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The Au Pair Cultural Exchange Program Advertising: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

Advertising is everywhere, and the effects of advertisements on people are notorious. Consequently, through ads, you can convince the audience to follow an ideology or to acquire certain products. The following article examines the au pair cultural exchange program online advertisements from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective. The article sets out to explore the linguistic features used in the au pair program advertisements that persuade participants to become au pairs and hosts. The analysis was achieved through a three-dimensional framework (Fairclough, 1994; 2001; 2003). This model demonstrates the correlation between linguistic forms, discourse, and social practices. The findings imply that advertisers use different linguistic forms and strategies to persuade Mexican girls from the age of 18 to 26 years old to enroll in the cultural program, as well as US citizens' families who are persuaded to host someone.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, advertisements, au pair.

1. Introduction

This article explores advertisements related to the au pair cultural exchange program by using Fairclough's three-dimensional model. This article has a central aim: to analyze the language used in online advertisements for the two participants who decide to take part in this cultural exchange program: (1) the au pair, and (2) the host families. Advertisements were taken from different websites and publicity on Facebook pages. To begin with, I will provide the key aspects of the literature that support this study. Then, the analysis of the advertisements will be presented. Finally, conclusions will be given.

1.1 *The au pair program*

Domestic workers have existed for a long time; they are characterized for an affordable means to take care of the household duties. Child care can be considered as a type of domestic labor, Ariza (2011) states that "since 1980 the US has been the principal element behind the rise of the child care services" (p. 7). However, it is not until the 20th century when the au pair exchange programs were implemented in some countries (Bahana, 2006).

The au pair program exists in various countries such as Australia, Germany, France, New Zealand, but the US is the most prominent due to its growing au pair market and the migration history between the USA and Mexico (Aguilar Pérez, 2015; Durand, 2007). In recent

times there has been an increment of cultural exchanges that permit young adults to travel abroad to continue with their studies or to live in a different culture and have the experience of traveling abroad (see Secretaría de Gobernación, 2019).

- At the textual level, advertisers seek to persuade young Mexican women by using adverbial and adjective phrases in advertisements.
- The analysis revealed that negative adjectives are more utilized in ads directed to host families.
- The discursive practice analysis exposed that more discursive strategies are implemented in advertisements for host families.

Rohde-Abuba and Tkach (2016) mention that “the au pair stay is officially defined as a cultural exchange program, thus au pairs are legally not granted the status of migrants, workers or students” (p. 193). They are granted a j-1 status visa, which permits au pairs to travel within the country, to work, and to study. According to the US Department of State (2020), the au pairs and host families take part in an intercultural opportunity in which au pairs become part of an American family and continue with their studies, and hosts are benefited from reliable childcare from the au pairs. The au pair cultural exchange program is one of the most popular exchange programs among young Mexican women since the program comprises improving the target language, studying abroad and learning a new culture.

Au pairs are not merely ambassadors of their culture, but they work at least 45 hours per week. Their primary responsibility is to take care of families’ children and the aspects that involve childcare such as: preparing kids’ meals, doing laundry, cleaning kids’ areas, drop-offs and pick-ups from school, among others (Cultural Care, 2020). For this cultural exchange to happen, two elements are needed, the host families and the au pairs (participants); therefore, it is somewhat essential to discuss what are the characteristics of each component.

1.2 Requirements to become participants in the program

In this small critical discourse study, the focus is on the Mexican au pairs and host families in the US as the main participants enrolled in this exchange program. Before discussing the requirements of each part, it is necessary to address that at this moment, many agencies function as program sponsors for the cultural exchange experience. The list of agencies that promote such an exchange program is long, and some examples are Cultural care, Au pair in America, Au pair care, to name a few. They are required to be mediators for both participants – the host families and the au pairs – and to promote the program in different countries. Agencies need to be immersed in the selection of participants (US Department of State, 2020). Since the au pairs need to move to a different country, there are requirements they need to fulfill to be eligible in the program. One of the benefits of this type of program is that they have the opportunity to work and study overseas. The US Department of State (2020) outlines specific criteria for au pairs and host families (Table 1).

The Table 1 specifies the logistics of becoming an au pair and for hosting one. In other words, this cultural exchange program is mediated by the US Department of State, and they provide a list of specifications to be immersed in the cultural exchange. Additionally, there are other rules for au pairs and families. These rules can vary according to the agencies that promote the cultural exchange program. Examples of the different regulations within the agencies are the following: provide the au pair with their own space (room), the host families provide food for the au pair, host families and au pairs can enter into a rematch if they are not a good fit to each other, au pairs must take a training one week before traveling to their hosts, au pairs must count with CPR certifications, to name a few (Cultural Care, 2020; Au pair Care, 2020).

Table 1. Requirements for the au pair program

<i>Au pairs</i>	<i>Host families</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proficient in spoken English - A secondary school graduate or equivalent - Between 18-and-26-years-old - Capable of fully participating in the program, as evidenced by the satisfactory completion of a physical. - Personally interviewed, in English, by an organizational representative who shall prepare a report of the interview which shall be provided to the host family - Successful in passing a background investigation that includes verification of school, three, non-family related personal and employment references, a criminal background check or its recognized equivalent, and a personality profile. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay up to \$500 toward the cost of the au pair's required academic course work; - Be US citizens or legal permanent residents fluent in spoken English; - Pay a weekly minimum stipend based on the program option selected; - Give the au pair one complete weekend off each month - Provide a minimum of two weeks paid vacation for each 12-month - Include the au pair whenever possible in family meals, outings, holidays, and other events.

Note. Adapted from "Au pair program" by US State Department, 2020, *J-1 Visa*. <https://j1visa.state.gov/programs/au-pair> [Accessed 2 May 2020].

1.3 The discourse of advertising

It is well-known that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) involves the examination of linguistic features that deal with social performance, cultural processes, and structures (Fairclough & Wodak, 1999; Paltridge, 2000). Therefore, conducting a CDA could shed light on the social disproportion among the sender and the receiver within a discursive practice. The purpose of CDA is to reveal the covert elements in discursive practices that lead to unequal power relations (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 1999). As it is known, the concept of discourse is concerned with all forms of language and practices, such as spoken interaction, written texts, and visual texts. Although discourse analysis explores the language in use, the term critical emphasizes on the reflection, relevance, and socially-based interpretations (Candlin, 1990). This criticality conveys insights not only in the linguistic forms but also on the social aspects and power relations.

Advertisements are mainly presented in written or spoken forms. The focus of the present study lies in the examination of online text advertisements. The discourse of advertising is grounded on the supposition "that the text is produced to persuade the viewer to buy a product or a service or to present that product or service as desirable as possible to the viewer" (Karlsson, 2015: 3). In general, advertisements are comprised of some elements like fiction, wordplay, storytelling, photography, among others. These are typically presented amusingly (Cook, 2001). Thus, for others, advertising encompasses the discussion of several instances, such as: "the wealth gap, the merits of socialism and capitalism, the growth of world culture" (Cook, 2001: 2), to name a few. According to Cook (2001), an ad involves the interaction of participants, function, substance, pictures, music, society, paralanguage, language, a situation, and other advertisements. The elements analyzed in this study will be detailed in the following section.

2. Discussion of findings

The presented analysis was interpreted through a three-level framework based on Fairclough's (1994; 2001; 2003) ideas on how to analyze a written discourse. These ideas are represented under three elements: the textual level, the discursive practice, and the social practice. In this section, I will provide critical analysis of the advertisements directed to the participants of the Au Pair program: the host families and the au pairs. In this article, the language, situation, and functions will be the elements to analyze within Fairclough's framework.

2.1 *The text*

As it was mentioned above, one of the objectives of this article is to find out the linguistic features behind the Au Pair advertisement. Therefore, it is vitally essential to open the section of results, as it was suggested in Fairclough's model, with the textual analysis. In this section, I will focus on the following linguistic features, vocabulary, semantic structure and cohesion.

In both advertisements, few personal pronouns were found. The use of pronouns might imply that the ads were not directly addressing the information to the participants. Examples of the use of pronouns are shown in the following comparative Table 2:

Table 2. Pronouns in au pair advertisements

The au pair advertisement	The host family advertisement
Develop skills that will be helpful in your future.	Au pair lives right in your home. Hosting an au pair with Au Pair in America will help you eliminate stress. Finding the right child care option for your family can be taxing.

The previous table shows examples of using pronouns to refer to the participants directly and on an individual sensitivity level. Fairclough defines this aspect as "synthetic personalization" (Fairclough, 1989: 62). Although the evidence of this characteristic is little, it can be observed that it is more visible in ads for host families. The particular way in which ads are using personal pronouns is to convince participants that they will find relief regarding their responsibilities (host families) and offering opportunities for personal growth (au pairs).

The previous aspect makes sense since one of the characteristics of the participants lies in the age. Perhaps, there is a common denominator that points out that when one is in their twenties, the goals are concerned to have personal and professional experiences that will aid young people in their future. One characteristic of advertisements is that they tend to manipulate consumers, so they take action on something. Advertisers manipulate consumers by using imperatives and interrogative sentences. However, in these advertisements, there was a lack of interrogative sentences, also scarce examples of imperatives were found in the au pair advertisements:

- *Live* in another country for one year,
- *Travel* for one year,
- *Make* friends all over the world,
- *Have* a second family,
- *Study* another language.

Another strategy implemented to persuade consumers to get into the cultural exchange program is through the fair use of adverbial and adjective phrases. These sentences do not count on verbs or subjects. Some examples are shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3. The use of adverbial and adjective phrases in the au pair advertisement

No.	Adverb/Adjective phrases	Type of advertisement
1	Better work-life balance	Au pair in America Hosts
2	Unique cultural exchange experience	Au pair in America Hosts
3	High level of schedule flexibility	Au pair in America Hosts
4	Less stress	Au pair in America Hosts
5	One-on-one attention	Cultural Care Hosts
6	Personal growth	Au pair Care Au pair

Regarding the adjectives found in the advertisements, Delin (2000) mentions that they portray a “positive or a negative affective meaning” (p. 133). In this study, the ads showed two types of adjectives. In the case of the host family advertisement, the list of positive adjectives is related to the benefits of hosting an au pair. Contrary to the au pair advertisement that shows that positive adjectives reflect the benefits of becoming part of the program:

Positive adjectives in host family advertisements: *common, reliable, unique, cultural, right, specific, less, fun, sane, consistent, invaluable, love, easy, clean, happy, eager, young.*

Positive adjectives in au pair advertisements: *native, new, incredible, safe, cheap, unforgettable, confident.*

American host families and Mexican au pairs are being attracted to the advertisements through the use of powerful adjectives. These are represented in the previous list; however, there are also “negative affective meaning” (Delin, 2000: 133) adjectives. These negative adjectives are presented in the host family advertisement, and they are utilized for showing the challenges of being a parent with plenty of responsibilities. Contrary to the advertisements directed to the au pairs, which no evidence of negative adjectives was found. The following are examples of this category in the host family’s ads:

Negative adjectives in the host family’s advertisements: *Difficult, steep, stressful, sick, challenging.*

Another feature involved is the extensive use of nouns that the advertisements use for making participants more engaged to the ads. Therefore, it catches the audience’s attention to consider the idea of being enrolled in the program, Table 4 shows the nouns utilized in both advertisements:

Table 4. The use of nouns in the au pair advertisement

No.	Nouns	Type of advertisement
1	Au pair, family, childcare, home, children, time, peace, stress, challenges, schedule, caregiver, flexibility, costs, solution, benefits, hours, work-life, balance, exchange, experience, ages, life’s surprises, date night, routine, meals, energy, foreigner	Au pair in America Hosts Cultural Care Hosts
2	Language proficiency, native people, culture, costumes, traditions, smiles, flavors, smells, aptitudes, hosting, support, friends, world, future, year, country, international, school, English level, independence, confidence, memories, life	Au pair care Au Pair Cultural Care Au Pair

2.2 Discourse practice analysis

The purpose of conducting a discourse practice analysis is to provide insights into speech acts, coherence, and intertextuality, which connects it with the context of the text. These elements involve the analysis of the text's production and consumptions (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000: 449). The following chart summarizes the strategies used in advertisements.

Table 5. The strategies used in au pair online advertisements

No.	Strategies	Linguistic devices
1	Reasons for becoming an au pair	Contribute to kids' education Perfection your English level A gain of international professional skills Acquire confidence and independence Study another language You create unforgettable memories for your whole life
2	Benefits for hosting an au pair	Better work-life balance Unique cultural exchange experience Caters to children of all ages High level of schedule flexibility Reliable care during life's surprises Sonja [au pair] can work at night and on the weekends Au pairs are young, full of energy, and eager to participate.
3	Au Pairs as a solution for host families	She knows the routine, so it's much easier. Help around the house Au pairs can help with some of the household duties Assistance with kid-related chores give us more quality time as a family Au pair lives right in your home Cost per family not per child 45 hours of child care per week; 10 hours per day
4	Host family's representation among their responsibilities	Our schedules are all over the place and rarely consistent. No flexibility with my schedule Difficult to get children to caregiver Steep hiring & screening costs
5	Emotional aspects	Less stress Having au pairs has helped keep us sane! We don't have to deal with stressful drop-offs or pick-ups or finding coverage for sick days We love going on a date every once in a while The kids feel safe with the au pair- and happy! All of our au pairs have added a layer of fun and excitement to our lives! Au pair in America will help you eliminate stress, save time, and gain peace of mind.

Advertisements use linguistic devices that permit participants to assimilate the information and consider the idea of acquiring a product; in this case, they become part of an exchange program. The table below (Table 5) shows some examples of linguistics features utilized in advertisements. One particular au pair company promoted an ad by using the narratives of another family who has been immersed in the program. These narratives express the experiences of a member within the au pair program and company. By implementing this strategy, advertisements create a safer bond with possible costumers, and it also promotes reliability.

