Marija N. Janevska
Tamara N. Janevska
University of Kragujevac
Faculty of Philology and Arts
Scientific Research Center

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APPROACHING EFL LEARNERS' STANCETAKING TENDENCIES FROM THE PHONETIC AND COGNITIVE SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY[1]

Abstract: The study proposes an interdisciplinary approach to EFL stancetaking by joining the fields of phonetics and cognitive semantics. The analysis is conducted on speech data realized by ten third-year English-major students, who were asked to offer their views on censorship. The first goal was to ascertain how the attitudinal assessments are expressed through certain linguistic expressions. In order to do so, the speech data were transcribed and annotated for stance polarity according to the principles underlying both *Appraisal Theory* (Martin,White 2005) and *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (Lakoff, Johnson 2003 [1980]). This resulted in a list of metaphorical linguistic expressions with positive or negative evaluation which provided a basis for the subsequent phonetic analysis. Namely, tests were carried out to determine whether or not there were notable differences in the way stance polarity (positive/negative) is signaled acoustically (on the basis of the extracted measures of fundamental frequency and intensity). It was observed that our subjects' speech exhibited a low degree of metaphoricity, since they predominantly opted for literal or non-metaphorical language when discussing the topic. Linguistic expressions with positive evaluation were generally less frequent, while negative assessment predominated in the transcripts. The comparison of the prosodic properties of these two stance categories revealed that, in our subjects' speech, negative stance tends to be signaled by an increase in both pitch and loudness, yet the differences between the two groups did not prove to be statistically significant. We hope that the interdisciplinary discussion presented here can facilitate further investigation of the topic on a larger scale.

Keywords: stance, prosody, conceptual metaphor, Appraisal Theory, Serbian EFL learners.

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marija.janevska@filum.kg.ac.rs

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Stancetaking[2] fundamentally refers to the act of adopting a position concerning either the content or the form of an utterance (Jaffe 2009: 3). As such, it functions as one of the pivotal properties of both written and oral communication, which can differ with respect to the degree of stance-saturation, but can, in fact, never be neutral in their essence (Ibid.). It is generally maintained that even seemingly neutral positions denote a certain kind of a stance, since their interpretation is always dependent on their relation to all the other possible, and arguably more affective positions a person could have adopted (Ibid.). Jaffe (2009: 7) argues that everyday talk is permeated by stances, considering that speakers naturally engage in all sorts of evaluations and social categorization; they further attribute knowledge, intentionality and affect to themselves, as well as others, which, in turn, gives rise to various social and moral identities.[3] Stances are commonly described as being either *affective* or *epistemic*, that is, they are either reflective of a person's emotion/affect directed towards another person or towards an idea being discussed, or they point to the degree of certainty someone has about a proposition they had previously put forward (Du Bois 2007: 143; Jaffe 2009: 7; Kiesling 2022: 416). In Gray and Biber's (2012: 16–17) terms, the expression of personal feelings and attitudes is achieved by the utilization of the so called *affect markers*, while *evidentiality* (i.e. *epistemic stance*) relates either to the source (signaled by the frequent use of expressions such as *According to X*) or the reliability of the knowledge contained in a proposition (e.g. expressing certainty, doubt, possibility, etc.). Therefore, a particular stance speakers hold can reflect their personal knowledge, be the result of hearsay, inference from evidence, etc., in which case such stance would fall within the scope of evidentiality research (Ibid.: 16). One's stance can also depend on particular emotions tied to an utterance, in which case it is to be labeled as a realization of affect (i.e. *attitudinal stance*).[4]

A significant body of stancetaking research has focused on observing written discourse, most notably academic writing (Biber 2020: 5), while the research pertaining to spoken language in general, and in classroom settings, remains scant (Biber 2006: 97–98). In one of his experiments, Abrar (2020: 22, 28–31) observed the nature of stancetaking in English Foreign Language setting and he found that students took epistemic stance more frequently, i.e. they were more

[2] Different approaches to the analysis of stancetaking are elaborated on in Gray, Biber (2012) and Kiesling (2022).

[3] Johnstone (2009: 29, 31) notes that specific stancetaking choices ultimately become associated with a particular individual through their repetition across time, which then results in the formation of a *social identity*.

