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Body, Health and Society: Socioanthropological Considerations

By Régia Cristina Oliveira & Eunice Almeida da Silva

University of São Paulo

Abstract- This text presents a sociological reflection on the biomedical discourse on the body and health in our society. We propose to address the sociological, anthropological and historical studies on body, health, illness and the scientific field of Health. The objective is to provide a discussion on the processes of society medicalization and of social inequalities in health.

Keywords: *body; health and illness; social class; biomedicine.*

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Régia Cristina Oliveira ^α & Eunice Almeida da Silva ^ο

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1. INTRODUCTION

In a classic text titled "Health and Society", author Donnangelo (1976) brings up a basic premise: in the relations that medicine keeps with the economic, political and ideological structure of societies where capitalist production predominate, medical practice ends up participating in the reproduction and maintenance of such structures by means of the upkeep of labour force and, further, of the participation in the control of social antagonisms.

This is to say that medicine, in such contexts, articulates beyond technique with other social practices, establishing itself as an important discursive field, in the organisation of norms and interdictions.

By means of different perspectives, several authors have analysed this aspect, among them Foucault (1976; 2006), Adam and Herzlich (2001), Fabiola Rohden, (2001), Camargo Júnior (2003), authors who studied the history of medicine in addition to the normative and moral interventions beyond technique that are at the service of the social configuration, of the division of roles that are to be maintained among individuals.

In this relationship between medicine and society, Donnangelo (1976) highlights the discriminatory class character that is manifested in the manipulation of medical resources.

Minayo (2001) analyses this aspect, underlining that to study the health field is to study social inequalities, being, therefore, necessary to mobilise the notion of social class in the perception of this field's complexity. Such inequalities refer to the population's differentiated access to health services, and, further, to the professionals' very hierarchisation, inside which the hegemony of medical knowledge and its articulation with power is revealed. A hegemony that results, additionally, in the asymmetrical and power relations

between doctors and the patients given assistance (Lima, 2018).

According to Minayo (2001) one needs to resort to class sociology, not only in the study of health, but also in the study of any other wider theme of culture.

Sarti and Melucci (1998), in a text discussing the importance of the social sciences for the health field, refer to other social cleavages, beyond class, which restrict the access by individuals to health, such as, specially, gender, race, ethnic background, religion, as well as cultural particularities.

Donnangelo (1976) highlights the social class aspect in the differentiation of medical practice. For the author, this differentiated relation, given by class, gains specificity in capitalist societies.

In such societies, the extension of medical practice by means of the quantitative widening of services and the increasing incorporation of populations into medical care is related, the author states, to the continuation of capitalist accumulation processes. This means seeking to provide health care to the worker only as it meets immediate economic goals, which do not involve the growing incorporation into medical care of social groups marginalised from the production process, Donnangelo (1976) ponders.

The extension of medical practice, presently, in Western societies, implies the extension of medicine's normativity. As Adam and Herzlich (2001) elaborate, contemporary problems are increasingly considered under the light of medical rationality, which grounds the normalisations. Thus, problems such as drugs, alcoholism, child abuse, among others, are medicalised more and more. In such medicalised societies, as defined by a few authors, among them Breton (2003; 2006) and Camargo Júnior (2003), fiscalist and normative arguments are increasingly deployed in the comprehension and definition of social problems.

For Jane Russo (2006), in its preventive version, medicine exhorts people to live a prescribed and balanced life; a healthy life - according to moral concepts around the issue, the author stresses.

Conceptions that prescribe an action on our bodies. For Donnangelo (1976), this body, sociologically speaking, is not limited to the physiological anatomical aspects, being, above all, an agent of work.

To be ill in such societies, Adam and Herzlich (2001) argue, is to be absent from work. In a study made about representations of health and of the sick

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person, the authors detect an association, in the popular classes, between illness and the incapacity for work. Especially for this population, work is a central category, concretely and symbolically speaking, once it allows for the legitimate access to social space by means of the construction of a working person's identity, chiefly among men, according to an ideal imaginary within such families, Sarti (1996); Adam and Herzlich (2001) highlight in different studies centred on such populations.

It is thus that, on this work (biological and social) body, medical and biomedical practices are operated.

Medical attention on the body, the biological organism, is grounded on the separation between body and spirit; on the divide between Man and his body. The Cartesian dualism that founds this distinction answers for the conception of the body in modernity, which is continued up to contemporaneity, ponders Breton (2006), in a sociological study about the issue.

This separation is supported by the notion of a split person, separated from her own body, which is conceived only in its biological dimension. In this perspective, Morin (2000) states that the fragmented conception of the world tries to reduce complex phenomena down to simplifying explanations, instead of conceiving them as multidimensional.

Differently from such conceptions, in the human sciences, the body is constituted as a human reality by the meaning that collectivity attributes to it, not having a character that is objective or prior to the meaning itself, Sarti (2001) highlights in a study about pain and suffering.

In face of it, the human sciences develop a critique of biomedicine's naturalised body, especially gender studies, which have problematised the social construction of women's and men's bodies. Within this scope, Thomas Laqueur (2001) retraces the historical process of the invention by medicine of the two sexes, with implications to the consolidation of a model and of a moral for women and the family, by means of the disciplinary control of the female body and its sexuality.

The split body and the individual are notions that go together in modern western culture. As developed by Durkheim ([1912] 1989), in the text "Elementary Forms of Religious Life", the body is an individuation factor.

The notion of a "self" in the relation of the individual with society is recent in the history of the Western world. This is a historically built social category (the notion of the individual) in the context of the search for freedom and autonomy, which is counterposed to submission to the collectivity. As Dumont (1983) develops, the individual is constituted by a value, the triumph of individualism.

In this conception separating body and person in contemporary Western societies, the corresponding

model of health and illness is ontological. As Laplantine (2001) clarifies, this model takes illness as an autonomous entity. For Sarti (2010), in a text discussing the traffic of knowledge in the health field, this implies another diverse conception of that which had already split human beings between body and person, autonomising the body into the biological body, in a matter unveiled by experimentation. And all this together with the increasingly more advanced technological resources that end up instrumentalising the body even further, in a process of maximum medicalisation, Breton (2003) writes in "Farewell to the Body".

The critique to this intended objectivism of the biological sciences' has been elaborated by Canguilhem (2006) and Foucault, focussing on the historical process of this knowledge construction and of medical practice.

This critique, under different perspectives, is well-established in the social sciences. In this field of knowledge, human beings are deemed social beings, who are born, grow up, fall ill and die, Sarti (2001) stresses, in relations that are established by society, by culture and by the times in which individuals find themselves.

Birth, pain, suffering, illness, are manifested in the biological body and are lived grounded on the way in which society, culture, defines such experiences. This meaning is socially elaborated. The biological body is thus socially translated, from the instant the individual is born. As Sarti (2001) develops, every human fact is a social language. The apparent naturalness yields from the fact that we assimilate it through habit, unthinkingly, as Mauss (1973) clarifies in a text related to bodily techniques.

The social sciences, in particular, seek the deconstruction, in social studies, of the "naturalness" of the relations there established by individuals.

In such relations, the social is defined by constantly made and remade rules, which implement the dynamics of power relations.

The social analysis of the health field operates the apprehension of power relations. In such relations, some practices, defined as medical-scientific, are legitimated to the detriment of other that are demoted, as Laplantine (2001) and Breton (2006) elaborate.

In anyway, these are discourses and practices that coexist, even though, in this clash, the medical discourse is hegemonic and dominant in Western societies. They are, as Laplantine (2001) develops, models for illness and health, valid for the practices articulated to them, according to a specific rationality. But the ill person holds his or her own interpretation models of the health-illness process, rooted in the sociocultural contexts one is inscribed in. In this sense, all knowledge is relative and liable to mutation, such as scientific knowledge, highlighted by Foucault in "The Birth of the Clinic".

In the examination of different cultures, not only what is considered an illness or not, such as the importance attributed to specific parts of the body, is diverse. Adam and Herzlich (2001) reveal that in some cultures, for instance, intestinal worms attacked by Western medicine are not considered malefic, but are considered part of the digestive system. In another example, the authors reveal that, while in Western societies the brain and heart are given much importance, in Japan, the stomach is the central organ, the one that merits the most attention.

So it is the belonging to a culture, the authors highlight, that will furnish individuals with the limits within which the interpretations regarding bodily phenomena operate. This perspective relativises the biomedical interpretation model for the health and illness process, whose emphasis is placed on the universal and objective, anatomophysiological character. At the same time, it widens the understanding of this process that is not restricted to the biological, necessarily demanding the articulation with the sociocultural, economic and political aspects manifested there.

This is a comprehension of the specific meanings that the biological phenomena take up in a given culture and society, in view of the fact that the records of normality and of abnormality are determined grounded on socially valid values. As debated by Canguilhem (2006), there is nothing in the biological that defines the exact exit point or moment for normality, other than a value. It is the subject's experience, in his or her relation with the environment, that informs the doctor about the state of health and illness in which the individual is to be found.

Man is a relational and symbolic being. For biomedicine, the sick person is circumscribed within a set of organs and systems. The human sciences resite humans to the body, learning the meanings of experiences lived and expressed differently according to gender, social class, ethnicity, religion, among them other social determinants.

As pointed out by Adam and Herzlich (2001), health professionals recognise the existence of different interpretations of the health-illness process. But these are seen as a simple translation of a fixed, objective reality. Differently from this conception, the human sciences conceive health and illness as social realities, historically constituted. Culture is not just a way of representing health and illness; it is the very constitution that models it, furnishing its meanings, its outlines, the resources deployed, also regarding the support obtained, i.e., the social networks (friends, neighbours, relatives etc.) which individuals rely on in order to speak of their illness, diffusing the meanings shared there and, thus, becoming someone able to get help.

The reference to class is specifically important in this issue. As Adam and Herzlich (2001) demonstrate, it is chiefly the upper classes who most resort to a

doctor in situations of preventive care. The reasons for that revolve around the language common to both parties, the shared meanings in the explanation of the illness, also given by the proximity regarding formal education.

II. FINAL REMARKS

In the terms that establish the relations between health, body, culture and society, in the context of Western contemporary societies, Adam and Herzlich (2001) show, in a study about the representations of health and illness, how individuals, as they speak about health and illness, do not refer to the body, but, instead, speak of the relation that they establish with the social. Illness, from this perspective, implies a conflicting relation with the social. To speak of health and illness is to speak of the relation that the individual establishes with society's social order, within which he or she find themselves.

The present text sought to reflect about the articulation between the dimensions of the body, health, the individual and society, understanding that it is necessary to consider the diversities and inequalities rendered evident by social markers, among them class, gender, ethnicity/race and place of abode, which allow for the understanding of discourses about and representations of care, being ill or being healthy, as well as for the comprehension of the constraints and (im)possibility of access to health services, inside the space and time where individuals are situated in different ways.

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The Status and the Specifications of the Questions of an Achievement Exam from the Points of View of the Teaching Staff- Members of Palestine Technical University- Kadoorie (PTUK)\Tulkarm-Campus

By Abd-Al-Hameed Mustafa Mahmoud “Jabsheh” & Majdi Rashed Jayousi

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Abstract- The aim of this study was to investigate the status and specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University – Kadoorie (PTUK)\Tulkarm campus; to achieve the purpose of this study, the researchers followed a descriptive quantitative approach through which a 24-item questionnaire was distributed, after ensuring its reliability and validity, to a sample of (140) subjects out the population of (355) teaching staff-members of (PTUK).

Keywords: specifications, feedback, exam-questions, achievement exam, language, validity, reliability, PTUK, teaching staff-members, Bloom's Taxonomy, learning, teaching.

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recommends a set of procedural and inquisitive recommendations.

Keywords: specifications, feedback, exam-questions, achievement exam, language, validity, reliability, PTUK, teaching staff-members, Bloom's Taxonomy, learning, teaching.

I. INTRODUCTION

Asking questions is considered to be an essential element of human communicative behavior that is propelled by curiosity and the need to acquire more knowledge about a given situation; feedback, then, can be an important aspect of the questioning process in a given communicative situation as it-feedback- may dictate modification and adjustment to the structure and content of the posed questions. In the teaching and learning processes, questions and questioning are inevitable because, generally, educators are supposed to seek feedback, from the part of their students and learners about the has been learning situation, over a span of time; feedback, in this educational sense, enables those educators to make judgments in regard to students and learners' achievement as well as about the teaching practices that have been followed in a given educational situation. As a result, questions, of a given exam or a test, constitute valuable tools to cast feedback that is highly needed to get a formidable view about how far the teaching and the learning processes have achieved what they are supposed to achieve of educational objectives and goals; moreover, and in accordance with previous related literature, it can be stated that students, learners, and exam-takers' comprehension capacity correlates with the specifications of the questions of a given exam, and, as a result, then, their level of achievement in that given exam.

Accordingly, and educationally speaking, it can be proposed that the structure, the language, and, more importantly, the specifications of an exam question correlate with the type, the amount of, and the quality of the feedback that is acquired, in reverse, through that given exam, and also the comprehension capacity and the level of achievement; in other words, furthermore, how much effort is exerted towards producing exam questions that are well-anchored to a given taxonomy of specifications, how fruitful the feedback,

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comprehension capacity, and the level of achievement would be, and how reliable and valid the exam, as a whole, would also be.

Depending on these premises, this study investigates the status and specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University- Kadoorie (PTUK)\Tulkarm campus; this study considers questions of an achievement exam as a mere educational communicative act in-between both teachers and students or learners; in this regard, this study also proposes that exam questions, when prepared and written, should be referenced to a well-established taxonomy, i.e. Blooms' cognitive taxonomy, so as to yield desired results that can offer guidance towards developing and elevating the processes of teaching and learning.

Although this study bears the limitation of restricting research to the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University – Kadoorie (PTUK), its investigative magnitude transcends its boundaries in the sense that, as far as the researchers have known, this is the first study to investigate such a topic, and that the educational nature of the topic can be generalized to other educational situations and environments. To achieve the objective of this study, the researchers followed a quantitative approach in order to investigate and reveal the teaching staff-members' points of view through deciding those highly considered maxims and specifications they- the teaching staff-members- abide by when writing or constructing achievement exam questions, and, then, as a result, drawing a line of understanding in regard to the achievement exams status and the specifications of its questions.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students ,as proved by some of the available literature, prefer exam questions that are tailored to include low thinking-skills and correspond with lower cognitive domains; as a result, and as far as The researchers have known, some teachers tend to abide by this preference while; consciously or sub-consciously; overlooking a wide risk margin of producing exam questions that are not anchored to a reliable criteria or a well-established cognitive taxonomy, and, eventually, passing unreal judgments in regard to the exam-takers' level of achievement, a misleading feedback about the learning continuum, and, then, deeply jeopardizing the reliability and validity maxims that any assessment process must go with, meet, and establish; breaching these maxims is totally risky as it yields an incomplete teaching and learning processes, fake judgments that do not mirror the reality of the teaching and learning processes, and, then, a hindering realm towards developing and elevating both

processes. The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exams, in PTUK and, may be, in a considerable number of universities and colleges all over the world, and as far as this study proposes, are anchored to a set of professional traditions and heritage rather than a referenced taxonomies or specification matrixes; moreover, depending on the researchers' own experience and mere observation in (PTUK), the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam are thought about as an effort-consuming and as a secondary requirement that can be dealt with by individual teachers who normally refer to a set of professional heritage and imitation .

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

One aspect of the significance of this study is that it can offer, through its empirical approach, a wider sphere of understanding towards the essentiality of the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam to the educational process as a whole; this study, as far as the researchers have experienced in the field, can construct practical definitions, in a unified and connected matrix, to the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam which were, as far as the researchers have known, never surpassed by related research; Another facet of the significance of this study is that its investigative scope can shed more light on the status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam as perceived in the minds of the teaching-staff members of (PTUK) as this kind of perception, it is proposed, orients the process of producing and writing exam questions; considering the perceiving mentality, which acts behind the scene, is totally significant for further development and advancement of the teaching and learning processes.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

To support the argument, proposal, and questions of this study, the researchers scrutinized an adequate amount of the available related literature which was casted, in this section, in a relative chronological order; to go with the aim of this study, this literature review was divided into three sections: The first section presents the scope of importance and usage of questions in a communicative situation as well as the educational situations in the form of the questions of the achievement exam; the second section highlights the centrality of (Bloom's Taxonomy) as a reference matrix to the classification and the categorization of the questions of a given educational achievement exam; while the third section classifies some of the most common established specifications of the questions of an achievement exam which were rendered in a unified and more digestible exhibit that is somehow different from the scattered rending within the available previous

literature; moreover, each section of the this literature review was summed up by a discretionary epitome to distill and unify the argument of each meant section.

a) *The scope of importance and usage of questions*

Swart (2009, as cited in Jayakodi, Bandara, Perera & Meedeniya, 2016), confirm that "While questions can be given throughout the course, mid semester and the end semester exam questions often carry a considerable weight for the overall assessment." Swart (2009) also adds that "Final examination papers are used by academics to assess the retention and application skills of students." Demir & Eryaman (2012) confirm that "It is not surprising to discover that the evaluation of the students' learning with low cognitive level questions in primary and secondary schools as well as in higher education institutions is a common assessment strategy." Demir & Eryaman, (2012) also add that "Both the teachers in primary and secondary schools and the university instructors tend to check whether the students memorize the decontextualized information by using semester exams and they do not force the student enough to critically analyze, synthesize and evaluate what they have learnt because of the low cognitive level questions in the exams. "Köksal & Ulum (2018) explain that "the questions presented on a paper determine whether the examination manages assessing the learners' performance or not. "Smith, Brown & Race (1996, as cited in Schneider, 2017), state that "Different types of test questions, per standard test design protocol, were used to allow students to have opportunities to express their differential test taking abilities. "McMillan (1997, as cited in Swart, 2009), concludes that "Questions are an essential component of effective instruction." Özden (1999, as cited in Demir & Eryaman, 2012), confirms that "People need questions in order to use one's life. "Sadker (2002, as cited in Demir & Eryaman, 2012) states that" Questions can and have been used for a wide variety of educational purposes: reviewing previously read or studied material; diagnosing student abilities, preferences, and attitudes; stimulating critical thinking; managing student behavior; probing student thought process; stirring creative thinking; personalizing the curriculum; motivating students; and assessing student knowledge. "Çepni (2003, as cited in Jayakodi, Bandara, Perera & Meedeniya, 2016), states that "Often the exam questions used to assess the level of the university students are at low cognitive levels. "Hussain (2003, as cited in Demir & Eryaman, 2012) concludes that that " in the realm of teaching and learning, questions have been cited as not only the most often used, but also the single most important strategy used by instructors." Dillon (2004, as cited in Swart, 2009), points out that "Questions, effectively delivered, facilitate student learning and thinking, as they serve to motivate and focus student attention, provide

opportunities for practice and rehearsal, and provide the opportunity for academics to assess how well students are mastering content. "Dillon (2004; Chin, 2004, as cited in Swart (2009) concludes that "The art of skillful questioning is a key to productive discussion by engaging students in higher order thinking. "Chin (2004, as cited in Swart, 2009), explains that there is a need for "significantly more complex thinking questions that can stimulate a student's mental activities. "Ali (2005) concludes that "The quality of asked questions on exams contributes developing creativeness of students and their criticism ability." Gürses, Bayrak, Bozoğlu, Açıkyıldız, Doğar & Özkan (2005, as cited in Demir & Eryaman, 2012) confirm that "questioning is the most essential step for the activity of thinking. "Gürses, Bayrak, Bozoğlu, Açıkyıldız, Doğar & Özkan (2005, as cited in Demir & Eryaman, 2012), also add that "Questioning can be admitted as a tactic that activates thinking. "Swart (2009) states that "Questions are used to obtain information, stimulate thinking, and redirect reasoning. Academics in higher education use questions on a daily basis to stimulate thinking and reasoning in students." Swart (2009) also adds that "Questions will remain as essential components of effective instruction. How these questions are formulated in examination papers will depend much on the respective academics." Marquardt (2011, as cited in Swart, 2009), indicates that "Adults as well as children make use of questions to seek information or to gain a better understanding of the world in which they live. "Demir & Eryaman (2012) propose that "Whatever methodology is used, it is unquestionable the effect of the questions organized in fostering the critical thinking abilities. "Demir & Eryaman (2012) also add that "The exams including questions with a high level thinking skills can be used as well as an assessment tool and a teaching material. "Omar, Haris, Hassa, Arshad, Rahmat, Zainal & Zulkifli (2012), as cited in Köksal & Ulum, 2018), indicate that "A question is an element that is intertwined with the exam. Questions raised in exams play an important role to test the students' overall cognitive levels. "Chandio, Pandhiani & Iqbal (2016) indicate that" Examination system may be used as a powerful means of reforming teaching-learning process. "Jayakod, Bandara, Perera & Meedeniya (2016), state that "Exam questions are the main form of assessment used in learning. "Jayakod, Bandara, Perera & Meedeniya (2016) add that" Through the art of thoughtful questioning teachers can extract not only factual information, but also help learners in connecting concepts, making inferences, increasing awareness, encouraging creative and constructive thoughts."

To sum up, the abovementioned review considered questioning as a normal aspect of human life, and that asking questions is normally oriented towards meeting a human instinct and curiosity of trying

to get more information and feedback which molds the modification and the accommodation processes of the communicative situation. The previous review also confirmed that questions, throughout the process of teaching and learning, occupy a spacious room of importance as questions, generally, constitute an inescapable means of communication between teachers at one end and students or learners at the other end; questions in this educational sense are inevitable when assessing and measuring: how much learning has occurred over a period of time, how much achievement has been reached, the type and quality of the educational performance, the desired skills, the comprehension magnitude, the knowledge depth, the levels of competency, and the clout in test-taking skills. The previous review considered that questions are normally connected with various educational purposes such as diagnosing problems within the learners' learning repertoire, reviewing the has been studied material, stimulating students' and learners' thinking, classroom management, activating classroom motivation and reaction, and orienting the learning processes. The abovementioned review connected questions, of a given achievement exam, with effective instruction methodologies as they are considered to be a very common strategy that is enhanced by teachers and educators so as to get better understanding of the learners' progress.

b) Bloom's Taxonomy and the classification and categorization of exam questions

Ali (2005) confirms that "The most common criteria used when analyzing the instructional objectives and questions is Bloom's taxonomy that is developed by Benjamin Bloom and known as by his name (Bloom taxonomy (BT))." Lord & Baviskar (2007) propose that "Developing questions based on Bloom's hierarchy would be a productive way of reversing the dangerous trend of graduating college students with a large number of misunderstandings in courses they have taken. Chang & Chung (2009, as cited in Abduljabbar & Omar, 2015)" also applied Bloom's taxonomy to evaluate and classify English question item's cognition level. "Omar, Haris, Hassan, Arshad, Rahmat, Zainal & Zulkifli (2012) indicate that "Normally, academicians would categorize a question according to the Bloom's cognitive level manually. "Abduljabbar & Omar (2015) concludes that "the Bloom's Taxonomy has become a common reference for the teaching and learning process used as a guide for the production of exam." Abduljabbar & Omar (2015) also states that "Many studies have sought to automatically classify exam questions based on Bloom's taxonomy. Furthermore, although limited, research has addressed the use of Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques to resolve this problem. "Chandio, Pandhiani & Iqbal (2016); Stanny (2016), propose that" Bloom's taxonomy

guides the development of test questions to assess higher-level thinking skills by drawing attention to what test questions and assessment prompts require students to do (retrieve facts, apply knowledge, make a prediction, solve a problem, or evaluate a theory)." Stanny (2016) further explains that "Bloom argued that teachers who write objective exam questions can use the taxonomy to determine whether questions require only a superficial knowledge. "Köksal & Ulum (2018) state that "Based on the findings, some assumptions have been made with the aim of suggesting how the exam papers which are being written or will be written should refer to Bloom's taxonomy. "van Hoeij, Haarhuis, Wierstra & van Beukelen (2004, as cited in Abduljabbar & Omar, 2015) "developed a classification-based tool that uses Bloom's anatomy to evaluate the cognitive level of short essay questions." Abduljabbar & Omar (2015), add that "To overcome the problem of exam question classification with a more effective solution, this study proposes a combination model which combines three machine learning approaches using a combination voting algorithm adopted to classify question items to agree with Bloom's cognitive levels." Yüksel (2007, as cited in Demir & Eryaman, 2012) classifies an "alternative categorizations based on Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) aims to formulate the Bloom's Taxonomy as truer and accurate. Some of the alternative categorizations propound against Bloom's Taxonomy are listed as follows: Categorization of Gerlach and Sullivan, Categorization of De Block, Categorization of Tuckman, Categorization of Williams, Categorization of Hannah and Michaelis, Categorization of Gagné and Briggs, Categorization of Stahl and Murphy, Categorization of Romizowski, Categorization of Quellmalz and Categorization of Haladayna. "Chang & Chung (2009, as cited in Yusof & Hui, 2010); Omar, Haris, Hassan, Arshad, Rahmat, Zainal & Zulkifli (2012) "presented an online test system to classify and analyze the cognitive level of Bloom's taxonomy to English questions. The system accepts the exam question as an input, which will then be segmented. This system has a database where various verbs of Bloom's taxonomy are stored. The database includes verbs with lower-case and capital letters. The system then compares all the verb tenses present in the questions. When a keyword is found in the test item, then the particular question belongs to the keyword. "Haris & Omar (2012, as cited in Abduljabbar & Omar, 2015)" employed a rule- based approach for question classification using Bloom's taxonomy in NLP. A rule-based approach evaluates and classifies written examination questions for computer subjects." recommended that "a study needs to be conducted to analyze the prevailing examination system through Bloom's Taxonomy." Jayakodi, Bandara, Perera & Meedeniya (2016) indicate that "Bloom's taxonomy of learning outcomes has been applied to classify the exam questions." Bloom (1956), as cited in Aviles (1999)

indicates that "Knowledge is probably the most common level tested in higher education because instructors can simply use a textbook to determine what "knowledge" students must learn and create exams targeted to a textbooks' contents. "Chandio, Pandhiani & Iqbal, (2016) explain that all" The questions asked in these papers are classified and analyzed from the vintage point of Bloom's Taxonomy to determine whether the present assessment system focuses on the lower degrees of learning like remembering, understanding, applying or it transcends to the higher degrees such as analyzing, evaluating and creating." Chandio, Pandhiani & Iqbal, (2016) further explain that "It can be concluded that Pakistan's secondary boards need a paradigm shift where there is a dire need of expert and experienced examiners to induct more questions catering to the higher order thinking skills of Bloom's Taxonomy while setting examination papers. Also, more time should be given to the examiners and it should be made sure that the questions are not repeated. "Köksal & Ulum (2018) conclude that "the analyzed exam papers lacked the higher level cognitive skills contained in Bloom's Taxonomy." Köksal & Ulum (2018) also assert that "the exam questions include only knowledge and comprehension levels of Bloom's taxonomy. That's to say, according to Table 1, the exam questions are based on the lower order cognition levels of Bloom's taxonomy while they lack the higher order cognition levels. The percentage of knowledge level contained in the exam questions is 81.7% while it is 18.3% for the comprehension level." Lawson (1990, as cited in Lord & Baviskar, 2007), concludes that "thinking comes together as a continuum in the upper segments of Bloom's levels." Lawson (1990, as cited in Lord & Baviskar, 2007) further explains that "in bright individuals, analysis often serves to order and structure a problem. After this, synthesis is employed to generate solutions, and evaluation assesses the suggested solutions against the objectives identified in the analysis phase. "Jayakodi, Bandara, Perera & Meedeniya (2016) elaborate that" Developing questions based on Bloom's hierarchy would be a productive way of ensuring the expected quality of student learning achievement. "Anees, S. (2017: 10), concluded that " question was prepared without considering the cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy which directly affect students' performance. Anees (2017) further explains that "teachers should use different software to find out their levels of questions after making question papers, to make a balanced question paper which evaluate the whole performance of students and contain on all cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. "Azar (1998, as cited in Ali, 2005), concludes that "the teachers in secondary schools don't have experience of asking questions by considering the Bloom's Taxonomy." Ali (2005) accordingly adds that "teachers should have taken courses on measuring and assessing students'

achievement by considering the cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy." Ali (2005) also elaborates that "student teachers at education faculties should also take courses about what Bloom's Taxonomy is and how they should consider it while preparing exam questions."