What stands out in Table 5 is the lack of discourse strategies used for advertisements directed to the au pairs. Therefore, the table shows more strategies used for host family's advertisements, and the approaches they use are in terms of explaining the benefits, solutions, and

emotional aspects. Another aspect concerning the discourse practice lies in the use of headings, for example: *How au pairs solve child care challenges, the perks of becoming an au pair, why being an au pair? Common child care challenges*. These examples show how costumers direct their attention to this type of advertisement. The power of these strategies implements solutions for a cheap and safer way to travel around the US for young Mexican women. Likewise, American families are involved in possible solutions for having a better lifestyle and less stressful conditions. The advertisements imply that young women want to experience a cultural exchange, and American families do not have enough time and control of their extensive activities.

2.3 Social practice analysis

The first two sets of reports examined the textual and consumptions of a text. This section displays the correlation between ideologies and “the hegemonic struggles” of discursive instances (Fairclough, 1992: 86). Therefore, this section includes the ideologies of hiring a child care person and the ideologies of becoming an au pair for the Mexican context. For Latin American settings, the goal is to seek opportunities to grow in the professional and economic aspect, and sometimes a specific group of people tends to pursuit the American dream. In the advertisements for au pairs, it can be seen elements that emphasize personal growth and the idea of gaining a better language level. Consequently, agencies emphasize the opportunities to learn a new language; however, in the requirements for becoming an au pair, they have to be proficient in the literature. That is to say, au pairs might be attracted to the chances they can have to learn the lingua franca, English, and this could represent as part of their personal and academic development. Therefore, these examples of advertisements invite au pairs to achieve the American dream and to be immersed in an environment where the English language is exposed in a real context, which may mean acquiring the target language faster, and in an affordable way.

From the host family’s side, it can be analyzed that for host families, it is more natural to hire child care help due to practicality and the idea of having a balance between their work and personal life. Moreover, in regard to all the aspects, the au pairs need to cover are idealistic. In one advertisement directed to host families can be seen some linguistic devices such as:

- au pairs are proficient in conversational English,
- Au pairs are Red-Cross certified in adult and pediatric CPR, AED and First Aid,
- Au pairs have at least 200 hours of childcare experience.

These sentences are clear examples of what the agencies are selling to the hosts. Agencies sell au pairs as functional helpers with plenty of skills. Although the US State Department does not mention these as fundamental requirements, it might be that the agencies undertake other measures to sell the right-skillful product.

Also, it is vital to point out that advertisers promote to the au pairs the ideal and safest way to accomplish individual goals. These goals are related to the academic experience, acquiring English in a real context, and the opportunities to have international life experiences such as traveling and making friends from all over the world. Likewise, they promote American families the opportunity to solve challenges concerning child care most cheaply and safely. Moreover, offering the au pair’s flexibility to work 45 hours per week and by stating that *the au pair lives right in your home* creates a sense of control and the benefits of having child care help at your disposal. Advertisements for au pairs tend to focus on the cultural learning experiences they could gain by taking this program. However, the ads analyzed for this study did not show the expectations and obligations related to the childcare program. The lack of specific information in regards to their requirements could create inevitable disappointment to au pairs since they are expecting to become cultural ambassadors.

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, the analysis conducted through the three-level framework proposed by Fairclough shows that the use of negative adjectives is implemented in the ads directed towards American families. They attempt to demonstrate empathy to the parents who faced challenges in their daily life. Additionally, the implementation of strategies used tends to be more attractive and persuasive for families. Two interesting strategies applied are related to providing solutions to their lives and the emotional aspects that encounter without an au pair, as well as the benefits that an au pair can contribute when it comes to their emotions as parents. In regards to the advertisements for young Mexican girls, the fixation lies in the use of nouns that conveys experiencing activities that involve international elements such as *friends*, *traveling*, *language*, *traditions*, *memories*, to name a few. In other words, advertisers use the wordplay to persuade this young audience to be immersed in the program. Nevertheless, the scarce information of what becoming an au pair entitles of is absence. Young Mexican women's first attraction to the program may rely on the idea of experiencing living abroad without noticing the other activities they have to fulfill along with her stay in the program.

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Right or Wrong? An Image for Immigrants: An Interpersonal Multimodal Discourse Analysis of MIA's Music Video "Paper Planes"

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Abstract

Most of the time, the opinion that people have regarding immigrants is based on what media, press, and news offer to the public. The music video "Paper Planes" by MIA demonstrates some of the stereotypes that society has for people according to their identity, and the singer represents it with the most outstanding characteristics of the minority groups in America. To conduct a more in-depth analysis of the music video and lyrics of MIA, I will provide an interpersonal multimodal discourse analysis. The analysis is based on the theories proposed by Halliday (1978) on systemic functional linguistics and Machin (2010) for the visual semiotic framework. The results demonstrate how the discourse used in the song transmits the perspectives people create regarding immigrants and perpetuate them.

Keywords: immigrants, multimodal discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics, visual semiotic framework.

1. Introduction

Presently, there are different perspectives on immigrants. This study provides an interpersonal multimodal discourse analysis of the lyrics and music video "Paper Planes". The song was written by MIA and as a co-writer Diplo. The music video depicts the singer as a drug dealer and emphasizes her ethnic and cultural background. To provide the analysis of the lyrics, I will use Halliday's (1978) theory for Systemic Functional Linguistics, and for the video, the theory provided by Machin (2010) on Visual Semiotic Framework will be the primary referent. Next, the critical aspects of literature supporting the discourse concerning immigrants and American people's attitudes towards them will be provided.

1.1 *Immigrants in the USA: A brief description*

The history of immigrants in America started around 1776. According to Koudela (2013), the pioneers of migration belonged to one ethnic group, and they were Scotch and English. Therefore, the first immigrants to arrive at what is known as the United States of America (USA) were Europeans. Until 1880, most immigrants in America were from countries of the north of Europe or Western Europe. Between 1880 and 1924, approximately 25 million immigrants came to the United States. Their reasons oscillated on religion, persecution, or some of them were

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looking for jobs (History, 2020). The United States has been considered a nation of immigrants. Presently, it stills seen as a spotlight for immigrants to go. Even though immigrants must get through a whole process to be recognized as citizens of the new country, it has is stated that they provide several benefits regarding economy to the United States (Blau & Mackie, 2016). Nonetheless, there is evidence that the new government wants to establish more strict policies for immigrants in the present day. These situations mentioned previously leads us to look for the different attitudes that society has on people who settled in their country.

- Stereotypes on mass media influence the attitudes of USA citizens towards immigrants.
- The music video of MIA shows the most outstanding characteristics that society infer from immigrants which is interpreted through the multimodal discourse analysis.
- Many immigrants' experiences can be related to what was found in the analysis about social labels.

1.2 American peoples' attitudes on immigrants

As a person who is not nationalized as part of the USA country and comes from a neighbor country, what is shown and perceived in social media regarding immigrants may have a negative impact on outsiders. Research on attitudes towards immigrants from the viewpoint of the USA society provides a different opinion. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2015), provide support for the previous assumption:

Immigration has been hotly debated in American elections and the media and based on these debates; one might think that Americans are deeply concerned with the issue and that many, perhaps even the majority, are opposed to immigration. Polling data suggest that this is not the case: most Americans assess immigration positively. (p. 47)

Even though many people tolerate immigration and see it as something beneficial for the country in different aspects, some perceive it as a negative factor impacting society. People who distinguish immigration with a negative connotation can be influenced by what they obtain from other people or sources. Shatell and Villalba (2008) state that "hearing about immigration on televised news broadcasts, print news stories, radio talk shows, or Internet blogs leads to having anti-immigration thoughts causing sentiment that is not related to law, but instead is veiled racism" (p. 541). Therefore, it can be understood the reason why most of the information we obtain on this topic is negative. People's negative thoughts are due to the focus that massive media draws on wrong perceptions only.

1.3 Cartels and gangs: Perspectives

To begin, I will share the definition for both terms, and a highlight of their relationship with this paper will be discussed. The first definition I will provide is cartels, and I will base the definitions regarding the Mexican territory because of the geographical closeness that the United States has with the country. A cartel is an organization that supplies drugs, realizing traffic operation between cartels (Flanigan, 2012). The author also describes the cartels' interaction to be carried out through corruption, political relationship, and violence to be necessary for their business operation to dissipate constraints with law.

This organization has its history related to the USA since the 1920s and 1930s because of the prohibition of alcohol. These cartels emerged from the need to gain notoriety and to take advantage of the country's situation (Astorga, 2005). As mentioned before, the geographical closeness to the border is relevant to define this term. Cartels start to establish strategically along

Mexico's border with the United States principally in Tijuana and Chihuahua, which presently are the epicenters of Mexican cartels and drug-related violence (Medel & Thoumi, 2014).

It is noticeable from the previous statements that drug cartels have a remarkable and robust history with the United States, which provides one of the main topics to be discussing in this multimodal analysis. The perspective on drug cartels was built decades ago, and it stills present. Therefore, it can be understood that the topic of drugs and cartels is a subject that seems to be arguable from different perspectives. The concept of Mexico as a country with an abundance of drug cartels can affect the perception of the United States citizens about the country and the people itself.

The term gang has been constructing its definition through a social perspective since the 1980s. Therefore, here are provided some of the definitions that have been build up by experts in the area. The first definition emerged from a survey in which people from different areas of society provided their characteristics for this term after the results were obtained the following definition was provided by Miller (1975):

A self-formed association of peers, bound together by mutual interests, with identifiable leadership, well-developed lines of authority, and other organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose or purposes which generally include the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility, or type of enterprise. (p. 121)

The author did not use any negative words to describe the term, but it defines it with an inclination to illegal behavior, which can lead to a negative meaning. Recently, Klein and Maxson (2006) provided a commonly accepted definition for the word gang. The authors refer to gangs as "any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity" (p. 4).

Considering this definition, when people hear the word gang, it is automatically related to harmful situations and criminal circumstances. Holmes et al. (2011) reinforce this assumption stating that "whenever the term "gang" is used or heard, individuals undoubtedly get a mental picture of a particular type of person, most probably someone threatening, or a minority, or someone that is easily recognizable as a bad guy" (p. 1). For instance, persons who have had experiences close to these groups of people will immediately have wrong perspectives, not only gangs but also in more straightforward matters such as the term.

2. Methodology

The approach considered for this paper is based on the theories provided by Michael Halliday's (1978) work and David Machin (2010) to analyze the lyrics and music video of the song. Also, the descriptions to consider during the analysis will be summarized to make the interpretation of the video. This section will also describe the characteristics of multimodal discourse analysis from Kay O'Halloran's (2013) perspective.

2.1 *Multimodal discourse analysis*

In conducting this analysis, it is proposed to use multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) to understand the music video. MDA is a process that requires a broader analysis of speech, conversation, or texts. This form of analysis involves different characteristics considered for examination, such as language, image, sound, and music, in multimodal texts and communicative events (van Leeuwen, 2012). Introducing O'Halloran's (2013) perspective, this form of discourse analysis "extends the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound" (p. 1).

O'Halloran (2013) also emphasizes that with the inclusion of different resources to be analyzed, these will convey meaning. The different assets which also transmit meaning included in MDA are printed materials, videos, websites, three-dimensional objects, and daily events.

Also, there is a way to complement multimodal discourse analysis, which involves the use of semiotic frameworks. These semiotic frameworks take to a different level the analysis of discourse. The range for discourse in this framework encompasses printed media, dynamic and static electronic media, and three-dimensional objects in space (O'Halloran, 2013). The theory behind this approach is from Michael Halliday's (1994) work, who talks about the systemic functional theory of language that includes the consideration of other semiotic resources. The use of this framework includes the investigation of combined resources and not just one. Therefore, the systemic functional theory needs to be considered as an additional framework to complement MDA.

2.2 Semiotic functional linguistics (SFL) theory

The theory based on the focus that Halliday (1978) provided by stating that semiotics' boundaries changed from a study of signs to a study of sign systems. The theory can be understood as a change of SFL theory from a specific focus to combined attention in multiple systems. The author exemplifies his focus, defining any sign as an entity and a system of signs as entities working together to communicate meaning. Therefore, the term sign is defined as a "semiotic resource that includes written language in form of graphology or typography, as well as the semiotic resources of visual images, mathematical notations, and other technical symbols" (Fei, 2004: 51)

Additionally, since the 2000s, some authors (Baldry, 2000; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) have demonstrated the impact that multimedia has had on daily lives. Thus, the way meaning can be communicated works differently than in past decades. The new manner of communication started to be noted as a combination of semiotic resources that began to convey a meaning when put together. The function of two or more semiotic resources working together started to raise a new understanding of meaning-making. Moreover, the model proposed from Halliday is explained by O'Halloran (2008) with the following words:

SFL is an approach to multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) which involves developing theoretical and practical approaches for analyzing written, printed and electronic texts, three-dimensional sites and other realms of activity where semiotic resources (e.g., spoken and written language, visual imagery, mathematical symbolism, sculpture, architecture, gesture, and other physiological modes) combine to make meaning. (p. 444)

Most researchers investigating SFL theory have utilized similar words to define the term and make it understandable as language can be used for different objectives and situations. Additionally, their definitions mention how different sources can shape the meaning to convey meaning differently. Hence, we can infer that we must appreciate every item's function to understand its diverse linguistic meanings. Moreover, based on Halliday (1978, according to Bloor & Bloor, 2004), there are different ways human beings use and understand language and how meaning can be made with language. The author divided these methods into three categories which are:

- This is known as the ideational metafunction. The ideational metafunction is classified in the introduction of functional grammar into two subfunctions or modes: *the experiential* and the *logical*. The experiential is largely concerned with content or ideas. The logic is concerned with the relationship between ideas.

