

LANGUAGE & EMOTIONS IN THE DISCOURSE OF REFUGEES & MIGRANTS: A RESEARCH AGENDA

1.
INTRODUCTION

2. UNDERSTANDING
THE NARRATIVES OF
DISTANCE

3. WHAT'S IN
THE MIND?

4. RESEARCH AGENDA:
A PROPOSAL

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1. INTRODUCTION

ASSESSING
REALITY

WHAT'S IN A
NAME?

A large teal circle is centered on the page. Inside the circle, the words "ASSESSING" and "REALITY" are written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, stacked vertically. Below them, the words "A PREMISE" are written in a smaller, black, uppercase, sans-serif font. The background of the slide features a light gray grid pattern, a black and white cross-hatch pattern in the top left, and a teal shape on the left side.

ASSESSING REALITY

A PREMISE

A PREMISE

What do we listen to when we are talking to migrants/refugees? transactional vs. interactional communication

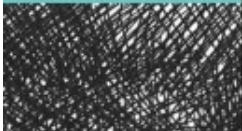
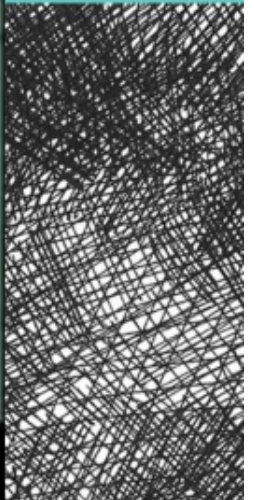
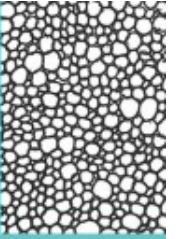
Narration of objective vs. subjective events

It is important to listen to the narratives of refugees and migrants to understand their positive and negative emotions.

Language is the window to the mind

A VIDEO





WHAT'S IN A NAME?

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE WORLD

Current, massive displacement of populations world-wide, with the accompanying problems of adjustment, physically, economically, culturally, as well as psychologically

How not to lose your soul when your body is crossing boundaries.

Migrants leave their home, their relatives, their friends, behind...and their names?

Mey, J. (2004) Between culture and pragmatics: Scylla and Charybdis? The precarious condition of intercultural pragmatics. *Intercultural Pragmatics 1: 27-48*

A TRUE STORY

When young Jacob Sementery (born March 22, 1882) arrived in the port of New York, on board the S/S "Kensington," from Antwerp, Belgium.

On March 31, 1902, he left behind not only his native country (then Russia, now a part of Poland), but also his "native" name: he was registered (and later naturalized) as "Jake Smith."

Migrants and refugees have to learn a new language. Cannot we learn their names, their pronunciations, their spellings...?

The story of two Syrian sisters with different surnames

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2. UNDERSTANDING THE NARRATIVES OF DISTANCE

THEORETICAL
APPROACHES
TO HAPPINESS

CORPUS PRAGMATICS: A
TOOL FOR THE ANALYSIS OF
BIG DATA IN DISCOURSE

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO HAPPINESS

Vroome and Hooghe (2013, p.1390) describe emigrants' happiness as the result of "the fulfillment of human needs, including basic physiological needs and the needs for safety, love and belonging, esteem and personal growth"

Vroome, Thomas, and Marc Hooghe. 2014. Life Satisfaction among Ethnic Minorities in the Netherlands: Immigration Experience or Adverse Living Conditions? *Journal of Happiness Studies* 15: 1389-1406.

THE NATURAL SEMANTIC
METALANGUAGE

THE NATURAL SEMANTIC METALANGUAGE

Objective: to examine human cognition and emotions from a non-arbitrary and non-ethnocentric perspective.