To sum up, the above mentioned review acknowledged the prevalence, centrality, reliability, and dependability of Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) to calibrate the questions of an achievement exam; the cognitive domains of this taxonomy suit the varying levels of learners as each domain is subdivided into specific indicative behavioral verbs; the previous review stated that even those alternative models and taxonomies, which have been developed in the field, were referenced, in one way or another, to Bloom's taxonomy. The previous review proposed that exam questions, whenever prepared and written in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy, they can lead to credibility, reliability, and validity in the learners' responses. The above mentioned review professedly revealed that teachers, generally, don't have enough experience in exploiting Bloom's Taxonomy when they usually prepare and write an educational exam questions; the mentioned review above also revealed that the domain of "knowledge", which represents the lowest cognitive level within Bloom's taxonomy, is the mostly referenced by teachers and educators when writing and preparing exam questions. As a result, the bulk of the previous review confirmed the need for training courses and workshops on how to make use of Bloom's Taxonomy when writing formidable, effective, valid, and reliable educational questions for a given achievement exam.

c) *The Specifications of questions of an achievement exam*

Smith, Brown & Race (1996, as cited in Schneider, 2017) explain that "More precisely, the completion questions used in the study were part of a larger examination that included short-answer and essay questions that were designed to elicit critical thinking, as well as true-false and multiple-choice questions." Blank-Libra (1997, cited in Gall 1984), as cited in Demir & Eryaman, 2012) "provides evidence to support the notion that higher-level questions will provoke higher-level responses from students. The same principle, of course, applies to lower-level questions" Brualdi Timmins (1998), as cited in Köksa & Ulum, (2018), proposed that "Instructors who prepare exams to improve students' high order cognitive skills promote interaction between themselves and their students." Çepni & Azar (1998, as cited in Ali, 2005) postulate that "students might be at difference cognitive levels." Aviles (1999) proposes that "Creating comprehension questions are more difficult than creating knowledge questions because words or phrases cannot simply be removed from a sentence and hidden among multiple-choices". Popham (1999, as cited in Swart, 2009)

confirms that "questions must not be opaque and ambiguous by nature and must not contain complex syntax, difficult vocabulary, or unintended clues." Leeds (2000, as cited in Swart, 2009) indicate that "Effective questions include problem-solving or informational questions." (Leeds (2000); Black, Harrison & Lee (2003); Chin (2004); Jones, Harland, Reid & Bartlett (2009, as cited in Köksal, & Ulum, 2018), confirm that "Efficient exam questions should cover various difficulty levels to refer to the different capabilities of learners." Piaget (2001; Bruner 1960, as cited in Schneider, 2017) "argue that assist devices on exams facilitate the interaction of the test taker with key exam elements so that they may better construct their understanding of test questions. Arguably then, use of such devices should actually improve test validity." Hand, Prain & Wallace (2002, as cited in Ali, 2005) "showed that students prefer low-order questions and don't prefer questions which need to be thought on." Black, Harrison & Lee (2003, as cited in Swart, 2009) state that "Effectual questions must help to raise issues on which academics need feedback or about which the students need to think." Lundberg (2004, as cited in Swart, 2009) further explains that "Short answers or multiple-choice questions requiring mainly factual recall tend to elicit surface learning, while essays (or long-answer questions) are more likely to encourage deep learning." Ali (2005) concludes that "Teachers are in need of preparing questions which develop students' scientific thinking." Ali (2005) further elaborates "that teachers should prepare questions together and they should pay attention for choosing questions from every step of cognitive levels." Andrade (2005, as cited in Balch, Blanck & Balch, 2016) concludes that "a rubric provides feedback which in turn provides clear and individually focused diagnostic feedback." Lord & Baviskar (2007) confirms that "It is generally believed by the test creator that, while short-answer and multiple-choice questions can be used efficiently to test the lower levels of learning behaviors, they are not sufficient to assess the higher levels." Thompson, Luxton-Reilly, Whalley & Robbins (2008) confirm that "During the analysis of the examinations, we found examples of questions that could be reworded in such a way that the cognitive level is altered." Jones, Harland, Reid & Bartlett (2009, as cited in Köksal & Ulum, 2018), propose that "A good assessment requires an exam paper that covers different cognitive levels to accommodate diverse capabilities of learners." Swart (2009) confirms that "academics must acquire the art of skillful questioning if they are to produce effective questions that will engage students in higher order cognitive processes such as problem-solving and critical thinking." Swart (2009, as cited in Jayakodi, Bandara, Perera, & Meedeniya, 2016) by the same token, adds that "When questions are prepared, there should be an effective balance between questions that assess the high level of learning and questions that

assess the basic level of learning." Swart (2009) accordingly, further explains that "The number of multiple-choice questions (38% on average in the Knowledge objective) used in these examination papers further suggests that surface learning is being promoted." Marquardt (2011, as cited in Swart, 2009) concludes that "the quality of the questions often depends on the nature of the topic. For example, children frequently ask questions that may merit a simple "yes" or "no" reply (closed-ended questions, according to Marquardt." Marquardt (2011, as cited in Swart, 2009) further explains that "Critical thinking is promoted through open-ended questions." Demir & Eryaman (2012) conclude that "It is necessary to ask high cognitive level questions to enable prospective student teachers to think in a multifaceted way. Therefore, they can avoid the tendency of superficial thinking that they get used to by answering cognitive level questions." Demir & Eryaman (2012) further adds that "The questions given in the exams by the instructors reflect the objectives, goals, outputs and the methodologies that the instructors apply in their teaching." Omar, Haris, Hassan, Arshad, Rahmat, Zainal & Zulkifli (2012, as cited in Köksal & Ulum, 2018) state that "Although a list of assessment types are available, a written exam is the most employed tool chosen by academic institutions." Freahat & Smadi (2014, as cited in Köksal & Ulum, 2018) confirm that "While low level cognitive questions increase the acquisition of the accurate knowledge and pave the way for acquiring high-cognitive skills, high level questions are practical tools for prompting thinking and improving other cognitive skills like problem solving and decision making." Paul, Naik & Pawar (2014, as cited in Köksal & Ulum, 2018) confirm that "choosing the right question is obviously the most difficult part of forming the exam paper, in addition to being the most time taking activity." Abduljabbar & Omar (2015), point out that "the process of questions writing is very challenging step for the lecturer. The situation is getting more challenging when lecturers try to produce good quality and fair questions to assess different level of cognitive." Abduljabbar & Omar (2015), further add that "the question must be provided in accordance with the subject content learned by students to fulfill learning objectives." Balch, Blanck & Balch (2016) reasoned that "as long as tools such as rubrics are incorporated, the student and the teacher will produce the optimum learning experience. The reward will be mutual." Chandio, Pandhiani & Iqbal (2016) conclude that "if questions are repeated in examinations, which is a very dangerous trend as it gives rise to rote learning. The reason being, that even if the questions belong to higher order thinking domain and are repeated, the repetition will cause students to memorize the answers to such questions." Jayakodi, Bandara, Perera, & Meedeniya (2016), state that "An exam question often falls into more than one level of

assessment categories of a given taxonomy." Anees (2017) concludes that "The best ranked university should provide the good questions' criteria." Anees (2017), further explains that "the young teachers should be trained in preparing high order questions." Köksal & Ullum (2018) indicate that "While providing suitable exam questions at schools, composing the proper ones may be a problematic issue."

To sum up, the previous review presented a multi-towered consideration to the specifications of exam questions: it was agreed upon that composing good quality and effective exam questions is not an easy task and careful attention must be paid and exerted; those involved in this process should be trained on the procedure as it is both a skill as well as an art that can be acquired. The previous review stated that composing good quality exams should take into consideration the students' individual differences, and that students normally do not prefer questions that need higher- levels of thinking, and usually they – students - exhibit a tendency of preference towards lower-cognitive questions. As a result, those who are tasked to prepare exam questions should consider a set of maxims: first, questions should not be prepared individually, but ,on the contrary, be prepared as a team product; second, questions should be prepared in accordance with a strict balance between questions that assess high-levels of learning outcomes and those that assess basic-levels of the learning outcomes; third, the process of preparing exam questions should incubate the orientation of developing students various cognitive skills and competences; fourth, the previous review acknowledged that rubrics play a double role as they provide precious feedback about students' comprehension skills in regard to the language and context of a given rubric, in addition to their traditional role of facilitating the process of comprehending the required response from a given question; as a result, incorporating clear and well-structured rubrics yields the optimal outcome of the learning experience; fifth, the stage of preparing exam questions should consider that composing fair and good quality exam questions, which can assess various cognitive levels, is difficult, problematic, demanding and challenging, time- consuming, and absolutely not an easy task. The previous review acknowledged that the best ranked universities provide academics with special training on the skills of preparing and composing exam questions.

As stated by the previous review , the process of preparing effective questions should be functioning within the scope of the following banners: first, it is generally believed that short-answer and multiple-choice questions can be most appropriate to assess the lower levels of learning behaviors, but, on the other hand, they are not sufficient to assess higher cognitive levels; second, the quality of the exam question correlates with and, at the same time, reflects the quality of the exam as

a whole; third, it should be born that preparing exam questions should be steered towards elevating the exam takers' cognitive skills which will also result in promoting an atmosphere of interaction and some kind of a telling encounter between those exam takers and their teachers; fifth, composing multiple – choice questions is easier than composing comprehension questions, and that an exam with an all multiple-choice format confirms that surface learning is promoted and encouraged; sixth, exam questions should reflect the objectives, goals, outputs and the methodologies that the instructors apply in their teaching; seventh, the language and wording of an exam question should be carefully carried out so as not to alter the cognitive level of the outcome meant to be elicited from the question; eighth, exam questions should not be confined to just one level of assessment of the reference taxonomy, but on the contrary be distributed and balanced to engage students in higher order cognitive processes such as problem-solving and critical thinking; ninth, it is acknowledged that a written exam is the most enhanced method of assessment that is chosen by academic institutions; tenth, the previous review summarized some of the specifications that questions of a given exam should be attributed to:

- Multiple-choice questions, which represent the knowledge domain, should not consume a wider or more percentage in comparison with other types of questions that represent other domains of the given taxonomy.
- It is essential that the exam questions should cover different cognitive levels to integrate diverse capabilities of learners.
- It is necessary to ask high cognitive level questions to enable prospective- student teachers to think in a multifaceted way.
- Effectual questions must help to raise issues on which academics need feedback or about which the students need to think.
- Effective questions include problem-solving or informational questions.
- Efficient exam questions should cover various difficulty levels to refer to the different capabilities of learners.
- Questions must not be opaque and ambiguous by nature and must not contain complex syntax, difficult vocabulary, or unintended clues.
- Repeating the same questions in various sets of examinations is a very dangerous trend as it gives rise to rote learning, and that the repetition will cause students to memorize the answers to such questions.
- Short answers or multiple-choice questions requiring mainly factual recall tend to elicit surface learning, while essays (or long-answer questions) are more likely to encourage deep learning.

- Various Cognitive- level questions can immune students against the tendency of superficial thinking.
- High level questions are practical tools for prompting thinking and improving other cognitive skills like problem solving and decision making.

V. METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION

To achieve the purpose of this study, the researchers followed a descriptive quantitative approach through which a 24-item questionnaire which

was rewritten and recompiled in reference to the related literature and in accordance with the amendments asked for by some experts in the field; the reliability of the questionnaire was measured by calculating the internal consistency and the (Cronbach's alpha) factor which reached the value of (.936); this value confirmed that the questionnaire is valid as the instrument of this study; the questionnaire, then, was distributed to a sample of (140) subjects out the population of (355) teaching staff-members of (PTUK); table(1) reveals the attributes of the subjects of the sample:

Table 1: Attributes of the subjects of the Sample.

| Percentage | Frequency | Variable Level | Variable |
|------------|-----------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 55.7 % | 78 | Male | Sex |
| 44.3 % | 62 | Female | |
| 15.0 % | 21 | Instructor | Academic Rank |
| 25.7 % | 36 | Lecturer | |
| 40.0 % | 56 | Assistant Professor | |
| 15.7 % | 22 | Associate Professor | |
| 3.6 % | 5 | Professor | |
| 32.1 % | 31 | 1-5 years | Teaching Experience |
| 30.0 % | 42 | 6-10 years | |
| 33.6 % | 47 | 11-16 years | |
| 14.3 % | 20 | More than 16 years | |
| 14.3 % | 20 | Engineering and Technology | College |
| % 20.7 | 29 | Commerce | |
| % 18.6 | 26 | Arts and Educational Sciences. | |
| % 4.3 | 6 | Science and Agriculture Technology | |
| % 21.4 | 30 | Applied Sciences. | |
| % 20.7 | 29 | Technical College. | |

As the aim of this study was to investigate "the status and the specifications of questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University

(PTUK)," the following scale for the means of the subjects' responses of the questionnaire items was set up:

Table 2: Percentage weight for each response

| Mean | Response Scale |
|-----------------|----------------|
| (4.2)and more | Very high. |
| (3.40-4.19) | High. |
| (2.60 – 3.39) | Medium. |
| (2.59 – 1.8) | Little. |
| Less than (1.8) | Very Little. |

To answer the main question of this study, the means and the standard deviation of the responses of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University-Kadoorie (PTUK), for the questionnaire items, in regard to main question of this "the status and the

specifications of questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University (PTUK)."; table (3) shows the results:

Table 3: The Means and the standard deviation for the responses of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University in regard to the status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from their points of view.

| Deviation | Mean | Item | Questionnaire Numbering. |
|-----------|------|---|--------------------------|
| 0.83 | 4.15 | I compose the questions of the exam distributed between objective questions and essay questions. | 1 |
| 1.18 | 3.49 | I compose the questions of the exam while including all types of objective questions. | 2 |
| 1.14 | 3.77 | When I compose the questions of an exam, I make sure that objective questions do not exceed 25% | 3 |
| 1.30 | 3.15 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I consider the answering time for each question. | 4 |
| 1.24 | 3.76 | I realize that time duration for both the first and second exams equals the duration of a normal lecture for each one of them. | 5 |
| 1.24 | 3.46 | I take into consideration that the questions of the exam should cover the studying material as a whole , and in line with the objectives and the course outline | 6 |
| 1.39 | 3.54 | I tend to compose various questions which measure various levels of achievement with no kind of repetition. | 7 |
| 1.32 | 3.26 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I make sure not repeating duplicate questions from previous exams. | 8 |
| 1.38 | 3.36 | I produce two forms of the same questions while changing the order of the questions. | 9 |
| 1.35 | 3.65 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I use a simple language that goes with the language I use in teaching. | 10 |
| 1.33 | 3.37 | I avoid composing a question that indirectly implies an answer to another question. | 11 |
| 1.41 | 3.37 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I make sure they ascend from the easy to difficult. | 12 |
| 1.46 | 3.40 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I make sure they cover various cognitive domains. | 13 |
| 1.30 | 3.44 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I make sure they go with the individual differences. | 14 |
| 1.34 | 3.36 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I make sure they contain extra elective questions. | 15 |
| 1.39 | 3.36 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I make sure that punctuation marks are correctly enhanced to give the exact intended meaning. | 16 |
| 1.28 | 3.46 | When I compose the questions of the exam, I phrase them in a simple , but a well structured language without spelling mistakes or typing errors. | 17 |

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|---|----|
| 1.41 | 3.06 | I tend to leave enough answer space for each question when I write the exam questions. | 18 |
| 1.28 | 3.49 | I tend to discuss the questions of the exam with my colleagues who teach the same course | 19 |
| 1.40 | 3.21 | I compose the questions of the exam the night before the date of the exam. | 20 |
| 1.37 | 3.24 | I do realize the exam does have an educational domain , and not just and assessing one. | 21 |
| 1.35 | 3.35 | I do realize that the student can learn from his mistakes in the exam if granted the chance to review the exam paper. | 22 |
| 1.34 | 3.07 | I prefer computer-based exams to avoid the manual correcting and marking. | 23 |
| 1.48 | 3.23 | When I compose the exam questions , I consider that questions go with the cognitive domains of Bloom's Taxonomy. | 24 |
| 0.37 | 3.42 | Total Degree | |

The above mentioned table (3) shows that the highest item in rank, with the mean of (4.15), was for the questionnaire item, "I compose the questions of the exam distributed between objective questions and essay questions." While the second in rank, with the mean of (3.77), was the questionnaire item "When I compose the questions of an exam, I make sure that objective questions do not exceed 25%." This result, the researchers believe, mirrors the past experience, and may be, negative attitudes of those teaching staff-members of (PTUK) towards objective questions, in general, and multiple-choice question specifically which mostly prevailed, in an online home-sent examining, during the pandemic situation of the Covid-19; this result, the researchers believe, also reflects the teaching staff-members' hankering to traditional types of questions such as essay questions in testing and examination, especially, it should be added, that this study is carried out during the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022 which signals the return to the face- face teaching and paper-based examination and testing.

Table (3) also shows that the lowest ranked item, with the mean of (3.06) has been "I tend to leave enough answer space for each question when I write the exam questions." This result, the researchers believe, depicted the fact that the process of stringing questions of the achievement exam, from the part of the surveyed sample of teaching staff-members in (PTUK), is still propelled by a teaching mentality and not a learning mentality; in other words, the exam is seen as a

complementary tool for the teaching process, and not as a precious tool that has an important learning dimension.

Table (3), additionally, reveals that the item which came exactly before the lowest item in rank with a mean of (3.07) has been "I prefer computer-based exams to avoid the manual correcting and marking." This result, the researchers believe, does not reflect a positive attitude towards the format of computer-based exams, but rather to its procedural labor-free toll; this result, the researchers believe, also mirrors the fact that the teaching staff-members of (PTUK) view the achievement exam as a formality and not as a necessity that can be exploited to steer the whole learning and teaching processes.

a) Results of the hypotheses of this study

- The first null-hypothesis:* There is no significant difference when ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the means of the teaching staff-members' responses, in regard to the main question of this study "The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University (PTUK), that are attributed to the variable of "sex"; to test this hypothesis, a (t-test) was conducted and the results has been revealed in table (4) which indicates that the value of (t) was (0.25), and the value of (P) was (0.81); these values tell that there was no significant statistical difference when ($\alpha = 0.05$) which leads to accepting the first null-

hypothesis. This result means that both males and females of the teaching staff-members of (PTUK) share a unified approach and attitude towards the status and specifications of the questions of an achievement exam; the researchers believe that the absence of organizing regulations in regard to the

specifications of the questions of the achievement exam widely opens the gates of imitation from the part of female teaching staff- members to their fellow male teaching staff-members , especially that males outnumber the females nearly within all faculties.

Table 4: Results of (t-test) in-between the means of responses of the sample subjects in relation to the variable of (sex).

| Significance Level | (T) | Degree of freedom | Standard deviation | Mean | Number | Sex |
|--------------------|------|-------------------|--------------------|------|--------|--------|
| 0.81 | 0.25 | 138 | 0.37 | 3.41 | 87 | Male |
| | | | 0.36 | 3.42 | 62 | Female |

- ii. *The second null hypothesis:* There is no significant difference when ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the means of the teaching staff-members' responses, in regard to the main question of this study "The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University (PTUK), that is attributed to the variable of "college"; to test this hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and the results has been revealed in table(5) and table (6) consecutively: table (5)reveals that there are apparent differences in the responses of the subjects of the sample of

this study in regard to "The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University (PTUK), that are attributed to the variable of (college). "Table (6) reveals the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) which was conducted to identify whether these apparent differences carry any statistical significance or not; as shown in table (6), it was confirmed that these apparent differences carry statistical differences as the value of (F) was (3.61), and the value of (P) was (0.004); these values led to refusing the second null hypothesis.

Table 5: The means of responses of the sample subjects in relation to the variable of "College"

| Mean | Number | College |
|------|--------|------------------------------------|
| 3.25 | 20 | Engineering and Technology |
| 3.39 | 29 | Commerce |
| 3.57 | 26 | Arts and Educational Sciences. |
| 3.18 | 6 | Science and Agriculture Technology |
| 3.55 | 30 | Applied Sciences. |
| 3.33 | 29 | Technical College. |

Table 6: Results of the one-way (ANOVA-test) for the means of the responses of the sample subjects in regard to the variable of (college).

| Statistical Significance (P) | Value of (F) | Mean of Squares | Degree of Freedom | Sum of Squares | Source of Variance |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 0.004 | 3.611 | 0.448 | 5 | 2.24 | In-between groups |
| | | 0.124 | 63 | 16.645 | In-group |
| | | | 66 | 18.887 | Sum |

Table (7) further shows, depending (LSD) test for post comparisons, that there is a significant statistical difference in-between Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences, and the Faculty of Applied Sciences in favor

for the Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences; table (7) also shows that that there is a significant statistical difference in-between the Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, and Palestine Technical College in

favor for the Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences; in addition table(7) reveals that there is a significant statistical difference in-between Faculty of the Agricultural Sciences and Technology and the Faculty of Applied Sciences in favor for the Faculty of Applied Sciences; table (7) also reveals that there is a significant statistical difference in-between the Faculty of Applied Sciences and The Palestine Technical college in favor for the Faculty of Applied Sciences. The researchers believe that these results constitute a natural outcome to the fact that most of the teaching staff-members of the Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences do have some kind of guiding educational knowledge that they can

exploit when writing and preparing the questions of an achievement exam; by the same token, the researchers attribute the significant statistical difference in favor of the Faculty of Applied Sciences to the fact that both of the Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences and the Faculty of Applied Sciences had been one single faculty under the name of Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences; this fact, the researchers believe, mirrors another reality that the teaching staff-members of both faculties were, jointly and relatively, able to orchestrate some aspects of examination formats and requirements, and, in addition they were able to share related educational experience.

Table 7: (LSD- test) for post comparisons

| Faculty of Engineering and Technology | Faculty of Business and Economics | Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences | Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Technology | Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Technology | Palestine Technical College | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|-----------------------------|--------|
| Faculty of Engineering and Technology | | 0.13 | 0.32 * | 0.07 | 0.29 * | 0.07 |
| Faculty of Business and Economics | - | | 0.18 | 0.20 | 0.16 | 0.05 |
| Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences | - | - | | 0.39 * | 0.02 | 0.24 * |
| Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Technology. | - | - | - | | 0.37 * | 0.15 |
| Faculty of Applied Sciences | - | - | - | - | | 0.22 * |
| Palestine Technical College | - | - | - | - | - | |

($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

- iii. *The third null hypothesis:* There is no significant difference when ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the means of the teaching staff-members' responses, in regard to the main question of this study "The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University (PTUK), that are attributed to the variable of "academic rank." To test this hypothesis, one-way (ANOVA) was applied, and table (8) reveals that there are apparent significant differences when ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the means of the teaching staff-members' responses, in regard to the main question of this study "The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University (PTUK)" that are attributed to the variable of (academic rank); to test whether

these apparent differences carry statistical significance, one-way (ANOVA-test) was conducted: Table (9) shows that the differences in the means of the responses, which are attributed to the variable of academic rank, have no statistical differences because ($F=0.54$) and the value of ($P= 0.71$) which leads to accepting the third null hypothesis. This result reinforces the belief that the teaching staff-members of (PTUK), with their different academic ranks, view the achievement exam as an end that can be achieved with any set of questions or format; the researchers also believe that the absence of any instructional training yields some kind of commonality of improvisational tendency while preparing and writing the questions of an achievement exam.

Table 8: The distribution of the means of the teaching staff-members' responses that are attributed to the variable of (academic rank)

| Mean | Number | Academic Rank |
|------|--------|---------------------|
| 3.51 | 21 | Teacher |
| 3.43 | 36 | Lecturer |
| 3.39 | 56 | Assistant Professor |
| 3.38 | 22 | Associate Professor |
| 3.32 | 5 | Professor |

Table 9: Results of the one-way (ANOVA-test) for the means of the responses of the sample subjects

| Statistical Significance (P) | Value of (F) | Mean of squares | Degree of freedom | Sum of squares | Source of Variance |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 0.71 | 0.54 | 0.075 | 4 | 0.298 | In-between groups |
| | | 0.138 | 135 | 18.589 | In-group |
| | | | 139 | 18.887 | Sum |

iv. *The fourth null hypothesis:* There is no significant difference when ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the means of the teaching staff-members' responses, in regard to the main question of this study "The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University (PTUK), that is attributed to the variable of the "teaching experience"; to test this hypothesis, To test this hypothesis, one-way (ANOVA) was applied, and table (8) reveals that there are apparent significant differences when ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the means of the teaching staff-members' responses, in regard to the main question of this study" The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of Palestine Technical University (PTUK) "that are attributed to the variable of (teaching experience)" table (10) reveals that there are apparent differences in the responses of the subjects of the sample of this study in regard to "The status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam from the points of view of the teaching staff-members of

Palestine Technical University (PTUK), that are attributed to the variable of (teaching experience)." to test whether these apparent differences carry statistical significance, one-way (ANOVA-test) was conducted :Table (11) shows that the differences in the means of the responses, which are attributed to the variable of (teaching experience), have no statistical differences because ($F = 0.28$) and the value of ($P = 0.83$) which leads to accepting the third null hypothesis. The researchers believe that this result reinforces the fact that "teaching experience" cannot be counted for with the maxim of how many years spent in teaching, but rather how much of those years were exploited in deducing new outlooks by digesting the amount of feedback accumulated throughout those years spent in teaching; this result, the researchers believe, is a logical outcome of the absence of formidable educational anchors and well-established taxonomies; imitating the traditional heritage in preparing and writing exam questions yields a hindering factor towards exploiting years of the teaching experience.