- Language is used to enable us to participate in communicative acts with other people, to take on roles, and to express and understand feelings, attitudes, and judgments. This metafunction is known as the *interpersonal metafunction*.
- Language is used to relate what is said (or written) to the rest of the text and other linguistic events. This involves the use of language to organize the text itself. This is known as the *textual metafunction*. (p. 11)

The three different methods are shown in *Figure 1* to have a more innate understanding of how it works and how they are divided with their subfunctions.

Ideational metafunction	Experiential
	Logical
Interpersonal metafunction	
Textual metafunction	

Figure 1. The three metafunctions with subfunctions (Adapted from Bloor & Bloor, 2004: 11)

After explaining the metafunctions, it is of importance to mention that only one will be the base for the analysis of the lyrics of MIA's song "Paper Planes". The section that follows reviews the approach that will be used to analyze the music video to determine if there is any other relevant source that conveys meaning.

2.3 Visual semiotic analysis

First and foremost, it was decided to use multimodal discourse analysis and associate it with systemic functional linguistics to analyze not only the lyrics of the song but also the visual context in the music video, as it is considered a system of communication. According to O'Halloran (2008), the systematic approach to visual literacy, and the dominance of the verbal modes of communication have been challenged by non-verbal modes such as visual resources. Besides, Hyland and Paltridge (2011) state that "the multimodal analysis includes the interactions between the spoken language, kinetic features (including gaze, body posture, and gesture) and cinematography effects (including camera angle and frame size)" (p. 127).

A good summary of the area is that even though that analysis started with textual language now, sometimes it communicates more meaning encompassed with videos, such as the case of this study, in which a music video will also be analyzed. Therefore, "discourses, along with their values, participants, action settings, can be connoted by both linguistic and visual choices. They revealed that just as we can study lexical choices in language to reveal discourses so, we can study choices of visual semiotic resources" (Machin, 2010: 7). As visuals are analyzed, the potential examined aspects are provided by David Machin (2010), who bases his analysis from Barthes' (1973; 1977) sight, which provides the characteristics of the images considered in the process of examining the video. Barthes provides important connotators of meaning, and there are described in *Table 1*, which includes only the aspects considered to analyze the video of "Paper Planes" by MIA.

Table 1. Connotators to analyze visuals

Connotators	Description
Pose	Postures must suggest something about the individual/group, whether they are approachable, independent, or moody, whether they are thought of as a unit or as individuals.
Gaze	Based on the Halliday (1985), the gaze analysis if the individual whether they look out at the viewer, whether they look downwards or upwards. Kress and van

	Leeuwen (1996) show their interest in the way that images can be view as completing the speech acts as described for language.
Social distance	As part of the pose and gaze, social distance provides information about the proximity that the image has with the viewer. Distance seems to reveal if there is any social relationship that intends to be demonstrated. This aspect is analyzed through the shot.

Note: Adapted from Machin (2010: 36-47)

The three elements shown in Table 1 will be examined in the analysis and discussion section. In which first, it would be exposed to the different elements encountered in the lyrics of the song to next proceed to the visual analysis of the music video scenes.

3. Results and discussion

Having defined the methodology for this paper, I will now move on to the results obtained from the analysis and the discussion to connect the results with the previous literature provided. First, an interpersonal analysis of the lyrics will be presented based on Halliday's (1978) theory, followed by the visual analysis provided by Machin (2010).

3.1 *Lyrics*

To provide a grammatical analysis of the lyrics of the song "Paper Planes" by MIA, I used the systemic functional linguistics theory proposed by Halliday (1978). To provide the analysis, I will be using one metalinguistic category proposed by Halliday. First, in Table 2, we can find the data for interpersonal metafunction and the two different moods identified in the song. It was decided only to analyze one metafunction aspect as it was more relevant for the meaning of the song and to understand the addresser's attitudes.

Table 2. Interpersonal functions

Mood	Clauses
Declarative	I fly like paper, get high like planes/I got visas in my name/ I make 'em all day/ I get one done/ I'm clicking/ everyone's a winner/ I wanna do/ making my fame/ making my name/ we pack and deliver/ just pumping that gas
Imperative	Catch me/ hit me/ we hit'em
Interrogative	Are you ready, all?

In the lyrics, there was only one interrogative clause (0.64 %), which did not contribute anything to the analysis more than asking if people were ready for something that may happen, something important. Therefore, declarative clauses have major priority by covering 97.44% of the total by being repetitive in the song. Imperative clauses only cover 1.92% as only three clauses were identified in the category.

The purpose of the lyrics is to express the singer's point of view on things happening in the world and with attitudes towards immigrants. She intends to elicit the audience's empathy to comprehend what she has gone through in her process as an immigrant. I have made and superficial analysis of the lyrics of the song and demonstrated the main objective that was intended to communicate by the singer. This general analysis was enough to identify her position on the topic involved. The next section encompasses the visual semiotic analysis of the different scenes encountered in the music video.

3.2 Visual analysis

Considering Machin's (2010) frameworks to analyze connotators in visuals, I will now examine and provide different examples of the video that are related to the literature reviewed in this study. The analysis will consider the pose, gaze, and social distancing of the individual/group to the viewer to convey meaning in conjunction.

3.2.1 Pose

Apart from the different movements which represent the actions mentioned in the lyrics. The most remarkable pose that MIA does is represented in Image 1.

Image 1. MIA principal pose (Source: MIA's music video "Paper Planes")

In this image, it can be seen that the most of the video she remains in a medium close up shot in which it seems that she is talking about something important as the shot infer that the singer is giving a talk. The pose she maintains in the video represents to the typical view that two persons have when talking between them. This pose is a complemented with the next section which describes the gaze of the singer.

3.2.2 Gaze

The video has several hand gestures and movements from the singer, but she constantly keeps eye contact with the viewers. Her look directed to the camera can be related to the attitudes that people have on immigrants as the songs say *All I wanna do is...* and gunshots are heard. The singer does the hand gestures simulating gunshots every time the same verse is in the song, as it can be seen in Image 2.

Image 2. MIA gunshots hand gesture. (Source: MIA's music video "Paper Planes")

The use of this hand gesture can be related to the gangs. Considering that the lyrics say *If you catch me at the borders...*, referring to the board that exists between the USA and Mexico and the constant problems regarding cartels and drug distribution. Therefore, based on the previous literature, her extract from the lyrics can be immediately driven to the country with the most negative social stereotypes.

Additionally, one scene of the video (Image 3) shows how the singer is giving to an Afro-American person a sandwich that is wrapped with aluminum foil. Simply, it is appreciated that she is just serving food to go.

Image 3. MIA is serving food (Source: MIA's music video "Paper Planes")

Image 4. Costumer giving chain (Source: MIA's music video "Paper Planes")

In-depth perception and after the scene presented in Image 4, one persona gives her a silver chain in return for food. Hence, it can refer to the people who buy drugs as sandwiches do not have the value of a silver chain. Therefore, it can be understood that she is working in a food truck to sell other things besides food. As it is known, drugs tend to be wrapped carefully either on tape or foil.

Image 5. MIA dancing at subway stairs. (Source: MIA's music video "Paper Planes")

Here, we can appreciate that the shot is taking at the top of the subway stairs and that MIA is dancing near the first step. It looks like she is in the subway, which is used constantly for people that cannot afford a vehicle that is expensive in the country. Hence, the scene infers that she provides her social status by showing in the scene the subway station.

3.2.3 *Social distance*

For this aspect, the music video encompasses different shots from the singer as well as individuals in the scene. Which intends to demonstrate proximity between the addresser and the audience. Thus, the meaning obtained from these shots is to establish any potential relationship with the viewers. For instance, in Image 6, we can see that the addresser is shown in a close-up shot complementing with a gaze to the audience.

Image 6. Close up shot of the addresser (Source: MIA's music video "Paper Planes")

Additionally, it can be emphasized in a different scene the proximity with other people on the video, the song in this scene states *No one on the corner has swagger like us*, demonstrating that the community is big and that they as part of it do stand out for all of them.

Image 7. Long shot of the group (Source: MIA's music video "Paper Planes")

In this scene, we can see that the main addresser of the song is in a company with people that are dressed like her. This denotes that she has a friendly relationship with them. The people surrounding MIA's group are Afro-Americans mostly, which again relates the video to the minority groups of immigrants in the country.

4. Conclusion

In this study, I provided an interpersonal multimodal discourse analysis of MIA's music video and lyrics "Paper Planes" using Halliday's (1978) and Machin's (2010) frameworks to have an analysis of this study. I explored most of the salient elements that MIA uses in order to represent the attitudes and perspectives that society constructs concerning immigrants and people from different countries. As mentioned previously by Villalba (2008), "hearing about immigration on televised news broadcasts, print news stories, radio talk shows, or Internet blogs leads to having anti-immigration thoughts causing sentiment that is not related to law, but instead is veiled racism" (p. 541). It can be inferred that the information that we receive in different communication media causes effects on society by thinking that immigration is negative. However, as stated in the literature key aspects, most of the studies demonstrate that the attitude from people regarding immigrants is positive, which contradicts to what media shows.

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Where Culture and Metaphor Meet: Metaphoric Awareness in Comprehension of Culturally-Specific Idioms

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Abstract

The goal of the present study is to investigate whether the comprehension of oligosemic, i.e. culturally-specific (CS) idioms is raised with awareness of underlying conceptual metaphors (CMs) as seems to be the case with idioms motivated by metaphors (CM idioms). An experimental study was conducted involving the metaphor-aware Experimental group and the Control group which was unaware of the existence of CMs. Metaphoric awareness was achieved through brief 15 minute-long lessons on metaphor and underlying motivation. The Control participants were given general information on figurative language in order to ensure equality of input. The instrument containing 35 items was administered to both groups whereas the Experimental group was also provided the underlying CM motivation. An ANOVA test for repeated measures was used to compare CM data to CS data. There was a statistically significant effect of motivation on idiom comprehension, $F(1,77)=67.203$, $p=.000$ which suggests that CM idioms are better understood than CS idioms. The t-test results for the CS idioms indicate there is a significant difference between the Control and the Experimental group when it comes to the comprehension of CS idioms in favor of the Experimental participants; it seems the comprehension of CS idioms is raised with metaphoric awareness.

Keywords: idiom comprehension, conceptual metaphor, culturally-specific idioms, metaphoric awareness, EFL teaching.

1. Introduction

To speak figuratively aids language speakers in more ways than one. It is widely believed that figurative language exists to serve pragmatic rather than semantic functions since it offers an ornamental, optional way of utilizing speech (Katz et al., 1998: 2). However, a new perspective has emerged that sees it as a means of increasing a learner's proficiency and native-like competence, which derives from the "appropriate selection of conventional phraseology" (Howarth, 1998: 31). We argue that to speak figuratively benefits native as well as second and foreign language speakers inasmuch as it provides speakers with an additional way of acquiring vocabulary. It also offers an insight into the culture the language originates from, which is particularly evident in ESL and EFL contexts (Boers, 2003; Deignan, 2003; Kövecses, 2005). The role of culture is also explored in the present study in which we aim to see whether conceptual metaphor (CM) instruction can be utilized in the teaching of those instances of language found tied to the L2 source culture. Before we turn to the role of culture in idiom comprehension, we will take a look at some of the conclusions drawn from research on metaphor in idiom comprehension.

- Grouping vocabulary has been proven to aid retention of vocabulary with second language learners.
- Significant differences are reported between metaphor-aided and metaphor-denied groups of learners.
- The idioms' underlying motivation seems to also heighten the understanding of culturally-specific vocabulary items.
- The comprehension of culturally more salient expressions can be facilitated through instruction about their origin.

2. Theoretical overview

In the following paragraphs we will attempt to address the methods of raising metaphoric awareness in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching and the role of culture in EFL idiom comprehension.

2.1 *Raising metaphoric awareness in the classroom*

The central idea around which the research for this study was developed is the fact that raising learners' awareness of conceptual metaphors (CMs) can facilitate their retention of the very vocabulary they motivate. Following Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), CM is seen as a universal mechanism of reasoning about the world that surrounds us. This mechanism thus motivates idioms as one type of linguistic expressions and if these expressions become frequently used by a group of people, they will become a part of the standardized phraseological corpus in a given language (Omazić, 2014: 30). We would agree with Deignan et al. (1997: 353) who said "students (...) are likely to achieve more if they are encouraged to consciously reflect on the metaphorical nature of language." Boers (2004: 211) listed five skills under the notion of metaphoric awareness:

- (i) recognition of the pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday discourse;
- (ii) recognition of specific CMs as the motivating mechanism behind figurative expressions;
- (iii) awareness of the non-arbitrary nature of many figurative expressions;
- (iv) awareness of the existence of cross-cultural differences between CMs;
- (v) awareness of the existence of cross-cultural differences present in figurative expressions motivated by those CMs.