Same emotions realised differently according to cultures and languages

Wierzbicka, Anna. 1999. *Emotions across languages and cultures: diversity and universals*. Cambridge University Press

Goddard, Cliff and Zhengdao, Ye. (eds.). 2016. *"Happiness" and "Pain" across Languages and Cultures*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

THE ETHNOPRAGMATICS
OF LANGUAGE

THE ETHNOPRAGMATICS OF LANGUAGE

Analysis of Semantic Primes and Cultural Scripts
across languages: some examples

- Study of the universal notion of beauty in
different languages and cultures

Gladkova, A. & Romero-Trillo, J. (2014) Ain't it beautiful? The
conceptualization of beauty from an ethnoprismatic perspective.
Journal of Pragmatics 60: 140-159.

- Analysis of 'sadness' in Chinese

Ye, Zhengdao. 2001. An inquiry into 'sadness' in Chinese. In *Emotions in
Crosslinguistics Perspective*, eds. Jean Harkins and Anna Wierzbicka,
359-404. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.



CORPUS PRAGMATICS: A TOOL FOR THE
ANALYSIS OF BIG DATA IN DISCOURSE

THE ANALYSIS OF
EMOTIONS IN
MIGRANTS' NARRATIVES

THE ANALYSIS
OF MIGRANTS'
CONVERSATIONS

THE ANALYSIS OF EMOTIONS IN MIGRANTS' NARRATIVES

Romero-Trillo & Avila-Ledesma (2016) The ethnopragmatic representation of positive and negative emotions in Irish immigrant's letters, in K. Allan, A. Capone and I. Kecskes. *Pragmemes and Theories of Language Use*. Springer. 393-420.

AIMS OF
THE STUDY

METHODOLOGY

POSITIVE AND
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

WHAT PRAGMEMES
REFLECT HAPPY AND
UNHAPPY EMOTIONS?

AIMS OF THE STUDY

Ethnopragmatic conceptualization of the narratives of Irish migrants in the US and their expression of happiness and sadness.

Natural Semantic Metalanguage examination of the emotional load of the positive adjectives *happy* and *glad*, and their negative counterparts, *unhappy* and *sad*

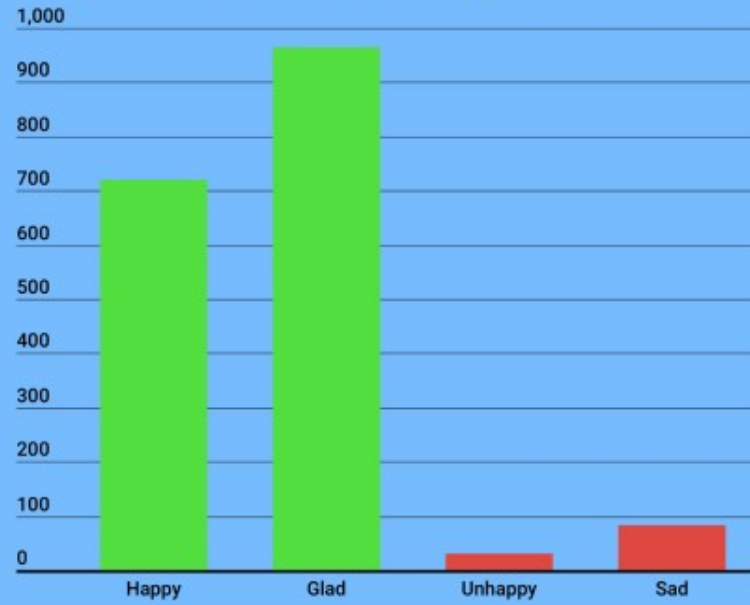
METHODOLOGY

Corpus Pragmatics analysis of 2,106 narratives (personal letters)
total: 2,005,079 words

