

# Culinary Linguistics

*The chef's special*

Culture and Language Use

EDITED BY  
Cornelia Gerhardt  
Maximiliane Frobenius  
Susanne Ley

10

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# Culinary Linguistics

# *Culture and Language Use*

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### **Volume 10**

Culinary Linguistics. The chef's special  
Edited by Cornelia Gerhardt, Maximiliane Frobenius and Susanne Ley

# Culinary Linguistics

The chef's special

*Edited by*

Cornelia Gerhardt

Maximiliane Frobenius

Susanne Ley

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John Benjamins Publishing Company

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*Für Chef*



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This volume has been prepared for Neal R. Norrick on the occasion of his 65th birthday.<sup>1</sup>

Neal R. Norrick holds the Chair of English linguistics at the English department of Saarland University, where he has spent most of his career. He received his doctorate from the University of Regensburg in 1978 and taught English linguistics at a number of German universities (Würzburg, Kassel, Hamburg, and Braunschweig) as well as at Northern Illinois University.

His research focuses on spoken English, with a particular attention to narrative as well as verbal humor, and is rooted in the wide field of pragmatics. His monographs include *Conversational Joking: Humor in Everyday Talk* and the popular *Conversational Narrative*, which has recently been reprinted in paperback edition.

He co-edited a handbook on phraseology and volumes on the *Foundations of Pragmatics* and on *Humor in Interaction*, which has also seen a reprint in paperback. After many years as Special Issues Editor, he is now Co-Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Pragmatics*. He also serves on the Consultation Board of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA) as well as on the editorial boards of a number of journals from the fields of pragmatics and humor studies (e.g. *Text and Talk* and *Humor*).

In this millennium only, he has published more than 50 articles in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes reflecting his manifold interests in language in use, its forms and functions, including topics as diverse as conjunctions, interjections, pragmatic markers, tellability, swearing, remembering, listener practices, similes, scripted performances, laughter, conflict, and the construction of identities in talk. Uniting his two passions, language and cooking, he has worked on recipes as early as 1983. His recent addition to the field of culinary linguistics is on “Conversational recipe telling” (2011).

The articles in this volume were written and assembled as a token of gratitude and affection for our teacher, mentor and colleague.

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1. We would like to thank the student helpers of English linguistics, above all Isabel Schul and Daniel Recktenwald, for their help, and also our colleagues at the English department of Saarland University and everybody else for not “spilling the beans.”



# Aperitivo



# Overview of the volume

Maximiliane Frobenius  
Saarland University

The present volume contains a collection of original research articles from multiple disciplines, revolving around the common theme of language and food and the manifestation of the two within their cultural framework. This section gives a brief overview of the general structure of the volume and of the individual contributions.

Similar to the intricate task of composing a four course meal for invited guests, the assembling of an edited volume demands a sense of “what goes together.” The metaphor of the menu serves as the vehicle for the order of contributions: we start with an introduction to the whole field of research (*Antipasti*), move on to contributions in the form of original research articles (*Primi Piatti* and *Secondi Piatti*), and close with a bibliography of language and food (*Dolci*). The first set of articles, *Primi Piatti*, has been grouped together for its clear focus on language as it is used in specific genres whose main themes are food related. These encompass both spoken and written genres in both electronically mediated settings and printed or even hand-written documents. The second set, *Secondi Piatti*, represents research on food related language use within specific cultural settings, where it represents a tool to shape and construct the context it is situated in. These contexts range from the perpetuation of gender roles, controlling the degree of formality in a work setting, or expressing a commercial register through the naming of businesses. Thus, we might say that the *Primi Piatti* contributions work from a more specifically linguistic perspective, or a micro-level analysis, compared to the *Secondi Piatti* studies, which take a macro-level stance in that they investigate phenomena of the cultural setting and therefore go beyond a purely linguistic analysis.

**Gerhardt’s** introduction to this volume, our mouthwatering *Antipasti*, represents an extensive review of the literature revolving around food and food practices. It begins with the interdisciplinary study of food in various fields and subsequently closes in on the more focused description of language studies pertaining to food and its discourses.

*Primi Piatti* is headed by **Diemer and Frobenius**, “*When making pie, all ingredients must be chilled. Including you*”: *Lexical, syntactic and interactive features*

*in online discourse – a synchronic study of food blogs.* This study of food blogs illuminates the written CMC (computer-mediated communication) genre using a hybrid approach. The qualitative analysis of addressee directed language confirms the primarily interactive character of the genre blog. The quantitative study of the Food Blog Corpus (FBC) is the basis for a lexical and syntactic analysis, which provides information on the use and frequencies of (1) CMC related phenomena: innovative vocabulary and spelling; (2) food related jargon: specialized vocabulary, grammatical patterns; (3) phenomena related to spoken interaction: discourse markers, hedges and address.

**Chiaro** *Passionate about food: Jamie and Nigella and the performance of food-talk* presents research on the genre of TV cookery shows. Following a brief history of this genre on British television, the study moves on to investigate two popular TV chefs and their (linguistic) presentation skills in more detail. The comparison of Nigella Lawson's and Jamie Oliver's verbal output examines features such as their choice of lexis, how they give instructions, their use of vague language and how they display emotion. The analysis of the two chefs' programs reveals that these shows' popularity is based on the entertainment value of the presenters as much as (or more than) the preparation of dishes that can be learned from them.

**Fischer** demonstrates the applicability of the notion of recipient design to the text type recipe in *The addressee in the recipe: How Julia Child gets to join you in the kitchen.* The comparison of four cook books, including Julia Child's famous *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, is an important contribution towards a more thorough description of strategies of reader involvement in document design. The analysis reveals the provision of background knowledge, the pointing out of various alternatives in the cooking process, and the anticipation of potentially problematic situations a cook may encounter as major strategies to instantiate and acknowledge the presence of the reader.

**Arendholz, Bublitz, Kirner, and Zimmermann** *Food for thought – or, what's (in) a recipe? A diachronic analysis of cooking instructions* compares two recipes of the same dish, one from Middle English, the other from a contemporary source, i.e. Jamie Oliver's website. The study points out the difficulties such a comparison entails regarding a functional analysis; the formal analysis reveals parallels in terms of, e.g. syntactic constructions and lexical codification.

The historical linguistics perspective is continued by **Diemer** *Recipes and food discourse in English – a historical menu.* The contribution provides a diachronic overview of the discourse of food on the basis of various examples of recipes and more general food related texts from Old English to the late 20th century. It traces lexis, syntax and discourse features and thereby illustrates several tendencies, such as the focus on a less and less professional audience, the gradual introduction of

more precise measurements and more procedural detail, and an overall reduction in lexical complexity.

**Bubel and Spitz** *The way to intercultural learning is through the stomach – Genre-based writing in the EFL classroom* discusses the text type recipe as a genre that can be fruitfully used in classroom settings to develop intercultural communicative competence. The analysis of the students' products proved the effectiveness of the teaching approach, in that the learners' writings contained most of the key features of typical English-language recipes, and in that the series of lessons reported on had the effect of raising students' awareness of their own food cultures as well as those of the English-speaking world.

In summary, Primi Piatti is a set of papers that each investigates one particular food-related genre. It covers the text type recipe in its written form both diachronically as well as synchronically in several contexts. Furthermore, spoken discourse on TV and the relatively new genre food blog, as mediated genres, form the data of some of the contributions.

**Secondi Piatti** starts with **Holmes, Marra and King** *How permeable is the formal-informal boundary at work? An ethnographic account of the role of food in workplace discourse*. From this paper we learn that talk about food makes a contribution similar to that of other aspects of relational workplace interaction, such as humor, small talk and narrative. These tend to occur at the boundaries of interaction, which they help construct. Talk about food generates informality, such that when it occurs as a legitimate, socially sanctioned topic for meetings, it causes interactional trouble.

**Kotthoff** *Comparing drinking toasts – Comparing contexts* is a study on toasting practices in Georgia, Russia and Sweden, where the toasting tradition is central to everyday life, and Germany and the Netherlands, where toasting plays a comparatively smaller role. Toasts are generally characterized as 'doing culture'; this practice is co-ordinated by the *tamada* in the Georgian tradition, a master of ceremony, who controls the degree of formality. The study finds that foreigners to a culture tend to adapt choosing humorous toasts and/or fulfill the minimal genre standards, which is met with acceptance by the host culture. This practice indexes both affiliation and connection as well as otherness.

**Fellner** *The flavors of multi-ethnic North American Literatures: language, ethnicity and culinary nostalgia* adopts a literary and cultural critic's perspective in analyzing the function of culinary nostalgia in narratives of dislocation. The discussion of three contemporary texts by multi-ethnic North American authors reveals that the evocation of food goes beyond acting as a language for expressing nostalgia, in that it functions to structure the narrators' ambivalent relationship to ethnicity. As transmitter of affect, it is argued, narrative descriptions of food and food preparation engage *culinary citizenship*.

**Fuller, Briggs and Dillon-Sumner** *Men eat for muscle, women eat for weight loss: Discourses about food and gender in Men's Health and Women's Health magazines* discusses the construction of hegemonic femininities and masculinities with regard to food choices as found in two magazines targeted at women and men respectively. The qualitative study shows how the notions of guilt and morality are closely linked to food consumption, and that articles and ads in those magazines employ them to create hetero-normative identities that depict women as in need of controlling their eating behavior and men as under pressure to perform.

**Serwe, Ong and Ghesquière** "*Bon Appétit, Lion City*": *The use of French in naming restaurants in Singapore* explores the use of French on restaurant signs in Singapore, giving both a quantitative and qualitative account of the forms and meanings of the names in relation to their respective business. The study uncovers a correspondence between the idiomaticity/mixing of languages and the type of food served: monolingual, idiomatic French names predominantly belong to restaurants specializing in French food; multilingual, non-idiomatic names often denote cafes or bakeries selling non-French food.

**Ankerstein and Pereira** *Talking about Taste: starved for words* is a psycholinguistic study of the taste vocabulary of English speakers. It challenges the assumption that words map directly onto physiological and psychological constructs, as the tasks this research is based on show that participants' knowledge of taste is far greater than their use of taste words suggests. The morphological properties of these lexemes, and their use are explored through collocation searches in the COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English).

To sum up, *Secondi Piatti* combines papers that approach the study of food discourse and food genres as they are embedded in larger discourse patterns and (cross-) cultural settings. This section thus contributes to our understanding of the effects these genres have on societal structures in that they can be employed as tools to express various kinds of meaning.

**Dolci**, our comprehensive *Bibliography: Food and language* represents the final section of this volume.

# Antipasti



Ich esse selbst täglich.  
(Loriot)

Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es.  
(Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin)

I will not dwell upon ragouts or roasts,  
Albeit all human history attests  
That happiness for man – the hungry sinner! –  
Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.  
(Lord Byron)

## Food and language – language and food

Cornelia Gerhardt  
Saarland University

### 1. Introduction

Eating and talking are universal human traits. Every healthy human being eats and talks; every society or group eats and talks. Both language and food are culturally dependent and vary according to factors such as gender, age, or situational context, or even lifestyle. There are vast differences both in the food-related behavior of different cultures as well as in the languages of the world. There is nothing natural or inevitable about food preferences or syntactic structures. “Food is a bridge between nature and culture” (Fischler 1988 in Germov & Williams 2008: 1)<sup>1</sup> and so is language. Brillat-Savarin, one of the earliest food writers, claimed: “Tell me what you eat, I will tell you what you are” (1825: 3). Again, linguists and other social scientists have shown that identity is constructed through language. Hence, “every coherent social group has its own unique foodways” (Counihan 1999: 6) and its own unique language use. You are different or you are the same depending on what you eat and how you speak. “If we are to understand women’s gender roles..., we need to study food” (Inness 2001a: 4) and, the linguist adds, language. “If there is one issue as deeply personal as food it is language and dialect” (Delamont 1995: 193).

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1. All references in the introductory chapter can be found in the bibliography *Dolci* at the end of this volume.

Both food and language are used to maintain and create human relationships. The dinner table is a rich site for socialization and language acquisition. Eating and talking are used to construct social hierarchies, class, ethnicity, caste, the difference between rich and poor. The way we speak and what we eat is not based on individual choice only, but also on the society we live in and the place in society we occupy or wish to occupy. Both food and language have an intricate connection to power: in the world at large (the distribution of meat, of land) as well as in smaller groups (*Father gets served first!*). Because of this interconnectedness on so many plains, both eating and talking can only be grasped in their context. “Foodways can only be understood holistically” (Anderson 2005:7), and so can language.

Food is not only sustenance and language not only a tool to transmit information. Only humans flavor their food and create unique dishes and food styles, such as sandwiches and banquets, Chicken Tikka Masala or French cuisine. Similarly, only humans have created a communication system that allows for international treaties and scribbled shopping lists, for haikus and email. National foods and national languages are claimed to construct national identity (Peckham 1998:174). Since both do more than cater for bare necessities, they represent perfect sites for social studies.

In Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*, a madeleine soaked in tea evokes long-lost childhood memories (cf. Sutton 2001). The taste of this cake brings forth chains of associations connected to the protagonist’s early years. Words can have the same magic. In a current column of the German weekly *Die Zeit* entitled *Mein Wortschatz* (‘my lexicon,’ literally ‘my word treasure’) readers can send in their favorite words. Often words are suggested which have a slightly archaic ring to them, such as *Augenweide* or *Fremdenzimmer*. According to the readers of the newspaper, these words also bring back fond childhood memories.

While food enters the body through the mouth, language leaves the body through the same cavity in its primary, spoken form. This physical proximity may produce a need for complementarity, to a certain extent as a necessity (Swadesh 1971:9), but also as a culturally constructed norm: either you eat or you speak (Elias 1939; Visser 1993).

Both food and language are fabricated by building larger units out of smaller entities: ingredients make dishes make meals; sounds make words make utterances make texts (cf. Halliday’s analogy between the categories of eating like daily menus, meals, courses, helpings, mouthfuls and categories of grammar like sentences, clauses, groups/phrases, words, morphemes 1961, cf. also Lévi-Strauss below). Both depend on the social context and their actual use by people at a specific moment for their meaning: a bun as such is devoid of meaning, a bun served in bed on a Sunday morning together with other breakfast ingredients is a meaningful act. The 1st person pronoun *I* is unclear unless used by a specific speaker in a social context *I care*.

Furthermore, food consumption and language use together often characterize settings, speech events or space. At a Western birthday party, the verbal act of congratulating as well as a cake as food choice constitute core elements. In a transcendental setting like the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ are consumed while a set of specific words are pronounced. The German word *Kaffeeklatsch* denotes a specific type of meal ‘coffee and cake in the afternoon’ with the help of the accompanying verbal activity ‘klatschen’, i.e. ‘gossiping’. Beer gardens, pubs, or coffee shops evoke certain food items and specific verbal activities (Oldenburg 1989; Laurier 2005).

This volume attempts to describe the connection between these two fundamental human social acts: eating and using language. This introduction will start by sketching the interdisciplinary study of food in various disciplines. The main part will consist of an overview of studies about language and food.

## 2. The study of food

Because of its centrality to human kind, food has been discovered as a fruitful topic by a number of disciplines, especially in the second half and at the end of the 20th century. As we will see, the study of food often reflects current paradigms such as behaviorism, structuralism or functionalism, and the interdisciplinary nature of food studies soon becomes evident. Many great thinkers, be they philosophers, sociologists or anthropologists, have encountered questions about food in their general work about human nature, as the following section will illustrate.

### 2.1 Classic early literature

Already in 1798, Kant described the limits of different sense experiences as part of his general interest in the human capacity to understand and gain knowledge, *Erkenntnisvermögen* (Kant 2000). The French lawyer and politician Brillat-Savarin is considered one of the founding fathers of gastronomic writing (Mennell 2005: 240). The great gourmand lay down his experiences and experiments in his *Physiologie du goût* in 1825. Early works in sociology include Veblen. In 1899, his influential idea of *conspicuous consumption* depicted food choice as a means of publically displaying social power and prestige. Furthermore, Simmel claimed in 1910 that a meal is worthy of sociological enquiry:

because the shared meal elevates an event of physiological primitiveness and inevitable generality into the sphere of social interaction, and hence of supra-personal significance, it has acquired in some earlier epochs an immense social value...  
(Simmel [1910] 1997: 131)

One “of the lesser deities in the sociological pantheon” (Mennell et al. 1992:2) concerned with food was Norbert Elias with his work on table manners (1939). Bourdieu’s description of the social stratification of French society explaining preferences in food choice (1979) came 6th place as *Book of the Century* (the 20th) by a members’ vote of the International Sociological Association. His work is still influential in studies on food discourse in present day Western societies: for instance, Johnston and Baumann show that exoticism and authenticity in food choice are the current features of distinction in gourmet food writing (2007). However, most of the classic sociological literature was more concerned with food as a symbol or an indicator of something else rather than with food in its own right (Mennell et al. 1992:2, 4–5).<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, anthropology, which together with sociology represents a natural place for food studies, traditionally included the description of practices around food preparation and consumption (Counihan & Van Esterik 1997:2). Morgan, the so-called “father of anthropology,” was concerned with “modes of livelihood” (1877). Cushing, the first participant observer, lived with the Zuni of New Mexico for more than four years in the 1880s and also described their foodways (1920). Boas published a collection of Kwakwaka’wakw recipes (of British Columbia) (1921). Malinowski also included the study of food in his ethnographic work (e.g. 1922, 1935). His student, Richards, continued the functional approach to the study of food with a specific focus on nutrition (1932, 1937, 1939). She is often seen as the main representative of functionalism in anthropological food studies (Mennell et al. 1992:7): “*Land, Labour, and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (...) is quite simply the best monograph on the anthropology of food ever written” (Mintz 2000:174). Mead was one of the first to acknowledge the centrality of food for humans (1943). By the 1960s, nutritional anthropology was firmly established (Fitzgerald 1977; Freedman 1981; Messer 1984), which was “oriented not only toward understanding foodways, but also toward coping with malnutrition worldwide” (Anderson 2005:238).

Nevertheless, what may first come to mind with regard to anthropological work on food, especially in a volume focusing on its connection to language, is Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist approach. Throughout his works, Lévi-Strauss draws on analogies between language and culture (e.g. 1964 in *The raw and the cooked* and 1968 in *The origins of table manners* esp. *A short treatise on culinary anthropology* in his *Mythologiques*).

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2. Warde and Hetherington point out that even in Mennell’s et al. literature survey for *The Sociology of Food* (1992) mainly anthropological and historical work is cited (1994:758).

Thus we can hope to discover how, in any particular society, cooking is a language through which that society unconsciously reveals its structure, unless – just as unconsciously – it resigns itself to using the medium to express its contradictions.  
([1968] 1979: 495)

In the culinary triangle (1965), he compares cooking and phonology by devising binary oppositions such as culture versus nature and elaborated versus unelaborated in parallel to Jakobson's phonemic triangles (1963).<sup>3</sup> This analogy has shortcomings on many levels and lacks empirical support (cf. also his revised formulation in 1968). As Shankman writes:

Lévi-Strauss' exclusive focus on the roasted and boiled has been spoiled by the natives who have discovered a veritable smorgasbord of ways of preparing people.  
(1969: 61)<sup>4</sup>

Still, the merit of Lévi-Strauss' work lies in stressing that food has a meaning and a symbolic value. Structuralist work in the realm of food studies has been continued, most notably by Douglas (1966 on Jewish dietary prohibitions, 1972 and 1974 (together with Nicod) on the constitution of a British meal). She shows that meals are ordered, throughout the year, the week and the day, each finding its significance in the ordered patterns through the omission or the addition of different food items:

The meaning of a meal is found in a system of repeated analogies. Each meal carries something of the meaning of the other meals; each meal is a structured social event which structures others in its own image.  
(Douglas 1972: 69, cf. de Saussure's *valeur*)

She grounds Jewish dietary laws in symbolism (cf. also Barthes below), which is rejected by functional approaches (Harris 1987).

In philosophy, Barthes' semiotic work on food symbolism, the preference people have for different food items, also had a structuralist influence on the research of food (1957, 1961): By eating the 'right' food people can accumulate symbolic capital and demonstrate their social status. Barthes also inspired cross-cultural work: for instance, the decadence or gourmand eating of Ancient Rome was compared to that of the United States, finding that the semiological systems

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3. For a molecular gastronomist referring to classic anthropological literature in his understanding of modern cuisine, cf. Roosth 2013.

4. With regard to this volume, Shankman also cautions: "The defects in Lévi-Strauss' theory that lead to his failure in prediction do not require the abandonment of a search for parallels between language and cooking or the examination of the relationship of cooking to social structure, but they do at least remind us to be cautious." (1968: 65)

are quite different (Edmunds 1980). Generally, however, in philosophy, food has long not been considered a proper subject for inquiry (Curtin & Heldke 1992: XIII, also 'taste', Korsmeyer 1999: 1f.).

In contrast, history has a long tradition in food studies. The French *Annales* school set out to study the entirety of the human experience. In France, food was then an obvious choice of study considering the *Annales* school's emphasis on enduring patterns (Braudel et al. 1961, 1979; Forster & Ranum 1979; cf. Pilcher 2012 for an overview). This work is still continued: Gabaccia studied the making of a Creole cuisine in America (1998), or more generally, Levenstein eating in America (2003). The meal as a form of representation has been studied interdisciplinarily in historical perspective (Kolmer & Rohr 2000). Culinary histories were written (Flandrin et al. 1999): Parasecoli and Scholliers offer a historical tour from 800 BC until 2000 AD in their 6 volume edition (2012). (National) identity and food continue to be a topic in history (Scholliers 2001) and, in general, in the humanities and the social sciences concerned with food (for a recent overview, cf. Campanini et al. 2011, see also many of the works below). Thus Brillat-Savarin's statement continues to be elaborated, the question being which type of foodstuff indicates which type(s) of identity(/ies) in how strong a fashion and in which type of interplay with other cultural artifacts or other semiotic systems (clothes, language, religion, ...) Food items are not endowed with equal significance for identity construction. Often, we eat or witness others eating without assigning any social significance to this act (Warde 1997). Consequently, Brillat-Savarin's simplistic statement has been questioned, "Are we what we eat?" (Belasco 2008: 15) or "If we are what we eat, who are we?" (Gabaccia 1998: 9), and reformulated, "We are what we ate" (Belasco 2008: 32) or "We are where we eat" (Bell & Valentine 1997: ii), "You eat what you are" (Willets & Keane 1995: 43) or "Why we eat what we eat" (Capaldi 1996).

## 2.2 Second half of the 20th Century till today

Since the 1980s, work on food has flourished in many disciplines. In anthropology, Farb and Armelagos delimited the field (1980). Goody's study of West Africa (labeled comparative sociology) criticizes structuralist accounts and focuses on changes in culinary practices (1982). In the same vein, Mennell offers a developmental perspective on Britain and France (1985), or Mintz concentrates on one product, sugar, and discusses its history and meaning for the working classes in Europe (1985). Concurrently, sociologists continued their work in the field of food studies (Murcott 1982, 1983 and Kerr et al. 1986 on women in Britain). Fischler's work (1990) has been seen as the end-point of structuralist dominance in France (Menell et al. 1992: 13, more recently Fischler & Masson 2008 in cross-cultural perspective).

The growing interest of sociology since the 1980s is not only based on the increasing awareness of world hunger (cf. McIntosh 1996 below), of eating disorders in some societies, and the professionalization in nutrition, but also a rising concern with a 'sociology of culture' which allows the study of trivial matters such as food (Menell et al. 1992: 5). For instance, the role of waitresses (Paules 1991) or the 'I am so fat' discourse in the US has been studied, albeit anthropologically (Nichter 2000). A connection has been drawn between food and morality, especially with regard to body size (Lupton 1996). In Britain a major research program was started *The Nation's diet* (Murcott 1998; Kaplan 1997, for Britain, cf. also Warde & Martens 2000 on eating out). Besides increased government funding, the 'obesity epidemic' and the neoliberal impact on food supply have led to the growing interest by sociologists (McMillan & Coveney 2010). Since *The Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet and Culture* (Mennell et al. 1992), the explanatory value of classic social variables like class, gender and age have been questioned with regard to food and identity (Sneijder & te Molder 2006: 113). Moving away from cultural concerns, for example McIntosh puts the emphasis on nutrition, in the light of world hunger stressing again that food is not only meaning, but in the first place sustenance (1996). The nature of food and nutrition as social problems has been emphasized (Maurer & Sobal 1995), again including body size (Sobal & Maurer 1999a; Sobal & Maurer 1999b). By choosing the title *Appetites and identities for An introduction to the social anthropology of Western Europe* (Delamont 1995), the author claims the central importance of food in anthropology (cf. Counihan & van Esterik 2008 or Mintz & Du Bois 2002 for recent overviews on food and culture, Menell et al. 1992; Beardsworth & Keil 1997 for an overview on sociological work, Delaney 2011 and Koç et al. 2012 for textbooks).

Another discipline to consider is psychology (for general introductions in the field of food, cf. Logue 1991; Lyman 1989). After the behavioristic and mechanistic phase where hunger was seen or searched as the stimulus for food intake, psychology considered learning and experience as important factors in the study of eating behavior (Capaldi 1996). Feeding represents the very first step in a human's relationship to food (Capaldi & Powley 1990). Social psychology examines factors influencing food choice and food preferences such as stress or food commercials (Conner & Armitage 2002). In the framework of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991), attitudes toward food were measured (cf. Wiggins 2001 for an overview) with the help of questionnaires or rating scales. Mainly, psychology relies on survey or laboratory studies concentrating on taste and smell, food preferences and attitudes (Smith 2002, cf. discursive psychology below though, cf. Rappoport 2003 for a popularly written introduction to the psychology of food).

To continue with more text-based studies such as American or other literary/cultural studies or philology, Brown published a seminal work on the symbolic

use of food in nineteenth century French literature (1984, also Appelbaum 2006 for early modern literature, Van Gelder 2000 for Classical Arabic literature). In her groundbreaking article, Leonardi describes how recipes are framed in the *Joy of Cooking* and how recipes serve as embedded narratives in literary texts (1989). Topics are diverse and cannot be subsumed under a single heading here: Belasco focuses on the 1960s in the US (1989), Bordo on the female body and eating (1993), or Mannur (2010) on food in the South Asian diaspora (cf. also the indologist Doniger 1999; Döring et al. 2003 on the poetics and politics of food, Scapp & Seitz 1998 or Ashley et al. 2004 with a focus on cultural studies including a chapter on food writing, Skubal 2002 with a psychoanalytic approach to orality in literature, or Rosenblum 2010 on early rabbinic Judaism, also Fellner this volume). The importance of space and place in food consumption has been stressed in cultural studies by geographers (Bell & Valentine 1997, cf. also 'foodscapes' below). In communication or media studies, the role of the television has often been in focus (Kaufman 1980; Dickinson 2005). Furthermore, the meaning of food in film (e.g. Ferry 2003; Keller 2006) or, generally, in popular culture (Parasecoli 2008) has been studied intensively.

Since activities including food have often been shown to be gendered (cf. also above), gender studies have recognized the importance of studying food production and consumption (Avakian & Haber 2005, cf. also Fuller et al. this volume). At the same time, the recognition of food as an important subject by feminism and women's studies has also been one of the causes for the wealth of publications about food in the last decades (Counihan & Van Esterik 2008: 1–2). For instance, Cline offers a feminist account based on self-reflexive interviews (1990), DeVault concentrates on women feeding the family (1991), or Croegaert is concerned with coffee drinking as a practice of Bosnian women in the U.S. (2011, cf. Counihan & Kaplan 1998 for an overview, Counihan 1999 on Italy and the US, 2004 on Florence, Italy, Inness 2001a on the US in the 20th century). Furthermore, gender and ethnicity often pattern with food such as in *Building houses out of chicken legs: Black women, food, and power* (Williams-Forson 2006). In critical theory, feminism and vegetarianism have been linked to dismantle the connections between meat eating and male dominance (Adams 1990). In an interesting study, Deutsch describes how firemen cope with being primary providers of food in their fire house by resorting to different versions of masculinity (Deutsch 2005, 2004, for boy scouts cooking, cf. Mechling 2005).

Other fields working at the intersection of food and language include economics or marketing, such as when testing consumer responses to brand names (Yorkston et al. 2004 for phonetics, Pantli 2009 for linguistics and consumer research). Furthermore, enology is an obvious field with regard to the vocabulary of wine-tasting (Gawel 1997; Lehrer 2009 with a linguistic inquiry). It has been

shown, for instance, that visual information (color) overrules olfactory perception when wine is described (Morrot et al. 2001). Archaeology has been concerned with the reconstruction of feasts (Dietler & Hayden 2001) or household consumption through the study of pottery (Bray 2003), human excrements, cooking sites or texts (Gosden & Hather 1999; Twiss 2007). Food preferences have been researched by linking archaeological studies to texts (Smith 2006). In addition, the imprint of food on architecture has been studied (Franck 2003; Horwitz & Singley 2006). There has been an increasing interest in material culture and objects (Miller & Deutsch 2010). The many disciplines concerned with physiological or biological questions such as medicine or nutrition studies, agriculture or home economics have largely been disregarded here. However, most works, also for instance, the popular books by Nestle, a nutritionist, on food politics and food movements (2010, 2013, Nestle & Nesheim 2012) illustrate that disciplinary boundaries are not clear-cut (cf. for instance Coveney 2006 who works in the field of Public Health at a School of Medicine in a Foucauldian framework on nutrition and morals).

This sketchy tour strongly manifests the interdisciplinary nature of the study of food. Different disciplines need to provide answers from their perspectives to describe and analyze the functions and values of food in the lives of humans (cf. the multidisciplinary volumes by Fürst et al. 1991; Wiessner & Schiefenhövel 1996; Griffiths & Wallace 1998; Scholliers 2001; Bower 2004; Lien & Nerlich 2004; Nestle 2013 or the *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture* Katz & Weaver 2002). Food studies is now a discipline with journals such as *Food and Foodways*, *Gastronomica*, *Appetite*, *Anthropology of Food*, *Petits Propos Culinaires*, *Food and History*, or *Food, Culture & Society*<sup>5</sup> using methodologies from various traditions, both quantitative and qualitative (Miller & Deutsch 2009, cf. also the annual Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, e.g. Walker 2003). Current topics include the notions of foodscapes (e.g. Cummins & Macintyre 2002; Yasmeen 2006), food porn (McBride 2010; Wong 1993), trash food (Plotnicov 2008), food voice (Hauck-Lawson 2004), foodies and gourmets (Johnston & Baumann 2010), food safety (Blay-Palmer 2008; Nestle 2010), the ethics of food choice (Singer & Mason 2006; Lemke 2007; Barlett 2011), the globalization of food (Inglis & Gimlin 2009; Watson & Caldwell 2005), and the agrofood system (Wright & Middendorf 2008). The next section will concentrate on those studies which focus on language.

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5. The *British Food Journal* however (now an interdisciplinary research journal) started publishing in 1899: "It is necessary that the power of the press should be brought to bear in order that a check may be established on adulteration and fraudulent trading which shall be thoroughly effective, and capable of application to immediate public needs." (1899:1)

### 3. Food and language – an overview

With such a wealth of studies it seems questionable to edit yet another book on food. However, when it comes to the relation between language and food, there does not seem to be any publication fathoming the work at this intersection. Linguistic anthropology seems one obvious field to consider with regard to the relation between language and food. However, a special issue of the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* (Duranti 1999) on contemporary research in the field encompasses entries on a plethora of subjects as diverse as agency, body, color, deaf, dreams, gesture, healing, humor, music, plagiarism, prayer, repetition, signing, theater, translation, or vision (to name a random selection) from renowned scholars. Although contributors not only from linguistic anthropology, but also from “folklore, linguistics, philosophy of language, psychology, sociology, ethnomusicology, conversation analysis, biological anthropology, and medical anthropology” (Duranti 1999: 4) contributed, food is only mentioned in passing in four of the articles (in brain, category, iconicity and socialization). Such an encyclopedic publication will necessarily not be able to cover the entirety of the field. However, with regard to the centrality of food to human kind, both as a biological necessity as well as a meaningful cultural act, this is astounding. From the opposite perspective, the encyclopedic 990 page small print large size *Oxford Companion to Food* lists entries under poetry and food, television and food, gender/sex and food, or gardening and food, but language is not a key term.

One edited volume in linguistics, however, does focus on the study of food: Lavric and Konzett’s *Food and Language: Sprache und Essen* (2009). Just like this volume, it offers a range of papers on different discourses of food and drinking. Furthermore, there is also a linguistic blog on *The Language of Food* (Jurafsky 2011, for food blogs, cf. also Diemer & Frobenius this volume). Still, no attempt has been made to bring together research at the intersection of language and food in an overview. This will be the aim in the remainder of this introduction.

When two of the most important factors in the life of humans are discussed, it is only natural that many scientific disciplines have important contributions to make. However, a single edited volume cannot do justice to all of these different fields, even if purely for reasons of space. In addition, I will not be able to do justice to all of these different fields because of my academic and general biography. There will certainly be a strong bias to the English language and English language publications because of my affiliation. Also, German publications were easily accessible. A certain blindness to some results and subjectivity is unavoidable. Hence, what may seem less central to me will probably represent core matters to others.

Besides limitation and selection, the writing of this chapter has also been accompanied by the difficulty of finding a system for classifying the various earlier works on the topic. While it is often straightforward to discuss scholarly strands in their chronological order, i.e. different research traditions and their development, this may not always be profitable in this case. Some works are quite independent from the perspective of the connection between language and food since they themselves stand in a tradition with either no relation to language or to food, or to both. Still, these works in themselves may make a contribution at this intersection, for instance, because of the data used. Sometimes a focus on one specific researcher may be the best choice if this person has been influential in the field and their work quite independent. Also, a classification based on the different types of data used, such as discourse genres (recipes, TV shows on cooking), focus group discussions, or participant observation (Ross 1995) could help illuminate the different findings in a telling way. However, this may separate different contributions which may best be discussed adjacently. Some strands such as the important contributions based on family dinner talk may also seem in between: although *family dinner talk research* will probably not be thought of as a field or subdiscipline of linguistics, anthropology or psychology, many of these works can also not be said to be merely based on a superficial incidental identicalness of data type. On the contrary, most of this work is intricately interwoven and builds on the same premises and beliefs. Finally, food itself could be used as a structuring principle: for instance, research on food preparation could be discussed in one section and food consumption in another. Research on eating disorders, for instance, would potentially profit from being discussed in one place, regardless of methodology or research tradition. Faced with these difficulties which made one overarching structuring principle seem counter-productive, this chapter will classify previous research according to different frames which will hopefully become clear in the course of the individual subsections.

This introduction has been written from the perspective of linguistics, the assumption being that readers will have a general knowledge of the field. For this reason, it opened with an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of food. However, it will not feature an introduction to language studies. To strive for comprehensiveness quickly proved presumptuous at this crossroad. A list of the research disregarded here would greatly excel the references at the end of this volume. With regard to the linguistic portion of language and food, however, no specific approach or sub-field was neglected *a priori*. For instance, there will be work from pragmatics, discourse analysis, interactional studies, conversation analysis, historical linguistics, lexicology, and cognitive linguistics.

Turning to the culinary side of this volume, on the other hand, important work on food will be disregarded here simply because too many disciplines are

concerned with human nutrition, physically, biologically, medically, but also socially, psychologically or culturally. For obvious reasons, studies concerned with the biology or physics of food consumption such as digestion or edibility were disregarded. Also, experimental or correlational studies e.g. on meal sizes or snacking were disregarded. However, we are interested in actual real life practices of eating since these have been shown to be intricately interwoven with interactional linguistic practices (cf. Erickson 1982; Mondada 2009, or the studies by Wiggins and by Laurier).

To my regret, also studies using language data or texts as the basis for their research had to be disregarded in many cases. To give an impression of the wide array of topic, Charles and Kerr interviewed women about their food practices (1988, also Warde & Hetherington 1994) and Appadurai describes how Indian cookbooks establish a national cuisine (1988) (also, Renne 2007 on West African food products sold in the US, Johnston et al. 2009 on the websites of organic food companies incorporating ideas of food democracy, Dusselier 2001 on candy ads, Klumbtyé 2010 on Soviet sausages in Post-Soviet Lithuania, Kaufman 1980 on food on television, Dickinson 2005 on television reception, also Minuchin et al. 1978 on the interactions of families with anorexic daughters, or Mannur 2010 on cookbooks as narratives of adaptation (Chapter 6)). For reasons of space, it proved impossible to report on all these studies concentrating on discourses surrounding food production and consumption unless the language use itself was in focus (rather than the content of those discourses). Furthermore, literature looking at the symbolic value of food will in the main not be discussed further in this chapter (e.g. Douglas 1987 on drinking, Lehrer 1991 with a semiotic account of food and drink, Counihan 1999 on gender and power). Finally, also methodological issues emerged. For instance, the food-centered life histories giving a voice to women by Counihan (2004) are an example of a study in which the anthropologist translated and edited her subjects' spoken narratives by

eliminating repetition; deleting unnecessary expressions like "I don't know," ... and sometimes changing the order of sentences... to construct a more logical progression of ideas. (Counihan 2004: 3)

This tempering, however, makes her contribution questionable with regard to linguistics or narrative studies since, in that way, her data do not represent authentic language use from Florence.

### 3.1 Comparative linguistics

In line with the development of linguistics, comparative studies will open this chapter. Languages reflect the needs and behavior of their speakers. Since eating

is a biological necessity, every language will invariably contain food terminology. Furthermore, in a given region, cultures depend on the same food items for climatic and historical reasons: some plants are endemic; others are brought to places at a certain point in time following historical events. For this reason, in historical comparative linguistics, especially for prehistoric studies, a comparison of cognates for food items has been shown to be fruitful. For instance, in 1926, Childe, linking archaeology and philology for the study of Indo-European, notes e.g. the common word for *laks* ‘salmon’ across the Indo-European languages (1926: 82–85 on Indo-European food terms). Buck’s dictionary of Indo-European synonyms includes a list of food related words (1949: 326ff.), which, he suggests, allow tracing the history of ideas (1949: v). Roughly at the same point in time, Swadesh proposed a list of basic vocabulary for cross-linguistic comparison to discuss Salish internal relationships, which also includes items such as *to eat* or *meat* (1950). Finally, the recent *Intercontinental Dictionary Series* (IDS) (Key & Comrie 2012, modeled on Buck 1949), which has been compiled to allow comparison across continents, has one section on food, kitchen utensils and ways of eating (Chapter 5).

The evolution of dishes has been likened to the evolution of languages (Whitfield 2005): Similar dishes may indicate cultural contact or common ancestry; such is the case with similar words or grammatical structures. Hence, borrowings of words denoting food items can be seen as proof of cultural contact, such as Russian loans in Alaskan Eskimo (Anttila 1972: 162). More recently, for instance Fowler (1994) and Hill (2001a) studied food terms and food distribution for the classification of Uto-Aztecan, or Adelaar discussed the name of the sweet potato, which has been considered a cognate in Polynesian and Quechua supporting a common genetic origin, a suggestion Adelaar ultimately rejects (1998, cf. also Lavric & Konzett 2009, Section II, on food names and language contact in and around Croatia).

From the opposite perspective, linguistic studies of traditional local names of fruits can help explain the domestication of plants. “A cultivated plant often migrates with its name, and when this plant is culturally innovative, its name is often retained in the receiving language.” (Perrier et al. 2011: 5) For instance, the dating of the bean in Mesoamerica has been challenged by linguistic data (Brown 2006). Hence, disciplines like botany or archaeology can profit from linguistic enquiry in that way.

Generally, a link has been drawn between the history of a language and the subsistence mode of their people: Hunter-gatherer or forager societies have been linked to a single, mutually intelligible language with regional dialect variation (Hill 1978). Such a dialect continuum is maintained through intermarriage (incest taboo) and the support between different local groups in times of scarcity so that a

long-distance area network of communication and mutual support is created which does not presuppose face-to-face interaction between its members (Kosse 1990). In anthropological dialectology, migration is only one possible mechanism to account for the spread of language features (Hill 2001b). The assumption is that language variability allows people to lay claims on natural resources. If you believe you own a resource, your language reflects this ownership with the help of dialect features (Hill 2001b: 261): If you speak in a certain way, you belong and have a right. On the other hand, in a distributed strategy, sociolinguistic variables are spread since speakers incorporate features from other dialects (Hill 2001b:261). Hence a link is drawn between food and linguistic variation. In the farming/language dispersal hypothesis (Bellwood & Renfrew 2002), the reach of the world's most wide-spread language families such as Indo-European or Bantu is linked to the shift from forage to agriculture (cf. also Ross 2006). The many linguistic, archaeological and biological arguments pertaining to different regions of the world cannot be reported here (cf. for instance Bellwood 2011 for a recent publication on the pacific region).<sup>6</sup>

### 3.2 Morphology and word formation

The most important word formation processes with regard to the denomination of food items are borrowing, compounding (including toponyms) and eponyms. Language histories such as the *Cambridge History of the English Language* are a fine source to study the borrowing of food terminology. For instance, in English, the first non-Germanic food terms were already introduced before the Anglo-Saxons even migrated to England. Out of the estimated 170 borrowings from Latin during the continental period when Germanic tribes mingled with the Roman army roughly 20% denote food items and another 30% plants and animals (most of which may also be eaten) (Kastovsky 1992: 302). Two examples from that period, *butter* and *cheese*, can be seen as representatives here for the wealth of borrowings in different situations of language contact described in general language histories. In addition, major dictionaries which include etymological information such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) are important sources to consider when studying word formation processes with regard to food items.<sup>7</sup> While some more

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6. For the evolution of Language (not languages) and the role of food in this process, cf. Parker (1985), who links shared references to food hidden from competitors and human Language in a social-technological model.

7. Many mid-twentieth century articles on the etymology of certain food terms, e.g. the Portuguese *iguarua* 'tasty food', 'dainty dish' (Malkiel 1944; Spitzer 1945; Spitzer 1946), do not reflect on their nature as food terms per se. For this reason, they will generally not be reported here.

recently spread words like *camembert* (first attested in English in 1878 according to the OED) or *spaghetti* (1845) still index their (sometimes supposed) place of origin, older international food terms such as *maize* (1544) from Taino are less transparent.

Turning to studies dealing explicitly with denominations for food items (cf. also popular books on the etymology of food terms such as Morton 2000 or Jacobs 1995, for winemaking terminology Nedlinko 2006), it soon becomes apparent that borrowings often spread internationally, an example being *coffee* (cf. Puttaswamy 2009 for *curry*). The words wander around the globe together with the food items. Often borrowed words take on local phonetic and graphic conventions so that German compounds like *Kaffeeklatsch* or *Kaffeekränzchen* ('an informal get-together in the afternoon with coffee and cake, the kind of talk found there, or groups of people who (would) do this') can represent a prototypical German pastime. The Arabic origin both of the word *qahwah* and the bean is usually not present in the minds of German speakers. These borrowings are also often integrated into the morphological system: for English, e.g. *pizza* (sg.) to *pizzas* (pl.) instead of *pizze* (Italian) (cf. also Metcalf & Doviak 1981 on *pizza* and *pie* as synonyms) or *schnitzel* (sg.) to *schnitzels* (pl.) instead of *Schnitzel* (German, sg. and pl.) (Mühleisen 2003:83). Furthermore, since the morphology of the source language is not always transparent, this has also led to re-interpretations like in the famous case of the *burger*. *Hamburger* is etymologically a derivation of *Hamburg* (the German city) plus *-er* suffix which was then reanalyzed as *ham* 'type of meat' plus *burger* 'type of sandwich' (Williams 1939). The reinterpretation of *burger* as a free morpheme then led to a number of new compounds such as *cheese burger* which have found continuous interest. For instance, in the journal *American Speech* only, in 1968, already 17 publications about *burger* had appeared, some by eminent linguists like Bolinger (Soudek 1968).

As far as language for special purposes or the cooking register is concerned, professional cooks all over the world still use loanwords from French, e.g. to differentiate between different types of cooks such as *saucier* or very specific kinds of intermediate products like *demiglace* (Riley-Köhn 1999:395). One strategy to upgrade food is the use of (sometimes invented) original denominations (cf. also Serwe et al. this volume). For instance, *escargot* sounds more sophisticated than snails, or *chop-suey*, a derivation from a Cantonese dialect meaning 'mixed pieces', is an American innovation, similar to *Mulligatawny soup* (not Indian, but English) or *Döner* (not Turkish, but German). One example that has recently attracted attention is *Chicken Tikka Masala*, which the British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook hailed "a true British national dish" (Buettner 2008). False references to other places (e.g. *zuppa inglese* originating from Ferrara, Italy) may simply indicate the use of one specific ingredient (see above) or a visual analogy (e.g. the

Italian *Messicano* which resemble Mexican *taco*). They may also be used to index exoticism (Giani 2009: 50), or the basis may simply be an error (e.g. the *Jerusalem artichoke*) (Giani 2009: 52). Because of this abundance of borrowings, knowledge of culinary terminology from French, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, or Thai may be required to read an American menu nowadays (Lakoff 2006). Lakoff advocates that the proliferation of new terms for food in the U.S. over the last quarter century indexes the rising significance assigned to food as a marker of identity (2006: 150, cf. also below).

Besides borrowing, another common word formation process used for food terminology is compounding with toponyms, as in some of the examples above (cf. Giani 2009 on 'geo-food names' in eight Germanic and Romance languages). The locality then stands metonymically for a certain spice or ingredient: *Pizza Hawaii*, for instance, indicates the use of pineapple or *Lamb Provençal* garlic and certain spices. Conversely, Mühleisen argues that the spice or ingredient in the dish metonymically indicates far-away places to exoticize food (2003: 80). She points out that it is not necessarily the original ingredients or original taste that transports authenticity, but the name itself (2003: 82, for genuineness in such naming practices cf. also Riley 1996). In noun-noun compounds including food terms and place names, there is a bias to interpret these as meaning 'originates in' rather than 'recipe from' or even less frequent, 'reminds of' (Zlatev et al. 2010). Often, geo-food names are only used outside of the place of origin (Giani 2009: 47). In community cookbooks with which local charities raise money, names like *Spanish noodles* or *El Paso beans* are used to gain authority and trust for the recipes by non-professional cooks (Tomlinson 1986: 206). Note that quite a number of names for foods denoting origin by the use of geographical indications, be it *Roquefort* (a borrowing in English) or *Asiago cheese* (a compound with a toponym), may be protected under different trade laws so that for instance sparkling wine cannot be called *Champagne* in commerce unless it comes from that very region.

Benczes draws attention to the short lived American neologism *freedom fries* with its double metonymy with *fries*, the older part found already in *French fries*, being METHOD OF PRODUCTION FOR PRODUCT and freedom as DEFINING PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY, where the category is the U.S. (2006: 6–7). A number of similar examples are cited: *sauerkraut* to *liberty cabbage* in similar hyperbolic fashion, *French loaves* to *Kiwi loaves* in New Zealand, when the French tested nuclear weapons in the Pacific, or *Danish pastries* were substituted by *Roses of the Prophet Muhammad* in Iran after the cartoon controversy (Benczes 2006: FN 4). That denominations for food are often the target of such political thrusts is not accidental since the origin or supposed origin of food is often transparent through the terms used, such as in the cases above, through compounds with a premodifying adjective denoting the country of origin or

through borrowing the word used from the language of the country of origin (for food and politics, cf. also Orwenjo 2009 for the use of proverbs, also on food, in political campaigns in Africa).

Food can be brought to countries and their languages (for European terms for *maize*, cf. Franconie 2000, also *potato* and *turkey*), but languages can also be brought to new countries and their food. In colonial encounters, the newly discovered plants are often likened to prototypical fruit, such as, in Europe, the apple: *alligator apple* or *cashew apple* are examples from Caribbean English with *malus*, the European apple, then called *English apple* (Mühleisen 2003: 74). Hence, compounding and meaning extension are frequent strategies to name unknown plants. However, the Caribbean with its diversity of cultural origins also exemplifies narrowing of meaning; such is the case with *Musaceae*, the banana family of plants, which splits into *bananas* (a borrowing from Bantu/Wolof via Portuguese, English, French), *plantain* (from Spanish *plátano*), and *figs* (elliptical for *figo da India* via Indo-Portuguese and French-related Creoles) (Mühleisen 2003: 76; Blank 1997).

Regarding words for dishes, a common practice is to name them after a person. One of the least transparent eponyms is probably *sandwich* meaning ‘slices of bread with fillings’ with the surname being for the most part unknown. Other examples include *Chateaubriand* (a beef dish named after the French author) or *carpaccio* (cold cut beef after the Italian painter). While, for instance, *Chateaubriand* maintains its capital letter (according to the OED), the others have lost this sign of their origin. Eponymic dishes are usually created by famous chefs to honor a certain person (Mühleisen 2003: 80) (cf. also the section on cook books and the section on restaurant menus for naming practices for dishes).

The *Journal of Recreational Linguistics* published an article about word formation in food terminology (Smith 1986), an indication that the study of food-related language use is often seen as trivial (cf. also the jocular pieces in *American Speech*). Smith notes that food terms on hand-written signs, employee-typed menus and local advertising flyers have often lost the past participle suffix -ed (*canned food* to *can food* or *iced tea* to *ice tea*, historically also *roast beef* from *roasted beef* or *hash brown potatoes* from *hashed browned potatoes*) indicating a preparation/production method and the adverb suffix -ly in premodifying position in adjective phrases (*lightly battered fish* to *light battered fish*) (Smith 1986). Many small scale studies or research notes exist about specific words for food and their origin (e.g. Fifield 1964 on *macaroni*), specific dishes (and their denomination) (Cohen 1950 on *the poor boy*), or specific word formation processes: In Greek, for instance, diminutives are conventionally added to nouns denoting food, drinks, or tableware etc. as mitigating devices (Sifianou 1992: 163f). They cannot all be reported here, the assumption also being that these findings have entered more general reference works like etymological dictionaries or grammars.

### 3.3 Syntax and grammar

With regard to syntax in the sense ‘word order in a sentence’, for two reasons, this will be a rather short section in comparison. On the one hand, word order does not usually depend on topic choice as strongly as other levels of language, such as, most obviously, lexis (cf. below though). Consequently, from the outset we will not expect much syntactic variation which can be linked to food. However, the ‘field of discourse’, i.e. “the type of activity engaged in through language” (e.g. ‘instructional language’, ‘legal documents’ or ‘newspaper headlines’) does correlate with grammar (Quirk et al. 1985:23–4). Hence, when looking at different genres, registers, or text types in the context of food production or consumption, specific syntactic constructions become important features (cf. Bubel & Spitz this volume). For instance, the recipe has a clear syntactic structure and, also, for this reason, it has often been used as a prototypical example of genre. Objects are often left out in recipes, a syntactic pattern which has been linked to middle and tough constructions (Massam 1987, cf. below though). However, these types of conventions are best discussed in their context, i.e. together with the accompanying variation on other levels of meaning-generation. Hence, syntactic structures depending on situational factors or typical of genre conventions will be discussed in the sections below dealing with different types of language use. Turning to grammar in the sense ‘syntax and morphology’, the latter has been treated in the section on word formation above.