These skills can be used in the retention of figurative language in three ways: the semantic image behind an expression can be explained by explaining the etymological origin of the expression's literal meaning; learners can be encouraged to independently attempt to discern the meaning behind the expression; and expressions can be grouped according to underlying motivational mechanisms (Boers, 2004: 353). The latter has been employed in our study, since grouping vocabulary has been proven to aid retention of vocabulary, which is also pointed out by Kalyuga and Kalyuga (2008: 255) who recognize that "the presentation of vocabulary in chunks united by the same metaphorical themes can create a mental link and enhance learning by reducing a potential cognitive overload and the associated learning burden." Boers and Demecheleer (2001) proposed guidelines for the classroom in order to enhance the learners' awareness of the arbitrary nature of idioms and the existence of cross-cultural variation. In those cases, when one CM is absent from the learners' culture, but is present in the target culture, the authors suggest reminding the learners of the presence of the said CM in L2. Moreover, it can be fruitful to find L1 equivalents for idioms motivated by domains that are not represented in the

source culture. Special attention needs to be given to the idioms, where there is a high risk of negative transfer occurring (e.g., the existence of equivalent expressions in the two cultures, but with different figurative meanings). Hypothesizing should be encouraged strongly on the part of the learner, since the problem-solving strategy leads to greater understanding. The teacher should serve as a beacon directing the students in the right direction in order to prevent them from getting sidetracked in their hypothesizing. Vivid imagery behind many idioms should be used to facilitate the retention of novel vocabulary, and etymological explanations should be provided where possible (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001: 260-261).

The potential facilitation of raising metaphoric awareness in order to aid vocabulary processing, comprehension, and retention has been subject of a lot of investigations in EFL vocabulary teaching (Deignan et al., 1997; Boers, 2004; Boers et al., 2004; Beréndi et al., 2008; Geld et al., 2014). Various activities have been designed to serve an awareness-raising purpose in EFL classrooms, such as ecological niches, task-based activities, and role-play activities (Littlemore & Low, 2006). Different factors involved in vocabulary teaching have been tested as variables, one of which is L1 transfer. Vasiljević (2011) included both CM awareness and L1 facilitation in order to test the way in which the Japanese learners' L1 exerted influence on their comprehension of English idioms. Three CMs were included in the study (IDEAS ARE FOOD, LOVE IS A JOURNEY, and LIFE IS A GAMBLING GAME) that were not present in the pre-teaching phase. The post-tests included a receptive task (a gap-fill exercise, where only the form needed to be recollected) and a productive task (a gap-fill exercise, where the participants were required to recall both the form and the meaning since the target idioms were not provided) (Vasiljević, 2011: 144-145). The data analysis pointed to the facilitative effect of CM upon idiom learning as well as the positive effect of presenting the translations of CMs and the target vocabulary in the learners' L1. Vasiljević (2011) study follows the pattern of many other studies (for example, Kövecses & Szabó, 1996; Boers, 2000a; Samani & Hashemian, 2012) in that it pre-teaches those examples of vocabulary that are going to be included in the testing. While a positive side of pre-teaching figurative language is the elimination of individual vocabulary knowledge that constitutes the items in focus, the downside of this approach is that it relies on the memory factor. Another study by Beréndi et al. (2008) included three separate experiments to determine if awareness of CMs helped language learners in their comprehension and retention of figurative expressions. The participants in their experiment were Hungarian students of English in their first year of studies at university. Both the Control and the Experimental groups were given a text in which idiomatic expressions were used in context. Afterwards, the idioms appeared in a list, where the students were required to provide translations of the idioms in question. The Experimental participants had the idioms in the list grouped according to the underlying conceptual metaphors, which were stated in the headings above each group of idioms, while the Control group was denied this (Beréndi et al., 2008: 76). They managed to confirm that metaphoric awareness of the underlying CMs helped learners in vocabulary retention. However, their consequent testings two days and five months after the initial testing showed that raising awareness of CMs might not prove sufficient to turn it into a conscious learning strategy that could contribute to learner autonomy. However, a closer look at the type of translations of the idioms the participants provided two days and five months later revealed that the task design did trigger some metaphor awareness after all, even though the participants did not seem to recall any instruction on CMs that was provided during the initial experiment. Kömür and Çimen (2013) did not opt for a one-eye opener about the existence of metaphor, as was the case with both Beréndi et al.'s (2008) and our own study, but they rather administered a pre- and post-test after holding a 10-hour long course aimed at raising students' metaphoric awareness of the multitude of CMs present in both their L1 (Turkish) and L2 (English). They also concluded that CM instruction in the classroom leads to greater retention of the instructed vocabulary.

Boers (2000a; 2000b) investigated the comprehension of idioms by EFL learners on multiple occasions. His (2000b) study dealt with idiom comprehension by EFL learners with the

aid of CM and explanation of the literal meanings of the idioms. Both the control and the experimental groups in his experiment received interpretations of the target items; however, the control participants were given explanations of the items' figurative meanings (e.g., *hurdle* "difficulty, problem"), whereas the experimental group was given explanations of the literal meanings, i.e., source domains (e.g., *hurdle* "frame to be jumped over in athletics") (Boers, 2000b: 142). Boers (2000b: 143) obtained a statistically significant difference in results between the two groups, which is to suggest the experimental group managed to transfer patterns and judgments connected to the source domain onto the metaphoric meaning of the phrase. The author also investigated the issue of L1 in metaphoric instruction in EFL contexts. His participants were instructed to read a text designed for teaching purposes, which contained lexis related to THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS and ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor. After the reading, both groups were given a cloze test to test for retention. The experimental group was statistically more likely to elicit a correct response suggesting "an awareness of the metaphoric themes behind the novel vocabulary can facilitate retention" (Boers, 2000b: 557).

2.2 Culture in EFL idiom comprehension

Metaphor and culture seem to be intertwined. Even if an expression is seen as originating from a particular domain of human activity (e.g., *sail under false colors* is derived from maritime), it can also be motivated by other imagery in the mind; this particular idiom can be seen as reflective of the metaphor SEEING IS KNOWING. Deignan (2003) lists several degrees of variation, where the most extreme case would be metaphors that are frequent in one language and rare or non-existent in another. Other degrees include metaphors, which are used in two languages but are far more frequent in one of the two languages, and metaphors that make use of the same source domain, but differ in details between languages (Deignan, 2003: 256-257). Boers (2003) identifies three types of cross-cultural variation in metaphor. The first type is differences between particular source-target mappings that have become conventional in observed cultures, such as baseball (also included in our study), which are more productive and conventional in American culture than in European. Another example of this type of variation is evident between French and English; French learners experience more difficulty in the interpretation of English idioms derived from maritime (a domain also included in our study as being culturally-specific) since this domain is underrepresented in the French culture (Boers 2003: 234-235). In these cases, Boers (2003) sees metaphoric awareness as serving the purpose of providing "a window onto a community's culture." The second type of variation occurs when there are differences observed in the value-judgments associated with a certain metaphor or the appropriateness of that metaphor (Boers, 2003: 234-235). An example is provided using the GOVERNMENT IS A MACHINE metaphor and how it expresses different messages in different languages. For example, while Americans might think their government is impersonal and inflexible like a machine, speakers of other languages might look at their governments more leniently and perceive them as effective and smooth-running and, thus, compare them to machines. The third case concerns the differences in pervasiveness of metaphor between different languages (Boers, 2003: 234-235). For example, Lakoff and Kövecses (1987) discuss ANGER IS A HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER as being pervasive in the American culture, and therefore, American English.

Cross-cultural variations in metaphoric conceptions have also been subject to investigation within the scope of CM's role in EFL teaching. Several examples can be found in literature that illustrate the example of cross-cultural differences in metaphoric entailments (Yu, 1995; Kövecses, 2003; Charteris-Black, 2003; Chen, 2010; Li, 2010). The ANGER IS HEAT metaphor and its realizations on a more elaborate level (ANGER IS FIRE, ANGER IS A HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER) have been subject to cross-comparative investigations in English and Chinese (Yu, 1995; Chen, 2010; Li, 2010). Even though both languages perceive anger as fire,

which is potentially harmful to those who get angry and also to those around them, in Chinese there is a more frequent utilization of body parts in figurative expressions, such as the heart, liver, and belly (Yu, 1995: 63). Furthermore, a lot of expressions in Chinese point to gas being used instead of liquid in the CONTAINER metaphor. This is a direct result of the difference in cultural systems of belief, where the Western culture oriented itself towards water as the source of life and Eastern mythology perceived air as the central element (Li, 2010). Boers and Demecheleer (2001) conducted research on French learners of English by testing their comprehension of selected idioms based on the imagery of hats, sleeves, ships, and food. They expected that idioms relating to a metaphoric theme that is more salient in the target culture would be “less easily ‘guessable’ to language learners” than those relating to themes that are equally or more salient in the L1 culture (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001: 257). The results showed that French learners of English were more successful in translating those idioms relying on the two domains (sleeve and food) found more salient and thus more productive in the French culture (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001: 258). On the other hand, hats and ships are frequently found domains in the English language, where a lot of expressions use the said imagery to convey meaning (e.g., *pass the hat around*, *talk through one’s hat*, *sail through something*, etc.). The same authors conducted follow-up studies with the help of the software they developed (*Idiom teacher*) to facilitate the retention of culturally-specific idioms (Boers et al., 2004). In this study, the participants that were included were of Flemish Dutch origin and were tested on their retention of English idioms. The results were comparative with those obtained for the French students. Thirty-four expressions were identified from various domains, which were found less salient in the learners’ L1 and for which the obtained results were lower than the overall score (Boers et al., 2004: 384). The authors used both culturally-specific idioms and phrases, which were found motivated by other mechanisms present in both languages, and even though culturally-specific idioms were understood less often than those motivated otherwise, the experimental learners to whom the origin of idioms was explained beforehand managed to score higher than the control participants who were denied such input.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research framework

In accordance with our research questions, two null hypotheses were set as follows:

1H₀: There is no noticeable difference in the success of translation of CS idioms between the Control and the Experimental groups suggesting metaphoric awareness does not aid the comprehension of CS idioms.

2H₀: CS idioms are understood with the same ease as CM idioms suggesting CM motivation does not provide better ground for understanding figurative language among EFL learners.

Five CMs were chosen to be included in the testing as a means of control and their selection was based on the following two prevailing facts: (1) the metaphors were researched both by English and Croatian authors, and (2) they had been established as shared between the two languages. On the other hand, CS idioms were chosen from two culturally salient domains – nautical and baseball – as representatives of British and American cultures respectively. The first step included the compilation of idiomatic expressions representative of the selected shared metaphors included in the administered instrument (a two-part questionnaire). By means of deduction, a list was produced containing idioms viable for the pilot study. The pilot study was then followed by the main study, which included a total of 150 participants all of whom were students of English as a foreign language at the Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka. They were divided into Control and Experimental groups, and the selection was based on a random sample method. The testing was preceded by a 25-minute introductory lesson on idiomatic

language and idiomatic expressions. Extensive examples of idioms were drawn from both languages in order to ensure the participants' understanding of the concept of figurative vocabulary and idioms in general. In addition, the Experimental group was introduced to the concept of CMs and was given examples of metaphors motivating idioms in order to illustrate the connection between the two concepts. This was withheld from the Control group, which remained unaware of the connection between idioms and CMs (until after the testing had been completed). The questionnaire used to elicit the participants' responses included 35 items (25 items were motivated by shared metaphors and 10 items were English idioms from the cultural domains of maritime and baseball). Two versions of the questionnaire were designed, both of which consisted of two parts: Part 1 consisted of 25 idioms motivated by conceptual metaphors, and Part 2 consisted of 10 idioms from the domains of maritime and baseball. The Control group was administered a questionnaire that did not feature the items listed under corresponding conceptual metaphors and cultural domains, while the Experimental group was administered a questionnaire where the items were grouped according to the conceptual metaphors motivating the idioms. Both versions also included the translations of certain words mentioned in the provided context that were believed to be more or less unfamiliar to the participants and might, therefore, influence the results. The entirety of the research presented in this study was conducted in compliance with the principles of procedural ethics. Formal approval was sought and gained from the Ethical Committee at the Faculty of Maritime Studies in Rijeka, where both the pilot and the main studies were conducted.

3.2 Coding procedure

Based on the pilot group responses, a coding approach was developed for CM and CS idioms respectively. While designing the approach to coding the participants' responses, existing practices as well as the participants' own responses in this study were taken into account. The categories employed in our current were developed based mainly on the pilot study responses, and they were as follows:

(1) No translation provided: Coding the missing translations was equally as important as coding other categories because of the nature of the study. The aim was to see if underlying motivation exerted a higher response rate among Experimental group participants, thus suggesting higher learners' motivation among participants who at least tried to provide translations.

(2) Incorrect translation provided (INC TR): translations that do not reflect the correct target meaning of the idiom in question.

(3) Correct translation – no conceptual metaphor employed (COR NO CM): Translations are correct and in accordance with target meanings, but lack the obvious presence of metaphor use.

(4) Correct translation – target conceptual metaphor employed (COR TG CM): Translations are correct interpretations of idiom meanings and exhibit evident use of the specified underlying motivation.

(5) Correct translation – conceptual metaphor employed (COR CM): translations are correct, but are reflective of another metaphor and not the one specified in the testing.

In the case of CS idioms, categories (1), (2) and (3) were employed, since there were no CMs to aid the retention of CS idioms. The idioms grouped according to underlying etymology (domains of origin) were coded as belonging to one of the three possible categories, NO TR, INC TR, or COR NO CM. Since, by definition, the coding process is heavily reliant on the subjective impressions of the person performing the coding, the services of two additional coders were

acquired for the purposes of this research. Both coders were holders of degrees in translation studies and had no previous insight into the research. The three different sets of data (the researcher's own categorization and two sets from independent coders) underwent inter-rater reliability tests in order to ensure data validity.

4. Results

In the following paragraphs we illustrate the data collected on the sample of 78 Control participants (mean age 20.06; range 18-26) and 72 Experimental participants (mean age 19.69; range 18-27) grouped according to inter- and intra- group statistical analyses.