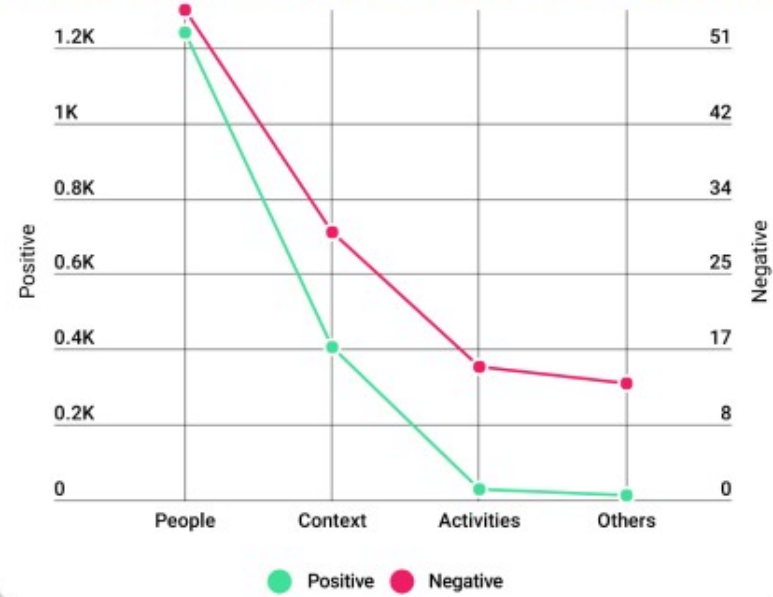
The unit of analysis was the 'pragmeme': cf. a situated speech act in which the rules of language and of society combine in determining meaning.

Different contexts: family, religion, leisure, finance, friends, etc.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS



WHAT PRAGMEMES REFLECT HAPPY AND UNHAPPY EMOTIONS?




THE ANALYSIS OF MIGRANTS' CONVERSATIONS

Harrington, K. (2017) Corpus Analysis: Pragmatic Conclusions. *Corpus Pragmatics* 1: 297-326

Corpus-based investigation of 48,000 words of lingua fran...

RESULTS

CONCLUSIONS



Corpus-based investigation of 48,000 words of lingua franca English transcribed from recordings of interaction between residents of asylum-seeking centre and native-English speaking staff and amongst the residents themselves over a 3 year period.

RESULTS

Of all the list of words, the first 300 words constitute 80% of all the vocabulary of the lingua franca

The first 100 words account for 64% of the total words.

These results were compared with the average use of English by native speakers and with the average vocabulary of L2 teaching textbooks. Disparity

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the lingua franca in this corpus shows how people who do not have access to a shared language or culture, co-construct meaning in talk-in-interaction in limited way, without communication challenges

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3. WHAT'S IN THE MIND?

CURRENT RESEARCH ON
EMOTIONS IN COGNITIVE
LINGUISTICS

Refugees flee
from situations
involving fear:
war, terr...

Emotional
reactivity is
lower in a forei...



CURRENT RESEARCH ON EMOTIONS IN COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

Recent research has found that two of the most indicative mental and physical measures of the response to fear -the dilation of the pupils and the sweating of the skin- showed a lesser effect of conditioning to fear when participants when the prevailing language was the foreign language.