Moving to grammatical frameworks, some approaches such as construction grammar, cognitive linguistics, pattern grammar or research in corpus linguistics stress the inseparable nature of syntax and lexis. Both are interrelated and, hence, words also determine syntactic choices. As seen above, there are a number of words closely associated with the domain of food. Verbs typically denote ways of eating or food preparation, and nouns often represent different food items (dishes, ingredients) or kitchen utensils. For instance, the verb ‘to eat’, the unmarked member of the class of verbs denoting food consumption in English, is transitive since one necessarily eats something, namely food. *Eat* and *drink* are often seen as some of the most prototypical members of the class of transitive verbs (Næss 2009, 2011). However, sentences such as *Mike ate* are also possible (Levin 1993). Crosslinguistic comparison indicates that these verbs show some features of intransitive verbs. This seems possible since verbs of indigestion, but also verbs of food preparation (e.g. *bake*), are “understood to have as object something that qualifies as a typical object of the verb” (Levin 1993:33). In other words, the object can get deleted because of its obviousness in the process of food consumption or production. Furthermore, these verbs have an “affected agent participant” (Næss 2009:27) (the food), which means “the participants [are not] maximally semantically distinct in

terms of the roles they play in the event,” (Næss 2009: 27) another indication that *eat* is not the most prototypical member of the class of transitive verbs.

### 3.4 Words and meaning

Not many of the following works would be classified as stemming from the sub-field of linguistics called semantics. However, all of this research is concerned with words belonging to the realm of food and their meanings in the widest possible sense. For instance, Lehrer (1972) compared words for cooking in different languages to test the postulated universal claim of Lévi-Strauss' *Culinary triangle* (1965). This section will include work in lexicography, anthropology, cognitive linguistics, or ethnobotany, to name a few. With regard to words from the domain of eating, one should again note that any major general language dictionary such as the *Oxford Dictionary of English* (OED) can be used as a treasure trove to study the meaning (and etymology) of food terms.<sup>8</sup>

Early work on food in linguistics is often lexicological and consists of lists of vocabulary mainly capturing specific jargons in the field.<sup>9</sup> In 1959, Shulman lists American English names of dishes which were currently not included in major dictionaries, and their sources. There is early lexicological work on the expressions used in different restaurants or bars. In 1943, Bailey listed terms used by waiters or waitresses in East Texas and western Louisiana (cf. also Morrison 1952 on Gainesville, Florida) and Jones lists calls used in the ordering process in a specific café in Kansas (1967). The dialectal distribution of *sauce* meaning 'canned fruit' is studied (Shuy 1966). Cason ridiculed the use of *apple sauce* or *banana oil* referring to 'nonsense' (1928). Jocular pieces seem common such as "Linguistic concoctions of the soda jerker" (Bentley 1936) on the etymology and use of expressions peculiar to soda fountain-lunch rooms (also Darwin 1978). The idiomatic use of food-related expressions such as *to butter someone up* is also the topic of a jocular piece in *Gastronomica*, a magazine straddling glossy food-writing with scientific inquiry (Morton 2005, cf. also his other quarterly columns in this publication). These articles seem to suggest that food discourse in its ordinariness is not always considered worthy of serious scientific enquiry.

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8. For instance, the articles about food related topics in the *Journal of Linguistic Studies* 1(2) all use dictionaries as their main resource (Groszler 2008; Holliefield et al. 2008; Perković et al. 2008; Perković & Ratá 2008; Ratá & Perković 2008) (also Becker 1992 on German loanwords in, most notably, American English).

9. The signs used by Benedictines for communication during their periods of silence have also been listed with a focus on food terms (Romeo 1979).

Similar to the well-known work on basic color terms (Berlin & Kay 1969), the classification of plants and animals in different languages and cultures has been studied in cognitive anthropology or ethnobotany (Berlin 1992; Berlin et al. 1974; Carlson & Maffi 2004). With regard to the connection between language and food, this approach asks the very basic question what is considered food and which term is used for it (e.g. Williamson 1970 for edible plants in the Niger delta). Biologists stress that classification into food and non-food is a task vital to all animals, including humans (Panchen 1992:1). However, to give an example from English, a dog may be edible, but it is generally not considered food (cf. Leach 1964 in his philological essay). Hence the word *dog* would not appear in an ethnoclassification of food items by English speakers. Just like any other part of language, these classifications also change through time: *Pferd* ('horse') was a traditional part of German food classification used for instance in the popular *Rheinischer Sauerbraten*. However, it is not considered a food item any longer by the vast majority of Germans. To give another example, the Shipibo added *tapir* to their diet at one point, probably with the advent of the shotgun, which facilitated the killing of larger animals (Behrens 1986). Consequently, younger Shipibo mention *tapir* as a food item, while many elderly do not (Behrens 1986:649). With regard to changes in food habits, euphemisms seem to be used in times of scarcity to make unusual food match previous concepts of edibility. For instance, *mountain chicken* is used for frogs in Caribbean English or *country rabbits* for cats during WWII in Europe (Mühleisen 2003:78). Differences in food preferences are often called upon to mark the otherness of neighboring cultures by choosing real or imagined food choices such as *Frogs* for the French or *Krauts* for the Germans as denominations for the people (Fischler 1988:280, cf. also Møller 2010 for the use of membership categorization devices in a restaurant setting). In self-descriptions, American Jews have creatively used *rye* or *whole-wheat*, in contrast to *white* (bread), to mark their ethnicity (Modan 2001). Furthermore, 2nd generation immigrants have been shown to use food preferences as markers to distance themselves from recent immigrants of their own ethnicity: *Is dat dog you're eating?* (Hiramoto 2011).

Another finding with regard to the classification of food items is that biological categories may not always faithfully represent local schemata. For instance, some plants are not recognized as one and the same species depending on the season or their use. In the mountains of Castilla-La Mancha in Spain, one plant is considered food by the end of winter as *pan de pastor*, but in the summer its stems are collected for broom making under the denomination *escobas de amargos* (Rivera et al. 2007). In addition, the shoots and fruits of one plant may be considered two different food items with two different denominations and no relation according to the local people (Rivera et al. 2007). Furthermore, what

may have one family denomination only in most languages, can have further classifications in other languages: For instance, *banana* is differentiated into different types in Caribbean Creoles not only by botanists, but by people in general. *Pòyò*, for instance, is green, when harvested, and destined for exportation. The same fruit is called *fig* or *fig-jón* when yellow and eaten raw (Blank 1997, for other terms used see also above). This research stresses that food is not a given, but a cultural construct which can be analyzed by looking at language. Different language communities conceptualize the world differently, depending on their cultural needs. Our biology or physiology may determine what is not edible. What is edible, however, and how we categorize food items cannot be identified by the natural sciences. It is not a function of the body, but a function of the mind. Hence, the dichotomy *nature* and *culture* cannot be maintained from this perspective since humans have shaped their environment from the very beginning (Carlson & Maffi 2004; Gosden 1999).

Turning to one of the most central words from this field, the Maricopa (of Scottsdale, Arizona) have two different verbs, one for ‘eating’ in general *maum* and one for ‘consuming something with water’ *čakaum* (for fruit and vegetables) (Frisch 1968). In his componential analysis, Frisch analyzes their food taxonomy as consisting of two classes of food items depending on the verb used (1968: 19). In reverse fashion, Landar describes different words for eating in Navajo depending on what food items can follow (1964, for Tzeltal cf. Berlin 1967, for Tojolabal Maya cf. Furbee 1974, or for Jicarilla Apache Landar 1976). Lehrer provides a structuralist feature analysis of the field of cooking for English (1969). In *The Linguistics of Eating and Drinking* (Newman 2009), a number of cross-linguistic studies reveal different syntactical, semantic or cognitive properties for those two verbs (for Dogon verbs of eating, cf. also Heath & McPherson 2009). Wierzbicka points out that *eat* and *drink* are not linguistic universals (in contrast to *live* and *die*). Accordingly, even though arguably everybody eats and drinks, not everybody conceives themselves as beings that *eat* and *drink* (2009). These two ideas of eating and drinking cannot even be expressed separately in all languages (Wierzbicka 2009: 65).<sup>10</sup> In a cognitive framework, Szawerna (1997) describes different verbs for eating as elaborating the bases of the English prototypical member of the class *to eat* and the Polish prototypical member *jeść*: either personal sphere is highlighted (*Have a sandwich!*), since the food must be close by to be eaten; or the [out]-[in] relation between the container (the human being) and the contained (the food), between the trajector and the landmark, is emphasized (e.g. *to stuff, bold (down)*);

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10. For why you can say *have a drink*, but not *have an eat\**, see Wierzbicka 1982 in the framework of natural semantics.

or the domain of disintegration is stressed, namely, that the food undergoes a radical change in the process (e.g. *to polish (off)*, *to demolish*) (1997:42–43), to give some examples from English. Thus eating is a process with three different stages: First, the food is close by; then it is located within the eater; finally, it is completely assimilated.

Reversely, expressions from the domain of eating are often used as metaphors: IDEAS ARE FOOD e.g. *food for thought*, *a voracious reader* or *to spoon-feed students* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 46–47, 147–148). Since food here defines ideas (and not vice versa), the food terms used are typically very simple. For this reason, “we may have *raw facts* and *half-baked ideas*, but there are no *sautéed*, *broiled*, or *poached ideas*” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 109). Hence, words from the lexical field food are used to talk about something abstract like ideas because they are mundane and concrete. In Chinese, also WORDS ARE FOOD (Zing-Schmidt 2008). Furthermore, DESIRE IS HUNGER, a metaphor found in different languages, points to the embodied nature of metaphorical thinking (Gibbs et al. 2004, cf. also SEXUAL DESIRE IS APPETITE Kövecses 2002). Gender studies have drawn attention to the metaphor WOMEN ARE DESSERTS e.g. as *tarts*, but also in the embodied form of women jumping out of cakes (Hines 1999).

There are also a number of studies focusing on the lexis and semantics of different food items or cuisines. Lehrer studied the vocabulary of wine from different angles, semantically (based on publications about wine) or experimentally with different wine tastings (2009, 1975). Her many findings can be subsumed under the general notion that humans (experts and laypersons) have difficulties pinpointing taste or aroma with language (cf. also Lavric & Konzett 2009, Section III, on wine and taste, cf. also Ankerstein & Pereira this volume). Backhouse offers a thorough description of the semantics of taste terms in Japanese (1994).

Since food is a commodity, its denominations are also subject to trade regulations and laws. In contrast to the research above, which is concerned with everyday uses of terms, the following works represent expert knowledge. The database LanguaL which lists 35,000 food items from all over the world recognizes some general issues in the compilation of multilingual glossaries:

One problem concerning multilingual thesauri is the multiplicity of natural languages: corresponding terms of different languages are not always semantically equivalent. It was chosen to render LanguaL language-independent, to be used in the USA and Europe for numeric data banks on food composition (nutrients and contaminants), food consumption and legislation. Each descriptor is identified by a unique code pointing to equivalent terms in different languages.

(LanguaL 2012)

Examples of descriptors include (a) *product types* such as *dairy products* or *confectionaries*, which are again based on the food classifications of different

organizations like the European Community, (b) *food sources* such as *animals*, *plants* or *chemical food sources*, (c) *cooking or preservation method*, or (d) *packing medium*, to give some examples (LanguaL 2012). The authors of an article on data management in this domain write that codes make “these systems language independent (but not necessarily culturally independent),” (Schlotke et al. 2000:712) a claim that, unfortunately, is not explained any further. Another initiative, the INFOODS classification concerned with nutritional information, recognizes differences in regional and other varieties of English and maintains that “different scripts and many languages may be smaller obstacles than inconsistent terminology of English speakers” (Truswell 1991:19). While different scripts may in the main represent a technical problem, it is unclear why the dialectal situation of English is foregrounded in this respect. After all, similar variation can be found in other languages. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations offer the AGROVOC thesaurus with more than 40,000 concepts in 22 languages. That the international exchange of information regarding food represents an unsolved problem in food studies and an ongoing debate amongst food experts (Schlotke et al. 2000) again points to the fundamental nature of food as a cultural construct rather than a chemical, biological substance. These difficulties become the more acute in literary translation where connotations and identity construction are relevant (cf. Lavric & Konzett 2009, section VIII, on food in translation).

Similarly, words for taste, like *sweet* or *salty*, have been shown to be culturally dependent and the existence of four (or five) primary tastes doubted:

“It may be conjectured that, historically, Western scientists took their idea of primacy from the predominant labels in their language, themselves probably dependent on local cuisine.”  
(O’Mahony et al. 1986: 171)

Even though there seem to be specific receptors on the tongue for these different tastes, as lexical items they are not necessarily present (Goddard 2001). For instance, in Japanese, the term *amai* ‘sweet’ can also be used for ‘bland’ tastes (Backhouse 1994 in Goddard 2001, cf. also Ankerstein & Pereira this volume). Gustatory psychophysicists, psychologists or food scientists elicited taste words by actual tasting solutions for example with sodium chloride under experimental conditions (e.g. O’Mahony et al. 1980). In enological studies, also, the lexicon is investigated by actual wine tasting (the original thrust being in the opposite direction, namely to investigate taste via its description). One important finding is that our senses do not work independently: Hence, based on its odor, a white wine colored red with the help of an odorless dye gets assigned the descriptors typically associated with red wine (Morrot et al. 2001). Taste and its brother smell are intricately interwoven with culture (Korsmeyer 2005). For instance, the Jahai language, but also other Austroasiatic languages, has an elaborate system of olfactory terms challenging the idea that smell is vestigial in humans (Burenhult & Majid 2011).

More cross-cultural studies are called for to account for the relation between language, culture and the senses (Majid & Levinson 2011).

Finally, focusing on attitudes towards word meaning, it is interesting to note that with regard to the discourse surrounding genetic modification crop science and food technology (Cook et al. 2004), scientists discuss word choice with regard to denotation rather than connotation. They felt words were meaningless unless they could be defined by a semantic feature analysis (rather than e.g. prototype theory; Rosch 1977), and context-dependency and variableness were not tolerated. For instance, the words *natural* and *unnatural* were considered evaluative and fuzzy, hence meaningless (Cook et al. 2004: 443).<sup>11</sup> In government documents about GM food and crops (from New Zealand), the word *sustainable* was used with various meanings creating ambiguity strategically to include different perspectives that are *au fond* incompatible (Leitch & Davenport 2007, for more on biotechnology, cf. below).

Words from the domain of food have been researched for their cultural and their semantic meaning by scholars and scientists from multiple disciplines with a multitude of findings: On the one hand, especially in language-studies, such work has often been framed as an entertaining spare-time endeavor or hobby-horse. On the other hand, the fundamental significance of food for human kind, for culture and identity has been claimed. In addition, quite practically, its culture and language boundedness poses ongoing difficulties for translation and international trade. Food does not easily match biological or chemical descriptions, be it with regard to words for taste, dishes or even plants.

### 3.5 Spoken discourse

Food has been talked about before the advent of the first script. In addition, the domain food is clearly part of languages with no writing systems. Furthermore, communication about food is part of our life before we learn to read and write. For these reasons, spoken discourse about food will be discussed before the written genres which may come to mind more readily.

The first part of this section is a long account on conversations by families having dinner together since these studies represent a considerable part of the literature at the cross-section between language and food. It is important to note that this section clearly has a cultural bias with its focus on nuclear families and dinner tables, which should not imply that other cultures lack similar concurrences, also with regard to child socialization. Schieffelin's account of the language socialization of Kaluli children (Papua New Guinea) (1990) will act as one representative here

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11. For a discussion about *natural* and *unnatural* food, cf. also Knight (2012) on their use in low carb diet manuals.

for the many works describing similar interplays between actual language use and food intake recorded or observed by anthropologists (cf. e.g. Cohen 1961 for food sharing). For once, there are a number of food taboos for mothers and children (but also fathers) that must be followed to ensure the healthy birth and upbringing of the children (Schieffelin 1990:65ff). Furthermore, an important part of Kaluli socialization is to teach the sharing and non-sharing of food items (and other objects) to maintain social relations (cf. also Keating 2000 below). This sharing is negotiated through talk and a lot of energy is devoted to teach the children the appropriate practices of giving and refusing to give (Schieffelin 1990:136ff.) Another example for the coming-together of food and talk besides at dinner tables is narratives at a Native American hunting camp told next to the fire under the kitchen tarp: Careful talk about pursuing moose (food animals) is used as allegories on interpersonal relations (McIlwraith 2008). In sum, when humans gather, food and talk are often intertwined for the fulfillment of a variety of human needs such as bonding or socialization.

### 3.5.1 *Analyzing dinner talk*

One of the most fruitful fields in the relation between language and food has been the analysis of dinner talk based on transcriptions of (video-)taped, naturally occurring interactions in families (Blum-Kulka 1997, for recent overviews, cf. Laurier & Wiggins 2011; Larson et al. 2006, the table of corpora in Pan et al. 1999:207). Having meals together is a core practice in families used by parents to socialize their children into value systems about language related and food related behavior, as well as any other aspect of life which may come up as a topic (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986). By sharing meals, families create opportunity spaces for joint activities (Ochs et al. 1989), be it play, prayer or narration. There is a plethora of studies from discursive psychologists, conversation analysts, linguists and anthropologists focusing on different aspects of dinner talk in a variety of languages and cultures. The focus is often on family dinner, even though other constellations may be just as meaningful, such as groups of friends having lunch or coffee (Tannen 1984; Leung 2009; Eriksson 2009; Escalera 2009). Many of the findings based on talk at the dinner table are of general interest (e.g. for language acquisition cf. Johansen 2010 or for methodological issues concerning the relation between interaction and culture Gardner 2012; Schegloff 2005). However, only a smaller number of studies deal with the relation between food and language specifically since often talk directly related to the setting is disregarded:

Excluded from this analysis were turns focused on instrumental dinner talk (e.g. “pass the salt, please”), such talk being considered by definition “nontopical” and hence subject to a different set of discourse norms for those operating for topical talk. (Blum-Kulka 1994:9, cf. Blum-Kulka 1994:32–33 and below though)

These here-and-now anchored themes, which are the most frequent kind of talk during mealtimes in both cultures, have not been analyzed in this study.

(Aukrust & Snow 1998:227)

In our case, with food being the topic, it is exactly those turns and those discourse norms that would be of interest. As a general background to this volume, however, it is important to note the wealth of findings around dinner talk indicating that meals facilitate so much more than the biological need for an intake of edibles. While some of the following studies rely on the coding and quantification of verbal behavior at the dinner table (e.g. Tingley et al. 1994), work in conversation analysis and discursive psychology analyzes the in-situ negotiations of meaning (e.g. the work by Wiggins). The following paragraph lists the works mainly in the order of their publication.

Quite early, Shultz et al. describe turn-taking patterns and role differentiation in the dinner talk of an Italian-American family (1982). By coding interactions between different family members during dinner, Lewis and Feiring (1982) show that research on socialization ought to study the child as a member of a social system, the family, rather than focus on the mother-child dyad only. Their studies indicate that children are exposed to a number of norms which are enacted by the families: "sex and age roles, communication rules and manners" (Feiring & Lewis 1987:387). An analysis of narratives at the dinner table (cf. also below) indicates that coherence across stories (told predominantly by Italian-American males while having dinner) is maintained by continuity of protagonist/narrator and keying, displaying family values for the children (Erickson 1988). In a linguistic analysis, the employment of positive and negative politeness formula can be observed by children (Snow et al. 1990). American-Israeli families allowed insight into code-switching and -mixing in a bilingual context (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka 1989). The specific politeness strategies in different families were also used to further politeness research with regard to directness and mitigation (Blum-Kulka 1990). The function of nick-naming has been studied in cross-cultural perspective (Blum-Kulka & Katriel 1991). In child development studies, the family dinner has been described as a rich site for observational data, one important reason being that children can also observe their parents' behavior towards one another (Lewis & Feiring 1992). The dinner table provides children with opportunities to listen to stories told by adults, to become co-narrators as well as to attempt telling their own stories (Ochs et al. 1989; Blum-Kulka et al. 1992). These joint narrative activities are also used by families to construct gender asymmetries *Father knows best* (Ochs & Taylor 1992b, 1995) and socialize children into critical thinking (Ochs & Taylor 1992c; Ochs et al. 1992). Cultural differences are to be expected: While American families like to exchange stories about their day, Israelis share narratives about their homes

(i.e. close in space), but further away in time: “The proposition unique to the Americans seems to be “Let me tell our story”; for the Israelis, it is “Let us (all) listen to your (singular) story.” (Blum-Kulka 1993:397) In contrast to Bernstein’s beliefs (1972), explanatory talk, which is used to predict cognitive or linguistic learning, is relatively frequent in low-income American families during their meals (Beals 1993). Narratives and explanatory talk have about equal share with explanations being shorter and more frequent (Beals & Snow 1994). Again in cross-cultural perspective, Italian families differ from American families with regard to the roles of the father, and the mother and children concerning the problematization of past events at the dinner table (Pontecorvo & Fasulo 1997, in contrast, Ochs & Taylor 1992a, 1992b). Children are encultured according to their sex to perform certain duties like helping serve or clean (Grieshaber 1997). A cross-cultural study indicates that Norwegian middle class families produce more narrative activities (in relation to explanatory talk) than their U.S. counterparts (Aukrust & Snow 1998). This focus on social norms could also be found in the Swedish families of a cross-linguistic study including Estonians and Finns (De Geer 2004, cf. also Tulviste et al. 2003; Tryggvason 2006 for the concept of ‘the silent Finn’, Tryggvason et al. 2002; Tryggvason 2004, for more Nordic cross-linguistic comparison). Besides narrative, another genre regularly cultivated by American families and transmitted to their children is saying grace (Capps et al. 2002; Goodwin 2007:101ff.). The children’s imperfections in this genre can be seen as “evidence of the routine interpenetrations of genres in everyday life” (Capps et al. 2002:54). Bilingual parents teach language rules regarding politeness or turn taking which are situated in between the languages they use (Blum-Kulka et al. 1993). Mothers of children with Down syndrome use a less varied vocabulary and less inner state verbs as well as shorter utterances than mothers with non-handicapped children during their dinners (Tingley et al. 1994). Since coming together to eat food is considered “making a family,” (DeVault 1991:78) the positioning of the stepmother in these situations can give insight into her integration into the family (Dedaić 2001). In the framework of discursive psychology, Pontecorvo and Fasulo discuss how an Italian family negotiates what would be considered a typical Italian meal in a foreign country (Austria) while eating hamburgers (1999). They show how the family produces ‘cultural typicality’ in its interaction with regard to their different roles e.g. as mother and provider of food and the impact this has on child socialization. While deconstructing Italian cuisine, by discussing the cultural norms and the daily practices, they concurrently try to live up to this idea of typicality (cf. also Miller & Berry 1999). Sterponi uses family dinner talk to study account episodes in a conversation analytic framework (2003). With regard to food, she discusses the interactional construction of the use of salt (by children) as excessive and morally accountable behavior (Sterponi 2003:87ff). Paugh shows the importance of

work related discourse in family dinner talk (2005). Not only do children ask for basic information when their parents talk about work-related subjects, they also witness evaluations of different behavior in work-related settings when listening to their parents' conversational narratives (Norrick 2000). Hence, these middle-class dual-earner American families socialize their children into work settings with their expectations and roles long before the children actually enter work life themselves (Paugh 2005). A lack of this socialization practice may be one factor in the "hereditariness" of unemployment. The use of reported speech by mothers and fathers (Ely et al. 2009) and the multimodal enactment of reporting (Niemelä 2010, cf. also below for multimodality) in conversational storytelling has also been studied in dinner table discourse (cf. also Perregaard 2010 for the construction of moral order in narrative). Finally, the interactional functions of linguistic forms can be studied *in situ*, such as the Icelandic particle *nú* as a marker of affective stance (Hilmisdóttir 2011) or the formula *I'm not X, I want/just want Y* to curtail following challenges (Childs 2012).

Taken together, these studies emphasize that having meals together serves more than the simple intake of sustenance. Instead, children are taught appropriate behavior, not only with regard to the dinner setting (see below), but through displacement, one of the defining properties of human language, about settings outside the immediate family realm. Morality, understandings of the world, and socialization are produced with mealtimes as vehicles of culture (Ochs & Shohet 2006). It is for this reason that many of the authors in this section advocate studying natural settings rather than researching food consumption (or socialization, or other human behavior or social endeavors) through laboratory experiments or questionnaires.

Turning to those studies which do take dinner-related talk into account, Blum-Kulka (1994) describes the underlying tension between the instrumental talk about dinner-related activities and the general socializing goals of dinner conversation, which is resolved by constant frame-shifting:

These frames in turn evoke different genres: the highly contextualized, regulatory discourse of the instrumental task of having dinner; the spatiotemporally here-and-now anchored discourse of immediate family concerns, which assigns topical relevance by family membership and is highly sensitive to socializing goals; and finally, the discourse of nonimmediate topics that unfolds in the most sociable, ordinary conversation-like manner, accepting with equal respect contributions from all participants, regardless of role in family. (Blum-Kulka 1994: 44)

Kendall assigns different frames and positions with, for example, head chef, host, or director of clean-up in the dinner frame, and facilitator or comedian in the conversational frame (2008). In the socializing frame, she also describes an

etiquette monitor to enforce appropriate behavior at the dinner table (Kendall 2008:553).

Dinner related talk has been studied from a number of perspectives: Blum-Kulka's research on politeness indicates that the highest number of directives at the dinner table is requests for action or requests to stop an action. With regard to the parents' utterances only, the portion even rises to 85%. This is an indication both of the asymmetrical relation as well as of the need perceived by the parents to control their children at the table (Blum-Kulka 1990). Narratives and food distribution are interspersed (e.g. transcript 19 in Ochs & Taylor 1992a). Ochs shows how the present act of eating is intertwined with past eating experiences through narrative: current eating may occasion story-telling about past eating or an event from a story about eating may happen again during the dinner (1994). In a cross-cultural Italian-US American comparison, Ochs et al. show differences in the socialization of children at the dinner table (1996). While Americans stressed eating the right food as a moral obligation (with dessert used as a reward for compliance), Italian families reveled in taste as pleasure. In Italy, children were regarded as persons with individual preferences whereas the Caucasian American families stressed the difference between children's and adults' tastes. In both these middle class cultures, children were taught that they should not waste food (Ochs et al. 1996, cf. also DuFon 2006 on how students learn about local taste in a study-abroad context, again in informal dinner talk with their host families). A qualitative analysis of Italian dinner talk highlights the shifting participation frameworks (Goffman 1981) in family interaction: with regard to dinner behavior, the burping of a young child was used by the father to put the child into the role of an overhearer (Goffman 1981) allowing him to turn his behavior into a face-saving comical performance (Fatigante et al. 1998). Junefelt & Tulviste show that there are sociocultural differences between the uses of the sentence types (declarative, imperative, interrogative) with regard to Estonian and American mothers regulating children (with Swedish mothers being in between) (1998). While the former prefer to concentrate on the task at hand (having dinner), the Americans seem to foster verbal activities during mealtimes (Junefelt & Tulviste 1998:146). With regard to the regulation of teenagers, however, American and Estonian mothers do not seem to differ in the amount of regulatory speech at the dinner table (Tulviste 2000:550). It is mainly mothers (in a sample of Estonian, Finnish and Swedish families) who regulate the table manners of children, especially younger children (De Geer et al. 2002). Estonian mothers comment more frequently on the immediate task of having dinner; also they use more imperatives than all other smothers (De Geer et al. 2002:1777). In contrast, Swedish early adolescents comment more often when perceiving failures to comply to moral rules than Estonians or Finns (Tulviste et al. 2002). In one Caucasian-American family, the father initiated local, dinner related topics only, whereas the

mother's topics were unrelated to the setting (Abu-Akel 2002). Metacommunicative comments are used in (Italian) food talk to coerce children to eat more or stop them from eating more (Fatigante et al. 2004). Generally, with children present, regulatory talk seems more direct in Swedish families than non-instrumental talk (Brumark 2006b), but there is also a tendency for fathers to use irony and sarcasm to regulate younger children (Brumark 2006a). In addition, with younger children there tends to be more negotiation around dinner-related behavior (Brumark 2008). During meal times, parents often use directives (in contrast to requests) since their children's willingness to comply is not of interest to them and since they do not doubt their own entitlement to control their children's actions (Craven & Potter 2010). Interaction between children, peer talk, is an important contribution to the development of adequate language skills (Blum-Kulka et al. 2004). An older brother may also at times position himself as caretaker in trying to coerce his younger sibling to finish his food, again in a Swedish family (Aronsson & Gottzén 2011). Furthermore, compliance to directives at the dinner table is exercised in different manners using an array of embodied and verbal resources (Kent 2012). In the case of a child with special dietary requirements, references to pleasure are used to normalize the diet and construct a practice shared by the whole family (Veen et al. 2012).

Taken together, these studies illustrate cross-cultural differences on various planes and the enactment of distinct family roles according to gender, age and position in the family (e.g. elder brother). Furthermore, just like in the sections above, food is again shown to be constructed through language. In addition, the importance of studying language and food in their natural habitats becomes reinforced. The complexity of the setting "dinner table" or "having meals together" will become even more pronounced in this final section with studies focusing on the inseparability of language from the physical context of its use, hence in our case, from the dinner setting. Here, the actual food on the table is also taken into account.

In his lectures, Sacks draws attention to the position someone occupies who can say "bring out the herring," a position typically associated with a dinner frame including guests (1995: 328). Similarly, an offer for a plate can be heard as displaying membership as 'host' (Butler & Fitzgerald 2010). Offering food to guests includes referring to the food on the table. This is achieved by using summonses, demonstratives, and bodily practices like pointing to, fetching or holding up objects (Eriksson 2009). Generally, entertaining guests adds another dimension to dinners. For instance, toasting is an important convention and a traditional spoken genre in many cultures (cf. Kotthoff this volume). Speech acts concerned with the offering of food or drinks to guests are strongly dependent on cultural norms: e.g. in Polish, the guest's expressed desires are typically dismissed (Wierzbicka 1985).

Ultimately this leads to questioning the universality of politeness phenomena (cf. the work on Chinese food offerings (Chen 1996)). All of these phenomena can only be truly explicated when both talk and food are taken into account.

In a more minute analysis regarding objects in conversation, Erickson (1982) shows how the food and dinner utensils on the table can be used as resources for conversation: after the mother declares that everything on the table is home grown, her son starts listing things like lasagne and napkins. He uses the location of the utensils on the table as a means of generating a list by following their order on the table in counter-clockwise fashion (Erickson 1982:61). By using the laid table as a local resource, the boy can quickly generate a topical list of items which allows him to contribute to the talk. Furthermore, Erickson points out that in his data an offer of food (to a guest) is reciprocated by a compliment about the food.<sup>12</sup> Hence an offer of a 'food item' is reciprocated by a 'talk item' while concurrently food consumption is backgrounded ('main course is over') and conversational work foregrounded ('small talk begins') (Erickson 1982:60). This study illustrates food used as a resource for talk-in-interaction, and, more importantly, as on-a-par siblings in the dinner setting, language being exchanged against food and food against language.

With different methodologies and data, but similar findings, Keating describes how different semiotic resources are used to create rank in Pohnpei, Micronesia (2000). Their language has different verbs of motion or state, and forms of address depending on the status of a person. Concurrently, food is used during the frequent feasts to index hierarchies: higher ranking persons come first; also the quality and quantity of the food will decrease throughout the distributions. These are often the topic of subsequent discussions (Keating 2000:310). Whereas language offers a limited choice of linguistic forms (e.g. pronouns) or grammatical constructions only (high-status, low-status, no status-marking), food offers more subtle variation, so that who may be in one group language-wise can be differentiated with regard to food practices. The different semiotic systems can add meaning unto another, or they can send oppositional meanings to create a complex set of hierarchies (Keating 2000:311).

Wiggins et al. have worked on eating practices in the framework of discursive psychology (2001). They show that even the very nature of food is jointly constructed and negotiated (Wiggins et al. 2001:9) and that inner states such as hunger are open to discussion in family talk (Wiggins et al. 2001:10). Wiggins (2001) shows that evaluations of food are interactionally constructed in family

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12. cf. also Ochs & Taylor 1992a transcripts 14 and, foremostly, 18 for the use of compliments about food in identity and role construction in families.

conversation, even to the point that the identity of the food has to be first clarified. Evaluations of food items occur to compliment the cook, and they are often taken as requests for more. Evaluations can also be used to justify not eating one's food. Finally, evaluating food is also a claim of being experienced. This bound nature and action orientation questions the many questionnaire based studies on food evaluation (Wiggins 2001:446) which were in the main disregarded in this introduction. In talk, people differentiate between 'subjective' and 'objective' evaluations, i.e. personal preferences and qualities of the food item, and between categories and items, i.e. a specific piece of food and a piece of food as representative of its kind (Wiggins & Potter 2003). Again, these distinctions are obscured in attitudinal studies (Wiggins & Potter 2003).

In addition, Wiggins describes the function of the gustatory *mmm*, which is often followed by an evaluation, as an interactional activity (2002:318, for challenges to evaluations of food items cf. Wiggins 2004b). It can be used by speakers as physical proof for bodily sensations linked to food to embody verbal claims of pleasure (Wiggins 2002:330). Furthermore, the interactional construction of food as healthy or unhealthy has been a concern: it is closely interwoven with other concurrent activities such as justifying meal choice (Wiggins 2004a).

Mondada, in her conversation analytic account of food assessments in dinner talk, shows that these are intricately interwoven with both food related as well as interactional activities (2009). Her paper can be seen as a strong argument in support of such a volume as this one: It is only by looking both at the meal activities as well as the interactions that she discovers the functions of assessments in this context. For once, assessments often occur when the arrival of new food is announced at the table: Assessment sequences are then relevant, projected second pair parts. Furthermore, they do not occur randomly in dinner conversation, but they are usually inserted after the closing of a sequence or a topic. Hence, "talking about food can be a powerful resource for relaunching conversation" (Mondada 2009:10). This nature of food assessments can also be used in 'delicate' situations by the diners to close controversial topics and initiate new ones. In sum, food assessments occur in specific slots both with regard to the conversations as well as with regard to the dining itself.

Laurier, in a similar vein, is concerned with "Drinking up endings" (2008). Drink is here used as a resource in the closing sequence of a casual conversation between two co-workers in a café.<sup>13</sup> After having ended her story with *at the end*

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13. This is for obvious reasons not dinner talk. However, the study by Laurier nicely complements Mondada and Wiggins with its focus on the use of objects as resources in talk.

*of the day*, B finishes her coffee with “that extra tilt... which while mechanically necessary also makes it visibly the last sip.” (Laurier 2008:172) This makes the completion of the coffee-break possible since both talk and drink are done. However, the other woman (F) still has half a glass of coke. B’s setting down the cup on the saucer with a hearable ‘clunk’ happens at the turn completion of her colleague’s turn. After a few utterances both women glance at their wrist watches. This then causes F to take a markedly quicker drink from her coke than in her previous behavior. In doing so she makes an attempt at aligning the time of her finishing the drink with the time they still have according to their watches. Although she is not done, she pushes the glass away from her after having set it down: “a charming and classic gesture of having finished even though the glass is not empty.” (Laurier 2008: 175) Again, a possible moment for leaving the café and the conversation has come. However, the two women seem reluctant to leave their moment of gossiping about co-workers. Now B uses a half-filled glass of tap-water which was sitting next to her cup of coffee as a reserve resource: Her picking it up projects forward more time for the conversation to continue. The final move that leads into them getting up in perfect synchrony is signaled again not only verbally, but through a sequence of actions: F drinks up, puts the glass down forcefully with a ‘clunk’, slaps her thigh and reaches for her handbag (Laurier 2008:177). The analysis of this sequence indicates that not every attempt at closing is necessarily taken up. This is in parallel to classic pieces of conversation analytic research about telephone calls (Schegloff & Sacks 1973). It is also a strong argument in favor of analyzing every possible resource for making meaning in conversation, including drinks and food. Schegloff and Sacks have already drawn the analogy between the uses of food and language in their seminal paper:

the possible need for preparing [closings], has to do with the OCCASION’S ending, and it is a part of conversation that the occasion may be ended. It is by way of the use of closing the conversation for ending the occasion that the use of a section to end the conversation may be appreciated, in a way similar to our appreciation of the use of a snack to end an evening or a get-together.

(Schegloff & Sacks 1973:326)

Just like conversation here is used to end a phone-call, in Laurier’s data it is drinks and conversation (and other means) which are used to end the coffee-break (Laurier 2008: 170–171).

With regard to young children in affluent societies, however, it is not always clear when the end of dinner has been reached. Parents elicit completion statements “Are you done?” and disregard claims from their children that they are full (Laurier & Wiggins 2011). Dessert is used as a resource by parents to check satiety with those children who are old enough to have acquired general dinner

rules. Furthermore, family equality or the nutritional value of food are evoked in the negotiation of adequate and fair food portions for children in mundane dinner settings. Hence, appetite, hunger, and satiety are not psychological states, but interactionally negotiated practices in families. For this reason, research on eating disorders and obesity should take such findings into account (Laurier & Wiggins 2011).

In US society, health is often depicted as a state to be achieved through correct eating practices (Paugh & Izquierdo 2009, also e.g. Meneley 2007 on the discourse surrounding one product, namely olive oil). With regard to children, these practices also reflect whether someone is a good or bad parent. Since everyday practices do not always match the perceived knowledge about healthy eating, conflicts arise between parents and children during dinner while they negotiate food choice and quantity in the context of issues such as individual preferences or sibling fairness through family interaction (Paugh & Izquierdo 2009). In addition, Wiggins and Hepburn study how the amount of food eaten by the children, their appetite, and satiety are managed in everyday family interaction (2007).

Having food together in a group is presumably one of the oldest social acts in the history of human kind. The studies above indicate its primordial importance in bonding and group constitution, in the transmission of language and culture, and in the constitution of identities and roles. While constructing one's behavior as meaningful and orderly, both food and language are used as resources in everyday situations.

### 3.5.2 *Other spoken discourses*

Talk about food is common in everyday interaction between relatives, friends or other social groups (e.g. in a paper on offers of assistance Curl 2006). Norrick shows that it can be used as a means of bonding, even if participants often take an expert footing for example in conversational recipe tellings (2011). Conversational recipes consist of a sequence of turns with a discernable opening and closing. The use of the first person past tense links them to conversational stories (Norrick 2000), while the use of imperatives indicates their instructional nature (Norrick 2011). In Greek, diminutives are often added to the ingredients in spoken recipes, indicating involvement and concern (Sifianou 1992: 163).

Not many studies seem to exist which focus on language use during food preparation. Achiba illustrates the acquisition of interactional competence by an L2 speaker during the course of three cooking sessions with L1 speakers (2012). For instance, the 8-year-old Japanese girl starts using the expression *it says...*, *so...* which has been used by the native English speakers to refer to instructions in the recipe and their in-situ application (Achiba 2012: 22).

In an ethnographic account of Israeli children's ritual sharing of snacks, Katriel describes the bonding nature of this communicative act that involves both food consumption as well as specific verbal negotiations (1987). For instance, by quickly stating *bli xibùdim* 'without sharing', the future buyer of snacks can suspend the rules. However, if the other children first utter *bexibùdim! bexibùdim!* in a chant-like manner, this option is no longer available so that the treat would have to be shared with the other children by letting them have bites or licks (Katriel 1987: 305). Mishler describes how children exchange food items during break time in a first grade classroom focusing on the act of trading (1979, cf. also Schieffelin 1990). Looking at spoken language in the kindergarden, teachers see majority culture food as a natural choice, inadvertently putting pressure on minority culture children (Karrebæk 2012, 2013). Meaning to put the focus on healthy eating, teachers advocated rye bread or oats for breakfast so that newly arrived students will also be discouraged by their fellow pupils to bring pita bread to school (Karrebæk 2012: 8ff, cf. also Allison 2008, about lunch-boxes in Japan).

The service encounter remains understudied (Kuroshima 2010). For Quito (Ecuador) the importance of phatic communion (Malinowski 1972) in corner shops is attested (Placencia 2004). Merritt draws attention to questions by customers which may sometimes be reciprocated by questions from the service personnel orienting to the status of the first as either requests for information or requests for service (1976). Expansions of the request-registration sequence indicate attenuated trust in the correct outcome of the ordering sequence, which may be relevant in a cross-linguistic setting (Kuroshima 2010). Buying food at markets or shops is usually studied under buying and selling and does not have a focus on food as the object of the transaction (for example Orr 2008 for buying e.g. fruit at a Chinese market).

However, the doings of customers e.g. at coffee shops also encompass entering, ordering, seat-selecting, meeting people, and a number of other activities which usually go unnoticed because of their ordinariness (Laurier 2005). People are usually discernable as regulars in cafés, groups that meet, or lone customers. It is through the use of talk, gestures, gaze, movement in space, use of books or newspapers, and other resources that we manage these mundane activities and make sense out of them (Laurier 2005; Laurier et al. 2001 for an overview about ethnographic studies in this field, cf. Møller 2010 for the use of membership categorization devices used in a restaurant situation).

In her ethnographic study, Lindquest shows how the patrons of a restaurant lounge in which she worked as a bar tender, create an identity of White working class through their talk (2004, 2002, cf. her bibliographies for more (ethnographic) studies of bar life). While arguing, mainly about politics, the regulars at the bar may disalign from each other; however, concurrently this allows the discursive

constitution of a group identity (Lindquist 2002: 171). Even though they feel they are not being properly represented by political and other institutions, they still believe they can move upwards within a society governed by these structures. Their identity is based on the common belief that “street smartness” is better than “book learning” (Lindquist 2002: 117–118). The stylized performances of the bar patrons are interpreted as resolving “tensions that exist not only between group solidarity and individual difference, but also between lived experience and the claims of the American myth of unfettered social mobility.” (Lindquist 2004: 312) The socio-political as well as material context of coffeetalk at Starbucks in the U.S., which may appear casual and based on equality, has been shown to reinforce social segregation (Gaudio 2003, for racial stereotyping by servers, cf. also Mallinson & Brewster 2005).

Barrett discusses the use of Spanish at a Mexican restaurant in Texas. Anglo managers often use mock Spanish for communication without questioning its success as a communicative tool. Instead, results of miscommunication are mostly explained with racial stereotypes of the Spanish-speaking workers as being lazy or stupid. Amongst the workforce, however, Spanish is used to show solidarity and resistance (Barrett 2006).<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, Tate, in her discourse analytic study, describes how Black British women from Caribbean descent reproduce and delimit their identities through talk about food, while also criticizing this reduction of their culture to “rice an peas on a Sunday an a piece ah chicken” (2003: 96). As pointed out above, “terms for food and dishes [...] frequently come to stand metonymically for a particular culture (spaghetti, kraut, curry, doner kebab, etc.)” (Mühleisen 2003: 72).

Based on a recorded conversation between a grandmother who is a trained nurse and her granddaughter, Beach shows how the denial of “a problem” with bulimia and the grandmother’s concern are interactionally constructed between the two women (1996). Wiggins et al. are concerned with calls to a helpline where food habits are discussed as either appropriate or evidence of abuse (2007, cf. also Hepburn & Wiggins 2005, for comments on body-size as a resource in conversation, see Guendouzi 2004). The authors demonstrate that discursive psychology can provide information for health professionals in this field that would help them understand actual food practices more thoroughly (Wiggins et al. 2007: 279–280, for studies on eating disorders, cf. also below). Similarly, based on observations of meetings between overweight (Danish) children, their parents and a dietician, Koustrup et al. point out that only medical and parental views were present whereas

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14. The high number of Hispanic workers in US American kitchens has also led to courses in Hotel/Restaurant Spanish in community colleges (Flouton 1991).

the child's perspective was lacking (2012). They suggest that interventions might be more lasting if the 'food worlds' of the obese children were taken into account.

Animal feed or pet food will for the most part be ignored in this volume. However, food is often used as a prompt in studies with animals to test their cognitive or communicative skills. It is interesting to note that dogs have the ability to understand human communicative cues such as pointing or gaze in their attempts to locate food, in contrast for instance to primates or wolves, an ability which must have evolved during their domestication (cf. Bräuer et al. 2006: 38–39 for a recent summary).

To sum up, besides the dinner table, a number of public places are also associated with the consumption and, hence, production of edibles, and talk: restaurant lounges, bars, restaurants, coffee shops etc. Also, foods need to be bought first. Depending on the context, food or references to food take on different meanings (cf. also Holmes et al. this volume). However, most studies from these settings do not focus on language. Apart from research on families having meals at the dinner table, there is a relative dearth of linguistically-informed or language-based studies concentrating on spoken discourses around food.

### 3.6 Food writing

Written discourses around food as well as the mediated ones in the following section are often connected today in that celebrity chefs as brands represent the most successful actors across these different markets (Ashley et al. 2004: 172ff, cf. also Chiaro this volume). They publish their own lines of cookery books, run restaurants, sell products under their name and work different media channels (television, internet...) Jamie Oliver's *School Dinners*, for instance, consisted of a reality TV programme and an online petition, which subsequently found wide media coverage and provoked governmental action (Mayr 2009). In that sense, these genres must nowadays not be seen separately, but as cross-fertile and as different realizations of the same discourse of lifestyle and distinction (Ashley et al. 2004: 177ff, cf. Coveney 2006).

Food writing is often distinguished into two forms: gastronomic literature and cookery books (Mennell 1996; Ashley et al. 2004). The genre defining example of the first is Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du gout* (cf. above). While the advent of food essays as literary genre and guides to eating has been described (Mennell 2005), a linguistically oriented discourse analytic account seems missing (cf. Van den Berghe 2009 for restaurant reviews in Brussels though). However, also other, smaller genres which may not be as obvious have established themselves. For once, written lists are an important part of food discourse: besides recipes which are concerned with the preparation of food, there are also shopping lists and menus

(Goody 2008: 83). While cookery books and recipes as well as menus have found some attention, the shopping list less so. Goody points out that it is more than a mere list of required items, but “a way of constructing the future schedule... in space and time” (2008: 83) e.g. by grouping certain products. Moreover, wine tasting notes have been described which usually follow the order of the tasting experience itself (color, smell, taste) and are of special interest because of the amount of metaphorical language use found in them (Caballero 2007). For instance, WINE IS A PERSON is a common metaphor in French (Amoraritei 2002; cf. Gluck 2003 for a critical account of ‘winespeak’). Food and healthy eating are also the topic of a burgeoning number of self-help books and diet manuals which tend to quantify, fragmentize and pathologize food (Marko 2009). The genre which has found the most attention by linguists, however, is the recipe.

### 3.6.1 *Cookery books and recipes*

The earliest documentation of written recipes consists of tablets from the northern Semitic city of Mari (located on the west bank of the Euphrates) from the earlier part of the second millennium BC (Goody 2008: 85). The first cookery book to be printed is claimed to be “Martino of Como’s *Liber de arte coquinaria*, which is embedded in Platina’s *De honesta voluptate* of around 1470” (Albala 2007: x) or, alternatively, the Nuremberg *Küchenmeisterei* (Ehlert 2010 [1485]). Recipes traveled from one European country to the next, both as medieval manuscripts and in print, allowing for a common style of cuisine in upper classes across Europe (Mennell 1996: 50). In England, the first cookery books (around 1500) were more general in scope, often called books of secrets, which also included receipts for medicine, cleaning agents, distillation, or perfumes (cf. Riley-Köhn 1999 for a diachronic study of the English recipe, cf. Hödl 1999 for a diachronic cross-linguistic study, cf. Arendholz et al. this volume, cf. Diemer this volume). In France, until the 19th century, cookery books were exclusively written by male, mostly professional cooks (Davidson 2006: 319–320). Take note that, until the 17th century, German cookery books “were more numerous and impressive than French ones” (Davidson 2006: 336), their compilations associated with Southern German monasteries (Schumacher-Voelker 1980) (cf. Davidson 2006 for a history of the cookery book in other European countries, Ashley et al. 2004 for a recent discussion of the literature). It is claimed that only in 1887 with the appearance of *The Boston Cookbook* the conventional bipartite recipe (list of ingredients plus instructions) emerged (Aresty 1964 in Cotter 1997).

The history of the (English) cookery book allows tracing the implementation of husbandry and housewifery as a gender based division of domestic labor (Davidson 2006: 276–280), cookery books having a female domestic audience (Mennell 1996: 200). In the U.S., after WWII, cookery books reaffirmed the

domesticity of the women, after many women had entered the workforce during the war years (Horner 2000). Interestingly, not only did cookbooks, beginning in the early twentieth century continuing into the 1960s, instruct women and girls how to get and keep a man: “the good-looking girl who is also a ‘good-cooking girl’ stands more of a chance of sniffing orange blossoms,” (quoted in Inness 2001a: 37) also, in marital sex manuals of the same years, women were instructed how to cook and keep a house: “If you want your husband to love you romantically in the years to come, don’t be romantic about yourself or about him. Think of his stomach.” (Borden 1933 in Neuhaus 2001: 101) In juvenile cookbooks, girls and boys are not only instructed that they must like different kinds of food, but also that their outlook on food is different: Whereas girls are supposedly concerned with the appearance and presentation of food, boys look for taste only. Likewise, cooking (simple) dishes is presented as an option to boys, whereas girls are taught that to them cooking will be a joy and a sacred responsibility in the future (Inness 2001b). Not only gender issues, but also representation of class and national identity can be traced in cookery books. Victorian authors of cookbooks often connect a nation’s diet to its fate likening the head of the household to a leader of a nation (Zlotnick 1996: 60–61). Community cookbooks are put together, mostly by women, to raise funds for local projects reflecting the worldviews and values of those communities (Bower 1997).

Recipes are ways of encoding dishes, “a culturally defined complex of food items” (Goode et al. 1984: 147). Even though recipes for one particular dish may vary from cookery book to cookery book or from cook to cook, their basic structure is a “group-shared, socially transmitted pattern” (Goode et al. 1984: 147). On the one hand, it is the food items and, on the other hand, the modes of preparation which constitute a dish, with the latter being more important for the differentiation of different social groups/ethnicities (Goode et al. 1984: 148). A case in point may be the attempt to provide Hamburgers to the American troops in WWII, even though the usual meat could not be provided (cf. *gazelleburgers* or *caraburgers* made out of caraboa ‘water buffalo’ Meredith 1944). In regional cooking, however, the ingredients are more constant, and the procedures flexible (Goody 2008).