4.1 Group comparison

Taking the combined frequencies for COR NO CM, COR TG CM, and COR CM categories into account, the Experimental group managed to outperform the Control group in terms of correctly provided translations for Part 2 items (415 as opposed to 269). Stated in percentages, the Experimental group managed to interpret CS idioms correctly in 37.77% of cases, while the Control group managed to do the same in 23.07% of cases. The total frequencies for each CS item and cultural domain are shown in Table 1, whereas in Table 2 means were compared for both Part 1 and Part 2 items.

An independent *t*-test was performed on the total means for CS idioms in an attempt to establish the significant difference between the results obtained for the Experimental (N=72) and Control group (N=78). The Experimental group obtained higher means on all of the 10 CS idioms, with the most significant difference in scores obtained for the idiom *keep on an even keel* (1.01 for the Control group and 1.79 for the Experimental group). The slightest difference in scores was obtained for the idiom *be off base* (1.28 for the Control group in comparison to 1.42 for the Experimental group). These means were compared by means of a *t*-test the results of which are presented in Table 3.

There was a significant difference in the scores for the Control group (M=1.58, SD=.35) and the Experimental group (M=2.03, SD=.36) conditions; $t(148)=4.307$, $p=.000$. The *t*-test results for CS idioms indicate there is a significant difference (p -value lower than .01) between the Control and the Experimental group when it comes to the dependent variable measured (CS Idiom comprehension). The Experimental group yielded higher means in CM conditions than the Control group did in no CM conditions for CS idioms, which in turn allowed for H_0 to be rejected; the comprehension of CS idioms is raised with metaphoric awareness.

4.2 Intra-group data

An ANOVA test for repeated measures was used to compare CM data to CS data in order to deduce any significant difference between the two sets and cast light on whether CM idioms are understood better than CS idioms. The test was thus performed on the Control group means (N=78) obtained in Part 1 and Part 2 of the instrument (Table 4).

There was a statistically significant effect of motivation on idiom comprehension, $F(1,77)=67.203$, $p=.000$. This means that we can reject the null hypothesis in the case of the Control group and accept the alternative hypothesis stating that CM idioms are better understood than CS idioms. The test was repeated on the Experimental group data the results of which are reported in Table 5.

The test performed on the Experimental group means ($N=72$) obtained in Part 1 and Part 2 of the instrument suggests there was a statistically significant effect of motivation on idiom comprehension, $F(1,71)=69.576$, $p=.000$. This means we can reject the null hypothesis in the case of the Experimental group as well and accept the alternative hypothesis stating that the Experimental group participants understand CM idioms significantly better than CS idioms.

5. Discussion

Through an extensive data analysis, we managed to discard the null hypotheses in relation to our research questions. The results of our study suggest CM idioms are indeed understood more readily by EFL learners than idioms, which derive from a cultural domain not as salient in the learner's L1 culture. Both the Control and the Experimental groups managed to translate CM idioms (means of 1.58 and 2.03 respectively) with greater success than CS idioms (means of 1.17 and 1.60 respectively). In addition, these means were found to be statistically significant in the case of both groups (level of significance was obtained at a .00 level). This would suggest that those expressions, which are not motivated by an underlying CM, are more difficult to interpret than expressions, which can be traced back to the underlying CM. This hypothesis seems to hold ground even when EFL learners are not made aware of the existence of CMs (which the Control group's results corroborate).

5.1 CM facilitation and culture-specific vocabulary

The learners who were actively made aware of the existence of CMs in their language understood idioms better than the learners who were denied the same. A significant difference between results for CS idioms was obtained between the two groups at a .000 level (Table 3). It is evident metaphor-aware students performed better with culturally-specific items than students who were denied the same tool. Making the learners aware of the idioms' underlying motivation seems to heighten their understanding of culturally-specific vocabulary items (Boers et al. 2004). We might argue, then, that raising metaphoric awareness contributes to overall understanding of the figurative language, even including examples that cannot be traced back to a certain CM. It seems that the awareness-raising lesson given to the Experimental students started a chain reaction that was not restricted to CS idioms alone; the strategy to look for the motivation beyond linguistic form was also stretched to CS idioms. However, these results might be suggestive of something else, which has to do with the underlying motivation of CS idioms. The reason why the Experimental group outperformed the Control group in CS idiom comprehension could be found in the fact that some CS idioms could also be brought into contact with specific CMs (and not necessarily their domains of origin). This would suggest that the etymological elaboration provided to the Experimental group lent little support to their comprehension of the target items. It was, rather, their heightened CM awareness that made them seek underlying CMs even for those culturally-specific items, which usually resist such attempts, since they are seen as motivated by cultural domains of human activities and not metaphorical conceptualizations. In other words, the Experimental group's dominant results for Part 2 items (Table 5) might be taken as evidence of CS idioms, which are somehow motivated by specific CMs. We have already mentioned that translations for CS idioms were categorized differently than in the case of CM idioms: the COR TG CM and COR CM categories were not included, since CS idioms are traditionally seen as resilient to CM conceptualization (Kövecses 2005). However, is this really the case? Our results could suggest that some idioms do lend themselves more readily to CM conceptualization than others, and it could also be the factor that resulted in the higher means obtained for those items in comparison to other culture-specific idioms. For example, *sail under false colors* might be reflective of the SEEING IS KNOWING metaphor; *be on your beamends* could be the product of the PEOPLE ARE MACHINES metaphor; *blown off course* could be motivated by DIFFICULTIES

ARE IMPEDIMENTS TO MOTION, and the baseball idioms *go to bat* and *step up to the plate* might reflect one instantiation of the LIFE IS A SPORTING MATCH metaphor, i.e., PEOPLE ARE BASEBALL PLAYERS. The idiom *be off base* could thus be seen as reflective of the CONVERSATION IS A SPORTING MATCH instantiation of the same metaphor. If this were the case, it might be logical to assume that at least the Experimental group would translate the idioms that could potentially be motivated by a CM more successfully than other CS idioms, such as *batten down the hatches* or *keep on an even keel*, which directly reflect human activities in certain contexts. The data do not show sufficient consistency for the alternative interpretation of results to be taken as the primary reason for why some idioms were translated poorly; for example, even though the Experimental participants found *batten down the hatches* to be the most challenging to translate (mean .97), *keep on an even keel* was not among the CS idioms that obtained the lowest means in the Experimental group (mean 1.79). We conclude that some CS idioms might present a greater challenge than others due to an interplay of various factors. In the case of *batten down the hatches*, both the low-frequency word factor of the constituent *hatches* (Boers 2000a; Boers et al. 2004) and the idioms' resistance to any CM categorization might play a role.

Another factor which might play a role in experimental studies of similar scopes is input organization. In our study, the Experimental group was made aware of the source of origin for CS idioms, since their version of the questionnaire included the headings NAUTICAL PHRASES and BASEBALL PHRASES. The Control group's version, however, did not. The reason why the headings were included for Part 2 idioms was to retain the equality of input for the Experimental group. Other authors have also addressed the importance of equal input (Boers, 2000b; Geld et al., 2014), but in relation to inter-group rather than intra-group differences. No such methods of achieving equality of input between Control and Experimental participants were employed in our current research, although the order of the input was not changed and the idioms with the same underlying motivation still remained visually grouped in one larger textbox separated by space from the other idiom sets. The Control group was denied the headings for CS idioms in an attempt to equalize the input for Parts 1 and 2. Additionally, this was done in the specified manner in order to attempt to provide an answer to our research questions and see if the Experimental group was able to produce more correct translations for CS idioms than the Control group.

5.2 Pitfalls to discerning motivation

There are instances when any hinting at the phrases' motivation might not prove facilitative in its comprehension by language learners. The first of these situations includes low-frequency keywords. If an idiom's component is a word that is not widely used in English or is not commonly taught in EFL contexts, then it might be difficult for the learner to decipher the meaning of the entire phrase (Boers et al., 2004: 378). For example, *be in the doldrums* contains the word *doldrums*, which is not just infrequently used, but also rather obsolete in English. We endeavored to eliminate the low-frequency keywords as a potential extraneous variable in our study by using a glossary. However, in spite of the inclusion of a glossary, unfamiliar keywords might have contributed to CS idioms' low means. In the Control group, the most poorly understood CS idioms were: *batten down the hatches* (.74), *go to bat* (.85), *be on your beam ends* (.92), and *keep on an even keel* (1.01). The CS idioms that obtained the lowest means in the Experimental group include: *batten down the hatches* (.97), *go to bat* (1.06), *be off base* (1.42), and *be on your beam ends* (1.42). As we can see, three of the idioms, which posed a challenge for both groups, include low-frequency keywords: *hatches*, *beam*, and *keel*. It seems that any further implementation of CMs or etymological elaboration in classrooms would necessarily need to include pre-teaching relevant vocabulary, because even with additional learning tools such as CMs and referencing to the etymology of a phrase learners are still at an impasse when faced with idioms whose components feature a low-frequency lexeme.

The second situation includes mostly culturally-specific idioms, where “the idiom may be derived from a source domain that is less salient in the learner’s own culture” (Boers et al., 2004: 380). This was the case with the CS idioms included in our study (baseball and maritime expressions). Boers et al. (2004: 380) hypothesize that “the idioms derived from less familiar source domains will tend (...) to be less susceptible to dual coding and thus less easily remembered.” If we take a closer look at the specific domains the idioms are derived from, such as maritime and baseball, we observe no relevant differences in the success of translation between the two source domains: both baseball and nautical idioms were equally difficult to interpret. It was our expectation that the nautical idioms might have presented a lesser challenge for two reasons. Firstly, Croatia is a coastal Mediterranean country, where maritime themes are very much entwined with the local cultures, especially in the Dalmatian, Istrian, and Kvarner regions, which is also evident in language production, where a lot of nautical expressions have taken root. Secondly, the participants of the main study were all students at the Faculty of Maritime Studies and thus more likely to be familiar with maritime vocabulary and everyday expressions. Our expectation was not met in this case: *batten down the hatches*, for example, obtained the lowest mean in both groups (mean .74 in the Control group and mean .97 in the Experimental group). It is closely followed by *go to bat* (mean .85 in the Control group and mean 1.06 in the Experimental group). The data thus show that the Control group translated baseball and nautical phrases with relatively the same success. However, they attempted to translate baseball phrases (96 NO TR responses) more frequently in comparison to nautical phrases (126 NO TR responses) (Table 1). The Control participants, therefore, attempted to translate baseball phrases more frequently than the nautical ones, but they also produced more incorrect translations in the case of baseball idioms (203 INC TR responses for baseball phrases, in comparison to 175 INC TR responses for nautical phrases). The statistics for the Experimental group tell us a slightly different story: they produced a total of 336 INC TR responses and 112 NO TR responses for CS idioms. This tells us that the Experimental group tended to produce more incorrect translations in both domains rather than leaving the answers blank. The significance of the discrepancy between these numbers obtained for the two groups is twofold. Firstly, the inter-group difference in the number of NO TR and INC TR responses suggests the Experimental students were more encouraged to attempt the translations of culturally-specific phrases than the Control students. Secondly, the inter-domain difference in favor of baseball phrases (which were more readily translated by both groups, unlike nautical phrases) indicates learners are more prone to attempt to translate phrases, which originate from domains more salient in their own culture (Boers et al., 2004: 380). This is not to suggest we believe baseball to be a salient domain in Croatian culture, but perhaps baseball is a cultural domain, which is more familiar to the younger generations of speakers, who have been exposed to some basic knowledge of the sport through cinematic art and other popular media devices frequently originating from the American culture. Their potential greater familiarity with baseball phrases rather than nautical ones encouraged them to attempt translations more often in the case of idioms connected to this domain; however, their insufficient knowledge of the same also resulted in a higher number of incorrect translations.

It might thus be concluded that neither the domain of origin nor the variety of English (British or American) was a significant factor when it came to idiom comprehension: EFL learners found baseball and nautical phrases to be equally challenging. However, it must be noted here that to claim responsibly that the two domains of origin are equally presented (or not) in both L1 and L2 would signify having to screen comparable dictionaries for idioms that can be retraced to the source domain under investigation and, additionally, use the language corpora with the purpose of counting the frequency of occurrence of the idioms, which were established as derived from the source domains subject to investigation (Boers et al., 2004: 377). These two complementary methods for determining whether particular source domains differ between linguistic communities were not employed in this research and, consequently, any firm claims about the included domains being equally present in Croatian and English cannot be made.

6. Conclusions

All differences aside, our findings suggest that CS idioms, whose domains are less salient in the learners' L1, are understood more easily by students with raised CM awareness, i.e., the comprehension of culturally more salient expressions can be facilitated through instruction about their origin. Culture, it seems, plays an important role in idiom comprehension and culturally-motivated idioms present a greater challenge for the learners. The results show that metaphoric awareness not only aids the comprehension of those idioms motivated by shared CMs, but also CS idioms, the motivation of which cannot be elaborated through CMs, but rather by etymological elaboration. Our research aimed to prove the "worthiness" of CMs to be included in EFL teaching practices. Firstly, by offering learners an eye-opener about the presence of CMs in figurative expressions, we managed to yield a better comprehension rate for the target items. Without attempting to make general claims about CM universality, we do believe our findings can be interpreted in favor of a perspective, which perceives metaphoric awareness as a tool facilitating the comprehension of figurative vocabulary. Secondly, it would be interesting to see if CM awareness also influences retention. Even though we have reported on studies, which conducted post-tests to test for vocabulary retention, such experiments either lacked in experimental design or were conducted on too few participants for the results to be taken into consideration on a broader level of application. The short- and long-term effect of metaphoric instruction upon idiom retention could also be investigated more extensively with respect to idiom motivation to see if, perhaps, CS idioms are equally well remembered as CM idioms or if differences do exist.