Table 10: Means of the responses of the subjects of the sample in regard to the variable of (Teaching experience)

| Means | Number | Teaching Experience |
|-------|--------|---------------------|
| 3.45 | 31 | Less than (6) years |
| 3.41 | 42 | 10years – 6 |
| 3.43 | 47 | 15years – 11 |
| 3.36 | 20 | 20years – 16 |

Table 11: Results of the (on-way ANOVA test) in between the means of the responses of the subjects of the sample in regard to the variable of (Teaching experience)

| Statistical Significance (P) | Value of (F) | Mean of squares | Degree of freedom | Sum of squares | Source of Variance |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 0.83 | 0.28 | 0.039 | 3 | 0.117 | In-between groups |
| | | 0.138 | 136 | 18.770 | In-group |
| | | | 139 | 18.887 | Sum |

VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with its objectives, findings of this study indicate that the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam are not much considered whenever the teaching staff-members of (PTUK) usually prepare and write exam questions, and that the questions of an achievement exam are mostly prepared and written from a teaching mentality, which mostly imitates and enhances a traditional practice that considers an achievement exam as a complementary tool for the teaching process, and not as an essential tool for the learning process; findings of this study indicate that an achievement exam is also viewed, in itself, as an end with little consideration to the fact that it can be a valuable source of feedback that can provide significant insights into the teaching and learning processes. Findings of this study also indicate that: first, computer-based exams are relatively preferred by the teaching staff- members of (PTUK) because of, the researchers believe, and in reference to previous related literature, their labor-free correcting toll, and not because of the specifications of their questions, especially the multiple-choice format; second, depending on their responses, both of the females and males of the teaching staff-members of (PTUK) relatively exhibit a very close and unified approach, attitude, and practice towards the status and specifications of the questions of an achievement exam, especially in the absence of any guiding and referential taxonomy; third, the teaching staff-members of the Faculty of Arts and Educational Sciences, in comparison with other staff-members of other faculties in (PTUK), are most likely to exploit some of their educational background when writing and preparing the questions of an achievement exam, but, once again, this advantageous and the would be exploitable educational background should be harmonized with a clear tabulated list of specifications and a referential taxonomy; fourth, "teaching experience", as has been found within the boundaries of this study, cannot be calibrated by how many years spent in the teaching profession, but rather how much of those years were exploited in deducing new outlooks through digesting the amount of feedback accumulated throughout those years spent in teaching;

fifth, findings of this study indicate that imitating the traditional heritage whenever preparing and writing questions of an achievement exam represents a hindering factor towards exploiting years of the teaching experience, and results in a progress cul-de-sac; by the same token, conclusions of this study indicate that: first, the pandemic situation of Covid-19 may have negatively impacted the status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam in the sense that the teaching staff-members of (PTUK) exhibited some kind of avoidance to multiple- choice questions which were heavily enhanced during the pandemic situation of Covid-19; second, this study confirmed, as a conclusion, that the absence of a tabulated list of specifications to the questions of an achievement exam will widely open the door to speculations, improvisation, and imitation to the traditional heritage in preparing and writing the questions of an exam; third, the teaching staff-members of (PTUK) view the achievement exam as a formality and not as a necessity that can be exploited to steer the whole learning and teaching processes, and that the questions of an achievement exam are still propelled by a teaching mentality rather than a learning mentality, and that those questions are rarely anchored to a specific taxonomy or a tabulated list of specifications; fourth, this study confirmed, as a conclusion, that the absence of any instructional training yields some kind of commonality of improvisational tendency while preparing and writing the questions of an achievement exam; this commonality of improvisational tendency, deductively, yields unreliable judgments, and mirrors fake reality of the teaching and learning processes; fifth, the teaching staff-members of (PTUK), with their different academic ranks, view an achievement exam as an end that can be reached with any set of questions or any exam format; sixth, this study concludes that the absence of formidable educational taxonomies, which the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam are anchored to, reinforces the practice of imitating the traditional heritage in preparing and writing exam questions.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In reference to its findings and conclusions, this study procedurally recommends that the teaching staff-

members, of (PTUK) and elsewhere, should pay more attention to the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam, and that such specifications should be anchored to a well-established educational taxonomy, i.e. (Bloom's Taxonomy). This study recommends that faculties of (PTUK), as well as faculties elsewhere, should offer training to the teaching staff-members on how to prepare and write questions of an achievement exam in parallel with educational specifications and well-referenced taxonomies; the Examination Management Department in (PTUK) should prepare and then circulate a well-established and a tabulated list of educational specifications that acts like a guiding resource whenever the teaching staff-members are to prepare and write the questions of an achievement exam, and, at the same time, meets the valid regulations and the educational mission and standards of (PTUK). This study recommends that all teaching staff-members in (PTUK) should view an achievement exam as not only a teaching means, and as an end itself, but also as a learning tool that can provide essential insights into the teaching and learning processes; this study, in accordance with the previous related research, confirms that specifications of the questions of an achievement exam act like parameters that, from one side, orient the amount of, type, quality, and usefulness of feedback, and, from the other side, correlatively, dictate the comprehension capacity as well as the level of achievement that can be reached by students, learners, and exam-takers; as a result, this study recommends that teaching staff-members of (PTUK) should fully exploit such feedback so as to be able to get more understanding and more capabilities to develop the whole process. Inquisitively, this study recommends further empirical research to investigate the effect of enhancing a taxonomy-referenced specifications, while preparing and writing questions of an achievement exam, on students and learners' competency, comprehension skills, and the level of achievement in various courses and different faculties in (PTUK) and faculties elsewhere; this study recommends more research to investigate the impact of the pandemic situation of Covid-19 on the status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam; this study recommends correlative studies to investigate the impact of the linguistic aspect and wording of questions, of a given exam, on the achievement of students, learners, and exam-takers in that given exam; This study recommends comparative research to investigate the relationship between taxonomy-referenced specifications of the questions of an exam and the type, quantity, quality, and usefulness of feedback that can be gained in return; this study recommends further studies to investigate the orienting clout of the specifications of the questions of an exam towards the teaching and learning processes; this study

recommends further studies to investigate the reasons that motivate the teaching-staff members in (PTUK), as well as the teaching staff-members in various universities elsewhere, to normally resort to a cloud of specifications that mainly stemmed from the educational heritage whenever writing and preparing questions of an exam, rather than anchoring the whole process to a well-established educational taxonomy i.e. (Bloom's Taxonomy) of cognitive domains; this study recommends more studies to investigate the effect of the semantic and connotative dimensions of the verbs classified in Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive domains on the status and the specifications of the questions of an achievement exam.

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Poetry as Playfulness and as Riddle (On the Poetry of Vlada Urošević)

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Poetic Trajectory- Vlada Urošević¹: author-epoch, remarkable intellectual, wondrously curious spirit, exceptional person, man-labyrinth. Equally successful in a variety of literary genres and artistic practices. As a writer, he considers poetry his primary vocation. He appeared on the Macedonian literary scene as a poet, mostly in journals. At the same time, his debut book *Another City* (*Еден друг град*) (1959) marks the beginning of his original individual investment in the achievements of Macedonian poetry, literature, and culture in general. Since then, poetry has remained his endless love and continual creative challenge.

Urošević's poetry is not rigidly closed in narrow national frames, although he is primarily a Macedonian poet, but is dialogically turned towards the European (and world) culture/civilization heritage. Urošević builds his very original and typically recognizable poetic discourse from this remarkable symbiosis of the national and the foreign, the personal and the universal, his unquestioned unique talent, and his experience with literature, the individual affinities and the collective heritage.

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Poetry as Playfulness and as Riddle (On the Poetry of Vlada Urošević)

Dr. Lidija Kapuševska-Drakulevska

POETIC TRAJECTORY

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¹ V. Urošević (1934, Skopje) is a Macedonian poet, prose writer, critic, essayist, anthology editor and translator. He is a member of the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the European Academy of Arts and Sciences (Salzburg), the European Poetry Academy (Luxemburg), and the Slovenian Academy of Literature and Art (Varna); an external member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (Belgrade) and a corresponding member of the "Mallarmé" Academy (Paris). He is a retired full professor at the Faculty of Philology "Blaže Koneski" in Skopje, at the Department of General and Comparative Literature. He has published 12 poetry collections, six story collections, seven novels, three books of notes and travelogues, several books of criticism and essays, two books about the fantastic in literature, and two books about the fantastic in painting, and he has edited several anthologies. He translates from Serbian, Russian and French into Macedonian. The Government of the Republic of France has named him a Knight of the Order of Art and Literature and then an Officer of the same Order for his literary and translation output. He is a winner of numerous national and international awards. Urošević's books have been translated into: English, Bulgarian, German, Danish, Polish, Russian, Slovenian, Serbian, French, and Spanish. For this occasion we list the titles of the poetry collections: *Another City* (*Еден друг град*) (1959), *The Invisible Land* (*Невиделица*) (1962), *A Mannequin in the Landscape* (*Манекен во пејзажот*) (1966), *Summer Rain* (*Летен дожд*) (1967), *Star Scales* (*Свездена терезија*) (1973), *Diving Bell* (*Нуркачко своно*) (1975), *The Dreamer and Emptiness* (*Сонувачот и празнината*) (1979), *Hurropolis* (*Хипнополис*) (1986), *Risks of Handiwork* (*Ризиците на занаетот*) (1993), *Mane, Tekel, Fares* (*Мане, текел, фарес*) (2002), *Secret Gold* (2016) и *Indiscriminate Laboratory* (*Безразборна лабораторија*) (2019).

literature, the individual affinities and the collective heritage. This poetic discourse, in its content, hide palimpsest traces from ancient cultural layers (primarily mythical), and corresponds intellectually with some other artistic (painting, architecture) and extra-artistic, above all scientific (archeology, anthropology, astronomy, physics, psychoanalysis), but also pseudoscientific spheres (esoteric studies).

Poetically, his discourse is much closer related to the heritage of the European literary (artistic) tendencies (especially the European avant-garde, whose experiences undoubtedly correspond to Urošević's sensibility) than the current national developments. Placed in the Macedonian context, his poetry, at its appearance, is a reaction to both intimism in poetry and the revolutionary pragmatism and realism in Macedonian poetry after World War II. "This is poetry that has set off on a long counter-current adventure"², which has provoked the earliest labels attached to this poet by some critics, such as: "enfant terrible" of modernism, "Dadaist," and "aesthete," of course, in a negative connotation. Later, the "European" or, rather, the cosmopolitan orientation of Urošević will be adequately valued, and will become an advantage and recognizable trait of his creative profile. Today, Vlada Urošević has his prominent place in the Macedonian poetic Pantheon. He is, above all, an urban poet. But at times, he is a careful listener to the secret speech of nature. Urošević is a poet who, from one collection of poetry to another, traces new excitements and broadens the borders/horizons of the poetic. This text is only one possible interpretative aspect of the great map of persistent, extraordinary curiosities and challenges of the poet Vlada Urošević.

Yearning for the miraculous

"If I were a critic of my work,
I would say that my poetry strives for the miraculous."

Vlada Urošević

Urošević relates the genesis of his interest in the wondrous as an aesthetic ideal with his childhood and the first "visual" book he was reading – the German lexicon "Duden." In the conversations with Vladimir Jankovski, he emphasizes his fascination as a child with the drawings and all the miracles in the mentioned lexicon, from the unusual objects and creatures that

² М. Матевски, Forward in: В. Урошевиќ, *Свездена терезија*. Скопје, Нова Македонија, 1973, p. 8.

belonged to different realms. But, printed on the same page, they showed mutual “secret” relations. He states: “All of it created in me an idea of a miraculous world that exists outside of the house in which I lived, that there is an immeasurable wonder of the universe that astonishes us at the same time explains something to us.”³ Or, stated in poetic terms:

Indian temples have become musketeer’s home
Piranhas and pyramids are on the same page
From volcanos erupt mummies and coins of Rome
Kites, dirigibles, and cars fly on the celestial stage.

All is connected: Papuans and papayas
Pineapples and watermelons are brothers and sisters.⁴

(“Lexicons from Childhood” *Indiscriminate Laboratory*)

Sprung from the large reservoir of childhood memories, or from the child’s perception of the world, the miraculous grows into the pivotal principle and aim of the poetic adventure of Urošević. His sense for the miraculous, as a dominant “strategy of perception” – to look at the ordinary, the every day, the banal, *and to perceive* the miraculous – is probably related to his great love, surrealism. “Surrealism was a significant school for me,” – he says, “because it has taught me to see the magic of the ordinary, as the surrealists used to say, i.e., to discover the miraculous around myself in every moment in life. (...) That is the message of my first collection of poems, *Another City*: in this everyday city, which is ordinary, gray, and tedious, there is another city that opens in front of us only at certain moments, and then we discover the miraculous.”⁵

“A city exists / whose boundaries / merge / like rain and fog / with the cement frontiers of the city” – the central poem in the first poetry collection states. The city here is a space which – as the dark woods were once in Romanticism or the neglected gardens in Symbolism – offers entrance into the world of the unusual and the impossible – Urošević wants to say with his typically urban verses. The poet can discover that unknown, invisible, second side of reality, which earns poetic status and functions according to its miraculous rules. Here are a few paradigmatic verses: “A power plant suddenly resembled a matchbox,” “A leaf of grass became big, a poplar small” (“Summer Story”); “At the end of the city / the castle of the Tattered Queen rises and on / the hill the stones climb...” (the poem “Evening Games”); “Gnats in the air: the air teams with gnats. / Fire in the greenhouses. Glassworks are burning. / A taxi flees across the sunshine aimlessly. / The cyclists are but shining meteors.” (“The City at Sunset”). What is

exciting and suggestive here? The *play* itself. The seductive *principle of playfulness* is one of the main postulates of the life/work of Urošević. That poetic principle is almost always connected to humor and irony as a protective mechanism from pathos and the banal of our existence.

In the area of playfulness in the sense of discovering, and recreation or transforming of reality, becomes evident the closeness of Urošević with the act of foregrounding or “estrangement” promoted by the Russian formalists. The postulate of “estrangement” is in harmony with Urošević’s tremendous and permanent obsession with *childhood*. The childhood is another essential experiencing of the world and the “wonder” of his worldview. Leopardi has said that “the children see everything in nothing, and the adults – nothing in everything.” Likewise, for Urošević, childhood is “a wondrous period of our life.” For him, “all things seen through children’s eyes and touched by children’s hands have almost unrepeatable and irreplaceable meaning.”⁶ In the poem “The Golden Age of Childhood” (*Mane, Tekel, Fares / Мане, текел, фарес*), alluding to childhood as a lost paradise (“There was a miraculous light which reflected” – one verse goes), the poet makes current the ancient myth in an imposing way:

There were empty snail shells in which
could still hear the noise of the sea

(...) There were butterflies upon whose wings
were spread maps of an island with buried treasure
with marked sea paths leading to it

(...) But there were also vile wizards whose sorcery
betrayed it all for plastic and paper money
and who lied to us that we would become adults.

According to Urošević, the roots of our imagination are situated in childhood. Every poet (and artist, in general), tries to regain the power of childish discovering of the world “as for the first time.” The child’s free imagination offers a possibility to approach the every day from another angle, from another different, unusual, and alternative perspective. Opposed to rational logic and habit, the outside sensations carry the taste of a miracle for any child. “Each, even the banalest object or event opens the doors that lead towards the magical areas of the incredible” – Urošević considers.⁷ In this sense, the poem “Shadow Theatre” (outside of the collections, 1980) is illustrative: “The fire bites the great body of darkness. / The night as a wounded beast twists and wriggles,” “over the white wall of the house terrible flocks fly,” “The child stands in the yard at night / and waits for the electrodes of the welding machine to swish.” The poem’s end reveals the illusion, the

³ В. Јанковски, *Огледало на загатката* (conversations with Vlada Urošević). Скопје, Сигмапрес, 2003, p. 16.

⁴ The poems quoted in the article have been translated by: Zoran Anceviski, Elisaveta Ritchie, Eugene Prostov, David Donnel, and Kalina Maleska.

⁵ В. Јанковски, *Огледало на загатката* (conversations with Vlada Urošević), op.cit., p. 54; 60.

⁶ Л. Капушевска-Дракулевска, Секоја средба со Влада Урошевиќ е чудесна (A conversation with V. Urošević). *Културен живот*, 2019, No 3-4, p. 22.

⁷ Л. Капушевска-Дракулевска, Секоја средба со Влада Урошевиќ е чудесна (A conversation with V. Urošević), op.cit., p. 23.

delusion: the imaginary panopticon, which is a cause for estrangement, is momentary (according to critics, Urošević is “the poet of the unrepeatable moment”), but for the child, it has a meaning of a whole cosmos. This poem (“Shadow Theatre”), according to the principle of construction and according to the final solution, interacts with the poem “The Drunken Boat” by Arthur Rimbaud. The series of images of exotic areas in the last part of Rimbaud’s poem ends with the appearance of a child that plays with paper boats in a pond. The areas the child’s imagination creates are poetic and much more impressive than the prosaic reality.

The program principle for foregrounding the miraculous and miraculization of the ordinary, crystalized in Urošević’s first collection, remains a constant mark of his poetry. However, in the following books, it receives different shapes and functions. At the beginning (*Another City*), the outcome of exploring the city labyrinth carries amazement and joy (so that, as in Chagall’s paintings, “the sleeping lovers to the sky depart,” the night bus, “a joyous monster, a scarecrow” “always takes us to unseen thing”). Later, in those (almost always a little oniric) urban adventures, there is always a feeling of repulsiveness (“The city tightens around like a noose” – we read in the poem “Dusk in April,” *Diving Bell*). There is no longer “a surprise waiting” for you behind the corner (as one verse in the first books of this author says), but most often, the wanderer through the city streets colored with the shadows of a dream, feels a threat lurking: “The pursuit follows me: / tanks chase me through the waking city,” “Helicopters, cyclists – everyone chases me” (“Erased space”); or: “If falls. What falls? Poisonous caterpillars / fall on the city. The city is emptying” (“Fake news”); or: “The smoke drops like a curtain upon the sight / of the city that writhes in spasms of alarm.” (“Alarm”)⁸.

Where do these horrifying visions come from? Are they a result of the memories of war scenes seen in childhood? Of the innate, natural tendency for a kind of catastrophe? Or a reflection of the events in the contemporary world (wars, natural disasters, refugee crises, etc. which do not differentiate between time and space)? “City” – a character in the novel *The Dragon’s Bride* (*Невестата на змејот*) by Urošević says – “a dangerous place for living.” Still, regardless of whether the views of the urban cityscape are attractive or catastrophic, Urošević very lucidly builds his estranging outline of the city, revealing its poetic qualities, in the style of his great predecessor – Baudelaire. Baudelaire, in the “wasteland” of the city, managed “to sense a previously undiscovered secret beauty” (Hugo Friedrich). That paradoxical, and unusual beauty is full of the attractive power of the ugly. In this sense, Urošević’s poems in which the topos of *monsters* appear

(especially the cycle “A Tower with Monsters” in *Hypnopolis*) are paradigmatic as a manifestation of the animal-like:

“Warm and sleek, handsome and cruel,
monsters creeping out of the corners in the twilight.
Their fur glistens like ancient velvet,
the white of their eyes is like porcelain.
(...)
They are all around, horrible and enchanting,
even, the child stretches its arms toward them.”
 (“Monsters”)

This poem demonstrates the poetic nature of the ugly, which simultaneously frightens and amazes. About the “terrible beauty,” understood in Blake’s sense, Urošević says: “The unusual that attracts me contains the two elements – on the one hand, the unusual frighten, because it is outside of the norms and understandings that persist in our way of thinking, but it can simultaneously amaze.”⁹ The monsters, “lazy and slow,” are sometimes rendered concrete, and have mythological (“Minotaur”), Biblical (“Behemoth and Leviathan”) or alchemical symbols (*Secret Gold / Tajno zlato*), sometimes they have unusual forms that the scientists admire: “three pairs of legs each / and their tongue twists as snakes’ ones” (“Tamed Monsters”), and sometimes a whole arsenal of composite creatures walk through Urošević’s verses as a projection of the unconscious (oniric): “lions with horns on their head,” “a lion with donkey’s head,” “evil women with bodies like birds,” “half dog-half bird,” “people-fish,” “people with legs of grasshoppers...”

The poems whose theme is monsters are illustrative of the interweaving between the imaginary and the realistic in the poetry of Vlada Urošević. The monsters, by rule, break the laws of the world/cosmos order, they are a sign of the out-worldly. They symbolize the irrational forces (chaos), but our author situates them in the space of the city (cosmos) or, possibly, on its periphery, in a separate tower, so again in some kind of a building, construction – an embodiment of the human. (For Urošević, the tower “represents a road to the celestial heights and the depths of the earth, so towards both poles of the Unknown.”) In this way, the animal-like does not begin where the human ends. Still, it penetrates the “normal,” and suggests the concept of the interweaving both seemingly contrary realities in the dual division of the world: visible-invisible, lightness-dark (day-night, cosmos-chaos), good-evil, conscious-unconscious, reality-dream, human-animal... Perhaps even the world in its essence is “monstrous”?!

The irrational in this poetry offers the reader an encounter with an incredible, exciting world. Among the

⁸ The poems: “Erased Space” and “Fake News” are from the collection *Diving Bell*.

⁹ В. Јанковски, *Огледало на загатката* (conversations with Vlada Urošević), op.cit., p. 100. Additionally, Urošević is also the author of an essayistic book titled *Miracles and Monsters* (*Чуда и чудовишта*) (Скопје, Магор, 2001), dedicated to the fantastic in literature.

types of the irrational that Urošević practices, the oniric imagination has an exceptionally privileged status. It is enough to see the titles of separate poems to notice the frequency of the motives of night and *dream* in his poetry. Understandable because the miraculous, whose great admirer he is, exists in dreams and fantasy: "Where does the wave take her and who makes her eyes widen / what sight does she see, what wonder – seventh, eighth?" – the lyrical subject in the poem "A Sleeping Woman" (*Star Scales / Сvezдена тепежија*) is curious, subtly alluding to the abundant miracles that are hidden in the plentiful layers of the dream understood as "another life" (Gérard de Nerval). The dream, undoubtedly, is poetic, but this author, according to his recognition, strengthens its poetic qualities consciously, using the language of symbols inherent to dreams. Urošević is a rare poet that knows "the secret of the dreamers"; his dreamer "toward the core of secrets sails" ("Night Sail," *The Dreamer and Emptiness / Сонувачот и празнината*) and "the dreamer unites with the unknown / feverishly in love" ("The Fall of Night," *The Dreamer and Emptiness*).

The Unknown is the common denominator of the dream and of another very frequent thematic and leitmotif attribute in the poetry of Vlada Urošević – the sea, that "sleeping horizon." "In my poetry, the sea has the role of a dream about free spaces, about touching the unpredictable, traveling towards the unknown," – he explains.¹⁰ The summer, according to him, also symbolizes freedom, becoming engulfed in adventure, dismissing the established order, and discipline. Slobodan Micković¹¹, in one of his studies dedicated to Urošević's poetry, he interprets the summer as an atmosphere (dominant in *The Invisible Land / Невиделица*, *Summer Rain / Летен дожд*, etc. and in certain poems in *Indiscriminate Laboratory / Безразборна лабораторија*) in correlation with the Mediterranean landscapes, fragrances and colors, and with the sea in general. Sensing the closeness of the sea or its presence is especially significant to our poet, such as in the poem "Sensing the City" (*Summer Rain*): "Salt smells from somewhere," "I stand on the city square, and I hear the voice / of the sea, a hundred and one sea miles away." Regarding to the mentioned rhyming between the dream and the sea, the final verse of the poem "A House Surrounded by Ripe Wheat" (outside of the collections, 1980) is illustrative: "A house the man sleeping in, says in his dream: 'Sea,'" and especially the end of the poem "The secrets of the City" (outside of the collections, 2004): "... from the small boat, / above the bed in the corner of the child's room, / it smells of

vanilla, canella at night, / the sea splashes and ties the world together."

The poet wanders with the "compass of the dream" through the landscapes of the oniric on a microcosmic level. But he uses another favorite instrument, the astrolabe, to make a daring journey towards the stars and space (macrocosm). Concerning the dichotomy between micro- and macrocosm, Urošević's line of thought is close to the idea of Paracelsus (and other great masters of esoteric sciences, especially alchemy) about their mutual unity, which results in the possibility of identifying the infinitely small with the infinitely large. Understanding poetry as "a kind of essence of the spirit," a "sudden cognition" that "each grain of sand is, in fact, a cosmos" ("To see a World in a Grain of Sand," says William Blake), this poet wants to point to the presence of the miracle both up there and down here: "In each fruit a star hides"; "fruits are planets, the light – their juiciness"; "What space flight aim to discover is hidden in the content of the fruit" – we read in the poem "Star Orchards" (*Star Scales*).

Through the stars, announced with the poem "Southern star" (*The Invisible Land / Невиделица*), a link is established with the *scientific miraculous* that this poet shows affinity to, by the cult towards knowledge that he cherishes so unselfishly, and with interest for astronomy and the new scientific discoveries in general. According to the statements of Urošević himself, this is another fascination from childhood. His encounters with books dedicated to celestial mechanics and the secrets of the universe resulted in a taste for the poetic sense of science. "Vlada Urošević is one of the rare poets (...) who introduced into poetry the miracle of the scientific epoch, not only of 'science fiction,' but also of our ordinary life. Reality could be more imaginary than fiction" – Francis Combe writes in an impassioned essay, and continues: "His 'Poems for XXI Century' (*Mane, Tekel, Fares*) are almost prophesy. They announce the risk of seeing how life on Earth ends: the burial of a lake, the space tree that no longer gives fruit, the plastic planet with sulfurous flowers, etc. A world in which all beautiful things are under threat."¹² In poems of this kind, the poet becomes a proponent of a type of bioethics:

Whether due to pesticides or other inventions
they are less and less among us, as you may have well noticed:
as are, in fact, all other beautiful things
that have silently been proclaimed unnecessary ornaments.

("Butterflies," *Mane, Tekel, Fares*)

In these and in many other warning and dramatic verses in which phantasmagoric visions and

¹⁰ В. Јанковски, *Огледало на загатката* (conversations with Vlada Urošević), op.cit., p. 113.

¹¹ С. Мицковиќ, Опсесиите и фасцинациите во поезијата на Влада Урошевиќ. *Разгледи* (XXX), 1988, февруари-март, No. 2-3, p. 137-144 (тематски број: В. Урошевиќ).

¹² Ф. Комб, Франсис, Шумата на чудата на Влада Урошевиќ. В. Урошевиќ, *Во соработка со сонот*. Скопје, МАНУ, Фондација Трифун Костовски, 2014, p. 9-10 (translated by: В. Мартиновски).

apocalyptic situations pulsate, for example: “plastic, oil spots, garbage” (“Library II,” *Indiscriminate Laboratory*), “Cities on which radioactive rains fall” (“Planet of War”), “Whole continents washed with detergent” (“Plastic Planet”), “...dangerous stars with stings of dangerous light” (“Dead Planet”), “Trains stuck in lakes of tar” (“Landscapes of Silence”)¹³, the mythical consciousness of the exhaustion of civilization is recognized. Urošević writes about the danger of chaos, destruction and dehumanization of the world (which, paradoxically, is carried out by humans). The new biological, and chemical weapons, as well as the monstrous experiments in the biotechnological laboratories, reshape life on Earth. The current and predicting dimension of these verses is more than evident. Interestingly, Urošević himself recognizes that he experiences the catastrophic poems not only as a warning for the possible destiny of the world, but also as a play of freed imagination.

The poetic adventure of Urošević with so many new shapes of the miraculous continues.

The magic of language

“Some spirits, among them myself, can hardly imagine something *beautiful*, which would not be, to a certain degree, magical.”