[4] Since the distinction between the said conceptions of stance was not strictly relevant to the present analysis, we will not go into further detail about such differentiation. For more information on this issue see Gray, Biber (2012; 2015).

likely to express their opinion, belief or knowledge about a topic, primarily as a response to their teacher's query. With respect to the studies pertaining to Serbian educational context, Veličković and Danilović Jeremić (2020) observed Serbian EFL learners stancetaking patterns in undergraduate essay writing. More specifically, the authors (Ibid.: 151) explored the stancetaking strategies Serbian students use when writing an argumentative/persuasive essay. One of their observations was that the use of attitudinal markers was rather scarce, which the authors (Ibid.: 153) believed could be attributable to the students' intent to avoid any personal input into their essays, so as not to disrupt the overall objective tone of their writing. The authors (Ibid.: 154) also stated that this can be ascribed to the fact that students are often explicitly taught that academic writing, primarily the expository genre, is of a more formal nature. By the same token, in her contrastive research on the linguistic forms English and Serbian researchers employ in their academic papers[5], Blagojević (2009: 71) makes the point that the use of attitudinal markers (such as verbs expressing attitude, adverbs and adverbial phrases, modal verbs expressing obligation, nouns of specific semantic content, adjectives functioning as pronominal modifiers, etc.) is more widespread among Serbian authors, regardless of the target language used. Even so, the total frequency of occurrence of attitudinal markers was quite low, as it comprised merely 0.28% of the texts written by English authors, and 0.40% of the texts written by Serbian writers, when they wrote in their mother tongue. The percentage was somewhat similar for Serbian writers' scientific papers written in English (0.36%) (Ibid.). This is to be expected since the traditional goal of academic writing is primarily taken to be the delivery of factual information, which is predominantly epistemic in its essence (Gray, Biber 2012: 24).

It is also well established that particular types of stance[6] or subject positions can be linked to certain ways of talking (Jaffe 2009: 13). Fairly frequently, the specific linguistic forms speakers use are reflective of the positions they wish to take (Kiesling 2009: 179). In Abrar's research (2020: 28), for instance, epistemic stance was expressed mainly through the use of verbal expressions like *I (don't) know* or *I think* (the usage percentage of such forms was about 75%). Researchers generally accept that lexical verbs, such as these, are the most commonly employed epistemic expressions in spoken interaction (Ibid.). By contrast, linguistic features usually associated with affective stances tend to involve comparative adjectives or adverbs of degree (Johnstone 2009: 31). There is, likewise, a common view that different features of stance (*polarity*, *type* and *strength*) are signaled by certain changes in the acoustic signal (Freeman 2019: 18). Such changes are often

[5] The corpus comprised 45 articles from three scientific disciplines – sociology, social psychology and philosophy (Blagojević 2009: 64). The language of scientific publishing for Serbian authors was both English and Serbian.

[6] See Du Bois (2007) for a more detailed discussion on various kinds of stance and some related examples.

achieved through the modification of parameters such as pitch height (F_0), pitch range, intensity, speaking rate and the duration of the lexically-stressed vowels in content words (Freese, Maynard 1998; Biber, Staples 2014: 274; Freeman 2014, 2015, 2019). Regarding *stance polarity*, researchers typically report that positive polarity tends to be marked by lower intensity, higher F_0 and significantly longer vowel duration (Freeman et al. 2015, cited in Freeman 2019: 3), compared to either neutral or negative stances, which, in some studies (e.g. Freeman 2019: 14), did not differ statistically in this respect. Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that these tendencies do not hold true for all cases, as there are experiments (ibid.) where intensity, in particular, did not vary significantly for different polarity levels. This is likely due to the specific methodological underpinnings of different research studies, or due to the individual differences between the research subjects.