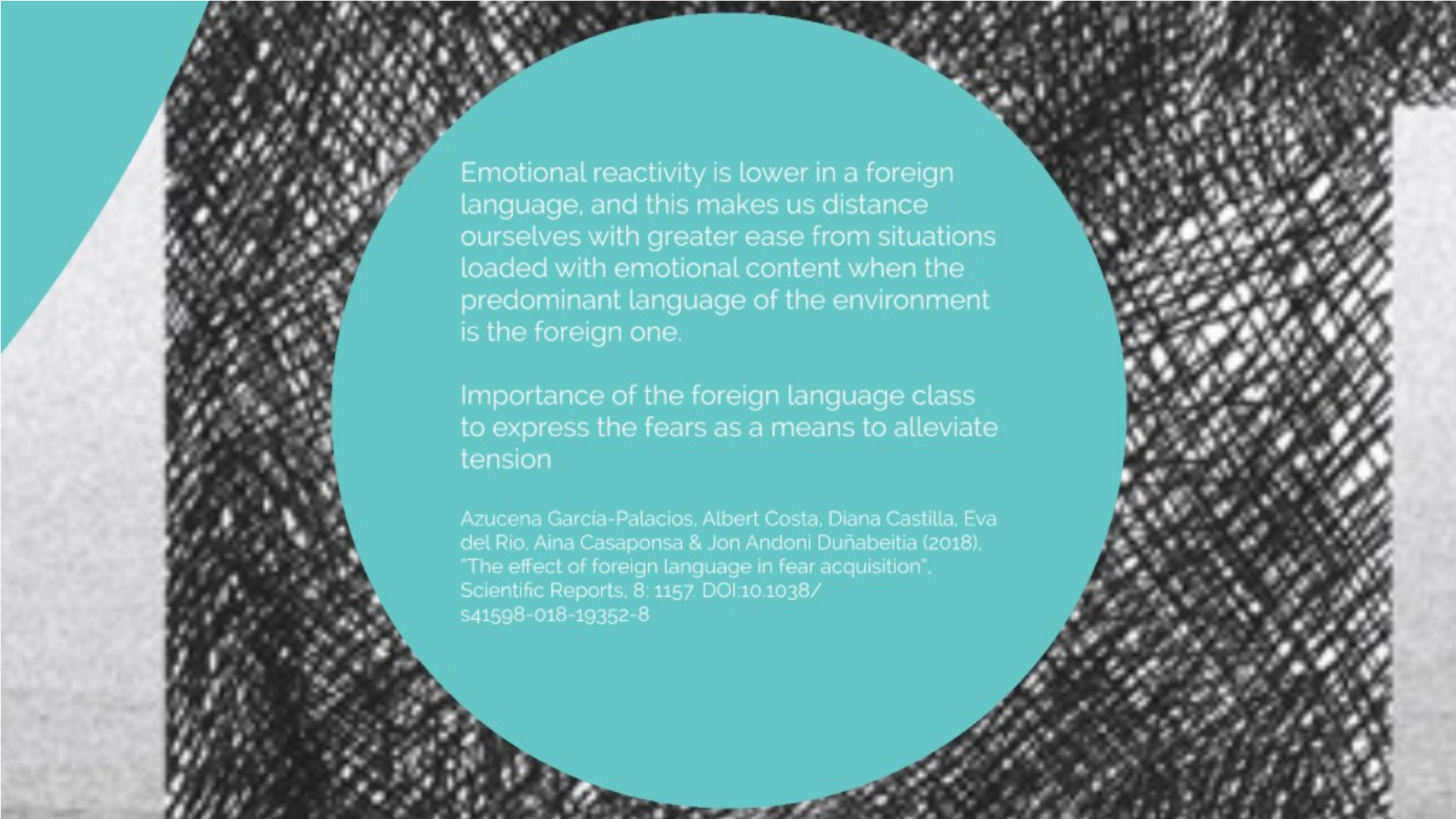


Refugees flee from situations involving fear:
war, terror, natural disasters.

The asylum process involves a recount of
their experience, with the aid of interpreters.

The narratives often cause a mental
blockage when they recall their experiences

NYT (16 March 2018) on recollections of
violence suffered by Yazidi women in
Canada, Interviews in Kurmanji



Emotional reactivity is lower in a foreign language, and this makes us distance ourselves with greater ease from situations loaded with emotional content when the predominant language of the environment is the foreign one.

Importance of the foreign language class to express the fears as a means to alleviate tension

Azucena Garcia-Palacios, Albert Costa, Diana Castilla, Eva del Rio, Aina Casaponsa & Jon Andoni Duñabeitia (2018), "The effect of foreign language in fear acquisition", *Scientific Reports*, 8: 1157. DOI:10.1038/s41598-018-19352-8

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4. RESEARCH AGENDA: A PROPOSAL

1. COMPILE A CORPUS OF NARRATIVES AND INTERVIEWS
2. ANALYSE THE EMOTIONAL LOAD OF WORK...

1. COMPILER A CORPUS OF NARRATIVES AND INTERVIEWS
2. ANALYSE THE EMOTIONAL LOAD OF WORDS
3. DESIGN TAILOR-MADE LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS TO ALLEVIATE TRAUMAS AND FOSTER INTEGRATION

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