The genre recipe has a number of characteristics on different linguistic levels which make it such an obvious case of specialized written use of language that it seems to represent the single most used example when exemplifying this technical term or when teaching genre writing in school (cf. also Spitz & Bubel this volume). Recipes usually consist of two parts: a list (of ingredients) and instructions. Often, recipes are also accompanied by external instructions or comments, sometimes in extra-boxes, e.g. information about some ingredient or how to serve the dish (Tomlinson 1986: 204). They are also headed by a title, the name of the recipe. These may include labels like *Shirley’s dip* or *Mother’s pumpkin pie* implying that

“the reader should trust the author” (Tomlinson 1986: 206). Moreover, some titles are rather uninformative, but strongly evaluative *Best ever cookies* or *Dream bar*, or, informative only regarding preparational details: *Tupperware sugar cookies* or *Microwave manicotti* (Tomlinson 1986: 206) (cf. also the section on word formation and restaurant menus for names of dishes in this introduction). Vital is also the information on the number of portions a recipe will make (Fisher 1969: 23).

The first major part of recipes, the list, may include the ingredients, but indispensable components like kitchen machines that may be required, pots, measuring cups, cutting boards etc. are not itemized (in contrast to laboratory manuals which list these) (Norrick 1983a, cf. also Ribeiro et al. 2006 and their ontology for a dialog system for *The House of the Future*). Likewise, some foodstuffs such as salt or water are not enumerated; or e.g. flour for rolling out dough is not added as an extra amount (Norrick 1983a). Moreover, often the list presupposes some earlier preparation stage *2 eggs, separated* or *sifted flour* by adding past participle verbs (Tomlinson 1986: 206). Finally, *pinch* or *slice* and abbreviations like *tsp* or *c.* may be hard to understand and put into action. In short, the list of ingredients is “incomplete, inexact and inconsistent” (Norrick 1983b: 174). Hence, expertise in cooking is required, even to understand the list of ingredients and its implications or presuppositions.

The instructions are “directly directive object-oriented schedules of procedures” (Norrick 1983a: 121; cf. also Wharton 2010). *Object oriented* pertains to the objective of recipes, namely to produce some dish. Instead of the word *schedule*, the Labovian narrative has also been used to describe the order of the instructions (Cotter 1994; Labov 1972). Even though the steps are given chronologically, prereading is often necessary: *Boil liquor in which meat marinated* for instance presupposes keeping the marinade (Norrick 1983a). Moreover, the instructions are necessarily always incomplete, and reading recipes means understanding the level of incompleteness (Tomlinson 1986: 207). The number of steps describing the preparation of the same dish in two different cook books may vary enormously catering for different audiences (Lakoff 2006: 162, cf. also Fischer this volume). While English uses imperatives, e.g. German uses infinitives introduced by objects *Pfifferlinge putzen* (Gläser 1979 in Norrick 1983a: 126). Syntactically, they have been described as “recipe context English null object constructions”, e.g. *Mix well and beat for five minutes* (Massam & Roberge 1989: 135, cf. also Massam 1992, for a formal representation of cooking recipes). While historically less frequent, zero anaphora is now primarily a question of style (Culy 1996, for a syntactical analysis cf. also Bender 1999). These elliptical constructions often represent “intermediate products, as one completes the procedures, and these are henceforth treated as ingredients proper” (Norrick 1983a: 125). Non-elliptically, “once sautéed, the *celery, carrot, and onion* [...] become the *vegetables* [...]; combined with vinegar

and water, they constitute the *first mixture...*” (Norrick 1983a:125). Again, the coherence of this text type relies on the knowledge of the cook. Non-imperative clauses have a descriptive or evaluative function only and often serve to differentiate versions of a particular recipe for the same dish (Cotter 1994). Because of the scalar nature of many of the descriptive clauses, e.g. *extra-thick* or *regular crust*, again prior knowledge about the genre and cooking seems presupposed (Cotter 1994). The complex nature of recipes comes into view when studying the cooking instructions given in a radio phone-in show which does indeed allow the reader/hearer to ask back (Goldberg 1975).

Cooking instructions printed on convenience food (Rathmayr 2006a, 2006b) are similar to recipes in many respects because of their shared global function. However, the lack of space, the smaller range and less complicated nature of the “cooking” activities, the ready-made mixtures as well as the context on the packages (e.g. recycling instructions) also make them specific text types. As to be expected, cross-cultural differences can be found: Russian texts, for instance, are much less explicit than German ones, their vague formulations catering for more experienced cooks (Rathmayr 2006a, 2006b).

Recipes are not simple, straight-forward step-by-step instructions that can be successfully used by any novice, but they represent a register containing presuppositions on many levels, necessary incompleteness in the steps of preparations or sets of instructions, assumptions about cultural knowledge, practical skills, and technical equipments evoking a complex set of practices. Successful cooks need to be able to time their steps, to understand the ever-changing nature of the product as they produce it while putting the text into action.

### 3.6.2 *Restaurant menus*

Menus are minimally lists of food names with prices. Restaurant owners face the difficulty of having to give information about their dishes and to advertise them in a relatively small space (Zwicky & Zwicky 1980). The genre convention of brevity holds even when the actual size of the menu would permit more information. In contrast, it may be flouted when the advertisement motive is strong (Zwicky & Zwicky 1980). In (American) English, past participle constructions are prevalent because the preparation is completed at the time of serving. Tasty, but rather uninformative adjectives such as *fresh* are common. The most basic taste words, however, are generally absent (Zwicky & Zwicky 1980:89). Furthermore, indexing connoisseurship by the use of French kitchen terminology and language play such as alliteration or rhyme are recurring features in American menus (Zwicky & Zwicky 1980:84–86).

Since French is often considered the language of the finest cooking, it can also be used to index quality and skill through the names of dishes in restaurants,

such as “*onion au gratin a la Japanese ... Small matter that the average diner can neither understand nor pronounce them*” (Teller 1969:92). In American menus, the French function words *le* and *au* are used irrespective of French grammar rules such as in *Le salad* or *Au gratin potatoes* (Zwicky & Zwicky 1980, cf. also Serwe et al. this volume). Besides the frequently used French forms and the Italian *alla* and *all'*, a new form *ala* has been devised for menu-upgrading (Teller 1969). The expression *a la mode* has lost its original meaning (and its accent) in American English and indicates that some food item is prepared with ice cream. Furthermore, dish names often follow French or romance word order patterns such as *Clambs Larry* (all Zwicky & Zwicky 1980). This has been lamented early on: “Languages are often freely mixed and confused: ... *ragout of beef tenderloin a la Deutsch*” (Teller 1969).

In recent years, there has been an increase in so-called fusion cuisine, i.e. the mixing of different Eastern and Western culinary worlds. The menus of these restaurants are an amalgam of international food terms such as *bouillabaisse with pak soi* or *won ton filled with tomato and mozzarella* with all their distinct etymologies (Mühleisen 2003:83, cf. also above). Furthermore, with the rising interest in food safety and ecologically sound production methods, even the exact origin of a product may be mentioned (e.g. *Paine Farm squab*) indexing the patrons ecological sensitivity (Lakoff 2006:152). Menus generally reflect a restaurant's orientation, both in word-choice as well as in lay-out (and pricing) (Lakoff 2006:157). Longer names usually reflect higher prices and vice versa (Lavric 2009, cf. also for naming practices in German, French and Spanish). Because of this range of different meaningful practices, there seems of be “something like a stylistics of dish names.” (Lavric 2009:29).

Menus for banquets have a specific build up, page 1 mentioning the special occasion, page 2 listing the wines, and page 3 the food. In the case of political visits, the denominations (and food choice) on the menu have been shown to mirror regional social contexts (e.g. for an American visit to Belgium during the inter-war years) (Van den Eeckhout & Scholliers 2003). While the wine to be served during formal dining is often mentioned on the menu, other beverages which may be taken instead are omitted (Goody 2008:81). In formal dining like at St. John's college, Cambridge, a “dining list” is also on the table, putting those present at the dinner in a distinct hierarchical order (Goody 2008:79f.).

### 3.6.3 Labeling food products

Food items like flour or milk only become individual products through packaging and labeling. Labeling, however, is more often part of economic studies, marketing, than language studies. Furthermore, a number of legal regulations apply to naming (e.g. protected geographical indications) or packaging (e.g. obligatory information

about nutritional values). In linguistics, in language for special purposes, an obvious field here, Rathmayr studied the labeling of Russian food items. She found that, for instance, for chocolate, first names (to individualize the product) or references to fairy tales are common (Rathmayr 2004). However, Freedman & Jurafsky's study on class distinction in potato chip advertising illustrates that the texts on food products provide an interesting site for analysis for other fields of linguistics also (2011).

In their sociolinguistic inquiry, Freedman and Jurafsky analyze the language on twelve more or less expensive bags of potato chips (2011). The expensive bags feature overall more complex language and more words. Moreover, the words used were less common (e.g. *fluorescent* or *flair* versus *fresh* and *light*), and there were more health claims on the expensive food than the less expensive (Freedman & Jurafsky 2011:48). Furthermore, claims at distinction (Bourdieu 1979), linguistically realized as comparatives or negation, were used five times more frequently on expensive chips (Freedman & Jurafsky 2011:49). While naturalness and ingredients/production process were often mentioned on the expensive bags, historicity and locality were stressed on the cheaper ones, in both cases to claim authenticity for the products (Freedman & Jurafsky 2011:51). Hence, socioeconomic status reflects in the marketing of a product like potato chips.

In her analysis of the textual material in U.S. American whole food markets, Johnston shows that despite a depiction of the company in terms of ethical consumption (protection of the environment, support of local farmers, organic farming,...), the choice of food available, both in terms of range and type (e.g. 129 types of cereal or ice cubes in plastic wrapping), sends a contradictory message (2008:251). In addition, while the in-store pamphlets may be called "Take action," they mainly treat individual health concerns (Johnston 2008:270). Ultimately, "vote with your dollar" – consume to preserve, is interpreted as representing "the privatization of social and ecological concerns, as the neo-liberal state distances itself from responsibility" (Johnston 2008:262, for consumer activism cf. also Terragni et al. 2009).

Nilsen also ventured into a supermarket for her analysis of the gender on the names of food products in comparison to restaurant names (1995). It was not only male names for products presumably bought by men, and female names for women, but often cross-gender appeal was used to attract buyers (Nilsen 1995:33). Restaurant names are more often male than female and also often marked for ethnicity, probably to indicate the cuisine offered (e.g. *Jean-Claude's Petit Café* or *Pepé's Tacos*) (Nilsen 1995:35, cf. also Serwe et al. this volume).<sup>15</sup>

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15. Research from economics or marketing is disregarded here (cf. also below for work on (television) advertisements).

### 3.7 Mediated food discourse

In discourses about food in media contexts such as advertisements for food products or television commercials, the focus has generally not been the language used. For instance, because of general health concerns, Britain has seen a number of debates about the role of television in food choice, mainly with regard to advertising (Hastings et al. 2003; Livingstone 2004). In Sweden, for example, food commercials typically contain health claims (Prell et al. 2011). Food is presented as a solution to health problems which must not necessarily be true, but credible (Gracia Arnaiz 2001). With regard to the U.S., television has been shown to portray mainly fit and healthy people eating unhealthy food, so that the viewer may deduce that this has no consequences (Kaufman 1980). Furthermore, the advent of celebrity chefs and cookery shows on television in the 1990s has been studied (Ashley et al. 2004), also, men's health magazines and their portrayal of masculine food practices (Parasecoli 2005, cf. also Fuller et al. this volume) or the enactment of masculine hegemony in Japanese cooking shows (Holden 2005). For reasons of space, research not concentrating on language use in a narrow sense or using "authentic" language data (that exist irrespective of the study) will be disregarded in the following. This section will encompass both classic mass media as well as computer-mediated communication.

In an early study, Eames and Robboy researched the dialectal distribution of the *submarine sandwich* by looking at the advertisements in classified telephone directories (1967). In addition, they searched for alternative names by interviewing students: "It should be noted that these interviews continued throughout the entire study and the authors are still continuing their search for additional names" (Eames & Robboy 1967: 280). Interestingly, a Wikipedia page ('Submarine sandwich') seems to be continuing this endeavor until the present day. Hence, a study on mediated discourse (advertisements in telephone directories) about food has now found a place in computer-mediated communication, potentially reflecting the general interest of the public in dialectal variation and etymology.

One recurrent theme in studies of press reports in the field of food is genetic engineering. In the biotechnology debate in Denmark, for instance, the press created predominantly negative metaphors (Faustian or Frankensteinian) for the process of genetic food modification (Holmgreen 2008: 107). Moreover, GM corn is portrayed as a dangerous person that needs to be monitored or, alternatively, as a contaminating substance. Health is a recurrent metaphor that can be used both by supporters and contesters (Holmgreen 2008: 110ff). Concentrating on the industries' perspective (in New Zealand), critical discourse analysis shows how New Zealand businesses draw on a variety of identities and rhetorics such as

environmental integrity, competitiveness or rationality (Henderson et al. 2007, cf. also Doolin 2007 for biotechnology discourse).

In a cross-linguistic study of television commercials (Strauss 2005), differences were found with regard to the description of the advertised food items: While in Japan it was often sufficient to label something generically as *oishii* ‘good tasting’, in the U.S. and Korea the reason for the good taste was given e.g. *because it is flame broiled*. Besides, more intensification, hyperboles and exclamations were used in Korea and Japan. Furthermore, the description of the texture of the food items was also utilized differently in this corpus. In Japan only softness and fluffiness were evoked and in the U.S. creaminess and richness mainly, whereas the Korean advertisements were much more varied. Generally, these findings suggest that a dichotomy between Western and (East) Asian cultures is oversimplified (Strauss 2005:1432). Gerhardt’s work shows that food represents such a mundane and basic topic that even in television football commentary references to food are used (2009). During color commentary and at the beginning of games, they seem to be used to close the co-presence gap between the television commentators and the viewers. By referring to the eating of *bacon and eggs* (by the viewers), the commentators concurrently construct an image of the English as pork-eaters reinforcing hegemonic world-views (Gerhardt 2009).

Moving from the television to the radio, the cooking instructions given in phone-in shows indicate that instructions are usually broken down into smaller units which are actively received by the one being instructed proposing an Instruct-Receipt-sequence (Goldberg 1975). A feature of the setting is the stretching out of receipts to mark the time needed for writing down the instructions given by the radio host (Goldberg 1975:275).

In Chinese online entertainment news, the playful use of food metaphors can be witnessed (Han 2011). The term *fěnsī* meaning ‘dry noodles made from bean or potato starch’ has been adopted as a transliteration of the English term *fans*. This playful use originated in online discourse about a specific television talent show, and it has given rise to a FANS ARE FOOD ITEMS metaphor in entertainment news and fans’ online discourse triggering a number of creative neologisms (Han 2011). In contrast to most other studies on food metaphors, in these cases, no correspondence between the two items is posited. Rather, these are examples of language play indexing the endearment of the fans towards their idols.

With regard to veganism, Sneijder and te Molder show how, in a vegan online forum, health problems are constructed as being at the responsibility of the individual rather than inherent in a vegan life style (2004, 2005). The formula *if... then...* plus modality (e.g. *If you ensure that you get enough calcium... it’s impossible for a problem to occur*) is used to implicitly put the blame on the behavior

of those seeking advice in the forum (Sneijder & te Molder 2004:605). Although vegans and vegetarians claim to choose their life style because it is healthier, the discursive constructions in this forum suggest that vegans are more concerned with avoiding health problems through eating practices than with improving their health (Sneijder & te Molder 2004:607). Likewise, vegan lifestyle is constructed as simple, and even taking pills against vitamin deficiencies is portrayed as routine practice (Sneijder & te Molder 2009). Similarly, Stommel and Koole draw attention to the difficulty of joining an online support group on eating disorders (2010). Even though this service is generally regarded as having a low threshold, it becomes apparent that membership requires accepting certain norms, among them not being 'pro-ana'. The task of understanding and accepting the requirements of this 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger 1991) may discourage those to whom the site originally addresses itself (Stommel & Koole 2010:375).

Finally, in an online discussion forum on food pleasure, users construct themselves as 'gourmets' for instance by using objective evaluations or physical experiences with food as "proof" (Sneijder & te Molder 2006, cf. also Diemer & Frobenius this volume, cf. also Wiggins 2002).

To sum up, studies on food in mediated contexts, especially in computer-mediated communication (CMC), promise interesting future insights into human understandings of food. Regarding long-standing genres such as recipes, it is interesting to see current developments in different media environments. While the introduction here summarizes work on conversational recipe tellings (Norrick 2011), i.e. oral recipes, on the earliest records of written recipes and on modern cookery books, in the main part of this volume the future of the recipe, food blogs (Diemer & Frobenius this volume) and celebrity chef's websites (Arendholz et al. this volume), will come into focus. All of these cater for the need to transmit culture knowledge about food production, from oral to written to CMC.

#### 4. Conclusion

This introduction shows that there is a plethora of studies at the intersection of language and food. Still, it becomes clear that there are many unexplored fields for linguistics and other disciplines studying language with regard to food studies. Since food is one central element of human lives, its study profits from an interdisciplinary approach with multiple perspectives on food. Language is the primary means humans use to transmit meaning. For this reason, a focus on language and its use could be beneficial with regard to many pressing current debates or present-day research fields in other disciplines.

To name a few, the study of eating disorders and its relation to socialization has mostly been studied with a disregard to actual language use and actual eating practices based on questionnaires, rating scales or experiments (e.g. Bruch 1966; Birch et al. 1987; Hill et al. 1998; Birch et al. 2001; Neumark-Sztainer et al. 2003; Videon & Manning 2003; Taveras et al. 2005; cf. Gremillion 2003 for field-work in a treatment center though). When actual dining was filmed (sometimes in laboratories, e.g. Drucker et al. 1999), it was used to code children's mealtime behavior (e.g. Cooper et al. 2004). If actual interactions between mothers with eating disorders and their children are taken into account, the interactions are coded as to whether the mothers express negative or positive emotions or exert verbal control (e.g. Stein et al. 1994). The same applies to the study of feeding in general (cf. Wiggins et al. 2007: 2064 for an overview, Faith et al. 2004 for a review study in medicine). From the point of view of interactional studies, it would have been interesting to see the actual rating of e.g. "intrusiveness: actions which inappropriately cut across, took over or disrupted the infant's activities" (Stein et al. 1994: 737). A number of questions arise, such as what counts as an activity or an action here (verbal or non-verbal behavior, speech acts or events, (sequences of) turns; which modalities or modes exactly were regarded ("the words", intonation, facial expressions, gestures, etc), or who judges whether something is appropriate or not (the scientist, the mother, or the child?). Hence, an enormous amount of research is concerned with eating disorders on both sides of the scale, i.e. obesity as well as anorexia nervosa or bulimia. Disregarding medical or biological research, bulimia, for instance, has mainly been studied with the help of self-report data such as interviews or questionnaires (e.g. Carper et al. 2000; cf. Beach 1996: 7ff, see also above). Enquiries into the sociocultural contexts of these illnesses, however, could well profit from approaches focusing on real family practices, interactions naturally occurring in the lives of those suffering from eating disorders. Again, interdisciplinarity is called for so that e.g. the coding of practices with which parents influence their children's eating during dinner could go beyond a superficial semantic level (such as in Orrell-Valente et al. 2007, or the extended version of BATMAN 'Bob's and Tom's method for assessing nutrition', the coding scheme for meal time behavior in Koivisto et al. 1994).

This volume represents a first attempt at delimiting the field of culinary linguistics. More was left unsaid than said. We, the editors, hope that the many aspects at the crossroads of language and food that we were not able to grasp will be interpreted as enticements by readers from other disciplines or other branches of linguistics to complement this volume with publications from their perspectives. With regard to the body of this volume, it now only remains for us to say *Guten Appetit!*



PRIMI PIATTI

## **Genres of food discourse**



# When making pie, all ingredients must be chilled. Including you

## Lexical, syntactic and interactive features in online discourse – a synchronic study of food blogs

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The present study describes food blogs as a genre of computer-mediated communication (CMC). The combined approach of corpus linguistic and pragmatic methods reveals the characteristics of food blogs as a hybrid genre that mixes elements from various other discourse types. Lexical and syntactic analyses depict the use and frequencies of (1) CMC related phenomena: innovative vocabulary and spelling; (2) food related jargon: specialized vocabulary, grammatical patterns; (3) phenomena related to spoken interaction: discourse markers, hedges and address. The pragmatic analysis reviews these elements in their blog context. They contribute to creating an audience directed text through features such as humor, repetition and expert knowledge. We thus provide evidence that one of the main goals of this discourse type is interaction and describe how this interaction is systematically achieved.

### 1. Introduction

Food blogs are a written, asynchronous genre of CMC (Computer-mediated communication); they revolve around the preparing, consumption and evaluation of food in all varieties and contexts. This paper presents the results of a synchronic, corpus based study of food blogs, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative, corpus-linguistic approach describes lexical and semantic phenomena that are characteristic features of food blogs, thus resulting in a detailed characterization of the genre and its merging of food discourse and online language. The qualitative approach traces signs of audience involvement throughout one complete blog post, taking the notion of *audience design* (Clark & Carlson 1992) as its basis. It mainly takes up two items discussed in the quantitative approach (audience address, pronouns) and discusses them in their context. We use this two-fold method to draw a comprehensive picture

of the characteristics of the genre under discussion. The analysis starts with a description of food blog as a subcategory of blogs in Section 2 and information on the compilation and composition of the Food Blog Corpus in Section 3, followed by the corpus linguistic study and the qualitative pragmatic analysis in Section 4 and our conclusion in Section 5.

## 2. Food blogs as a sub-genre of CMC

Blogs, “frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence,” (Herring et al. 2004:1) constitute an online form of communication that goes back to the 1990s. The availability of blogging software made this written asynchronous medium vastly popular around the turn of the century. In the literature on blogs, there is discussion whether blogs constitute an independent genre, or whether they are the continuation of earlier offline genres in a different medium (cf. Puschmann 2009). Various factors come under consideration, most importantly the question if aspects of form, (pragmatic) function, content, or a combination thereof make up the criteria a genre is based on (Swales 1990; Grafton 2009; Miller & Shepherd 2004).

Blogs that rely on open source software have a recognizable design and features, namely entry titles, dates, the blogger’s name, an archive, a blog roll and reverse chronological order. While the content, i.e. subject matter, of personal blogs is not restricted, it revolves around the author of the post (Puschmann 2009). This personal element is also reflected in the style of writing, with deviations from the norm in spelling, punctuation and vocabulary, which have “never been seen in a public, printed form, outside of literature” (Crystal 2007:244).

Myers (2010) discusses a range of devices bloggers use to signal engagement with their readers: address, pronouns, referring to the audience, questions and directives, enacting conversational interaction, implicature, politeness and (shared) knowledge. Direct address in the form of naming the audience is rare in his data, whereas the pronoun *you*, due to its indefiniteness, is a common device to address different kinds of audiences: large, small, known, unknown, specific and unspecific.

The present paper considers food blogs a sub-genre, adopting the characteristic design and technical features of blogs, and revolving around preparing, enjoying, buying, and photographing food and drink of all kinds. Topics discussed range from new recipe creations to caloric value and weight loss, from nutritious meals for children to last weekend’s drink at a garden party, from a food critic’s restaurant visit to Martha Stewart’s Everyday Food Magazine. Food blogs contain a large number of photos of the dishes and the events discussed. Pictures

and recipes are embedded in a surrounding text, which often recounts an event or the preparation of a dish, and sometimes also the reason for preparing it (e.g. hot weather → ice-cream). Frequently, these texts contain hyperlinks. Thus, this sub-genre combines elements of printed cookbooks, diary like texts and web specific elements, resulting in posts that are often staged as a narrative. Therefore, Herring's et al. finding that "blogs are neither unique nor reproduced entirely from offline genres, but rather constitute a hybrid genre that draws from multiple sources, including other Internet genres (2004:2)" proves quite well applicable to food blogs.

This can be seen, e.g. in the recipe section (see end of this section for a schematic representation of the sections of food blogs), which combines elements from both written and spoken recipes. Written recipes are considered *procedural discourse*, which is agency neutral and time neutral (Wharton 2010). "This agency/time neutrality is reflected in the use of the imperative form" (68), which has no overt subject and no grammatical tense in English. Spoken recipes can be likened to narratives and sets of instructions, as they "tend to switch back and forth between the first person past tense of the former and the second person imperative of the latter" (Norrick 2011:2753). This *second person imperative* in the data presented in Norrick (2011) consists of the pronoun *you* and a verb (in English, the indicative and the imperative mood are, for the most part, indistinguishable). Analysis in Section 4 describes the usage of this structure in food blogs.

Figure 1 shows a typical layout of a food-blog. While the elements represented are common, not all of them are automatically present in all posts, i.e. one might find a post without a recipe section. Moreover, some of the elements do not necessarily always appear in the same position.

Typically, one finds a number of sections in food blogs: at the top of the page, there are the name of the blog and a banner; below that, there are the title of the post, author's name and the date; the main text body consists of three elements: (1) background information, often in the form of narrative, (2) the recipe proper, (3) readers' comments; typical elements of blogs (or websites in general), namely advertisements, the blog archive and links to other blogs (the "blogroll") are situated next to the main body.

In order to collect a sufficient amount of data and to exclude non-food-related blogs, we resorted to a ranked list of food blogs, compiled by *The Times Online: 50 of the world's best food blogs* (Robinson 2009).<sup>1</sup> As this ranked list was compiled by a journalist trained in this genre, and published by a renowned online

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1. ([http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life\\_and\\_style/food\\_and\\_drink/real\\_food/article5561425.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/food_and_drink/real_food/article5561425.ece))

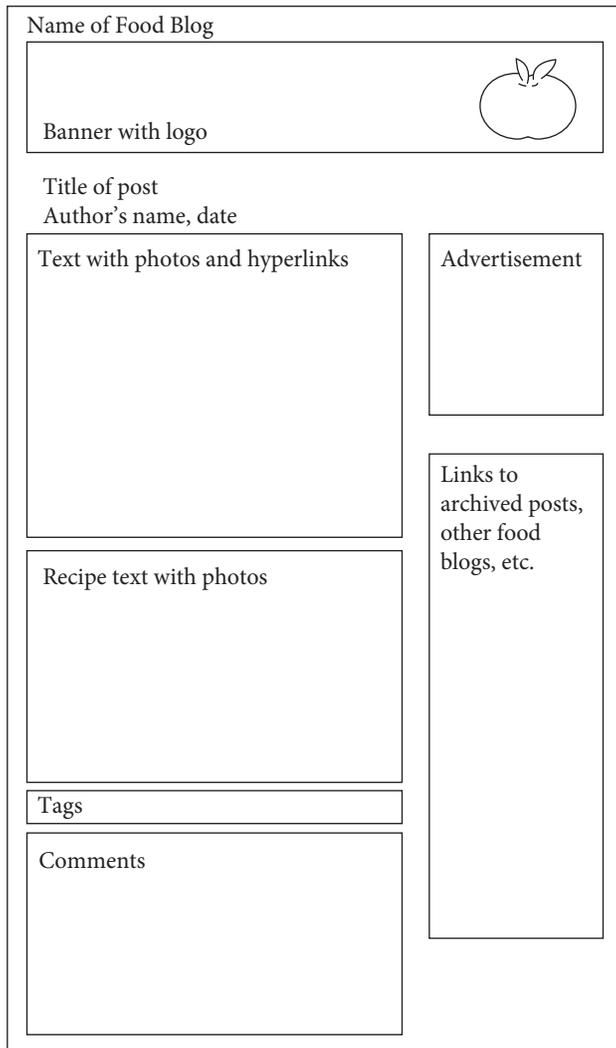


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the sections of food blogs

newspaper, we consider this collection of blogs as representative of the label *food blog*, and thus suitable for our research. Considering that the blogs under analysis were praised for their quality (it is not revealed, however, what criteria were applied in this case), we hypothesize that the bloggers' expertise in all things related to food is at a high level. This likely has an impact on the texts they produce, compared to texts written by less successful bloggers. The next section will discuss our corpus in more detail.

### 3. The Food Blog Corpus (FBC)

The FBC consists of the ten latest blog entries by the first ten blogs that were listed in the *The Times Online* ranking, resulting in 100 blog posts in total. The data, including images and hyperlinks, were collected in August 2011. All blogs are written in English, though not all by native speakers; some blogs host entries by several authors. As is the case for all written communication online, anonymity allows for the creation of online identities that may deviate considerably from those displayed in other settings. For example, several authors sharing one “pen name”, or in Goffman’s terms, the splitting of author, principal and animator roles (Goffman 1981), might go undetected by the general readership. In order to allow the discussion of audience address and audience involvement on the one hand and to facilitate grammatical and lexical analysis on the other hand, two versions of the corpus were compiled: a “raw” version preserving metadata and multimodal features such as layout, images, hard-coded reference and navigation elements, and a part-of-speech tagged text-only version.

After tagging with the CLAWS part-of-speech tagger, the corpus contains 826 073 words, with 207 938 tokens and 8039 types. The standardized type-token ratio (TTR), an established measure of lexical variation, is 69.53. Compared with a standard, non-specific text type, that is quite high, indicating considerable lexical variation and diversity. Mean word length is 4, with 4 559 sentences of a mean length of 36 words. Both values are, again, higher than in standard written and considerably higher than in spoken discourse. Usually the combination of high TTR, high word and high sentence length indicates specialized or possibly even restricted content and elaborate style. Following Beißwenger’s and Storrer’s criteria (2008) as supplemented by Thurlow and Mroczek (2011), the characteristics of the corpus are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the Food Blog Corpus (FBC)

Name and compilation date	Food Blog Corpus (2011)
Compilation	English Linguistics, Dept. 4.3, Saarland University, Germany
Size	826 073 words
Type of data	project-related, anonymous, annotated, metadata and multimodal elements
Data source	acquired from the internet
Availability of data	download upon request
Special features	two versions: raw version with preservation of metadata and multimodal elements (layout, non-language elements) for pragmatic analysis and tagged version for grammatical and lexical analysis.

Thus, the corpus is in principle comparable to the untagged project-related corpora by Yates (1996), Janich (2002) or Siebenhaar (2006), although the additional CLAWS part-of-speech annotation makes it also suitable for more general linguistic research, similar to the *Düsseldorf CMC Corpus* or the *Dortmund Chat Corpus*. However, the limitation to a specific subgenre of blogging needs to be taken into account.

The corpus search for lexical features was performed with WordSmith. For the lexical analysis, all tokens with a share higher than 0,01% of running words were examined, which means a minimum occurrence of 20, unless otherwise indicated. Nouns and verbs were analyzed separately and listed according to frequency. The items were then grouped according to meaning (e.g. ingredients, tools, methods, measures) or function (e.g. modification, evaluation, interaction), followed by a qualitative discussion. The syntactical analysis is performed according to similar criteria, combining quantitative aspects, examples and interpretation, while the subsequent investigation of audience address and involvement is performed on the basis of a qualitative sample.

## 4. Analysis

The food blogs examined exhibit several typical features of web-based discourse, as described in Section 2. Section 4.1 focuses on lexical features such as word choice, general vocabulary, language innovation and non-standard forms, Section 4.2 on syntactic features such as sentence structure, use of particles and punctuation, and Section 4.3 on audience address.

### 4.1 Lexical features

#### 4.1.1 *Special-purpose vocabulary (excluding verbs)*

Based on lexis, food blogs can easily be categorized as special-purpose discourse, or what Crystal (1996: 370) calls “occupational variety”, as indicated by the frequent and central use of special vocabulary and jargon. Even at a cursory glance, the corpus exhibits numerous examples from various categories, such as food, names of ingredients and cooking methods, as in example (1).

- (1) *Deviled Eggs with Basil Aioli and Capers*  
*Inspired by Olaiya Land*  
*The multiple steps in this recipe can feel daunting, but it's actually pretty quick to make. I usually make the aioli while the eggs are cooking, and while they cool, I fry the capers. And if you're feeling really short on time, just skip the frying and use drained, rinsed capers. No sweat.* (FBC 189ff.)

The first analysis considers nouns, verbs are examined separately in Section 4.1.2. For noun compounds in which both components belong to the same category (such as the frequently used ingredient *olive oil*), each noun was counted and listed separately so as not to influence the quantitative analysis. The vocabulary can be subdivided into seven categories:

- food jargon such as *reci*pe or *food*
- ingredients, food and recipe types, such as *salt* or *cream*
- non-English terms like *vollkorn* and *gelato*
- kitchen tools, for example *bowl* and *pan*
- preparation methods, such as *heat* and *bake*,
- amounts and measures, like *cup* or *minutes*
- blog-specific terminology such as *comments* or *post*

For a full list of nouns sorted by frequency see the appendix. The categories are explained in detail below.

Food jargon, with the definition of *jargon* following Crystal (1996: 454) as “the technical language of a special field”, comprises terms that are either clearly connoted with the preparation or enjoyment of food or, alternatively, take on a special meaning in this context. Terms like *dish*, *recipe*, *ingredient* establish the setting and identify the text type, while *dinner*, *lunch*, *dessert* categorize the topic and type of food in more detail.

The frequent mention of ingredients and food types is the most noticeable lexical feature of the corpus. The terms range from basic staples like *salt*, *cream*, *butter*, *oil*, *water*, *sugar* or *rice*, to more specific foodstuffs like *vanilla*, *cherries* or *celery*. There are also some more general categories (for example *vegetables*, *fruit*, *seeds*) as well as prepared food categories (*dough*, *pie*, *tart*, *powder*, *cookie*), but only one food component (*gluten*). This distribution may indicate that food blogs, as a genre, are still close to traditional recipes, since blogs discussing, for example, health issues would probably contain a more detailed discussion of components. The lexical prevalence of ingredients also allows the interpretation that the focus in this food blog corpus lies on the preparation process rather than just the discussion of the finished product. Many special food types or dishes such as *bienenstich*, *tchotchkes* or *tartines* are mentioned without explanation. The use of code as in examples (2) and (3) indicates expertise and is frequently accompanied by the use of other non-English terms such as *voila* or *verdad* in the same blog entry, possibly to create local reference and to reinforce the indication of familiarity on the part of the blogger, similarly to the use of place and time references examined in Section 4.1.4.

- (2) *Of enthusiastic note, this has a section on gelato (gelato al gianduiotto anyone?) and desserts including strudel, panettone, and ricciarelli the Siennese almond meringue.* (FBC 3856)
- (3) *Buon Appetito! And, if you're ever in the area, definitely make the trip to Chez La Mamma.* (FBC 3191)

The frequent use of kitchen tools like *bowI*, *pan*, *sheet* or *dish* is as expected, as are numerous references to preparation methods like *heat*, *bake*, *boil*.

In contrast to Norrick's observation that recipes contain lists that are "incomplete, inexact and inconsistent" and that "recipes presuppose a complex set of tools and basic ingredients," (1983b: 174) the food blogs in the corpus contain both more complete ingredient lists, including basic staples like water, and detailed tool sets. In this respect, they follow the observed trend towards providing more detailed information and help for a less experienced non-professional audience. A further indicator of a non-professional audience is the frequent use of amounts and measures. Norrick (1983b) subdivides weights and measurements in recipes into three categories: "Some of these terms group together into hierarchical systems which are peculiar to recipes [...], while others are generally used [...], and still others belong to no system at all [...]" (189). These categories can also be distinguished in food blogs. Most amounts are low (hinting at food in a small context of up to 4 persons); most measures are the standards used in cookbooks (*teaspoon*, *tablespoon*, *cup*, *inch*, *minute*, *hour*). But there are also several quite vague measures. Some of these, like *pinch*, are part of cooking jargon, while *bit* and *lot* may reflect the informal setting of food blogs as part of computer-mediated communication. The discrepancy between this focus on a less professional audience and the observation that the vocabulary becomes more specific will be further discussed in the conclusion.

As a last feature, the use of blog-specific terminology identifies the genre (*blog*, most visibly) and refers to other textual or media elements such as *photo*, *comments*, *permalink* and *video*.

#### 4.1.2 *Verb use*

Rather than extracting specific vocabulary, all non-auxiliary verbs in the FBC (Table 2) have been sorted by frequency in order to demonstrate the prevalent character of special-purpose vocabulary.

Not surprisingly, the most common non-auxiliary verbs are action verbs that describe activities in the lexical field of cooking, like *make*, *add*, *cook*, *serve*, *take*, *chop*, *bake* or *fry*. In addition, there are activities related to food procurement, such as *buy* or *pick*, and consumption, such as *eat*.

Table 2. Key verbs in the food blog corpus

Most frequent non-auxiliary verbs	make (197), add (170), cook (97), taste (93), know (89), let (83), eat (72), serve (66), take (65), going (60), come (56), find (56), using (53), chopped (51), ground (51), makes (50), say (45), tell (45), cooked (44), bake (44), remove (42), posted (42), feel (40), mix (39), crisp (39), fried (37), try (37), share (36), came (36), comes (36), started (36), turn (36), found (35), give (35), pour (35), said (35), toss (35), bring (33), took (33), wanted (33), print (32), sliced (31), cover (29), look (29), done (28), left (28), spread (28), start (28), eating (27), working (27), buy (26), felt (26), read (26), doing (24), looking (24), realized (24), stick (22), tried (22), ate (21), believe (21), live (21), pick (21), related (21), thinking (21), transfer (21)
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Cooking blogs exhibit a frequent evaluative element, for example by using verbs like *find* and *think*. The bloggers in the FBC also use hedges in the description of their own experience by referring to them as failed or successful attempts (*tried*) and formulate advice tentatively (*try*), as in examples (4) to (7).

- (4) [*If you taste a second one and a third, you'll find a lot of flavor there, low and earthy and resonant.* (FBC 5759)
- (5) *I find picnics require pickles almost as much as they require a steady supply of cold drinks.* (FBC 1381)
- (6) *I think these radishes would make an ideal side dish for roasted chicken, but you could serve them with almost anything.* (FBC 583)
- (7) *But one night, I wanted to make us a nice dinner, and I had a new dessert recipe that I wanted to try, a type of souffle flavored with almond paste.* (FBC 466)

Remarkably, neither evaluations nor hedges are, as one might suppose, set apart from the descriptive recipe sections, but occur throughout the blog entries. This integration of both descriptive and evaluative statements may contribute to the perceived informal character of cooking blog discourse. Historically, cookbooks did not use evaluative statements until the 19th century and even then separated them from the recipe sections until the mid-20th century (for examples see Diemer this volume). Recently, however, there have been indications of an increase in evaluative statements in several types of cooking discourse, from cookbooks to cooking shows. The usage shown in the FBC and illustrated in examples (8) to (13) thus could be considered part of a genre-wide trend towards a widening of discourse topics and a more personal, interactive register. Other verbs support this hypothesis by referring to lifestyle and interaction such as *live*, *do*, *read* and *tell*.

The use of verbs of perception and emotion further strengthens the impression of a personal style, for example with *look*, *feel*, *want* or *find*.

- (8) *I ask of you: how can one live through the month of June without eating raw tomatoes? I say one cannot.* (FBC 1346)
- (9) *And, Berliners, if this is what you call humidity, then I am a lucky girl to get to live here.* (FBC 1417)
- (10) *I can be in my head quite a bit sometimes and by Saturday, I started to feel a bit homesick.* (FBC 978)
- (11) *The recipes are easy and approachable, but the flavors that Andrea combines feel wonderfully fresh and new.* (FBC 1534)
- (12) *It will feel quite oily (but just think of how great your hands will look later!)* (FBC 5399)
- (13) *That's what I want for lunch this week. Parsnip soup, toast and sharp cheddar, and an orange.* (FBC 642)

The most frequent auxiliary verbs are *should*, *might*, *may*, *must* and *need*. This, again, does not surprise since recipes usually consist of a set of instructions. In the food blog corpus, these are either direct or indirect, as in examples (14) to (18):

- (14) *Oh, and if I were you, I might fry two eggs per person. But it's really up to you.* (FBC 290)
- (15) *Depending on how deeply browned the onions are, you might also want an extra squeeze of lemon.* (FBC 416)
- (16) *Added to that, you must use fraises the bois the same day you get them because they break down pretty quickly.* (FBC 2915)
- (17) *When making pie, all ingredients must be chilled. Including you.* (FBC 4180)
- (18) *You don't need anything else.* (FBC 2760)

Some verbs also further characterize the CMC genre, describing activity in the context of a blog, such as *share*, *post* and *print* (as does the use of humor in Example 17).

In summary, non-auxiliary verb use in the FBC indicates a combination of traditional cooking discourse with a more personal and highly evaluative component, some emotional and interactive elements, reference to non-food related issues and CMC-specific activities. This, of course, may be considered a suitable definition of the discourse of food blogs in general.

### 4.1.3 Modification, evaluation and hedging

In contrast to other special-purpose registers and historical varieties, present-day English recipes frequently contain modifying and evaluative adjectives and adverbs. As Table 3 shows, these are also frequent in the FBC, as is the use of non-verbal hedges.

**Table 3.** Evaluation and hedges in the food blog corpus

Modification	about (350), more (235), few (135), little (131), well (123), even (122), too (100), small (98), really (94), much (89), medium (73), around (71), most (66), each (65), large (62), another (53), green (53), enough (50), many (48), fine (47), white (46), big (41), brown (41), cold (40), black (39), hard (39), crisp (38), almost (36), better (35), least (35), extra (34), less (30), light (29), ill (27), quickly (27), probably (26), soft (26), thin (26), quick (22)
Evaluation	good (117), very (93), fresh (83), right (80), favorite (73), sure (70), top (64), hot (57), never (53), great (52), cool (50), long (49), sweet (47), nice (44), old (44), different (40), high (40), red (40), dry (35), pretty (34), warm (34), easy (33), happy (33), simple (30), perfect (29), freshly (25), heavy (24), smooth (24), homemade (23), ready (23), beautiful (22), completely (22), special (22), tender (22), quite (21)
Unspecific determiners and hedges	thing (53), kind (34), stuff (22), just (249), actually (31), maybe (29)

*Modification:* A common practice in food discourse is the use of modifying adjectives or adverbs, as in example (19). Two purposes can be distinguished, on the one hand the quantification of an ingredient, practice or measure, and on the other hand the characterization of food items. In contrast to recipes, the quantities given are less precise: *about, little, small, much, large*. One possible reason for this could be the intent to reduce the prescriptive strength of what are essentially orders and instructions. Most instances, though, show that the main intent is to provide concrete referents and thus facilitating the measuring process while obviating the need to use measuring implements. This, in turn, may make the cooking process more enjoyable.

- (19) *Some pieces of butter will be about the size of peas, while other will be more like flakes of oatmeal.* (FBC 129)

Another possible interpretation may be the bloggers' intent to preserve their level of expertise and to preempt complaints. It may be more difficult to recreate the recipe if there are no precise measurements, and if the recipe doesn't work, it is more difficult to allocate blame (a technique that many grandmothers seem to be fond of, in our non-representative observation). The colors *green* and *brown* in

examples (20) to (22) are used to specify ingredients, or to give indicators for the desired stage of the cooking process.

- (20) *1/2 cup (70 g) superfine brown rice flour.* (FBC 1136)
- (21) *I have to admit that I'm not necessarily on board with this whole 'green tomatoes' thing.* (FBC 2635)
- (22) *Bake for 30 minutes or until tope [sic] is golden brown. Cool for 20 minutes before slicing.* (FBC 1097)

*Evaluation:* While recipes published before the 1940s usually avoid evaluative statements, as seen in the analysis of verb use, newer cookbooks usually comment on the food they describe. Similarly, the FBC also exhibits a frequent use of evaluative terminology other than verbs, mostly in connection with food, as Table 3 shows. Positively marked emotional terms like *good, fresh, favorite, great, pretty, special* and *beautiful* are, in addition to non-food contexts, frequently used in connection with food, as in examples (23) to (27).

- (23) *[I]t's incredible with fresh berries, in France or elsewhere.* (FBC 2943)
- (24) *Hard-boil the eggs. I'm sure you have a favorite way to boil yours, but just in case, here's mine.* (FBC 200)
- (25) *My favorite Bruce song, performed five days after I was born.* (FBC 348)
- (26) *It tastes pretty good, and I assume it's intended to be a vodka mixer.* (FBC 4724)
- (27) *Here's what I do. Take some beautiful Delicata squash, cut each one straight in half, and scoop out off the fuzzy bits in the middle and discard.* (FBC 3101)

The evaluative description of foods is not, strictly speaking, necessary for the preparation of the recipes given. It seems to be intended to increase the aesthetic impact of the descriptions by providing an emotional context. In combination with modifying terms, this can lead to rather sensual descriptions (Example 28).

- (28) *At the greenmarket yesterday, then, I bought a sackful of everything I'd missed so much over the past few weeks, from a favorite local farm: a kilo of gleaming tomatoes, a long, dark cucumber, the most beautiful, moody head of oak-leaf lettuce and a perky bunch of radishes.* (FBC 1348)

This evaluative component can also be found in traditional recipes (as in the eponymous "Joy of Cooking"), but it is significantly higher in the food blog corpus. A possible explanation might be that the increasing connection of lifestyle with food issues which can be observed in traditional recipes is enhanced by the CMC context, facilitating blending of emotive and descriptive context and making food

a part of lifestyle. Topic shifts from food to non-food issues while preserving the emotive context are quite common in the corpus, as example (29) shows.

- (29) *Despite a few intermittent bursts of rain now and then, it's tough not be spending every waking minute outdoors these days. Berlin in summer is something so impossibly lovely and fleeting that it must be enjoyed and soaked up, as much as humanly possible. The best way to do this (besides taking a boat ride around the city) is to go out to one of Berlin's many parks and have a picnic. Just the other day, I was at my friend's annual picnic a stone's throw from the bridge to Potsdam, and we had ourselves a feast: cold meatballs and herb jam on flatbread, long-cooked beans and carrot-harissa salad, strawberry cake and Bienenstich.* (FBC 1358)

*Hedges*: In addition to the use of verbal hedges, a qualification of statements also frequently occurs by adding non-specific adverbs and indeterminate noun phrases like *kind of*, *just* or *thing*. In the corpus this does not, as a rule, occur in relation to quantities, but rather in connection with evaluative or non-food related statements, usually a feature of spoken interaction.

Based on the corpus data, the particular mix of emotive and descriptive content in connection with shifts between special-purpose and lifestyle or general content seems to be another central feature of food blogs and a useful feature of distinction from traditional recipes.

#### 4.1.4 Reference to place and time

There are numerous place and time references, another feature that is rare in recipes. In addition to the emotive context, a key feature of food blogs thus seems to be the creation of a regional and temporal context for the food presented or discussed, often in an associative or contrastive manner. Not surprisingly, the most frequent place references are *French* and *Italian*, with other food-related places (*Louisiana*, *Thai*) further behind. Obviously, these references may be to food types rather than the places themselves, and there are references to other matters like politics and culture, but most of them are food-related, as in examples (30) to (32).

- (30) *French Green Lentil Salad.* (FBC 2538)
- (31) *Her food was the essence of rustic Italian.* (FBC 3144)
- (32) *I guess I'm more French than I thought because I'm not a fan of very hard vegetables raw, like broccoli, cauliflower, or green beans.* (FBC 2504)

Discounting specific months and seasons, which may be misrepresented due to the date of compilation of the corpus, there are frequent references to weekends, times of day and relative references as part of preparation steps like *later*, as Table 4 shows.

**Table 4.** Space and time reference in the food blog corpus

Place and social references	home (67), together (67), friends (60), people (60), work (57), own (48), French (36), hand (36), sea (36), Italian (34), friend (33), room (33), side (32), house (31), Paris (31), wedding (30), family (28), market (27), far (26), Louisiana (25), city (23), LA (23), party (22), Thai (22), store (22), mother (21)
Time reference	summer (89), ago (79), week (66), year (51), life (45), night (39), July (33), spring (32), morning (30), season (30), June (29), weeks (28), end (26), later (25), weekend (24), afternoon (22), late (21)

The typical food blogger seems to write about French or Italian food, often in preparation for the weekend. The food is categorized according to seasonal aspects and meal times, as in examples (33) to (35).

- (33) *We planned a very relaxed summer menu. Just the way I like to eat.* (FBC 1031)
- (34) *That is to say, it gets into what you might find on the table for lunch on a Sunday afternoon at your Italian mother-in-law's house (not my Italian mother-in-law, though).* (FBC 3854)
- (35) *Back at home, we turned the tomatoes into a mid morning snack.* (FBC 901)

#### 4.1.5 Non-standard lexis and spelling

Another key feature of blogs is lexical innovation by the coining of new, often non-standard, lexical items. As discussed in Diemer (2010), these usually start occurring as hapaxes and then gradually spread through the blogosphere and beyond. There are, indeed, numerous non-standard lexical items in the food blog corpus, all with a frequency below 0,1% (20 tokens). The examples below are hapax terms, unless otherwise indicated.

There are interesting adjective and adverb coinages, mostly combining existing words and suffixes: While *superfine* (5) has become quite frequent, *wilty*, *superhumanly*, *summerish*, *scoopable*, *awesomer* and *melty* (2) would still be considered non-standard or at least unusual. These terms have a low opacity, especially in the food context which makes the meaning clearly discernible (see Example 36).

- (36) *The alcohol keeps this ice cream nice and soft, scoopable even after a few days in the freezer.* (FBC 4561)

Nouns are rarely newly coined; the only example is *non-breakfaster*. There are some obvious spelling mistakes like *tuscon* (for *Tuscan*) and some irregular plurals like *bakerys*. Many of the nonstandard forms in the corpus are not new coinages, but spelling variations used for emphasis or punning (*wedddddddddd*, *gorrrrrgeous*, *thisssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss*, *verrrry*, *Chaaahles*). There are various instances of

joined words referring to familiar concepts such as *glutenfreebaking*, *bullshitthis*, *juniorhighschoolgirlmode*, *sinclonger*, *No-Freaking-Way-Are-You-Kidding-Mes* (see Examples 37 to 39).

- (37) *I love it thissssssssssssssssssssssssssss much. Why? Because [...]* (FBC 4046)
- (38) *I can have your permission for this blog to veer into juniorhighschoolgirlmode, right?* (FBC 3655)
- (39) *And I have a bit of a hard time handing out emphatic No-Freaking-Way-Are-You-Kidding-Mes.* (FBC 1285)

Several nonstandard forms (Examples 40 to 42) are used to emphasize the oral character of blogs, either as interjections, onomatopoeia or imitations of intonation or accent: *whaa*, *mhhhhhhhh*, *slurp* (3), *anyway* (8), *oh* (32), *nom* (7).

- (40) *...nom nom nom...my name is Ella and I'm a vegetarian...nom nom.* (FBC 3419)
- (41) *[...] this was one of the easiest celebration cakes I've ever made. Whaa? Here's the deal.* (FBC 5749)
- (42) *'Elle m'a mise sur le cul', Laurent said of the dish, a French expression meaning something to the tune of being so gouud it knock' ya on yur ass, hon.* (FBC 3329)

A common feature in blogs is the innovative use of particle verbs (cf. Diemer 2010). This can also be observed in the FBC, as in examples (43) to 45). There are several unusual prefix verbs, mostly in the context of cooking, for example *recook*, *rewarm*, *unmould*. More frequent is the innovative use of prepositions and adverbs in connection with the food preparation process: *pipe into*, *pipe onto*, *play sth off with* or *smooth into*.