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Appendix

Table 1. Response frequencies for CS idioms across the three coding categories

Item	Control group			Experimental group		
	NO TR	INC TR	COR NO CM	NO TR	INC TR	COR NO CM
batten down the hatches	28	46	4	12	55	5
keep on an even keel	27	37	14	9	30	33
sail under false colors	19	28	31	6	28	38
be on <i>your</i> beam ends	36	27	15	18	30	24
be blown off course	16	37	25	7	22	43
Total	126	175	89	52	165	143
have two strikes against <i>you</i>	18	42	18	11	27	34
go to bat	26	45	7	20	40	12
throw a curve	14	30	34	8	22	42
step up to the plate	20	46	12	13	37	22
be off base	18	40	20	8	45	19
Total	96	203	91	60	171	129
Grand total	222	378	180	112	336	272

Table 2. A comparison of means for the 35 items for the Control and Experimental groups

Item	Control (N=78)			Experimental (N=72)			Total (N=150)		
	M	SD	SE	M	SD	SE	M	SD	SE
let off steam	2.21	.76	.09	2.57	.71	.08	2.38	.76	.06
add fuel to the fire	2.19	.81	.09	2.56	.67	.08	2.37	.76	.06
fan the flames	1.54	.62	.07	2.25	.78	.09	1.88	.79	.06
take the heat out of <i>something</i>	1.59	.61	.07	1.75	.75	.09	1.67	.68	.06
get hot under the collar	1.22	.71	.08	1.31	.91	.11	1.26	.82	.07
blow <i>your</i> stack	1.37	.87	.10	1.94	.85	.10	1.65	.91	.07
hit the ceiling	1.58	.61	.07	1.97	.80	.10	1.77	.74	.06
have kittens	.96	.76	.09	1.71	1.08	.13	1.32	1.00	.08
blow <i>your</i> top	1.33	1.00	.11	1.97	1.14	.13	1.64	1.11	.09

burst a blood vessel	1.74	.81	.09	2.01	.94	.11	1.87	.89	.07
spin your wheels	1.41	.73	.08	1.69	1.04	.12	1.55	.90	.07
hit a dead end	1.68	.99	.11	2.51	.89	.11	2.08	1.03	.08
at a crossroads	1.77	.77	.09	2.56	.73	.09	2.15	.85	.07
go off the track	1.87	1.06	.12	2.36	.98	.12	2.11	1.05	.09
have a head start in life	1.38	.73	.08	1.64	.89	.11	1.51	.82	.07
be on the warpath	1.09	.63	.07	1.33	.90	.11	1.21	.78	.06
shoot down <i>someone's</i> arguments	1.91	.91	.10	2.24	.91	.11	2.07	.92	.08
cross swords with <i>someone</i>	1.62	.87	.10	2.15	.90	.11	1.87	.92	.08
fight a losing battle	1.99	.93	.11	2.42	.93	.11	2.19	.95	.08
fight to the last ditch	2.55	.68	.08	2.82	.66	.08	2.68	.68	.06
be up the creek without a paddle	1.35	.82	.09	1.61	.96	.11	1.47	.90	.07
hit a brick wall	1.35	.91	.10	2.25	1.07	.13	1.78	1.09	.09
fight an uphill battle	1.10	.78	.09	1.54	.95	.11	1.31	.89	.07
face hurdles	1.18	1.00	.11	1.64	1.13	.13	1.40	1.09	.09
be caught between a rock and a hard place	1.68	.95	.11	2.10	.91	.11	1.88	.95	.08
batten down the hatches	.74	.71	.08	.97	.67	.08	.85	.70	.06
keep on an even keel	1.01	1.04	.12	1.79	1.16	.14	1.39	1.16	.10
sail under false colors	1.55	1.25	.14	1.97	1.13	.13	1.75	1.20	.10
be on <i>your</i> beam ends	.92	1.11	.13	1.42	1.20	.14	1.16	1.18	.10
be blown off course	1.44	1.15	.13	2.10	1.14	.13	1.75	1.19	.10
have two strikes against <i>you</i>	1.23	1.06	.12	1.79	1.20	.14	1.50	1.16	.09
go to bat	.85	.82	.09	1.06	.98	.12	.95	.90	.07
throw a curve	1.69	1.21	.14	2.06	1.16	.14	1.87	1.20	.10
step up to the plate	1.05	.94	.11	1.43	1.11	.13	1.23	1.04	.09
be off base	1.28	1.09	.12	1.42	1.00	.12	1.35	1.05	.09

Table 3. *t*-test results comparing the Control (N=78; CM idioms: M=1.58, SD=.35; CS idioms: M=1.17, SD=.59) and Experimental (N=72; CM idioms: M=2.03, SD=.36; CS idioms: M=1.60, SD=.60) groups on Idiom Comprehension with respect to underlying motivation

Independent <i>t</i> -test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
CS idioms*	200	.655	4.307	148	.000	.423	.098	.228	.617
CM idioms*	956	.330	7.657	148	.000	.449	.058	.333	.566

* Equal variances assumed.

** $p < .001$

Table 4. ANOVA test results for Control group means according to Motivation: CM idioms (N=78, M=1.58, SD=.35) and CS idioms (N=78, M=1.17, SD=.59)

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects - Control group							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Motivation	Sphericity Assumed	6.531	1	6.531	67.203	.000	.466
	Greenhouse-Geisser	6.531	1	6.531	67.203	.000	.466
	Huynh-Feldt	6.531	1	6.531	67.203	.000	.466
	Lower-bound	6.531	1	6.531	67.203	.000	.466
Error (Motivation)	Sphericity Assumed	7.483	7	.097			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	7.483	7	.097			
	Huynh-Feldt	7.483	7	.097			
	Lower-bound	7.483	7	.097			

Computed using $p = .05$.

Table 5. ANOVA test results for Experimental group means according to Motivation: CM idioms (N=72, M=2.03, SD=.36) and CS idioms (N=72, M=1.60, SD=.60)

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects - Experimental group							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Motivation	Sphericity Assumed	6.847	1	6.847	69.576	.000	.495
	Greenhouse e-Geisser	6.847	1	6.847	69.576	.000	.495
	Huynh-Feldt	6.847	1	6.847	69.576	.000	.495
	Lower-bound	6.847	1	6.847	69.576	.000	.495
Error (Motivation)	Sphericity Assumed	6.987	71	.098			
	Greenhouse e-Geisser	6.987	71	.098			
	Huynh-Feldt	6.987	71	.098			
	Lower-bound	6.987	71	.098			

Computed using $p = .05$.

“Maestro: el Gran Aliado”: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This article examined an opinion column titled *Maestro: el Gran Aliado* (teachers: The great ally) from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective. The relevance of the analysis of this piece lies on the fact that our current minister of education wrote it shortly before accepting this position. The study sets out to explore the linguistic features used in this opinion column and uncover the opaque intentions behind it. The analysis is conducted through the use of systemic functional linguistics. The findings imply that the discourse used in this opinion column had a different intention than the transparent purpose stated by the name given to it.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, transitivity, modality, textual, opaque meaning, opinion column, systemic functional linguistics.

1. Introduction

Ever since their emergence, newspapers have been important social institutions precisely because they have provided a forum for citizens, although sometimes only a limited group of people get to participate in this forum, to discuss the issues that concerned them (Lewis & Wahl, 2005). Since 2015 and before he was appointed minister of education in Mexico, Esteban Moctezuma Barragán has written opinion columns for *El imparcial*. The themes of the columns vary, for example national and international politics, social issues to name a few; however, education is a consistent topic in most columns.

In 2017, for his opinion column Barragán wrote a short piece called “*Maestro: El gran Aliado*” for the above-mentioned newspaper. The transparent aim of the column was to portrait Barragán’s opinion about teachers in Mexico, specifically teacher from the public sector. This paper presents a critical discourse analysis (CDA) with the aim of analyzing this written discourse in order to uncover the opaque or hidden intention. The analysis is divided into three sections, transitivity, modality and textual. To conclude, I present a summary of the repercussions the op-ed has and the importance of critically processing information on newspapers, specially opinion columns.

2. Theoretical background

For a better understanding of this paper, it is crucial to understand the central phenomenon that is under study in this paper. To provide this context on the central phenomenon, I shall first provide a brief biographical background, in which I explain who Esteban Barragán is and why it is relevant to analyze this opinion column.

- Through the use of systemic functional linguistics, it was found that the discourse used in this opinion column had a different intention than the transparent purpose stated by the title of the piece.
- Behind the opinions that the author has concerning the improvement of public education lies the political endorsement to, at the time, a presidential candidate.
- Evidence of opaque intentions and meanings shed light on the necessity of media literacy training for citizens in any society.

2.1 Esteban Moctezuma Barragán: A brief biographical account

Born in 1954 in Mexico City, Esteban Barragán holds a BA in economy and law from the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM) and a MA in political economy from Cambridge University. During Ernesto Zedillo's presidency (1994-2000), Barragán was appointed *secretario de gobernación* (ministry of the interior) and later he was in charge of the *secretaría de desarrollo social* (ministry of social development). In the year 2000, Esteban Barragán retired from politics and became the CEO of *Fundación Azteca* (a foundation created as part of the social responsibilities of Grupo Salinas). While being part of this foundation he created two programs in charge of promoting music and connecting NGOs and bring them together to improve communities.

Barragán is also the author of three books. Two of them related to public management and government policies and one of them related to public education. Additionally, he published weekly opinion columns at a renowned newspaper in Mexico. On 1 December 2018 Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador appointed Barragán as *secretario de educación* (ministry of education). This marked the end of his job as CEO of Fundación Azteca to occupy this position.

It is relevant to analyze this opinion column (and others he has written) because these shed light on his beliefs and perspectives about topics such as education. This opinion was written months before he became minister of education and yet he was already announcing core beliefs and ideas concerning how education was going to evolve. The following section discusses the methodology used for the analysis.

3. Methodology

This analysis sets out to examine an opinion column written by our Minister of Education in 2017. The purpose of such analysis is to uncover the underlying hidden assumptions that this text entails. This is of special interest since this op-ed was written a year before he was appointed minister of education. In order to conduct this study CDA was employed as the research methodology. By the end the 1970s, CDA had established as one of the domains of research in discourse studies. It is known as an approach that is based on the union of language studies and social theory (Fairclough, 1992). It investigates how social power is misused and how text and talk represent, procreate, and resist dominance and inequality in the social context. The focus of CDA is public speech, such as political speeches, advertisement, newspaper, official documents and so on. CDA has its roots in critical science; van Dijk (1986) states that critical science (CS) goes beyond descriptions, superficial applications, and theoretical problems. The importance of CS lies

in that it goes further into questioning responsibility, interest, and ideology, in order to explore social problems.

One of the most important linguistic theories correlated with a critical discourse approach is that of Halliday's systematic functional grammar. It is supported by some linguists (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; Fairclough, 1995a; Kress, 1985) who used it for analyzing the text because systematic functional grammar has a significant role in critical interpretation of linguistic expression in various discourses. Therefore, systematic functional linguistic (SFG) model has been applied as a tool for analyzing this text, the following subsection provides an overview of this tool. In sum, critical discourse analysis and systematic functional linguistics together will help develop a stronger analysis of the text to better discover the hidden implications of this opinion column.

3.1 Research technique: Systemic functional linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics has been developed for around half a century now, in different contexts around the world. Systematic functional grammar was developed by Michael Halliday and it is based on grammatical description. The framework considers that language is interlocking options or networks of systems for creating meaning (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015). Halliday (1978) further elaborates that discourse is a multidimensional process which is not only composed of lexico- grammatical choices but also by higher levels of functions like semiotics. In other words, the social, physical, cognitive, cultural, interpersonal and situational context play an important role in discourse choice (Haratyan, 2011). This multidimensional process encompasses three functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Table one summarizes the nature of each of these:

Table 1. SFL's functions

Ideational function	Combine transitivity (grammar) and voice to express reactions, cognitions and perceptions. This function comprises six processes: material (action with a direct object), mental (perceptions and reactions), verbal (exchange information or describe), relational (identify or attribute characteristics), behavioral (express physiological or mental behaviors) and existential (present something that exist or happens)
Interpersonal function	Express comments, attitudes and evaluations related to certain communication roles. These roles are informing , questioning , or giving commands .
Textual function	The manner in which language is organized coherently to help the listener or reading understand the message.

The analysis was conducted by first separating the entire text into clauses to conduct all the three analysis. Appendix A shows the complete transcript of the written discourse, the section of the text in clauses and the color coding for verbs and adjectives.

4. Results

The analysis is divided into three sections, first the transitivity analysis in which the data is classified into the SFL's six processes. The second part of the analysis concerns the interpersonal function providing a modality analysis. The last part of the analysis specifically looks at the textual function in order to understand how content of the opinion column was unified. Table 2 illustrates the general characteristics of the report under examination.

Table 2. General characteristics of discourse

Statistical Item	Opinion Column	
	No.	%
Tokens	498	100
Types	210	42

The results from Table 2 show that the lexical density of the article is at 42% this means that the text is directed at a very small audience.

4.1 Transitivity analysis

The transitivity analysis consists of understanding the processes that are used within the ideation function. To illustrate this analysis Table 3 shows the results of the analysis in relation to the processes. In addition, Table 4 presents some of the examples found in each of the aspects.