André Breton (*Magical Art*)

According to Vlada Urošević, the poetic language must contain “a degree of magic, Zaum.” “To be a poet means to be capable of *being astonished* by language,” – Claude Roy had said. “Poetry is the highest form of use of language,” – Urošević considers, and, in the style of Stéphane Mallarmé, he concludes: “It’s not the idea that creates the poem, it’s the language that creates the poem. Ideas are, after all, exhaustive.”¹⁴ Likewise, for Paul Valéry (“Poetry and Abstract Thought”), the poet’s task is to create an impression of an intimate relationship between the word and the spirit, which leads to a remarkable result, close to the illusions and the miraculous in ancient magic. In other words, the principles of magic and the principles of poetry meet in the request of a language that will be different from the usual one; it is a “secret language,” as Mircea Eliade would say. Talking about the closeness between magic and poetry as two activities of the human spirit, Urošević says: “The incomprehensible or partly comprehensible words contain the energy of the primordial beginnings. The word still held the close relationship with the object or the action it designated, as well as the possibility of identifying with them. And, therefore, the incomprehensiveness of words strengthens the magic of poetry the faith in their magical

power. The child feels it, and the poet sometimes manages to express it.”¹⁵

One such exceptionally successful example of the symbiosis between magic and poetry in Urošević’s output is the magical palindrome “Ablanatanalba” from the eponymous poem (*Risks of Handiwork* (*Ризиците на занаетот*)):

I pronounce you O abla O natan O alba
There is nothing in you, and there is everything
(...)
A spinning word that
wants to give praise
to the unutterable
Ablanatanalba
Ablanatanalba!

Don’t these verses sound like incantations? In the style of magic, poetry, too, is “an attempt to express the inexpressible,” – says Urošević. The poem “Ablanatanalba” sublimates his yearning for the miraculous as an ideal, and the magic of the lyrical language game. The idea that words begin as magic, and that through the poetry, they return to magic again is also held by Borges: “There are wonderful verses yet have no meaning. And still, they do have meaning – not for a reason, but imagination” – he says in his Norton Lectures, and explains: “there is pleasure in the words, and, of course, in their rhythm, their music. (...) They don’t mean anything, and they are not created to mean anything, and yet they function. They function as something beautiful.”¹⁶

These views of Borges correspond with some attitudes of Urošević expressed in the text “Ars Poetica”: “Too much rationality harms poetry. For a poem to become and remain poetry, there is a need for a certain dose of irrationality – achieved through playfulness, through accepting coincidence, through association leading from one thing to another, through some kind of word trance, through humor – to reach the areas that no one can reach with the rational approach.”¹⁷ The essence of poetry, according to Urošević, surpasses the sensible, rational message, which can be avoided, can be turned around, the poet may play with it, and “that is what makes poetry – poetry.”

So, from a linguistic aspect, the poetic adventure of Urošević is based on the belief in the power of speech. Maybe, he insists much more on the suggestiveness of the sound of poetry speech than on its meaning. Macedonian critics consider Urošević to be “an extraordinary verselogue and a rare versification expert,” author of “our most sonorous poems” whose musicality is “rich and abundant,” a poet who

¹³ The poems: “Planet of War,” “Plastic Planet,” and “Dead Planet” are from the poetry collection *The Dreamer and Emptiness*.

¹⁴ Љ. Спасов, *Рудните слоеви на секавањето*: conversations with Vlada Urošević. Скопје, МАНУ, 2014, p. 131.

¹⁵ В. Урошевиќ, *Viola arsenica*, (белешки за поезијата). Скопје, Готен, 2021, p. 7.

¹⁶ Х. Л. Борхес, *Умешноста на стихот*. Скопје, Табернакул, 2014, p. 91-93 (translated by: Т. Сиљаноски).

¹⁷ В. Урошевиќ, *Viola arsenica*, оп. цит., p. 48.

"fascinates with his word puns."¹⁸ *The Euphonia* of the verse, and the interest in the phonetic aspect of poetry (rhymes, alliterations, associative listings, etc.) are the crucial characteristics of Vlada Urošević's poetry. Here are a few examples:

It's raining like a woman sleeping,
like a child learning a poem by heart,
it's raining like fugitive hiding and weeping
it's raining as if part

of the seasons are confused, there's rain
pouring as when love is strong
as if in a dream, as if we are in pain
pressed by a hill, it's raining hard and long

("Summer Rain," *Summer Rain*)

Nothing has remained, not even knives or strives
nor fires or shires or spires or wires
nor madness or sadness or darkness or brightness
Nothing has remained, not even salt or vault
nor keepers or sleepers or hangers or winders

("Lullaby – Dreamguile," *Risks of Handiwork*)

"These poems will enchant you in every sense of the word. With their unusual charm, with their music," the French poet, novelist, essayist, and longtime editor of *Europe* magazine – Pierre Gamara has stated, referring to Urošević's verses. According to Blaže Koneski, "Urošević's rich vocabulary, exposed in the position of rhyme, is submitted to exceptionally successful sound harmonies. Hence, the contribution of this poet in refreshing the rhyme in Macedonian poetry is obvious, and not small."¹⁹ The copious "rhymarium" in the creative laboratory of our poet is born, as he explains himself, through a long process of searching for closeness between words, which results in their final sound harmony creating a ray of surprise. Urošević often consciously approaches the act of rhyming words from various areas, and comes to interesting connections that make unexpected effects. Characteristic in this sense is the afterword to the poetry collection *Indiscriminate Laboratory* (*Безразборна лабораторија*), in which Urošević expresses his dilemmas around the choice of the free verse and rhymed verse. Urošević believes that poetry has no strict rules, and that each poet chooses the path he believes will enable him to attain the desired goal. He writes both rhymed verse and free verse, although, according to the poetic practice, he is more inclined toward classical verse.

In the spirit of the poetic strive for achieving a solid form and Euphonia of the verse, he also writes in the sonnet form, probably the highest artistic model of poetic discourse in general, which is a rare form in

contemporary Macedonian poetry. Miodrag Pavlović characterizes the unique poetic formula of Urošević as an "Oniric Parnassus." This formula refers to the harmony between the Apollonian and the Dionysian concept as two entirely equitable principles of creation. It is no coincidence that the latest poetic book by Vlada Urošević, *Indiscriminate Laboratory* (*Безразборна лабораторија*, 2019), starting from the title itself, dialectically connects: adventure and order, curiosity for the unusual and the "yearning for a system," playfulness (freedom) and discipline ("l'art pour l'art"), "creative fantasy" and experience, admiration (ecstasy) before life as a minor big miracle and rational control, a sense of wonder and a cultivated expression and style, singing and contemplation.

"I have grown up between those two fascinations: the one with books and the one with natural phenomena. (...) I think that in my experience of the world today, those two kinds of gaining experience are complementary," – Urošević says.²⁰ And indeed: his poetry is a testimony of a fascinating erudition, on the one hand, and on the other, it is completely submerged into the sea of sensory and perceptions. Regarding sensory stimuli on which he insists and through which he experiences life, Urošević has emphasized many times the importance of the change of seasons and changes in nature, of feeling the fragrances, the type of external light, even of tactile experiences, because, although they are seemingly worldly and physical, they open the gates towards metaphysical essence of life, they point to the cyclical movement of life and death. The stimulus of the specific sensory experience of the world has become a pillar of creation. Consequently, the drama that takes place in the poetic laboratory is in harmony with the great drama of existence that takes place every day in the imagined laboratory of nature. In this sense, the collection *Indiscriminate Laboratory* abounds in especially suggestive verses that show that "the garden" is a kind of "observatory," that "the flight of the butterflies" can be calligraphy or cryptography, and "the text on the field is palimpsest." Similar examples are constantly present in Urošević's poetry: "lichens have their writing rules" ("A Poem about Inscriptions," *A Mannequin in the Landscape*) and "Bushes are syllables / and the speech of the wind stammers" ("A Draft of the Land," *Summer Rain*), "The landscape is a book – unread. / All is writing (regardless of who wrote it)" ("Book – Unread," *Mane, Tekel, Fares*) and "new signs reel in the air pools: the small stars of the dandelion, calligraphic fibers" ("Spring Book," *Diving Bell*); "...only the stars in the sky / and the ants on the earth go on writing the shapes / of an alphabet that no one knows." ("Mane, Tekel, Fares") ... Writing of nature suggests an

¹⁸ Г. Старделов, Поезијата на Влада Урошевиќ. *Разглед* (XXXIX), 1996, април-мај, бр. 4-5, 109-132.

¹⁹ Б. Конески, Блаже, Меѓу јавето и сонот. Поговор во: В. Урошевиќ, *Панична планета*. Скопје, Наша книга, 1989, р. 83-85 (двојазично, на македонски и на англиски јазик).

²⁰ Раскажете ми го детството и ќе ви кажам каква личност сте. Интервју со В. Урошевиќ. *Вечер*, 13.02.2019, р. 17

untouchable quality of phenomena, and reveals the poet's trust in its secret forces.

It is interesting that, apart from the mentioned "reading of the landscape" (the title of one poem), the urban in Urošević's poetry can also be viewed from a semiotic aspect, as a harmony of signs, as a letter that is read and interpreted. Analogously to nature, the city too is a cryptogram, a coded message or "chaotic manuscript":

Messages flow through the city: tiny
flickering sparkles, vibrations, hardly
legible signs, a telegraph of chances (...)
... And the entire city
is a chaotic manuscript, unpaginated pages,
lost connections...

("The Secrets of the City")

What the poet insists on in the indicated verses dedicated to the manuscript, both of nature and the city, is the secret, the riddle, the mystery, and the inexplicable – crucial categories for the biographical/poetic worldview of Urošević. The *poetical image* in this poetry is also a riddle, its second crucial component, besides the Euphonia of the verse. "I consider the poetic image one of the most important elements of contemporary poetry. Regardless of whether we place it in a metaphor, comparison, oxymoron" – Vlada Urošević says in the conversations with Vladimir Jankovski, and continues: "I enjoy creating a poetic image, especially if there are elements of wonder, improbability in it, something that conflicts with the laws of logic and with everyday practice."²¹ Or, stated in poetic terms: "The night is dark blue, as the juice of blackberries" ("Dandelion Kites, Dreamers, Night," *The Dreamer and Emptiness*); "Who is that girl over there with her palm/like green outside landscape over the window?" ("The Compass of the Dream," *Star Scales*); "The cold audibly enters, riding a broom" ("Winter Ceremonies," *Diving Bell*); "the tossed newspaper and the wind hug" ("Picnic Goers," *Another City*); "I exist in the skin of a crystal"; "I exist in the skin of a crystal"; "I exist in the fragrance of a flower," ("Existences," *Risks of Handiwork*); "Leopard's skin stretched on the seabed, / its spots moving: a net / in which I lie making drowsy moves / of a clumsy dreamer / stretching in his cage of light." ("An Afternoon Swim in the Sea," *Mane, Tekel, Fares*).

If the Euphonia in Urošević's verses can be correlated to the inheritance of Symbolism, the visual is most frequently connected with the techniques of surrealism. "Although surrealism had a great influence on his poetry, that inclination limits this poetry, simplifies it and, eventually, makes it cliché, whereas his poetry is much more abundant, more complex and multilayered,"

Roman Kissiov rightfully warns.²² Still, Vlada Urošević has written one typically surrealist poem – "A Night of Full Moon above Skopje" (*Mane, Tekel, Fares*) which is considered the peak of the masterfully constructed analogies. It is one of the longest poems by Urošević (maybe even the longest), which fascinates with the disparity, and intensity of the images themselves, with the unusual, impressive, dynamic, paradoxical and wondrous sights: "This is the Vardar, not the Brahmaputra! / What are Indian temples doing in Skopje?"; "Fish from the Southern Seas swim in the City Aquarium (...)" But Skopje / never had an aquarium, / someone yells. So what?"; "The Stone Bridge is not of stone but amber / and ancient ivory, slightly darkened / through the centuries"; "The Daut-pasha's Hammam offers its twelve breasts to the sky / stretching restfully like Ephesus's Artemis"; "Surrealism is not dead! / That is the slogan in black letters written on a freshly / whitewashed wall", etc. "The city is slightly removed: / if someone had a compass / he would be able to see that it now lies beneath the stars. / Nothing is the same" – concludes the lyrical subject. And all of this is the doing of the Moon, which, acting as a stage prop, frequently plays the role of a semantic "cut" (according to Lotman). The Moon's duty is "to shuffle the cards / of the possible and the impossible." According to Urošević, the surrealist image does not play a mimetic role. The surrealist image is "a pure creation of the spirit. Each surrealist image wants to be a miracle – a sign of the victory of imagination over reality,"²³ – he states. These positions are self-referential, at least concerning the lavish spectrum of images in the poem "A Night of Full Moon above Skopje."

From a stylistic point of view, this poet also uses other techniques (besides the already mentioned association/allusion), such as the metonymic concept or enumeration. For example, the poem "Illusory Landscapes" (*The Dreamer and Emptiness*), is entirely composed following the metonymic idea (although it is not the only one): "Birds with leaves instead of wings. / Mountains with fur instead of snow. / Volcanoes spitting blood instead of lava. / Storms with spasms instead of thunder. Fruits with eyes instead of seeds", etc. In the poem "Childhood" (*The Dreamer and Emptiness*), the author affirms several common traits of his poetry: *depersonalization and absence of the lyrical I* (absence of lyricism at the expense of creating atmosphere), *cataloging* (without the mediation of the verb-temporal forms) and *turning point* ("The surprise, the deviation

²² Р. Кисъов, Играта на въображеното митологията на съня и паралелните светове на поета – вълшебник (Поезията на В. Урошевиќ). Forward in: В. Урошевиќ, *Митология на съня*. София, Ерго, 2013, p. 15.

²³ В. Урошевиќ, Машината за шиње и чадорот излегоа во пет часот (кон поезијата на надреализмот). Forward in: *Големата авантура: францускиот надреализам* (составил и превел). Скопје, Македонска книга, p. 26.

²¹ В. Јанковски, *Огледало на загатката* (conversations with Vlada Urošević), op.cit., p.109.

toward the unexpected, is the best salvation from the banal," says Urošević at one point). Here is the entire poem "Childhood":

Thermometers, dictionaries,
alarm clocks ringing,
mother-of-pearl boxes
dolls and oranges.

Glass vials
filled with insects
zeppelins, angels,
Turkish delights and rhinos.

Peddlers
of colorful lollipops
islands with hidden treasure
and old picture postcards.

Expeditions, parrots,
a world closed in a marble,
watermelon lanterns,
shells and butterflies.

Natives and volcanos,
carriages and bats,
evening lamps under arbors
and a war – coming ever closer.

"As far as catalogization is concerned, I enjoy it, it's true," Vlada Urošević says. "I can't explain why. Simply, the enumeration and placing those objects one next to the other is for my enjoyment that might be visual. But I enjoy the objects, the tactile experience with them. Especially the rare, unusual objects. Some objects are unusual, which come from distant countries, which belonged to other cultures. It is all connected to my sense of the miraculous, of wonder."²⁴ So, the author links enumeration as a visual act (present in many other poems besides the mentioned one, "Childhood") with visual art. Throughout the entire poetic output of Vlada Urošević, there are reminiscences (explicit or implicit) of painters with whom he has his own, unconventional dialogue. For example, in the poem "Paleography of the Dream" (*Diving Bell*), we can sense traces of the atmosphere of De Chirico's paintings: "There are such dreams in which / you walk the empty city squares. / A monument stands in the middle of the square. / You run the smooth stairs..." Giorgio de Chirico is not mentioned here, but in the poem "A Riddle of the Afternoon" (*Indiscriminate Laboratory*), there is an homage to this painter in the motto. Apart from De Chirico, Urošević's imagination museum also contains: Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Brueghel, Vincent van Gogh, Marc Chagall (eponymous sonnets from the cycle "Canvases," *The Invisible Land*), Hiroshi Nakamura, Max Ernst and again H. Bosch (*Indiscriminate Laboratory*). As a kind of a counterpart of the museum, in Urošević's poetry (in numerous poems), there is the presence of the library, the literary museum in which a whole series of unique

names from literary history gain a significant place: from Homer and Shakespeare – to Baudelaire and Borges, and from Konstantin Miladinov and Kosta Racin – to Blaže Koneski and Mateja Matevski.²⁵

The triad: museum-library-theatre, illustrative of the "places of memory" – places in which the images of history, culture, and experience are stored, in the poetry (as well as in the prose) of Urošević, has the status of the city as a product of a specific civilizational model, as a cosmogony act of ordering the world, a transition from chaos to cosmos. All together are parabolas for an inevitable parallel reality. Touched by the magical wand of the poet, the library, the museum, and the theatre become sites of new urban mythology: "The library is a ship that sinks" (the poem "Library," *Indiscriminate Laboratory*), the mythical Minotaur, "half bull, half man" is a museum piece to which "two elderly ladies (...) offer some grass", while "the tourists take photos ("The Minotaur", *The Dreamer and Emptiness*), and below the theatre there are catacombs in which "a whole storehouse of bombs has remained!" ("Panicky Theatre", *Indiscriminate Laboratory*). Yet, in the museums, "metals stand in which / the splendor of the distant fire without sun still burns / and the King and Queen stand still / offering smiles to each other" ("A Poem of Museums," *A Mannequin in the Landscape*), while, after the fire in the Library of Alexandria "the night printer continues to work / printing dark books with letters of phosphorus" ("The Library of Alexandria," *Secret Gold*). The parallel between the alchemical and the creative process in the mentioned poems suggests, after all, the faith of the poet in the eternity of art (museums, libraries, theatre).

Urošević is a scenographer and a director of numerous scenes in his verses. Beside the connection with the theatrical play, these events can also connect to the narrative of the film art (critics, among other things, have established a relation between Urošević's poetry and the oniric poetics of the cult director Fellini). Scenery in the poetic discourse (theatrical and film shots, but also the production, collage and other techniques) indicates not only the ludic principle, and the poetics of "estrangement," but also the aspect of the *narrative* in poetry. Thus the appearance of characters; through Urošević's verses, a multitude of constant characters appear – especially children and women, dreamers and fantastists; as well as mythological creatures (Minotaur, Dionysius, Pythia, Argonauts, etc.) and fairy tale creatures (Sinbad the Sailor, Scheherazade, princesses, magicians), the alchemical King and Queen and others, but also unique creations of the author, such as: Mister Mysterious Case, Mannequin in the Landscape, The Green Spirit of the Park, The Air Diver, The Great Hunter, The God of

²⁴ В. Јанковски, *Огледало на загатката* (conversations with Vlada Urošević), op.cit., p. 78.

²⁵ Konstantin Miladinov, Kosta Racin, Blaže Koneski and Mateja Matevski are Macedonian poets.

Summer, etc. These inventive names again indicate the infinite potential of poetic expression and the magic of language.

Homo poeticus, after all

"Only poetry is powerful enough to touch the essence of the world."

Martin Heidegger

Poetry is an old anthropological need and one of the most senior human skills. The truth poetry "radiates," – it is an epiphany of the divine, a transition from Non-Being into Being, "an urge that does not ask for sense", as Blaže Koneski would say. According to Danilo Kiš (from his essay this subtitle is taken), poetry is a defense against barbarism: it gives the sense to our existence. "Poetry continues the beauty of the world; it aestheticizes the world" – French professor Gaston Bachelard wrote in his study *Poetics of Reverie*. Without poetry, the world would be a "wasteland" – the Serbian writer Mihajlo Pantić says.

For Urošević, poetry represent "entrance in the realm of freedom, and release from the realm of necessity." Aware that poetry today is excluded from social events and the great movements of the epoch, he considers that "poetry is forced to lead an almost secret life." In one of his essays with a paradigmatic title – "What is Poetry Able for," he declares that poetry "cannot stop any war, cannot reduce the misfortunes of refugees, cannot prevent the destitution of the planet." According to him, the poet feels incapable "before the tragic and increasingly threatening perspectives of the contemporary world." Urošević, however, emphasizes his faith in the "hidden force" of poetry and in the prophesying role of the poet. "Who knows, his verses may have some kind of influence on tomorrow's developments?"²⁶ – he is optimistic.

To be a poet of the level of Vlada Urošević ("poet-magician," "explorer, discoverer and builder," according to Mateja Matevski), is to be dedicated to poetry whose nature is enlightening. However, "it explores the night" of the soul of the world and "the secrets in which the human being has sunk," as Saint-John Perse would say. "The poet decodes the essence of things, to express it, he must again, in a different way, encode it," Urošević considers. Maybe that is why his ideal in poetry, as he often emphasizes, is to make "a poem that will look like a solid object. As an object carved out of language," "as some kind of beautiful perfect box." "Maybe because the box always hides something inside."²⁷ In it are stored the past and the memories of childhood, dreams, and yearnings of the poet Vlada Urošević. The book is "a magical object," as he says, an "unread book" and, as the box, it hides – a

riddle, "a secret unraveled only by another secret" – as it is said in the poem "Ablanatanalba."

The earthly and the celestial images of this poetry (from "the anxiety in the landscape" to the "star orchards"), fascinate with the unique and wondrous crystallization of the expression. With the "cosmic force" of imagination, Urošević creates the virtual space of the eternal poetry of humankind. I believe that the poetry of Vlada Urošević can enchant an English, American, French or German reader almost as much as a Macedonian one.

Translation from Macedonian into English: Kalina Maleska

²⁶ В. Урошевиќ, *Viola arsenica*, op.cit., p. 82.

²⁷ В. Јанковски, *Огледало на загатката* (conversations with Vlada Urošević), op.cit., p. 26.



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A Study on the Status Quo and Reconstruction Paths for Ecological Imbalance in College English Classroom under the Background of Informationization – Taking Yunnan Minzu University as an Example

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Abstract- Based on the theory of educational ecology, this paper starts to analyze the status quo of the imbalance in college English classroom of Yunnan Minzu University (YMU) under the background of informationization, attempts to put forward three principles abided in the process of reconstruction, then mainly focuses on the reconstruction paths for the college English classroom ecology, so as to provide some new ideas for the reform in college English, and eventually contributes to the sustainable development of the college English classroom ecology.

Keywords: college english teaching; ecological imbalance; reconstruction paths.

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INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of modern information technology and its application in the field of education, the role of information technology has quietly changed. The way of teaching and learning in the information technology environment has also evolved accordingly. Teacher centered teaching has gradually changed to student-centered teaching. The role of information technology has also changed from being a tool of demonstration and individual counseling to information plus collaboration and communication, cognition and exploration. Blended learning has become a critical teaching model, and the creation of teaching situation has become a means to support effective learning, and the ecological teaching concept has gradually built a new information-based education philosophy.

College English classroom ecosystem is an organic whole composed of teachers, students and teaching environment. After a long period of running in, the system is in a relatively balanced development state. However, with the popularization of network technology and information-based teaching in colleges and universities, it has caused certain impact on the traditional college English classroom ecosystem. As a result, the structure of the classroom ecosystem is unbalanced, and the classroom functions are gradually degraded, which seriously affects the talent training goals of colleges and universities.

I. CURRENT SITUATION OF ECOLOGICAL IMBALANCE IN COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

College English classroom ecosystem is an organic whole composed of teachers, students and teaching environment. After a long period of running in, the system is in a relatively balanced development state. However, with the popularization of network technology and information-based teaching in colleges and universities, it has caused certain impact on the traditional college English classroom ecosystem. As a result, the structure of the classroom ecosystem is unbalanced, and the classroom functions are gradually degraded, which seriously affects the talent training goals of colleges and universities. Taking Yunnan Minzu University (YMU) as an example, this paper analyzes the current situation of ecological imbalance in college English teaching from the following aspects.

a) Imbalance of macro-level factors

Macro-level factors are the important external guarantee and prerequisite for the harmonious and sustainable development of teaching ecology. Among them, factors such as language ecology and curriculum setting play a particularly prominent role in restricting the ecology of college English teaching in ethnic colleges and universities. The details are as follows:

- i. The university language ecology is chaotic. As an ethnic university located in the southwest frontier area, the proportion of minority students in our school accounts over 50%. Besides English and Japanese, YMU has opened 15 non-universal languages in 14 South and Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, the school of ethnic culture has opened 13 languages of 12 ethnic minorities in China, which is the school with the largest number of languages offered by similar colleges and universities. The language ecology shows a trend of diversity, but it also brings a lot of trouble to language teaching, especially foreign language teaching.

In the process of college English teaching for many years, the author found that almost all the Han

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students are second language learners (Chinese and English), most ethnic minority students are third language learners (ethnic language, Chinese and English), and most ethnic minority students from the school of south and southeast Asia languages are fourth language learners (ethnic language, Chinese, English and professional languages). Han students in the province mostly use dialects to communicate, while minority students mostly use dialects or national languages to communicate. The author found that this phenomenon is also common among teachers. Teachers and students usually use Mandarin only in formal occasions inside and outside campus, such as conferences, classrooms and other places. What's more, most of their Mandarin is not standard with obvious regional characteristics. The use of English is almost limited to classroom learning.

- ii. The setting and arrangement of college English courses are unreasonable. The current curriculum of the university is as follows: college English reading and writing and college English audio-visual and oral courses are offered at the same time in the first year of college, with two classes each week, a total of 16 weeks; Only college English reading and writing are offered in the second year of college, with two weekly classes, a total of 16 weeks. Teachers are allocated according to the number of classes opened in each grade. The maximum number of classes is 60. Students are free to choose classes according to their schedule. As a result, in the same class, students come from different colleges and majors, and their English foundation varies greatly. Teachers cannot teach in full English, and students with poor foundation cannot participate in various classroom teaching activities, which seriously affects the enthusiasm of teachers' teaching and students' learning enthusiasm.

In addition, as a public compulsory course, the university only offers college public English courses. Due to the lack of professional foreign language talents, colleges have been unable to offer professional English courses. The university has certain advantages of bilingual talent resources in school of south and southeast Asian languages, but only a few teachers have offered basic language courses such as college Thai in the form of general education course, and there are no special cross-border languages with ethnic minority languages, such as Vietnamese, Myanmar, Lao and other non common language courses. The advantages of bilingual talents of ethnic minorities have not been brought into play, and the learners of ethnic minority languages are usually recruited from the ethnic minority students.

b) *Imbalance of micro-level factors*

The micro-level factors of college English cover a wide range of factors. The imbalance of teachers, classroom environment, teaching facilities, and class size in ordinary colleges and universities also exists in ethnic colleges and universities. Therefore, the author will mainly focus on the composition of the special teaching subjects in ethnic colleges and universities, that is, the two ecological factors of teachers and students, to discuss the more prominent ecological imbalance of teaching subjects.

- i. The ability and behavior of teachers are unbalanced. As the main body of "teaching", teachers' professional quality, teaching ability, speech and behavior will exert a subtle effect on students' acquisition of professional knowledge and improvement of personality (Guan Jingjing, et al, 2016). However, due to the unified curriculum setting and syllabus plan, teachers' professional skills cannot be brought into full play; The number of classes is large, the level of students varies, and teachers cannot implement targeted teaching strategies. Over time, problems such as teachers' collective lesson preparation, single teaching methods, and monotonous teaching courseware have gradually emerged, which restrict the exertion of teachers' subjective role.