- (43) *Fill the egg whites in a piping bag [...] and pipe small circles with a rim onto the paper.* (FBC 2011)
- (44) *The crackers play off the nutty cheese which plays off the slick of honey and faint crunch of sea salt with bits of thyme throughout.* (FBC 5380)
- (45) *You then toss it with linguine and a whole lot of its cooking water [...] and it smooths into a sauce.* (FBC 5603)

There is also considerable innovation in non-particle verbs, although some of these are only new in the culinary context in which they appear in the FBC. As examples (46) to (51) show, the corpus contains remarkable examples of conversion, e.g. in *to pesto* (used with a guilty conscience), *to sauce*, *to sliver*, *to plop*, *to pipe*, or prefixation in *devein*.

- (46) *You then toss it with linguine and a whole lot of its cooking water and the peas you didn't pesto (yeah, I just verb-ed pesto; my poor editor has her work cut out!)* (FBC 5603)
- (47) *Plop some in a puddle of olive oil and drag fresh pita through it.* (FBC 1429)
- (48) *I piped four of these little baskets and used the remaining egg whites for some small meringue bites.* (FBC 2013)
- (49) *Wayne loves stuffed shells – straight up, red sauced, ricotta-stuffed snails of baked deliciousness.* (FBC 5008)
- (50) *8 fresh mint leaves, slivered.* (FBC 5209)
- (51) *Drain the water and let the shrimp rest until they are cool enough, then peel and devein them and set aside.* (FBC 3743)

Many of the verbs used, although not strictly speaking nonstandard, are unusual, but already fully lexicalized in the CMC context: for example *to text*, *to spotlight* or *to stream*.

The CMC character of cooking blogs is also evident in frequent non-standard spellings. Most common is the ellipsis of the apostrophe in

*couldnt*, *havent* (6), *im* (82), *isnt* (8), *itll*, *ive* (24), *neednt*, *theyll* (2), *thats* (32), *theyd* (1), *wasnt* (11), *wouldnt*, *youd* (5), *youll* (18), *youre* (27), *youve* (3)

The share of ellipsis is unusually high, around 30% of total forms or more, as in *thats* (32) v. *that's* (73) and *wasnt* (11) v. *wasn't* (23). This indicates that the awareness of a standard is decreasing, another common feature of CMC.

#### 4.2 Syntax

According to Norrick, recipes are characterized by “subjectless, verb-initial imperative sentences,” (Norrick 1983b: 176) with the user as addressee and frequent omission of the direct article. The high degree of self-referentiality in food blogs means that this impersonal structure is not as prevalent in the FBC. Ellipsis of the subject and of articles does occur in food blogs, but almost exclusively in the recipe section, which thus are syntactically distinctive. This may be due to the bloggers' knowledge and (at least partial) observation of traditional recipe syntax and structure, a hypothesis further strengthened by the fact that these sections also still exhibit the classical bipartite list-step-structure referred to by Norrick (1983b): a list of ingredients and measures, followed by step-by-step instructions, as in example (52), which can be divided into 7 lines of ingredients, followed by 5 lines of instructions.

- (52) *4 cups all-purpose flour*  
*2 Tbsp. baking powder*  
*¾ tsp. salt*  
*6 Tbsp. sugar*  
*1 ½ sticks (12 Tbsp.) cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces*  
*1 ½ cups cold heavy cream*  
*Center a rack in the oven, and preheat the oven to 425<sup>o</sup>F. Line a baking sheet with parchment.*  
*In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar.*  
*Add the butter and, using your fingers, toss to coat with flour.* (FBC 120)

Other syntactical structures that are common in recipes can also be found in the FBC, such as conditional clauses and the use of negative imperatives. Like in recipes, the structured nature of cooking also makes the use of temporal or structural adverbs necessary in the FBC, as with

*then (190), first (98), here (95), still (93), before (81), ago (79), only (77), while (71), again (53), ever (50), next 47), since (47), yet (35), sometimes (28), already (22).*

It should be pointed out, however, that the FBC is syntactically more varied than traditional recipes. In addition to a high degree of variation depending on author, topic and format, the syntax of food blogs is also influenced by CMC features such as audience address or the imitation of spoken discourse. Audience address is one of the key features of food blogs and is further discussed in Section 4.3. The standard syntactic method for initiating (or imitating) interaction is, of course, the use of questions. The corpus contains 241 questions, usually rhetorical or immediately answered by the blogger, as in the first sentence of example (53). This is an unusually high number in a discourse type that does not allow for direct interaction or feedback. Spoken dialogue is imitated by the construction of minor sentences or the insertion of full stops between elements of a sentence, thus separating it into multiple prosodic units, as in the second part of example (53). In this respect, food blogs should be considered a sub-genre of blogs or CMC in general, rather than a continuation of the discourse of recipes.

- (53) *And (did you wonder if I was ever going to get back to the mayo?) it made me fall hook, line and sinker for homemade garlic-anchovy mayonnaise, which I whipped up in two minutes and have proceeded to eat every day since.*  
*Every.*  
*Day.*  
*Since.*  
*Me.*  
*Mayonnaise.*  
*Case closed.* (FBC 1556)

This section has pointed out similarities and differences to the genre recipe, and it has located food blogs within the CMC sphere. The following qualitative analysis will examine a food blog entry with regard to its interactive elements, also comparing it to written and spoken recipes.

### 4.3 Audience address and audience involvement

This section is concerned with the audience and how it is addressed and involved by the author of a blog in his or her posts. The people who actually read those posts make up the real audience, which is to be distinguished from the imagined audience that the writer has in mind when formulating the texts (cf. Myers 2010). A considerable overlap of the two groups is feasible, for the written comments beneath blogs give the blogger not just a list of (user)names of people who have read and responded to a post, but an impression of their interests, sense of humor, the place where they live, etc. Most importantly, he or she can gather all kinds of information revolving around what and how the readers like to eat.

Central to a discussion of audience involvement are the notions of *footing* (Goffman 1981) and *audience design* (Clark & Carlson 1992). Both break up the notion of hearer into several roles, which are assigned by the speaker: addressee, bystander, overhearer, eavesdropper (*footing*) and participant, addressee, overhearer (*audience design*). Both models were developed for spoken interaction, thus the applicability to a written genre, blogs, is restricted. The analysis in the present paper presupposes that one major device of involving one's audience, whether in written or spoken communication, is the (re)assignment of hearer or reader roles to members of the audience. Tannen (1989: 17) argues that

[s]ense patterns create involvement through audience participation in sense-making: By doing some of the work of making meaning, hearers or readers become participants in the discourse. In other words, they become meaningfully, mythically involved.

Parallel to that, we argue that the audience's effort to recognize its participation status results in active involvement.

Many devices available in spoken interaction, e.g. gestures or manner of speaking, are not available to authors of written texts. Furthermore, bloggers' mode of communication is asynchronous, thus they do not know who will be reading the text, and there is no immediate feedback such as backchanneling. Bloggers must therefore achieve role assignment with those devices available to them: vocatives/terms of address, pronouns, shared knowledge (e.g. expert knowledge, interactional history from previous blog posts) etc. As will be shown in the analysis below, some of these devices loom large in food blogs as they fulfill several functions.

In food blogs, the use of the pronoun *you* is governed by conventions from different genres in some passages, most notably the recipe (written and spoken), which the analysis will show. However, in contrast to the authors of recipes, who are traditionally self-effacing, food bloggers frequently refer to themselves. This has the effect that the self-reference *I* occurs more than twice as frequently in the corpus, with *you* a distant second. These pronouns, of course, cannot be analyzed separately. In terms of lexis, as we have shown in Section 4.1, their use entails more personalized vocabulary and the use of emotional and qualifying terminology. Thus, many bloggers tell stories or directly address the audience, as in examples (54) and (55).

(54) *So fabulous I ate it for lunch two days in a row. Then, when the chicken was gone, I made myself – finally! at 33! – the iconic tomato sandwich [..]*  
(FBC 1571)

(55) *But before I go, I have to tell you something. I've said this before but I'll say it again and again and again: Thank you for reading and for being my audience. For a self-doubting writer, I count myself among the luckiest. Because I have all of you here with me and your presence alone is one of the biggest motivators I have, if not the biggest.*  
(FBC 1656)

The personalized discourse in food blogs also leads to other interaction features (see Examples 56 to 58). Discourse markers like *oh* and *d'oh* appear frequently, as do hedges like *actually* or *maybe*, as well as some interjections like *hell*.

(56) *Oh – and a quick update. Books from the new shipments of Super Natural Every Day will be available any time now – fingers crossed.*  
(FBC 5120)

(57) *I realized a bit after the fact that I'd used skirt steak when the recipe called for flank steak. Actually, no, I indeed used a flank steak. D'oh!*  
(FBC 5465)

(58) *Not only would I happily eat it on its own and, hell, maybe even a week stale! That's true love.*  
(FBC 106)

For a table of personalized discourse and interaction terms, see the appendix.

In the following, a complete food blog entry is analyzed, including a few comments by readers. The analysis will mainly focus on the blogger's text and the devices employed. Readers' comments were not explored systematically in this paper and are thus referred to only in passing.

(59) *Not a tomato sandwich*<sup>2,3</sup>

2. The complete blog entry is reprinted in the appendix.

3. We would like to thank Molly Wizenberg for granting us permission to reprint her blog entry including images in this research article. It can be found at: <http://orangette.blogspot.com/2011/09/something-other-than-tomato-sandwich.html>

This blog entry, not including the comments section, is formally made up of two parts: a personalized back-up story to a recipe (lines 1–54), and the recipe as it might appear in a cookbook (lines 55–84). The two parts are separated by a bolded headline “**Matthew’s Spicy Sauteed Corn**” (55). Interestingly, both contain a version of the same recipe. Clearly, the first, which is a casual description of the cooking process and an evaluation of the results, does not pass as a proper, written recipe, a flaw which is remedied by the addition of the complete recipe text containing exact measures and sentences stripped of any excess words (cf. Norrick 2011 for the functions of recipe tellings in oral communication vs. written recipes).

The first section features a number of elements that involve the readers, the most obvious one being the author’s directly thanking the audience, *In any case, thank you for your patience* (line 7). The humorous addressing of the Pacific Northwest *I love you, Pacific Northwest! Though let’s not go too far: you could grow better corn. Ohio’s corn beats your corn black and blue.*(lines 11, 12) invokes a mock scenario with a region technically being the direct addressee, and the blog readers the other participants. The readers have to figure out that actually they are the addressees of that passage: *Pacific Northwest* functions as a vocative and thus personifies this region. It is addressed as if it was a reader of this blog. As that is an unrealistic scenario, the readers have to infer that they are the actual addressees. The literal reading of *beat* (line 12) evokes yet another unrealistic scene, namely a violent confrontation between corn from different states in the US. This interpretation is induced by the phrase *black and blue*, which combines with *beat* to describe physical violence. However, the blogger actually uses *beat* metaphorically, which usually does not combine with *black and blue*. Thus, humor is employed in this passage to relate a fairly simple message (“Ohio corn is better than that grown in the Pacific Northwest”). This strategy proves successful, as it has elicited a direct comment from reader Amy P: “*Ohio’s corn beats your corn black and blue.*” *Love!* (line 94). This direct quote from the blog text with an evaluative comment is a reaction to the word play.

Another successful strategy to involve the readership of this blog is the repetitive, climactic tomato sandwich reference: *but I got sidetracked by tomatoes and tomato sandwiches and more tomato sandwiches*, (lines 24, 25), *Or maybe I was just impressed that I had made something that was not a tomato sandwich.* (lines 27, 28) and *Or maybe tomorrow, a tomato sandwich.* (line 52). Through exaggerated repetition, it turns into a self-deprecating running gag. This, too, is taken up by the commenters: *I am sure we’ll be discussing the tomato sandwiches we’ll be eating all August long.* (lines 104, 105). These two examples of humorous passages add a light-hearted tone to the text, presenting the author as less of a professional authority than an approachable person sharing food-related everyday experiences with likeminded readers.

*Tubers, crucifers, and brassicas* (lines 15, 16) represent specialized vocabulary, which displays the blogger's expert footing. Information about what types of produce are harvested (and thus available on the market) at what time of year is transmitted only indirectly in the post: *and at the markets, summer is clearly giving way to fall*. (lines 13, 14). It seems safe to assume that there is general knowledge about when corn is available fresh, *But corn is still around* (line 14). However, *Tubers, crucifers, and brassicas*, are not necessarily known to a general audience as terms designating groups of vegetables available in fall and winter. This information has to be deduced from the context, e.g. *for the rest of the year*. (line 16) and *the words winter squash or cabbage*. (line 18). The theme of seasonal food is taken up in the comments section, demonstrating the commenters' familiarity with the topic and their knowledge of the field. The blogger's use of this jargon thus inspires readers' comments such as *but does Ohio have chanterelles like the pacific nw?* (lines 116, 117) and *And I bought 5 ears of corn yesterday along with some yams (summer + fall in one basket)*. (lines 122, 123).

The actual cooking instructions that make up the core of the first part (lines 36–46) finally introduce the reader by address: *you* is the subject to every verb that is used to describe the steps in the recipe (notice the *I* and past tense *cooked* when the blogger relates her own experience that is not essential to the recipe). *You* plus second person imperative, and the digression from the actual cooking procedure (lines 39–42) introduce a conversational quality to the text. Much like speakers in oral conversation switch from storytelling to recipe telling and back (Norrick 2011), here the post is structured to transition from a narrative (lines 20–36) smoothly into a recipe (lines 36–46), ending in a general evaluation of the dish (lines 47–52).

The bolded title and the reference to the source (line 55) signal the beginning of the second section, the proper recipe, but interestingly it continues as the previous section ended, namely in a narrative/conversational recipe telling fashion. The exact listing of the ingredients, the imperative mood (without pronouns), and the condensed, sometimes elliptical sentences then clearly evoke the written recipe style as found in cook books. This recipe section (lines 68–83) seems much less reader directed than the preceding one, as the imperatives are not to be understood as orders, for “in the context of a recipe the imperative loses its directive force.” (Wharton 2010: 68) *Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium-high until bubbling* (line 75), for example, foregrounds only the actions, ingredients and tools necessary for the preparation of the dish, while the reader and supposed cook is not mentioned. There is one short digression from that, namely the parenthetical (*You might hear some kernels popping*.) (lines 78, 79), which acknowledges the reader's presence. It uses the pronoun *you* and auxiliary *might*, and describes a possible scenario in the cooking process which is

not actually essential to the preparation of the dish. With this additional information, the impersonal character of the written recipe briefly yields to a more personal tone.

In sum, the blogger uses two different styles to convey the same information twice, one adopting a very reader directed, personal, and conversational tone with elements of narrative (lines 1–54), the other adhering to the conventions of a traditional written genre, i.e. the cooking recipe, with its fairly depersonalized tone (lines 68–83). The double input itself is a major device for the blogger to signal an awareness of the audience, for she is not only concerned with the precise information about how to produce a particular dish, she also offers a whole range of personal information around it that encourages readers to interact, e.g. the topic of her birthday (line 1) is reflected in several comments (lines 98, 108). This is also true for her experience of the Pacific Northwest (line 11) and her comments about the weather (line 13). These are taken up by commenters as well (lines 109–113).

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has explored the genre *food blog* with regards to lexical, syntactic and discourse analytic/pragmatic issues. We have compared recipes and food discourse as they appear in food blogs to spoken and written traditional recipes and to food discourse in general. Two major influences of the CMC context were integrated in our analysis: (1) CMC discourse displays particular features, e.g. deviation from the spelling standard, or topics revolving around life style matters; (2) Web 2.0 applications have interaction/communication as a major goal.

We combined two approaches, qualitative and quantitative analysis, complementing one another: e.g. the Corpus approach reveals that address using pronoun *you* is much rarer than self-reference, which would indicate a less addressee oriented type of text; pragmatic analysis, however, shows up the various alternative strategies to address and involve the reader.

The quantitative approach resulted in a lexical and syntactic characterization of the text type food blog. It defined them as a combination of traditional cooking discourse combined with a more personal and highly evaluative component, some lifestyle elements and CMC-specific activities. This result (foreshadowed by Herring's et al. description of blogs as "a hybrid genre that draws from multiple sources" (2004: 2)) is based on a number of observations: the use of special vocabulary and jargon and blog-specific terminology, such as reference to other textual or media elements; the use of modifying and evaluative adjectives and adverbs,

providing an emotional context; the trend towards providing more detailed information and help for a less experienced, non-professional audience. These observations somewhat clash with the demonstrated use of specialized vocabulary, such as the frequent occurrence of food jargon, food types and even non-English terms for recipes, as these seem to presuppose a certain familiarity with the matter and thus indicate a professional audience. A possible explanation lies in the historical development of cooking discourse (see Diemer this volume). One diachronic trend that can be observed in the genre is the inclusion of more detail particularly regarding ingredients, measures and cooking methods for an audience that is increasingly non-professional. At the same time, range and origin of recipes increase, and preparation methods and ingredients become more varied, which indicates an audience that is more familiar with a wide range of food items. Thus, the audience gets less professional, but the discourse type more specific at the same time.

Non-auxiliary verb use in the FBC suggests that food blogs are a hybrid genre. There is a high degree of self-referentiality and a relatively rare use of *you*. Further characteristics are personalized discourse, leading to social interaction features, such as discourse markers and hedges; the creation of a regional and temporal context for the food presented or discussed. Furthermore, we have found lexical innovation, assigning the texts an oral character as well as numerous quasi-dialogous features such as questions or incomplete sentences.

The qualitative analysis of a single blog entry reviewed strategies that create audience involvement. Here, too, we conclude that food blogs combine elements from different genres, including spoken ones. We identified two parts in the text, one that provides a narrative-like passage as backdrop, which displays various signs of audience awareness; and the recipe proper, which is comparable to the written recipe genre. The first part derives its interactive character from the following features: direct address in the form of vocatives (including pronoun *you*) and humor; repetition; food jargon and expert knowledge; use of past tense. Obviously redundant information in the two parts signal a function of food blogs that exceeds the mere conveying of a recipe. It extends to initiating a friendly exchange between users of the internet that have similar interests.

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## Appendix

Special-purpose vocabulary in the food blog corpus (excluding verbs):

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(1) Food jargon	recipe (180 tokens), food (129), kitchen (71), ingredients (63), recipes (51), restaurant (44), dinner (42), dish (43), flavor (42), course (31), layer (29), market (27), menu (26), lunch (24), dessert (21)
(2) Ingredients, food and recipe types	salt (184), cream (158), salad (145), oil (125), ice (122), butter (118), water (116), sugar (106), cake (95), lemon (83), olive (82), cheese (78), chocolate (77), rice (77), pepper (73), wine (68), egg (66), chicken (65), dough (65), garlic (64), juice (64), milk (62), eggs (61), flour (60), soup (58), sauce (52), tomatoes (48), leaves (47), seeds (46), tomato (46), pie (44), yogurt (44), shrimp (43), mixture (42), radishes (38), fruit (37), onions (37), ricotta (36), corn (34), cherries (33), pasta (33), vinegar (32), basil (31), dressing (31), stock (31), potato (30), vanilla (30), zucchini (30), almond (29), apple (29), peas (29), marshmallows (28), fennel (27), mushrooms (27), parsnips (26), sandwich (26), syrup (26), tart (26), vegetables (26), avocados (24), batter (24), coconut (24), potatoes (24), celery (23), fat (23), filling (23), fish (23), mayonnaise (23), onion (23), powder (23), cookie (22), bacon (21), crumble (21), gluten (21), grain (21), honey (21), sandwiches (21), vegetable (21), zest (21)
(3) Non-English terms	( <i>including hapax terms</i> ) vollkorn, voisin, voila, uwajimaya, txakolina, tostadas, toro, tchotchkes, tartines, sur, spanikopita, spanier, rafraichi, membrillo, kochbuch, käsesahne, chai, beurre, biergarten, bienenstich, appetito, gelato (3), verdad (4), umami (7), kimchi (15)
(4) Kitchen tools	bowl (111), pan (90), oven (85), sheet (43), cups (42), dish (42), paper (39), skillet (35), table (35), pot (34), blender (30), parchment (29), knife (28), freezer (24), hands (23), plate (22), fridge (21), springform (3)
(5) Preparation methods	heat (111), baking (77), cooking (76), stir (60), making (59), bake (44), cooked (44), roast (31), boil (28), baked (26), roasted (26), whisk (24)
(6) Amounts and measures	cup (153), minutes (149), bit (109), one (277), two (94), lot (55), tablespoons (49), teaspoon (48), couple (47), once (46), whole (45), everything (43), cups (42), half (42), part (38), three (38), inch (37), tsp (36), full (34), four (32), hours (30), tablespoon (28), pinch (27), hour (26), times (25), amount (24), min (24), oz (24), tbsp. (24), number (22), serving (21), slice (21), slices (21)
(7) Blog-specific nouns	comments (71), photo (32), post (30), version (25), blog (21), video (21), permalink (10)

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Personalized discourse and interaction

Personalized discourse	I (1781), me (278), mine (132), myself (49), our (105), you (853), your (224), youll (38)
Social interaction	yes (40), why (37), oh (32), anyone (24), everyone (24), thank (24), someone (22)

Original blog entry (line numbers added)



9.16.2011

**Not a tomato sandwich**

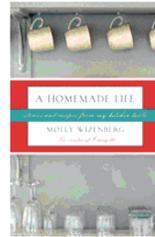
So, I turned 33 a couple of days ago. And Brandon, who was but a pup of 23 1  
 when I met him, turned 30 a few days before that. Thirty! The staff at 2  
 Delancey wrote BRANDON TURNS OLD TODAY on the chalkboard and spelled 3  
 out OLD BOSS in alphabet magnets on the ice machine. He told me that he 4  
 hasn't thought much about being in his thirties, but I think he secretly likes 5  
 the idea. I'm on the fence sometimes, but mostly, I do too. 6

In any case, thank you for your patience. In my absence from this space, 7  
 there was a return flight from Ohio, writing, more writing, payroll, a 8  
 birthday cake, a big project for a friend, and a two-night birthday camping 9  
 trip that featured an island, seals, jellyfish, porpoises, and a steak cooked 10  
 over a campfire. I love you, Pacific Northwest! Though let's not go too far: 11  
 you could grow better corn. Ohio's corn beats your corn black and blue. 12

We had our first rain in months yesterday, and at the markets, summer is 13  
 clearly giving way to fall. But corn is still around, and Ohio-quality or not, I 14  
 intend to eat as much of it as I can before I'm forcibly restricted to tubers, 15  
 crucifers, and brassicas for the rest of the year. (Though I was looking at 16  
 the brand-new *Art of Eating Cookbook* last night, and I found myself eagerly 17  
 bookmarking every recipe that used the words *winter squash* or *cabbage*. 18  
 Weird how that works.) 19

This time last year - actually, *this very day* last year! I just noticed that! 20  
 Weird how THAT works - my friend Matthew and I did a *Spilled Milk episode* 21  
 on corn, and Matthew made a spicy sauteed corn recipe that, for me, sort of 22  
 stole the show. I've wanted to make it since corn first showed up this 23

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summer, but I got sidetracked by tomatoes and tomato sandwiches and more tomato sandwiches, and it was only today that I finally made the corn. With a few slices of sharp cheddar and some toast, it was the best lunch I've had in a long time. Or maybe I was just impressed that I had made something that was not a tomato sandwich.



I might have said it before, but I'll say it again: Matthew is a terrific cook. I've eaten a lot of meals at his table, from carnitas to home-corned beef, Frito pie, green papaya salad, cucumber salad with Szechuan peppercorns, and cowboy beans, and he does it all well. His spicy sauteed corn is not fancy, but it reliably does what I wish every recipe would reliably do: take a few good ingredients and, without unnecessary fuss, make them even better. It makes very good corn taste excellent and so-so corn taste very good. Basically, you melt butter in a hot pan, and then you tip in some fresh corn kernels, minced jalapeno, and a couple of sliced scallions. You stir to coat them in that hot butter, and then you let them hang out, mostly, for the better part of ten minutes, until the corn begins to caramelize. You might notice that it smells like the State Fair, in a nice way. I cooked my corn today a little darker than Matthew does, and it smelled even more State Fair-y, which was kind of thrilling, though I think I like his better. Either way, when the corn is pleasantly browned, you throw in a splash of water and scrape up the tasty browned bits on the bottom of the pan, and they melt into a light glaze that covers the whole thing. Then you finish it with salt and a good amount of lime juice, and that's it.

If it were my dish, I would call it Spicy Caramelized Corn, but Matthew calls it sauteed, and it's his dish, so he wins. Whatever you call it, the corn is darkly sweet and sticky, and your lips burn from the heat of the jalapeno, and then the lime juice comes in kicking. It gets very hard to keep a fork out of. I can imagine eating it with almost any meat - or cheddar and toast. Or maybe tomorrow, a tomato sandwich.

P.S. I'm a guest at *habit* for the month of September, so come visit. I post there as "molly w." a few times a week. I really love that site.

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MY PODCAST



RECENT POSTS

Ohio  
A real thrill  
It still surprises me  
How we do what we do  
You don't forget  
I wish them a lifetime  
I could talk about the weather  
This one's coming with me  
Such is the power  
Your efforts will be rewarded

AN EVER-CHANGING LIST  
OF INSPIRING SITES

the blue hour  
Canal House Cooks Lunch  
i made that!  
my madeleine  
NPR Fresh Air  
Poor Man's Feast  
saipua  
Sprouted Kitchen  
Sweet Amandine

*and click here for many more*

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What is this?

As featured on  
**TIMES ONLINE**  
50 world's best food blogs

**Matthew's Spicy Sauteed Corn**

Adapted slightly from [Spilled Milk](#)

I bought my corn late last week and didn't have time to cook it before we went camping, so I cut it off the cob, spread it in a single layer on a sheet pan, and froze it. Then, before I cooked it today, I let it defrost in a

pan, and froze it. Then, before I cooked it today, I let it defrost in a colander for about 30 minutes, shaking the colander a couple of times. It worked very nicely, and based on that, I am happy to say that you don't have to use fresh corn kernels for this recipe! You can make it at any time of year, with frozen corn. If it simplifies things, note that you will need 10 to 12 ounces of kernels for a single batch.

Also, I used a 10-inch cast-iron skillet here, but you can use whatever kind of skillet you have.

- 3 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- Kernels from 3-4 ears fresh corn
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeds removed if desired, minced
- 2 Tbsp. water
- Salt
- 1 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lime juice, plus lime wedges for serving

Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium-high until bubbling. Add the corn, scallions, and jalapeno, stirring to coat with butter. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the corn begins to brown and stick to the bottom of the pan, about 10 minutes. (You might hear some kernels popping toward the end.) Add the water and stir, scraping the bottom of the pan to dislodge any extremely delicious brown bits. When the water has boiled off, add salt to taste. Remove from the heat, and stir in the lime juice. Serve immediately, with additional lime wedges.

Yield: 4 side-dish servings

posted by molly at 6:38 pm

81 COMMENTS:

Sarah said...

That sounds so simple and tasty. I'll have to make it some day.

6:50 PM, SEPTEMBER 16, 2011

Roberta said...

Your chocolate cake photo on Habit actually made my mouth water. Must. Have. Cake.

7:06 PM, SEPTEMBER 16, 2011

Amy P. said...

"Ohio's corn beats your corn black and blue." Love!

We haven't made it past eating straight-up corn on the cob slathered with butter and Penzeys 4/5 seasoned salt this season, but I just may have to give this recipe a go.

Happy birthday Molly, you're still young!

7:36 PM, SEPTEMBER 16, 2011

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the Web  Orangetti

 Molly said...	100
Yesterday's CSA box included six ears of corn and a butternut squash.	101
Summer is tiptoeing away, and fall is strolling in. I'm going to freeze those kernels tonight, so that I can reach into my freezer on a frigid January evening and have "fresh" frozen corn and enjoy this dish. I am sure we'll be discussing the tomato sandwiches we'll be eating all August long.	102
	103
	104
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7:43 PM, SEPTEMBER 16, 2011	106
 Michelle Stiles said...	107
Happy belated birthday to a fellow virgo! Cheers! I celebrated mine yesterday, taking in as much of this Pacific Northwest as I could. It happened to be the first day it rained in many, what is a girl to do? Put on a rain coat and ride it out! I love this recipe, I have done the same and added a dollop of sour cream but it looks like it doesn't need it. Enjoy the last bit of the PNW sunshine while you can, Suisha is AMAZING!	108
	109
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8:11 PM, SEPTEMBER 16, 2011	114
 kris said...	115
That sounds so awesome - but does Ohio have chanterelles like the pacific nw? This recipe was also terrific: <a href="http://www.gourmet.com/recipes/2000s/2006/10/cornmiso">http://www.gourmet.com/recipes/2000s/2006/10/cornmiso</a>	116
	117
10:09 PM, SEPTEMBER 17, 2011	118
 kickpleat said...	119
Oooh, what a beautiful blog Habit is, thank you for the introduction. And I bought 5 ears of corn yesterday along with some yams (summer + fall in one basket). I think I'll freeze the corn and follow a similar path come November when I'll need a reminder about the sun.	120
	121
	122
12:00 PM, SEPTEMBER 18, 2011	123



# Passionate about food

## Jamie and Nigella and the performance of food-talk

Delia Chiaro

Università di Bologna, Forlì

Despite the nation's poor reputation in terms of cuisine, cookery shows abound on UK television with Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson being two of TV's most popular chefs. Following a brief overview of popular cookery programs broadcast in the UK over the past fifty years, this essay will focus on Jamie and Nigella through a description of a series of linguistic features adopted by each, such as their idiosyncratic uses of terminology when giving instructions; modes of interaction with the audience and expressions of emotion. It will emerge that the chefs' performances, especially in terms of language, take front stage with respect to the dishes they present.

### 1. Introduction

Despite a reputation for the less than outstanding quality of its cuisine, over the past decade or so Britain has managed to generate a number of chefs, many of whom, following the success of their television series, have risen to the status of "celebrity chefs" gaining international fame and fortune. TV cookery programs have become so popular in the UK that chefs like Nigella Lawson, Jamie Oliver, Gordon Ramsay and Delia Smith have become both household names and media superstars. All these chefs have penned numerous bestselling books based on their series – books which have been subsequently translated into dozens of languages – have their own ranges of "designer" cookware and food labels and, in some cases, own various holdings including entire restaurant chains. To underscore the force of celebrity chefs even further, suffice it to think of common everyday expressions such as "to do a Delia" meaning "to cook" and the "the Delia effect" to describe an upsurge in demand for a certain food item in stores after Smith has used it in a cookery show.<sup>1</sup> According to Oddy "the twentieth century, which began with

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1. The noun "Delia" entered the Collins English Dictionary in 2001 together with expressions "Delia Effect"; "Delia Power" and "to do a Delia" see: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/1688790.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1688790.stm) (11 January 2012).

plain fare, food adulteration and dietary deficiencies, ended with fusion foods, functional foods and an increasingly overweight population” (2003:235). Furthermore, Oddy also highlights that most celebrity chefs on TV are not interested in plain food but rather simply in decorating plates with aesthetically pleasing constructions. In addition, there certainly appears to be a contradiction between UK foodie culture with its glossy food magazines and celebrity chefs and the reality of the widespread consumption of ready-made meals and processed foods all of which have helped pave the way to a nation of largely overweight couch potatoes. In December 2006, Tory leader David Cameron stated that the British public “just don’t respect food enough” and called for the re-emergence of a “good food” urging for the adoption of “the kind of food culture seen in other European countries.”<sup>2</sup> Yet with so many food programs and dedicated food channels, how can it be that numerous Brits still appear to nurture junk food culture? Could it be that viewers watch cookery programs for reasons other than wanting to learn about preparing food?

This essay sets out to explore British cookery programs with particular reference to the language and style of two very popular celebrity chefs, Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson in an attempt to demonstrate that these programs have as much to do with endeavoring to entertain as to instructing audiences in the rudiments of food preparation. In other words, while celebrity chefs do indeed initiate their audiences with regards to the details of cookery, at the same time they construct an image of themselves, often to such an extent, that the host, the chef, overpowers the very object of the program – the food. Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson exemplify two hosts with very strong audience appeal both visually and in terms of their discourse. In fact, their verbal style is not only highly distinctive, but is also packed with quirky linguistic features.

After a brief outline of the history of cookery programs in the UK, I shall carry out a “quick and dirty” analysis of a number of features of Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson’s language and style. The reason for choosing these particular chefs is based firstly on their enormous popularity both at home and internationally and secondly on the fact that they exemplify both genders together with a feature that is central to British culture, namely class. Jamie, with his Essex drawl presents his programs casually dressed in t-shirt and jeans and well characterizes “laddish” working class culture whereas elegantly dressed, sophisticated Nigella, famous

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2. Cameron, David. “Why food matters.” Conservative Party Website. Speech delivered 1st December 2006. ([http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2006/12/David\\_Cameron\\_Why\\_food\\_matters.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2006/12/David_Cameron_Why_food_matters.aspx)) (30 December 2011).

for the sensual descriptions of her dishes, the recipes of which are delivered in Received Pronunciation, represents the nation's "posh" upper classes.<sup>3</sup>

Following a short introduction regarding Jamie and Nigella, I shall explore a series of linguistic features adopted by each, such as their idiosyncratic uses of terminology when giving instructions; modes of interaction with the audience and expressions of emotion.

## 2. A brief overview of TV cookery in the UK

What follows is a potted history of culinary programs in the UK, (for a more exhaustive account, see Rossato 2009).

Until the 1990s and the true explosion of cookery programs on the small screen, TV chefs were few and far between. Marguerite Patten was the very first to present recipes within *Designed for Women*, a program on the BBC which ran from 1947 until the early 1960s. In the program, Patten simply prepared recipes while telling viewers what she was doing. Patten's instructions were straightforward and never included deviations from the task at issue. Rossato quotes Patten recalling being reproached by Winston Churchill in 1954 because her TV Christmas pudding recipe included alcohol (2009: 96), an episode that starkly underscores how things have changed today if we consider not only the liberal use of alcohol made by some celebrity chefs, but also, for example, the amount of vulgar, offensive language used by chef Gordon Ramsay. Although the censor will bleep out Ramsay's abundant four-letter words, the fact that the bleep is there simply underscores the presence of taboo items that may offend viewers. However, from the early seventies to the present day, it is Delia Smith who is the indisputable queen of the genre in the UK, having presented numerous cookery shows at regular intervals. Like Patten before her, Delia's style and appearance are simple, her language clear and straightforward with the focus very much on food preparation rather than on the host. In fact, according to an independent survey carried out in 2007 (reported by Rossato 2009: 102) the public considers Delia to be the most popular celebrity chef in the UK. Yet while Delia is indeed a celebrity, there is nothing either sensational or out of the ordinary about her, two elements which, as time goes by, seem to have become pre-requisites for cookery

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3. "Laddish *adjective*, used, often disapprovingly, of the lively behaviour of young men responding to those things (alcohol, sport, sex) that appeal to them." Dalzell, Tom & Victor, Terry. 2008. *The Concise New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional Dictionary*. New York: Routledge.

show hosts. It is likely that the first true celebrity chef on British TV as we understand the term today may well have been Fanny Cradock who, between 1954 and 1975, together with her husband Johnnie, hosted numerous cookery programs. Fanny Cradock, would appear on the screen elegantly dressed, made-up and bejeweled to present elaborate, lavish French-style dishes. Husband Johnnie would be perpetually hen-pecked and bossed about by Fanny, thus adding a comedic dimension to the shows via the stereotype of the nagging wife. Fanny was well and truly ahead of her time television-wise through the attention she drew to her persona – in terms of appearance and personality – which was possibly more significant than the recipes she presented. Comparing Cradock to present day super-chefs, the comic interludes in which she needles Johnnie are reminiscent of Gordon Ramsay's sarcastic comments to his staff throughout the series *Hell's Kitchen* (ITV 2004–2009) and Ainsley Harriot's jibes at the hopeless cooks competing in the quiz-cum-cookery show *Ready Steady Cook* (BBC 1994–2010). Furthermore, while Fanny's dress code may well have been over-the-top at times, audiences were attracted to her appearance, just as today Nigella Lawson's tight fitting outfits that enhance her voluptuous curves are part and parcel of the host's performance. However, with the arrival on screen in the late sixties of Graham Kerr as *The Galloping Gourmet* (1969–71), audiences get a further inkling of what was to come in TV cookery programs. Kerr had an extremely informal manner, cooking (performing?) before a studio audience. Instead of standing behind a table, he literally hurtled around (hence the title of the show) and involved the studio audience by addressing and interacting with them, pulling them up on stage and generally getting them to join him and taste what he had prepared. And it is this very change in attitude towards the audience which was to typify so many of the celebrity chefs to come. In fact, from Kerr onwards, it would not be unfair to claim that celebrity chefs have tended to become a combination of chef-performers rather than regular cooks. Indeed, nowadays it often seems that cookery shows and their hosts need some sort of gimmick. In fact, the *BBC Food* website<sup>4</sup> features well over 400 celebrity chefs – although admittedly the list does include 19th century writer Mrs. Beeton – a figure which clearly highlights the prominence of food culture in the media. Amongst the BBC's A to Z listing we find, for example, Ainsley Harriott, the larger-than-life star of cookery quiz *Ready Steady Cook* a program crammed with much stand-up comedy style repartee; Clarissa Dickson Wright, who, together with Jennifer Paterson, rode about Britain on motorcycle with a

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4. See: (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/chefs>) (20 January 2012).

sidecar preparing large meals with unusual ingredients in places such as army camps and boarding schools for the program *Two Fat Ladies* (BBC2 1996–1999) and, of course, ex-footballer Gordon Ramsay who has hosted many reality-style food programs such as *The F-Word* (Channel 4, 2005 – present) and is famous for displaying his hot temper and use of bad language. It is clear from these three examples that many cookery programs come with a twist and go beyond the straightforward didactic-style of Delia Smith.

## 2.1 The “personality system”

Of course, the centrality of the host as the spearhead of a program is not only due to his or her skills in cookery but to what Langer has labeled television’s “personality system” which “works directly to construct and foreground intimacy and immediacy” (1981: 354). Unlike the old movie star system in which personalities were beyond the reach of the general public, both in terms of their physical distance on the big screen and in real life, television constructs an aura of familiarity by bringing personalities into our homes on a regular daily or weekly basis. Furthermore, not only do these personalities enter our domestic environments, but they act within a similar environment recreated on screen. Typically, cookery shows are recorded in kitchens especially created on set. Nowadays, however, there is a trend to record such programs in authentic locales; *Nigella Bites*, for example, was shot at the host’s London home, and many of Jamie Oliver’s programs are recorded either in his home or those of his friends, not to mention numerous reality-style cooking shows that are recorded in restaurants. Thus, personalities not only enter our homes in replicated home environments, but we also share something of their private lives. We see them in close-up shots so that we are able to witness their reactions and emotions as they speak to us in an informal mode. In other words, as Langer points out, the barriers that exist between the personality and the public seemingly break down. Jamie’s casual ordinariness and Nigella’s sensuality exemplify what Langer described as “playing” oneself (1981: 335) a factor which renders them both acceptable and, at the same time, familiar to audiences.

### 2.1.1 *Jamie Oliver*

Son of an Essex publican, Jamie Oliver attended catering college and then worked in various restaurants working his way up to sous-chef status at the well-known and trendy River Café in London where he was “discovered” by the BBC in 1999 and was offered his first TV program *The Naked Chef*. His simple approach to food preparation combined with his cheeky Essex manner soon gained him

enormous popularity that led him to more TV shows (e.g. *Return of the Naked Chef* – BBC2, 2000; *Oliver’s Twist* – Channel 4, 2002 and *Jamie’s Great Italian Escape* – Channel 4, 2005; etc.) and, of course, worldwide fame. Significantly, Jamie Oliver has used his notoriety to promote a series of philanthropic projects such as “The Fifteen Foundation” which began with the *Fifteen* restaurant in London where Jamie trained 15 underprivileged young people to work as chefs. Soon this venture developed into a full-blown charity with other restaurants at home and abroad where disadvantaged youngsters with drug and alcohol problems could be assisted by well-known professionals and then kick-started into a career in catering. In 2005, Jamie launched the “Feed me Better” campaign in an attempt to improve school dinners and move British children away from junk-food and towards a more healthy diet. The venture resulted in much public awareness and effective political changes that are documented in the program *Jamie’s School Dinners* (Channel 4). Jamie’s zealous approach to healthy eating led him to a similar campaign in the USA and the program *Jamie Oliver’s Food Revolution* (ABC 2010–11) which, however, was less successful in changing the eating habits of American schoolchildren.

### 2.1.2 *Nigella Lawson*

Nigella Lawson comes from a background of affluence. She is the daughter of Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer during Margaret Thatcher’s government and socialite Vanessa Salmon. After graduating from Oxford, Nigella flourished as journalist and food writer and soon became the best-selling author of several cook books before moving onto television where from 1999 onwards she has hosted numerous series of successful cooking shows.

Unlike Jamie, Nigella is not a professional cook but simply highly acculturated in matters of food and cookery. Furthermore, Nigella is a very beautiful, voluptuous woman who clearly enjoys eating. The twist in her program lies in the manner in which she presents her recipes – a manner which is often extremely flirtatious and sensual, tasting the food she presents in quite a lustful way, reason for which she has been labeled the “queen of food porn” (see 3.1.2.). Her programs include *Nigella Bites* (Channel 4 1999–2001); *Nigella Feasts* (Food Network 2006) and *Nigella Express* (BBC2 2007).

## 3. Jamie and Nigella performing food-talk

As mentioned previously, the choice of investigating the discourse of Jamie and Nigella from the wide choice of TV cooks came about mostly for reasons pertaining to their popularity as well as for the many peculiar linguistic features their

talk contains. However, another reason for this choice lies in their passion for food – an attribute both chefs display albeit in rather different ways. On the one hand, Jamie reveals his passion through his fanatical drive to improve eating habits in the UK and, more recently, in the USA. On the other hand, Nigella exhibits her obsession with food as she constantly displays a lustful attitude towards the meals she prepares, frequently tasting her fare, often in no less than an erotic manner. Both clearly enjoy what they are doing and the result is a display of fun and passion – fun and passion that is reflected in their talk.

Most of Jamie and Nigella's television programs are available in DVD format and the Internet also provides plenty of examples of their repertoire from live shows and TV interviews. However, for reasons of ease of availability, the materials analyzed in this study have been extracted from the following two DVDs: Jamie Oliver's *Pukka Tukka: An Essential Guide to Cooking* and Nigella Lawson's *Nigella Bites*.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.1 The DVDs

#### 3.1.1 *The paratexts*

As well as the programs themselves, the paratexts, or editorial materials that accompany the DVDs, provide several pointers regarding the attitudes of the two chefs. The sleeve of the *Pukka Tukka* DVD pictures Jamie seated on a scooter, smiling and looking straight into the camera. He is casually dressed in yellow jumper and jeans with his hair ruffled. The printed matter on the back of the sleeve reads:

- (1) *Take one hugely talented chef, 14 new recipes, a box of tricks plus his mates and students, some brave firemen and city slicker boys and you have all the ingredients for Pukka Tukka.*
- (2) *Hi Guys!  
This is my essential guide to cooking "Pukka Tukka." It's all about the basics, confidence, common sense and cooking simple, tasty dinners. It doesn't matter if you're a housewife, an OAP, a builder, a student, a bachelor, whether you're skint or loaded – there's enough here to get you cooking up a storm for yourself, your mates or your entire family. So get stuck in and have a laugh.*

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5. Jamie Oliver. 2004. *Pukka Tukka: An Essential Guide to Cooking*. Video Collection International DVD. Nigella Lawson. 2002. *Nigella Bites*. Channel Four. DVD.

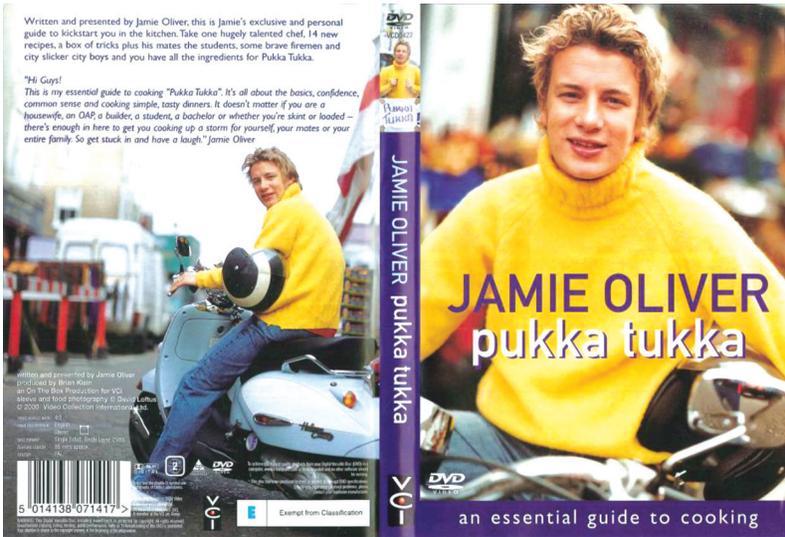


Figure 1. The DVD cover of *Pukka Tukka: An Essential Guide to Cooking*

In contrast, the *Nigella Bites* DVD cover pictures a close-up of the host's face and neck. Nigella's face is framed by her long disheveled hair, her half-shut eyes are looking downwards and her lips are parted as she bites into a morsel of food which she is holding between perfectly manicured fingertips. This image adds to the effect of the title, as we do indeed envisage Nigella as she is about to bite, thus rendering the punning title visual as well as verbal.

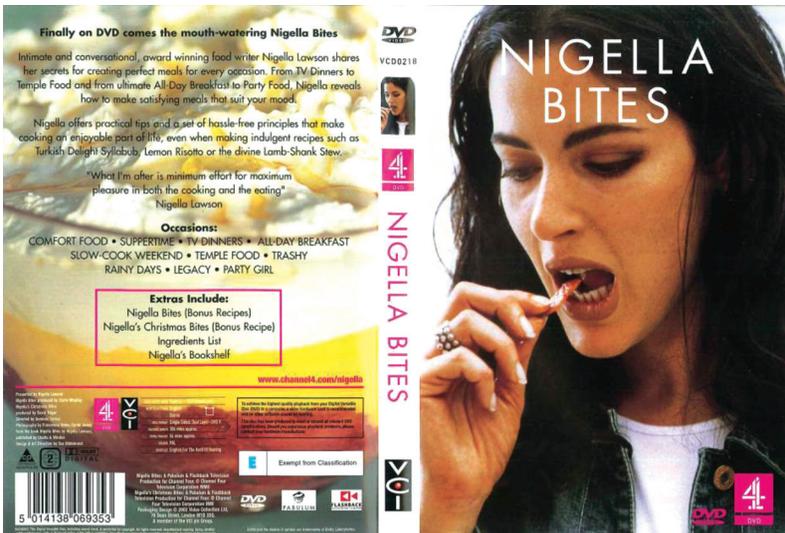


Figure 2. The DVD cover of *Nigella Bites*.

The same image of the chef, obtained with the use of a red filter, is reproduced on the sleeve's center spread while on the back of the sleeve Nigella declares: "What I'm after is minimum effort for maximum pleasure in both cooking and eating." On the DVD itself, Nigella is pictured standing against a black background clad in black leather.

Words and visuals contained on the two DVD sleeves provide a pretty eloquent preview of the differences between the two chefs who, while both being very casual, are so in diverse registers. At first sight it seems that *Pukka Tukka* will be heavily male-oriented, the way Jamie is pictured, out in the open air together with a passage that explicitly specifies categories of masculine workers and "mates" does somewhat reek of virility (Example 1). Furthermore, immediately below this information, Jamie himself addresses his viewers with an informal "Hi, Guys" encouraging them to "get stuck in" and "have a laugh" (Example 2) in a very direct and above all, laddish manner. What he is about is spelt out in no uncertain terms, unlike Nigella whose succinct message is almost subliminal with the emphasis very much on the item "pleasure." If Jamie is male-oriented, then so is Nigella, but in a very different way.

Both chefs, however, are united by their concern for easy cooking. Jamie stresses how his video is "essential" and about "basics" and cooking "simple dinners," while Nigella, we are told, will offer "practical tips and a set of hassle-free principles that make cooking an enjoyable part of life." Where they are divided is most blatantly in their choice of register. Jamie's use of the term "dinner" conveys the feeling of working-classness as in the UK, dinner, for some, can refer to the chief meal of the day, eaten in the evening or at midday, while for others, dinner is strictly the evening meal and the term for their midday meal is lunch. In fact, Jamie claims that his program is aimed at people from all walks of life whether "skint or loaded" whereas Nigella limits herself, as we have seen, to the maxim of "minimum effort for maximum pleasure." Thus the two chefs contrast slang with formality; matter-of-factness with hedonism, the outdoors with homely warmth and even, at times swiftness with leisureliness. In fact, amongst the information on the back sleeve of the *Nigella Bites* DVD, the host is described as "intimate and conversational" and that in the program she will "share her secrets" that include "indulgent" and "divine" recipes.

### 3.1.2 *The titles*

As might be expected, the titles of the programs chosen reflect the styles of the two chefs in question. Jamie's DVD entitled *Pukka Tukka* plays on the combination of the Anglo-Indian term "pukka" meaning "first rate" and on the term "tucker," Australian slang for "food." The term "tuck" meaning "food" is very much part of British English vocabulary which commonly uses terms such as "tuck shop" to refer to an outlet for chocolate and sweets in schools and summer camps and

the expression to “tuck into a meal.”<sup>6</sup> Jamie, however combines the two terms and creates the rather uncommon expression “pukka tukka” to refer to “first rate food” although he does also frequently tend to use the term “pukka” on its own.

The title *Nigella Bites* is a more sophisticated piece of wordplay that plays on the morpho-grammatical duplicity of the term “bites” – the series was immediately followed by another entitled *Nigella Feasts*<sup>7</sup> which echoes the pun of the first.<sup>8</sup> We could thus say that we have one cook who represents “one of the lads” and simply “tucks in” and another who, in a more refined way, prefers to “bite” and “feast.”