Table 3. Transitivity analysis

Statistical Item	Opinion Column	
	No.	%
Material	4	16
Mental	3	12
Relational	2	8
Verbal	6	24
Behavioral	2	8
Existential	8	32

Table 4. Examples of process

Examples	Opinion Column
Material	Invest, educate, led
Mental	Think, rethink
Relational	Maintain, had
Verbal	Ask, answer, have
Behavioral	Improve, revise, wonder
Existential	Forms of to be

The author of the op-ed mostly used the existential process (32% of the time) to describe the state of situations and people related to education. Some examples of clauses are the following: “Porque la mayoría de las maestras y maestros están siempre en el aula / Because the majority of the teachers are always in the classroom”, “El maestro está auténticamente enamorado de su profesión; no es un trabajo sino un compromiso de vida. / Teachers are authentically in love with their professions; it is not a job but a lifetime commitment.”, and “[director] Es el CEO de la escuela y para ello debe prepararse. / [the principal] Is the CEO of the school and must prepare for that”. As we can observe these quotes discuss the status and characteristics of the teachers and

principals that work in the public sector. Therefore, all clauses can be treated by the reader as facts about these stakeholders.

The second most used process is the verbal one, which was used a 24% of the time. The author uses this to communicate the reader his action plan for public education. These clauses express most of the times the class, quality, or quantity what is being shared. Some sentences that illustrate this process are “Contesto que la educación tiene un destino: la calidad. / I respond that education has one destiny: quality”. Barragán here is responding to the rhetorical question concerning education in AMLO’s presidency. Another example is “Es importantísimo tener una amplia oferta de preparación para la gestión directiva. / It is really important to have a wide offer for training principals in schools”. Here, he highlights the importance of this course of action, however, this statement fails to elaborate on how this can be achieved.

The two processes that were used the least are the behavioral and relational ones (both 8%). The relational process was used to compare Spain and México. This comparison was used to explain why México’s educational quality is not high. The behavioral function was used to illustrate how the author and the teachers feel about how teachers are treated.

4.2 Modality analysis

This part of the analysis is concerned with examining “comments, attitudes, and evaluations in relation to the particular communication roles” (Halliday, 1971: 333). The texts’ purpose is to provide the readers with the opinions that the author has surrounding education and they key to improving Mexican public education. Through the analysis of the verbs the results indicate that 85.1% of the text has affirmative verbs. This means that the author states and treats these statements as facts and as something that it is true or presently true. Throughout the written discourse there is only 3.7 % verbs whose mood is imperative. These only appear when the author suggested solutions to improve educational quality and this is followed by a verb commanding the reader to consider such solutions. Table number 5 shows a summary of the mood in the opinion column.

Table 5. Mood

Statistical Item	Opinion Column	
	No.	%
Imperative	1	3.7
Affirmative	23	85.1
Interrogative	3	11.1

Through the identification of the mood in the text it is possible to understand that the purpose of the report is to express a certain ideology that the author of text has concerning the steps to take in order to improve public education in Mexico. Due to the short nature of the opinion column and the asynchronous nature of this type of communication, the audience, do not have access to the inquiries may lead us to question whether or not these had a certain ideological bias. The author of the piece is not explicit on what underlying assumptions or ideologies are informing his opinions.

Additionally, Table 5 summarizes the analysis of the use of tenses within the opinion column. The results indicate that present tense was used the most used tense. The usage of present tense (59.2%) affirms that the aim of the column was to establish this as a relevant social topic. The infinitive tense was second most used tense (27.6%), this was mostly used when discussing what are the steps to follow in order to improve que quality of public education in Mexico. This is

to ensure that the audience understands that the solution lies on actions such as creating, changing, inspiring and educating, to name a few.

Table 5. Use of tenses

Statistical Item	Opinion Column	
	No.	%
Present	46	59.2
Past	6	7.9
Infinitive	21	27.6
Future	4	5.2

The final level of modality is presenting the use of adjectives in order to explain the attitudes and evaluation. As illustrated in the table 6, the author of the column uses mostly positive adjectives. This could mislead us into thinking that the use of these positive adjectives means that the opinion column is a praise to the situation in Mexico. However, all the positive adjectives (93.5%) are almost exclusively used to describe this imaginary scenario where the government changes its mechanisms to improve education. For example; “*capacitación pertinente*/relevant training”, “*acceso total digital*/full digital access”, and “*esfuerzo mayor*/greater effort”. In general, the use of positive adjectives in the text reveal what the future secretary of education believes are the best cases scenario for public education. It also reveals a prescriptive use of adjectives such as normal, quality, main and pertinent. The author does not hedge his claims about what is to be done for education, they are portrayed through the use of adjectives as the only way.

Table 6. Use of adjectives

Statistical Item	Opinion Column	
	No.	%
Positive adjectives	29	93.5
Negative adjectives	2	6.4

The negative adjectives (6.4%) are used to describe the bad criticisms and fame Mexican teacher have in the eyes of society in general “*profundamente triste*/deeply sad”. Repeatedly the use of adjectives gives evidence that the author thinks positively of the changes that in his opinion are necessary to have quality information. It is important to note that the small number of negative adjectives does not mean that the author has mostly positive opinions about the situation in the country.

4.3 Textual analysis

In this part of the analysis I will present the organizational structure of the written discourse I am analyzing. The organization also reveals information on the intention of the opinion column. The first lines of the op-ed are the following:

“Muchas personas preguntan cómo será el programa educativo de ganar Andrés Manuel López Obrador la presidencia. Contesto que la educación tiene un destino: la calidad / A lot of people wonder how will Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s educational program would be if he is elected president. I reply that education has one destination: Quality”.

The opening line of the column references our current president AMLO. When this piece was written, he was still a candidate. It is interesting that although the title highlights teachers as great allies and it seems that the entire piece will revolve around teachers in public

education, it does not. The opinion column is quickly framed into a political statement where Barragán seems to know that education, if AMLO is elected, is destined to become quality education.

“España y México teníamos la misma población en 1960. Hoy, España mantiene su misma población y nosotros crecimos tres veces más! Los españoles llevan 6 décadas invirtiendo en valor agregado para mejorar su servicio educativo, mientras México se nos obligó a crecer su sistema al ritmo de la población / Spain and Mexico, we used to have the same population numbers in 1960. Today, Spain maintains its numbers and we have grown three times more! The Spanish have been investing on added value to improve their education service, while Mexico’s educational system has been forced to grow at the rhythm of our population’s growth”

The introduction continues and tries to set a context. Spain and Mexico are briefly compared in order to offer as justification as to why education in México is lacking quality. In the second section of the column Barragán briefly discusses that quality can be achieved through technology, language learning (priming English), teacher training to name a few. The third section focuses on the teachers. The section discusses topics such as the responsibilities teachers have, the mistreatments they suffer, and the changes education needs to endure in order to have better teachers. All these points are intertwined with Barragan’s opinions concerning the bad perspectives people have about teachers. He voices his admiration for these teachers and eases the heavy load that has been placed on them. Also, there are some comments related to principles in public institutions and what their role should be.

The fourth and final section is a *mélange* of voicing how the teachers feel and what are some mechanisms the government can implement in order to improve the quality of our education. The closing sentences is a rhetorical question posed to the reader in order to appeal to their emotional side. This question is quickly answered by Barragán claiming that this can all be changed if the reevaluate the *función magisterial*.

4. Discussion

In this section I will focused on the significance of findings of the analysis. One significant element of this paper is that it is possible to identify that discourse, whether written or oral, has two meanings (a) the one transparently assigned by the author and the genre of the discourse itself, and (b) the one that is opaque and requires observation and critical thinking skills. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001) language in mass media is meant to be transparent, neutral, disinterested, and an open space for public discourse. Nonetheless, this analysis shows none of these qualities, they do not give evidence of a non-bias nature of the author’s opinion. The affirmative nature of the text is surprising since it is an assumption that what the author is writing is the truth.

Another significant finding was the political endorsement given to a presidential candidate was hiding in plain sight. The reader might forget that the entire text is framed on the assumption that AMLO becomes president. It is almost as if the real problem, which is providing quality education in public schools, can only be solved if people vote for a certain candidate. This is might be misleading for the reader. The significance of the findings shed light onto the deceiving nature papers and media discourse can have and how applied linguistics can help make these opaque meanings more transparent.

5. Conclusions

Throughout this critical discourse analysis, it is apparent that what seems to be one man's opinion about public education and how teacher are key to change the situation, it is in reality a subtle political endorsement. The transitivity analysis reports that the processes that were majority employed were the existential, verbal and material. The author used a verbal process 32% of the time, this was to paint a picture on the current state and facts of education and its stakeholders, while the verbal process (24%) was used to describe the actions that are necessary for public education to succeed. The op-ed was scripted in an affirmative mood; the reporter used this mood 85.1% of the time. Correspondingly, most of the content was expressed in the present tense. Considering the results, it is vital for Mexican society to consider that texts in newspapers, social media or online websites might have a transparent purpose, manifested by the author or the genre of the text, and a covert one. It is important to raise awareness on this reality where the mass media can select their narratives to a) demand a better quality in our media outlets and b) to provide the citizens with media literacy education (Koltay, 2011). In Mexico 80% of the population is said to live in poverty and each day greater inequities exist among the country's society (Feixa, 1998). The situation is unfortunate however, it is our decision and education's responsibility to instruct its citizens with tools that allow aid them navigate life.

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Appendix A. Color coding process for analysis

Verbs (all tenses)	Adjectives	Verbs (infinitive)
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Material process clauses

- Los españoles **llevan** 6 décadas **invirtiendo** en valor **agregado** para **mejorar** su servicio **educativo**, mientras México **se nos obligó** a **crecer** su sistema al ritmo de la población.
- De **educar** en artes, **destacando** la música **orquestal**, y de **apasionar** a los estudiantes en ciencia y tecnología a través de la robótica.
- En el caso de los directores **habrá que darles** el lugar que **merecen** y que **requiere** la calidad.
- Hace tres años, cuando Emilio Chuayffet **encabezaba** la SEP, **hizo** una consulta **nacional** sobre la educación y al **presentar** los resultados **afirmó**.

Mental process clauses

- Pienso** que gran parte de la critica **es injusta**.
- Pensemos** en **crear** la Academia de Directores. ¿No **piensas** que **es fundamental** que cuando un niño **llegue** a la clase **vea** en su maestro el ejemplo a **seguir**; la **gran** voz que **le enseña**; el **gran** amigo que lo **puede conducir** al conocimiento y **transmitirle** no sólo la importancia de **tener** sino también de **ser**?
- Actualmente el mundo **está repensando** cómo **educar** para un futuro en donde los **principales** trabajos hoy **no existen**.

Relational process clauses

- España y México **teníamos** la **misma** población en 1960.
- Hoy, España **mantiene** su **misma** población y nosotros **crecimos** itres veces más!

Verbal process clauses

- Muchas personas **preguntan** cómo **será** el programa **educativo** **de ganar** Andrés Manuel López Obrador la presidencia.
- Contesto** que la educación **tiene** un destino: la calidad.
- Es **importantísimo** **tener** una **amplia** oferta de preparación para la gestión directiva.
- Eso sólo **se logrará revalorando** la función **magisterial**.
- El éxito en **lograr** la cobertura que **tenemos** nos **impulsa** a un esfuerzo **mayor**.

15. Llegó el momento de la calidad, de lograr acceso total digital, de impulsar el aprendizaje de idiomas, en especial el inglés, de una capacitación pertinente de los maestros y de una educación acorde.

Behavioral classes

16. Los maestros tienen la responsabilidad de ser cada vez mejores, pero también la autoridad educativa tiene el compromiso de darles las herramientas para crecer, de revalorar la función magisterial en serio.
17. Durante años se ha tratado mal al maestro en diversas formas: películas, programas de análisis, declaraciones de “expertos”, por lo que hay que revisar a fondo si esa actitud nos llevará a mejorar la educación. ¿Por qué?

Existential clauses

18. Porque la mayoría de las maestras y maestros están siempre en el aula, dando clases; cumpliendo los programas de la SEP.
19. Están enseñándoles a sus niñas y niños; y esforzándose por aprender cada vez más.
20. El maestro está auténticamente enamorado de su profesión; no es un trabajo sino un compromiso de vida.
21. En México todo está dispuesto para que mejore la educación.
22. El director no puede seguir siendo un tramitólogo administrativo; alguien que se dedique a llenar informes para la SEP, sino un verdadero líder y conductor de la enseñanza en su plantel.
23. Es el CEO de la escuela y para ello debe prepararse.
24. No es lo mismo ser un buen maestro que un buen inspirador de toda una escuela.
- El hallazgo más importante es que el maestro mexicano está profundamente triste, sentido con la sociedad mexicana por cómo se le ha venido tratando.

Coronavirus Outbreak in Mexico: A Critical Discourse Analysis of AMLO's Speech

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Abstract

A recent pandemic called coronavirus (Covid-19) has been spreading rapidly around the world this year, 2020. While some countries have confirmed cases and deaths, others as Mexico start to see far approaches of what is likely to be a large coronavirus outbreak. A video posted in YouTube by Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, known by his nickname AMLO, portrayed his opinion regarding the coronavirus and the security measure. This paper, based on Critical Discourse Analysis theory and Systematic Functional Linguistics, explore AMLO's speech by analyzing focused on transitivity and modality to discover what is behind the Mexican president's speech and its social consequences. The findings suggest that AMLO's speech has a different intention than convince the Mexican population that everything is fine.

Keywords: coronavirus, systematic functional linguistics, transitivity, modality, opaque meaning.

1. Introduction

In Mexico, two cases of infected people have appeared and there have been no announcements by the government to take the necessary security measures. This paper aims to know what is behind this political speech to understand the hidden meaning and ideology of this speech. Moreover, this study seeks to highlight the social impact of AMLO's speech. The video presented the Mexican president' speech regarding the announcement of the two main cases of people infected in the country. The transparent objective of this speech was to invite society not to fear the situation and to continue with their daily activities. To provide an analysis of the speech, I will use Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) proposed by Halliday (1985). To begin with, an introduction of the coronavirus background will be presented. Then, a general overview of the methodology implemented in this analysis will be addressed. To finish, I will provide a general conclusion of the results.