Imbalance between students' habits and environment. As the main body of "learning", students should have shown a diversified development trend, but restricted by factors such as the place of origin and the disparity of learning level, there are generally some unfavorable phenomena such as insufficient learning motivation, single methods and large differences in effects. Most students can not make full use of computers, notebooks and smart phones for study purposes, nor can they make full use of school teaching facilities, such as self-learning platforms, rain classroom, MOOCs, etc., instead, they are addicted to the entertainment function of the equipment. In addition, some students have acquired three or even four languages. The adverse factors of mother tongue or foreign language negative transfer affect the learning efficiency and gradually hinder the cultivation and maintenance of learning enthusiasm.

c) *Imbalance between macro-level and micro-level factors*

The main body of the ecosystem plays a decisive role in the development of the whole ecosystem, and also restricts the status and relationship between other factors within the system. The imbalance of the ecological subject of college English teaching has led to the dislocation of other ecological factors in the whole system, the virtual existence of the curriculum, the confusion of the classroom environment, the failure to

implement the syllabus and plans, the failure of teaching methods, the failure of teaching facilities to make the best use of everything, the tense relationship between teachers and students, the continuous expansion of distance, the indifference of student relationship, poor communication, and so on.

Although the school has introduced Curriculum Center, Rain Classroom, iTest language testing and training system, Lingde digital voice system and other online course teaching resources, the utilization rate of resources is low and there is a lack of later maintenance. As a result, college English teaching has been limited to the traditional multimedia classroom for a long time. The teaching PPT courseware is stereotyped, lack of new ideas and no pertinence. Some teachers follow the book or fill the hall with books, which does not reflect the role of students as the main body of learning.

II. PRINCIPLES OF ECOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

To build a good ecological classroom, it is necessary to adhere to the student-oriented, optimize the teaching environment, realize the symbiotic and diversified development of individuals through the virtuous cycle of classroom teaching, and finally make the classroom tend to be a process of harmonious, sustainable and healthy development. In order to better reconstruct the current educational ecology, the paper puts forward the following three principles on the premise of following the basic principles of educational ecology (i.e., the principle of optimum, educational rhythm and overall effect of the ecosystem).

a) *Principle of integrity*

Due to the structural complexity of the college English classroom ecosystem, the uncertainty in the innovation of English teaching mode, and the risks and crises in the operation of the system, it is difficult to effectively control many elements in the classroom ecosystem (Guan Jingjing, 2016). For example, the policy revision or adjustment of the competent department of education, and the change of staff positions in the college English classroom ecosystem, will all have an impact on the normal operation of the system. Therefore, the principle of integrity should be firmly established, and the reasons for the imbalance of the college English classroom ecosystem should be analyzed through system theory, and isolated and single analysis should be avoided. In this way, the core elements that affect the ecosystem of college English classrooms are discovered.

b) *Principle of humanization*

The principle of humanization refers to adhering to the student-centered principle, respecting the

dominant position of students, guiding students to establish the awareness of autonomous learning and stimulating their enthusiasm for learning English in all links of the reconstruction of the classroom ecosystem. Advocate diversified teaching, fully understand students' differences and learning habits, allow students to carry out personalized development in English learning, and promote the all-round development of students' mental and cultural quality, so as to form a healthy personality. At the same time, teachers' self-development cannot be ignored and a good situation of joint promotion between teachers and students can be formed (Qu Weiwei, 2015).

c) *Principle of effectiveness*

An important starting point of reconstructing the college English classroom ecosystem is to effectively improve the effect of college English teaching and coordinate the relationship between modern information technology and classroom teaching, so as to maintain the balance of the classroom ecosystem and achieve efficient teaching. Therefore, colleges and universities should adhere to the principle of effectiveness, integrate network information resources, and coordinate the elements of the college English classroom ecological environment in order to effectively improve the productivity of classroom teaching when reconstructing the college English classroom ecosystem.

III. THE ECOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION PATHS OF COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Based on the above-mentioned status quo of classroom ecological imbalance in colleges and universities, classroom ecological reconstruction is imperative. This paper holds that the above construction principles should be strictly observed, by giving full play to the leading role of information technology as the leading factor, controlling the limiting factors in the classroom ecology, avoiding the flowerpot effect in the construction of the classroom environment, and restoring the ecological function of the information-based classroom, we can optimize the structure and function of the classroom ecology and promote the restoration of the classroom ecology.

a) *Giving full play to the leading role of information technology as the dominant factor*

In the process of college English informatizaon teaching reform, an accurate understanding of the niche of information technology in classroom teaching will help give full play to the leading role of information technology and drive other factors in classroom ecology to adjust their structure and function, so as to restore the imbalance caused by the wide application of information technology in the early stage of reform. Once the dominant position of information technology is established, other ecological factors in classroom

ecology will inevitably move with it. Teachers and students, as the main body of classroom ecology, will actively change teaching ideas, consciously improve information literacy, actively change teaching methods and actively adjust classroom interaction in order to pursue teaching effectiveness and self-development. The classroom environment and atmosphere as the object of classroom ecology will also change accordingly, classroom rules and regulations will be adjusted accordingly, and the original unbalanced classroom ecology will be gradually repaired.

- i. Formulate policies to promote the informatization process of college English teaching. In order to comply with the development trend of educational informatization and meet the internal and external needs of English teaching reform in colleges and universities, the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education issued a series of relevant policies, formulated a series of relevant documents and adopted a series of relevant measures in 2010 to vigorously promote the English teaching reform in colleges and universities based on informatization, broke the "dead" balance of foreign language teaching that has lost its productive vitality, and brought great changes to all aspects of foreign language teaching; At the same time, it also caused great disturbance and imbalance to the classroom ecosystem. In this case, if we continue to vigorously promote the reform of information technology and take corresponding measures, it is expected to make the elements of the classroom form a joint force due to synergy, help the classroom ecology realize mutation in the area far from the balance, gradually form a dissipative structure and realize the new dynamic balance of the teaching system.
- ii. Strengthen teaching reform and realize the normalization and deepening of information-based teaching. At present, foreign language teaching informatization has entered a plateau period of relatively slow development and application and concentrated reflection. In the new reform period, in order to realize the sustainable development of foreign language teaching informatization, we must try our best to promote the normalization and deepening of information-based foreign language teaching. Normalization refers to the space-time universality of the application of information technology in teaching, and deepening refers to the organic integration of information technology and foreign language teaching. The integration process gradually infiltrates and internalizes it into foreign language education technology, which fully leads the process of classroom ecological structure and function adjustment, promotes the reconstruction of classroom ecology, and improves the effect, efficiency and benefit of foreign language teaching.

b) *Controlling the limiting factors in classroom ecology*

According to the law of ecological tolerance, any ecological factor is insufficient or excessive in quantity or quality, that is, when it approaches or reaches the tolerance limit of a certain organism, it will affect or even prevent the survival, growth, reproduction, diffusion and distribution of the species, thus becoming a limiting factor in the ecosystem (Shen Xiansheng, 2012). In classroom ecology, the interaction between various ecological factors is not only affected by other factors in the system, but also affects other factors in turn, and ultimately affects the growth of classroom ecological subjects. When this influence approaches or reaches the tolerance limit of the classroom ecological subject, it will evolve into a limiting factor and destroy the balance and harmony of the classroom ecology. In order to reconstruct the ecological balance of foreign language classroom, we must control the restrictive factors in the classroom ecology.

- i. To control the limiting factors in classroom ecology, we should first enhance the awareness of identification, and clarify the real limiting factors by carefully observing the evolution and change of each ecological factor. For example, the time of network self-regulated learning, the network resources, the classroom activities and the use of multimedia courseware should all be appropriate, the information literacy of teachers and students should not be too low, the number of classes should not be too large. Generally speaking, the extreme degree and quantity will evolve this ecological factor into a limiting factor, resulting in some imbalance or imbalance in the system.
- ii. To control the limiting factors in classroom ecology, the key is to control the possibility space of classroom ecological factors. Any ecological factor in the classroom ecosystem has a variety of development possibilities, and the collection of various possibilities in this development and change becomes the possibility space. Control believes that all control processes are actually composed of three basic links: what is the possibility space faced by things? Select some states in the possibility space to locate the regulation target; Control some conditions to make things run or transform to the established national standard. Taking online self-regulated learning as an example, some students will fabricate online self-regulated learning. This false learning method will have a great negative impact on students' growth and may become a limiting factor in the classroom ecology. In order to control this phenomenon, we should first analyze the possible space for students' online self-learning fraud. Is it possible to fake their online time, or is it possible for the online subject to fake, or is it possible to fake the answers to online questions?

Then, in view of these possibilities, control some conditions, such as improving the design of teaching platform, enhancing the identity authentication of online learners, setting the preconditions for online recording learning time, and improving the time and method of providing answers.

- iii. To control the limiting factors in classroom ecology, we also need to adjust according to the feedback information. The controller believes that both control and adjustment are compensated by correction activities in the opposite direction. Just like driving a car, if it is found that the driving direction is left, it must be corrected to the right, and vice versa. In classroom ecology, the limiting factor that needs to be regulated is the controlled subject, and the ecological subject that implements the regulation behavior is the trial empty subject. On the basis of analyzing the possible space of the controlled subject, the controlling subject controls the controlled subject by limiting certain conditions and obtains feedback information from the controlled subject. If it is positive feedback, it needs further regulation; If it is negative feedback, the regulation plays a role in making the system operation close to the target.

In the process of information-based foreign language classroom teaching, teachers and students should form the good habit of continuous observation and analysis, predict or find limiting factors, and then regulate through analysis and condition control. At the same time, obtain the feedback information after regulation, and judge whether the regulation behavior is effective.

c) *Restoring the ecological function of information-based classroom*

Any system is the unity of structure and function. A stable structure is conducive to the exertion of system function, and the normal exertion of system function is also conducive to the stability of system structure. Different from the structure, the function of the system is determined by the structure and environment. When the internal or external environment of the system changes, the system structure will be disturbed, and the system function will be weakened or even changed. Information technology has entered the foreign language classroom and developed into the leading environmental factor, which has caused great disturbance to the system structure (Qu Weiwei, 2015). The function of optimizing the structure, tuning the relationship, promoting evolution and ecological education of the classroom ecosystem have been weakened. In order to reconstruct the college English classroom ecology in the information context, it is necessary to adjust the system structure, optimize the

system environment and gradually restore the weakened system functions.

- i. Using the self-organization ability of the unbalanced system, we can gradually realize the rebalancing of the foreign language classroom ecology and restore the ecological function of the information-based foreign language classroom. System science believes that the system has the ability to spontaneously increase the organization and structural order of the system through its own strength without the intervention or control of the external environment and other external systems. However, to complete the self-organization process, it needs to meet a prerequisite: the system must be an open system far from balance. In order to keep the system away from equilibrium, energy or low entropy material must be continuously input into the system from the external environment, so that the system and its elements are in a dynamic process, and gradually move towards equilibrium after a series of cyclic changes. Under the impact of modern information technology, college English classroom has become a system far from balance. If the investment in software and hardware of foreign language teaching informatization can be sustained, the dominant environmental factor of information technology will eventually pull other components of the system to move towards the bifurcation point in the phase space, form the joint force of the system and enter a relatively balanced state. The process of self-organization and self-regulation is an important mechanism of system evolution. However, this self-organization process is not a gradual and stable process, but an internal brewing, sudden and leap process. The time cost is high, and it generally takes a long time. To solve the imbalance in teaching ecology, it also needs to be supplemented by active control and regulation.
- ii. The establishment of classroom ecological restoration mechanism is an important means to realize the ecological rebalancing of foreign language classroom and restore the ecological function of foreign language classroom. The goal of classroom ecological restoration mechanism is to maintain or reconstruct the system structure and function of the ideal state, take the classroom ecological subject as the regulator, and actively regulate these influencing factors according to the characteristics and mode of action of some or some influencing factors in the system. The regulation process generally follows the paradigm of "cognition regulation acquisition feedback re regulation". First understand the characteristics and action mode of influencing factors, and then take relevant measures for influencing factors, observe

and obtain the feedback information of the system for regulation, and take further regulation measures. Controlling measures generally include preventive measures and remedial measures. Preventive measures are avoidance measures taken by prediction before system imbalance, and remedial measures are corrective measures taken after system imbalance. Whether the regulation reaches the expected goal depends on the ability of the regulation subject, including the ability to recognize and analyze the influencing factors, the ability to formulate appropriate regulation schemes, the ability to choose the appropriate regulation timing, the ability to observe and obtain feedback information, etc. the improvement of these regulation abilities needs continuous learning.

- iii. Realizing the organic integration of modern information technology and foreign language classroom teaching is the fundamental measure to restore the ecological function of information classroom. In the process of integrating information technology and foreign language teaching, we should aim at building an ecological classroom jointly built by teachers and students, pursue the balance between system input and output, the harmony between ecological factors, the consistency between teaching objectives and teaching results, and the common growth of teachers and students, create an ecological classroom environment, cultivate a good teacher-student relationship of equal dialogue, adopt a mixed teaching model, and reasonably adjust the role orientation of teachers and students, Establish multi-dimensional classroom teaching interaction and build a multi-dimensional teaching evaluation system. When modern information technology and foreign language classroom ecology reach a high degree of fit and integration, classroom ecology has a new and different organization. This optimized structure can give better play to the function of optimizing structure, tuning relationship, promoting evolution and ecological education in the process of interacting with the environment. The organic integration of information technology and classroom teaching is conducive to solving the internal imbalance of the system, including the imbalance between teaching ideas, teaching roles and English teaching practice, the imbalance between students' learning habits, information literacy and English learning objectives, the imbalance between the use methods of multimedia and three-dimensional courses and English teaching effect, and the imbalance between the new English teaching model and the traditional English teaching system, The imbalance between traditional evaluation methods and English teaching objectives.

d) *Avoiding the flowerpot effect in the construction of classroom environment*

In the classroom ecosystem, environment is an important factor that interacts with teachers and students. The classroom environmental factors in the perspective of educational ecology include not only the physical environment and humanistic environment in the classroom, but also the teachers and students who have an impact on other ecological subjects and their ancillary characteristics, such as their teaching ideas, emotional attitudes and so on. When constructing the classroom ecological environment, we should pursue the goal of being conducive to the coexistence of teachers and students, and try our best to avoid the negative effects of the classroom environment on talent training and teacher development. However, in the process of foreign language teaching informatization, information technology not only brings great convenience to foreign language teaching, but also makes the classroom ecology appear the flowerpot effect, which is not conducive to the sustainable development of teachers and students. For example, some teachers are dependent because of the convenience of electronic courseware, so they won't have classes without courseware; Some students are dependent because of the convenience of the Internet. They can't write without the Internet, and so on.

- i. In order to avoid the flowerpot effect brought by the information environment, we must correctly understand the role of information technology and make rational use of information technology in the process of teaching and learning. We should not only make full use of the convenience brought by modern information technology such as computer network, but also pay attention to our own sustainable development and try to avoid information technology obsessive-compulsive disorder or information technology dependence. When constructing the classroom teaching environment, it is not that the more expensive the equipment is, the better the environment is, and the better the conditions are, but that the goal is to serve the sustainable development of teachers and students, and build an ideal ecological classroom environment in an appropriate and timely manner.
- ii. The flowerpot effect nurtured by the traditional classroom teaching environment still exists. In the traditional classroom, teachers explain step by step according to the formulated teaching plan, and students sit quietly in the classroom and listen carefully. This way of teaching and learning has already reached a balance after long-term running in. In the classroom environment where teachers do everything, students have formed the habit of passive learning and lost the ability of autonomous learning and metacognitive strategies to a great

extent. This flowerpot effect still plays a role in the face of the information-based reform of foreign language teaching, which hinders the process of students' adaptation to the information-based teaching environment. In order to weaken the flowerpot effect produced by the traditional classroom and reconcile the interactive relationship between the learning subject and the learning environment, it is necessary to vigorously cultivate students' autonomous learning ability, help them form good habits of autonomous learning, develop metacognitive strategies of self planning, self-monitoring, self-management, self-assessment and self-adjusting learning behavior, cultivate students' adaptability to different environments, and expand students' adaptation threshold to environmental factors.

IV. CONCLUSION

In view of the great advantages of the current application of information technology in foreign language teaching and the irreversibility of the use of information technology, and the ecological imbalance caused by the application of modern information technology in English classroom teaching, colleges and universities should grasp the reconstruction principle of college English classroom ecosystem, adjust measures to local conditions, formulate a talent training system and curriculum construction system in line with the restoration and development of college classroom ecosystem, and improve the information technology literacy of teachers and students, reform the teaching methods, teaching evaluation system and other links, so as to realize the real integration of information technology and English classroom teaching, build an interactive and open English classroom ecosystem, and ultimately create a harmonious, efficient and sustainable ecological classroom between teachers and students.

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Cinco Rimas Fantasmales de Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer

By Robert Rois

Abstract- Observing how a specific theme emerges within the work of a poet leads to greater appreciation of stylistic technique and to a better understanding of human experience. In this paper we study the poetry of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer to perceive how a lover's passion transforms itself into an autonomous entity that travels through space. Relevant connections between poems must be carefully traced. We start by examining the nostalgia evoked by remembrance of past love in Rhyme LIII. We then see in Rhyme LXXV the lament over absence of the beloved develop into an intimation of whether in sleep we may penetrate a dimension where other spirits dwell. The wonderment grows in the related Rhyme LXXI as it expresses the amazing premonition of a friend's death. In order to comprehend this memorable lyric we next explore the transformation of romantic desire into the wandering phantom lover of the beguilingly repetitive and intricate Rhymes XVI and XXVIII. The sensitive reader may experience in the traced thematic development a conceptual expression of intense love through poetry. A similar method of textual exploration can be used to detect and analyze essential themes in the work of other poets.

Keywords: *bécquer, phantom lover, premonition of death, rhymes, spatial transport, wandering spirit.*

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Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



Cinco Rimas Fantasmales de Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer

Five Spectral Rhymes by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer

Robert Rois

Abstracto- Al contemplar un tema específico surgir en la obra de un poeta podemos apreciar mejor la técnica estilística y compartir su experiencia humana. En este ensayo observamos detalladamente la poesía de Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer para percibir el cambio de una pasión amorosa a un autónomo espíritu que vaga en el espacio. Las pertinentes nociones expresadas en diferentes poemas deben ser conectadas cuidadosamente. Comenzamos nuestro estudio al examinar la nostalgia evocada por un amor de antaño en la Rima LIII. Pasamos a ver en la Rima LXXV como lamento hacia la ausencia del ser querido se torna extrañeza al concebir que durante el sueño quedamos expuestos a una región donde vagan espíritus de otros seres. El asombro aumenta en la vinculada Rima LXXI para expresar entrañable presentimiento ante la muerte de un amigo. Para comprender este excepcional poema exploramos la transformación del deseo amoroso a fantasma enamorado en la embriagante repetición sintáctica de las Rimas XVI y XXVIII. El atento lector puede absorber el trazado desarrollo temático al sentir la experiencia conceptual de un intenso amor por medio de la poesía. Es posible emplear similar método de exploración textual para descubrir y analizar temas esenciales en la obra de otros poetas.

Palabras claves: *bécquer, espíritu errante, fantasma enamorado, presentimiento fúnebre, rimas, transporte espacial.*

Abstract- Observing how a specific theme emerges within the work of a poet leads to greater appreciation of stylistic technique and to a better understanding of human experience. In this paper we study the poetry of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer to perceive how a lover's passion transforms itself into an autonomous entity that travels through space. Relevant connections between poems must be carefully traced. We start by examining the nostalgia evoked by remembrance of past love in Rhyme LIII. We then see in Rhyme LXXV the lament over absence of the beloved develop into an intimation of whether in sleep we may penetrate a dimension where other spirits dwell. The wonderment grows in the related Rhyme LXXI as it expresses the amazing premonition of a friend's death. In order to comprehend this memorable lyric we next explore the transformation of romantic desire into the wandering phantom lover of the beguilingly repetitive and intricate Rhymes XVI and XXVIII. The sensitive reader may experience in the traced thematic development a conceptual expression of intense love through poetry. A similar method of textual exploration can be used to detect and analyze essential themes in the work of other poets.

Keywords: *bécquer, phantom lover, premonition of death, rhymes, spatial transport, wandering spirit.*

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INTRODUCTION

En la obra de un poeta que causa fuerte impresión no nos sorprende hallar elementos de su personalidad individual. Ramón Rodríguez Correa, crítico contemporáneo y amigo de Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (1836-1870) nos habla de una característica esencial de su poesía: el "realismo ideal." El poeta intenta dominar la idea a la forma; es hombre de sentimiento que *sabe permanecer siempre dentro del arte*.¹ Esa contradictoria cualidad de las *Rimas* explica la inherente ambigüedad emocional del poeta entre los sentimientos y experiencias de su vida real y sus ideales o sueños, entre la esperanza de alcanzar lo que anhela y la nostalgia que siente por lo perdido. Estudiar el tema del enamorado fantasmal y sus variaciones permite observar el proceso que sigue el poeta para expresar la inefable experiencia de comunicarse a un nivel casi místico con la extra-realidad del mundo, o la sub-realidad de otros seres.

Rubén Benítez explica la poética de Bécquer: "El hombre sin amor no puede iluminar su caos interior, su duda. Se siente perdido."² Más que escape, el amor es refugio. Continúa el mismo crítico a indicar que el mundo exterior sacude el alma del poeta por medio de la inspiración, término de índole romántica. La inspiración crea un proceso que produce vasto sentimiento. Según Benítez, como los escritores platónicos, Bécquer "busca el amor ideal, representado por la mujer incorpórea e intangible, y encuentra *vano fantasma de niebla y luz*" [XI, 12].³ El amor terreno es un ademán fugaz, no volverá, como las golondrinas de la rima LIII. Iniciemos un análisis conceptual semántico de esta célebre Rima.

Volverán las oscuras golondrinas
en tu balcón sus nidos a colgar,
y otra vez con el ala a sus cristales
jugando llamarán.

Pero aquellas que el vuelo refrenaban
tu hermosura y mi dicha a contemplar,
aquellas que aprendieron nuestros nombres...
ésas...ino volverán!

5

¹ Rodríguez Correa 9.

² Benítez 29.

³ Benítez 31.

Volverán las tupidas madre selvas
de tu jardín las tapias a escalar 10
y otra vez a la tarde aún más hermosas
sus flores se abrirán.

Pero aquellas cuajadas de rocío
cuyas gotas mirábamos temblar
y caer como lágrimas del día... 15
ésas...ino volverán!

Volverán del amor en tus oídos
las palabras ardientes a sonar,
tu corazón de su profundo sueño 20
tal vez despertará.

Pero mudo y absorto y de rodillas
como se adora a Dios ante su altar,
como yo te he querido...desengáñate,
así...ino te querrán!⁴

El ritmo casi hipnotizador del poema crea una impresión fantasmal en esa figura del amante que murmura al oído de una antigua amada tan dolorida queja sobre el desleal amor humano. Notemos que la primera estrofa traza un despertar al amanecer de tiempos pasados. Las golondrinas son *oscuras* y crean un cierto presagio de luto. Hacia el final de la estrofa las avecillas quedan convertidas en una personificación que atestigua el amor de antaño, ya que aquellas mismas golondrinas *no volverán* a presenciar lo mismo. La experiencia no se repetirá en forma idéntica. Continúa el poeta guiando el sentimiento del lector al repetir el ciclo de *volverán* después de calificarlas con el demostrativo y la negación, “*ésas no volverán.*” La negación absoluta al fin de la primera estrofa y la afirmación al comienzo de la segunda destacan un contraste entre el tiempo histórico en general y el individual, el tiempo personal perdido.

La tercera estrofa detalla la naturaleza visualizándola. La estructura paralela consiste en: *Volverán* – (en general) – *otra vez* – *pero* – *ésas* – (en particular) – *no*. La repetición convierte a las golondrinas en un símbolo propicio para expresar el deseo de conservar recuerdo del momento perdido. Este adquiere así el carácter de lo sobrenatural y misterioso. Benítez menciona que el tono de canción popular combinado a la poesía culta hechiza hasta tal punto que “la anécdota personal debe ser aceptada por los demás como experiencia colectiva.”⁵ En la Rima LIII las golondrinas proveen al amor un marco de fondo repentino y fugaz. Al enfocar nuestra atención en el rocío ante la metáfora *lágrimas del día* no sabemos si la eterna regeneración de la naturaleza se personifica o si la percepción de una inherente nostalgia humana se

amplia. Es evidente en todo caso que el poeta crea dos ilusiones mediante el uso de esta metáfora: a) en sus rasgos humanos y personales la naturaleza muestra ampliar la importancia de lo común, ya que el pasar del tiempo no produce rocío sino lágrimas; b) al solemnizar el contraste entre la emoción y la naturaleza se extiende lo humano, el llanto. Combinadas, ambas sensaciones sugieren al lector que la memoria puede vencer el tiempo; lo particular se une así a lo universal.

En la estrofa final la tenacidad del amor es sometida al perecer del tiempo. El “yo” poético rescata su intromisión de ser incorpóreo en el nuevo amor de la antigua amada mediante su impertinente queja. Al querer reemplazar a las golondrinas que antes despertaban a ambos amantes, los recuerdos del hombre que anhela soñando se desvanecen como si fueran las mismas golondrinas que se esparcen en vuelo por los cielos. Además, en contexto, el grito del ser incorpóreo es una queja desesperada que forma parte de su esencia. En esta última estrofa Bécquer trata de cerrar la correlación iniciada al principio entre la vista y el oído, *contemplar* y aprender. El verbo “aprender” aplicado a las golondrinas causa asombro al comienzo; este *aprendieron nuestros nombres* pudiera referirse al percibir cuchicheo de nombres usados entre amantes para expresar cariño. Presenciamos entonces que, a lo último, se mencionan los oídos, receptores del otro ser. La sugerencia forjada sería en paráfrasis algo así: “Volverán a tus oídos palabras de amor, pero un mudo ‘yo’ adorador no volverá.” El asombro inicial que encauza connotaciones de nostalgia romántica en torno al pretérito del verbo “aprender” desaparece. Es como si el poeta, al querer convencer a la amada ausente de su desengaño al no poder nunca volver a encontrar el amor que él le brindó, expresado con igual cariño, se desengaña él mismo de que actual recuerdo del momento específico es prácticamente inútil para ambos: a) para ella porque tiene otros amantes, b) para él porque la soledad le agobia; en ambas perspectivas del presente predomina lo pasado. El poema no es un reproche a la amada, sino un contraste entre la fragilidad del efímero amor pasado sometido al continuo perecer del tiempo. Por consiguiente el fracaso que sentimos al final del poema es un fracaso moral, psicológico y físico. El individuo rabia de impotencia porque la ilusión se le escapa al despertar de su ensueño. Estos últimos versos resultan ser también un fracaso rítmico, pues extrañamos el estribillo. Lo más real de esta rima es ese sentimiento de extremada nostalgia. El poema atina a producir una fuerte impresión ya que la propuesta de la meditación condensada en el estribillo queda demostrada; es decir, no serán aquellas mismas golondrinas las que presenciarían *nuestro amor*, serían otras; el amor tampoco será el mismo, será otro. Habrá otros amantes representando otro amor ante otras golondrinas. El amor adquiere en este primitivo proceso

⁴ Toda cita a las *Rimas* de Bécquer proviene de esta edición. Benítez 105-106.