Furthermore, individual chapter titles in Nigella’s DVD include *Comfort Food*; *All-Day-Breakfast* and *Slow-Cook-Weekend* all of which hint at warmth, contentment and gratification. The inter-titles preceding each chapter are in a black comic-style font on a bright pink, red and grey striped background and are accompanied by a short piece of hot jazz. In contrast, Jamie’s chapters have down-to-earth, masculine headings like *City Boys* and *Fire Fighters*. His inter-titles are presented against a background of zigzags in different shades of blue onto which the name of a city and the name, age, occupation and dinner budget of the person Jamie is about to prepare a meal for appear in bullet style. These inter-titles are accompanied by loud, non-descript “muzak.” And indeed, between dinners Jamie is seen rushing around the country on his scooter on his way to cook for one of his mates. Nigella is mostly seen relaxed in the comforts of her home kitchen.

## 3.2 The talk

### 3.2.1 *The introductions*

In the “Introduction” chapter of *Pukka Tukka*, Jamie is seen walking around a London market. He presents the program as follows:

- (3) *Well we old mates we’re a nation of people who love to eat but we got no time to cook.*

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6. “**Pukka** adjective certain; reliable; genuine; hence excellent; fashionable. Derives from Hindu *pakka* which has the meaning of “substantial” UK, 1776.” – “**Tucker** noun food Australia, 1850.” Dalzell, Tom & Victor, Terry. 2008. *The Concise New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional Dictionary*. New York: Routledge.

7. While completing this manuscript BBC2 launched another cookery show featuring Nigella. In *Nigelissima!* first broadcast in April 2012, Lawson focuses on Italian cuisine.

8. “**Like the clappers; like the clappers of hell; like clappers of fuck** very fast, very hard. Possibly rhyming slang for “clappers of a bell”, “hell”, UK, 1948. Dalzell, Tom and Victor, Terry. 2008. *The Concise New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional Dictionary*. New York: Routledge.

- (4) *You know what? It's the same old story for everyone but cooking shouldn't be about stitching yourself up and getting into a load of trouble it should be about enjoying yourself and having a laugh. But the whole idea of this video'll be to keep things simple work on the old confidence, I know, do a little bit of shopping and that, me old mates is the essential guide to pukka tukka.*

In his Essex accent complete with dropped aitches and using an all-inclusive 'we,' Jamie re-iterates to his "mates;" i.e. the 'real' friends he is cooking for and his TV audience, that cooking should be nothing to be afraid of, but about simplicity and "having a laugh." As he walks around he (apparently) randomly stops people asking them if they have time to cook, using openings such as: "Excuse me darling;" and "Barry, me old mate." Terms of address such as 'darling' and 'mate' are typical of traditional dialects of the south-east of England, and especially of Cockney. Jamie is from Essex, an area in the south east of England whose variety has certainly been influenced by what is considered the more prestigious talk of nearby London (see Trudgill 1990). Jamie moves around and gesticulates a lot as he speaks. Example 4 is spoken as he walks towards the camera, hesitating at "I know" pausing slightly and moving his hands vigorously up and down just before saying "do a little bit of shopping." I would like to suggest that Jamie's way of speech, his stance and his attitude are appealing because together they allude to a sort of 'chirpy' Cockney 'laddishness' that has been in vogue in British culture since the turn of the present century.

In Nigella's parallel "Introduction" chapter we see her pottering around the kitchen of her London home, delicately putting the final touches on different foods. As she does so, she often places spoonfuls of food in her mouth or else licks her fingers looking into the camera making suggestive glances that allude to the pleasure she is experiencing from what she is tasting:

- (5) *Cooking for me lies in the pleasure of food, and I mean uncomplicated food. It all has to be simple, straightforward, suited to the way I really live, and that is what Nigella Bites' all about.(...) and this absolutely is the food I want to eat, the food I llllove to cook, any time.*

What is immediately striking is the atmosphere of warmth and cosiness that is created. Colours are subdued, the camera often adopts a blurring effect as Nigella slowly moves around and cooks. In contrast to Jamie's sweat-shirt and jeans, Nigella is dressed in a stylish tight fitting sweater. Nigella also focuses on the simplicity of cooking, but the stark difference between the two lies in how much Nigella concentrates on herself. Notably, in Example 5, there are five occurrences of a first person pronoun in a few seconds of speech. Furthermore, rather than pre-empting a teaching experience regarding how to eat better, or simply how to prepare a certain dish (Jamie's objectives), with Nigella expectations regard how to

derive pleasure from food. Jamie wants his audience to “have a laugh” (Example 4) Nigella wants us to “love” cooking and, above all, eating. Markedly, when uttering the final occurrence of the word “love” in Example 5, Nigella lingers on the /l/ sound, lengthening the word and rendering it more sensual. Moreover, Nigella is posh. Her voice has a sensual quality, it is deep and smooth and she delivers her lexically rich talk very slowly with an RP accent in such a way that, combined with her voluptuous features, conveys pure passion. Furthermore, Nigella only directly addresses her remote audience when showing off her finished dishes but when she does so, unlike Jamie, there is no matey camaraderie, but simply an imperative “look” usually followed by an “mmm.”

Each chapter of the *Nigella Bites* DVD opens with a short introduction in which Nigella looks into the camera and slowly talks to the audience about some aspect of her personal relationship with food:

- (6) *If I'm being honest, all food is comfort food to me. When we're tired, stressed or sad certain dishes have the ability to soothe you like no other.*  
(Chapter 1 *Comfort Food*)
- (7) *This is one of my paternal mother's favourite cookery books.*  
(Chapter 9 *Legacy*)
- (8) *Sausages and lentils my mother cooked for me when we were children and now I cook for my children.* (Chapter 9 *Legacy*)
- (9) *I'm not a puritan I want to eat and drink what I like well, but, to be honest, there are times when purity can be a positive pleasure.*  
(Chapter 6 *Temple Food*)
- (10) *In my heart of hearts there is a place, and a very fond one, for a bit of kitsch in the kitchen and it would be hard to think of a more sublimely trashy concoction than this ham cooked in coca cola.* (Chapter 7 *Trashy*)

From the cozy atmosphere of her home and with her warm voice Nigella reveals some aspects of her personal life thus succeeding in creating a feeling of intimacy. She too gesticulates a lot, but more slowly than Jamie and in a way that is in time with the way she speaks, often gesticulating, for example, on stressed syllables. Moreover, every savor is followed by an appreciative “mmm” and fitting facial expression so it is not too difficult to understand why the British press has labeled Nigella “queen of food porn”.

The concept of “food porn” was first devised by Coward in reference to women’s “hungry eye[s]” that take pleasure “in looking at the supposedly forbidden” foods displayed in glossy food magazines that are reminiscent of “another form of guilty-but-indulgent looking, that of sexual pornography” (Coward 1984:99). Nigella

takes visual/oral pleasure one step forward by actually indulging in the forbidden pleasures of food (forbidden in modern day society which values dieting and slim women) without giving so much as a thought to issues regarding weight gain. As she wantonly licks dollops of food from spoons, she plays with her audience with actions but also with words – “I need fire and I need spice” she says breathily looking sexily into the camera – referring (of course) to a Kerala omelette (Chapter 4 *All-Day-Breakfast*) not to mention “leave yourself some in the bowl [chocolate cake mixture] for licking later” (Chapter 8 *Rainy Days*). In other words, Nigella is a tease.

In *Pukka Tukka* the audience sees Jamie racing around from place to place on a scooter on his way to cook for one of his “mates.” Before each meal he focuses on the needs of the mate in question who usually has no time to cook. Talk is very much dedicated to helping the friend in question to eat cheaply and well with simple dishes. In this program Jamie rarely talks about his personal life or family, something he will do however, in future series such as *Jamie’s Great Italian Escape*.

### 3.2.2 Giving instructions

Instructions are an essential part of cookery programs and both chefs have their own personal style of giving them. Jamie is quite rough in the kitchen, he tends to rush clumsily around accidentally banging saucepan lids and forgetting ingredients and utensils as he talks. Hardly ever does he use the traditional lexis of recipes; specialized cookery terms such as to mix, to fold, to pour, are either substituted or at best modified – suffice it to consider his use of the verb “to whop” to refer to placing fruit into the pastry base of an apricot tart (Chapter 11); to “*whack* that [butter] in there as well...” and to “*bash* ‘em up a bit” in reference to chopping up almonds for a chocolate sponge pudding (Chapter 8). Throughout the program he prefers to use the slang verb “to chuck” (meaning ‘to throw’) instead of the traditional term “to add” and when pouring oil into a mixture, Jamie favors the expression “a good lug of olive oil” as opposed to the more traditional “a large portion.” While it is strange to use such terminology to talk about food, nevertheless, Jamie’s use of these slang terms when giving instructions, is juxtaposed with others pertaining to a terminology more usual to playful talk. Consider the insertion of the term “lovely” combined with “little” when he instructs his audience to “just give it [pasta] a lovely little drain” (Chapter 2, *Pasta*) and again the endearing “little” in “give it [butter in caramel] a little jiggle” (Chapter 10, *City Boy*). “Lovely” is a classic term of endearment in Cockney, but what is of interest is that Jamie uses it in an unusual way as part of giving instructions. Nigella is also prone to nonce cookery terms every now and again when giving instructions. For instance, Nigella talks of

lamb that “gets *bunged* into the pot to brown” (Chapter 5 *Slow Cook Weekend*) and prefers the verb “to blitz” whenever processing food through a blender.

### 3.2.3 *Interacting with the audience*

However spontaneous our chefs may seem, we do need to remember, that in a sense, both Jamie and Nigella are doing their jobs, namely “playing themselves.” While they are not alone when filming – they are surrounded by all sorts of people concerned with the technicalities of the task (e.g. cameramen, make-up artists, lighting assistants etc.) – their talk is in fact aimed at a remote audience with whom they need to successfully create the impression of what Goffman calls “fresh talk” (1981). As with any television host, cookery show presenters will have prepared and rehearsed what they are going to say beforehand, yet Jamie and Nigella’s talk contains several features that make it appear very fresh and spontaneous. As we have seen, Jamie addresses his audience with the term “mate” and “mates,” however, he also manages to deal with the absence of an interlocutor’s back-channeling through the use of what appear to be his most frequently used discourse markers, “yeah” and “right”.

### 3.2.4 *Fillers versus fluency*

Jamie speaks quickly with a running commentary that is clearly aimed at an imaginary “other” who is watching from a remote television screen and is thus unable to respond. Nonetheless, he prompts his viewers through the use of fillers “yeah” and “right,” both uttered with rising, question-style intonation. Example 11 illustrates how “yeah” is inserted at each step of the preparation process of a pasta sauce (Chapter 1). Jamie picks up a handful of tomatoes and utters his first “yeah,” cuts them in half, describes what he is doing and utters a second “yeah,” as he quarters the larger tomatoes he voices a third “yeah”.

- (11) *So you need about a handful of tomatoes yeah? whatever tomatoes you can get whatever tastes best really and what we do is we just get these and we cut them in half yeah? and these lovely small ones we leave whole slightly bigger ones we can quarter yeah? and it just makes it all look nice and it all makes sense yeah? and we’re not gonna cook this at all you can cook it and it’ll be lovely but there’s no point cos they’re so good* (Chapter 1, *Pasta*)

The fourth instance of “yeah” (as the “yeah” and instances of “right” in Example 12), does not accompany an instruction, but stands in for “as you can see” or “I’m sure you will agree”. In other words, Jamie manages to re-create a faux-dialogue with his audience; at each “yeah” he is saying words to the effect of ‘you see what I’m doing?’ and ‘you do likewise’ and at each “right” he is calling for their consensus, although the first occurrence of “right” (Example 12), has a different function as it is marking the beginning of a new topic.

- (12) *Right, this is something I've always wanted to do right? I'm quite excited I feel like I'm on Watchdog or something em we've established that people basically think that pre-packed food is quicker and more convenient less hassle, right? Fair do's. You're welcome to that I wanna prove otherwise, yeah?* (Chapter 1, *Pasta*)

Although Jamie's talk is free of the hesitations, mistakes and repetitions of real life speech, it does contain the use of several discourse markers typical of naturally occurring conversation such as "you know what?" (Example 4) "you know," "like" and "the thing is" (Example 13).

- (13) *And even things like this stalk where you picked it you know you could chuck the stalk away a lot of people do but **the thing is** you get this stalk and then **like** just just finely chop it it's quite crunchy so again it's **like** another texture in the pasta that's so good it's better than throwing it away innit? So basically there we go.* (Chapter 1, *Pasta*)

Nigella moves more slowly than Jamie, speaks more slowly and is far less prone to use fillers, her speech is extremely polished as she continuously offers pearls of wisdom to her viewers. For example, as she decorates a Turkish Delight syllabub (Chapter 5 *Slow Cook Weekend*) she proclaims "may I say your life is ever so much easier if you get pleasure from such small things." Jamie would never use the 'may' form, let alone the stylish "ever so much." Nigella's poshness also emerges from her use of embedded clauses such as "in my heart of hearts there is a place, and a very fond one, for a bit of kitsch" (Example 9). Moreover, the discourse markers she uses are in line with the character she portrays, in other words, they seem to be classy ones. Consider her use of "If I'm being honest" (Example 6) and "to be honest" (Example 9). Nigella favors refined language and so we cannot be certain that the alliteration of "when purity can be a positive pleasure" (Example 9); and "a bit of kitsch in the kitchen" (Example 10) are instances of fresh talk. Again, her lexical choices often tend to be quite poetic, such as "I like the cream to billow into a cloud..." (Chapter 8 *Rainy Days*). Above all, the way her words are put together echo class. Consider the almost poetic nature of strings of words such as: "particularly wonderful" (cream style sweet-corn); "positive pleasure" (soup); "the ability to soothe like no other" (food in general) and especially referring to making risotto:

- (14) *...the mindless, repetitive activity of stirring the risotto make it for me just as much a solace to cook as a comfort to eat* (Chapter 1 *Comfort Food*)

how different from Jamie's use of slang that ranges from "skint" and "loaded" (Example 4) to the Cockney expression "fair do's" (meaning "fair treatment" in Example 12) and "innit" (Example 13); not to mention more complex stretches of

Cockney as illustrated in Example 15, where he uses the term “palaver” meaning “complicated business” and substitutes personal pronoun “my” with “me”:

- (15) *Now if I was in the restaurant I would make me own puff pastry em but as we're not I don't bother as to be honest with you it is a bit of a palaver so, where's his rolling pin, here we go.* (Chapter 11)

### 3.2.5 Vague language

Both chefs are keen users of vague language (see Channell 1994) possibly because they have quite a nonchalant attitude to measurements in their recipes and thus vagueness may well be a necessity. In Example 16 Jamie is talking about baking and despite the fact that the weight of individual ingredients needs to be precise and he himself admits that “[baking]’s a bit like chemistry” – thus *vaguely* like chemistry – so his instructions are anything but precise:

- (16) *Right Got some scales. Ooh dear don't use scales very much as you know but when it comes to things like desserts it's quite important a lot of the time you've got to get it on the ball cos it's a bit like chemistry do you know what I mean? So I need about 200 grams of butter which is about that much have a little guess oh straight on the head mate beautiful and then I need where's me caster sugar? Right, so that's easy to remember, right whack it in the old bowl butter goes in you want it reasonably soft cos you need to cream it right? Pour in the sugar just use it like a spatula to kind of sort of stab it and get it so it's sort of mixed you need about 3 sort of heaped tablespoons of cocoa powder, yeah there they go in there and just enough water to sort of make it into a nice sort of paste let's have a little mix up here if you don't use warm water you'll find that the cocoa powder goes kind of dry so you want to put just enough water so that your three tablespoons of cocoa powder sort of dissolve and go smooth yeah so there get all of that in there.* (Chapter 8)

The dessert needs a precise amount of sugar; nonetheless Jamie allows “about” 200 grams, and as he pours it into the scales, he guesses that it is “about this much” and he is right and congratulates himself with “straight on the head mate!” – “mate” this time being himself. The butter needs to be “reasonably” soft, however Jamie is a professional chef and knows the importance of precision in baking, even so he only *vaguely* admits that with (vague) “things like desserts” [weighing ingredients] is (only) “quite important a lot of the time.” Even more vague are Jamie’s instructions for amalgamating the butter and sugar, a process technically known as ‘creaming’ – “sort of stab it and get it so it’s sort of mixed” says Jamie. Finally, to avoid the mixture becoming “kind of dry,” Jamie suggests adding “just enough water.” In the same recipe Jamie needs to add hot water which becomes “some sort of hot water:”

- (17) *but what I wanna do is make it chocolate yeah so I just get **some sort of hot water**, where's me cocoa?*

Nigella is equally vague both in her cooking and in her instructions to the point that she actually encourages her viewers to avoid precision as illustrated in Example 18:

- (18) *I mean, about 2 tablespoons of fresh rosemary were you to measure it which I don't suggest you do. (Chapter 10 Party Girl)*

as well as constantly reassuring them with the phrase “don't worry” if they do not have a certain ingredient or if things go wrong. In Example 19 she encourages viewers to chop onions “as finely as [they] have got patience for.”

- (19) *Use shallots don't worry you can use the white parts from spring onions if you can't find them, and chop them as finely as you have got patience for. (Chapter 6 Temple Food)*

### 3.2.6 Expressing emotion

Both chefs are passionate about their work. Whether surveying a finished dish or tasting a culinary creation, Nigella tends to wax lyrical, while Jamie accompanies his talk with complicated gesticulation. Typically, Nigella will express her satisfaction with a non-verbal vocal sound such as a groaning “mmm” – [mmm]. This sound appears in various syntactic positions; compare “[mmm] beautiful” in response to the perfume of chilli peppers” (Chapter 10 *Party Girl*) to “as soft as a baby's bottom, [mmm]” as Nigella pats a ball of pasta dough (Chapter 8 *Rainy Days*) and to “I like these with [mmm] chilli peppers” (*Party Girl*). At the sight of a tray of freshly prepared aubergine *involtini* she says “Look, deep, deep joy... [mmm]” (*Bonus Recipes*) or upon tasting a kerala omelette, “[mmm] very, very good” emphasizing the second “very” (*All-Day-Breakfast*).

Our chefs' emotions also emerge in the way they personify their dishes. In Example 20 Jamie's chocolate pudding becomes “the old babe” “old” being a term of endearment as in the slang expressions “the old man” for father/boyfriend/husband and “the old lady” for girlfriend/wife:

- (20) *Let's check the old babe, superb, look at that so I've got the old chocolate sauce and er just have a look at that, I mean, that is **just heaven mate** so basically all you do now is while this is hot just pour the chocolate on top superb there you go mate one dessert in the bag that is beautiful.*

Jamie describes caramel on the boil as “the old caramello;” referring to onions, he instructs viewers to “peel the old boys;” and calls Noilly Prat, a famous French vermouth “a bit of the old Noilly.” He even personifies the stove as in “turn on the old gas and give it [the mixture] a good old stir.” Such personification continues in the way the chefs emphasize the physical attributes of their dishes with adjectives

like “lovely” and “beautiful.” For example, when beholding a platter of kedgeree Nigella throatily exclaims “I mean, look, lovely” (*All-Day-Breakfast*); of a hot and sour soup she ecstatically says “beautiful to look at how it comes to life” (*Temple Food*) and upon pulling a rack of roast lamb from the oven she comments “How beautiful is that?” (*Slow Food Weekend*). Sight is certainly as important as taste to our chefs. “Look at the lovely bronze color of these nuts” (*Party Girl*) breathes Nigella and enthuses as she pours “lovely, thick, green olive oil” (*Comfort Food*). Jamie is less lyrical but equally enthusiastic with a series of “look at that[s]” and “that is beautiful” to describe a sticky chocolate pudding (Example 20) or a simply “so lovely” as he pours caramel onto a tart (Chapter 11).

And just as Jamie juxtaposes instances of slang with tender endearments (3.2), he does the same with his positive adjectives so that the appellation ‘old’ is counterpointed with a predilection for the terms “superb” and “beautiful” and references to heaven. Thus the “old babe” of a chocolate sauce is “superb” and “just heaven, mate” (Example 20). Nigella also makes references to heaven such as when she declares that since she was 12, “cream style sweet-corn” was not just “particularly wonderful” but also her “idea of gastronomic heaven” (Chapter 7 *Trashy*). And once more, in line with their characters, Jamie’s paradisiacal talk contains a colloquial “mate” and Nigella upgrades with a high register “gastronomic”.

A rather unusual aspect of Jamie and Nigella’s talk is the fact that they sometimes interact with the food they are cooking. In Example 19 Jamie is bending the spaghetti so that they will fit tightly into the pan into the boiling water, and as he does so, he addresses the pasta as if it were one of his “mates”:

- (21) *We’ve got some quite good quality pasta here, right, so this is spaghetti it cooks in around 7 minutes right so this goes in boiling salted water it’s supposed to be, just bend it around, get in there, go on mate, get in there, here we go... (Pasta)*

Nigella has a tendency towards nostalgia so before a bowl of *pasta e fagioli* (an Italian pasta and bean soup) she proclaims “I adore all that smudgy terracotta, reminds me of a visit to Italy” after which she takes the wooden spoon from the pan, tastes the soup and emits an “mmm” (*Bonus Recipes*).

Finally, a word about their use of humor. Nigella’s use of humor is usually restricted to a gentle self-effacing irony. For example, aware of her healthy appetite and roundness, Nigella declares “I might give myself a modest portion” of a freshly prepared kedgeree. And again, when abounding with some hot chilli pepper, playing on her sexiness she declares “I always like to go just a little too far I suppose.” However, she does sometimes attempt an even more suggestive style of humor such as while she is preparing a spatchcock and declares “I like a bit of dismemberment in the evening” (*Party Girl*). Jamie is not so understated. When peeling

onions makes him cry, he complains of “Me old sinuses!” and his cockney humor emerges in the use of traditional expressions like “the old caramello is bubbling away like the clappers.”

#### 4. Conclusions

This essay has briefly analyzed some aspects of the performance talk of celebrity chefs Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson. Cookery shows are very popular in the UK and many of their hosts have gained super-star status in the media, however, although these programs are concerned with the preparation of food, it would appear that audiences watch the shows for the sake of the chefs as much as to acquire cookery skills. Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson’s shows are extremely popular with the public and undoubtedly, their presentation skills are one of the main reasons for their popularity. It is unlikely that the public are seriously capable of imitating their dishes. Presumably few people will have the space, facilities, time, means, and above all, capacity to arrange their preparations in a similarly artistic and aesthetically pleasing fashion. On screen, recipes are prepared in minutes. Real life cookery involves not only going shopping beforehand, but dealing with clearing up afterwards. In other words, Jamie and Nigella offer a fantasy.

The talk of self-assured, chipper, working-class Jamie is compared to that of sensual and classy Nigella examining features such as their choice of lexis, how they give instructions, their use of vague language and how they display emotion. Fully aware that their talk may well be of a simulated “fresh” variety, both exhibit instances of vagueness, an important feature of naturally occurring language. Nigella’s highly fashioned talk sometimes verges on the poetic while Jamie’s use of Cockney features raises many a smile in audiences.

To sum up, the chefs’ performances are fun to watch. It would appear that both men and women enjoy viewing the beautiful Nigella as she slowly moves around her kitchen sexily tasting her wares and boisterous Jamie dashing around his kitchen space preparing dishes. And of course audiences enjoy partaking in the cooking process, and surveying their luscious finished dishes. Discussing what she labels food pornography, Coward describes the ideology behind food photography and how the photographer decides in advance how to display the food paying attention to detail such as arrangement of table linen, china, flowers (1984: 103). Like food magazines TV also presents viewers with elaborate dishes which, although we are told are simple to make, may well be hard to reproduce let alone obtain the same visual effect. However, television cookery takes this notion one step further by familiarizing viewers with a host who makes processes appear

doable. Television cookery provides us with a fantasy. But above all, these shows create and reinforce our imagination by bringing personalities like Jamie and Nigella into the very heart of our homes, namely, our kitchens.

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# The addressee in the recipe

## How Julia Child gets to join you in the kitchen

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Texts may be adjusted to their target audiences to different degrees. Recipes are a highly conventionalized text-type, which leaves little room for variation; nevertheless, cookbooks are often tuned to particular audiences. The current study investigates how the addressee may be oriented to in recipes; the methods identified in the different cookbooks analyzed can be instructive for audience design in instructional texts in general.

### 1. Introduction

Speech is generally adjusted to its particular recipients; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974:727) have termed this process *recipient design*: “the multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants.” Also written text is often tuned to its intended readers, yet while talk-in-interaction may rely on concomitant feedback from the communication partner (e.g. Gardner 2001), the relationship with the recipient necessarily has to be less feedback-driven in most written texts. Nevertheless, also written texts can orient implicitly or explicitly to particular intended recipients, i.e. the target audience (Schriver 1997).

In the movie “Julie and Julia” based on a novel by Julie Powell, the protagonist claims with respect to a particular cookbook that Julia Child, the main author of this cookbook, seems to be assisting her in the kitchen; in particular, she reports “I feel like she is there with me in the kitchen,” and about a childhood experience involving her mom in the kitchen: “and it was like she was there, like Julia was there – in the room – on her side like some great big good fairy – and everything was going to be alright” (Powell 2005). This cookbook is Julia Child’s, Louisette Bertholle’s and Simone Beck’s *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961). Powell treats this cookbook as rather extraordinary (“she changed everything”), and this perception is supported by various quotes from professional and lay cooks;

for instance, in a book review of Child et al. (1961)<sup>1</sup> we read: “It is, in fact, quite extraordinary because it was the first of its kind and had such a huge impact on America’s culinary future.” Furthermore, on a general webpage of book reviews,<sup>2</sup> we find the following statement:

Since there has never been a book as instructive and as workable as *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, the techniques learned here can be applied to recipes in all other French cookbooks (...) the authors have produced a magnificent volume that is sure to find the place of honor in every kitchen in America.

In addition to the invited reviews, the webpage provides also a forum for the general public to comment on the books, and here we can read among the first five comments: “really, this is the most thorough, easy-to-understand, and excellent cookbook I have ever owned” (Amanda Nuchols), “its a lot like being in the kitchen with her, having her adjust your hand on the knife or point over your shoulder to say ‘yes, that is the color it should be’” (Ryan); and finally, Mary Beth Donnelly: “this book is a true classic, a first in its field.” So the cookbook seems to have been very well received, and readers report on a rather special relationship between writer and audience.

So in the following, I investigate how the authors of this cookbook succeed in establishing such a close relationship with their audience. That the authors of this cookbook manage to create such an intimate relationship with their readers is not only unusual, but it is all the more surprising given the highly conventionalized nature of the recipe as a text-type, which is usually described as one of the core examples of registers (e.g. Ferguson 1982). Registers are conventionalized linguistic varieties with identifiable linguistic properties related to particular situations of use. In very conventionalized registers such as recipes, the adjustment to a certain audience constitutes a particular challenge because of the highly prescribed ways in which they are written. So what possibilities are there within these very tight conventional constraints on the register? In the current study, I examine several different cookbooks with respect to their strategies of including the addressee in the recipes in order to compare them with the ways Child et al. (1961) adjust to their recipients. These strategies will shed light on different ways in which the audience can be oriented to in instructional texts in general.

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1. <http://gourmetfood.about.com/od/cookbookreviews/fr/childfrench.htm> (1 March 2012).
  2. [http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/129650.Mastering\\_the\\_Art\\_of\\_French\\_Cooking](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/129650.Mastering_the_Art_of_French_Cooking) (1 March 2012).

## 2. Designing documents for a particular audience

Schrivier (1997) presents three kinds of methods to carry out audience design for documents: classification-driven, intuition-driven and feedback-driven. The classification-based method makes use of existing resources associating particular linguistic features with certain target groups, for instance, using word lists with vocabulary appropriate for children of a particular age group. The intuition-based method relies on the document designer's capability to place him- or herself in the position of a reader of a particular target group. Finally, the feedback-based approach relies on experimental methods in which document designers create preliminary versions of the document, which are then evaluated by members of the target group. All of the three methods assume that design decisions at all levels may display an orientation towards particular groups of readers. Design decisions concern, for instance, the choice of content, the choice of typeface, the use of images and the relationship between text and image (Schrivier 1997, Chapter 5), but also implicit linguistic means like language complexity, word choice, or level of formality. But the intended audience may already play a crucial role at a more general level: Waller (1999), for instance, distinguishes between three areas that need to be taken into account in document design: topic, artifact and access structure. Topic structure refers to the selection of contents: what is necessary information, what should be presented in what depth, and what can be taken for granted. Artifact structure concerns the medium used to present the information; for instance, a company may decide between a leaflet, a booklet or a flyer to inform their employees about innovations in the organization. Depending on the artifact chosen, also the content may differ. Finally, access structure refers to the intended audience; a flyer for children will be designed differently than a flyer for adolescents or adults. The choice of intended audience will also impact design decisions regarding topic and artifact structure; thus, the three areas interact, such that the choice of content and mode of presentation depend both on the potential readership and on the kind of document created.

In addition to designing a document for a particular readership by taking design decisions with particular audiences in mind, the audience can be involved in the text directly. De Stadler (2003), for instance, discusses explicit means of including a particular target audience into a document. The strategy to include the reader in the text he proposes is the creation of a certain persona for the reader. The empirical studies he presents reveal that if the attributions to the target audience are correct, direct appeal to the audience can be very successful, yet that errors with respect to the intended audience may lead to strong dispreferred reactions; in particular, "those text fragments containing the more pronounced descriptions of the persona stimulated the most wide ranging reactions: either strongly positive

or strongly negative identification” (de Stadler 2003:208). Referring to an intended readership in the document can thus be risky.

### 3. Recipes

A recipe combines different kinds of contents which correspond to different phases in the food preparation process: (a) decision making, i.e. what to cook; this phase comprises a projection of the results of the process; (b) ingredients selection; this phase concerns the necessary preconditions for (c), the food preparation proper. These contents address what a reader might “demand to be told in a recipe” (Fisher 1983:17). Fisher (1983:23) thus argues that a prospective reader of a cookbook will need three types of information: name, ingredients, and method. Cotter (1997) breaks recipes down into what she calls ‘narrative components’; she identifies a general bipartite structure consisting of ingredients and directions (1997:59), yet there can be optional orientation and evaluation components (1997:60). Fixed expressions like “serves 6” may serve as a coda to the recipe.

The different content types are conventionalized to different degrees: While regarding (a), decision making, there is no conventional way of presenting the content, (b) and (c) are highly conventionalized. The ingredients (b) are usually presented as an ordered list, where the order of ingredients reflects the timing in the food preparation process or the type of ingredients used (for instance, spices may be presented separately). The food preparation process (c) is often presented with characteristic linguistic features, such as the imperative mood (Ferguson 1982). The imperative is “the recipe’s most distinguishing syntactic feature” (Cotter 1997:56). Fisher (1983:21) even argues that most recipes start out with the same word: “*Take...*” The imperative is also made use of in conversational recipe telling, where conversationalists switch back and forth between instructions, which are then presented in the imperative mood like their written counterparts, and narrations, which are presented in the first person past indicative (Norrick 2011:2745).

Furthermore, both Fisher (1983:21–22) and Cotter (1997:57) identify the absence of temporal adverbs as a formal characteristic of recipes. They also argue that recipes rely heavily on their readers’ background knowledge, for instance with respect to the interpretation of scalar or vague descriptions like “extra thick”, which may require sophisticated background knowledge on food preparation processes. This is also reported by Culy (1996), who describes null objects as a distinguishing characteristic of recipes, as well as by Tomlinson (1986), who deals with recipes as examples of incompleteness. The extent to which cookbooks

presuppose background knowledge depends on their target audience: Cotter finds that cookbooks for general audiences are explicit and detailed whereas those for a special readership allow for more brevity (1997:69). Thus, in her view, audience design shows particularly in the amount of background knowledge presupposed. Waxman (2004:349) predicts that recipes will develop to become increasingly simpler, more explicit and more intuitive, providing more background information in the future.

Fisher (1983:22) furthermore suggests that recipes are “rarely funny, and almost never witty.” She asks whether a correct recipe should also give the result, “the desired end of the procedure” (1983:23–24), and observes that modern writers occasionally permit themselves “a relaxed comment”, which she however dismisses as “gastronomical chitchat” (1983:24).

To sum up, there are certain core components of recipes with respect to the contents presented, which correspond to partly highly conventionalized means of presentation. Based on this analysis, addressee orientation can be expected mostly concerning the amount of background information presented.

#### 4. Audience design in cookbooks

In order to compare the methods of including the reader in Child et al. (1961) with the audience design of other cookbooks, I used the first three hits of searchable cookbooks designed for a particular audience on the Amazon website. That is, I searched the Amazon book database for book titles containing the phrase “cookbook for”. It turns out that shaping a cookbook for a particular target audience is in fact quite common. On the Amazon web pages, 4,398 hits turned up (on July 14th, 2011). These hits include, however, also general guidebooks, like “the secure programming cookbook for C and C++”, as well as cookbooks in which the nominal phrase after the preposition *for* refers to time expressions (“for all seasons”) or to abstract concepts (“for the hungry mind”). For the analysis, I chose the first three cookbooks of which parts were electronically available. In the analysis itself, I look for traces of the readership named in the title of the respective cookbook; in particular, I address the presentation of the recipe on the page, the linguistic realization of the instructions, the role of the images used, and the way the reader is referred to or addressed directly and implicitly. These features constitute key areas of document design (cf. Schriver 1997; Bateman 2008) and unlike, for instance, typography, they are routinely adapted to the respective audience (cf. Schriver 1997, Chapter 3). In particular, I investigate how the rhetorical elements, different types of content in a document, are presented in the cookbooks. For instance, background information in a scientific

text such as a textbook may be presented in a footnote or in a separate box or in the margins. Here we shall see how the different elements of recipes, such as the ingredients and the cooking instructions, are realized in the cookbooks investigated.

#### 4.1 Cookbook for students

The first cookbook retrieved and analyzed in this way is the *Holidays of the World Cookbook for Students* by Lois S. Webb and Liudsay G. Roteu (2011). This cookbook starts out with some practical background information concerning cleanliness, safety and equipment needed. After that, a glossary of food terms, a bibliography and an introduction are presented; the introduction states the major aims of the cookbook: “We hope that through the common language of food, this cookbook of world holiday celebrations, rituals and feasting will help us learn even more about those with whom we share this planet.” (2011: xix) In addition, the introduction explains the different calendars used in different cultures.

The recipes then are ordered according to the countries from which they originate. As the authors points out themselves, each recipe is structured according to serving size, ingredients, equipment and the food preparation instructions (1995: xviii).

The layout of the pages presenting the recipes can be divided into four parts: (a) background information on the recipe, (b) a list of ingredients and necessary tools, (c) the food preparation process proper, and (d) additional information (see Figure 1).

Prior to the recipes, the cookbook presents background information about country, ingredients and holiday in a text preceding the recipes. For instance, we read:

African porridge is made with water or milk and cornmeal. It is called *nsima* in Malawi and Zambia, *ugali* in Kenya and Tanzania, *oshifima* in Namibia, *bidia* in Zaire, and *mealie-meal* or *putu* among the English- or Zulu-speaking South Africans. Large kettles of this cornmeal mush are prepared along with the meat, vegetables, and fresh fruit served at community feasts. Each family eats from a container they bring from home, usually a large hollowed out calabash (gourd) or plastic tub. The food is eaten with the right hand only. Throughout Africa and the Middle East, it is considered rude to touch food with the left hand, which is used for personal grooming. In Africa, the traditional way to eat cornmeal mush is to pull off a chunk, press a hole in it with your thumb, and then use it to scoop up stew or sauce. (2011: 3)

Thus, the text preceding the recipe proper provides background information on the dish and on cultural habits.

**● African Porridge (Traditional Cornmeal Mush)**

The following recipe for African Porridge is typical of what is eaten every day as well as at most holiday feasts. African porridge is made with water or milk and cornmeal. It is called *nsima* in Malawi and Zambia, *ugali* in Kenya and Tanzania, *oshifima* in Namibia, *bidia* in Zaire, and *mealie-meal* or *putu* among the English- or Zulu-speaking South Africans. Large kettles of this cornmeal mush are prepared along with meat, vegetables, and fresh fruit served at community feasts. Each family eats from a container they bring from home, usually a large hollowed-out *calabash* (gourd) or plastic tub. The food is eaten with the right hand only. Throughout Africa and the Middle East, it is considered rude to touch food with the left hand, which is used for personal grooming.

In Africa the traditional way to eat cornmeal mush is to pull off a chunk, press a hole in it with your thumb, and then use it to scoop up stew or sauce.

**Yield:** serves 4 to 6

1 cup milk  
 1¼ cups cornmeal  
 1 cup water

**Equipment:** Small bowl, wooden mixing spoon, medium saucepan, rubber spatula, greased medium bowl

1. Pour milk into small bowl, and slowly add ¾ cup cornmeal to milk. Beat constantly until mixture forms smooth paste.
2. Bring water to boil in saucepan over high heat. Add cornmeal mixture to boiling water, and, stirring constantly, reduce to medium heat. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring constantly, while adding remaining ½ cup cornmeal. Continue stirring until mixture is lump-free and smooth. When mixture begins to pull away from sides of pan and sticks together, remove from heat.
3. Pour cornmeal mixture into medium bowl and set aside to cool.

*Serve at room temperature with other food.*

a) b) c) d)

Figure 1. Cookbook for Students (Webb & Roten 2011:3): (a) background on recipe, (b) ingredients presented as list, (c) instructions proper, (d) additional information

The recipes themselves, i.e. the food preparation instructions, follow the conventional patterns of recipes, for example: “pour milk into small bowl, and slowly add ¾ cup cornmeal to the milk. Beat constantly until mixture forms a smooth paste” (2011:3). In particular, we observe imperative constructions and telegraphic style, for instance, due to the drop of the direct object and the elimination of determiners. The paragraph breaks between the information elements on the page separate background information from the ingredients, which are presented as a list, and from the food preparation instructions. In this way, the cookbook follows the conventional patterns of cookbooks described by Cotter (1997).

The audience addressed, students, are never referred to directly. That an academic audience is targeted is however apparent from certain design elements that stem from academic texts, such as the glossary, the bibliography provided and the background information on world calendars. Concerning the recipes themselves, however, the adjustment to the intended audience thus concerns mainly phase (a), the description of the recipe, and not so much (b) the ingredients or (c) the food preparation process proper.

## 4.2 Cookbook for girls

*The Cookbook for Girls* (Smart 2009) by Dorling Kindersley starts out with an introduction on how to use the book; this introduction contains some general tips, which comprise the suggestion “to tie your hair back (if necessary)” and to “put on an apron.” (2009: 4) Furthermore, we find some safety instructions and the mission statement at the beginning: “This book is all about creating truly scrumptious food that you and your friends and family will love to eat. There are some old favorites as well as new ideas to inspire you to get in the kitchen and start cooking!” (2009: 4). The recipes are structured according to a grid assigning certain rhetorical elements, such as serving size, ingredients, tools, instructions and additional tips, to certain areas of the page. For instance, each page is framed by a bar displaying serving size, preparation time and cooking time for the respective recipe. The ingredients and tools needed are presented in a separate pink box, and the food preparation process is illustrated with numerous photographs. In addition, each page is decorated with pink ribbons and with appealing pictures showing the dish.

The recipes are ordered according to the kind of dish, that is, snacks, light meals, main meals, desserts, baking, drinks and ‘sweets & treats’. In addition, there is a section on gifts. Finally, there are a glossary and an index at the end of the text.

The recipes exhibit the narrative structure identified by Cotter (1997), comprising (a) a general introduction to the dish, (b) a list of ingredients and (c) the food preparation instructions, which are accompanied by photographs illustrating the respective instruction. For instance, the recipe for Red Pepper Hummous first introduces the dish: “This roasted pepper hummous makes a perfect dip for snacking when served with toasted pitta or crudités. Alternatively, spread onto tortillas with some crumbled feta cheese for an easy wrap” (2009: 8), then lists ingredients and tools needed separately and finally explains the food preparation process in different steps. In addition, the top margin hosts (d) useful general information on the dish, such as serving size and preparation time. The instructions instantiate many of the general characteristics of the register: “place the red peppers under a hot broiler. Broil until the skins have blackened. Place in a plastic bag and when cool, peel off the blackened skin” (2009: 8). In particular, we find imperatives and a tendency for ellipsis, as for instance “when cool,” even though determiners are not left out. Interestingly, the language is grammatically relatively simple, using paratactic structures (in the mission statement, for instance), yet there are numerous lexical items that are unlikely to be part of the vocabulary of young girls, for instance, *crudités*, *blackened*, *alternatively*, *deseeded* or *transfer*. These terms are appropriate for expert cooks, yet they are likely to cause problems for a young, inexperienced audience. At the same time, the instructions

Serves 4 Preparation 10 Cooking 10

## Red pepper hummous

This roasted red pepper hummous makes a perfect dip for snacking with toasted pitta or crudités. Alternatively, spread onto tortillas with some crumbled feta cheese for an easy wrap.

### Ingredients

- 2 red peppers, deseeded and each cut into 4
- 400g (3 1/2 cup) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 30ml (2tbsp) tahini (sesame seed paste)
- juice 1/2 lemon
- 45ml (3tbsp) olive oil
- a little paprika

### Tools

- knife
- food processor
- plastic bag
- bowl

- Place the red peppers under a hot grill. Grill until the skins have blackened. Place in a plastic bag and when cool, peel off the blackened skin.
- Place the skinned peppers with the remaining ingredients in a food processor and blend until smooth and creamy.
- Transfer the hummous to a bowl and sprinkle with a little paprika. Serve with grilled pitta breads or vegetable crudités.

*This healthy snack is great served with*

d)

a)

b)

c)

**Figure 2.** Cookbook for Girls (Smart 2009): Layout of page with (a) background information on the dish, (b) ingredients, (c) instructions in different steps, illustrated by means of images, and (d) general information

are paired with images that illustrate the same contents as the instructions, i.e. the relationship between text and image is redundant. Redundancy in text and images is usually employed in documents to ensure understanding (cf. Schriver 1997, Chapter 5). This indicates that the document design has indeed targeted a young, inexperienced audience.<sup>3</sup>

To sum up, the recipient design shows in the pink color of the cover and the illustrations with ribbons and flowers in the inside, as well as concerning the

3. The apparent discrepancy between features of the text and other document design features may well be due to the fact that in publishing companies, often different people are responsible for text and layout respectively.

presentation of certain rhetorical elements, such as ingredients, tools and instructions. Yet, we can also observe adjustments regarding syntactic complexity. Thus, the adaptations concern the artifact and the presentation of information on the page, the redundant text-image relationships, as well as linguistic choice related to complexity in all phases (a) to (c).

#### 4.3 Cookbook for people with health issues

Lynette Hall's (2006) "cookbook for those with candida, celiac disease and diabetes" begins with a personal preface and contains an introduction in which the relationship between different foods and the respective illnesses are being explained, as well as the ways US Americans generally think and talk about their food, medical facts and facts about nutrition and their consequences for eating habits and health. Based on this discussion, general recommendations are provided as well as discussions of particular kinds of foods, such as oil, cheese and herbs. The introduction furthermore provides some medical background and lists food to avoid. In addition, the author argues that readers should consume organic food if possible and provides suggestions on what to eat when eating out. She also refers to the reader directly when she says: "I can hear your groans now: I don't have the *time* to make my own meals" (2006: 4). Throughout the introduction, she addresses the reader directly, for instance: "You can be sure that organic foods are not genetically engineered" (2006: 5). The mission statement of the preface is: "true fast food that is good for you!" (2006: x). The rest of the book is structured according to different kinds of food, such as snacks and appetizers, cakes and cookies, or relishes and sauces. At the end of the book, the reader finds a description of standard measurements and an index.

Each section is introduced by a stage-setting photograph (cf. Schriver 1997, Chapter 5) and an explication of the terms used as section headings, for instance, *appetizer* and *snack*. These words are presented with their morphological division and with definitions, as if in a dictionary entry.

The recipes themselves then do not exhibit particular addressee orientation; for instance, the recipe for Kasha Tabbouleh first lists the ingredients for the main dish and then the ingredients for the dressing. The instructions for the food preparation are formulated in the imperative mood and use a telegraphic style, for example: "mix all dressing ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth" and "for best results, chill at least 2 hours before serving" (2006: 14), which also exhibits null objects (see Culy 1996). The orientation to the particular readership thus mainly concerns the selection of recipes and ingredients. One could argue, however, that the brevity of the recipes underlines one of the main points made in

the introductory part, namely that healthy food does not need longer to prepare than regular food.

To sum up, the three cookbooks investigated are adapted to their respective audiences regarding choice of recipe, the kind and amount of information presented about the dish, and some external factors (artifact) that may appeal to the audience. What often shows hardly any audience design are however the instructions for food preparation. The recipient design of the cookbooks investigated thus mostly concerns information *outside* the recipe proper.

#### 4.4 ‘Mastering the art of French cooking’

Julia Child’s, Louisette Bertholle’s and Simone Beck’s *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961) exhibits a set of further strategies to adjust to the particular audience than previously identified. The authors state their intended readers to be “the servantless cook who can be unconcerned on occasion with budgets, waistlines, timetables, children’s meals, or anything else which might interfere with the enjoyment of producing something wonderful to eat. Written for those who love to cook, the recipes are as detailed as we have felt they should be so that the reader knows exactly what is involved and how to go about it” (1961: vii). The cookbook does not contain any illustrations of recipes or ingredients, yet there are occasionally drawings that illustrate how to carry out a particular task (such as removing the heart of an artichoke (1961: 395–397) or peeling asparagus (1961: 401)). In addition, the introduction contains a section with numerous drawings illustrating typically French kitchen equipment and different ways of cutting ingredients.

Furthermore, the introductory part consists of a glossary (“Definitions”) and of an introduction to the ingredients providing background information on ingredients that are less well known to a US American audience or that require preparation, such as clarified butter (1961: 12–13). Moreover, the reader finds conversion tables for all kinds of measures and temperatures (plus the mathematical means to do the conversion him- or herself). The cookbook is structured according to the type of dish, such as soups, sauces, eggs, fish, and poultry. The book concludes with an index.

One of the strategies by means of which the reader is involved in the texts of the recipes is by letting him or her in into the decision process. This is sometimes done in the introductory text at the beginning of a recipe, and sometimes part of the food preparation instruction itself. In particular, the authors present different opinions on how to prepare certain ingredients; in this case, they are weighing the pros and cons, making the reader understand the reasons for the instructions.

For instance, the authors discuss whether brains need blanching or not, and they present all arguments in order to enable the reader to take an informed decision him- or herself, depending on the circumstances:

Some authorities direct that they always be blanched before cooking – that is, poached in salted and acidulated water or a court bouillon (...); others do not agree. If the sweetbreads or brains are to be braised, blanching is a useless and flavour-losing step – If they are to be sliced and sautéed, blanching firms them up so that they are easier to cut, but removes some of their delicacy and tenderness. Both brains and sweetbreads are perishable, and if they are not to be cooked within 24 hours, they should be soaked and blanched, which will help to preserve them. (1961: 375)

Similarly, the authors present the reader with the criteria necessary to make an informed choice on the material to drain cooked rice with (1961: 489). Furthermore, Child et al. (1961) justify their recommendations, as for instance, when they explain why surrounding filament on liver should be cut off (p. 372): “Have the liver cut into even slices 3/8 inch thick. Any surrounding filament should be peeled off each slice; if this is left on, the liver will curl as it cooks.” (1961: 372) These arguments are thus included in the food preparation instructions. Without addressing the reader directly, the recipes are therefore designed to enable the reader to carry out the process independently and to decide for him- or herself whenever different options are available. Consequently, the recipes are educational in the sense that the reader is enabled to cook a recipe rather than simply being given instructions concerning the steps to be taken in the food preparation process. The reader is thus treated as an intelligent person capable of understanding the principles underlying the food preparation.

A second strategy in which the cookbook by Child et al. differs from the other cookbooks investigated is by allowing for personal preferences. For instance, in the preparation of rice, Child et al. write: “There are many ways of arriving at plain boiled or steamed rice, and most cooks choose one which best suits their temperaments. We find the following to be a foolproof system” (1961: 488). In their comment on precooked rice, they recommend the precooked rice to “those who dare not attempt raw rice” (1961: 493). This recommendation is without judgment, and also preceding and following text contains no evaluation or even categorization of the reader; the reader is not addressed as a particular type. The choices available to him or her always concern concrete decisions and are not related to him or her as a particular type of person. Thus, unlike in de Stadler’s (2003) examples, the reader is included here in the text not in terms of a certain persona, but as an individual who is given a choice concerning a particular practice; note that alternative formulations to “those who dare not attempt raw rice” could also have been ‘the

inexperienced cook, 'the crappy cook', 'dummies', all of which appear in titles of recent cookbooks and which would have categorized the reader.

A third difference to the other cookbooks investigated consists in anticipating what the reader will experience; for instance, in the preparation of sweetbreads, the authors add to the instruction to "turn, baste, and cook 5 minutes more" that "they will render quite a bit of juice" (1961: 377). The anticipation of what the reader will encounter in the cooking process also extends to the anticipation of possible problems. For instance, the instruction how to fry onions concludes with: "you cannot expect to brown them uniformly" (1961: 444). Moreover, possible questions, for instance, with respect to the size of the frying pan to be chosen, are anticipated as well: "which will just hold the onions in one layer" (1961: 443) and are addressed within the recipe proper.

So while the cooking instructions are presented in imperative mood and in the telegraphic style which is conventional for the register, the instructions are combined with additional information providing background information, arguments for informed choice and descriptions of what the cook is going to encounter in the food preparation process. In addition, the recipes allow for personal preferences.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of the four cookbooks reveals different ways in which a highly conventionalized text type, such as recipes, can be adjusted to particular target audiences. Very common are introductory texts that provide background information on the recipes, procedures, customs, ingredients and the physical and chemical processes involved in food preparation. Furthermore, the cookbook for girls shows how deliberate design decisions concerning layout and artifact can be adjusted to a particular group of readers. The strategies identified in Child et al. (1961) comprise (a) providing the reader with background information to take informed decisions him- or herself; (b) anticipating what the reader will encounter during the food preparation process; and (c) allowing for personal preferences. While the first strategy may appear in all kinds of educational texts and has also been implemented in recent cookbooks (e.g. Alton Brown's (2002) cookbook that explains the scientific background of the cooking process), the latter two strategies are rather uncommon. The current analysis thus does not only shed light onto why the cookbook by Julia Child and collaborators is so special, but also outlines hitherto undescribed ways of addressee orientation in recipes.