Unlike most studies, the objective of the current one will not be to identify the specific linguistic structures, i.e. grammatical[7] (e.g. *that*-clauses, modal verbs, passives, etc.) or lexical markers of stance (e.g. evaluative adjectives), nor will we concern ourselves with parameters such as the meaning of the assessment (personal attitude ~ status of knowledge) (Gray, Biber 2012, 2015). Our main objective is to determine whether or not specific prosodic properties of our subjects' voices can invariably be interpreted as signals of either positive or negative polarity of stance, and to see how different attitudinal assessments are contained in specific (metaphorical) linguistic expressions. Our research is unique in that it uses a special theoretical apparatus for polarity annotation, that is, for labeling stance-conveying segments as instances of diverse polarity levels. Namely, conceptual metaphor, in particular, could be tied to the notions such as argumentation, stance taking, and appraisal (Charteris-Black 2013, cited in Bogetić 2020: 124), because, unlike non-figurative evaluation, metaphor can increase the volume of an assessment. The latest research (Bogetić 2020: 124–125) has shown that the combination of the *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (Lakoff, Johnson 2003 [1980]) and *Appraisal Theory* (Martin, White 2005) provides "a rich theoretical apparatus for socio-cognitive discourse analysis". The said linguistic analysis served as the basis for the subsequent acoustic analysis. To the best of our knowledge, there is no other study akin to the present one. In fact, Serbian stancetaking research is rather scarce and the papers published to date (Blagojević 2009; Veličković, Danilović Jeremić 2020) focus exclusively on written registers and lexico-grammatical markers of stance. Given that stance expressions are more pervasive in spoken, rather than written language (Biber 2006: 113–114; Gray, Biber 2012: 24–25; Biber, Staples 2014: 272), we decided to restrict our analysis to the former register. In the following segments, we will briefly explain the theoretical underpinnings of the *Conceptual*

[7] For a comprehensive overview of some common stance-conveying grammatical devices, see Biber (2004, 2006), Biber, Staples (2014) and Gray, Biber (2015).

Metaphor Theory and *Appraisal Theory*, after which we shall detail the methodology of our research.

1.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: *CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY* AND *APPRAISAL THEORY*

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) holds that communication, thinking and acting are all based on the same conceptual system (Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 4). The nature of that conceptual system can be deduced from linguistic evidence, or the *metaphorical linguistic expressions* (e.g. "*wasting* my time", "*cost* me an hour", "*budget* your time") which serve as manifestations of underlying *conceptual metaphors* of the form A IS B (TIME IS MONEY[8]). Metaphors, therefore, represent analogies between two different conceptual domains. Their unique tendency to highlight or hide certain aspects of any given concept (e.g. time can be represented by means of different metaphors: TIME IS MONEY, TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT, or time is a substance) allows us to explore how speakers make use of *metaphorical evaluation* in everyday language. In other words, one's lexical choices which belong to a certain conceptual domain can reveal their (positive or negative) stance on a particular issue (see Charteris-Black 2004: 13). Such views can be expressed in language either explicitly, by means of *direct metaphor*: "[censorship is] like* *treating dandruff but with decapitation*", or implicitly by means of *indirect metaphor*: "I think that artistic expression should not be *silenced* or *muted* in any way". It thus becomes evident that metaphors serve as mechanisms of evaluation. The *Appraisal Theory* (Martin, White 2005) provides a framework for studying the language of evaluation, be it "toward phenomena (the entities, happenings, or states of affairs being construed by the text) or toward metaphenomena (propositions about these entities, happenings, and states of affairs)" (White 2015: 1). The theory is central to our research given that it focuses on the means by which the speaker's attitude is overtly encoded, as well as the means of indirect activation of evaluative stances, by which the speaker positions the addressee to provide his own assessment (Martin, White 2005: 2). Conceptual metaphors have long been part of the evaluative language research, largely due to the *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) (Charteris-Black 2004), and Bogetić's (2020) application of Appraisal Theory to metaphorical content in newspaper discourse proves that they can act as complementary approaches when studying language in use.

[8] The example is taken from Lakoff, Johnson (1980: 7–8).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. SUBJECTS

The subjects were third-year English-major students at the Faculty of Philology and Arts, University of Kragujevac. Besides the homogeneity of the sample with regard to the level of undergraduate study, other criteria used in the subject selection process included variables like sex, the informants' L1 and their age. By these criteria, the selected participants (N = 10) ended up being female speakers of approximately the same age (mean age = 21.1; SD = 0.32), and they all spoke Serbian as their native language. The subjects were compensated with course credit for their voluntary involvement in the present research.