⁵ Benítez 24.

explorador una dimensión real, pues en el plano material y práctico del momento todo lo que cuenta es amar. Las golondrinas simbolizan el recuerdo de sucesos en un nocturno espacio temporal que existió pero ha dejado de existir.

Si efectuamos una cuidadosa lectura de las *Rimas* de Bécquer, notamos que la nostalgia parece adquirir una existencia autónoma. Presenciamos este desarrollo temático en la obra becqueriana. Las preguntas que se hace el parlante de la Rima LXXV son retóricas en su forma semántica, pero conmovedoras al nivel poético. El amor, o relación interpersonal, sobrevive la muerte porque es una entidad de índole espiritual, y, como no es material, podría ser eterna. Si osamos aceptar que el espíritu, o la conciencia humana, logra existir fuera del cuerpo, pasamos entonces a un tema estrictamente trascendental: el espíritu sobrevive la separación del cuerpo. El tema debe ser aceptado de fe, puesto que no se explica concretamente en poesía. El cuerpo humano podría ser una especie de *cárcel* para un espíritu incorpóreo con ardiente sed de libertad. Contentémonos con reaccionar sensiblemente a la visión artística que el poeta expresa:

¿Será verdad que cuando toca el sueño
con sus dedos de rosa nuestros ojos,
de la cárcel que habita huye el espíritu
en vuelo presuroso?

¿Será verdad que, huésped de las nieblas, 5
de la brisa nocturna al tenue soplo,
alado sube a la región vacía
a encontrarse con otros?

¿Y allí desnudo de la humana forma,
allí los lazos terrenales rotos,
breves horas habita de la idea
el mundo silencioso?

¿Y ríe y llora y aborrece y ama
y guarda un rastro del dolor y el gozo,
semejante al que deja cuando cruza
el cielo un meteoro?

Yo no sé si ese mundo de visiones
vive fuera o dentro de nosotros:
lo que sé es que conozco a muchas gentes
a quienes no conozco. ⁶

La última estrofa no contesta las preguntas anteriores. El cierre de este poema queda abierto. No es posible saber de seguro si el espíritu se encuentra con otros, pero sí contemplamos otra posible dimensión. El sonido de la consonante gutural insonora en el verbo conocer, repetido dos veces, detiene el ritmo en forma abrupta; mas el significado de este vocablo abre posibilidades de introspección en la última estrofa. El “yo” lírico no expresa ansias de un encuentro

divino; la sed de amor le hace ver un limbo potencial de amistades perpetuas. El poeta desea compartir esta secreta dimensión con el lector. Desde la primera estrofa vemos que el sueño impulsa al espíritu del narrador a sentir cierto trance embriagador; y en la segunda estrofa podría éste encontrarse con otros seres en el vacío. El espíritu errante busca apego de alguien porque parece que necesita sujetarse en su perenne vuelo.

Al quedar fuera de la forma humana, *libre de lazos terrenales*, el espíritu alcanza el mundo de la idea. Este transporte aleado a otra dimensión es tan intensamente real que no topa cielo, ni siquiera toca sensualidad romántica, sino que implica ansias de sentir una mutua relación, o compartir una estrecha amistad personal con otros seres. En la transición de la cuarta a la quinta estrofa se ven rasgos del pensamiento científico moderno que llama meteoro a la estrella fugaz de nuestra infancia; mientras que a la vez se pone en tela de juicio si durante el sueño el mismo espíritu puede viajar por el tiempo y el espacio para estar con otros espíritus. El poder de la conciencia traspasa confines de la vida normal. Pero notamos que la frase *breves horas* se refiere al sueño, no a la muerte; el escape es temporal, no permanente. No presenciamos una mente que concibe ideas al nivel racional, sino que sentimos un mundo de pasiones extremas. Las pasiones fortifican al espíritu.

El verso bímembre, y *ríe y llora y aborrece y ama*, une polos extremos en la mente apasionada [13]. Los sentimientos aparentemente contradictorios unifican la pasión en las parejas de términos opuestos, siguen *dolor y el gozo* [14]. Mayor integración predomina en los versos donde la persona del poema duda si el perímetro corporal sirve de separación entre espíritus: *Yo no sé si ese mundo de visiones/ vive fuera o va dentro de nosotros* [17]. El amor de gran soñador parece abarcar otras dimensiones; pero no es posible distinguir si las visiones se contienen en la mente o si habitan su propio mundo. Al llegar a los dos versos finales es evidente que las parejas de términos contrarios, conocer/no conocer, conmueven intensamente. La duda entre afirmación y negación universaliza variadas sensaciones humanas conceptualmente. Quedamos convencidos de que existe una zona intermedia entre el día y la noche, la vida real y el sueño; se perciben en la experiencia del ser durmiente.

Quedan tan entrelazadas las estrofas de la Rima LXXV que no logramos separar la noción de *espíritu* en la primera estrofa de la sorprendente imagen *huésped de las nieblas* en la segunda; vemos, además, la forma corporal desecha en la tercera. Bécquer supera la dimensión donde subsiste tan sólo amor romántico entre amante y amada; el horizonte de una antítesis tras otra expande el ocaso del sueño. Nociones abstractas se combinan con explicaciones

⁶ Benítez 123-124.

científicas. Podemos comprender que un meteoro cruza el firmamento en lugar de aceptar la versión primitiva del fenómeno: una estrella fugaz cae del cielo. La metáfora ilustra el breve instante en que el alma habita el cuerpo; la vida humana parece tan solo un súbito relámpago en contraste con la magnitud infinita del eterno universo, lo que a veces llamamos en la tierra tiempo geológico. La trayectoria de un simple meteoro en su recorrido por nuestro cosmos no parece gran cosa en contraste al infinito universo; este es el Bécquer de la Rima LIII, en la cual frágiles golondrinas representan la fugacidad del tiempo perdido en la memoria humana. El recuerdo *del dolor y el gozo* deja sólo un *rastro* al cruzar por el inmenso vacío del espacio; podría considerarse el sentimiento humano verdadera angustia sólo si acaso tuviera mayor duración. En la inmensa *región vacía* donde vaga el espíritu apasionado encuentra consuelo el *huésped de las nieblas*. Transporte espacial lo libera de la mezquina esclavitud corporal.

En *Cartas literarias a una mujer* Bécquer trasplanta la sensualidad del amor a una *ars poetica* hablando de “un abandono tan artístico,” y también de “una respiración perfumada y suave.”⁷ Promete llaneza romántica al insistir que la poesía es un medio para expresar el sentimiento efusivo de un amante. El poeta no profesa evadir *herejías históricas, filosóficas y literarias* si se topa con ellas al *sentir y pensar*, no al *estudiar y leer*.⁸ Al emplear esta correlación Bécquer explica el origen de la inspiración poética: conviene aceptar la vida humana y dejarse llevar por la experiencia. El intelecto en esta nueva cosmología artística se torna instinto porque el deseo de alcanzar al ausente ser amado forma parte del ímpetu que lo impulsa a crear la obra de arte. Describe la poesía así: “Murmillos extraños de la noche, que imitáis los pasos del amante que se espera. ¡Gemidos del viento que fingís una voz querida que nos llama entre las sombras!”⁹ Continúa tales epítetos mencionando inclusive *presentimientos incomprensibles y espacios sin límites*. Benítez trata el tema al considerar la contemplación de ruinas, *Solar de la casa del Cid*: “Bécquer cree en la simpatía mágica: su sensación frente a la ruina y aun las más extrañas fantasías coinciden con la verdad ideal que la ruina encierra.”¹⁰ Entre las ruinas del antiguo convento de San Juan de los Reyes en Toledo nuestro poeta contempla estatuas litúrgicas y nos habla de *fantasmas inanimados de otros seres que han existido*. Estos y él mantienen el *ardiente corazón inerte bajo el sayal, como un cadáver en su sepulcro*.¹¹

⁷ Benítez 230.

⁸ Benítez 232.

⁹ Benítez 240-241.

¹⁰ Benítez. *Bécquer tradicionalista* 55.

¹¹ Benítez 245.

Habiendo penetrado el simbolismo poético de Bécquer, es posible tener acceso a la percepción del espíritu errante. La Rima LXXI revela una experiencia profundamente humana; el sensible narrador explica un acontecimiento importante en su vida: el presentimiento que siente ante la muerte de un distante ser querido.

No dormía; vagaba en ese limbo
en que cambian de forma los objetos,
misteriosos espacios que separan
la vigilia del sueño.

Las ideas que en ronda silenciosa
daban vueltas en torno a mi cerebro,
poco a poco en su danza se movían
con un compás más lento. 5

De la luz que entra al alma por los ojos
los párpados velaban el reflejo;
mas otra luz el mundo de visiones
alumbraba por dentro. 10

En este punto resonó en mi oído
un rumor semejante al que en el templo
vaga confuso al terminar los fieles
con un Amén sus rezos. 15

Y oí como una voz delgada y triste
que por mi nombre me llamó a lo lejos,
y sentí olor de cirios apagados,
de humedad y de incienso. 20
.....
.....

Entró la noche y del olvido en brazos
caí cual piedra en su profundo seno:
dormí, y al despertar exclamé: “¡Alguno
que yo quería ha muerto!”¹²

Estaba acostumbrado el hombre del ayer a dejarse llevar por un sobresalto emocional sin sentirse cohibido por la vergüenza del individuo pragmático de hoy que vive sin ilusiones, y teme a la superstición. Exploremos el interior de la conciencia humana anterior a la revolución industrial. Según Bécquer la región entre el insomnio y el sueño encierra el olvido; y sofocar persistentes visiones causa una fuerte ansiedad que invade el alma. Efectuar un mayor intento de olvidar dichas visiones aumenta la ansiedad producida por ellas, no la elimina. Al dormir, el sueño atrae a la mente subconsciente errantes ideas que perduran. *Los brazos del olvido* es una gastada frase casi cliché hoy en día, y es posible que lo fuera ya en la época en que Bécquer escribía, pero aquí es una sutil frase que da vida al espíritu errante; el olvido atrapa el alma del sonámbulo. Bécquer admiró la ópera de Bellini la *Sonámbula*. Dice en uno de sus artículos que esta ópera fue extraordinaria: “...cantos como los de la *Sonámbula*

¹² Benítez 117-118.

sólo se escriben tocando al límite que separa la tierra de la región de eternas armonías.”¹³ La muerte de un ser querido deja un vacío instantáneo en la mente de un amigo dormido cuando se desplaza afuera el alma del difunto al perder contacto existencial con el cuerpo. Sentir el despegue corporal de un alma causa el presentimiento fúnebre.

La persona del poema expresa cierta inexplicable culpabilidad. El hablante parece sonámbulo; y desea hacer al lector cómplice de su sonambulismo. En esta rima queda amaestrada por desnudo ingenio creador una experiencia existencial en la vida del autor. Aquí Bécquer comparte con el atento lector un tema central en su obra. Observemos cuidadosamente el desarrollo de este extraordinario poema. La primera estrofa nos deja con los ojos entreabiertos. En la segunda estrofa las ideas bailan una danza macabra. Pero no es hasta la tercera estrofa donde se percibe el proceso auto hipnótico llevado a cabo por completo; las ideas que *daban vueltas en torno a mi cerebro* permanecen en una zona donde no existe nada. Los párpados vedan el reflejo de la luz externa; ahora bien, los ojos se han cerrado pero las pupilas persisten en ver algo. Bécquer nos presenta una imagen del interior del párpado cerrado que es una pantalla donde la pupila proyecta las ilusiones del cerebro. Parece fantástica la ilusión del hombre dormido que cree lo que ve porque son imágenes de su propia mente.

En la cuarta estrofa el oído capta *algo como una voz*. Gradualmente el vago sonido se acerca aún más en la quinta estrofa, pero no cobra forma enteramente clara. Notamos que es el impulso visual lo que descubre, o alumbra, la región de formas incorpóreas; después es el oído el sentido que precisa el origen de la visión. La voz es *delgada y triste*, semejante a la voz de un enfermo inválido. Dicha voz misteriosa llama al dormido por su nombre y el soñador detecta olores de un ambiente eclesial. En la última estrofa percibimos la confrontación directa a un sentimiento fúnebre. El despertar al final del poema convierte al espíritu errante del ser dormido en la voz personal del narrador que cuenta lo que sintió. Esta actitud dramática de querer compartir con el lector la sensación de una remota impresión fúnebre nos convence que el presentimiento es auténtico; el despertar revela en el poema una experiencia de la vida real: el vacío que deja la muerte de un amigo en la mente de uno.

No podemos resolver la ambigüedad de la referencia al antecedente sintáctico de la palabra *alguno* en la Rima LXXI de Bécquer sin ver a un ser que se escurre a otra dimensión. No es “alguien” sino *alguno*. Siendo este vocablo pronombre partitivo,

entendamos pues, *alguno* de sus conocidos. Que haya escrito Bécquer en la primera versión del poema “alguien” no hace al vocablo correcto, pues al cambiarlo a *alguno* en versiones posteriores a la primera el poeta comprende la potencialidad que el cambio expresa. La selección final de *alguno* absorbe simbolismo adecuado aunque haya que ajustar la medida del verso por sinalefa, como indica Rull Fernández.¹⁴ Sin esfuerzo, la forma incorpórea de una mujer espectro puede absorberse en la ambigüedad genérica del pronombre indefinido. El pronombre “*alguno*” es imprescindible para sugerir la sensación de veracidad. Combinados, los sentimientos de nostalgia y esperanza dan forma a un sentimiento anterior a la noticia y contemporáneo con el suceso de la muerte. El narrador alcanza a forjar un auténtico presentimiento fúnebre. En el momento preciso en que rinde su forma corpórea el ser para convertirse en algo diferente, no necesariamente de ultratumba, un amigo siente el vacío. Puntos suspensivos despegan a la última estrofa del contexto. Así impulsada, la ambigüedad semántica dota de expresión simbólica a la sorprendente imagen conceptual. No es aceptable la voz “*alguna*” porque no tendría referencia sintáctica directa al espíritu como tal. La voz “*alguien*,” demasiado indefinida, eliminaría la intención del escritor, y su deseo de explorar conceptualmente su propio mundo espiritual: distinguir entre quien conocía de quien no conocía. Esta ambivalencia en el antecedente preciso de *alguno* se relaciona al cierre abierto de la Rima LXXV. Las implicaciones que subsisten tras la imperfecta conclusión de ambos poemas proveen de realismo a la expresión lírica. Además, la referencia directa a seres incorpóreos asocia ambas Rimas entre sí, LXXI y LXXV. El lector se pasma al confrontar lo incógnito de un pronombre sin referencia exacta; se evoca en el poema una extraña sensación de rebeldía hacia la muerte como fin total de la vida humana sin otra aparente razón que querer nutrir una perenne sed de amistad. El atento lector comparte la experiencia del poeta: quizás la muerte no sea un fin absoluto; entre íntimos amigos la amistad perdura. Bécquer dota inmortal virtud poética a la expresión de un presentimiento fúnebre.

Carlos Bousoño comprende la importancia de la Rima LXXI. Para establecer la inefable trayectoria del alma vacía que alcanza calidad de espectro, refiere esta rima a la poesía de Antonio Machado directamente, citando versos donde se toma por espectro al

¹⁴ Consideramos sabia la decisión editorial de Benítez al usar *alguno* en su edición de las *Rimas*. Rull Fernández no se atiene al cambio en la revisión efectuada por el mismo Bécquer y mantiene el original vocablo “alguien” en su edición de las *Rimas*; el cual vocablo, según el crítico, “parece ser más indeterminado.” Rull Fernández 154. Comprobamos en nuestro análisis que la voz *alguno* abarca mayor potencialidad de significado, incluyendo al espectro femenino entre sus posibles antecedentes.

¹³ Pedraz 401.

caminante solitario: “A la vuelta de una calle en sombra,/ un fantasma irrisorio besa un nardo.”¹⁵ Bousoño define la preferencia hacia lo sobrenatural de los poetas románticos explicando que la transcripción literaria en ellos se basa en la fe de sentimientos tradicionales mientras que los fantasmas machadianos son símbolos “sin verdadera existencia.” Agrega además que dicha convención del fantasma enamorado representa “la frustración del humano aspirar a otro mundo más perfecto, redimido de dolor y de sombra.”¹⁶ Sin embargo Bousoño no considera la relación entre Bécquer y Machado coincidencia casual sino auténtico influjo. Al citar poemas de Machado precisa “que exhiben una directa, incuestionable relación con la Rima LXXI.”¹⁷

Ya que Bousoño habla de “notable analogía,” su explicación nos permite traer la tesis del fantasma enamorado al ámbito de convención literaria. El fantasma prescinde de la relación explícitamente sensual y emerge, no de la muerte, sino del sueño, tanto en Machado como en Bécquer. Ambos poetas resultan algo macabros en la presentación del tema y muestran derivación poética con similar marco sintáctico:

Y sentí olor de cirios apagados,
de humedad y de incienso.

Y en la cripta sentí sonar cadenas
y rebullir de fieras enjauladas.¹⁸

En los versos de Bécquer Bousoño nota que “la fantasía está justificada por una realidad psíquico-fisiológica.”¹⁹ Se nota mayor delicadeza simbólica en la cita de Bécquer; nos espantan las fieras machadianas. Pero Bousoño insiste en continuar su análisis textual. Tras citar la última estrofa de la Rima LXXI nuestro crítico indica que la experiencia becqueriana no consiste de irreal delirio. Con ademán racional y tono predominantemente empírico trata el crítico estructural moderno de explicar la palpitante fisonomía de la metáfora: “Bécquer no ha hecho otra cosa que describirnos un fenómeno, raro en la realidad psicológica, pero, al parecer, según algunos creen o pueden creer, existente: lo que hoy se denomina *telepatía*.”²⁰ Sugiere así Bousoño que Bécquer siente la despedida de un moribundo. No es posible menospreciar la validez del espectro bajo ninguna explicación científica. El crítico se compadece de Bécquer, quien en esta rima demuestra “intentada justificación racional del elemento maravilloso.” Machado, en cambio, “no teme la total incorporación de

lo delirante al dominio lírico.”²¹ Quizás la aparente intención semiótica de Bécquer se base en querer exponer una realidad psicológica no accesible al poeta moderno, aunque deje en él su huella. La destreza que alcanza Bécquer en dotar realidad a la metáfora del ser incorpóreo demuestra que el tema vive en él y él vive en el tema; es decir, Bécquer expresa en este poema una percepción esencial del alma humana.

Nos gustaría comprender las etapas de transición en las Rimas a través de la cual se deriva la experiencia que relata la Rima LXXI. Si deseamos acercarnos al espíritu errante, y poder descifrar el misterioso encanto del verdadero fantasma enamorado, conviene revisar las Rimas XVI y XXVIII, pues dejan ya ver el intento de comprender el tema. Juan Díez Taboada nos dice: “Mientras que las experiencias internas producidas por la proximidad del amado en las Rimas XVI y XXVIII tenían por marco la naturaleza, en ésta LXXI es lo religioso lo que da ambiente a la separación más tremenda y absoluta, la de la muerte.”²² No tenemos hacer más que leer las leyendas de Bécquer para ver el alcance de esta visión supra terrestre del más allá, evidente sobre todo en los breves relatos *El rayo de luna* y *La corza blanca*.²³ La visión sobrenatural era un tema favorito de Bécquer. Su obra capta la experiencia del espíritu errante finamente amestrada. Rodríguez Correa, amigo y editor del escritor, adumbra el *realismo ideal* en su prólogo a la primera y segunda edición de *Obras completas* explicando que las leyendas por fantásticas que luzcan, “entrañan siempre un fondo tal de verdad, una idea tan real, que en medio de su forma y contextura extraordinarias, aparece espontáneamente un hecho que ha sucedido o puede suceder sin dificultad alguna.”²⁴ Por eso Taboada cierra su fino análisis de la Rima LXXI diciendo: “Bécquer, por la interiorización, llega a lo abstracto, al vacío, pero no a la rotura de su mundo anímico, no al narcisismo y mucho menos al cinismo.”²⁵ La Rima LXXI es un poema serio y profundo.²⁶

²¹ Bousoño 171.

²² Díez Taboada 96.

²³ En ambas leyendas, del ensueño emanan alucinaciones que incitan deseos amorosos y éstos se desvanecen por completo entre ráfagas de aire, rayos de luz y sombras. La realidad combate la ilusión y viceversa. García Viñó menciona los dos planos, “uno que alude al mundo cotidiano y otro que evoca el mundo sobrenatural.” García Viñó 205. En *La corza blanca* este choque resulta en muerte prematura de una ilusa amada, demostrando que los sentidos son incapaces de detectar apropiadamente diferencia entre lo mundano y lo sobrenatural.

²⁴ Rodríguez Correa 10.

²⁵ Díez Taboada 98.

²⁶ Mariano F. Urresti usa la primera estrofa de la Rima LXXI de epígrafe para la Parte I de su novela *Los fantasmas de Bécquer*. Vemos la última estrofa de la Rima LXXV al comienzo de la Parte II de la misma novela. En esta obra de misterio se emprende intrigante búsqueda del primer manuscrito de las *Rimas*, perdido durante la revolución de 1868.

¹⁵ Bousoño 165.

¹⁶ Bousoño 166.

¹⁷ Bousoño 168.

¹⁸ Bousoño 169.

¹⁹ Bousoño 170.

²⁰ Bousoño 170.

Para explorar la transición temática que se origina en el anhelo de superar la nostalgia y que concluye en la sorprendente imagen del espíritu ambulante efectuemos un análisis conceptual semántico de las Rimas XVI y XXVIII. Ante nada señalemos la más sencilla diferencia: en la primera de estas Rimas el amante fantasmal es el hombre, y en la XXVIII es la mujer. El esfuerzo de colmar la dicha de su amor a pesar de la ausencia física del ser amado lleva al poeta a indagar un tema central en su obra.

| | |
|---|----|
| Si al mecer las azules campanillas de tu balcón crees que suspirando pasa el viento murmurador, sabe que, oculto entre las verdes hojas, suspiro yo. | 5 |
| Si al resonar confuso a tus espaldas vago rumor, crees que por tu nombre te ha llamado lejana voz, sabe que, entre las sombras que te cercan, te llamo yo. | 10 |
| Si se turba medroso en la alta noche tu corazón al sentir en tus labios un aliento abrasador, sabe, que aunque invisible, al lado tuyo respiro yo. ²⁷ | 15 |

La primera estrofa muestra un *viento murmurador* que se torna suspiro. La segunda estrofa precisa el ruido hasta convertirlo en voz que llama a la persona del poema por su nombre. En la tercera y última estrofa el aliento se vuelve beso que sobresalta a la dormida dama desde lejos. La estructura de cada estrofa se mantiene fija bajo el molde sintáctico de la frase hipotética que sigue un marco silogístico: "Si...sabe que...yo." Frases preposicionales *al mecer* y *al resonar* intensifican la potencia verbal. Tenemos aquí la tradicional correlación becqueriana entre lo visto y lo oído. En la tercera estrofa el infinitivo *al sentir* parece acoplar la ilusión fantasmagórica al sobresalto de la joven, reacción natural ante un hecho psíquico. La suposición que encabeza cada estrofa se cierra con la presencia del "yo" lírico. Este cuadro retórico intenta dar vida en la sintaxis del poema a la presencia incorpórea:

Si al mecer...crees que...sabe que...yo
Si al resonar...crees que...sabe que...yo
Si se turba...al sentir...sabe que...yo

La variación inesperada entre el uso del verbo "creer" y el vocablo *sentir* es convincente; así la experiencia del amante fantasmal no se mistifica. Es conveniente comprender las transiciones que se

desplazan en el marco sintáctico del poema. Bousoño analiza el paralelismo formal en esta Rima. El crítico distingue entre paralelismo formal y paralelismo conceptual explicando la diferencia entre especie y género. Da el ejemplo de "color verde" y "color" para distinguir lo primero de lo segundo.²⁸ "A una (oración) subordinada temporal sigue otra condicional; y a ésta, la oración principal, acompañada de una completiva. Es decir, se asemejan a nivel sintáctico estas dos frases: *al mecer las azules campanillas/ de tu balcón* (A₁) y *al resonar confuso a tus espaldas/ vago rumor* (A₂), por tratarse de subordinadas frases temporales. Estas otras dos: *si...crees que suspirando pasa el viento / murmurador* (B₁) y *si...crees que por tu nombre te ha llamado / lejana voz* (B₂), por expresar ambas una condición hipotética. Y estas otras: *sabe que, oculto entre las verdes hojas, / suspiro yo* (C₁) y *sabe que entre las sombras que te cercan / te llamo yo* (C₂), por ser oraciones subordinadas que sirven de complemento al mismo verbo: *sabe*: A₁/A₂ – B₁/B₂ – C₁/C₂." ²⁹ Continúa Bousoño su análisis estructural insistiendo que existe además lo que llama "descomposición" de las oraciones en elementos paralelos porque *viento* (D₁) y *voz* (D₂) encauzan impresiones hacia adjetivos correspondientes: *murmurador* (E₁) y *lejana* (E₂). Este análisis estructuralista de paralelismos formales tiende a sugerir que dichos adjetivos desembocan en una indicación de silenciosa cautela. Además observemos que los verbos mantienen una similar equivalencia correspondiente: el viento *pasa* (F₁) y la voz *te ha llamado* (F₂). El verbo *pasa* trasluce el presente, pero con denotación pertinente al pasado, y encontramos *te ha llamado*, bajo función temporal de pretérito perfecto; ambas voces verbales nos remontan a un suceso anterior al presente. Toda la Rima XVI mantiene una tenebrosa sugerencia de nostalgia de principio a fin. Esta breve Rima nos embelesa y sugestiona.

Concluye su interpretación de la relación entre sintagmas el crítico explicando la correlación locativa que demuestra acción por parte de la persona que habla, el "yo" lírico de Bécquer. Explica que en las dos frases *entre las verdes hojas* (G₁) y *entre las sombras que te cercan* (G₂) se canalizan verbos con equivalencia semejante en la primera persona, respectivamente: *suspiro yo* (H₁) y *te llamo yo* (H₂).³⁰ La explicación, ligada en forma de sintagmas paralelos, según Bousoño, se resume así: A₁/A₂, B₁/B₂, C₁/C₂, D₁/D₂, E₁/E₂, F₁/F₂, G₁/G₂, H₁/H₂. Los paralelismos formales producen un efecto casi hipnótico de absorta fascinación melancólica. La detallada explicación de Bousoño soslaya una referencia al paralelismo dual de los antiguos cancioneros ya observado por Dámaso

²⁸ Alonso y Bousoño 202.

²⁹ Alonso y Bousoño 204.

³⁰ Alonso y Bousoño 205.

²⁷ Benítez 83.

Alonso en la obra de Gil Vicente.³¹ Subrayamos el énfasis anafórico al referirnos a estas repeticiones para concluir que el paralelismo crea un plano retórico adaptado a una dimensión poética que causa profunda nostalgia. El tema del amante fantasmal, aquí estilizado en paralelismos formales, queda fijado en la mente del lector por maniobras retóricas que dotan significado al misterioso encuentro y nos hacen recordarlo; quizás nos conmuevan a tal punto que hasta lleguemos a aceptarlo. Recordemos que semejante consecuencia semántica del desarrollo lírico nos pasma al concluir la Rima LXXI. El encuentro fantasmal se puede expresar conceptualmente en el lenguaje poético porque es una experiencia humana.