Consequently, we can formulate now three strategies to include the addressee in instructional documents that have not been stated explicitly within the document design literature; Child et al. (1961) provide us with examples of introducing

the reader in a text that can potentially be extended to other instructional registers. First, we can distinguish different degrees by means of which the communication partner is provided with background information in order to understand the reasoning behind an instruction or to make an informed choice between alternatives. This strategy coincides with Waller's (1999) recommendation to choose the contents to be presented on the basis of the suspected needs of the target audience. This strategy may cause the transferability of skills noted in the review on goodreads.com; if readers are put into the position to decide themselves, they gain much more independence than if they were in the role of an instruction follower. Second, authors may signal different alternative procedures and mark them as optional and as a matter of personal preference. While this can be done using certain personae (de Stadler 2003), i.e. by categorizing the reader, also strategies may be useful in which the reader is not classified as of a particular kind. This is what Child et al. (1961) do by treating each choice independently and without judgment. Finally, the strategy probably most influential in the creation of the impression that Julia Child is joining you in the kitchen is the anticipation of what the cook will encounter. In this way, readers are reassured that their perceptions are 'normal' or expected. Potential problems and pitfalls are anticipated, thus creating the impression of online feedback on the current food preparation process and converting the cooking process into a joint action (Clark 1996). Thus, the readers never need to be in doubt whether they are going in the wrong direction or have made any mistakes, but instead are reassured that they are doing okay. This is what we would expect of "a great big good fairy" in our kitchen.

To conclude, the strategies identified may well account for the success of the cookbook and the perception that it is extraordinary. We can conjecture that it would be desirable if the designers of all kinds of instructional texts oriented at similar strategies; yet to what extent such strategies will improve instructional texts in general is eventually an empirical question for future research.

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# Food for thought – or, what’s (in) a recipe?

## A diachronic analysis of cooking instructions

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This paper focuses on the text type of cooking instructions, or *recipes*, from a chiefly diachronic point of view. After giving a brief overview on both the etymological origins and semantic developments of the notion *recipe*, we will compare two recipes with regard to formal and functional similarities and discrepancies: one Middle English recipe (“Beef y-Stywyd”, MS. Harl. 279 f. 6<sup>v</sup>) by an anonymous scribe with its Modern English online counterpart (“beef and ale stew”) by the British chef James ‘Jamie’ Oliver. Opposed to findings by e.g. Görlach (2004), particularly the functional comparison remains mostly obscure, as the medieval recipe escapes functional classification. However, remarkable text type specific parallels can be identified with regard to formal aspects, such as syntactic constructions and lexical codification.

### 1. Introduction

Dishes, their ingredients and their preparation, have always been a savory subject of universal relevance. Fortunately, what may be called ‘food talk’ is not only a common human practice but also a timeless one, preserving all sorts of descriptions, instructions and scribal images of culinary phenomena for linguists to re-boil, i.e. to analyze retrospectively. From the countless numbers of textual patterns that may be identified within the field of cooking, we have chosen the text type *recipe* as the basis for a diachronic investigation that sets out to compare two British English texts whose origins are no less than five centuries apart: one recipe from the first half of the 15th century to be found in the Harleian manuscript MS. 279 versus a contemporary online text authored by Jamie Oliver.

For the sake of comparability, we opted for two recipes that resemble each other as much as possible in terms of subject (i.e. the dish) and length. Both recipes deal with the preparation of stewed beef, which, in itself, reflects two

aspects we would like to pick out right at the outset. First of all, *beef* is not a vernacularly Germanic lexeme but a borrowing from OF *boef* (< classL *bos*, *bov*-). This observation already raises the question in what way the recipe – then and now – is characterized or even enhanced by the choice of a particular lexicosemantic code, and, for that matter, a particular syntax? Secondly, a brief glance at both recipes shows that it is not only the text bodies that need to be taken into account but also their mode of presentation. The appearance of a medieval recipe noted down onto parchment may rightly be called bare compared to the multimodal arrangement of today’s cooking instructions as found on webpages. Accordingly, this contribution offers some answers to the following question: What are the formal and functional differences and parallels between the two recipes, which feature the same content, yet could not be more diverse from a chronological point of view?

In order to shed light on this research question as well as on related issues, the remainder of the paper combines theoretical reasoning with practical analyses. After some introductory remarks sketching the underlying terminology used in this paper, the medieval and the modern computer-mediated recipe will be juxtaposed on a formal and functional level.

## 2. One dish – two recipes

### 2.1 The history of the notion *recipe*

In a first step towards answering our research question, we need to sketch the semantics of the notion *recipe* from a diachronic point of view before exploring its conceptual delimitation as an individual text type (see 3.2). As to its etymology, the English terms *recipe* and *receipt* are not only partially synonymous when used in the context of cooking instructions, but ultimately also go back to one common Latin source term, i.e. to classL *recipere* v. ‘take, receive’. The recordings published by the OED (online version June 2011) reveal that by the end of the 14th century (c1390), *receipt* had found its way into the English lexical inventory via AN *recepte* <classL *recepta* (< ppp. of *recipere* ‘receive, obtain, to be given’, used both as adj. or noun, which is the case here), referring, however, to the reception of money in particular. Subsequently, the frame of reference seems to have been extended to ‘the act of receiving something or someone’, at the same time pertaining to medical directions for composing drugs (a1398) (*ibid.*). The first recorded evidence of *receipt* as actually referring to what we would understand as a cooking recipe dates back to 1595: “A notable receite to make Ipocras” (*Widowes Treasure* B iv b, URL 1).

The ModE noun *recipe*, which currently seems to be the more common term with regard to cooking instructions, is, however, a much younger incorporation into the lexical inventory of the English language. While its first documented occurrence was in 1533, the reference to cooking had only developed by the first half of the 17th century. Besides *recipe*, the *OED Historical Thesaurus* (Kay 2009) also mentions two other terms referring to cooking recipes in that particular timeframe: *formula* (1706) and †*nostrum* (1742). In the course of the EmodE vocabulary soaking up lexical items from Greek and Latin, *recipe* seems to have been directly adopted (and phonologically adapted) from the Latin imperative of the verb *recipere*. As such, it addresses a second person singular in the sense of ‘take!’, which is of course an almost ritualized formula preceding lists of ingredients, be it in a strictly medical context initially (cf. OED online version June 2011) or beyond that later on.

The compound noun *recipe book*, referring to a printed compendium of cooking instructions, is a term occurring hardly earlier than 1803. This holds true despite the fact that it retrospectively gives a label to a concept which had doubtlessly already been established by the end of the 13th century. This can for example be seen from MSS. Add 32085 and Royal 12.C.xii (British Library), which both contain Anglo-Norman compilations of recipes (Heiatt & Jones 1986). Before the thirteenth century, however, little is known about British cooking instructions in general and in particular about their social distribution, let alone about the intentions of their compilers or the actual functions a recipe was supposed to fulfill. In order to disentangle various aspects of the recipe, we will also look into the matter of text types in the course of this paper. Drawing on Görlach (2004), it is yet to be seen whether the two specimens under investigation meet typical criteria of the text type *recipe*.

After this introductory look at the notion’s history, we can now proceed to the description of the two recipes.

## 2.2 “Beef y-Stywyd” as in MS. Harl. 279, f. 6<sup>v</sup>

The medieval specimen of a cooking instruction for stewed beef dates between 1430 and 1440 (Austin 1888 [foreword]: vii), i.e. to the late Middle English period. We obtain this prose text recorded in MS. Harl. 279 on folio 6<sup>v</sup>, as part of all in all 153 recipes compiled under the heading “Kalendare de Potages dyuers” (‘various stews’, fols. 6<sup>r</sup> to 26<sup>r</sup>). This section is followed by two shorter ones, viz. “Kalendare de Leche Metys” (‘[jellylike] sliced dishes’, fols. 27<sup>v</sup> to 36<sup>r</sup>),<sup>1</sup> which

1. Although Austin edited this title as “Leche Metys” on p. 3, he printed “LECHE VYAUNDEZ” in the actual edition of the text on pp. 34ff. The makeshift translation of the

contains 64 recipes, and “Dyuerse Bake Metis” (‘various pastries’, fols. 37<sup>v</sup> to 43<sup>v</sup>) with just 41 cooking instructions.<sup>2</sup> The manuscript additionally contains bills of several courtly banquets (fols. 45<sup>r</sup> to 48<sup>v</sup>), none of which, however, incorporate the rather down-to-earth dish “Beef y-Stywyd” in the menu (Austin 1888: 57–64). As the actual manuscript is not easily accessible to the general public, the only way to approach the text was as part of a compilation, *viz.* in the first of the *Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books*, edited by Thomas Austin and printed for *The Early English Text Society* (1888:6) under the title just mentioned. As a consequence, we cannot make a point about the medial make-up of the original recipe, a fact which also constrains us somewhat in the attempt to sound out the functions of the original recipe (see 3.2).

While the Middle English recipe-text displayed in the following is entirely based on Austin’s edition, the subsequent translation is our own rendition of it and both syntactically and semantically as close to the original as possible:

.vj. **Beef y-Stywyd.**—Take fayre beef of þe rybbys of þe fore quarterys, an smyte in fayre pecys, an wasche þe beef in-to a fayre potte; þan take þe water þat þe beef was soþin yn, an strayne it þorw a straynowr, an sethe þe same water and beef in a potte, an let hem boyle to-gederys; þan take canel, clowes, maces, graynys of parise, quibibes, and oynons y-mynced, perceli, an sawge, an caste þer-to, an let hem boyle to-gederys; an þan take a lof of brede, an stepe it with brothe an venegre, an þan draw it þorw a straynoure, and let it be stulle; an whan it is nere y-now, caste þe lycour þer-to, but nowt to moche, an þan let boyle onys, an cast safroun þer-to a quantyte;<sup>3</sup> þan take salt an venegre, and cast þer-to, an loke þat it be poynant y-now, & serue forth.

[Recipe for] *Stewed beef.* – Take a nice fore-quarter rib piece of beef and cut [it] up into nice chunks.<sup>4</sup> Rinse the beef in a nice pot and then strain it through a sieve. Pour the same water the beef was washed in into a pot and let the beef boil in it. Then take cinnamon, cloves, mace, grains of paradise, cubebs, and minced onions, parsley, and sage, add [these] thereto and let them boil together. And then take a loaf of bread and steep it with broth and vinegar, and then draw it through a strainer, and leave it. And when it [the beef] is nearly done, add the liquid thereto, but not too

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ME phrase may seem odd, but follows the *Middle English Dictionary*, rendering *leche viaunde* (which corresponds to the frenchicized *vyaund-ez* above) as “any of a number of jellylike dishes prepared from various ingredients and usually cut into strips or slices” (URL 2).

2. As is quite usual for ME spelling, *y* and *i* are considered interchangeable variables.
3. For this common adverbial, the *Middle English Dictionary* suggests the translations ‘in an unspecified amount; somewhat, considerably’ (URL 3).
4. As to ‘a nice ... piece of beef’, compare NHG *ein schönes Stück (Rind-)Fleisch*, which – quite similar to its English counterpart *nice* – also conveys various ideas such as ‘big’, ‘fresh’, ‘tender’ etc. (but cf. 3.1).

*much [of it], and let it boil up once, and add some saffron to it. Then take salt and vinegar and add [it] thereto and see to it that it tastes spicy enough and serve [it] immediately.*

To place the Middle English recipe from MS. Harl. 279, f. 6<sup>v</sup> within its broader inter-textual context, a few more words about the history of English recipes and cooking instructions in general are in order before we head on to the analysis proper. According to Hödl (1999: 52), who gives a concise overview of the inventory and origins of the historic European cookery books we currently obtain, more than 50 manuscripts have come down to us that contain English recipes. Apart from the 19th century recipe book our text is taken from, she particularly refers to the significant 14th century work *Forme of Curye* (‘Manner(s) of cooking’), a compendium of over 200 recipes, many of which were included in later recipe compilations. However, no recipe of stewed beef could be found in it, which may seem surprising in light of its simplicity and commonness from today’s point of view.

### 2.3 “Beef and ale stew” as presented by Jamie Oliver

More than 500 years later, amateur chefs can resort to a very similar recipe, “beef and ale stew”, however this time presented by James “Jamie” Oliver on his webpage (<http://www.jamieoliver.com/>). Born and raised in the UK, this renowned chef and owner of several restaurants targets at raising awareness about healthy (yet simple) food worldwide. He does so by means of starring on his own cooking shows on British as well as American television, touring continents with cookery shows and authoring bestselling cookbooks. He is also the driving force behind various campaigns to improve the cooking skills of non-professionals interested in food, be it in private households or in public institutions such as schools in particular (URL 4).

Although the recipe under investigation is also accessible in print, *viz.* in Oliver’s book *Jamie’s Ministry of Food. Anyone Can Learn to Cook in 24 Hours* (2008), this paper focuses on its online version. On his webpage, users are offered a wide range of recipes, which are grouped into various sections such as “fish”, “vegetable”, “pasta” and others. When clicking on the section “beef”, one of the many suggestions on how to prepare food in general and beef in particular is “beef and ale stew”. The presentation of the recipe displays a tripartite structure, featuring a photograph of the dish with basic information such as the servings and, most importantly, two columns of text stating the “method” on the left hand side and listing the “ingredients” on the right hand side.

The “method” column is again subdivided into an italicized upper part (containing own experiences with the recipe) and a rectified lower part representing the actual cooking instruction. The second object of this study reads as follows (see Figure 2).

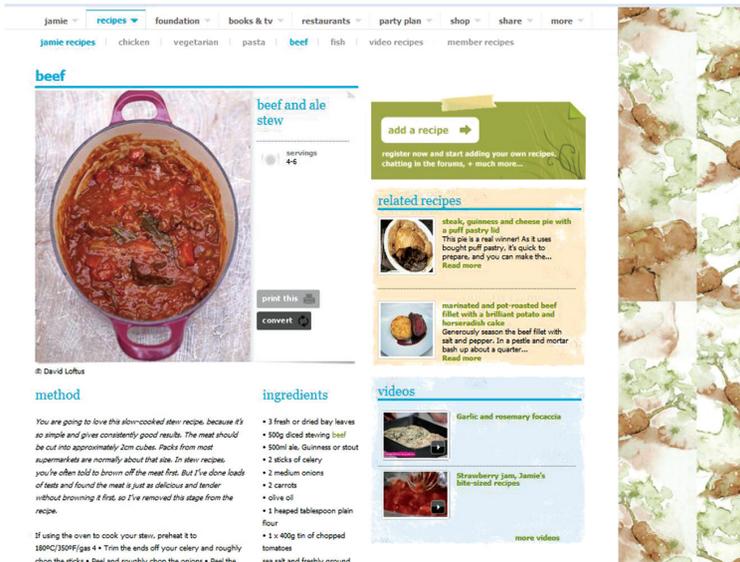


Figure 1. Screenshot of Oliver’s online recipe for “beef and ale stew” as part of the arrangement on the webpage (URL 5)

## method

*You are going to love this slow-cooked stew recipe, because it’s so simple and gives consistently good results. The meat should be cut into approximately 2cm cubes. Packs from most supermarkets are normally about that size. In stew recipes, you’re often told to brown off the meat first. But I’ve done loads of tests and found the meat is just as delicious and tender without browning it first, so I’ve removed this stage from the recipe.*

If using the oven to cook your stew, preheat it to 180°C/350°F/gas 4 • Trim the ends off your celery and roughly chop the sticks • Peel and roughly chop the onions • Peel the carrots, slice lengthways and roughly chop • Put a casserole pan on a medium heat • Put all the vegetables and the bay leaves into the pan with 2 lugs of olive oil and fry for 10 minutes • Add your meat and flour • Pour in the booze and tinned tomatoes • Give it a good stir, then season with a teaspoon of sea salt (less if using table salt) and a few grinds of pepper • Bring to the boil, put the lid on and either simmer slowly on your hob or cook in an oven for 3 hours • Remove the lid for the final half hour of simmering or cooking • When done, your meat should be tender and delicious • Remember to remove the bay leaves before serving, and taste it to see if it needs a bit more salt and pepper • You can eat your stew as it is, or you can add some lovely dumplings to it.

## ingredients

- 3 fresh or dried bay leaves
- 500g diced stewing beef
- 500ml ale, Guinness or stout
- 2 sticks of celery
- 2 medium onions
- 2 carrots
- olive oil
- 1 heaped tablespoon plain flour
- 1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Figure 2. Screenshot of the central section of Oliver’s online recipe for “beef and ale stew” (URL 5)

Oliver’s webpage bears witness to his obsession with food, providing fans and like-minded people with all kinds of cooking related information. For that reason, actual written recipes are just one of the webpage’s many components. Next to biographic information about the host, there are also sections dedicated to his foundations, books, TV shows, restaurants and discussion platforms. In fact, each and every recipe, including the one to be analyzed, is equipped with a discussion template, thus providing users with the opportunity to comment on the recipe and to share their experiences with the preparation and/or taste of the dish. In a way mirroring Oliver’s philosophy that cooking is in fact much more than just preparing food, (the purpose of) the multimodal make-up of this webpage will be taken up again in later chapters.

### 3. Form and function: Two perspectives on one recipe

#### 3.1 A formal comparison

Although both recipes outline the same dish, same content does not mean same make-up. Not only that from a medial point of view both texts are passed down differently,<sup>5</sup> their differing states of originality also cause considerable problems, especially when it comes to “Beef y-Stywyd”. Without access to the manuscript (MS Harley 279), a facsimile or pictures of the manuscript text, we lack reliable information about the composition of the original recipe. Working with an edited version of the original certainly limits the comparative potential when contrasted with Oliver’s recipe. As a result, this kind of text lends itself to a predominantly language related analysis which focuses on aspects of structure, lexicon and grammar.

The first structuring feature meeting the eye in both recipes is the heading. Even on expensive parchment, little but necessary room was given to indicate briefly what dish was the outcome of the following recipe. When comparing the title “Beef y-Stywyd” to other such recipe headings, the phrasal structure is mostly identical. We have noun phrases consisting of one simple or, in rarer cases, of complex heads (e.g. “Vele, Kede, or Henne in bokenade”, Austin 1888: 13, no. xxxvj.) plus at least one modification, *viz.* an adjective (in our case a past participle). Having said that “Beef y-Stywyd” is a rather down-to-earth dish, in this case we also find this congruously affirmed by the simple phrasal structure of it.

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5. As a matter of fact, our Middle-English recipe can also be found in various online versions for common use, e.g. on [www.godecookery.com](http://www.godecookery.com).

As for Oliver's recipe, the photograph of the dish comes with a rather simple heading, indicating the name of the dish, "beef and ale stew". Neglecting capitalization, which is not uncommon for computer-mediated contents, the main components of the dish are listed in the form of a noun phrase conjoint which serves as a premodification to the head *stew*. Above that, Oliver's recipe is further structured by the two headings "method" and "ingredients", again summarizing the content of the subsequent text in the most straightforward way.

When looking at Oliver's list of ingredients, the (more or less) experienced amateur chef finds what they expect to be there: numerals for exact measurement and modifying adjectives explaining texture or form of the ingredients. As common as we might expect such information to be today, there is no such list of ingredients to be found with our Middle-English recipe.<sup>6</sup> This first fundamental, even unexpected difference between these two texts might, at least from today's perspective, be explained by a slightly differing medieval understanding of cooking. When looking at medieval recipes, cooking back then rather seems to have been a question of trial and error. The cook needed to handle the ingredients with care, always on guard not to overdo things. Another explanation could be seen in the fact that most people in former times learned how to cook (the basics at least) from their childhood on, because the preparation of food was an urgent means to survive, and therefore might have had a more fundamental understanding of the course of events and necessities of cooking.

If we move on to the column on the left, the first paragraph provides the reader with some inside knowledge about Oliver's experiences with the recipe and his personal modifications thereof, phrased in a simple, straightforward syntax, which consists mostly of SVO-constructions, occasionally accompanied by an adverbial. For regular cookery books, i.e. those that have not been authored by a prominent figure, such an introductory part is rather uncommon. This *personalized preface* to Oliver's recipe could be interpreted as a remnant of one of his TV shows, where the viewer is presented with a lot of insights into his personal backdrop and opinions. The same conclusion can be drawn by looking at personal pronouns such as "you", when addressing his fellow cooks, and "I", when referring to himself.

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6. On <http://www.medievalcookery.com/recipes/beefystewed.html>, we find one example of the attempt of rendering our medieval recipe imitable in terms of exact measurements and quantities of ingredients.

Having used notions such as *personal* and *personalized*, we should address the vital aspect of authorship first, before returning to our formal analysis. Although we considered the first part of Oliver’s online recipe to be a personalized preface, we must bear in mind that it is certainly not Jamie Oliver himself who typewrote this recipe, let alone embedded it into ‘his’ website. We could even go as far as doubting the authenticity of said ‘personalized’ preface. For that reason, we can only guess as to what extent recipes presented on this website (and in his cookbooks, for that matter) are really a product of Oliver’s own creativity or experience. To detail the various roles involved in the process of producing language, part of Goffman’s (1981: 145–146) model concerning the production format can be applied:

1. animator: the sounding box
2. author: the agent who scripts lines
3. principal: the party whose position is expressed

Although Oliver can be seen as the *principal* of the online recipe, i.e. the one who instigates the original idea and triggers the process of text production, it is doubtful whether he is also the *author* and, even more unlikely, the *animator* of the recipe, i.e. the one who delivers the contribution to the (intended) recipients. Considering the mere size of the “brand” Jamie Oliver and its related lines of business worldwide, it is quite safe to assume that there are certainly people who act as authors for “Oliver’s” recipes, with Jamie Oliver as a person simply giving his name and smile. Last but not least, the role of the animator is also taken out of Oliver’s hands and transferred to his webpage, which spreads the word all day long and independent of Oliver’s presence.

As a matter of fact, division of labor is a common practice in mass media and productive steps and roles are realized by different people at different times. This holds true for highly interactive forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC), of course, but also for printed encyclopedias, travel guides or, indeed, cook books. They allow for a moderate degree of interactivity in that they display a considerable wealth of inserts and self-contained texts, references and cross-references, images, drawings, graphics and other iconic snippets, which anticipate key features of CMC such as multi- or nonlinearity, multimodality and fragmentarization. As just pointed out, the monolithic character of a cook book’s participant concept is blurred on the producing side, where we encounter textual and iconic fragments of information that are frequently authored, arranged, designed and co-authored, co-arranged, co-designed by an indistinct number of human agents rather than by one identifiable individual author. The reason that the degree of interactivity in the CMC format, which we investigate for Oliver’s recipe, is much higher has, of course, to do with the receiving side. The users’

range of options is much wider and actions, accordingly, unpredictable in as far as they are free to choose among a multitude of meaningful reading-paths, not only by glancing at various textual and iconic fragments on screen but mainly by activating hyperlinks (cf. below).

In the Middle English recipe, on the other hand, the medieval creator and/or the 'scribe' takes a backseat and remains anonymous, as many medieval manuscripts and texts do. By introducing these two notions *creator* and *scribe(s)*, we have already implied the split roles in the process of any medieval text being recorded in written form. More often than not do we obtain medieval texts preserved as copies (no autographs or manuscripts authorized by a text's creator, so to say), which were produced by at least one scribe, generally not even a contemporary of what Goffman would call the *author* of a text. This notion, however, must not be confused with the everyday term *author*, which generally refers to the producer of a text who is responsible for its form and contents, rightfully claiming them as his own intellectual property. With reference to any kind of medieval text creator, the latter understanding of the term *author* would thus be highly anachronistic, which is why we will use the term *author* only according to Goffman's definition in the following analysis. For one thing, the passing on of knowledge extant both in oral and written form used to be in much greater demand during the Middle Ages than did the creation and publication of *new* ideas for food. For that reason, we must presume that every medieval text passed on till today is a mere reflection of a pre-existent idea. One could imagine a medieval text as a necklace made of pearls lined up on a string. The pearls represent parts of texts (oral or written), some of them are old and therefore already existing in a person's cultural memory, some of them are new and are an invention for the creation of a new work. Not only that creators of texts line up chosen items on the string, but also the order in which they do so, makes them create independent texts, from which educated readers are able to deduct inter-textual information. Thus follows the second deduction, namely the fact that the author of a text would not have considered him- or herself more important than the contents compiled or copied, which is why we hardly ever find text editors having left any fingerprint but their handwriting. Anonymity in combination with the lack of graspable facts about the author is more than usual for medieval texts. Consequently, Goffman's model of production roles is hardly applicable, as it is impossible to identify any of these for our Middle English text.

Coming back to our formal analysis, Oliver's recipe stands out for the bullet points, which separate distinct steps in the process of preparing the dish. There is actually no punctuation, except for a few commas between them. Cooking instructions are phrased in the imperative – something that has not changed since the Middle Ages. As a matter of fact, 21 of the 28 verb forms in our medieval recipe are phrased as imperatives. Additionally, we encounter verb phrases

featuring modal auxiliaries + infinitive constructions (“the meat should be cut”, see Figure 2), at times adorned with a personal pronoun “you” and its possessive form “your” (“you can eat your stew”, see Figure 2), in sentences reflecting the work progress or chiefly presenting additional assistance.

Before we turn to some aspects concerning the lexical choices in both the ME and the ModE texts, a curious syntactic finding pointed out by Culy (1996) before shall briefly be included here. In comparing ME recipes from the 14th and 15th centuries with modern ones, Culy observed a remarkable rise in frequency of elliptical direct objects in recipes, or, according to his terminology, *zero anaphors*. Transferring this observation to the two recipe texts in our investigation, we discern a somewhat different picture. While Oliver’s text does, indeed, contain a fair number of zero-anaphors typical for modern recipes, eight, to be precise (following ‘slice’, ‘chop’, ‘fry’, ‘season’, ‘bring’, ‘simmer’, ‘cook’, ‘serving’), we unexpectedly also find five instances in the ME text. This is a boiled-down display of the five relevant passages, which come indicated in bold script:

[...] Take fayre beef of þe rybbys of þe fore quarterys, an smyte [**the beef**] in fayre pecys, [...] þan take canel, clowes, [...] an caste [**these ingredients**] þer-to, [...] an þan let [**it all**] boyle onys, [...] þan take salt an venegre, and cast [**these**] þer-to, an loke þat it be poynaunt y-now, & serue [**it**] forth.

Given the fact that Oliver’s text is considerably longer than the ME text (188 vs 146 words), we can rightly aver that they more or less display the same ratio of zero anaphors. Thus, at least with respect to our ME recipe, Culy’s assumption cannot be confirmed.

Turning to the lexical make-up of our “Beef y-Stywyd” recipe, we find that the first two lines exhibit a word that is repeatedly used in this text: “fayre” (“fayre beef”, “fayre pecys”, “fayre potte”), the Modern English equivalent of which appears to be, at least in this particular context, *fair* in the sense of *nice* (see translation of the ME text above and FN 4). Nowadays, this is an unusual lexical choice in cookery books. As “fayre” is used in phrases of differing heads, it is questionable what the reader is supposed to understand by it. Fortunately, we can draw on some readings listed in the *Middle English Dictionary* for clarification (URL 6):

1. Pleasing to the sight (...) (c) of animals and their parts.
3. (...) odour: agreeable to the senses; pleasing (...).
9. (...) suitable, appropriate, (...) desirable.
12. (a) Highly to be approved of; splendid, excellent; fine, good[.]
14. (a) Physically clean (...)[.]
15. Above average; considerable, sizable (...)[.]

Although the dictionary suggests even more meanings, this selection only mirrors the most likely candidates for the various possible interpretations of the lexeme

*fayre*, with the third meaning most likely leading the way. Still, the appropriate interpretation is left, as ever so often, to the reader.

Another recurring lexeme, “(and) then”, serves as a connector within the recipe’s syntactic structure and is used for asyndetic listings of distinct steps in the working progress. Then again the coordinating conjunction “and” ties together main clauses inside those steps, thereby compensating for the lack of punctuation, which is typical for medieval manuscripts. Note that Austin’s edition of our recipe is an adaptation to modern reading conventionalities. The simplicity and straightforwardness displayed in both the ME and the ModE recipe is certainly common, even desirable in this sort of instruction. A different picture presents itself when it comes to the accuracy of this text. Beside the fact that there is no list of ingredients, our Middle English recipe tells us about the How, but nothing about the How Much and How Long. With the exception of “fore-quarter rib piece of beef” at the beginning, quantities do not seem to matter at all to the Middle English text. As already mentioned before, it appears to be all about a rule of thumb estimate then. In addition it is rather curious to write down the recipe in the first place, when a considerable amount of previous knowledge is expected from the reader anyway. It is thoughts like these that beg the question about the function of this recipe, which will be dealt with in some detail in Section 3.2.

With a view to the frequency of the parts-of-speech used in the two recipes, it is also worth mentioning that recipes, both then and now, make salient use of verbs and nouns. When looking at Oliver’s recipe, these two word classes constitute 38.5% of all words used in the entire text, thus indicating their lexical primacy in this particular recipe. In comparing these findings to the text-internal distribution of diverse word classes of the ME text, it is interesting to see that the percentage covered by verbs and nouns in the second text remarkably equals the one just gathered from Oliver’s recipe, 38.7% to be exact.

Let us focus on the two most prominent verbs in the texts respectively, i.e. on the recipes’ usages of *add* (2x Oliver, 0x ME) and *take* (0x Oliver, 5x ME). The origin and first documented occurrence of the verbs may serve as a useful hint. While *take* is of North Germanic origin (> late OE *tacan*), *add* stems from L *addere* and is first mentioned in the English language at the end of the 14th century. Assuming that recipes shoulder an oral tradition of considerable duration, it is not surprising that the comparatively modern word *add* did not have the chance to find its way into our Middle English recipe. After all, ME *adden* was only introduced towards the end of the 14th century. Instead, ME *casten* (< ModE *to cast*) is used 4 times in this sense. Given that *take* equals the German “nehmen” (as in the formula *man nehme*, which is a typical feature in the recipe-code), its usage sounds fairly familiar to us, despite the fact that it is semantically imprecise. *Add* is the more

accurate expression: *take* does not generally mean “put in(to)” whereas *add* is “join sth. to sth.” (URL 7).

With respect to formulaic expressions in the text type *recipe*, which have so far only been dealt with marginally, we find one particular recurring pattern of text in the ME text, which deserves to be mentioned here. We may just call it the ‘take and \*-formula’, whereby the asterisk \* represents another verb inserted. This formulaic sequence occurs 5 times in total, basically following each of the 5 occurrences of the verb *take* in the text, and seems to internally structure the text by sectioning the sequential steps of description. Considering that the manuscript version does not contain any punctuation, the strategic positioning of *take* before the actual verb of action may have served as a structuring device.

Casting a closer look at the ingredients of “Beef y-Stywyd”, we find that all of them are, etymologically speaking, of French origin and must have been rather exclusive in Middle English times: among them “canel” (‘white cinnamon’) and “graynys of parise” (‘grains of paradise’, i.e. peppery seeds) and “quibibes” (‘cubeb’). If indigenous Middle English expressions for these rather exotic spices had existed, it is astonishing that they were not used in the Middle English recipe. Coming across French names for certain spices is not very surprising as the French, being part of the ruling class over England for centuries, certainly had access to the most exquisite spices all over England. Today, these ingredients certainly belong to a well-equipped kitchen. Looking back to the Middle Ages, one can only wonder who would have been able to afford such exquisite culinary pleasures in the first place.

### 3.2 A functional comparison

In his essay *Text-types and language history: the cookery recipe*, Görlach presents a quite clear-cut outline of a recipe’s features, when he describes it as

a category [...] that is well-defined as far as function is concerned – the instruction on however to prepare a meal; [...] whose basic function has not changed over the centuries – how much ingredients, utensils and the people involved in the process may have changed. (Görlach 1992: 745)

When comparing the textual forms of the two recipes represented here, we need to bear in mind, that there are at least 600 years separating them; and as time did not pass the recipes’ formal aspects without leaving its marks, it also left its imprints on the functional ones, as will be pointed out in the course of this chapter.

One question needs to be kept in mind whenever a medieval text is approached: When and why did who write the text (i.e. the recipe) and for whom? And it will serve us as a guide through our functional analysis of the medieval recipe.

When? MS Harley 279 is dated around the years 1430 and 1440 (Austin 1888: foreword). The Middle English recipe discussed in this essay might, however, certainly be older. Before the creation of manuscripts, collectors had to gather bits and pieces (recipes in the case of MS Harley 279), which were only later on compiled and formed into a manuscript. Sometimes rather loose bundles (i.e. quires) of leaves that had already been written on were packed and bound together. In other cases the collected materials needed to be ordered and then copied into an empty manuscript.

Why? “Recipes tend to be collected in books devoted to the purpose of cooking, or household management” (Görlach 1992:750). This statement perfectly applies to MS Harley 279. Yet, if we assume that most recipes (as other texts as well) were transported orally in former times, the reason for their record needs to be inquired, especially with respect to the still relatively high costs of a medieval parchment manuscript, even if it was intended for daily usage (*Gebrauchshandschrift*). It could be argued that recipes were regarded as transporting cultural identity and were consequently written down to fix it for coming generations. Another possibility might be that the recipe somehow served as a cooking aid, when there was no experienced cook at hand. Of course, the lack of quantifications of ingredients seems to be problematic at first, but we can assume that basic knowledge about the preparation of food can be taken for granted in medieval times, because it was existentially needed to survive. The aforementioned idea of a cooking aid leads us to another reason for manuscripts containing recipes. With a rising number of manuscripts, which circulated in society, more and more people found out about their benefits, such as serving as a reminder and collector of memories or new (exotic) recipes.

Who? This is presumably the trickiest part when it comes to medieval texts, because *who* could stand for different referents: the author and the scribe (cf. 3.1 above). It proves to be almost impossible to trace the primal author of a recipe and find out how (medially) he or she passed it on. All we know is that the recipe has found its way into MS Harley 279 and this alone was the work of the scribe. We cannot say if his master copy was written on scrap paper, on a fly leaf belonging to a greater but loose collection, in another manuscript (containing recipes), or if it was passed on to him orally.

For whom? The addressee of a recipe then was, and still is today, the cook. As already mentioned, most of the recipes were formerly transported orally, not only because manuscripts were costly, but also because many people were illiterate in the Middle Ages. Consequently, it has to be asked who, after all, was able to read those recipe manuscripts; and who, with regard to the exquisiteness of some of the ingredients, was able to afford such dishes. Here it needs to be considered that the

people cooking and the beneficiaries cannot generally be expected to be identical. First of all, we have to narrow down the possible field of recipients to households which could indulge themselves to such culinary pleasures, *viz.* clerical or courtly households. Most of the nuns and monks in the Middle Ages were trained to read and/or write and therefore should have been able to follow those cooking instructions. Still, the rather exclusive choice of food seems a bit unbecoming. This brings us to the courtly households, i.e. homes of the socially higher-ranked. Some of them might have been off well enough to appoint specially trained kitchen staff. Their reading (and writing) skills, however, remain obscure. However, it could be possible that some of them had acquired at least some basic education at school or somewhere else. Another option for illiterate kitchen staff might have been a person reading the course of events described in the recipe out loud to them. In other households of higher social status, maybe the housewife herself took care of the kitchen and the preparation of the food. She more likely might have enjoyed some kind of education and hence could have been a potential addressee for a manuscript containing recipes.

Documentation and organization of facts as well as instructing interested amateur cooks are certainly regarded as the most central functions of recipes nowadays. Moreover, today's addressees are male and female cooks, young and old, from various parts of the world. This is especially obvious on Oliver's webpage, which 'translates' its content into British, American and Australian English as well as Dutch. But there is more to Oliver's website than just cooking instructions.

Oliver's site promotes the idea of cooking as joint venture, because everybody is invited to add their own ideas via blogs or live chat, to participate in polls or to make use of various services (e.g. dating). An interactive community is busy exchanging recipes, ideas for improvements or simple chitchat. The idea is equally simple: cooking brings people together, not only around the table (as also a few hundred years back) but also around the hearth. Cooking constitutes a community, which transports a certain feeling of coziness and ease. This is what many people are looking for today. It is no more about prevention of starvation. It is basically all about well-being, food-awareness, and having a good time.

All of this is communicated on Oliver's website, which makes users feel at home instantly. The website neatly combines textual and visual elements such as photos of dishes and cook books, embedded videos as well as links to social network sites, newsfeeds and related businesses (e.g. to Oliver's catering party service "Jamie at home" and his restaurants), to name but a few. It is thus a platform not only for information but also entertainment: *info-tainment*, so to say. *Info* in this context not only comprises food, cooking and recipes themselves, but also, and potentially a lot more, facts about this website's omnipresent host

Jamie Oliver, who is perceivable in each and every detail of this page, not only in the autobiographic section. The recipes are thus reduced to a mere means to an end, which is presenting the host in a proper light. He, certainly supported and guided by his public relations specialists, uses this site for self-promotion and merchandising purposes in a very obvious way, aspects of cooking supposedly nobody would have thought of in medieval times.

To conclude this paragraph, a word about *remediation* (Bolter & Grusin 2001) is in order. This term labels a process of refashioning that can be witnessed all over the WWW. To be more precise, it means that web designers draw on and thus emulate traditional medial formats of representation to the effect that online replica of postcards, leaflets and clipboards, even entire bulletin boards to name but a few, are reused as parts of electronic contexts. Although clearly a brainchild of the 21st century, Oliver's recipe section (see Figure 1) is placed on what resembles a kitchen tablecloth or wallpaper. Above that, certain components of his page appear as notepads glued to the wall with adhesive tape or dog-eared pieces of paper on a table. Part of conveying that cozy feeling to users thus also seems to include presenting them with a familiar, home-like setting.

#### 4. Results and conclusion: Same old, same old?

In this comparative investigation of two rather diverse presentations of one and the same recipe, both texts and their surroundings have been put to the test with regard to their formal as well as functional parallels and discrepancies. The findings shall now be briefly summarized, beginning with the formal parallels and differences as displayed in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1.** Parallels and discrepancies of general formal criteria

General formal criteria	ME text	ModE text
simple syntax: (A)SVO(A)	☑	☑
(asyndetic) connector <i>and then</i> (ME: <i>an þan</i> )	☑	☑
occurrences of zero-anaphors (elliptical objects)	☑	☑
sketchy punctuation	☑	☑
favoured modifiers: adjective (ME: <i>faire</i> ) vs. adverb (ModE: <i>roughly</i> )	☑	☑
distribution of verbs + nouns within text (approx. 40%)	☑	☑
2nd person addressee (ME: implicit vs. ModE: explicit)	☑	☑
personalized preface (I > you)	☐	☑

Table 2. Parallels and discrepancies of structuring devices

Structuring devices	ME text	ModE text
heading	☑	☑
introductory part	☐	☑
list of ingredients	☐	☑
measurements ( <i>viz.</i> numerals) for the exact preparation of the dish	☐	☑
formulaic cooking expressions	☑	☐
further sectioning devices for better overview (i.e. bullet points)	☐	☑

The findings revealed by Tables 1 and 2 show that particularly on a formal level, there are striking parallels, which seem to have outlasted more than half a millennium, thus gaining genre-spanning acceptance. On a syntactic level, we likewise find remarkable parallels, *viz.* the structure of the tendentially simple sentences, which are neither in the ME text, nor in the ModE one sectioned by conventional punctuation. The same ratio of zero anaphors occurring in both texts is another striking observance. What is more, both texts come with a heading as a structuring device. Although this may not be a text-type-specific feature of the recipe, the imperative addressing of the extra-textual 2nd person certainly is. This is where the parallels end. Only the modern recipe displays an additional number of structural features (cf. Table 2), among them a list of ingredients with concise indications as to quantities and time of cooking, which reflect the aim of this text far better than the ME one does.

In order to pay appropriate reference to the first of the two questions posed at the beginning of this paper, regarding a particular lexico-semantic code in the text type recipe, insights are twofold: On the one hand, we have to assume a certain amount of idiosyncratic flavor for each of the two texts, which is certainly higher in Oliver’s semi-personal framing of the recipe than in the anonymous medieval text. Some formulae, on the other hand, seem to be timeless, such as ME “serue forth” and ModE “serve immediately.” The fact that both recipes contain a variety of lexical items belonging to one particular semantic field may be taken for granted and is also reflected by our two examples, verbs such as ModE *trim*, *peel*, *chop* and ME *smyten*, *myncen* etc. do confirm this. A lexical peculiarity of the Middle English text, which is not paralleled in Oliver’s display of the recipe, is the high number of French borrowings (e.g. “venegre”, “poynant”). This discrepancy is due to Oliver apparently preferring Germanic vocabulary in general, but is particularly owed to the fact that he simply suggests other ingredients than those contained in the medieval recipe, which renders a direct comparison of foreign words somewhat pointless.

While the formal comparison reveals some very fruitful findings, which are also fit for being neatly inserted and displayed in tables, weighing up the functional aspects is all the more difficult. Even if we take for granted the basic but debatable function of a recipe, namely to get readers to imitate the instructions given therein, we still cannot say anything else about intentions and effects of the medieval recipe and thus cannot conclude whether its “basic function has remained stable over the centuries”, as Görlach (2004: 123) believes. Then again, the functions of the ModE text may be assumed as being quite conspicuous, the formal features of the recipe even enhance the functional aims of this text. Through user-friendly structuring, which renders clear and comprehensible the concisely presented contents, and the personal tone of the text, readers find themselves encouraged and in the mood for cooking and may therefore generally assign a positive attitude to it – and associate this with Jamie Oliver.

Even if the date of the creation of these two recipes is centuries apart, the fact that *both* these texts are equally accessible freely and for free on the Internet by now (see URL 8) broadens the pool of readers, thus giving both, and particularly the medieval text and the dish it stands for, a platform to be passed on even further.

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# Recipes and food discourse in English – a historical menu

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The article provides a diachronic overview of the discourse of food on the basis of various examples of recipes and more general food related texts, from Old English to the late 20th century. After comparing lexis, syntax and discourse features, three main diachronic tendencies can be observed: first, the focus on a less and less professional audience, second, the gradual introduction of more precise measurements and more procedural detail, and third, an overall reduction in lexical complexity. In addition, some syntactical features remain universal diachronically while others, like the ellipsis of the definite article, are comparatively recent developments. Increasingly frequent is the use of “supporters” and “controllers,” sentences that directly address the reader and provide advice for problematic steps in the procedure and a means to check if these steps were successfully completed. In the most recent examples, more extraneous information, such as health advice, is added. Thus, food discourse is established as a dynamic genre with distinct linguistic developmental patterns.

## 1. *Hors d'oeuvre*: Old English

Food-related discourse is, of course, as old as humanity, but the oldest written sources in English are from Anglo-Saxon times. Unfortunately, there are, to our knowledge, no surviving Anglo-Saxon recipes. Even establishing “food discourse” as text type with the few surviving manuscripts seems to have been problematic. When Thomas Cockaigne published a rather miscellaneous edition of minor Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, among them some food-related texts, he chose the rather grand title *Leechdoms, wortcunning, and starcraft of early England. Being a collection of documents, for the most part never before printed, illustrating the history of science in this country before the Norman conquest.* (Cockaigne 1864) The inclusion of food amongst “leechdoms” and “wortcunning,” not to mention science, may explain why, for a long time, people believed that Anglo-Saxon cuisine was nothing to write home about. As Cockaigne puts it:

The Saxons [...] have been, and still are, I believe, commonly regarded as mangy dogs, whose success against the Keltic race in this country was owing chiefly to their starved condition and ravening hunger. The children protest that, positively, as they know from their most reliable handbooks, these roving savages stuffed their bellies with acorns [...]. (Cockaigne 1864:vii.)

In his translation of *Bald's Leechbook*, one of the manuscripts in the 1864 edition, Cockaigne disproves this notion. Though real recipes other than for medical purposes are missing, Anglo-Saxon documents show that people write about food, how to prepare it, how it tasted, and, of course, what to eat in case of illness, as in this example:

ðus him mon sceal þur mettas fellan [...] zeseaþe pyfan & half on hatum waetere [...]; ne þiegen hie fen fixas [...] ne hriþeres flaesc ne swines, [...] ne mete ne to spiþe hatne ne eac to cealdne.

Thus shall the sick mens diet be administered [...]; juicy peas, and bread in hot water [...]; let them not partake of fen fishes [...], nor let them take the flesh of bullock, nor of swine, [...] nor food either too extremely hot or too cold.

(Text and translation from the *Lece Bok*, ed. Cockaigne 1864:256f.)

Lexically, these first recipes (if we may properly call them that instead of lifestyle advice, as contemporary journalism would probably put it) are basically just lists of ingredients. There are only rare descriptions of cooking procedures or tools, as in the example *administered [...] in hot water* above. Syntactically, the texts are mostly organized as parallel structures and imperatives – thus we can see that two of the key features of cooking discourse are, in fact, timeless.

## 2. *Le.j. cours: Middle English*

While the topic of food necessarily is universal, the differences between historical and modern recipes are considerable. Middle English recipes, for example, are clearly made for professional cooks, since the modern measurements are almost completely missing. Fortunately, many of the numerous surviving manuscripts have been extensively researched (see, for example, Austin 1888 or Hieatt & Butler 1985), and there are several splendid editions that even allow us to recreate the dishes described in them (for intrepid explorers I would recommend Hieatt et al. 1976). Here is a 15th century example of a recipe from the Harley 279 manuscript with the only slightly misleading title *Garbage*:

Garbage:

Take fayre garbagys of chykonys, as þe hed, þe fete, þe lyverys, and the gysowrys; washe hem clene, an caste hem in a fayre potte, and caste þerto freysshe brothe

of beef or ellys of moton, an let yt boyle; an alye it wyth brede, an ley on pepir an safroun, maces, clowys, an a lytil verjous an salt, an serve forth in the maner as a sewe.

Giblets.

Take lots of chicken parts, such as the head, the feet, the livers, and the gizzards; wash them well, and throw them into a large pot, and add fresh broth of beef or mutton, and let it boil; and add slices of bread, and pepper and saffron, mace, cloves, and a little verjus and salt, and serve as a broth.

(Austin 1888: Harl 279.1.17 [translation SD])

Lexically, the text is quite difficult, since the lemma is high due to the large number of ingredients, many of them in lists. The syntax, on the other hand, is, like in the Old English example, easy and repetitive; imperatives are listed one after the other, with as few conjunctions as possible, all of those *an[d]: take..., washe hem..., an caste hem..., and caste therto..., an let yt boyle..., and alye it..., an ley on, and serve forth*. Clearly this is not an artful text, but a professional instruction that is intended to convey information in a very compact form. It is interesting to see that the “subjectless, verb-initial imperative sentences” that Norrick (1983b: 176) identifies as one of the key syntactical features of recipes are already evident in these examples and remain one of the defining syntax features of this special-purpose language until present-day English.

In terms of instructional content, we see that Norrick’s observation that recipes “presuppose not only the user’s knowledge of technical verbs [...] but also his ability to carry out the operations they describe” (Norrick 1983b: 178) is also true for these Middle English recipes. There is obviously more to “casting” and “boiling” the chicken innards specified above than just performing these two rather vague steps, not to mention identifying and preparing the parts in question. These recipes also “presuppose a complex set of tools and basic ingredients,” (Norrick 1983b: 178) like modern examples, if perhaps on a lower order of complexity. This can be seen as further evidence that the intended reader is an experienced cooking professional.

Numerous Middle English texts also discuss cooking and food preservation techniques, hygiene (most famously seen in Chaucer’s description of the Cook) and advantages or disadvantages of various foodstuffs together with lifestyles that are quite similar to modern books on health. However, in contrast to modern texts, which may integrate advice and preparation, the recipes and other advice are usually separate in Middle English. They appear in separate manuscripts and are addressed to different audiences. While recipe collections cater to professional cooks, texts like the (anonymous) *Secreta Secretorum* from the early 15th century are possibly intended for a less professional, more general public, since they

provide advice on wide range of issues, such as good governance, virtue, medicine and astronomy, but also on food and health, as in this example:

These thingis are they that makith þe body lene. Excesse of mete and drynke, ourr moche travayle, moche stondyng in the sonne, moche goyng, moche slepyng afore mete, moche wrath, moche fere, and bathyng in watris þat be of Sulphure nature. Etyng of salt metes, drynkyng of oold wyn, ourmoche to vse chambir worke.

These things make the body lean: Excess of food and drink, overmuch work, much standing in the sun, much walking, much sleeping before the meals, much wrath, much fear, and bathing in waters of a sulphuric nature. Eating salted meat, drinking old wine, overmuch defecation.

(Steele 1898: Capm. 49m. [translation SD])

Again, this text is, syntactically, very simple. In fact, there is only one predicate in the example above: *are*, all the rest consists of an item list. This may be due to the fact that the *Secreta* is an instructive book that deals with numerous topics in sequence.

There are also texts on more general food-related training. The *Babee's Book* (written ca. 1475 and edited by John Furnivall in 1868) counsels young boys learning to be servants. While the syntax is, again, parallel and mostly imperative, the form itself is that of a poem, probably intended as a mnemonic device for the students. Rather than with cooking, it deals with table manners and behavior, as the following excerpt shows:

Kutte withe your knyf your brede, and breke yt nouhte;  
A clene Trenchour byfore yow eke ye lay,  
And whenne your potage to yow shalle be brouhte,  
Take yow sponys, and soupe by no way,  
And in youre dysshe leve nat your spone, I pray,[...]  
Oute ouere youre dysshe your heede yee nat hynge,  
And withe fulle mouthe drynke in no wyse;  
Youre nose, your teethe, your naylles, from pykyng,  
Kepe At your mete, for so techis the wyse.

[Cut your bread with your knife, and don't break it;  
Put a clean trencher down before you,  
And when your soup is brought to you,  
Do use your spoon, and never sip.  
And in your dish don't leave your spoon, I pray  
Don't let your head hang down over your dish,  
And don't drink with your mouth full, in no way;

When eating, do not pick your nose, your teeth  
 Or nails, for so the Wise instructs.] (Furnivall 1868: 6f. [translation SD])

John Russell's *Boke of Nurture* (ca. 1460, also edited by John Furnivall in 1868) gives advice on the types of food to be served at a franklin's feast. The preparation is not explained in detail, and the text can thus be described as a precursor of modern menus. There is a considerable evaluative component through the use of adjectives like *improberabile*, *concordable*, *agreeable* and *seemly*, which underlines the important social role of providing the proper food. The use of end rhymes (of a sort) may again be a mnemonic device, indicating that the *Book of Nurture* was used for education, probably of stewards (household managers).

A Franklen may make a feste Improberabile,  
 brawne with mustard is concordable, [...]
   
Boyled Chykon or capon agreeable,  
 convenyent for þe seson; [...]
   
Than veel, lambe, kyd, or cony,  
 Chykon or pigeon rosted tenderly [...]
   
þen followyng, frytows & a leche lovely;
   
Suche seruyse in sesoun is fulle semely
   
To serue with bothe chambur & halle.

[A franklin may make a very proper feast,  
 Brawn with mustard is harmonious,  
 Boiled chicken or capon agreeable,  
 convenient for the season;  
 Then veal, lamb, kid or coney,  
 Chicken or pigeon, roasted tenderly  
 Then, after that, fritters and a lovely leche;  
 Such a menu in season is very fitting  
 To serve in both chamber and hall.]