2.2. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURE

When choosing the particular conversational topic, we opted for the one we deemed had a greater likelihood of generating more opposing views. We also purposefully set a somewhat broad topic, that is, the subjects were free to discuss the impact of censorship on various art forms (ranging from music, movies, literature, to painting and photography). In order to elicit conversational speech samples, the subjects were asked to record their views on the topic. The obtained recordings were then orthographically transcribed. The transcribed corpus comprised 6796 words while the total duration of the recordings was 57 min and 26 secs.[9] These transcripts were then used so as to identify the tokens of different stance polarity. Therefore, our transcripts of spoken data have been split into lexical units (6973) and analyzed in accordance with the *Metaphor Identification Procedure VU* (Steen et al. 2010). Namely, we primarily consulted the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online* to see if there is a more basic sense against which the contextual sense of each unit could be identified as metaphorical. However, when the more basic sense was not recorded by *Longman*, we resorted to *Cambridge Dictionary Online* in order to separate concrete and abstract senses. For instance, the linguistic expression *abusive* in "I think these songs now are just *abusive*", typically denotes a human referent that is "using physical violence and emotional cruelty" (*Cambridge Dictionary Online*, sense 2), but refers to the practice of "using rude and offensive words" (*Cambridge Dictionary Online*, sense 1) in songs in this context. Since there is a similarity between these two meanings that refer to two different referents, we mark the word as related to metaphor. The units which were discarded for metaphor analysis included vocalized sounds (e.g. *um*, *uh*, *hm*,

[9] Due to space limitations, only segments of the transcribed corpus will be presented in this paper. They will serve as an illustration of the observations that were made.

huh, sighs) and false starts (e.g. "the ~~ca~~– the, the, the kids' heads", "~~woma~~– I think Suzan", "so ~~defin~~ so that, uh…")[10]. It is worth noting that spoken discourse data scores lowest in metaphor density, while the majority of the metaphors that do appear in this register belong to highly conventional metaphors (Steen et al. 2010: 63), such as TO USE OFFENSIVE WORDS IS TO USE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE which was linguistically expressed by the word *abusive* in the example given above. Our first hypothesis was that we would encounter conventional metaphors, but that the overall metaphor density in our transcripts would be low. Since the mapping of states, entities and relations typically goes from concrete source domains to abstract target domains, metaphorical evaluation is achieved by transferring one's evaluation of the source domain onto the target domain (Bogetić 2020: 125). The previously mentioned word *abusive* refers to a violent individual, its negative evaluation is transferred onto the target song. The surrounding context helped in deciding whether the metaphorical linguistic expressions actually served an evaluative purpose, after which the expressions that displayed positive evaluation were marked with a "+" sign (e.g. *well-constructed*+), negative evaluation was marked accordingly with a "–" sign (e.g. *abusive*–), while borderline cases were marked as "neutral", following the methodology presented in Bogetić (2020). The basic idea is that each metaphorical linguistic expression is assigned a + or a – sign. After annotating the corpus for stance polarity, we proceeded with the acoustic analysis of the annotated units.

Considering that stance can be expressed not only via lexico-grammatical devices, but prosodic properties (fundamental frequency (F_0) and intensity) as well (Gray, Biber 2012: 19; Freeman 2019: 3), the said set of parameters was examined for the purpose of the current research. Fundamental frequency (F_0) is the acoustic correlate of pitch and it is dependent on the speed of the vocal fold vibration (Ladefoged 2003). The average F_0 for women falls within the range of 150–300 Hz, with the average values being around 220 Hz (Clark, Yallop 1995: 240). Intensity refers to the amount of energy present in a sound, and it is expressed in decibels [dB] (Cruttenden 1997: 3). The perceptual correlate of intensity is loudness. As in some other studies of this kind (e.g. Freeman 2014, 2019), fundamental frequency and intensity were measured at vowel midpoint, and their means were calculated as the means of all pitch and intensity values that were extracted for the stance-conveying words.

[10] Following the MIPVU, compounds (e.g. *self-control*, *primary school*, *video game*), phrasal verbs (e.g. *deal with*, *agree with*, *give off*, *check out*), and polywords (e.g. *of course*, *for example*, *a bit*, *et cetera*) were marked as single lexical units.