En la Rima XXVIII es la amada la que persigue al sujeto adúlador. Un espíritu femenino invade el sueño del narrador dormido:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Cuando entre la sombra oscura perdida una voz murmura turbando su triste calma, si en el fondo de mi alma la oigo dulce resonar, | 5 |
| dime: ¿es que el viento en sus giros se queja, o que tus suspiros me hablan de amor al pasar? | |
| Cuando el sol en mi ventana rojo brilla a la mañana y mi amor tu sombra evoca, si en mi boca de otra boca sentir creo la impresión, | 10 |
| Dime: ¿es que ciego deliro, o que un beso en un suspiro me envía tu corazón? | 15 |
| Y en el luminoso día y en la alta noche sombría, si en todo cuanto rodea al alma que te desea te creo sentir y ver, | 20 |
| Dime: ¿es que toco y respiro soñando, o que en un suspiro me das tu aliento a beber? | ³² |

El desarrollo del tema en esta segunda Rima aparece también en forma estilizada. La experiencia del ciclo amoroso cobra mayor realidad en este poema porque el encuentro culmina aquí en un beso un tanto más absorto que *el aliento abrasador* de la Rima XVI. El paralelismo estilístico muestra afinidad en ambas rimas. También tenemos en la Rima XXVIII una clara división sintáctica paralela que intensifica la acción de los verbos; en vez de al + verbo infinitivo tenemos cuando/cuando en la primera y tercera estrofa, más un

entorno en la penúltima y quinta bajo el marco ya conocido de la frase hipotética, molde semántico que encabeza la Rima XVI. Esta predilección por la frase suspendida en la sintaxis penetra inconscientemente en la mente; es decir, hipnotiza, o impulsa la imagen para que brote como simbolismo visionario al margen del sueño. No solamente en la penúltima estrofa, también en la primera y tercera hallamos frases hipotéticas. Notemos que la temporalidad de los dos "cuandos," expresada en la primera y tercera estrofa de la Rima XXVIII, se vuelca a lo último sobre la común frase hipotética, aquí con doble prótasis, culminando siempre en la proverbial pregunta que indaga si está soñando o no:

| | | |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| Cuando | Cuando | Si |
| si | si | si |
| ¿es que... | ¿es que.... | ¿es que... |
| o...? | o...? | o...? |

Notemos que las apódosis son dobles, "¿es que ..." y, en seguida, "o...?" Las hipótesis tienen por sorprendente resultado aquí preguntas directas. En esta Rima es el amante el que espera al fantasma de la amada; la variación del tema recalca distinción de la expresión aparentemente masculina que se manifiesta en la Rima XVI, donde el espíritu del amante es el que aspira a transporte espacial mientras que la amada se mantiene fija. La temporalidad de ambos cuandos se filtra a las cláusulas subordinadas por medio de la conjunción adverbial adversativa si de la primera y tercera estrofa, abarcando con doble énfasis la pregunta final; ésta cobra mayor calidad de respuesta, aunque continúe siendo pregunta; y aunque en la última estrofa el *cuando* se vuelva *si*, formando una doble prótasis. No es ya una situación circunstancial, sino una misma hipótesis, en lo que se basa la conclusión final de este otro cándido esfuerzo de mutua unión con el ausente ser amado. La maestría técnica de Bécquer queda demostrada en su manipulación del lenguaje poético a través de la síntesis hipotética. Debido a dicha síntesis la reciprocidad aumenta y parecen abrazarse los amantes con audaz arrojo incorpóreo. Consecuentemente no dudamos el posible transporte espacial de un apasionado espíritu ausente, como confirma la impresión final de la Rima LXXI.

El *viento*, en el tercer verso de la Rima XVI y en el sexto de la XXVIII, es símbolo de recuerdos que retornan a espantarnos súbitamente, antes de que podamos aceptar al pasado en la conciencia y confrontar directamente en forma lógica consecuencias históricas de la vida real. El proceso hipnótico en estas rimas de Bécquer consiste así en proveer a la mente vehículo de transición a un plano metafísico que traspasa límites espaciales y temporales. En ambas Rimas, XVI y XXVIII, el *viento* aparece en la primera estrofa. El *viento / murmurador* de la Rima XVI se convierte en sensaciones que el sujeto que contempla

³¹ Alonso y Bousoño 66.

³² Benítez 91.

anhela justificar ante la imagen del objeto contemplado. También el *viento en sus giros* de la Rima XXVIII es la proyectada pasión que el amante desea infundir en la amada. Los suspiros al final de ambas Rimas llenan un espacio de aire que se colma de dicha amorosa por medio de un beso. El beso trae recuerdos respectivamente al sujeto que contempla y al objeto contemplador. Los suspiros unen al vacío entre beso y aliento. El respirar que ocurre en la última estrofa de ambas poesías es lo que rompe la estructura paralela en el momento de mayor intensidad; el amante fantasmal infunde su aliento a manera de beso para trasladarse de hipótesis a ser viviente.

Comparemos el cierre de ambos poemas. Primero tenemos: "...sabe que, aunque invisible, al lado tuyo / respiro yo." [XVI, 17-18] Notemos que la otra Rima concluye: "...es que toco y respiro / soñando, o que en un suspiro / me das tu aliento a beber?" [XXVIII, 22-24] El deseo de estar junto a la amada ausente, o que esté ella presente, nos lleva a la experiencia trascendental. El vehículo poético de estas poesías parece ser el transporte espiritual ocasionado por el sueño y tal vez la muerte; pero el tenor simbólico consiste en explorar intensamente el casi demente poder del profundo deseo amoroso. Bécquer es el poeta de ese anhelo fantasmagórico que tenemos de querer estar junto a un ausente ser amado, atraídos a una quinta dimensión por exagerado embeleso ante recuerdo del intenso placer que nos provee un beso. El viento se torna aliento humano; igual sucede con la metáfora ya explicada, *lágrimas del día*, de la Rima LIII; lo personal humano en particular se mezcla a la naturaleza en general. El aire se convierte en beso.

El tema de la ausencia se basa en la lejanía del ser amado; puede éste estar lejos o muerto; también puede el delirante amante estar soñando dormido. En el caso de una confrontación directa a la dama puede ésta quizás permanecer impávida ante ofrendas de amor. Esta justificación de la ausencia se ve en las letras españolas desde Garcilaso de la Vega; la primera égloga ofrece contraste entre el monólogo de Salicio, cuya amada lo deja posiblemente por otro, y Nemoroso, quien llora a su difunta amada.³³ Ambas razones para la ausencia convergen en el deseo monomaniaco de querer poseer al ser querido y la realidad de no poder siquiera verlo. La nostalgia creada por este cruce de anhelo y desesperación ante la realidad que frustra el deseo es muy intensa y adquiere sorprendente madurez retórica en la poesía de Bécquer. El atento lector alcanza comprensión. En la Rima LIII nostalgia hacia la vieja amada ausente desespera al amante; en las Rimas LXXV y LXXI, la sed de amistad en una y el apasionado presentimiento fúnebre en la otra alcanzan validez existencial; y en las XVI y XXVIII el amante fantasmal corteja y enamora. En

nuestra explicación del impacto poético de la ausencia física pasamos de la nostalgia a la expresión de un amor filial entre seres humanos; finalmente esta obsesión romántica de querer abarcar la distancia que separa a dos amantes inspira la creación metafórica del fantasma enamorado.

En sus etapas de transición entre realidad y ensueño el espíritu humano puede confrontar la pasión cual entidad independiente del mismo ser amado, aunque las ansias del anhelo poseedor emanen del original objeto que engendra pasión. Algo así le sucede al Quijote, amante de aventura, al ver brazos de gigantes que lo atacan cuando en verdad una simple ráfaga de viento mueve las astas de los molinos.³⁴ Sin el viento no hay movimiento de astas. Lo más importante que debemos notar, tanto en la obra de Cervantes como en la de Bécquer, es que existe algo en la realidad natural que prende la mecha metafórica de la ilusión: el viento en Cervantes, la pasión del deseo en Bécquer. El vidente aguarda. La unión existencial entre la voluntad personal y el objeto externo percibido casi nunca se efectúa a la par; absorbemos impacto de la realidad por medio del llamado perspectivismo cervantino, quizás antecedente estilístico del *realismo ideal* que atribuye Rodríguez Correa a la obra de su contemporáneo amigo.³⁵ Ya que en la poesía de Bécquer el tema del espíritu ambulante encierra una visión real, una perspectiva conceptual es adecuada para participar en la experiencia humana del tema. Conste que para comprender la obra de un escritor genial debemos acostumbrarnos a su repertorio de ideas y acceder a las sugerencias que las metáforas evocan. Aceptemos que, según concluye la Rima LXXI, estrecha amistad da validez al presentimiento fúnebre. Según Rodríguez Correa, abunda en la obra de Bécquer "un amor ideal, puro, que no puede morir ni aun con la muerte, que más bien la desea, porque es tranquilo como ella."³⁶ En la Rima LXXI de Bécquer, al preciso instante en que se desprende el alma del cuerpo, emprende su despedida el ser corporal; la estrecha amistad se transforma con hechizo encantador en un intenso amor fraternal que avisa a un conocido de la separación física. La fe en la amistad perdura eternamente, aunque no tenga ni siquiera identificación directa momentáneamente a un específico ser querido. El amor humano persiste en otra dimensión; esta experiencia enaltece al lector de las cinco rimas fantasmales.

Variados aspectos de esta misteriosa búsqueda espiritual del ausente ser querido convergen

³⁴ Murillo, 128-131.

³⁵ Mantiene el crítico Aldo Ruffinato, al explorar manifestaciones del perspectivismo cervantino, que "la parodia no exceptúa el concepto de verosimilitud." Al *baciyelmo*, por ejemplo, se contraponen otras definiciones híbridas entre verdad-mentira; es una verdadera bacía de barbero la que suple la función de yelmo. Ruffinato 118.

³⁶ Rodríguez Correa 9, 15.

³³ Rivers, 119-134.

en la labor del espíritu errante que alcanza su deseo. Entre los contemporáneos de Bécquer, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda le escribe al Padre Luis Coloma: "...le estimaré me diga como va de espiritismo, si ha perdido Ud. ya las ilusiones o si continúa creyendo que pueden ser realidades. Aquí (en Madrid) se ha establecido ahora un gran centro espiritista, y pertenecen a él gentes formales y de buena fe."³⁷ Sin detenernos demasiado a contemplar creencias arcaizantes de la época, podemos concebir que las ansias del amante que desea saciar de amor el colmo de su pasión convierten a la esencia del anhelo en espíritu verdadero. La experiencia trascendental queda así sujeta a la vida real. Este esfuerzo une la esperanza y la nostalgia, el futuro y el pasado, la vida y la muerte en la sensibilidad estética del artista que trata de alcanzar el objeto de su voluntad. En la poesía becqueriana el espíritu, sediento de encuentro con un ser ausente, se torna entidad incorpórea que vaga en el espacio. En esta visión sentimos cuan asombrosa es la intensidad emocional del deseo humano. La impresión real subsiste en un marco semiótico de enjambre rítmico concebido por el poeta. Para comprender las Rimas del espíritu errante debemos aceptar y compartir el origen amoroso de la expresión poética.

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³⁷ Coloma 13.



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Construction of the THEME System of Myanmar

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Abstract- The primary purpose of this paper is to construct the THEME system of Myanmar following the system network for THEME in English proposed by Halliday (1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014) within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. It is found that the THEME system of Myanmar consists of two sub-systems: THEME STATUS and THEME COMPOSITION. For the former, there are two major types: unmarked and enhanced Themes, while for the latter, Themes can be presented in two ways: simple and multiple Themes. Unmarked Themes in Myanmar clauses are Subject, Complement, Adjunct, hypotactic clause, Predicator (only in imperative), and Ba-element (only in interrogative). The enhanced Theme in Myanmar contains two major types: thematic equatives and preposed attributes. A multiple Theme includes textual, interpersonal, and topical Themes, which can be chosen as a point of departure of the clause. The findings may shed light on the realization of the textual metafunction of the Myanmar language.

Keywords: Theme, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Myanmar.

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL, hereafter), language serves three metafunctions: experiential, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday 1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014; Fawcett 2000, 2008, forthcoming). Based on the textual metafunction of language, the concept of the THEME system is considered. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 64), the THEME system construes organizing messages relevantly to the other notes around them and to the broader context in speaking or writing. The textual meaning of the clause is realized by a thematic structure consisting of two parts: Theme and Rheme. The Theme is the element that serves as the starting point of the message, while the remaining part is the Rheme that gives further information about the Theme. From a Systemic Functional approach, the studies of Theme¹ are based on Halliday's thematic structure (see Caffarel et al. 2004).

Research on Theme in Myanmar from a Systemic Functional approach is surprisingly scant (e.g., Hopple 2002; Rattanapitak 2009; Ozerov 2014). Rattanapitak (2009) studies the THEME system and its realizations in Myanmar from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics. However, Rattanapitak's (2009) study of Theme in Myanmar does not cover interrogative and exclamative clauses. Moreover, bias in the data collection also exists because it relies on only five Burmese religious tales extracted from Min Yu Wai's (1999) book entitled "38 Welfare Tales," containing 38 stories about Buddhist teachings. To meet this literature gap, this paper aims to develop the THEME system of Myanmar by supplementing it with the enhanced Theme based on the thematic analysis of different genres of Myanmar text from a Systemic Functional perspective.

In the THEME system of Myanmar proposed in this study, two sub-systems: THEME STATUS and THEME COMPOSITION are presented in order to show the flow of information in Myanmar text. For the former, unmarked and enhanced Themes are presented, while for the latter, simple and multiple Themes are presented. Theme in Myanmar typically functions as a Subject, Complement, Adjunct, or hypotactic clause. It can also function as a Ba-element in interrogative, and a Predicator in imperative. Two major types of special thematic structures, such as thematic equatives and preposed attributes are found in Myanmar. Thompson (2004/2008: 164) characterizes them as enhanced Theme in his THEMATIC systems of English. The typical organization of a multiple Theme in Myanmar is textual ^ interpersonal ^ experiential. This study contributes to the understanding of how Myanmar people organize their messages relevantly to the context. The result makes an important contribution to a contrastive study of THEME systems between Myanmar and foreign languages.

II. PREVIOUS STUDIES OF THEME IN MYANMAR

Based on the THEME system of English devised by Halliday (1985, 1994) and Matthiessen (1995), many linguists have constructed the THEME systems of human languages within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (e.g., French by Caffarel 2004; German by Steiner and Teich 2004; Japanese by Teruya 2004; Chinese by Halliday and McDonald 2004). There are a few studies on Theme in Myanmar (see Hopple 2002; Rattanapitak 2009; Ozerov 2014). Hopple (2002) studies Topicalization in Burmese expository discourse, focusing on the topicalizing and thematic functions of the three postpositional particles: သည် /the/, က /ga/ and နှင့် /go/ from a discourse point of

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¹ Theme (with capitalized initial) refers to the function; THEME (all letters in capitals) is used as the system's name.

view. Rattanapitak (2009) presents a system network of textual resources in Burmese religious tales from a Systemic Functional approach. Since Rattanapitak's (2009) study is limited to expository discourse, it does not offer a satisfactory explanation of the textual metafunction of the Myanmar language. Based on Jacobs' (1999) concepts of informational autonomy, Ozerov (2014) investigates the grammatical means used for expressing information structure in standard colloquial Burmese by analyzing its morphosyntactic and prosodic devices. Ozerov's (2014) study is beyond the scope of Systemic Functional Linguistics. It reveals a grammatical system of informational PACKAGING in Burmese. Therefore, further research on constructing a new model of the THEME system of Myanmar, which can realize the textual meaning of Myanmar clauses, is necessary for Systemic Functional Linguistics.

To meet this need, this study aims to develop the THEME system of Myanmar based on the network presented by Halliday (1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014). It is of great significance that findings are based on the thematic analysis of different genres of Myanmar text. In this study, the elaborations of unmarked Themes in different clauses and special thematic structures of Myanmar are supported with data from authentic materials, such as literature, news articles, and databases such as SEALang Library Burmese corpus². The thematic compositions of simple and multiple Themes in Myanmar are also presented in this study. The results of this study will form part of a more extensive study of the Systemic Functional Grammar of Myanmar. This study will also make a significant contribution to a contrastive analysis of THEME systems between Myanmar and foreign languages.

III. CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEME SYSTEM OF MYANMAR

The THEME system is a grammatical resource for the organization of the clause as a message. It realizes the textual mode of meaning concerning the creation of text relevantly to the preceding text and context, which is intrinsic to language. The clause in any language has the character of a message, or quantum of information in the flow of discourse; therefore, every language has some form of organization contributing to the flow of discourse (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 88). Like other world languages, Myanmar clause is also organized as a message by having a special thematic status assigned to one part of it. This element is enunciated as the theme, and then it combines with the remainder to constitute a message. In spoken and written Myanmar, textual prominence (i.e., the thematic status) is given to an item by putting it first in the clause. The Theme is the first element functioning as the point of departure of the message, which locates and orients the clause within its context. In contrast, the remainder of the message (i.e., the part in which the Theme is developed) is known as the Rheme (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 89). Following Halliday's (1985, 1994, 2004, 2014) Theme-Rheme structure, this study explores thematic choices in different clause types in Myanmar, including simple clauses, clause complexes, and reported clauses. It also explores enhanced Themes or special thematic structures of Myanmar, such as thematic equatives and preposed attributes.

a) *Theme and Mood*

The choice of Theme in Myanmar clause depends on Mood choice. MOOD, the primary interpersonal system of the clause, provides interactants with the resources for giving or demanding a commodity such as information and goods-&-services – in other words, with the resources for enacting speech functions (speech acts) through the grammar of the clause: statements (giving information), questions (demanding information), offers (giving goods-&- services), and commands (demanding goods-&-services). This study focuses on major clauses of Myanmar. Minor clauses like ကောင်းပြီ /kaunnbye/ "ok", ဟုတ်ကဲ့ /hokekèt/ "yes" have no Mood choice and thematic structure, and so they are left out of account in this study. A major clause in Myanmar can be either indicative or imperative. Indicative has two options: declarative and interrogative. Exclamative is a subtype of declarative. The following will present thematic structures in each Mood type of Myanmar from the perspective of a textual metafunction.

i. *Theme in indicative clauses*

The Theme in Myanmar declarative functions as Subject, Complement, and Adjunct. The Theme functioning as a Subject or Complement is generally realized by a nominal group, nominal group complex, and clause. The Theme functioning as an Adjunct is typically realized by a prepositional phrase or an adverbial group. See Examples (1)-(3).

² <http://sealang.net/burmese/corpus.htm>

- (1) ဆိုင်မှ ကောင်လေးက သံပုရာရည်နှစ်ခွက် လာချပေးသည်။
sain-hma kaunlaye:-ga thanpayar-yay-hna-khwet larchapaye:-the.
 shop-from.ABLMARK boy-SBJMARK lemon-juice-two-CLF bring.PFV-DECL.SENTSUF

| | |
|-------|-------|
| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|

‘The boy from the shop brought two glasses of lemon juice.’

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 9)

- (2) စည်းလုံးမှ အင်အား ဖြစ်မည်ဆိုသည်မှာ အမှန် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။
seelonn=hma inarr phytmye-sothehmar ahman phyt-par-the.
 unite=COND strength COP-SBJMARK truth COP-POLMARK-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

| | |
|-------|-------|
| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|

‘It is true that unity is strength.’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

- (3) မြစ်တစ်ဖက်ကမ်းဆီသို့ ကျွန်တော် လှမ်းကြည့်လိုက်သည်။
myit-taphetkannsethot kyanor hlannkyi-laik-the.
 river-ALL 1SG.M.NOM glance-PFV-DECL.SENTSUF

| | |
|-------|-------|
| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|

‘I glanced towards the river.’

(Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004: 11)

Exclamative, a subtype of declarative, is a small group of clauses. It functions to express the speaker’s intense emotions. It is structured in the form of Subject ^ Predicator, which is the same as Myanmar declarative. The clause-final particle: /-laiktar/ distinguishes exclamative from declarative in Myanmar. The unmarked Theme in Myanmar exclamative is the Subject realized by a nominal group, as shown in Example (4).

- (4) အိမ်ကြီးက ကျက်သရေရှိလိုက်တာ။
ein-gyee-ga kyeththayayshi-laiktar.
 house-AUG-SBJMARK splendid-EXCL

| | |
|-------|-------|
| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|

‘How splendid the house is!’

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 120)

In Myanmar, the unmarked Theme in WH-interrogative is Ba-element, analogous to the WH-element representing the missing information that the speaker wants to know from other person. Thematization of Ba-element can function as Subject, Complement, or Adjunct, as shown in Examples (5a)-(5c).

(5) a. Themmatization of Ba-element functioning as Subject

ဘယ်သူ မင်းကို ပြောခဲ့တာလဲ။

béthue minn-go pyaw-khèt-darlè.

who 2SG-OBJMARK tell-PST-INT.SENTSUF

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Who told you?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Themmatization of Ba-element functioning as Complement

ဘယ်သူကို တွေ့ချင်လို့လဲ။

béthu-go twayt-chin-lotlè.

who-OBJMARK meet-OPT-PRS.INT.SENTSUF

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Whom do you want to meet?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Themmatization of Ba-element functioning as Adjunct

ဘယ်အချိန် ပြန်လာမှာလဲ။

bé-achein pyanlar-hmar-lè.

which-time come.back-IRR-INT.SENTSUF

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Which time will you come back?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

Other Theme choices in WH-interrogative in Myanmar are Subject, Complement, and Adjunct, as shown in Examples (6a)-(6c).

(6) a. Subject as Theme

သူက ဒီကို ဘာ လာ လုပ်တာလဲ။

thue-ga dego bar lar loke-tarlè.

3SG-SBJMARK here what come do-PRS.INT.SENTSUF

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘What does she come here for?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Complement as Theme

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| ဒီပန်းအိုးကို | ဘယ်နေရာမှာ | ထားမလဲ။ |
| <i>de-pannoe-go</i> | <i>bénayyarhmar</i> | <i>htarr-malè.</i> |
| this.DEM-vase-OBJMARK | where | put-IRR.INT.SENTSUF |

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Where will you put this vase?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Adjunct as Theme

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| အပေါ်မှာ | အိပ်ခန်း | ဘယ်နှစ်ခန်း | ရှိပါသလဲ။ |
| <i>aporhmar</i> | <i>eikkhann</i> | <i>béhnakhann</i> | <i>shi-bar-thalè.</i> |
| upstairs | bedroom | how.many | exist-POLMARK-PRS.INT.SENTSUF |

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘How many bedrooms are there upstairs?’

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 72)

Yes/no interrogatives function to ask for the polarity of the clause between “yes” and “no”. The unmarked Themes in Myanmar yes/no interrogatives are the Subject, Complement, Adjunct, and hypotactic clause. The clause-final interrogator, such as /-larr/ and /-lè/ marks the end of the Myanmar yes/no interrogative. See Examples (7a)-(7c).

(7) a. Subject as Theme

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| သူတို့ | လာမှာလား။ |
| <i>thuedot</i> | <i>lar-hmar-larr.</i> |
| 3PL.NOM | come-IRR-INT.SENTSUF |

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Will they come?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Complement as Theme

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| သူတို့ကို | ဖိတ်ပြီးပြီလား။ |
| <i>thuedot-go</i> | <i>pheik-pyeebye-larr.</i> |
| 3PL-OBJMARK | invite-PFV-INT.SENTSUF |

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Have they been invited?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Adjunct as Theme

ဒီနေ့၊ အတန်း ရှိလား။

denayt atann shi-larr.

today class have-PRS.INT.SENTSUF

| | |
|-------|-------|
| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|

‘Is there any class today?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

Figure 1 illustrates a system network of THEME in three major types of indicative clauses in Myanmar, such as declarative, interrogative, and exclamative.

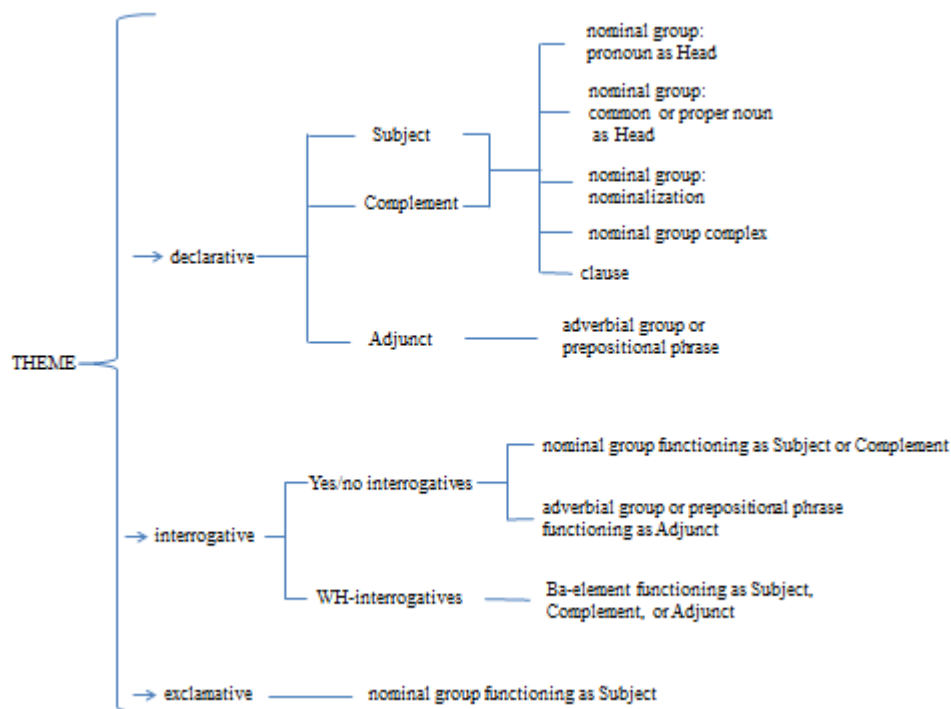


Figure 1: A system network of THEME in indicative clauses in Myanmar.

ii. Theme in imperative clauses

The communicative purpose of the imperative is to ask the other person to perform the action. In Myanmar, the unmarked Theme in the positive imperative is the Predicator realized by the verbal group expressing the action to be performed by the addressee, while the one in the negative imperative is the Predicator along with the pre-verbal negator /ma-/ and the post-verbal particle /-nèt/ (cf. Examples 8 and 9). As Examples (8) and (9) show, there is no Rheme in thematic structures of Myanmar imperatives whose unmarked Theme is the Predicator.

(8) ဝင်လာပါ။

winlar-bar.

come.in-POLMARK

Theme

‘Come in!’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

(9) မသွားနဲ့။

ma-thwarr-nèt.

NEG-go-NEGIMP.SENTSUF

Theme

‘Don’t go!’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

When there is Rheme in the thematic structure of Myanmar imperative, the unmarked Theme can be Subject, Complement, or Adjunct, as shown in Examples (10a)-(10c).

(10) a. Subject as Theme

ဘယ်သူမှ မလှုပ်ကြနဲ့။

béthuehma ma-hloke-kya-nèt.

anyone NEG-move-PLMARK-NEGIMP.SENTSUF

Theme

Rheme

‘Anyone, don’t move!’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Complement as Theme

သူ့ကို ဖမ်းလိုက်ကြစမ်း။

thu-go phann-laikkyasann.