(Furnivall 1868: 170f. [translation SD])

These texts show that both recipes and more general food discourse were already common genres in Middle English. The problem is of course that there is little or no information on the audience. We could argue, though, that the nature of the recipes, some indications from the titles and topics, and the fact that books were restricted to a narrow section of society, all indicate that the audience was, for the most part, professional cooks, or, alternatively, clergy or nobility-in-training, and not necessarily restricted to one gender. The classification as professional texts, instruction or jargon is supported by the wide range of ingredients, some of them quite exotic and expensive in the 15th century (pepper and saffron above, for example), the limited explanation of complex preparation techniques

(like the production of *frytours* or *brothe*) and the focus on representation by the combination of many dishes in sequence.

### 3. *Le.ij. cours*: Early Modern English

The audience of cooking discourse changes with the introduction of the printing press and the advent of mass book publication. In Early Modern English, we find numerous publications that are clearly addressed to a broader audience, such as Gervase Markham's *The English housewife* (1615–31). Editor Michael Best remarks that “Markham intended to reach at one end the gentry, and at the other the more ‘general’ reader, possibly the wife of a wage-earner, more interested in ‘ordinary wholesome boiled meats which are of use in every goodman’s house’ (ii, 40) than in ‘banqueting stuff and conceited dishes’ (ii, 146)” (Markham 1631, ed. Best 1986: xxvii). Indeed the book describes, in considerable detail, a wider range of household-related aspects, theoretically suitable for both sexes. Since Markham also published *The English Husbandman*, in which the eponymous subject spends his days with “riding great horses, [...] hunting, hawking, coursing of greyhounds [...], shooting, bowling, tennis [...].” (Markham 1631, ed. Best 1986: xxvi), the ideal addressee of the *English housewife* obviously is female and (since she would need the advice) does not prepare food in a professional capacity, although with the plethora of activities presented, a full-time occupation seems inevitable. This represents a shift from Middle English texts where both authorship and audience of cooking texts are more or less gender-neutral. Incidentally, this change of generic addressee may reflect a wider societal trend, although this would need further confirmation from other contemporary text types beyond the scope of this article.

In the Early Modern English recipes we see a discourse that is much closer to modern cookbooks. Some vague measurements start to appear, as in this example:

To bake a carp

After you have drawn, washed, and scalded a fair large carp, season it with pepper, salt and nutmeg, and then put it into a coffin with good store of sweet butter, and then cast on raisins of the sun, the juice of lemons, and some slices of orange peels; and then, sprinkling on a little vinegar, close it up and bake it.

(Markham 1631, ed. by Best 1986: 20)

Markham also includes several chapters on necessary preconditions for a successful housewife, comparable to the *Babee's Book*:

It resteth now that I proceed unto cookery itself, which is the dressing and ordering of meat, in good and wholesome manner; to which, when our housewife

shall address herself, she shall well understand, that these qualities must ever accompany it: first, she must be cleanly both in body and garments, she must have a quick eye, a curious nose, a perfect taste and a ready ear [...]. Now for the substance of the art itself [...]

(Markham 1631, ed. by Best 1986:9)

All in all, these Early Modern English examples indicate several major changes in the character of the discourse. In addition to measurements (*a little vinegar, some slices, a fair large carp, good store of sweet butter*), instructions are more elaborate than in Middle English, both syntactically and semantically. The baking process is differentiated and explained step by step: *put into, cast on, sprinkle, close up* and *bake* – in Middle English this all would have been subsumed under *bake*). As far as lexis is concerned, there is a noticeable simplification in the terminology for ingredients (even though the ingredients themselves remain exotic in many recipes, such as the one above). At the same time, the specific vocabulary of cooking requires the continuing use of special terminology (the procedures *draw, scald* and *bake* or the *coffin*). These changes support what Markham indicates in his preface: a change of audience from professional to private, with an accompanying need to remove some of the jargon (or code) of earlier texts, resulting in an overall reduction of lexical complexity. At the same time, the second example shows that the discourse of food is much broader than just the description of cooking methods and includes, for example, discussions on manners, society and health issues.

Syntactically, both Middle English and Early Modern English texts on food and recipes continue to be mostly parallel and imperative. There is little variation in the sentence structure: *After you have drawn..., season it..., and then put it..., and then cast..., and then, sprinkling on..., close it and bake it*. The use of conjunctions, however, is more elaborate than in the Middle English examples, where frequently no conjunctions at all appear. The few examples given here indicate that a future quantitative analysis of sentence length may show an increase in sentence length and, possibly, complexity.

#### 4. *Le.iii. cours: Late Modern English*

The trends towards more precise instructions and a less professional audience continue in Later Modern (i.e. present-day) English. This can be illustrated by two examples from *The Art of Cookery* by Hannah Glasse (first published 1747 in London) and *American Cookery*, the first American cookbook, published in Hartford in 1796 by Amelia Simmons.

Glasse's book is, according to food historian Karen Hess (1996:ix) "far and away the most popular and influential cookbook of the late Colonial period." It is

clearly and explicitly addressed to laypeople, but the author expresses the hope that the book will enable them to work in a professional capacity:

[A]s I have both seen and found, by experience, that the generality of servants are greatly wanting in that point, therefore I have taken upon me to instruct them in the best manner I am capable; and, I dare say, that every servant who can but read will be capable of making a tolerable good cook, and those who have the least notion of Cookery cannot miss of being very good ones. (Glasse 1774: i)

This statement establishes the focus on a less professional audience, necessitating changes in lexis, syntax and pragmatics. Glasse clearly seems to consider the usual writing style of the period (which was highly elaborate) to be unsuitable for this type of special purpose discourse. She apologizes for using non-professional or “lower” terminology with the purpose of making herself understood, thus echoing Martin Luther or, indeed, foreshadowing Jamie Oliver. At the same time, Glasse explicitly recognizes that some of the “odd” ingredients mentioned in older and contemporary professional cookbooks are no longer needed:

If I have not wrote in the high polite style, I hope I shall be forgiven; for my intention is to instruct the lower sort, and therefore must treat them in their own way. For example: when I bid them lard a fowl, if I should bid them lard with large lardoons, they would not know what I meant; but when I say they must lard with little pieces of bacon, they know what I mean. So, in many other things in Cookery, the great cooks have such a high way of expressing themselves, that the poor girls are at lots to know what they mean: and in all Receipt Books yet printed, there are such an odd jumble of things as would quite spoil a good dish; and indeed some things so extravagant, that it would be almost a shame to make use of them [...]. (Glasse 1774: if.)

The quotation above also indicates, like in Markham, that the intended audience is exclusively female, “the poor girls”. Glasse’s recipes nevertheless read distinctly modern in comparison to previous examples:

To make hasty fritters:

TAKE a stew-pan, put in some butter, and let it be hot: in the mean time take half a pint of all-ale not bitter, and stir in some flour by degrees in a little of the ale; put in a few currants, or chopped apples, beat them up quick, and drop a large spoonful at a time all over the pan. Take care they don’t flirt together, turn them with an egg-flice, and when they are of fine brown, lay them in a dish, and throw some sugar over them. Garnish with orange cut into quarters. (Glasse 1774: 156)

Lexically, we already find precise measurements: *half a pint*, *a large spoonful*, together with the usual rather vague terminology of earlier examples: *some butter*, *some flour*, *a few currants*. Glasse, in contrast to Markham, uses qualifying

adjectives: *ale not bitter, fine brown*. We will see that the increasing use of evaluative terms can be considered a key diachronic trend for cooking discourse in general. There is not much jargon, resulting in a low lexical complexity. The syntax continues to be parallel, but there is a bit more variation in the cooking sequence and even a deviation from the linear sequence by the need for parallel actions:

Take a pan – put in butter – let it be hot – (in the meantime take – and stir – put in – beat them) – drop – turn – lay them – throw – garnish.

A new discourse feature is the introduction of what I would propose to call *supporters* and *controllers*, essentially, main or subordinate sentences that directly address the reader but are more than simple instructions. Supporters provide advice for steps in the procedure that may be problematic, such as “Take care they don’t flirt together,” while controllers give the budding cook a means to check when one step is finished and whether it has been successfully completed, as in “when they are of fine brown, lay them in a dish.” These are, of course, key features in modern cookbooks and again cater to a lay audience, since professionals won’t need either.

Glasse’s approach is continued by later publications, like Amelia Simmons’. Her editor Karen Hess (1996) calls Simmons “a good plain cook” and comments on her unsophisticated approach when compared with modern cookbooks. This statement is quite surprising, since many of the recipes are very elaborate. Again, Hess probably refers to the avoidance of jargon that is similar to Glasse. Simmons herself, in a preface to the 1796 edition, describes the intended audience as follows:

[T]he Lady of fashion and fortune will not be displeased, if many hints are suggested for the more general and universal knowledge of those females in the country, who by the lots of their parents, or other unfortunate circumstances, are reduced to the necessity of going into families in the line of domestics [...], and doing those things which are really essential to the perfecting them as good wives, and useful members of society. (Simmons 1796:3)

Simmons’ recipe for a lemon tart is the most detailed example so far:

#### A Lemon Pudding

1. Grate the yellow of the peels of three lemons, then take two whole lemons, roll under your hand on the table till soft, taking care not to burst them, cut and squeeze them into the grated peels.
2. Take ten ounces soft white bread, and put a pint of scalded white wine thereto, let soak and put to No. 1.
3. Beat four whites and eight yolks, and put to above, adding three quarters of a pound of melted butter, (which let be very fresh and good) one pound fine sugar, beat all together till thoroughly mixed.

4. Lay paste No. 7 or 9 on a dish, place on saucers, and fill with above composition.
5. Bake near 1 hour, and when baked stick on pieces of paste, to your fancy, bake lightly on a floured paper; garnished thus, they may be served hot or cold.  
(Simmons 1796: 35f.)

There are several lexical innovations: All measurements are precisely given and quantified (*three lemons, a pound of melted butter, one pound sugar*). This obviously necessitates the qualification of some units as approximate values that cannot be precisely quantified (something the earlier recipes did not need to do), such as baking time (*near 1 hour*). In contrast to modern recipes, though, no instructions on baking temperature or level is given (it would, of course, be both impractical due to the nature of ovens around 1800 and unnecessary due to the implied universal familiarity with the device in question). Adjectives feature prominently and describe mostly ingredients: *soft white bread, floured paper, scalded white wine, fresh and good butter, fine sugar*. It is possible that in addition to providing more information in order to enhance the cooking process, some of these adjectives may already perform an aesthetic function comparable to that in modern advertising language (this has been alluded to, but not explicitly quantified in Goddard 1992) and, of course, in modern food discourse: *melted butter, which let be very fresh and good* is not strictly necessary like the essential information in *white wine* or *fine sugar*.

Pragmatically, the cooking sequence is extremely detailed and subdivided into four steps, something that no earlier text does. This allows for easy reference to previous steps (*put to No. 1*) and even other recipes (*paste No. 7 or 9*). The author provides additional orientation in the form of several directional (*put wine thereto, garnished thus*) and qualitative adverbs (*thoroughly mixed, bake lightly*) as supporters.

Although the general imperative structure still is in place, the syntax is, at times, less strict, like in sentence 5 above, which concludes with a passive sentence. Norrick (1983b) remarks on ellipsis of the definite article as another key feature of recipes. This can indeed be seen in the above example, as in *lay paste No. 7 or 9 on a dish, place on saucers, and fill with above composition*, while the earlier examples given above still mostly use articles. We could thus, on the basis of these few examples, form the hypothesis that the ellipsis of the article is a distinct feature of Late Modern English food discourse. This will be further supported by two additional examples, one from the 19th and one from the 20th centuries.

In a recent *Intelligent Life* article in honor of its 150th anniversary, Christopher Hirst calls Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management* (1861) "the best-known of all British cookbooks." (Hirst 2011:38) Interestingly, its author was,

as he points out, “a hard-pressed journalist rather than a practiced cook” (Hirst 2011:38), As far as lexis and syntax are concerned, the recipe below shows a further strengthening of the characteristics found in the previous example:

Rice Blancmange.

[No.] 1476. Ingredients.—1 lb. of ground rice, 3 oz. of loaf sugar, 1 oz. of fresh butter, 1 quart of milk, flavouring of lemon-peel, essence of almonds or vanilla, or laurel-leaves.

Mode.— Mix the rice to a smooth batter with about 1 pint of the milk, and the remainder put into a saucepan, with the sugar, butter, and whichever of the above flavourings may be preferred; bring the milk to the boiling-point, quickly stir in the rice, and let it boil for about 10 minutes, or until it comes easily away from the saucepan, keeping it well stirred the whole time. Grease a mould with pure salad-oil; pour in the rice, and let it get perfectly set, when it should turn out quite easily; garnish it with jam, or pour round a compote of any kind of fruit, just before it is sent to table. This blancmange is better for being made the day before it is wanted, as it then has time to become firm. If laurel-leaves are used for flavouring, steep 3 of them in the milk, and take them out before the rice is added: about 8 drops of essence of almonds, or from 12 to 16 drops of essence of vanilla, would be required to flavour the above proportion of milk.

Time.—From 10 to 15 minutes to boil the rice.

Average cost, 9d.

Sufficient to fill a quart mould. Seasonable at any time. (Beeton 1861:743)

There is even more detail, and the syntax is imperative, with ellipsis of subject and most articles. For the first time we can distinguish what Norrick calls a “bipartite list-step-structure” (Norrick 1983b: 176): a list of ingredients with measurements or quantities followed by the traditional step-by-step instructions. There is also additional related information, such as price (which also appears in Glasse’s general part), total time and information on seasonality as well as alternative ingredients. More supporters and controllers are added, which is not surprising since both writer and readers were non-professionals.

The last example is from Braiden Rex-Johnson’s *Pike Place Market Cookbook*, a collection of recipes from the Seattle area published in 1992. Although the general structure, lexis and syntax is similar to Beeton’s recipe collection, there are some obvious differences:

Purple Potato Salad

Make this potato salad a real conversation piece by using purple potatoes when in season. No matter what kind of potatoes you use, however, you’ll enjoy the rich sauce that covers them, full of mayonnaise and mustard. You can cut down on the fat and calories by using one of the new reduced-calorie mayonnaises.

5 hard-boiled eggs, chopped  
2 celery stalks, chopped  
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
½ teaspoon pepper  
½ tablespoon salt  
2 cups mayonnaise  
2 tablespoons bacon bits  
2½ pounds purple potatoes, boiled until just tender and cut into bite-size chunks

Combine eggs, celery, mustard, pepper, salt, mayonnaise, and bacon bits in a large mixing bowl with a cover, and stir to blend thoroughly. Add potatoes and stir gently until all pieces are coated with sauce. Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Serves 10. (Rex-Johnson 1992: 39)

In addition to the list-step-part, there is now an introduction which includes a positive evaluation of taste, with emotional adjectives like *rich*, *full*, *real* and verbs like *enjoy*. Of course, none of the examples ever details a negative food experience, so in essence this is advertising for non-professional cooks on the search for a tasty recipe. In addition, health information and healthier substitutes for problematic ingredients are provided. Many cookbooks from this time also list calories and similar nutrition information. From a sociolinguistic perspective and in view of the demonstrated focus on the female reader since the end of the Middle English period, it should be pointed out that as a consequence of societal changes during the second half of the 20th century, recipes and cookbooks revert to an increasingly gender-neutral stance.

In summary, two key trends observed in earlier periods are continuing in present-day food discourse: the refinement of measures and instructions and the tendency to address a less professional audience, accompanied by a less complex vocabulary. New in Late Modern English are particularly syntactic and pragmatic features: less syntactic rigidity, the introduction and diversification of internal recipe structure, the integration of health and other food-related information, and the increasing use of supporting and controlling phrases. These developments look set to continue during the present shift to online discourse, which, however, is not the subject of this analysis.

## 5. A review of courses

In addition to the specific topic, the discourse of food in English exhibits several universal features and distinctive diachronic trends. Thus, this type of discourse is established as a dynamic genre with distinct linguistic developmental patterns.

Pragmatic function and discourse: There is a general diachronic tendency to address a less and less professionally trained audience, necessitating facilitation of syntax, adaptation of lexis and increasing internal differentiation. In recent examples, more and more additional information is integrated as a part of recipes, including, in the latest examples from the late 20th century, health and more general lifestyle advice. “Supporters” and “controllers” are introduced in Early Modern recipes and have been used increasingly since then. They function as main or subordinate sentences that directly address the reader and provide advice for problematic steps in the procedure and a means to check if these steps were successfully completed.

Lexis: The texts are characterized by a high lemma due to the wide range of specialized terms relating to food, food preparation and cooking. While early texts are often pure ingredient lists and presuppose a detailed knowledge and a high degree of lexical (and professional) knowledge, later examples introduce more and more precise measurement terminology and detail relating to food and preparation methods, accompanied by a decrease in lexical overall complexity (excluding the necessary special-purpose vocabulary), indicating a less professional audience. There is also an increasing use of evaluative and aesthetic, non-essential qualifying terms (usually adjectives or adverbs) during the Late Modern English period.

Syntax: Syntax in food discourse is restricted. Prevailing syntactic constructions are parallel, mostly by repeated imperatives and item lists. These features remain essentially universal until the end of the Early Modern English period, with some Late Modern English examples showing an increasingly varied, less restricted syntax while providing a more differentiated structure, often divided into lists of ingredients and steps of preparation. Several other features, like the ellipsis of the subject and definite article, are also comparatively recent developments during the Late Modern English period.

## 6. *Vn sotelte*: Apple pie across time

The term *sotelte* refers to a subtle highlight in a medieval meal, often a dish with a particular shape. Since the examples above detail a wider variety of more or less randomly selected recipes (although possibly influenced by the author’s personal cooking habits), it may be useful to illustrate the changing nature of this discourse type by tracing the same dish through time, thus hopefully also providing a *sotelte*, as it were, in the context of this article. Below are several examples that give instructions for the same recipe, apple pie or pudding (it is essentially

the same dish although there are some unavoidable historical differences in ingredients):

Middle English, ca. 1500 (there is no pie crust in this recipe):

Pommesmoille

Nym rys & bray hem in a mortar; temper hem up with almande milke, boile hem. Nym apples & kerve hem as small as douste; cast hem in after þe boillyng, & sugur; colour hit with saffron, cast therto goud poudre, & 3if hit forth.

(Austin 1888: Laud 553)

The example above exhibits the typical characteristics of a text intended for a professional audience: no quantities or measurements whatsoever, the use of general terms to describe procedures and a very economic parallel syntax, with only one temporal adverb, *after*. The specialist lexis (ingredients, cooking implements and procedures) clearly establishes the discourse type.

Early Modern English, 1631:

Apple tart

Take apples and pare them, and slice them thin from the core into a pipkin with white wine, good store of sugar, cinnamon, a few sanders, and rose-water, and boil it till it be thick; then cool it, and strain it, and beat it very well together with a spoon; then put it into the coffin as you did the prune tart, and adorn it also in the same manner [cut as beats, birds, arms, knots, flowers, and such like]; and this tart you may fill thicker or thinner, as you please to raise the edge of the coffin; and it carrieth the colour red.

(Markham 1631: 108)

Markham's example only contains the very general measurements *a few* and *good store*, as well as some qualifying adverbs: *slice thin*, *fill thicker or thinner*, *beat it very well*. The syntax is similar to the Middle English text, and there is an early example of a supporting expression, *till it be thick*. The Middle and Early Modern English examples above are comparable in terms of lexical complexity.

Late Modern English, 1796

Apple Pudding

One pound apple sifted, half pound sugar, 9 eggs, one quarter of a pound butter, one quart sweet milk – one gill rosewater, a cinnamon, add 2 rusks soaked soft in wine, a green lemon peel grated (if sweet apples,) add the juice of half a lemon, put on to paste No. 7. Currants, raisins and citron some add, but good without them, bake 1 hour.

(Simmons 1796: 34)

Amelia Simmons' apple pudding contains precise measurements. The structure is bipartite, but without a clear division, with the ingredient list and measurements followed by a brief step-by-step instruction part. Interestingly, the syntax is partly non-finite, the list without any verb followed by verb-initial imperatives. There are some partial sentences reminiscent of note-taking, for example in *some add*, *but good without them*. The lexis is less complex than in Markham's recipe.

Late Modern English, c 1870

Common Apple Pie

Put a thin crust at the Bottom of your plates, slice your apples thin, put a layer of Apples, then coarse sugar and powdered cinnamon and a little allspice in layers untill your plates are filled then pour over a little rose-water or quince syrup or any other syrup you have to spare. Cover them with a paste.

(MacDonald 1997:89)

This recipe by the mother of the American painter James McNeill Whistler was not intended for publication and thus does not contain quantities or an ingredient list. The syntax is, again, verb-initial and imperative, the lexis similar to Simmons.

Late Modern English, 1992

German Apple Cake

Make this moist cake, full of grated apples and walnuts, at the height of apple season and you'll think you've gone to heaven. [recipe for icing omitted here and below]

2 eggs

2 cups sugar

2 cups flour

2 teaspoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 cups grated apples, medium grate (about 3 large, firm apples, such as Golden Delicious or Granny Smith)

½ cup chopped walnuts

[...]

Preheat oven to 350°F. Take out a 9- by 13-inch baking pan, grease lightly or spray with nonstick corn-oil spray, and set aside. Beat eggs in large mixing bowl until light and foamy, then add sugar, flour, cinnamon, baking soda, salt and vanilla. Stir until well blended (dough will appear dry), then add apples and any juices that accumulates during grating. Mix well and add walnuts. Pour dough into baking pan and bake until cake shrinks from sides of pan and toothpick inserted in middle comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool on wire rack. [...] Cut into slices, and enjoy.

(Rex-Johnson 1992: 166)

This last example from the *Pike Place Market Cookbook* shows a clear and differentiated two-part structure, with an additional evaluative introduction and conclusion. The syntax is imperative, the lexis simple. The recipe contains evaluative, no essential descriptions (*this moist cake, full of grated apples and walnuts*) and extraneous, subjective information at the beginning and the end (*you'll think you've gone to heaven, enjoy*) indicating the desirable quality of the cake

and exhorting readers to test the recipe. There are also frequent supporters (*stir until well blended, bake until cake shrinks*) and controllers (*dough will appear dry, toothpick inserted in middle comes out clean*).

## 7. Room for dessert?

It is difficult to evaluate how food discourse will develop in the future. Certainly, the observed trends look set to continue in the traditional offline genre. However, a new stage in the development of food discourse may have been reached as a consequence of the increasing use of the internet as medium for recipes and food talk. These internet-based varieties such as food blogs are not, strictly speaking, just food discourse or recipes any more, but rather form a part of the more general genre of lifestyle discourse while continuing the established tradition. In the online medium, the character of food discourse may change further under the influence of computer-mediated language features and particularly through the introduction of previously unavailable interactive elements. In addition, the observed trend to integrate unrelated themes like recipes, general food issues and personal matters may be facilitated. The particular features to be found in online food discourse are well worth exploring in a separate study.

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### A note on the recipes

The recipes above have been tested by the author, albeit in some instances in a slightly (or in the case of *Garbage*, heavily) modified version, and with varying degrees of success. Readers are encouraged to test them, thus providing, at the same time, a cognitive frame for the discourse of cooking, and satisfying any curiosity as to the efficiency and practicability of the various instructions through time.



# The way to intercultural learning is through the stomach – Genre-based writing in the EFL classroom

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This article reports on and analyzes the products of a series of English as a Foreign Language lessons revolving around the topic of food, which resulted in German students mediating typical recipes from their native languages and home cultures into English. To enable learners linguistically to transfer their findings into English a genre-based approach (cf. Henry & Roseberry 1996, 1998, 2001a & b) was taken. The resulting texts, “cultural translations” in the sense of Norton (2008), are analyzed in terms of their content, structure, and lexis in order to determine their authenticity with respect to the linguistic features characteristic of the genre, as well as with respect to their potential to provide insight into the students’ home cultures.

## 1. Introduction

As the saying goes, we are what we eat, and one of the central characteristics of any culture is the food its members thrive on and enjoy (cf. Lakoff 2006). In fact, food is often symbolic of a national culture such as sausages for Germany, kebabs for Turkey, burgers for the US, sushi for Japan or pizza for Italy. On top of that, dishes and how they are prepared also constitute family traditions and are therefore an important element of more localized sets of identities. In the sense of Goodwin (1986:289), preparing food is “a domain of expertise and knowledge, indeed a small culture in its own right.” It is not surprising then that students are frequently confronted with questions about typical dishes from their home countries and/or regions, when spending some time abroad.

The present article reports on and analyzes the products of a series of lessons designed to enable students to deal with this situation. The products, written in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in Germany, are English language recipes based on traditional dishes from the students’ home cultures. The resulting texts are more than simple translations; they include explanations of

food-related practices in the learners' native cultures and can thus be considered "cultural translations" in the sense of Norton (2008).

In a first step, the theoretical background will be sketched: recipes as a medium for intercultural learning, the genre-based approach to foreign language writing, and an overview of research on the genre *recipe*. Next, the macro- and micro-structure of a small corpus of "mirror texts" (cf. Philipp & Rauch 2010 "Spiegeltexte"), i.e. English-language recipes given to the students as a way of providing scaffolding for their own writing, will be analyzed. Subsequently, the series of lessons leading to the students' writing products will be outlined and finally, we will analyze the resulting "cultural translations" (Norton 2008).

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Intercultural learning and recipes as a locus of culture

The study is based on the assumption that dishes – their origin, their ingredients and how they are prepared – are a window on culture (cf. Cotter 1997; Norrick 2011; Waxman 2004). We define culture as the manifestation of the values and beliefs of a community constantly (re)negotiated through shared practices. All cultural phenomena in turn create meanings. These can only be understood if related to the local conventions and values of the specific interpretive community which has generated them. An inquiry into language and culture then is essentially a quest for meaning. Meaning is communicated through spoken or written language in a range of genres, each of which serves a specific purpose for the speech community using it (Corbett 2010). Genres are generally governed by specific linguistic conventions, which are suited to and constitutive of their cultural purpose (consider, for instance, the structure and style of a blog entry as compared to those of a scholarly article). Knowing these genre schemata helps recognize a text as a specimen of a certain genre and at the same time provides a framework for producing a prototypical text of this genre (cf. Henry & Roseberry 1996, 1998, 2001a & b; Rohrbach 2003; Spitz 2009; Thornbury 2005).

Intercultural language education, which constitutes one of the key principles of modern language teaching, therefore requires that learners be confronted with a wide variety of such genres and the conventions governing them to expand their communicative repertoire and develop their intercultural competence.

One of the main objectives of intercultural language learning is that of "cultural exploration and mediation" (Corbett 2010:1). Intercultural learners

utilize language to explore cultures (including their own) and to mediate in those situations where cultural differences or even misconceptions occur.

Food is one of the areas where such mediation might become necessary in everyday situations, since any culture's methods of preparing food provide a basis for interaction and function as a vehicle of communication. Even though, due to globalization, there is now a transcultural flow of ideas, some practices and behaviors are "global in extent but local in inflection" (Corbett 2010: 4). Chinese restaurants can be found in many countries around the world but the menus found in Berlin will surely be different from those found in Beijing. Furthermore, there are practices which still differ significantly depending on the culture in question. For example, does a breakfast consist of bread, butter and jam or rather of pickled vegetables and miso soup? Mental representations of objects and processes are highly culture specific, and the same holds for genre schemata. This is something students have to be made aware of.

One of the oldest and most well-researched genres in the food context is certainly the recipe (cf. Cotter 1997; Fisher 2001; Massam & Roberge 1989; Norrick 1983b, 2011; Waxman 2004). Recipes have also been widely explored with respect to their cultural functions. They are "more than a list of ingredients, measurements and instructions" and "might become a marker of identity – a testament to a family's or people's tradition" (Alfelor 2008). Cotter (1997: 53) sees the recipe as "a text form that is 'locally situated' as a community practice, and as a text that embodies linguistic relationships and implies within these relationships a number of cultural assumptions and practices." Similarly, Norrick (2011: 2740) argues that recipes – along with ingredients, tools, procedures – are part of the specialized knowledge shared by members of a culture who engage in the sets of practices involved in cooking and baking.

Hence recipes can help learners understand different cultures. They can take them to different regions of the world in a geography or language lesson, but they can also take them back in time allowing them to explore the development of their own culture including social, economic and linguistic aspects in a history or language lesson (e.g. the British Library "Books for Cooks" website, Schröder 2012).

On top of that, the written recipe constitutes a special authority within the community of practice. Conventions from written recipes form the basis for conversational recipe telling (Norrick 2011) and can thus help students to communicate about their food culture with members of other communities of practice.

It is then not surprising that recipes are being used for instructional purposes and frequently appear in publications providing classroom materials and methodology (see for example Aue 2007).

## 2.2 The genre-based approach to foreign language text production

Dealing with a specific genre makes it easier for language learners to produce naturally sounding texts in a foreign language (cf. Henry & Roseberry 1996, 1998, 2001a & b; Rohrbach 2003; Spitz 2009; Thornbury 2005). Whether it is letters of application, film reviews, travel ads, Wikipedia entries or recipes, once students have experienced the procedure of genre-based writing, they can utilize this strategic competence and apply it to any required text type. The genre-based approach provides a confrontation with authentic examples of the genre in question, guiding students in the analysis of the key components both on a macro- and micro-structural level. The term “macro-structure” stems from Thornbury’s (2005) adaptation of the genre-based approach to teaching writing; it denotes the constitutive elements – optional and obligatory – of a genre and how they are typically ordered. In Henry and Roseberry’s (1996, 1998, 2001a & b) framework, these are called “moves.” While Thornbury uses the term “lower level-features” to cover grammatical and lexical elements, and Henry & Roseberry label them “register,” we have chosen the complementary term “micro-structure,” since the macro- /micro-structure dichotomy is easier to handle for learners when they apply them to the authentic texts they are confronted with. Philipp and Rauch (2010) refer to these authentic specimens as mirror texts (“Spiegeltexte”). Mirror texts ideally display the prototypical features of the genre and thus constitute models for the students’ own text production. The results of their analyses as well as the texts themselves function as a helpful scaffold for the students’ own writing.

## 2.3 The language of recipes

### 2.3.1 *Macro-structure*

Norrick (1983b:174) describes recipes as having a bipartite structure consisting of “a schedule of items (LIST)” and “a schedule of operations (STEPS).” In contrast to other instructive texts, a recipe’s schedule of items contains only the ingredients needed in the operations but not the tools. It can moreover be considered “incomplete, inexact and inconsistent” (Norrick 1983b:174) as it does not list all ingredients required to prepare the dish – such as “water” – and gives vague quantities using different measuring systems. This presupposes that a cook has studied the recipe in advance and is aware of the tools and additional items needed before she or he starts cooking, just as the order of operations often requires prior reading because it is not necessarily given in the chronological sequence of events.

Cotter (1997) looks at recipes as forms of narratives and bases her analysis on Labov (1972). She compares a recipe’s title to a narrative’s abstract, because it

provides a summary of what follows. The title is followed by optional “orientation clauses,” which typically deliver some background to the recipe such as origin or health benefits. While Norrick does not explicitly distinguish such an orientation part, he points out that there might be an “informative introduction to a recipe” (1983b:177). The third constituent in Cotter’s framework is the “list”, which is arranged either according to importance or order of use of the ingredients. While there is no correspondence in Labov’s (1997) framework for a recipe’s list of ingredients, the instructions (Norrick’s STEPS) can be matched to the complicating action. Just like in the complicating action in a story, Cotter (1997:57) claims – in opposition to Norrick (1983b:174) – that there is a temporal relation between adjacent steps of preparation, reflected in the order of elements or even numbering.

Within these instructional actions, she also finds “evaluation clauses” relating to either identity or procedure, which specify how a certain action is to be carried out or how a dish is supposed to look at a certain stage. Furthermore, she identifies “macro evaluations in the preliminary description [i.e. the orientation] that illustrate some aspect of the outcome of the recipe, such as what other foods would go well with this particular dish or how long the recipe will take to prepare” (Cotter 1997:63).

A recipe may end with a “coda-type clause” – such as *top with a sprig of parsley and serve*. According to Cotter, a clause like *serves six* even functions as a coda when placed at the beginning of the recipe. Similarly, Norrick (1983b) mentions “serving suggestions and notes”, which might appear above the list or at the end of the recipe.

### 2.3.2 *Micro-structure*

2.3.2.1 *Syntax*. According to Norrick (1983b), the most prevalent syntactic features of recipes are the use of subjectless, verb-initial imperative sentences as they occur in the “STEPS” (*cut meat, heat meat*). Furthermore, syntactic elements are frequently omitted; this holds both for subject noun phrases referring to the dish as well as definite articles in direct object noun phrases (*clean and cook spinach*) or even entire object noun phrases referring to ingredients (*remove from heat*). In the other parts of the recipe text the syntax is much less constrained, allowing for present tense assertions in the introductory section and subjectless assertions in the serving suggestions (*makes 6 servings*).

Cotter (1997) also identifies imperative forms as syntactically characteristic of the instructional actions (STEPS) of the English-language recipe. These can be preceded or followed by locative (*on a floured surface*) or instrumental prepositional phrases (*with a pastry blender*). Another distinguishing syntactic feature of this recipe section is an absence of temporal markers specifying the sequence of

action (*now, when, as soon as* etc.) and tense shifts. Similarly to Norrick (1983b), Cotter finds the syntax of the other recipe elements to be more varied. She categorizes forms that do not correspond to the described patterns as having an orientation or evaluation function. Some of these structures include a second person pronoun (*if you use your hands, ...*) and are therefore reminiscent of the oral transmission of recipes (Cotter 1997:57, cf. Norrick 2011 on conversational recipe telling).

**2.3.2.2 Lexis.** With respect to lexis Cotter (1997) and Norrick (1983b) both observe that a lot of a recipe's vocabulary is technical and can only be understood by someone who is "a member of the subculture that knows how to cook" (Cotter 1997:58). This type of vocabulary falls into two categories: special terms referring to measures and quantities on the one hand and technical verbs on the other.

The terms specifying quantities and measures form semantic relations that are often unique to recipes. This holds both for nouns such as *teaspoon, tablespoon, cup* and scalar adjectives/adverbs such as *extra thick, medium*. Many measurements are open to interpretation (*to taste, a pinch of*) and can only be adequately dealt with if the addressee is familiar with the genre and cooking practices.

The verbs used in the instructions have been analyzed in detail by Lehrer (1968). They are typically not part of everyday English, and if they are, they tend to take on context-specific meanings (*clarify a concept* vs. *clarify butter*). Just as the terms of measurement and quantity, they are only comprehensible to competent members of the community of practice (e.g. *braise, sauté*). For example, some of them imply a subsequent processing of the food, e.g. *parboil*, others only work with certain noun phrases (e.g. *blanch vegetables*).

### 3. Corpus of mirror texts

The corpus consists of four recipes,<sup>1</sup> which were chosen to stem from different media (i.e. the internet as well as different cookbooks), to cover various English-speaking cultures (i.e. British, American and Indian) and to present a

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1. The corpus was restricted to this relatively small number in order to not overtax the students. For the same reason we decided on a simplified description of the macro-structure (cf. 2.1). The texts from the mirror corpus are abbreviated MT.

broad range of topic-related vocabulary (the full recipe texts can be found in the appendix):

- a. Caesar Salad (*Culinary Arts.com*)
- b. Fantastic Fish Pie (Jamie Oliver, *The Return of the Naked Chef*)
- c. Carrot Pachadi (Das Sreedharan, *The New Tastes of India*)
- d. Spiced Pumpkin Soup with Bacon (Nigel Slater, *Real Good Food*)

### 3.1 Macro-structure

All the recipes in the corpus consist of three structural parts. These are firstly, an introduction specifying the background or the when, where and how to eat it; secondly, a list of ingredients; and thirdly, the instructions for the preparation. The sequence of the instructions in our corpus consistently corresponds to the actual order of preparation. Unlike Norrick (1983b) and Cotter (1997), we consider the serving suggestions and any other notes as a last step in the instructions for the preparation.

### 3.2 Micro-structure

#### 3.2.1 Syntax

The syntax of the recipes in the corpus generally matches that described by Norrick (1983b) and Cotter (1997). The most striking element are the imperative verb phrases found in the instructions for the preparation, e.g.: *pre-heat the oven; peel the garlic cloves; lower the heat; pour in the cream.*

A further characteristic of this section of the texts – found in all but one of the recipes – is the use of ellipsis as in the following examples: *set aside; chop into rough cubes; bring back to the boil.* On the other hand, the instructions also contain quite elaborate structures such as modals, which in Cotter's framework would be considered "evaluations". Some examples are: *the cooked potatoes should be drained; this will only take a minute; oil from the garlic will remain in the bowl; you will probably have about 650g/1 ½ lb of orangy-yellow flesh.*

Another feature, not mentioned by Cotter (1997) or Norrick (1983b), which is present in our corpus, are adverbial clauses: temporal (*till the pumpkin is golden brown at the edges; as they begin to pop; when the spinach is done*), conditional (*if you have time*) as well as purpose (*so they are soft and running*). Cotter (1997) would regard such clauses as "evaluation" or "orientation", whereas we consider them as part of the instructions for preparation.

In line with Cotter's analysis (1997), all recipe instructions in the corpus contain prepositional phrases, for instance: locative (*in a separate pan; on a paper towel; against the sides of the bowl*), instrumental (*with a pestle and*

*mortar; with the back of a wooden spoon; with a wire whisk*), temporal (*till soft and translucent; till crisp; until ready to use*) and resultative (*(cut ...) into cubes; into rough cubes*).

Finally, we also find present participle constructions, e.g.: *stirring frequently; stirring often; not forgetting your baked beans*. Again, Cotter (1997) would not consider such structures to be part of the instructional action.

Another difference to Cotter's analysis are temporal markers, which our survey of the mirror corpus yields in all but one of the recipes. Examples include: *then cut into ...; then put in ...; then drain ...; then add ...; now add ...; meanwhile peel ...*. An explanation for this difference might be that, as Waxman (2004) points out in his overview of the history of recipes, in the course of time, recipes have become more specific and more instructional because nowadays cooking is no longer a job for experts and hence more detail is required. Since our mirror texts are more recent than the recipes analyzed by Cotter and Norrick, the more frequent occurrence of temporal markers to structure the texts and to make the order of actions explicit is not surprising.

Unlike the instructions for preparation, the introduction is not restricted to specific syntactic patterns. We find varied types of verb phrases (*it was created by a famous temple chef; will taste even better*) and tenses (*the whole fish pie thing is one of the most homely...; it was delicious*) as well as relative clauses (*a cracking recipe, which does it for me*), and non-finite structures (*the original version created in 1924*).

While Cotter (1997) and Norrick (1983b) do not explore the syntactic features of the list, we find one phenomenon worth mentioning: past participle constructions that specify a processing state. The participle can either be found after the specified noun (*four large carrots, shredded*), separated by a comma or a dash ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup parmesan cheese – shredded or shaved), or as a premodifier (*2 good handfuls of grated mature Cheddar; 1 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper*).

Another notable syntactic peculiarity is the inconsistency with which recipe authors use or omit the preposition "of" in noun phrases specifying measurements as, for example, in: *2 good handfuls of grated mature Cheddar* vs *1 heaped teaspoon English mustard* and *2 large cloves garlic* vs *2 plump cloves of garlic*.

### 3.2.2 Lexis

Regarding lexis, our corpus confirms Cotter's (1997) and Norrick's (1983b) findings about special terminology presupposing knowledge and skills on the part of the addressee. We find both measurements open to interpretation such as: *3 cups of French bread; 2 good handfuls of grated mature Cheddar; 2 plump cloves of garlic; a touch of nutmeg*, and a large number of cooking verbs, e.g.: *toss, steam, peel, blend, grind, stir, melt, whiz, roast, add*.

Interestingly, Norrick and Cotter do not comment on the plethora of other cooking words, nouns and noun phrases specifying the ingredients (e.g. *beetroot, turmeric powder, chicken stock*) and cooking tools (e.g. *the back of a wooden spoon, heavy-based pan, blender, a pestle and mortar*), or adjectives describing the dishes or meals (e.g. *vibrant colour, serve piping-hot, moreish dinners*). From a foreign-language perspective, these are just as striking as the cooking verbs and the measurement terminology.

#### 4. Classroom applications

The project was conducted in two grade 9 English groups at two different German secondary schools (Gymnasien). In year 9, the first foreign language is taught for three periods of 45 minutes. The learners were aged 14–16, and they were in their fifth year of English as a foreign language. This means they had mostly reached level B1 (threshold) of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. While most students came from a German cultural and language background, around a quarter of the learners stemmed from different ethnic and language backgrounds: Bulgarian, Indian, Kurdish, Persian, Turkish, and Russian. All of these students with an immigrant family background were either born in the Saarland or had lived in the region for a considerable timespan. All in all, 52 students participated in the project, which was covered within the span of nine 45-minute periods.

The application of the findings sketched above poses a threefold challenge in the classroom: first of all, students need to be familiarized with the genre of recipe texts, secondly, their awareness of the intercultural element of recipe texts needs to be raised, and thirdly, they need help and feedback when composing specimens of the genre. The following procedure was developed to address these issues.

##### 4.1 Genre competence

In order to enable students to understand and even compose authentic foreign-language recipes, they need to be made familiar with macro- and micro-structural aspects of the genre. To this end, we developed a bottom-up approach, in which first micro-structural elements were focused on. Tapping into the already existing knowledge base, students composed a network of food expressions, which constitute a significant part of the register of recipe texts in the sense of Henry and Roseberry (1996, 1998, 2001a & b). This collection of culinary words and collocations was then expanded by explicit vocabulary work with the help of specifically designed exercises, laying a foundation for a guided discovery of other

micro-structural features as well as an analysis of the macro-structure of recipe texts. Students cooperatively studied the recipes from the mirror corpus and identified the three basic sections (i.e. Henry & Roseberry's (1996, 1998, 2001a & b moves): introduction, list of ingredients, instructions for preparation. With the help of guiding questions, they then worked on typical features of the register, listing salient lexical as well as syntactic elements.

#### 4.2 Intercultural competence

Using authentic interviews about favorite dishes with native speakers of English from different geographical backgrounds (Canada, USA, Great Britain, Australia), students were introduced firstly to the language required to talk *about* food and recipes and secondly to culture-specific preferences regarding food. Awareness of these preferences and the language to talk about them enabled the students to conduct a classroom survey on their favorite local and international dishes. The questionnaire followed Corbett (2010:200) and contained the following items:

1. Region/country of origin
2. Ingredients
3. Full meal or snack
4. Occasion/time of day
5. Side dishes
6. Origins
7. Activities after eating it
8. Reasons for choosing the dish

With the help of this classroom survey students explored their own culinary cultures, negotiating what constitutes the most typical regional dishes in their area (i.e. the Saarland)<sup>2</sup> as well as typical dishes of their various home regions and cultures (e.g. Turkish).

Discussing the results of the classroom survey, the students agreed that the following dishes from the Saarland are the most typical: Schwenker (marinated meat grilled on a tripod barbecue), Dibbelabbes (a version of the British dish bubble and squeak made of potatoes, leek and bacon), Geheirate (a mixture of boiled potatoes and dumplings served with a cream-and-bacon sauce), Lyonerpfanne (a mixture of fried potatoes with a particular type of sausage called

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2. The Saarland is a small area state in Southwest Germany, located between France, Luxemburg and Rhineland-Palatinate.

“Lyoner”), Bratkartoffeln (fried potatoes). Some students, who stem from other German areas, however, picked typical dishes from these regions: Box-Pickert (a kind of potato loaf typical of Eastern Westphalia), Maultaschen (large pasta squares filled with spinach and meat characteristic of Swabia), Currywurst (fried sausage in a tomato-curry sauce, a fast food originally found in Berlin and the Rhine-Ruhr area). Finally, students stemming from immigrant families chose the following three dishes: Filled vine leaves (by a Turkish student), Torator (a cold soup made of yoghurt and cucumbers from Bulgaria), and Ghormeh Sabzi (a Persian lamb stew).

Having negotiated these dishes, students researched the relevant recipes as well as more details of the recipes’ cultural backgrounds by interviewing parents or relatives and/or consulting the Internet. Their findings allowed them to reflect on the culture-specific elements of their chosen dishes – be it local or national culture, which would need explanation when mediated into another language and hence culture.

### 4.3 Writing competence

The students’ writing constitutes a “cultural translation” in the sense of Norton (2008), i.e. a transfer of their chosen German recipe texts into English, which includes an explanation of food-related practices in their home culture. Students worked on these texts cooperatively, following the guidelines they themselves had established when analyzing the mirror corpus. The availability of the mirror corpus texts allowed them to exploit them for specific expressions and structures that they needed for their local/national recipe. Subsequent peer-editing provided an opportunity for co-construction and clarification of problems that had arisen in the drafting stage of the writing process.

## 5. Analysis of students’ writing products<sup>3</sup>

The resulting texts – the full texts can be found in the appendix – are analyzed in terms of their content, structure, and lexis in order to determine their authenticity with respect to the linguistic features characteristic of the genre *recipe*, as well as with respect to their potential to provide insight into the students’ home cultures.

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3. Student texts are represented as handed in, i.e. displaying all lexical or grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. All examples cited in section 5 are taken from these student texts unless indicated otherwise.

## 5.1 Linguistic features

### 5.1.1 Macro-structure

All fifteen student texts follow the macro-structure found in the mirror corpus. This finding is not surprising given that the structure not only is very similar for English and German language recipes but is also clearly visible through the alteration of continuous (i.e. introduction and instructions for preparation) and discontinuous (i.e. list) paragraphs. This holds both for hard copies in a cookery book and for digital versions on the web.

### 5.1.2 Micro-structure

Whereas the adaption of the correct macro-structure does not pose a great challenge to foreign language students, the grammatical and lexical intricacies on the micro-level certainly do. Vocabulary as well as syntactic patterns found there are generally unfamiliar in the foreign-language classroom and transferring them from one language into the other requires a considerable effort. Furthermore, differences between German and English texts can be found on this level. The most striking of which is the use of subjectless, verb-initial imperative sentences (*lower the heat (MT 3)*; *preheat the oven (MT 2)*) in English where German recipes display imperatives with an object or a modifier (example taken from Gläser 1979: 156–157, quoted in Norrick 1983b: 177):

*Pfifferlinge putzen*  
chanterelles clean (inf.)  
*und mit kaltem Wasser gründlich abspülen*  
and with cold water thoroughly rinse (inf.)

**5.1.2.1 Syntax.** The syntax of the mediated recipes largely matches that described by Norrick (1983b) and Cotter (1997) and that found in the mirror texts. Thus imperative verb phrases are predominant in the instructions for the preparation of the student texts, too.

However, the texts vary considerably with respect to the consistency with which this structure is used. Some student texts display the feature throughout the complete third part of the recipe: *Mix the water and the yoghurt. Then cut the cucumber and hazelnuts in very small pieces. Grate the peeled cucumber and mix all the ingredients together. Serve cold.*

Others alternate it with other structures such as second person singular indicative declaratives and infinitive structures: *First you prepare the dough for the dumplings: Mix the flour, the egg, the water and a good pinch of pepper, salt and nutmeg. Then you peel and quarter the potatoes...; The next step is to leave the steaks for 24 hours in the fridge. Take the steak out of the fridge on time, before you start to grill.*

There are two different perspectives on this type of variation within the student texts. Assuming a deficit hypothesis, one could argue that the young authors simply have not yet mastered the prototypical structure, which they presumably have rarely encountered in the English-language classroom before. From a “can-do” perspective, the variation might as well be interpreted as the students’ desire to display their grammatical knowledge using a range of different types of structures – something that is typically required of them in foreign language writing. Here obviously general classroom practices run counter to genre conventions.

However, students also use a variety of elaborate grammatical patterns that can be found in the mirror texts, such as modals, albeit not *should* but rather *can* and *have to*: *Boil the potatoes and let them cool down. After this you have to pell the potatoes and to cut them into slices. The sausage from Lyon you can also cut into slices.; First you have to peel the potatoes and then grate them onto fine pieces. After that you have to peel and grate the onions.*

By contrast, a typical feature of the recipe genre that can only be found in a few of the students’ texts are ellipses such as: *First of all the pork has to be cut in 250-g-pieces and then put into a bole. Mix the oil, onions... and then por it over the prepared steaks.; Serve hot or cold with yogurt.; Peel potatoes, grate finely and squeeze firmly in a linen cloth ... vs. Clear the leek and cut it. Add this and he eggs to the potatoes and season it with salt pepper and nutmeg.; At the end serve the dish with cold apple sauce.*

The reluctant use of this grammatical structure – despite its high frequency in the mirror texts – might again be due to the fact that language learners are usually trained to formulate their thoughts as explicitly as possible – both in spoken and written language. Apparently, this is another instance where classroomese contrasts with authentic language use.

The adverbial clauses found in our mirror corpus, which are not mentioned in Cotter’s or Norrick’s analysis, feature in the student texts as well, with the temporal clause introduced by *until* being the most frequent:

- a. temporal: *until its smell is spread out; until they surface again; until the mixture is smoothed; until its golden at both sides; until it is hot enough; until the potato mixture is cooked; until the onions are limp; until its crispy; till their done to a turn; till the dough increases; till they are firm to the bite; till they have an brown border; before you start (to grill); when you’ve done this*
- b. conditional: *if you want; if you want to; if you like it a bit spicy*
- c. purpose: *so a crispy surface can be built; so a hard mixture is formed; so that a relatively dry mass ...*

The distribution of clause types reflects the one in the mirror corpus.

Similar to the recipe instructions in the mirror corpus, the mediated recipes also contain prepositional phrases, predominantly locative, instrumental, modal and resultative ones, for instance:

- a. locative: *in a frying pan; in a (hot) pan; in boiled water; into a baking pan; to the potatoes; to the meat dough; out of the box form; on the noodle dough parts; on top of that; on a table; over a medium heat*
- b. instrumental: *(extinguish it) with the cream; (mix ...) with a mixer*
- c. modal: *(season them) with pepper; (season it) with salt, pepper and nutmeg; (season them) with the instant stock and pepper; (serve) with cold apple sauce; (place the wine leaves) with the smooth side down*
- d. resultative: *(cut) into slices; (cut) into rings; (cut them) into slices; (cut the dried meat) into little cubes; (cut the onions) in cubes; (grate them) into fine pieces*
- e. temporal: *before the serving*

By contrast, only one of the mediated recipes contains a present participle construction, namely *by using*. Presumably this is due to the complexity of the pattern and the fact that in general in the German school system non-finite structures appear late in the syllabus. The students in our study had only been familiarized with participle constructions about half a year before the mediation task was set.

The more familiar pattern are relative clauses, and indeed two of these rather atypical structures in recipe instructions occur in the student texts: *for people who like spicy foods; the bacon, which is cut in cubes*.