2.3. MEASUREMENTS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The acoustic analysis of the collected speech samples (sampling frequency: 44.1 kHz, resolution: 24-bit) was performed using *Praat*, version 6.2.13 (Boersma, Weenink 2021). The obtained acoustic data were then analyzed statistically using the *R* statistical software, version 4.2.1 (R Development Core Team 2022). Both descriptive, as well as inferential statistics were generated. So as to check the data for normality, the *Shapiro–Wilk test* was employed. The p-value of less than 0.05 indicated that the data were not normally distributed, in which case the *Mann–Whitney U test* was used for determining whether there are significant statistical differences between different data sets. Conversely, the data were considered to follow normal distribution if the p-value was above 0.05, which resulted in the use of the *Independent Samples T-test* (Larson-Hall 2015: 119). The differences between the compared data sets were judged to be statistically significant if the p-value was less than 0.05 (Ibid.: 65). The following segment presents the findings of the conducted research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We will first turn to the results of the linguistic analysis. Namely, one key observation that emerges concerns the distribution of metaphor in spoken discourse. Conversation typically contains the lowest proportion of metaphorical expressions (see Steen et al. 2010: 195), and a low degree of metaphoricity was observed in our data as well. This means that our subjects' speech was predominantly marked by literal or non-metaphorical language (underlined):

1. I completely agree with the fact that censorship <u>should not exist</u>.

2. […] but it doesn't mean you should basically slap… uh… that sticker on the album, because that album cover might as well be… uh… <u>a piece of art</u>.

3. Because I don't think you can control, especially today, what your child… uh… watches and listens to, because… So, the sticker's pretty <u>useless</u> t- in today's society.

4. The thing with the parental advisory sticker… I mean, it's <u>OK</u>.

5. […] people SHOULD become familiar with violence, and curse words, and even some… segments, some ideas, some concepts that are not… um… necessarily… <u>humane</u>.

However, the examples in which censorship was represented by means of metaphorically used lexical items indicated that metaphorical evaluation played an important role, given that only three cases (italicized expressions below) were

marked as neutral. While the expressions in 6 (containing the linguistic manifestation of the UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING conventional metaphor) and 7 (an example of the direct metaphor CENSORSHIP IS A TOOL) have no evaluative meaning, the one in 8 represents a borderline case as both the basic ("fairly warm") and contextual sense ("not serious enough to cause much suffering") are neutral.

> 6. I'm like…THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, you–yo… you're trying to censor something and you basically don't *see*… uh… some things that–that's [sic] happening… in front of your eyes.
>
> 7. I think that censorship is used as a *tool* by powerful people to silence their critics and opponents.
>
> 8. But I would just say that those songs back then were just kind of *mild*, if that makes sense.

Negative assessment predominated in the transcripts, largely due to the expressions belonging to the domain of PHYSICAL VIOLENCE (9–14), which highlighted the explicit or vulgar content in songs, the detrimental effects of censorship, or expressed one's support for the practice, followed by the domain of SENSES (15–16) which highlighted the damaging effect censorship could have on one's reasoning and functioning in the world.

> 9. I think these songs now are just *abusive*, I think that's the right word.
>
> 10. With censorship, artist's ideas and messages are destroyed, um… as well as free speech, since uh… the art, as well as music, should express that, and with censorship it's *assaulted*.
>
> 11. And, like, I–I love the… Frank Zappa's [laugh] commentary that you should, it's like* *treating dandruff but with decapitation*.
>
> 12. Suzan, um… used to like uh… Chocolate Barry who is known for his hits that are full of topics that seem to her violent and that can *harm* children.[11]
>
> 13. I think it's very contradictory to *fight* for censoring and banning something that you actually listened to uh… in your youth.
>
> 14. And also, I believe that censorship will… um… will not… definitively *exterminate*… um… violence or… any other… um… type of aggression from this world just because we cannot see it.
>
> 15. [Censorship is] making them… in some sort… uh…uh… *blind* and even *deaf* to [the] real world.

[11] Contrary to the lexical unit *abuse*, Longman dictionary does separate the physical ("to physically hurt a person or animal", sense 2) and abstract sense ("to have a bad effect on something", sense 1) of the verb *to harm*.

16. So, what I also think is that if you *mute* artistic expression, we might lessen the importance and um… fail to raise awareness of certain touchy subjects.

Some examples expressed the underlying metaphor PROTECTION IS A COVER, as illustrated by the examples 17 and 18. Since the act of exposing one to vulgar language and explicit content is conventionally represented as an act of uncovering, these expressions have a negative evaluation. Other examples (19–20), however, focus on the act of hiding (the true meaning of the lyrics or ignoring certain topics).

17. I mean, she could've just… I don't know, taken away the CD and… If you really wan– If you don't want to *expose* your children to that kind of language.