1.1 Coronavirus pandemic

According to BBC News (2020) "the virus, which causes the respiratory infection Covid-19, was first detected in the city of Wuhan, China, in late 2019" (para. 3). Coronavirus is a new type of pandemic that has caused thousands of infection cases, and unfortunately, deaths.

This is a type of virus that causes disease in animals. Seven types of viruses, including the Covid-19, are transmitted from animals to humans (Newey and Gulland, 2020). It is believed that this problem was first originated in December 2019 in a market located in Wuhan, China, which sold dead and live animals of different types. According to the ICM Anaesthesia COVID-19 (2020), the symptoms are “fever, fatigue, and dry cough is likely in the early stage of illness. However, some patients may not progress to more severe illness” (para. 5). This virus has been rapidly spreading around the world, according to the Center for Systems Sciences and Engineering (2020) there are over 3,596,142 confirmed cases and 251,718 deaths. The countries more affected are France, Italy, Spain, and the UK. The worst number of places that reported cases are in Europe. Thus, considering the increase in numbers of confirmed cases and deaths, the measures to avoid spread the virus is to stay at home if you have the opportunity. The World Health Organization (2020) it is essential to follow some precautions to reduce the possibilities of being infected or spreading COVID-19. The suggestions are presented as follows: regularly cleans and wash your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or with soap, maintain at least 1 meter of distance between you and others, avoid going out to public and crowded places, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.

With several cases confirmed in different countries and causing the death of thousands of people, this virus turns in a health worldwide problem in the first months of the year 2020. Countries follow strict lockdown restrictions to prevent the increase of infected people, nonetheless in Mexico the case security measures are not being respected. This country is one of the places which is about to see far approaches of what is likely to be a large coronavirus outbreak. In fact, Mexico has reported the first cases of coronavirus. Unfortunately, despite all the global warning and recommendations, AMLO states that everything is fine in México. It seems that he is skeptical regarding this worldwide health crisis. This situation is truly alarming because he is the representative of a country, and he is acting irresponsibly by not considering the security measures. Ward (2020) affirms that “he continues to hold political rallies, kiss supporters, and request that Mexicans go out shopping to prop up the country's sputtering economy during a global slowdown” (para. 2). This type of decisions can have severe consequences in the country because the outbreak of the virus can reach a breaking point. This situation has caught the attention of national and international media, they condemn the position of the Mexican president. Citizens are the ones who have taken the security measures that international health organizations have given.

Takin into account the previous overview, my motivation to conduct this analysis is to understand AMLO's speech and ideology regarding this serious situation. AMLO's speech is surprisingly alarming, considering that by the time he made this speech, the situation was a global health crisis and there were confirmed the first cases in Mexico. Thus, the results of the outbreak in Mexico could cause a breaking point in the society and in the health system. I ponder that politicians or anyone who has a public office must not forget that they represent the population's well-being and they need to take the most suitable choices. In the next section, I will provide a summary of the methodology.

2. Methodology

2.1 *Critical discourse analysis (CDA)*

This analysis seeks out to explore what is behind the AMLO's speech posted in a YouTube channel of a national newspaper name “El Universal” about the first security measure of the Coronavirus pandemic. Van Dijk (2015) claims CDA mainly, it is used to explore the way social-power, hegemony, and disparity are implemented, reproduced, hint, and endured by texts and conversations in political and social contexts. This approach is linked between language studies and social theory (Fairclough, 1992). This type of technique allows us to explore the hidden

meaning of discourses and ideologies and the power of politicians. CDA is a method that can be used to analyze political speech to explore their ideologies and power. Wodak (2011) affirms that through this framework it can be understood the relation between the concept of power and ideology and their use for dominance and discrimination.

2.2 Systemic functional linguistics

People express their opinions and thoughts using the language either written or spoken as a tool to communicate something. Halliday (1978) states that “through language, individual human beings becomes a part of a group” (p. 14). It seems that is not possible to communicate without the language. To conduct and explore an analysis of the spoken and written language is a complex. Numerous approaches have been proposed to understand the diverse aspects of the language. One of the most suitable approaches is Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which is commonly implemented in areas such as linguistics and applied linguistics.

SFL was selected as the most suitable framework to carry out this analysis which is constituted by three levels: (1) ideational, (2) interpersonal, and (3) textual. In the analysis section, I will provide a description of the levels within. SFL is a theory that was mainly developed by M. A. K. Halliday in 1960 in the UK. According to Zhunglin (1988) “functional language is a tool for interaction based on this idea that language forms are inevitably specified by the functions or uses that they provide” (p. 307). In addition, Halliday and Hassan (1989) stated that text is a tool to study the meaning and use of phrases and words. This study considers two perspectives: (1) the text as a product, and (2) the text as a process. Sharififar and Rahimi (2015) state that “a text is considered as a product when it studies the linguistic structures. Simultaneously it is a process in terms of a semantic component or encoding the meaning. These grammatical systems provide a basis for explaining the meanings of different kinds” (p. 344). The text itself is a media that could be a product and a process that encodes the meaning; thus it is required to implement an analysis to understand the codification from the text.

3. Analysis

In this section, I will describe of the three levels from Halliday’s framework, and I will analyze the next aspects: transitivity and modality. Then, as mean to reinforce the analysis I will include the social aspects.

3.1 Ideational function

The ideational function refers to the process and functions that offer an understanding of the real world (Halliday & Webster, 2003). Having this in mind, this function provides new elements and knowledge that are unfamiliar to the listener. This function is represented by the transitivity process. In Hallyday’s (1985) terms, transitivity concerns with the expression of ideas “representing ‘processes’ or ‘experiences’: actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations” (p. 53). According to Zhunglin (1988), these processes “determines the accessible options in meaning as well as specify the nature of their structural awareness (p. 312). Transitivity encompasses six processes: (1) material, (2) relational, (3) mental, (4) verbal, (5) behavioral, and (6) existential.

Table 1. Transitivity analysis

	No.	%
Material	13	36.11
Mental	3	8.33
Relational	3	8.33
Verbal	3	8.33
Behavioral	1	2.77
Existential	13	36.11

The most outstanding results of the analysis are material and existential processes, represented with an equal percentage (36.11 %). I will present both processes in the following sub-sections.

3.1.1 *Material process*

Material process involves the following elements: (1) actor, (2) process, and (3) goal. Table 2 shows examples from AMLO's speech.

Table 2. Material process

Actor	Process	Goal
(you)	do not anticipate	Anything
You	do not	go out
You	continue	taking your family
We	will continue	doing our normal life
We	can continue	doing our normal activities
It	may escalate	the problem

As it can be seen in these expressions, the Mexican president affirms that the pandemic's situation is not difficult in Mexico as in the rest of the world. The actors' in AMLO speech is we that refers to the whole Mexican nation. Additionally, he remarks that his government will inform us when it is necessary to take the security measures. He mentions continuing to do our everyday activity.

3.1.2 *Existential process*

The existential process is defined as something that exists or happens. Rashid and Jameel (2017) "existential clauses are not regular in discourse, but they provide an important contribution to different types of texts. In narrative, for instance, these clauses are used to introduce different participants" (p. 6). Holliday (2004) mentions that this process can be understood as "representative constructions" (257).

Table 3. Existential process

<u>We are</u> in the first phase.	Estamos en primera fase
<u>We are</u> paralyzed without reason in an exaggerated way.	Estamos paralizados sin ninguna razón de una manera exagerada
<u>There are</u> two cases in Oaxaca.	Hay dos casos en Oaxaca
<u>There are</u> just two cases of people infected with coronavirus	Hay solo dos casos de personas infectadas de coronavirus

Rashid and Jameel (2017) affirm that “the word ‘there’ when used in existential clauses enables the addressee to prepare for something which represents new information that is about to be introduced” (p. 6). Moreover, the authors remark that the word ‘there’ “is neither a participant nor a circumstance, but it is used to indicate the feature of existence” (p. 6). As stated above, existential clauses are not regular in discourse; however, in the present analysis this process was one of the most representative with a 36%. From the above samples, there is a sense to make references to the phase the country is and to the people infected. At the last minutes of the interview, the Mexican president introduces new information, making reference to the people infected. Moreover, the above sentences are examples of showing that Mexicans are alarmed by the coronavirus situation.

3.2 Interpersonal function

Interpersonal function is the second level of Halliday’s (2013) framework, which is defined as “the interpersonal function embodies all uses of language to express social and personal relations” (Zhuanglin, 1988: 313). This level is related to the relationship between the speaker and the listener. It embodies how the speaker introduces himself to a setting in a specific situation. Halliday (1978) stated that “both expressing his attitudes and judgments and looking for to influence the attitudes and behavior of others” (p. 112). The term to communicate the interpersonal function is a modality, which is defined as “the expression of the speaker’s attitude or opinion regarding the contents of the sentence” (Palmer, 2001: 14). In other words, the modality reflects the speaker’s position or judgment of a specific situation or topic. According to Martin and David (2003), modality is “a resource for grading polarity, for setting up positivity and negativity (p. 49).

3.2.1 Modality analysis

Modality concern with the attitude of the writer or speaker towards their level of certainty or confidence. Table 4 depicts the position of the speaker, either positive or negative, and it includes levels that are classified from low to high politeness.

Table 4. Modal verbs

	Low politeness	Median politeness	High politeness
Positive	Can, may, could, might have 3	Will, would, should, shall 5	Must, ought to, need, has/had to
Negative	Needn’t, doesn’t/didn’t, + need to, have to 9	Won’t, wouldn’t, shouldn’t, isn’t/wasn’t to 1	Mustn’t, oughtn’t to, can’t/couldn’t, mayn’t, mightn’t

As showed in the previous table, modals verbs are used to express negativity. The modality in raked in the low politeness. It is essential to highlight that modality is also positive, and it is ranked in the median politeness. This aspect is interesting because negative aspects portrays a lack of authority and confidence from the speaker, in this case, the Mexican president. But the median politeness illustrates that AMLO has a degree of certainty in their speech.

Table 5. Personal pronoun

Personal pronouns		Sample speeches
First person	I	3
	We	14
Second person	You	1
Third person	He	
	She	
	It	5
	They	2

From Table 5, we can see that the pronoun “we” is the most used. The employment of this pronoun is implemented to share the responsibility, and it has a sense of collectivity. The use of the pronoun “we” in political speech is used mostly to refer to the President. Furthermore, “we” is employed to create a separation between the speaker and the audience. In this case, AMLO uses the “we” in both sides. In the first place, AMLO includes himself as part of the Mexican population, leaving aside his role as president. On the other hand, AMLO uses “we” to refer to him and his cabinet, by doing so he establishes a distance between him and the Mexican population. Lopez Obrador uses “we” to emphasize that the Government cabinet members are doing their best to control the pandemic in the Mexican context.

3.3 Textual function

The third level is the textual function, that is the way the text is organized to guide the reader or listener to understand the language. According to Halliday (1971) “language makes links between itself and the situation, and discourse becomes possible because the speaker or writer can produce a text and the listener or reader recognize one” (p. 334). In this section, I will explore the textual function to understand the organization of the speech. The following sample is the first part of the speech:

“We are preparing [the government], but we should not be scared. We do not anticipate anything; that is what I have been saying. The Mexican culture is very resistant to all the calamities, we always have got ahead, and in this situation, we will do it”.

AMLO's speech addresses for the first time the pandemic situation. He mentions that Mexicans are more concerned than normal, and that society should not worry about the first phase. Also, he portrays a positive image of the government, considering that they are prepared to manage the pandemic. The whole speech is not organized, logical, or accurate. Throughout the whole speech, he continues to persuade society to go to restaurants and continue with everyday activities:

“Don't panic, we are going forward, and do not stop going out; we are in the first phase. I will tell you when do not go out, but If you're able and have the means to do so, continue taking your family to the restaurants-eateries because it strengthens our families and our economy.”

Beyond this calming message, this speech portrays control and dominance by the government. It seems that it is more important to keep the economy than public health. Furthermore, it is highlighted that the central message of the speech is to cover the real situation of the pandemic by diminishing (1) the worldwide health crisis, and (2) the security measures.

3.4 Social aspect

In this section, I will address the social impact of AMLO's speech in the Mexican context is addressed to uncover the power use throughout the language. To begin with, I share a quote from O'Neil (2020):

Only now, two weeks later, has the president finally addressed the nation. His speech revealed his limits as a leader, and leaves Mexico unprepared to face the pandemic, rescue the economy or bring the nation together. This failure threatens not just his once sky-high approval ratings, but also the viability of his ambitious economic and political project (para. 3)

The previous quotation was published two weeks after AMLO's recommendations to the Mexican population to continue with their normal activities. Thus, this reinforces the hidden intention of AMLO's speech to reduce the importance of taking security measures. Instead of giving importance to the first phase, it seems that the most important is to maintain the economy of the country. Unfortunately, the social impact was severe because after two weeks from the first speech, the cases of people infected increase enormously. By hiding the real message, the people are uninformed and unprepared to confront this situation, and the social consequences will be severe.

4. Conclusion

Through Halliday's three levels framework of critical discourse analysis, I was able to uncover the hidden message from AMLO's speech. To sum up, the Mexican president portrays a negative position regarding the social distancing program and suspending all nonessential activities. His positive position concerns with social behavior to maintain the calm and careless because he considers that the situation in Mexico is controlled. Also, the real message from the speech was to maintain the economy of the country; that is the reason why he invites the people to work because, as he mentions people's work is the strength of the economy. Unfortunately, there is an impact on society because they are not prepared and informed to face this current situation. Coronavirus is a disease in the world; thus, we are not prepared for this worldwide health crisis, but we can follow the security measure to handle and overcome this situation.

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