3SG-OBJMARK arrest-IMP.SENTSUF

Theme

Rheme

‘Arrest him!’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Adjunct as Theme

ချက်ချင်း သူ့ကို ဖမ်းလိုက်ကြစမ်း။

chetchinn thu-go phann-laik-kya-sann.

immediately 3SG-OBJMARK arrest-IMP.SENTSUF

Theme

Rheme

‘Arrest him immediately!’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

The Theme in "let's" type of Myanmar imperative is the Subject, Complement, or Adjunct, as shown in Examples (11a)-(11c).

(11) a. Subject as Theme

ငါတို့ ရုပ်ရှင် သွား ကြည့်ရအောင်။
ngardot yokeshin thwarr kyi-yaaun.
 1PL.NOM film go see-SUGMARK

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘We let’s go and see the film!’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Complement as Theme

ရုပ်ရှင် သွား ကြည့်ရအောင်။
yokeshin thwarr kyi-yaaun.
 film go see-SUGMARK

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Let’s go and see the film!’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Adjunct as Theme

ဒီနေ့ ရုပ်ရှင် သွား ကြည့်ရအောင်။
denayt yokeshin thwarr kyi-yaaun.
 today film go see-SUGMARK

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Let’s go and see the film today!’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

Another sub-category of the imperative is precative (i.e., a polite request for goods-&- services). The unmarked Theme in precative type is Subject or Complement, as shown in Examples (12a) and (12b).

(12) a. Subject as Theme

သက်သက် သွားပါရစေ။
thetthet thwarr-bayazay.
 Thet.Thet go-REQMARK

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘Let me go!’

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 205)

b. Complement as Theme

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| ကျွန်မ | နေဖို့ | အခန်းကို | တဆိတ် | ကြည့်ခွင့်ပေးပါ။ |
| <i>kyama</i> | <i>nay=phot</i> | <i>akhann-go</i> | <i>taseik</i> | <i>kyi-khwintpaye:-bar.</i> |
| 1SG.F | stay=REL | room-OBJMARK | moment | look-let-POLMARK |

| | |
|-------|-------|
| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|

‘Let me have a look at my room!’

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 71)

Figure 2 illustrates a system network of THEME in imperative clauses including suggestive and precative types.

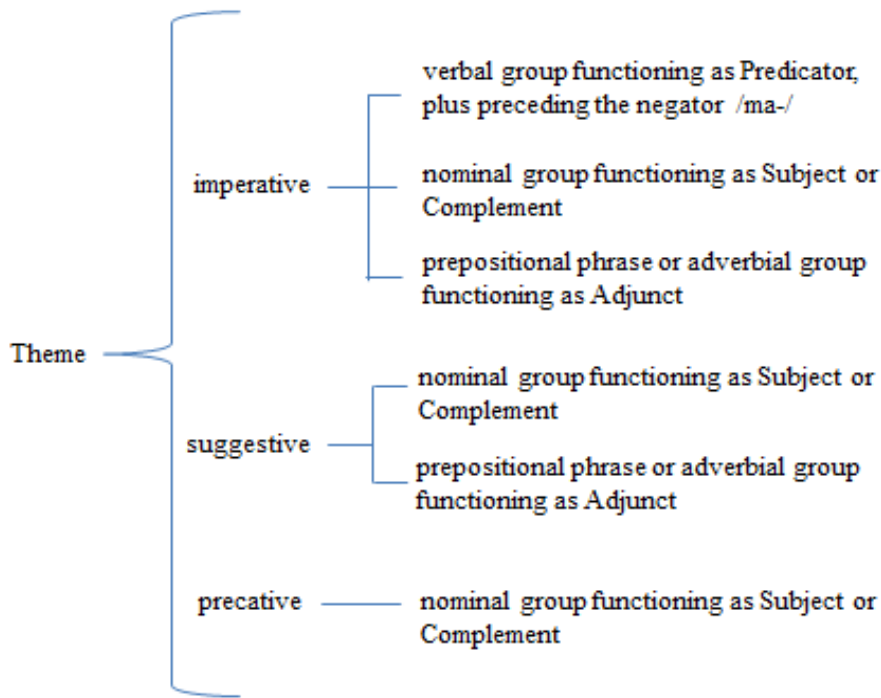


Figure 2: A network of Theme in imperative clauses.

b) Multiple Theme

According to Halliday (1994: 52-54), every major clause has an experiential Theme (i.e., the first element with the experiential meaning of the clause). The thematic experiential constituent is labeled as the “topical Theme,” which is closely associated with the topic of the clause in topic-comment analysis. It is also possible to have a purely interpersonal Theme (e.g., vocative, modal Adjuncts, and mood-marking) or textual Theme (e.g., continuative, structural, and conjunctive Adjuncts) before the experiential Theme. In this case, everything up to the experiential Theme is included in the Theme of the clause. The typical ordering of elements in a multiple Theme is textual ^ interpersonal ^ experiential, as shown in Example (13).

| | | | | | |
|------|----------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| (13) | အို | သက်သက်ရယ် | နင့် | ကားကို | ရောင်းမလို့လား။ |
| | <i>o</i> | <i>thetthet-yé</i> | <i>nint</i> | <i>karr-go</i> | <i>yaunn-malotlarr.</i> |
| | Oh | Thet.Thet-APPEL | 2SG.GEN | car-OBJMARK | sell-IRR.INT.SENTSUF |

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| continuative | vocative | topical | |
| textual | interpersonal | experiential | |
| Theme | | | Rheme |

‘Oh Thet Thet, will you sell your car?’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c) *Theme in clause complexes and reported clauses*

Thematic choices in Myanmar clause complexes and reported clauses are investigated in this study following Halliday (1985, 1994, 2004, 2014). In a Myanmar clause complex, the dependent clause always precedes the clause on which it depends. In such case, the dependent clause is analyzed as the Theme for the whole clause complex. As every clause has a Theme, the dependent clause and the dominant clause are further analyzed into Theme-Rheme structure as in Example (14).

- (14) သူတကာ နံနက်စာ စားပြီးမှ ထမင်းစားပွဲသို့ ရောက်၏။
thuedagar nannetsar sarr=pyeehma htaminnzabwe-thot yauk-i.
 everyone breakfast eat=after.CONJ dining.table-ALL arrive-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Theme-1 | | Rheme-1 | |
| topical | | topical | |
| Theme-2 | Rheme-2 | Theme-3 | Rheme-3 |

‘After everyone has eaten breakfast, he arrives at the dining table.’

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

According to Thompson (2004/2008: 161), “Reporting or projection has a different kind of relationship between clauses than other types of clause complex; this is reflected in the uncertain status of projected Themes in the text; and in the case of quotes, the analysis is usually straightforward in such a way that the reporter makes a thematic choice in the projecting or reporting clause and also recycles the original speaker’s thematic choice in the quote.” Both Themes typically play an essential role in the development of the text, and they are analyzed separately in the reporting clause and quote, as shown in Examples (15) and (16).

- (15) ဟွမ်တောမတ်က 'ဘယ်သူက တိုက်ခိုက်တာလဲ'ဟု အရေးတကြီး မေးလိုက်၏။
hwantawmat- 'bethuega taikkhaik-tarle'=hu ayaye:dagyee maye:-laiki.
ga
 Juan.Tomas- who attack- quickly ask-
 SBJMARK PFV.INT.SENTSUF=COMP PFV.DECL.SENTSUF

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|--|
| Theme-1 | Rheme-1 | | |
| | topical | | |
| | Theme-2 | Rheme-2 | |

“‘Who attacked?’ asked Juan Tomas quickly.”

(Htin Lin 1999: 126)

- (16) 'ဒါ တန်ဖိုးသိပ်ကြီးတဲ့ ပုလဲဗျ'ဟု ကိနိုက ဆိုသည်။
'dar tanphoe-theikkyee=det palebya'=hu keno-ga so-the.
 this.DEM value-AUG=REL pearl=COMP Kino-SBJMARK say-DECL.SENTSUF

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Theme-1 | Rheme-1 | Theme-2 | Rheme-2 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|

“‘It is a pearl of great value,” Kino said.’

(Htin Lin 1999: 97)

In both direct speech and indirect speech in Myanmar, the reported clause comes after the Subject of the reporting clause. Each of them has its Theme. The Theme of the reported clause links in with the topic of the text, while the Theme of the reporting clause primarily develops the information by identifying the source (Thompson 2004/2008: 161). Both Themes, therefore, serve different functions in the development of the text, and they are identified separately, as illustrated in Example (17).

- (17) ရှေးဦးစွာ ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန ပြည်ထောင်စုဝန်ကြီးက လက်ရှိကာ နိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရအနေဖြင့် e- အားပေး ဆောင်ရွက်လေ့ ပြောကြား
 န်ကြီးက လတွင် ရအနေဖြင့် Govern မေး ရှိပါကြောင်း သည်။
 စနစ်ကို
 ment
 go

shaye:u pyinnyaryaye:w pyehtaunsu letshika nainngand e- arrpa saunywet- pyawky
e:zwar ingyeehtarna wingyee-ga rlatwin orasoeya- Govern ye: lyetshi- arr-the.
anayphyint ment- bar=gyaun
sanit- n
go

firstly Ministry.of.Edu Union.Min at.prese governmen e- enco carry.out- say-
 cation ister- nt t-SBJMARK Govern urage PROG- DECL.SE
 SBJMARK COMP NTSUF
 system
 -
 OBJMA
 RK

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------|---------|
| conjunctive | topical | Rheme-1 | |
| textual | experiential | | |
| Theme-1 | | Rheme-1 | |
| | | topical | |
| | | Theme-2 | Rheme-2 |

‘Firstly, the Minister of Education said that the government is encouraging e-Government system at present.’
 (Myanma Alinn Daily Newspaper 2019: 8)³

³ https://www.burmalibrary.org/sites/burmalibrary.org/files/obl/mal_28.6.19.pdf

d) *Special thematic structures of Myanmar*

Special thematic structures of Myanmar (i.e., enhanced Theme) cover thematic equatives and preposed attributes (see Figure 3). In a thematic equative, Theme and Rheme are in the same status, which is pointed out by the verb to be, as shown in Example (18).

(18) ငါတို့ လွတ်လပ်ရေး ရခဲ့တဲ့ နှစ်ဟာ ၁၉၄၈ခုနှစ် ဖြစ်တယ်။

ngardo lutlatyaye: ya- hnit-har htauntkoeyarlaye:zetshit phyit-te.

t khet=de -khuhnit

t

IPL.NO independenc get- year- 1948-year COP-
M e PST=REL SBJMAR PRS.DECL.SENTSU
K F

| Theme | Rheme |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

‘The year when we got independence is 1948.’

(SEALang Library Burmese Corpus)

The second type of special thematic structure is the preposed attribute. It is a part of the Theme that introduces the quality of the following nominal group functioning as the starting point of the clause (Thompson 2004/2008: 163). The preposed attribute plus the following nominal group as Theme in Myanmar is shown in Example (19).

(19) a ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးမှာ ပြည်ထောင်စုဝန်ကြီး ဒေါက်တာညွှာ ယခင် နံနက် ၁၁နာရီခွဲတွင် သံတွဲမြို့ အမှတ်(၁)အခြေခံပညာ သွားရောက်

န င်စုဝန်ကြီး နဲ့ဖေသည် ဝေ့ က် င် ဖြို့ အထက်တန်းကျောင်းသို့ ရှိ

pyinnyaryaye: pyidaun dauktarny ya nan settanain than ahmattit- thwarrya

wingyeehtarna zu- untphay- na net yekhwe- dwe- achaykhanpyinnyar uk=ywayt

*wingyee the yt twin myot ahtettannkyaunn-
thot*

Ministry.of.Ed Union- Dr. tod mor 11:30- Than No.1- go=and.C
ucation Ministe Nyunt.Pe ay ning ABLMAR dwe- Basic.Education.Hi ONJ
r -SBJMARK K town gh.School-ALL

| Theme-1 | Rheme-1 |
|---------|---------|
|---------|---------|

‘The Minister of Education, Dr. Nyunt Pe went to No. (1) Basic Education High School, Thandwe at 11:30 this morning and...’

b ကျောင်းသားကျောင်းသူများ အေးချမ်းသာယာစွာ ပညာသင်ကြားနေမှုမျှ ကြည့်ရှု အားပေးသ
့ ကို ည်။

*kyaunntharrkyaunnthue- aye:channtharyarzwar pyinnyarthinkyar kyishu arrpaye:-
myarr r-nayhmu-
myarr-go the.*

student-PLMARK peacefully learn-NMLZ- inspect encourag
PLMARK- e-
OBJMARK DECL.SEN
TSUF

| Theme-2 | Rheme-2 |
|--|---------|
| ‘...inspected the learning of the students in peace.’ (Myanma Alinn Daily Newspaper 2021: 7) ⁴ | |

Based on the findings of thematic analyses on Myanmar’s declarative, exclamative, interrogative, and imperative clauses, the THEME system of Myanmar is demonstrated in Figure 3.

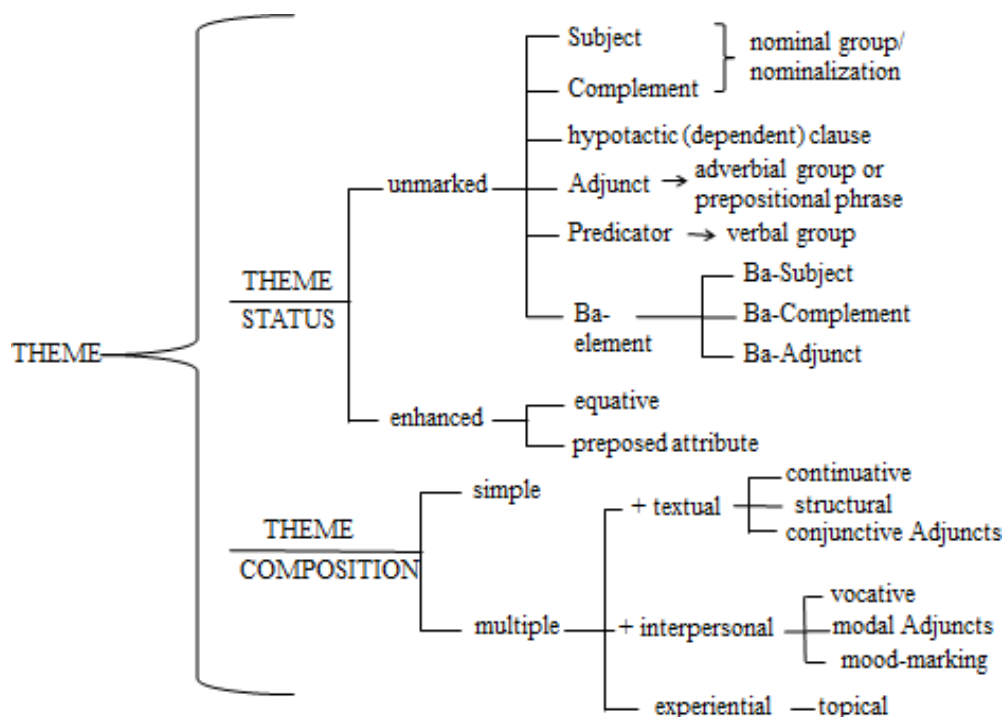


Figure 3: The THEME system of Myanmar.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper presents the THEME system of Myanmar from the Systemic Functional perspective. In section 2, the previous studies on Theme in Myanmar have been reviewed. There are very few studies of Theme in Myanmar from the Systemic Functional perspective. Their analysis is based on the restricted data collection; consequently, they do not offer satisfactory answers to the organization of messages in different genres of Myanmar text. To meet this need, the present study has developed a system network for THEME in Myanmar based on the findings from the thematic analysis of different clauses: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamative in Myanmar by using Halliday’s (1985, 1994) Theme-Rheme structure in section 3.

Findings show that the THEME system of Myanmar consists of two sub-systems: THEME STATUS and THEME COMPOSITION. The former contains two major types: unmarked and enhanced Themes, while the latter contains simple and multiple Themes. Unmarked Theme in Myanmar clauses can be Subject, Complement, Adjunct, hypotactic clause, Predicator (only in imperative), and Ba-element (only in interrogative). Enhanced Theme contains two major types: thematic equatives and preposed attributes. A multiple Theme includes textual (e.g., continuative, structural, and conjunctive Adjuncts), interpersonal (e.g., vocative, modal Adjuncts, and mood-marking), and experiential/topical Themes.

In conclusion, this study is of great significance in investigating how Myanmar speakers organize their messages coherently to the other messages around them and in the broader context of spoken and written discourse. The findings of this study characterize the textual metafunction of the Myanmar language and contribute to the Systemic Functional Grammar of Myanmar. This study has clear implications for further research on a contrastive analysis of Theme in Myanmar and foreign languages.

⁴ https://www.burmalibrary.org/sites/burmalibrary.org/files/obl/mal_18.12.21.pdf

Abbreviations found in the Leipzig Glossing Rules

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 3PL | third person plural |
| 1SG | first person singular |
| 2SG | second person singular |
| 3SG | third person singular |
| ABLMARK | ablative marker |
| ACC | accusative |
| ADDCONN | additive connective |
| AFFMARK | affectionate marker |
| ALL | allative |
| ANA | anaphoric |
| APPEL | appellative |
| ASSOC | associative |
| CAPAMOD | capability modality |
| CAUS | causative |
| CLF | classifier |
| CMPR | comparative |
| COM | comitative |
| COMP | complementizer |
| COMPA | compassion |
| CONJ | conjunction |
| CONN | connective |
| COP | copula |
| DAT | dative |
| DECL.SENTSUF | declarative sentence suffix |
| DET | determiner |
| DIM | diminutive |
| DU | dual |
| EMPMARK | emphatic marker |
| EXCL | exclusive |
| EXPER | experiential |
| F | female |
| FUT | future |
| GEN | genitive |
| INCL | inclusive |
| INF | infinitive |
| INS | instrumental |
| INT.SENTSUF | interrogative sentence suffix |
| LOC | locative |
| M | male |
| MOD | modifier |



| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| NEG | negative |
| NEGDECL.SENTSUF | negative declarative sentence suffix |
| NOM | nominative |
| OBJMARK | object marker |
| OBLG | obligation |
| OPT | optative |
| PFV | perfective |
| PLMARK | plural marker |
| POLMARK | polite marker |
| POSTDECL.SENTSUF | positive declarative sentence suffix |
| PROG | progressive |
| PRS | present |
| PST | past |
| PURP | purposive |
| REFL | reflexive |
| REL | relative |
| SBJMARK | subject marker |
| SUP | superlative |

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20. Adding unnecessary information: Do not add unnecessary information like "I have used MS Excel to draw graphs." Irrelevant and inappropriate material is superfluous. Foreign terminology and phrases are not apropos. One should never take a broad view. Analogy is like feathers on a snake. Use words properly, regardless of how others use them. Remove quotations. Puns are for kids, not grunt readers. Never oversimplify: When adding material to your research paper, never go for oversimplification; this will definitely irritate the evaluator. Be specific. Never use rhythmic redundancies. Contractions shouldn't be used in a research paper. Comparisons are as terrible as clichés. Give up ampersands, abbreviations, and so on. Remove commas that are not necessary. Parenthetical words should be between brackets or commas. Understatement is always the best way to put forward earth-shaking thoughts. Give a detailed literary review.

21. Report concluded results: Use concluded results. From raw data, filter the results, and then conclude your studies based on measurements and observations taken. An appropriate number of decimal places should be used. Parenthetical remarks are prohibited here. Proofread carefully at the final stage. At the end, give an outline to your arguments. Spot perspectives of further study of the subject. Justify your conclusion at the bottom sufficiently, which will probably include examples.

22. Upon conclusion: Once you have concluded your research, the next most important step is to present your findings. Presentation is extremely important as it is the definite medium through which your research is going to be in print for the rest of the crowd. Care should be taken to categorize your thoughts well and present them in a logical and neat manner. A good quality research paper format is essential because it serves to highlight your research paper and bring to light all necessary aspects of your research.

INFORMAL GUIDELINES OF RESEARCH PAPER WRITING

Key points to remember:

- Submit all work in its final form.
- Write your paper in the form which is presented in the guidelines using the template.
- Please note the criteria peer reviewers will use for grading the final paper.

Final points:

One purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people interpret your efforts selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, with each section starting on a new page:

The introduction: This will be compiled from reference matter and reflect the design processes or outline of basis that directed you to make a study. As you carry out the process of study, the method and process section will be constructed like that. The results segment will show related statistics in nearly sequential order and direct reviewers to similar intellectual paths throughout the data that you gathered to carry out your study.

The discussion section:

This will provide understanding of the data and projections as to the implications of the results. The use of good quality references throughout the paper will give the effort trustworthiness by representing an alertness to prior workings.

Writing a research paper is not an easy job, no matter how trouble-free the actual research or concept. Practice, excellent preparation, and controlled record-keeping are the only means to make straightforward progression.

General style:

Specific editorial column necessities for compliance of a manuscript will always take over from directions in these general guidelines.

To make a paper clear: Adhere to recommended page limits.



Mistakes to avoid:

- Insertion of a title at the foot of a page with subsequent text on the next page.
- Separating a table, chart, or figure—confine each to a single page.
- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence.
- In every section of your document, use standard writing style, including articles ("a" and "the").
- Keep paying attention to the topic of the paper.
- Use paragraphs to split each significant point (excluding the abstract).
- Align the primary line of each section.
- Present your points in sound order.
- Use present tense to report well-accepted matters.
- Use past tense to describe specific results.
- Do not use familiar wording; don't address the reviewer directly. Don't use slang or superlatives.
- Avoid use of extra pictures—include only those figures essential to presenting results.

Title page:

Choose a revealing title. It should be short and include the name(s) and address(es) of all authors. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations or exceed two printed lines.

Abstract: This summary should be two hundred words or less. It should clearly and briefly explain the key findings reported in the manuscript and must have precise statistics. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations. It should be logical in itself. Do not cite references at this point.

An abstract is a brief, distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less, a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approaches to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

Write your summary when your paper is completed because how can you write the summary of anything which is not yet written? Wealth of terminology is very essential in abstract. Use comprehensive sentences, and do not sacrifice readability for brevity; you can maintain it succinctly by phrasing sentences so that they provide more than a lone rationale. The author can at this moment go straight to shortening the outcome. Sum up the study with the subsequent elements in any summary. Try to limit the initial two items to no more than one line each.

Reason for writing the article—theory, overall issue, purpose.

- Fundamental goal.
- To-the-point depiction of the research.
- Consequences, including definite statistics—if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account for this; results of any numerical analysis should be reported. Significant conclusions or questions that emerge from the research.

Approach:

- Single section and succinct.
- An outline of the job done is always written in past tense.
- Concentrate on shortening results—limit background information to a verdict or two.
- Exact spelling, clarity of sentences and phrases, and appropriate reporting of quantities (proper units, important statistics) are just as significant in an abstract as they are anywhere else.

Introduction:

The introduction should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable of comprehending and calculating the purpose of your study without having to refer to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give the most important references, but avoid making a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. Describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will give no attention to your results. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here.



The following approach can create a valuable beginning:

- Explain the value (significance) of the study.
- Defend the model—why did you employ this particular system or method? What is its compensation? Remark upon its appropriateness from an abstract point of view as well as pointing out sensible reasons for using it.
- Present a justification. State your particular theory(-ies) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
- Briefly explain the study's tentative purpose and how it meets the declared objectives.

Approach:

Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done. Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point for every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need at least four paragraphs. Present surrounding information only when it is necessary to support a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read everything you know about a topic. Shape the theory specifically—do not take a broad view.

As always, give awareness to spelling, simplicity, and correctness of sentences and phrases.

Procedures (methods and materials):

This part is supposed to be the easiest to carve if you have good skills. A soundly written procedures segment allows a capable scientist to replicate your results. Present precise information about your supplies. The suppliers and clarity of reagents can be helpful bits of information. Present methods in sequential order, but linked methodologies can be grouped as a segment. Be concise when relating the protocols. Attempt to give the least amount of information that would permit another capable scientist to replicate your outcome, but be cautious that vital information is integrated. The use of subheadings is suggested and ought to be synchronized with the results section.

When a technique is used that has been well-described in another section, mention the specific item describing the way, but draw the basic principle while stating the situation. The purpose is to show all particular resources and broad procedures so that another person may use some or all of the methods in one more study or referee the scientific value of your work. It is not to be a step-by-step report of the whole thing you did, nor is a methods section a set of orders.

Materials:

Materials may be reported in part of a section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

Methods:

- Report the method and not the particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology.
- Describe the method entirely.
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures.
- Simplify—detail how procedures were completed, not how they were performed on a particular day.
- If well-known procedures were used, account for the procedure by name, possibly with a reference, and that's all.

Approach:

It is embarrassing to use vigorous voice when documenting methods without using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result, when writing up the methods, most authors use third person passive voice.

Use standard style in this and every other part of the paper—avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

What to keep away from:

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings—save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.



Results:

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part as entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Use statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.

You must clearly differentiate material which would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matters should not be submitted at all except if requested by the instructor.

Content:

- Sum up your conclusions in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In the manuscript, explain each of your consequences, and point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation of an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and give remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or manuscript.

What to stay away from:

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surrounding information, or try to explain anything.
- Do not include raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present similar data more than once.
- A manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate information.
- Never confuse figures with tables—there is a difference.

Approach:

As always, use past tense when you submit your results, and put the whole thing in a reasonable order.

Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report.

If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results section.

Figures and tables:

If you put figures and tables at the end of some details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attached appendix materials, such as raw facts. Whatever the position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other, and include a heading. All figures and tables must be divided from the text.

Discussion:

The discussion is expected to be the trickiest segment to write. A lot of papers submitted to the journal are discarded based on problems with the discussion. There is no rule for how long an argument should be.

Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implications of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and support all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of results should be fully described.

Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact, you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved the prospect, and let it drop at that. Make a decision as to whether each premise is supported or discarded or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."



Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work.

- You may propose future guidelines, such as how an experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details of all of your remarks as much as possible, focusing on mechanisms.
- Make a decision as to whether the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory and whether or not it was correctly restricted. Try to present substitute explanations if they are sensible alternatives.
- One piece of research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind. Where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from other available information. Present work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.

Describe generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

THE ADMINISTRATION RULES

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BY GLOBAL JOURNALS

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| | A-B | C-D | E-F |
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| <i>Introduction</i> | Containing all background details with clear goal and appropriate details, flow specification, no grammar and spelling mistake, well organized sentence and paragraph, reference cited | Unclear and confusing data, appropriate format, grammar and spelling errors with unorganized matter | Out of place depth and content, hazy format |
| <i>Methods and Procedures</i> | Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads | Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed | Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning |
| <i>Result</i> | Well organized, Clear and specific, Correct units with precision, correct data, well structuring of paragraph, no grammar and spelling mistake | Complete and embarrassed text, difficult to comprehend | Irregular format with wrong facts and figures |
| <i>Discussion</i> | Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited | Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious | Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend |
| <i>References</i> | Complete and correct format, well organized | Beside the point, Incomplete | Wrong format and structuring |



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