18. The point is actually to be *EXPOSED* to… violence, vulgar language, and so on, so as to… to make people… um… learn how to behave in certain… [sigh] in certain events, in cert–certain situations, in certain contexts as well.

19. And I'm like… YEAH… IT'S WHAT IT SAYS IN THE LYRICS, YOU SHOULD JUST… READ IT, and it's basically *masked* with LALALALALA… uh… sound.

20. I think artistic expression should definitely not be silenced or muted in any way, that it would be just um… ignoring or uh… *swiping* [sic] *under the carpet* […].

Other conceptual metaphors observed in our dataset (given in brackets) have been proposed on the basis of a small number of linguistic metaphors, usually just one instance, but they display negative evaluation as well:

21. Uh… and to me, censorship seems like a way of *controlling* people's mind. (MENTAL CONTROL IS PHYSICAL CONTROL)

22. I would just say that she should have seen that coming based on some of his previous songs and albums which were also *dirty* and inappropriate. (IMMORAL IS DIRTY)

23. So there are lots of examples nowadays whenever we see, uh, rap, hip-hop artists when they perform live they, uh… never ever use those words and they censor their music which really does, um… *degrade*, let's say, uh… their song, because that's what the song is NOT meant to be. (TO IMPAIR THE QUALITY IS TO DEGRADE A SUBSTANCE)

The metaphorical linguistic expressions with positive evaluation, though significantly less frequent, occurred when the speakers were presenting other people's opinion, i.e. the artists that want to "*beat* this parental advisory sticker" or who see censorship as an act of "*treating* dandruff". The former expression is the manifestation of the conventional metaphor TO DEAL WITH A PROBLEM IS TO BEAT SOMEONE IN A COMPETITION, which also implies that the PARENTAL ADVISORY STICKER IS THE OPPONENT. The latter represents a novel metaphor TO CENSOR EXPLICIT CONTENT IS TO TREAT AN ILLNESS. The only instance of a positive subjective view on the practice of censoring artistic expression is presented in 24, where the guiding principles of

the practice are compared with stable structures. In addition, positive metaphorical evaluation was evident in the examples such as the ones in 25–26, which show how the exposure to different content can have a positive outcome:

> 24. Um… censorship is… a *well-constructed* idea. (IDEAS ARE CONSTRUCTIONS)
>
> 25. Like… Satanism in… metal music […] Um… people should become familiar with it so as to *keep an open mind*. (TO BE WILLING TO CONSIDER SOMETHING IS TO BE OPEN < THE MIND IS A CONTAINER)
>
> 26. And people should acknowledge how… other people feel towards something, so they can even *sort out* their own feelings. (TO DEAL WITH ONE'S EMOTIONS IS TO SORT OUT OBJECTS)

Metaphorical evaluation is achieved predominantly through the use of conventional metaphors in this data set, with just a few instances of creative, novel metaphors. As the examples listed illustrate, metaphors, especially novel ones, serve as mechanisms by which the speakers present themselves as more or less aligned with the value position or, in Martin and White's words (2005: 94), mechanisms by which they *graduate* the focus or force of an utterance. For instance, when announcing their attitudinal stance on censorship, one speaker used the expression *treating dandruff but with decapitation* which is the manifestation of the following metaphors: DIRTY LYRICS ARE DANDRUFF, TO REGULATE CONTENT IS TO TREAT DANDRUFF and CENSORING MUSIC IS DECAPITATING. By comparing the content of songs to an illness such as dandruff ("small pieces of dead skin from someone's head that can be seen in their head or on their shoulders", *Longman*), the speaker marks their disalignment with the practice of censorship by opting for an evaluatively charged word *decapitation*, which indicates that the punishment is too severe. Modes of *infused intensification*, where "semantically related terms contrast in degree of intensity with the other members of that sequence" (Martin, White 2005: 144), were more frequent in our data. Such was the case with the metaphorical linguistic expressions of higher degree of intensity: *abusive* (as opposed to *hurtful*), *exterminate* (as opposed to *kill*), or *degrade* (as opposed to *worsen*). The employment of novel metaphors could therefore have a greater effect on listeners and can highlight the issues at stake in a manner that is more memorable compared to their non-figurative equivalents or conventional metaphors.

