2019）

Translation: 2019 will see both opportunities and challenges that will require us to

work together shoulder to shoulder.

In example 7, "like" is added, and in example 8, "serve as" is added, both of which are addition of similes. By adding the words "like, as" and so on, the river metaphor and the architecture metaphor in the original text are expressed more explicitly, with clear logic and rigorous structure, in line with the hypotactic characteristics of English to make readers understand the simile more intuitively. In Example 9, the human body metaphor of "shoulder to shoulder" is added to make the translation more vivid and convey the cohesion of the Chinese people's struggle which enriches the connotation of the original text and makes it easier for the target readers to understand. Addition of similes or metaphors directly reappears the images of the original text, so that English readers can more intuitively understand and feel the approachability and closeness of *President Xi's speeches*, which also reflects the state leaders' concern for the people's lives. Due to certain differences in geographical environment, social life and way of thinking, there may be inconsistencies in the expression of the same thing between two languages and cultures. This situation can explain why the source language is non-metaphorical in the translation process, while the target language can add metaphorical usage.

Omission to Delete Metaphors

Omission is to omit some unnecessary or redundant words in the original text that violate target language habits, which is commonly used in translation process. When the cultural conflicts and differences between the source language and the target language cannot be reconcilable, and the metaphor concept of the original text does not affect the general meaning of the paragraph and the context of the text, the translator can delete or omit the metaphor concept of the original text according to the situation. Due to the differences between Eastern and Western expressions, for metaphors with redundant meanings or no meanings or even easy to misinterpret, we can adopt omission to delete the metaphorical imagery in the original text that has repeated meanings or affects the understanding and acceptance of the target audience. We can use non-metaphorical language to express the implied message and content of the metaphor in the original text more directly.

10.

无论国际风云如何变幻，中国维护国家主权和安全的信心和决心不会变，中国维护世界和平、促进共同发展的诚意和善意不会变。（气候隐喻，2019）

1 Translation: No matter what these changes bring, China will remain resolute and confident in its defense of its national sovereignty and security. And China's sincerity and goodwill to safeguard world peace and promote common development will remain unchanged.

11.

2021的脚步越来越近，我在北京向大家致以新年的美好祝福！（拟人隐喻，2021）

Translation: The year 2021 is arriving. From China's capital Beijing, I extend my New Year wishes to you all!

12.

“十三五”圆满收官，“十四五”全面擘画。新发展格局加快构建，高质量发

展深入实施。（围棋隐喻，2021）

Translation: The 13th Five-Year Plan has been accomplished in full. The 14th Five-Year Plan is being comprehensively formulated.

In example 10, "风云(wind and clouds)" is a climate metaphor, and "风云变幻" means "the situation is unstable". In example 11, "脚步(footstep)" is an anaphoric metaphor, "脚步来临(footsteps approaching)" means "coming soon". In Example 12, "收官(closing)" is a Go(Weiqi) metaphor, meaning "the final stage in the game of Go, meaning the end". These three metaphors have no related concepts in the source domain of the target language, so we can adopt omission to delete the metaphors and translate the connotation of the original text directly to avoid the confusion caused by the lack of concept source domain and make the translation more concise and easier for readers to understand. In intercultural communication, the translator omits the original metaphor when the translation of metaphor cannot be operated. At this point, the translation cannot realize the connection with the original text in terms of image and meaning. Sometimes, in order to compensate for the information loss in the translation, the translator may adopt some compensation strategies to convey the basic meaning of the original metaphor.

Conclusion

This study classifies the metaphorical phenomena appearing in President Xi's New Year's Speeches from 2017 to 2022 from the perspective of metaphor. On this basis, it summarizes four translation methods of metaphor, namely, literal translation to remain metaphors, free translation to adjust metaphors, addition of similes or metaphors, and omission to delete metaphors. However, when choosing a specific translation method, different translation strategies should be selected to maximize the effectiveness of the source text in terms of text type, cultural context, language features, and readers' acceptance, so as to avoid cultural default and misinterpretation. It is significant to provide some reference and help for the construction of the Chinese foreign discourse system and language learners. However, the universality of the four translation methods of the conceptual metaphors in New Year's Speeches in this study needs to be further explored.

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