Our original intent was to observe the differences between the three levels of stance polarity (positive/negative/neutral). However, the number of lexical units that were analyzed acoustically depended on the results of the linguistic analysis. Due to the small number of units expressing the neutral stance (*see*, *tool*, *mild*), we decided to exclude this category from further analysis, so no statistical data is reported for this category. Statistical tests were performed for the remaining two groups (positive and negative stance). The positive stance-conveying words were: *worth*, *sort* (*out*), *open*, *beat*, *treating* and *well-constructed*. The negative stance was

expressed via the following lexical units: *abusive* (x2), *dirty*, *fight*, *fought*, *silence*, *harm*, *assaulted*, *controlling*, *swiping*, *muted*, *silenced*, *silencing*, *mute*, *rebellious*, *degrade*, *deaf*, *blind*, *exposed*, *exterminate*, *way*, *expose*, *fly*, *turning* (*of*), *masked*, *restricting*, *decapitation* and *dandruff*. Table 1 summarizes the results of our analysis.

Table 1. The results of the acoustic analysis and statistical measurements

parameter	stance polarity	$\bar{X}$	SD	test	p
F_0 [Hz]	positive	201	33.14	U = 58	0.294
	negative	221	43.83		
intensity [dB]	positive	67	4.04	t = 1.443	0.159
	negative	70	4.98		

Note. $\bar{X}$ = mean value for the measured parameter; SD = standard deviation; U = the result of the *Mann–Whitney U test*; t = *t-test* result; p = p-value (significance level: $\alpha = 0.05$)

In summary, the data suggests that, on average, expressions signaling negative polarity tend to be pronounced louder and with a higher pitch, compared to the linguistic units denoting a positive stance. The intensity measurements suggest that there is no significant difference between the positive and negative lexical items. Yet, the difference of 3 dB, although not being significant, is perceptible, given that the smallest intensity change humans can detect is the difference of about 1 dB (Everest 2001: 70). Lower intensity values for positive polarity were also found in previous studies (Freeman 2015). The pitch values, although being higher for the negative expressions, did not differentiate them greatly from the positive ones, i.e. no statistical significance was found. Since our subjects' stance was fundamentally more affective in nature, our results can be explained, in part, by observing the findings of several studies on affective vocalization (e.g. Kappas et al. 1991; Lee, Narayanan 2005; Paeschke et al. 1999). Essentially, the research on vocal portrayal of emotions indicates that both positive and negatively valenced emotions typically exhibit an increase in mean intensity and mean F_0, due to a high degree of emotional arousal that characterizes these emotions (Kappas et al. 1991: 214–216; Paeschke et al. 1999: 929). Nevertheless, further research is needed in order to resolve the question of how they differ exactly.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The current paper gives an overview of the findings on how attitudinal assessments are realized through certain metaphorically used lexical items, and how those items, denoting the two levels of stance polarity (positive/negative), differ in terms of their prosodic properties. We observed the spontaneous speech of ten

female students while discussing the topic of censorship. Our results point to the fact that common views on censorship seem to be organized around the following metaphors based on the attitude held towards the practice. Negative views are organized around the mappings: TO CENSOR ART IS DECAPITATE, PARENTAL ADVISORY STICKER IS THE OPPONENT, TO RESTRICT ART IS TO CONTROL ONE'S MOVEMENTS, TO LIMIT ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IS TO MUTE THE SOUND OF SOMETHING, TO MAKE SOMEONE STOP EXPRESSING CRITICISM IS TO SILENCE SOMEONE, TO FAIL TO REALIZE IS TO BE BLIND, TO FAIL TO REALIZE IS TO BE DEAF, TO IGNORE IS TO SWEEP SOMETHING UNDER THE CARPET and IMMORAL IS DIRTY. Conversely, a positive attitude is expressed by the mappings: TO CENSOR EXPLICIT CONTENT IS TO TREAT AN ILLNESS, TO GET RID OF VIOLENCE IS TO EXTERMINATE LIVING BEINGS and TO SUPPORT CENSORSHIP IS TO TAKE PART IN A WAR. Overall, the linguistic analysis showed that the metaphorical evaluation of the target concept proved to be predominantly negative, this in turn shows that the participants in our study largely opposed the act of censoring artistic expression.

The acoustic analysis indicated that negative polarity, in particular, tends to be signaled by an increase in both intensity and pitch, compared to positive polarity. As in some previous studies on this issue (e.g. Freeman et al. 2015, cited in Freeman 2019: 3), positive polarity was expressed with lower intensity. Although there were perceptible differences in loudness between the two polarity levels, statistical difference was not observed ($p > 0.05$). In terms of pitch, negative expressions had the highest pitch values, but the overall results did not show any statistical effect for different polarity levels ($p > 0.05$). Extremely low frequency of occurrence of neutral stance expressions precluded the possibility of their assessment. It is important to note that our research included only female speakers in order to minimize intersubject variability that normally arises when comparing speech of female and male speakers. Perhaps the inclusion of subjects of the opposite sex might yield different results. However, the number of male students who volunteered to participate in the study was below the commonly implemented threshold of at least six speakers of each sex (Ladefoged 2003: 14). The study was further limited by the total number of students who wished to take part in the research. Given these limitations, the prosodic parameters reported here should not be overgeneralized. Further research is needed to obtain more tangible results.

It is important to stress that the degree of stance saturation in our corpus was a direct result of our research methodology, i.e. our decision to focus on (i) metaphorical expressions as stance-conveying units, (ii) the spoken register, and (iii) the subjects' personal style which displayed lower degree of metaphoricity. Our focus on metaphorical evaluation has led to an imbalance in the number of linguistic expressions exhibiting different evaluative meanings. Secondly, our subjects' speech resembled a more casual register, despite the fact that it was carried out in an academic setting, which had led to a high number of non-metaphorically used lexical items. We believe that this could be counteracted by focusing on academic discourse and more abstract topics (Steen et al. 2010: 97). One solution could be

to ask the research subjects to record a reading passage with a higher density of evaluative metaphor, which would yield an even number of lexical units that is necessary for detailed acoustic observations. A more controlled speech would perhaps be more suitable for observations of this kind, since it is very difficult to predict the number of metaphorical expressions in spontaneous utterances. Nevertheless, the results of our preliminary study indicate that the two disciplines can provide complementary methods of analysis, so the future investigation of metaphors that mark a stance can be explored in a study of a larger scale which would include a greater number of subjects and a representative sample of a greater size. As was indicated in the introductory segment of the paper, there are other devices that can mark stance, such as value-laden word choices, grammatical structures, lexico-grammatical combinations, etc. (Biber, Staples 2014; Gray, Biber 2015) that are not necessarily metaphorical. Arguably, there is a greater density of occurrence of such structures in spoken registers. The future stancetaking research would also benefit greatly from observations of that kind.

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Марија Н. Јаневска

Тамара Н. Јаневска

Универзитет у Крагујевцу
Филолошко-уметнички факултет
Центар за научноистраживачки рад

ФОНЕТСКИ И КОГНИТИВНОСЕМАНТИЧКИ ПРИСТУП АНАЛИЗИ НАЧИНА ИЗРАЖАВАЊА СТАВОВА У ГОВОРУ СРПСКИХ СТУДЕНАТА АНГЛИСТИКЕ: ПРЕЛИМИНАРНО ИСТРАЖИВАЊЕ

Резиме: Рад се бави изучавањем ставова из нове перспективе која подразумева укрштање фонетског и когнитивнолингвистичког приступа. Језичку грађу чини транскрибован текст звучних записа говора десет студената енглеског језика који су дискутовали на тему цензуре уметности. Овај комбиновани приступ полази од испитивања метафоричког вредновања, у складу са принципима *теорије вредновања* (Мартин, Вајт 2005) и *теорије појмовне метафоре* (Лејкоф, Џонсон 2003 [1980]). На тај начин, издвојени су метафорички језички изрази који носе позитивно или негативно вредносно одређење, након чега су сагледане варијације у прозодијским карактеристикама говора испитаника (фреквенције основног тона (F_0) и интензитета), како би се утврдило да ли постоје значајне разлике у начину на који испитаници изражавају позитиван и негативан став о датој теми. Утврђено је да говор наших испитаника одликује веома низак степен метафоричности, будући да су се испитаници претежно служили нефигуративним језиком. Конкретно, доминирале су негативне представе које су биле вишег тона и јачег интензитета у односу на мање фреквентне позитивне представе. Разлике, међутим, нису биле статистички значајне. Добијени резултати прелиминарног истраживања указују на потенцијане тенденције, стога дати предложени модел завредњује пажњу у истраживању већег обима.

Кључне речи: ставови, прозодија, појмовна метафора, теорија вредновања, српски ученици енглеског језика као страног.