Contrary to Cotter's findings, but in line with our analysis of the mirror corpus, the mediated recipes feature numerous temporal markers making explicit the order of the steps, as well as structuring the text. These include:

- a. *first of all the pork has to be cut; first you have to peel the potatoes; first cut; first soak*
- b. *and then put into a bowl; and then pour it over the prepared steak; then cut the field garlic; then grill the schwenkers; after this peel the potatoes; after that you have to peel; afterwards leave it covered; next deglaze the meal*
- c. *now you can add the beans; now you can enjoy your german "Curryworscht"; now put it all together*
- d. *finally the cooking take place in ...; and finally: enjoy; add finally salt and paprika or pepper; at the end serve ...; lastly season them with the pepper ...*

In fact, some texts have a temporal marker at the beginning of almost every sentence. For example, the recipe for fried potatoes contains the following: *First ..., Then ..., After that ..., In addition ..., Lastly ..., Now ...* This demonstrates that the students really engaged with the mirror texts.

Considering that recipes in general have become more explicit in order to enable even laypersons to prepare complex dishes, it is not surprising that texts mediating between two cultures and hence introducing non-members of a community to this community's food culture, also use this strategy to help potential users of these recipes for unfamiliar foods.

However, it also shows that students apparently make an effort to use a range of different connectors, sometimes stemming from a not strictly temporal semantic field such as *moreover* and *in addition*. Again, traditionally (in non-genre-based approaches) a variety of patterns is explicitly encouraged in student writing in the EFL classroom and hence the deviation from the mirror corpus, which has a lot less temporal markers, is not surprising.

As the genre analyses reported above suggest, the introductions in the mediated recipes are not limited to specific syntactic patterns. They contain a multitude of different verb phrases, patterns and tenses. Thus this part of the students' texts does not merit closer analysis on the level of language. It is however the key locus for cultural mediation and will be inspected more closely below.

Another feature of the mediated recipes which reveals that the students obviously used the mirror texts as scaffolds for their own writing is the use of participle constructions specifying a processing state in the list. As in the mirror corpus, the participle can either be found after the specified noun, separated by a comma: *two cloves of garlic, mashed*; *3 ½ juniper berry, mashed*; *1 kg lamb (beef-gulasch), cut into cubes*; *250 g red beans, dried*; *1 pot Basmati rice, steam-cooked* or as a premodifier: *1 package dried yeast*; *2 chopped onions*; *50 g chopped parsley*; *150 g dried meat*. Obviously in an attempt to copy the mirror texts, students sometimes failed to reproduce the full structure, as in: *5 onions, in stripes* – probably modeled on the *Fantastic fish pie* recipe: *sliced into strips*.

Another clear parallel between the mediated recipes and the mirror texts are the inconsistencies with which the preposition "of" in noun phrases specifying measurements is used or omitted: *1 teaspoon oil* vs *2 tablespoons of butter*; *1 stick field garlic* vs *2 stems of leek*.

**5.1.2.2 Lexis.** The combination of observing the students' writing process and later inspecting the lexis used in the written products yields that they made use of various resources to cope with the challenge of food and cooking vocabulary. They used the vocabulary worksheets and mind maps as well as bilingual dictionaries and the mirror texts to transfer the German terminology and describe the necessary procedures and objects.

On the one hand we find measurements and quantities that clearly originate from the mirror texts: *6 thin rashers of bacon*; *2 cloves of garlic*; *a pinch of dill/parsley/tarragon*. On the other hand, the texts also contain some rather

experimental expressions that are evidence of the students' creativity as well as their use of various communication strategies to deal with lexical problems: *2 bounds parsley* – apparently an attempt to anglicize the German word “Bund”; *½ bunch of parsley* – transferred from another context, and *2 bars of leek* – a literal translation of the German word “Stange”.

While the mediated recipes contain a smaller range of cooking verbs than the texts in the mirror corpus, the fact that the students made use of such highly specialized terms still proves that they picked up on the fine semantic distinctions as well as typical collocations they had encountered in the sequence of lessons centering on language and food. Consider, for example:

- a. *drain the potatoes; soak the dried beans*
- b. *boil the potatoes; roast the potatoes; simmer the potatoes*
- c. *grate the peeled cucumber*
- d. *peel the potatoes*
- e. *knead the dough*
- f. *spice it with salt; flavour it with salt; season them with the pepper*
- g. *deglaze the meal with three cups of water*
- h. *add the wet herbmix*

Although they were not always successful in picking the correct or idiomatic collocate, the expressions clearly show that the students have developed an awareness for the semantic subtleties, which most of them probably did not even know in their native language – unless they are passionate about cooking at this early age.

This also becomes apparent in the noun and adjective phrases used, many of which are clearly not part of typical learner English: *firm to the bite; done to a turn; non-stick frying pan; large pasta squares filled with spinach and meat*.

While some attempts at mediating the German cooking terms are quite successful, others are incomprehensible at least for non-German speakers – if creative and entertaining. These include: *the staff of life* – presumably a misspelling of “stuff” in the sense of substance; *pell the potatoes* – either inspired by the German verb “pellen”, or simply a misspelling of “peel” and *a hot sluge* – which remains a mystery.

## 5.2 Cultural elements

Just as in the model texts, all of the cultural explanations can be found in the introductions of the recipes. The students' work displays various “strategies” to realize this “move” in the sense of Henry and Roseberry (2001a & b): They refer to the origin of the dish, give etymological explanations, list typical occasions of consumption or comment on the required preparation effort. This reflects the use

of both the questionnaire described in 3.2 and the mirror texts (cf. Section 2) in the composition of the recipe texts.

### 5.2.1 *The origin of dishes*

All of the mediated recipes specify in which region/country the dish originated. Depending on the ethnic background of the students, they range from the German region they live in, i.e. the Saarland (*one of the most popular dishes from the Saarland*), the German regions they grew up in, i.e. Eastern Westphalia and Swabia (*a tasty culinary speciality of Eastern Westphalia*), or the countries their parents come from, namely Bulgaria, Iran and Turkey: *It belongs to the national food of Iran.*

One text rather focuses on the origin of the main ingredient than on that of the dish: *The beginning of the potatoe was in south america. The potatoe came to Europe after the capture of Peru in year 1536. After that the spud (other word for potatoe) became very famous in the hole world.*

Three texts also commented on the social background of their chosen regional dish, explaining that they are cheap to make, yet filling: *It's a cheap and tasty dish: Real plain cooking. But it's a very rich dish.; ... which was eaten by the poor people because its ingredients could be found in every home.; The former poor-people-meal ...*<sup>4</sup>

### 5.2.2 *Etymological explanations*

Three of the student texts contain references to the etymology – or folk etymology – of the dishes' names. One resembles an encyclopedia entry: *The name of the dish sounds a little bit crazy. It consists of the two 'saarländisch' words "dibbe" (pot) and "labbe" (cloth) so its orally meaning is pot cloth.* The second lacks the translation of the dish's name, which is "married couple", but explains the meaning of the term: *It's called "Geheirade" because the different ingredients (dumpling and potatoe) come together like woman and man, when they marry.* In the third case the students express an awareness of the difficulty of cultural translation combined with an explanation of what constitutes the dish: *There is no good translation for the German meal "Maultaschen". These are swabian large pasta squares filled with spinach meat.*

### 5.2.3 *Occasions of consumption*

Nine of the mediated recipes comment on when to eat the dishes. Specifically they state (1) whether the dish is usually eaten at or prepared for a special occasion or

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4. A loan translation from the German term "Armeleuteessen"

constitutes an everyday staple, e.g.: *usually prepared for wedding ceremonies; normal dinner every day; very recommendable for every grill party*; (2) which season they are particularly suitable for: *a cold soup for a warm day* (compare with the mirror corpus phrase: *a warming soup for a cold day*); or (3) what time of day they are typically eaten, e.g.: *eaten mainly in the evening; a warm dish for lunch or dinner*.

#### 5.2.4 Comments on preparation effort

In four of the culturally translated recipes we find remarks on the effort required to prepare the dish in question, such as: *easy to cook; fast and delicious*. While these examples do not really transport cultural notions in the narrow sense, generally the evaluation of the preparation effort is open to interpretation and thus related to a community of practice's food culture (where community of practice can relate to an ethnic group, a family or a group of friends).

Indeed some student texts reflect different – even conflicting – perceptions of the effort the preparation of a certain dish requires, presumably mirroring family cooking traditions. Consider the following comments on “Dibbelabbes”: *Mostly it isn't prepared at home because it's too much work*. vs. *A soon-made dish with healthy ingredients*.

## 6. Conclusion

In this article we have reported on a series of lessons revolving around the topic of food and analyzed the results of this EFL unit, cultural translations of recipes for popular regional or national dishes. The analyses yielded insights into the suitability of a genre-based approach to teaching second-language writing, the effectiveness of recipes (and the topic of food in general) as a medium for intercultural learning as well as the students' ability to mediate between two different languages and cultures.

The mediated recipes contained most of the key features of typical English-language specimens of the genre, both on the macro- and micro-structural level. The frequent use of idiomatic patterns shows that the students obviously modeled their writing on the mirror texts using them as scaffolds. The authenticity – if in varying degrees – of the student texts hence testifies to the effectiveness of the genre-based approach.

The differences that occur between the mirror corpus and the end products of the EFL unit point to the deficiencies of some second language writing instruction practices, which entail the risk of students' overgeneralizing certain lexical or grammatical patterns at the expense of authenticity. In this case

an overuse of temporal markers and deviation from the monotonous subjectless imperative pattern so characteristic of recipe instructions runs counter to genre conventions. Therefore, more genre awareness is called for in foreign language teaching.

Both the enthusiasm students displayed in the course of the series of lessons as well as the quality of their writing products clearly demonstrates that complex mediation tasks can foster the reflection of one's home culture and target cultures as well as enable learners to assume a different perspective on their own culture, i.e. raise cultural awareness. This awareness in turn allows the learners to bring across cultural phenomena when transferring texts – in the general sense – from one language into another. The introductions of the mediated recipes yield insights not only into regional/national traditions (when to prepare or eat a specific dish, where the dish originated and (folk)etymologies of a dish's name) but are also a window on family customs (the perception of the preparation effort) and hence illuminate the practices of cultural communities on different levels of organization.

All in all, the project presented can be considered successful. Student feedback revealed that learners felt their work on language and food – in particular on recipes – had provided them with genre- as well as intercultural awareness and competence, allowing them on the one the hand to apply a genre-based approach to any other text type and on the other hand to make use of their heightened awareness of their own cultural background in intercultural encounters.

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## Appendix

### I. Corpus of mirror texts (MT)

#### *MT 1: Caesar Salad*

This recipe is very close to the original version created in 1924 by Caesar Cardini, an Italian restaurateur in Tijuana, Mexico. That's right, the salad is named after its creator, a Chef, not Julius Caesar of the famed Roman empire.

Serving size: 4

Preparation time: 0:20

#### Ingredients:

- 1 large head romaine lettuce
- 1 cup olive oil
- 3 cups French bread
- 2 large cloves garlic
- 8 anchovy filets
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 2 tablespoon lemon juice (fresh is best)
- 1 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon coarse ground salt
- 2 egg yolks for large eggs – at room temperature\*
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese – shredded or shaved

#### Preparation:

Trim the romaine lettuce of bruised or browned leaves, then cut into 1 1/2 inch pieces. Wash and drain the lettuce, pat it dry and refrigerate for 30 minutes to crisp the leaves. To make the croutons, cut the bread into cubes, heat the 1/2 cup olive oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Fry the bread cubes in the oil, tossing frequently, until they're crisp and golden. Drain the croutons on a paper towel until ready to use.

Peel the garlic cloves then put in a large wooden salad bowl. Mash the cloves against the sides of the bowl with the back of a wooden spoon. Rub the pieces against the bowl until they begin to disintegrate. Remove most of the mashed garlic from the bowl and discard (oil from the garlic will remain in the bowl and flavor the salad). Add the anchovies and repeat the procedure you used with the garlic, but leave the anchovy pieces in the bowl. Now add the dry mustard, Worcestershire sauce, lemon juice, black pepper, and egg yolks and blend well. Slowly drizzle in the remaining olive oil mixing with a wire whisk until a creamy mayonnaise type dressing forms. Add the lettuce, croutons, Parmesan cheese and salt. Toss everything together and serve directly from the salad bowl!

\*Note: The original recipe may have called for coddled whole eggs (warmed to 120F degrees, to coddle simmer in water 1 minute and cool in cold water) so they are soft and runny. Some chefs who make this salad today use the whole egg at room temperature.

\*\*Sautéed or steamed vegetables, chicken and shrimp may be added if you like! Simply cook them in a separate pan and add them to the top of the salad. This will create more of a lunch or dinner portion entree.

(<http://www.culinaryarts.com/Recipes/recipefiles/Caesar.htm>)

### *MT 2: Fantastic fish pie*

The whole fish pie thing is one of the most homely, comforting and moreish dinners I can think of. This is a cracking recipe, which does it for me.

*Serves 6*

5 large potatoes, peeled and diced into 2.5 cm/1 inch squares

salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 free-range eggs

2 large handfuls of fresh spinach

1 onion, finely chopped

1 carrot, halved and finely chopped

extra virgin olive oil

approx. 285 ml/1/2 pint double cream

2 good handfuls of grated mature Cheddar or Parmesan cheese

juice of 1 lemon

1 heaped teaspoon English mustard

1 large handful of flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

455 g/1 lb haddock or cod fillet, skin removed, pin-boned and sliced into strips

nutmeg (optional)

Preheat the oven to 230°C/450°F/gas 8. Put the potatoes into salted boiling water and bring back to the boil for 2 minutes. Carefully add the eggs to the pan and cook for a further 8 minutes until hard-boiled, by which time the potatoes should also be cooked. At the same time, steam the spinach in a colander above the pan. This will only take a minute. When the spinach is done, remove from the colander and gently squeeze any excess moisture away. Then drain the potatoes in the colander. Remove the eggs, cool under cold water, then peel and quarter them. Place to one side.

In a separate pan slowly fry the onion and carrot in a little olive oil for about 5 minutes, then add the double cream and bring just to the boil. Remove from the heat and add the cheese, lemon juice, mustard and parsley. Put the spinach, fish and eggs into an appropriately sized earthenware dish and mix together, pouring over the creamy vegetable sauce. The cooked potatoes should be drained and mashed – add a bit of olive oil, salt, pepper and a touch of nutmeg if you like. Spread on top of the fish. Don't bother piping it to make it look pretty – it's a homely hearty thing. Place in the oven for about 25–30 minutes until the potatoes are golden. Serve with some nice peas or greens, not forgetting your baked beans and tomato ketchup. Tacky but tasty and that's what I like.

(Jamie Oliver, *The Return of the Naked Chef*. 2002)

### *MT 3: Carrot pachadi*

In Kerala, dishes with thick yogurt sauces or pachadis are very popular for weddings. We make many different pachadis with various fruits and vegetables – beetroot and pineapple are very popular for special occasions. Carrot pachadi is something I discovered when I came to Britain and went to a wedding feast at the Murughan Temple in East Ham, London. It was created by a famous temple chef, Ram Narayan. It was delicious, with a beautiful vibrant colour and much more refreshing than beetroot pachadi. Best of all, carrots are cheap and plentiful. The dish goes well with rice or bread.

*Serves 4*

100 g/3 ½ oz fresh grated coconut  
 2 fresh green chillies, chopped  
 5 mm/¼ in cube root ginger, peeled  
 1 teaspoon ground mustard seeds  
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
 2 teaspoons mustard seeds  
 10 curry leaves  
 4 large carrots, shredded  
 1 teaspoon chilli powder  
 1 teaspoon turmeric powder  
 225 ml/8 fl oz plain yogurt  
 salt

In a spice mill, finely grind the coconut, fresh chillies, ginger and ground mustard together. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan or wok. Add the whole mustard seeds, and as they begin to pop, add the curry leaves. Stir in the shredded carrots, chilli powder, turmeric and a little salt and cook for 10 minutes over a medium heat, stirring frequently.

Stir in the ground coconut mixture. Lower the heat, cover and cook for 10 minutes, stirring often. Remove from the heat and stir in the yogurt. Serve hot or cold.

(Das Sreedharan, *The New Tastes of India*. 2001)

#### *MT 4: Spiced Pumpkin Soup with Bacon*

A warming soup for a cold day. Cooking the pumpkin till golden brown at the edges will give a deeper flavour. Any soup left over till the next day will taste even better.

1 medium onion, peeled  
 50 g/oz butter  
 2 plump cloves of garlic, peeled and squashed  
 900 g/2lb pumpkin – about ½ medium size  
 1 tablespoon coriander seeds  
 2 teaspoons cumin seeds  
 1 teaspoon ground turmeric  
 1.2 l/2 pints vegetable or chicken stock  
 4 rashers of smoked bacon  
 120 ml/4 fl oz single cream

Roughly chop the onion. Melt the butter in a large heavy-based pan and cook the onion and garlic in it till soft and translucent. Meanwhile, peel the pumpkin, remove the stringy bits

and discard them with the peel. You will probably have about 650 g/1 ½ lb of orangy-yellow flesh. Chop into rough cubes and add to the softened onions. Cook till the pumpkin is golden brown at the edges.

Roast the coriander and cumin seeds in a small frying pan over a low heat until they start to smell warm and nutty, about 2 minutes (keep this pan to one side). Grind the roasted spices in either a spice or a coffee mill, or, if you have time, with a pestle and mortar. Add them and the chillies and turmeric to the onions and pumpkin. Cook for a few minutes over a medium heat. Pour over the hot stock and stir. Cook for 20 minutes or so, till the pumpkin is tender.

Fry the bacon in the pan in which you roasted the spices, till crisp. Cool a little, then cut up with scissors into small pieces. Whiz the soup in a blender or food processor to a smooth, golden purée. Pour in the cream and taste for seasoning, add salt and pepper if necessary. Return to the pan, bring almost to the boil and then serve, piping hot, with bacon bits scattered on top.

*Serves 4 generously*

(Nigel Slater, *Real Good Food*. 1995)

## II. *Corpus of student texts (ST)*

### *ST 1: Geheirate*

This recipe is a typical saarländisch dish, which was eaten by the poor people, because its ingredients could be found in every home.

Ingredients (for 4 persons):

750 g potatoes

500 g flour

150 g bacon

2 eggs

1 teaspoon salt

1 liter milk

1 liter mineral water

Preparation:

(P)ive the potatoes, next cut them into little pieces, then simmer the potatoes in salt water. Out of the flour, ¼ litre mineral water and the two eggs make a viscous dough. Cook the water with salt in a pot and let the dough stand in small parts in the hot water. The bacon, which is cut in cubes has to be fried and later extinguish it with milk. Mix up the potatoe pieces and the dumpling in a warm bowl and put the bacon-milk. At the end serve the dish with cold apple sauce.

Enjoy your meal!

### *ST 2: Geheirate mit Specksauce – the Main thing is to eat well!*

Geheirate is a saarlandish national dish and consists of poatoes, dumplings and baconsauce. It's a cheap and tasty dish: Real plain cooking. But it's a very rich dish. It's called "Geheirde", because the different ingredients (dumpling and potatoe) come together like woman and man, when they marry.

Ingredients (for 4 persons):

750 g potatoes

500 g flour

250 ml water

1 egg

400 ml cream  
250 g bacon  
pepper, salt, nutmeg, stock

Preparation:

First you prepare the dough for the dumplings: Mix the flour, the egg, the water and a good pinch of pepper, salt and nutmeg. Then you peel and quarter the potatoes and put them on as salt-potatoes.

You put the dough in little portions into the water by using a dessert spoon and wait until they surface again. Let them boil two additional minutes and finally skim them off.

The bacon sauce is very easy: dice the bacon, fry it and extinguish it with the cream. Season it with the instant-stock and pepper. Let it thicken. And finally: ENJOY!

### ST 3: *The saarländish Bubble & Squeak – Dibbelabbes*

A soon-made dish with healthy ingredients and a super delicious taste from the Saarland.

Ingredients:

500 g potatoes  
3 onions  
2 rasher of bacon  
pepper } like you want it to taste  
salt }  
1 egg

First you have to peel the potatoes and then grate them into fine pieces. After that you have to peel and grate the onions, too. Then put the potatoes and onions together and add the egg.

Cut the bacon into little cubes and add them to the rest. Spice it with salt and pepper. Now put it all together in a hot pan with oil and let it brown. Sometimes you have to shake the pan. After ½ an hour the Dibbelabbes is finished.

Enjoy your meal!

Tip: Dibbelabbes is even more delicious with a nice drink.

### ST 4: *Delicious Dibbelabbes*

Being a traditional recipe in the German province Saarland, the rich dish is loved by everyone who tasted it.

Serving size: 4

Preparation time: 1 hour

Ingredients:

2 kg potatoes  
2 onions  
2 cloves of garlic  
2 stems of leek  
2 eggs  
½ bunch of parsley  
salt + black pepper  
nutmeg  
2 tablespoons of butter

¼ kg bacon

First drain the potatoes and rub them clearly so a hard mixture is formed. Then drain and cut the onions, press the garlic and give both of it to the potatoes.

Clear the leek and cut it. Add this and the eggs to the potatoes and season it with salt, pepper and nutmeg.

Heat the butter in a pan and roast the rest of the bacon. Mix everything and roast the “Dibbelabbes” until its crispy.

### *ST 5: Dibbelabbes*

A warm dish for lunch or dinner. It is easy to cook and a delicious famous “saarländisches” dish. You can warm it up the next day as well.

Ingredients (for 4 persons):

2 kg potatoes

2 onions

2 garlic cloves

2 bars of leek

¼ kg dried meat

2 eggs

½ bunch of parsley

Salt

Pepper

Nutmeg

2 tbs butter oil

Preparation:

Peel potatoes, grate finely and squeeze firmly in a linen cloth, so that a relatively dry mass. Peel the onions and garlic also rub onions, garlic press, add to the potato mixture. Eggs open, clean, wash leeks and cut into thin rings and also give the eggs to the potatoes. Dried meat into small cubes, add half to the potato mixture with the salt, pepper and nutmeg to taste strong.

Heat the butter in a cast-iron pans, half of the dried meat and fry crispy then pour the potato mixture into the roasting pan. The mass of brown and form under constant “rearranging” crusts leave until the potato mixture is cooked. This takes about 1 hour.

### *ST 6: Dibbelabbes*

Dibbelabbes is one of the most popular dishes from the Saarland. You can often find it in restaurants in Saarland, which offer original dishes from the Saarland. Mostly it isn't prepared at home because it's too much work. The name of the dish sounds a little bit crazy. It consists of the two 'saarländisch' words “dibbe” (pot) and “labbe”(cloth) so its orally meaning is pot cloth.

Ingredients (for 6 people):

1 egg

150 g dried meat

3 pound potatoes

1 stick field garlic

3 big onions  
salt and pepper  
nutmeg  
parsley

Preparation:

First cut the dried meat into little cubes and roast them in a pan with a little bit oil. Then cut the field garlic into small circles and sauté them in the same pan like the dried meat. After this peel the potatoes, grate them and press them out. When you've done this grate the onions, too and mix them with the grated potatoes. After this put the potatoes and onions into a baking pan and mix it with a egg into it. Now season the almost ready Dibbelabbes with salt and pepper. Put it into the oven at 200°C for two hours, but put the lid on it! After one hour and fortyfives minutes take the lid away, so a crispy surface can be built. If you want, you can eat with it apple sauce, endive, or if you like it a bit spicy: use garlic.

Have a nice meal!

### *ST 7: Fried potatoes*

The begining of the potatoe was in south america. The potoatoe came to Europe after the capture of Peru in year 1536.

After that the spud (other word for potaotoe) became very famous in the hole world. Today it's not able to live without it because the spud is one of the staff of live.

*Serves 4*

15 medium potatoes (waxy)  
100 g bacon  
1 onion or shallot  
5 tesaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon ground pepper  
1 teaspoon paprika powder  
2 teaspoons olive oil

First cook the potatoes for 18 minutes in good salted water till they are firm to the bite.

Then peel them an cut them into round slice.

After that, cut the onion or shallot (shalltos are milder) into little cubes. In addition cut the bacon in little stripes.

Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and put the onion, the spuds and the bacon together in the pan.

Roast the potatoes till they have an brown border.

Lastly season them with the pepper, the paprika powder and the remains of the salt.

Now you can serve them.

### *ST 8: German potato-heads with tasty sausage from Lyon*

This dish is often prepared by special festivals in the Saarland. Also you can use this recipe for normal dinner every day. This meal is one of the most popular dishes in this region.

Serving size: 3–4

Preparation time: 1 h

Ingredients:

1 ring tasty sausage from Lyon

700 g potatoes  
a little bit of pepper  
2 tubers onion  
1 tablespoon crème fraîche

Boil the potatoes and let them cool down. After this you have to pell the potatoes and to cut them into slices. The sausage from Lyon you can also cut into slices. Then you have to peel the onion and cut them into cubes. Put together in frying pan with hot oil and fry them gold brown. Season them with pepper and before the serving give one tablespoon crème fraîche on it.

### *ST 9: Schwenker*

The Schwenker is an traditional saarlandish steak. It is famous for its taste and many people like to do it at a barbecue. This kind of steak is very recommendable for every grill party.

Ingredients:

1 kg pork  
125 ml oil  
5 onions, in stripes  
2 cloves of garlic, mashed  
3 ½ juniper berry, mashed  
½ teaspoon mustard  
thyme  
oregano  
curry pulver  
pepper pulver  
cayene pepper  
salt & pepper  
grease for the grill

First of all, the pork has to be cut in 250-g-pieces and then put into a bole. Mix the oil, onions, garlic, juniper berry, mustard, thyme, oregano, curry pulver, pepper pulver, cayene pepper, salt and pepper, and then por it over the prepared steaks. The next step is to leave the steaks for 24 hours in the fridge. Take the steak out of the fridge on time, before you start to grill.

But attention! Before you start, the grill has to be well greased and heated over the fire. Wait until the fire is broken and then grill the schwenkers in a low hight. 10–15 minutes is the ideal time to grill the steak on both sides.

Tip: Por 1 to 2 bottles of good saarlandish bier over the Schwenkers

### *ST 10: Traditional German “Currywurst”*

The “Currywurst” is a German recipe, which people mostly eat for lunch because it is fast and delicious.

Serving size: 2 persons  
Preparing time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

2 sausages

ketchup  
curry  
spiced pepper  
salt & pepper  
Tabasco or chilli

Turn on the grill until it is hot enough. Then put the sausages on the grill and barbecue them till they're done to a turn. Then put them on a plate and above them you distribute ketchup, curry and spiced pepper. Then salt and pepper it.

For the people who like spicy food: 5–6 drops of Tabasco or a bit of chilli.

Now you can enjoy a German "Currywurst".

Bon Appetit!!!

### *ST 11: Delicious "Maultaschen"*

There is no good translation for the German meal "Maultaschen". These are Swabian large pasta squares filled with spinach and meat. They were first made around 1800 in Germany and are usually served in a hot sauce.

2 bunches parsley  
15 eggs  
2 bread  
600 g mince meat  
600 g sausage filling  
500 g spinach  
salt and pepper  
2 onions  
6 thin rashers of bacon  
1200 g flour  
3 big spoons of oil

With parsley, 6 eggs, the old bread, the mince meat, the sausage filling and the spinach you prepare the meat dough. Afterwards you cut the onions in cubes and give it to the meat dough in the pan. Mix the flour, 9 eggs, oil, 1 ½ teaspoons salt and the water and knead the dough. Divide it into nine parts and roll it out. Put the meat dough on the noodle dough parts and form a square.

Cook the pasta squares for 15 min in boiled water.

### *ST 12: Box-Pickert – The delicious Eastern Westfalian speciality*

The former poor-people-meal Pickert is now a tasty culinary speciality of Eastern Westphalia. There are two variants of the Pickert. The so-called rag-Pickert, which is especially prepared in the Lippeland, and the second variant, the box-Pickert, which is especially prepared in the Bielefeld region. Box-Pickert is prepared at family celebrations like birthdays.

Size of box: 35 × 11 cm  
Preparation time: 1:45 h

Ingredients:  
1 kg potatoes

3 eggs (medium-sized)  
1 teaspoon salt  
500 g wheat flour  
125 ml milk  
1 package dried yeast  
200 ml oil  
some grease  
250 g raisins (to taste)

Instructions:

1. Peel the potatoes, mix them together with eggs and the salt in a mixing bowl.
2. Heat the milk up in a small pot. Moreover mix the flour and the dried yeast in another pot.
3. Mix the flour-yeast mixture, warm milk and the potatoe-eggs-mixture with a mixer until the mixture is smoothed.
4. Knead the dough for circa 5 minutes. Afterwards leave it covered in a warm place 'till the dough increases.
5. If you want to, you can add raisins to the dough and fill the dough into a box form.
6. Put the form in the oven (160<sup>0</sup>–180<sup>0</sup> C/60 min).
7. Solve the Pickert out of the box form, cut it into 24 slices and eat it with butter and marmelade or fry it with oil in a frying pan until it's golden at both sides.

*ST 13: The excellently flavoured gravy – Ghormey Sabzi*

Ghormeh Sabzi is a traditional Persian meal which was created by the persian ethnic group a long time ago. It belongs to the national food of Iran and it is eaten mainly in the evening with a safran- or barberry-flavoured Basmati-rice as a side-dish.

Serving size: 4

1 kg lamb (beef-gulasch), cut into cubes  
250 g red beans, dried  
70 g mixture of herbs (parsley, chives, mint, dill...)  
2 onions  
3 dried limes  
salt  
pepper  
(oil)  
1 pot Basmati-rice, steam-cooked

First, soak the dried beans in water over the night and also the herbmix in water for several minutes. After this procedure fry the lamb with the minced onions, Then add the wet herbmix to the fried meal and fry the meal for about 10 minutes until its smell is spread out. Next deglaze the meal with 3 cups of water and lead it to the boil. Now you can add the beans and limes and flavour it with salt and pepper. Finally the cooking take place in a closed pot for 1 ½ to 2 hours. so the gravy is finished.

*ST 14: Torator*

A cold soup for a warm day. In Bulgaria dishes with yoghurt or milk are very popular and are eaten every day.

1 cucumber  
1 teaspoon oil  
2 hazelnuts  
2 cloves of garlic  
2 cups of yoghurt  
a pinch of dill  
250 ml water  
a pinch of parsley  
a pinch of tarragon

Mix the water and the yoghurt. Then cut the cucumber and hazelnuts in very small pieces. Grate the peeled cucumber and mix all the other ingredients together. Serve cold.

### *ST 15: Filled wine leaves*

Filled wine leaves are a famous dish of turkey. You can eat it everyday but usually it prepared for wedding ceremonies or for other special festivals. The leaves are rolled around a filling. The filling is mostly rice or meat. The dish goes well with yogurt or lemon. It's difficult to make but tastes very good.

Ingredients:

250 g fresh wine leaves

Filling:

4 tablespoon olive oil  
2 chopped onions  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
300 g rice  
50 g chopped parsley  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon paprika or pepper powder  
1 lemon or lemon juice

Filling:

Cook the wine leaves in boiling salted water for 10 minutes and let them drain in a sieve. Heat the olive oil with the chopped onions in a pot until the onions are limp. Mix rice, tomato paste and the chopped parsley together with the onions and stir a few minutes. Add finally salt and paprika or pepper. Stir frequently all ingredients for 5 minutes over a medium heat.

Preparation:

Place the wine leaves with the smooth side down on a table and remove the stems. Give about two teaspoons of the mixture in the lower middle of the leaf. Fold the sides of the wine leaf and roll it up. Put the wrapped leaves in a pot. Lay on top of that a few lemon slices. Cover them with water and cook it for 20 minutes. Serve hot or cold with yogurt.

Enjoy your meal!



SECONDI PIATTI

## **Food and culture**



# How permeable is the formal-informal boundary at work?

## An ethnographic account of the role of food in workplace discourse

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Talk about food at work is typically overlooked as peripheral, just like other relationally-oriented discourse (e.g. small talk and humor). Drawing on a data set of workplace interactions recorded in formal and informal settings, we demonstrate how food talk erodes and troubles formality boundaries. The distinctive distribution of food talk at the boundaries of workplace interaction creates a duality: because it occurs at boundaries, food talk is regarded as irrelevant; when it occurs in non-boundary positions, it has the interactional effect of reducing formality, regardless of its legitimacy as a business topic. In practice, food talk “indexes” boundaries and informality. Each time it occurs at boundaries, or creates informality, this indexicality is reinforced. We demonstrate just how food talk indexes informality in meeting talk.

### 1. Introduction

This paper explores the permeability of the formal-informal dimension of interaction in New Zealand workplaces by examining the relationship between language and food. Food is often a central component of social events, ranging from the most formal and ritual celebrations, such as weddings, to regular family dinners where family members meet to share family gossip and maintain their relationships. In the workplace, however, it is typically “disappeared” to use Joyce Fletcher’s (1999) terminology. So while food may be the legitimate and ratified centre of social events outside the workplace, like gossip, humor and small talk, it is largely treated as marginal or peripheral in most workplaces. In other words, food is rarely the first topic that comes to mind when we think about work. But a little reflection generates examples of a myriad ways in which food, and talk about food, is entwined in everyday workplace interaction.

Our research in a wide range of New Zealand organizations indicates that food plays a much more significant role in workplace interaction than might have been expected. This paper explores where, when and how food insinuates itself into workplace talk. We explore the ways in which food can erode and trouble the formal-informal boundaries of workplace contexts.

## 2. Literature survey

In the body of research which investigates workplace discourse, very little attention has been paid to talk about food. Food is typically referred to simply as part of the background setting or context in which the talk occurs.<sup>1</sup> For example, discourse analysts have investigated humor in the hotel kitchen (Brown & Keegan 1999); and Franziskus (2013) analyzes the multilingual practices of employees in a supermarket. Talk in bakeries has been the focus of a number of studies: Holland (2009) examined the role of power in interactions in a bakery as it was transformed from a family business to a manufacturing workplace; Pilkington (1998) analyzed the gendered features of bakery gossip during different overnight baking shifts; Nielsen (2008) examined how the physical setting and economic context of the bakery contribute to gendered discourse; and Leung (2009) described code-switching patterns in an Asian bakery in Philadelphia. In such research, despite the presence of food in the research site, talk about food is not the main focus of the analysis (cf. also Norrick 2001, 2003). The setting is largely incidental, with the analyses predominantly concerned about linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of the interaction. Yet food is clearly vital to our everyday lives, including our workplace lives.

Many other constructive components of workplace talk have been overlooked as peripheral, or dismissed as marginal (even counter-productive), as Fletcher (1999) demonstrated in her examination of relational talk in a specific workplace. She argued that relational features of talk, features which are often regarded as “women’s work”, are often rendered invisible as a result of the tendency to regard socially-sanctioned transactional talk as compromising “real” work. New perspectives on workplace talk mean that the important role of relational talk at work, including small talk and humor, is now widely recognized (Ragan 2000; Coupland 2000; Holmes 2000; Schnurr 2009; Chan 2005; Mirivel & Tracy 2005).

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1. Here we refer to non-food establishments which represent the majority of workplace settings which have been studied within the field, i.e. those workplaces where food is not the core business. Our claims, however, do not necessarily hold for workplaces where food *is* the business at hand.

Recent research, including our own work in New Zealand workplaces, has clearly demonstrated that relational talk makes a crucial contribution to achieving workplace objectives (Holmes 2007; Holmes, Marra & Vine 2011; Locher 2004; Schnurr & Chan 2011; Murata 2011). Oiling the interactional wheels and maintaining good relationships with colleagues is an increasingly recognized aspect of effective leadership, for example, and small talk and humor are discourse strategies which demonstrably contribute to these goals. Furthermore, even in predominantly transactional interactions such as telephone sales conversations or fast food service outlets, researchers have demonstrated that small talk is an important component in developing and maintaining relationships with clients (e.g. Bubel 2006; Cheepen 2000; Belt 2002; Leidner 1993).

Our research has also demonstrated that relational talk at work (humor, small talk, narratives, small stories, anecdotes) tends to occur at the boundaries of interactions, i.e. at the beginning and ends of the day, at the start and close of meetings, and between meeting topics (e.g. Holmes 2005; Holmes & Marra 2004). Evidence for this distinctive distribution has been provided by other studies in different socio-cultural contexts, in particular in research on small talk at work (e.g. Mirivel & Tracy 2005; Chan 2005; Murata 2011). Research examining the distribution of workplace humor, also identifies this canonical positioning, arguing that it is often an indication of tension relief. Consalvo (1989), for example, notes the rapid increase in the frequency of humor when problems which have arisen in particularly complicated sections of meeting talk are resolved. In a hospital setting, Pizzini (1991) tracks the occurrences of humor by doctors and patients during labor, charting high frequency of humor immediately before and after the birth of a baby. Similarly, humor in team meetings often serves to indicate that the group has reached an acceptable decision (Marra 2003; Schnurr 2009). In all cases, the relational talk is positioned firmly at talk and topic boundaries.

Approaching the topic of food in the workplace as another aspect of relational work, we note a number of interesting similarities in the functions and distribution of workplace discourse which features food in some way. Like small talk and humor, discourse around food is typically associated with creating and maintaining workplace relationships; and like these relational aspects of talk, it tends to occur at meeting and topic boundaries, reinforcing perceptions of its peripheral nature. Interestingly, this distribution creates a type of duality. Because talk about food usually occurs at workplace activity boundaries, it is often discounted and regarded as irrelevant, informal and off-record. Consequently, when talk about food occurs in non-boundary positions, it tends to have the interactional effect of reducing the formality of the talk, and reclassifying the associated talk as off-record and peripheral. Below we explore this fascinating cycle and the way that the typical distribution of food talk intersects with its function, thus contributing

to what we describe as the permeability of the formal-informal dimension of interaction in New Zealand workplaces. First, however, we describe our database and methodology.

### 3. Database and methodology

The data used as the basis of the analyses in this article was collected by the Language in the Workplace (LWP) Project team, based at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand.<sup>2</sup> Our database currently comprises over 3000 interactions recorded in more than thirty New Zealand workplaces, including government departments, factories, small businesses, semi-public or non-government organizations (NGOs), and private, commercial organizations. The interactions include both business talk and social talk, informal talk and meetings of many different sizes and kinds, with participants from a wide range of different levels in the workplace hierarchy.

The LWP methodology involves a participatory approach which gives participants direct control over the data collection; volunteers from the workplaces carry a voice recorder throughout their workday and record samples of their everyday interactions.<sup>3</sup> Where possible, meetings are also video-recorded, again without any of the researchers being present. The cameras are set up before the participants enter the meeting room and removed after everyone has left, thus minimizing the effects of the researchers on the data collected. In addition, in the well-established tradition of interactional sociolinguistic analysis, a rich fund of ethnographic information is gathered by means of interviews and observations to assist with interpreting the data. This approach has proved very successful in collecting actual workplace data, and the project's methodology has been adopted by many others researching spoken interaction (e.g. Koester 2006; Richards 2006; Angouri 2007; Mullany 2007; Ladegaard 2011).

This paper draws on the full range of recorded data, including interactions at morning tea, small, relatively informal work-related meetings and discussions involving two or three people, as well as data from larger, and generally longer, meetings which were both audio- and video-recorded. From this database we identified all instances of interaction which involved food in any way, whether food-related events, or talk with food present, or talk about food. This data set

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2. See <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/lwp> for further information)

3. For more information on the project, and especially details of data collection and methodology, see Holmes and Stubbe (2003) and Marra (2008).

provided the basis for the analysis which follows. The analysis distinguishes two distinct contexts in which food intersects with meetings in New Zealand workplaces: firstly, where food is present and talk about food occurs at the boundaries between formal and informal interactions at work; secondly, where food is present and talk about food occurs within meeting talk, including instances where it is a ratified topic of workplace talk.

#### 4. Food talk at boundaries

The New Zealand workplaces in our database typically had designated breaks for morning tea, and sometimes also for afternoon tea, where food was often a component of the social event. Where workplace participants gathered together for these events, we asked them to continue recording – and many did so. These formally “off-record” contexts provided ample opportunities for the relational talk which serves as the widely recognized “oil” for constructing and maintaining good collegial relationships at work. The topics at these breaks were wide-ranging, including talk about weekend and after-work activities, holidays, clothes, gossip about mutual acquaintances, and, interestingly, also some work-related transactional talk of varying degrees of importance. Our earlier analyses (e.g. Holmes & Stubbe 2003) have indicated that the objectives of such transactional talk were sometimes more effectively accomplished in an informal situation, where formalities are temporarily suspended and status differences downplayed. This break talk may thus fortuitously smooth the way for potentially difficult future negotiations.

More relevantly here, however, food (usually biscuits or cake) and drink (tea and coffee) provided the focus for these events, and occasionally food was also an explicit topic of discussion, as in Example (1) in which Leo teases his mentee, Isaac, about not being comfortable with using a knife and fork.

(1)<sup>4</sup> Context. Morning tea in a Government department where Isaac, a skilled migrant from China, is working as an intern. Leo is his New Zealand colleague and mentor.

1. Leo: and you came to lunch and yeah i know
2. they didn't have chop sticks but er //[[laughs]\
3. Isaac: /[laughs]\...\
4. Leo: do you n-so you um do you do you use knife
5. and fork at all knives and forks at all

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4. For transcription convention see appendix.

6. Isaac: er ++ just a–a just a few times
7. Leo: just a //few times\
8. Isaac: /a a a\\few //times yeah\
9. Leo: /oh right\\so that would have been quite challenging
10. Leo: cos all the people here like Valerie and them
11. they're //very\competent with chopsticks too
12. Isaac: /mm\\
13. Isaac: //oh\
14. Leo: /but\\... but they still know how to use knives and
15. forks as well
16. Isaac: oh
17. Leo: so they so you might you know you might
18. want to work on (that)
19. Isaac: tomorrow I will bring a cake a cake at morning tea time
20. and I would like to share it with all the colleagues
21. Leo: that's very nice we'll look forward to eating it
22. Isaac: [laughs] okay thank you

In this excerpt, the morning tea break provides a relaxed opportunity for Leo to tease Isaac about food utensils. While to outsiders the jibe about Isaac's use of chopsticks from Leo might seem extreme and even potentially racist, within our experience of researching New Zealand organizations this kind of teasing (especially in a casual, social context such as this) is frequently used as solidarity-enhancing behavior (cf. Daly et al. 2004). Isaac and Leo have been working together for six weeks and they have developed rapport to permit this. The atmosphere is positive and Leo's tone is friendly; hence this banter seems intended to make Isaac feel that he is being treated as one of the team. This is reinforced firstly when Leo refers to other Chinese members of the team who can use both chopsticks and knives and forks (lines 10–15), and secondly when he teases Isaac that he “might want to work on that” (lines 15–16), using a phrase appropriate to his mentoring role, in this very social context. Reinforcing this interpretation, Leo later adds jokingly that use of knives and forks is “part of Isaac's training”. Isaac responds positively with an offer to bring cake to share for morning tea (lines 19–20), indicating that he has quickly picked up the fact that contributions of food are welcome, and that this will assist him to integrate into the workplace. In fact, when Isaac subsequently brings the cake the following day, Leo continues the humor by joking that he “can't use chopsticks on it”.

In another company, in a very similar context, Carl, the mentee, also offers to bring cake for morning tea. Interestingly, his mentor suggests that people could take the cake to a meeting which will follow morning tea, illustrating a point that seems to characterize a number of New Zealand workplaces, namely that the

boundaries between social and transactional activities are more permeable than might be expected.

- (2) Context. Carl is an intern in a government department. Nerissa is his colleague and mentor. They are working side by side.
1. Carl: oh Nerissa I just um
  2.           you know tomorrow is my last //day here\
  3. Nerissa: /mm mm\\
  4. Carl: so um I'm thinking I um I will bring some finger food
  5. Nerissa: oh yep
  6. Carl: er for the morning tea
  7. Nerissa: oh yeah
  8. Carl: yep and how what do you think?
  9. Nerissa: um yep well we were going to do lunch any way
  10.           for you for relieving things
  11.           so I don't know if you need to
  12.           um they have um forecasting have their meeting
  13.           //on friday morning don't they at eleven to twelve
  14.           you should bring something for that
  15.           that would be a good idea\
  16. Carl: /yep mhm yep that's right mhm + oh okay\\
  17. Nerissa: what kind of things were you thinking?
  18. Carl: mm I think just some tai- taiwanese um cake
  19. Nerissa: oh yeah
  20. Carl: and er and a sweets
  21. Nerissa: oh yeah cool
  22. Carl: yeah I think I //will bring some of that
  23.           and a put on the morning tea table
  24.           and er everyone can help by their self\
  25. Nerissa: /I think they'd like that + yep yeah yeah yeah yep yep yep
  26.           + yep themselves\\ yep yep
  27.           and then take some of it to their meeting
  28.           they'll like that if you take that there
  29.           yeah that's a good idea mm
  30. Carl: okay

This excerpt provides rich illustrative material on a number of relevant points. Carl's plan to bring finger food for morning tea on his last day indicates that he has learned that sharing food is an appropriate way of expressing appreciation in the workplace (lines 1–6). Nerissa's "thinking aloud" response is complicated, but illustrates well the imbrication of food and work in this company: firstly, she notes that Carl's colleagues were planning to take him out for lunch in recognition that his contribution has helped provide them with some work relief "for relieving things"

(line 10). After first considering that this makes his morning tea offer redundant (line 11), she re-thinks and suggests that he brings something for the team he has been working most closely with, the “forecasting” team (line 12) for their meeting between eleven and twelve, i.e. after morning tea (line 13). After discussing just what he will bring, namely Taiwanese cake (line 18) and sweets (line 20), Carl reverts to his plan to make this a contribution to morning tea where everyone can help themselves (lines 23–24), while Nerissa persists with her suggestion that the food can be taken to the meeting: “and then take some of it to their meeting they’ll like that if you take that there” (lines 27–28). This excerpt thus nicely demonstrates how a negotiation about food and its place in workplace interaction contributes to the construction and maintenance of workplace relationships. It is clear that both the particular kind of food and its precise positioning in relation to work activities are significant matters subject to normative constraints, which Nerissa is informally policing. As Leo’s joking comments to Isaac indicated, a mentor’s guidance can usefully extend beyond the transactional dimension to assist new employees negotiate the relational norms of particular workplaces, including the role of food in workplace interaction.

Nerissa’s comments indicate that food was sometimes carried into meetings, where it served to deformalize the event, a desirable outcome in New Zealand, where formality is avoided as much as possible and a strong egalitarian ethic prevails (Trevor-Roberts et al. 2003). Food and talk about food serve an important function and this was especially apparent at the boundaries of meetings. Our analysis suggests that while such talk was typically discounted by the participants and considered irrelevant, nevertheless it clearly served the function of easing participants across the boundary between informal pre-meeting talk and the commencement of the formal meeting. Example (3) illustrates this point very clearly.

- (3) Context. Meeting of senior management team at a production company. People are gathering for the monthly management meeting and the participants are still waiting for several colleagues.
1. Veronica: no that’s for Sharon
  2. // (as we’re) going through the meeting\
  3. Sharon: // [laughs]\
  4. Paul: good grief
  5. Sharon: no they’re not
  6. [general laughter]
  7. Jaeson: oh chocolate oh dude // [drawls]: oh:\
  8. Harry: /happy birthday\ Sharon

Our ethnographic data provide extensive evidence that the members of this team relate very well to each other. It is a positive and very productive team. Their ease with each other and their positive collegial attitudes are evident in the informal humor generated around the box of chocolates on the table, and the humor focuses

in particular on Sharon's partiality toward chocolate. Paul's comment "good grief" (line 4) and Jason's contribution "oh chocolate oh dude" (line 7) provide support for this interpretation as does Jason's drawled groan of anticipation "oh" (line 7). And Harry's tease, likening the situation to a birthday treat for Sharon, provides further support (line 8). However, Sharon's comment "no they're not" (line 5) indicates, as is abundantly clear to all, that the chocolates are not just for her. The laughter and humor this short exchange produces thus contribute to the informal and friendly atmosphere, and demonstrate how food in this boundary position functions to erode the formality of the meeting.

Once again we see how talk about food generates humor and deformalizes the workplace atmosphere. And, as in Example (3), the occurrence of this talk about food at the start of the meeting serves to facilitate the transition from casual pre-meeting chat to formal meeting talk. The next section considers how food talk functions when it subtly creeps into meeting talk.

## 5. Food talk affects formality

Transactional talk in meetings usually focuses on topics which are more obviously related to the business goals of the organization. We have analyzed many instances of such talk in our previous research (Holmes & Stubbe 2003). At times, however, food insinuates itself into a serious discussion, and the effect is noticeable and interesting. Example (4) illustrates how food serves to provide a topic of light relief towards the end of a long complicated planning meeting which has addressed some very knotty problems and generated a good deal of tension.

- (4) Context. Staff meeting of a small section of a government department discussing solution to the current staffing problem. There is laughter throughout the example.
1. Leila: Emma you are part of the solution
  2.           in that I think that ( )
  3. Emma: I only want to be part of the problem
  4. XF: really
  5. Leila: [laughs] [in fun growly tone]: don't you dare
  6.           be part of the problem:
  7.           I'll keep on giving you vitamin c + bananas
  8.           [laughs] chocolate fish [laughs]
  9.           I gave I gave um I you know
  10.          everyone had chocolate fish last week
  11.          but Emma had more chocolate fish than anybody
  12.          the only thing was she had holes in her teeth //[laughs]
  13. Emma: /I couldn't eat them\\
  14. Leila: she couldn't eat them [laughs]

As meeting chair and manager of the section, Leila has been fundamentally involved in guiding the complex discussion of how tasks will be allocated and staffing problems addressed over the coming months. Her serious comment “Emma you are part of the solution” (line 1) elicits a facetious response from Emma “I only want to be part of the problem” (line 3) which Leila responds to in kind, seizing the opportunity to lighten the atmosphere and relieve the tension. Her chosen topic is the chocolate fish rewards she had handed out to her team the previous week, with an anecdote about how although Emma had earned most she was unable to eat them because of the state of her teeth (lines 9–12). She teases Emma that she will therefore give her vitamin C and bananas this time (line 7). Emma provides collaborative feedback in response to Leila’s small story “I couldn’t eat them” (line 13) which Leila echoes (line 14). Good humor is evident in the laughter of the team members throughout this little excerpt which also illustrates the use of chocolate fish as a reward, a well-known feature of New Zealand culture. Occurring in the middle of the meeting, rather than at the boundary, this talk about food provides relief from the serious discussion and deformalizes the tone of the meeting, albeit briefly.

In the next example, food is a legitimate topic of discussion. As noted above, transactional talk in meetings typically focuses on topics which are related to the business goals of the organization. Interestingly, however, there are some occasions when the “business” of the meeting explicitly involves food. In these cases the topic of food is a formal agenda item, and it is treated rather differently.

Example (5) illustrates how food is treated when it arises as a legitimate topic in planning social events. Organizations which include celebrations in their regular timetable of work activities typically discuss plans for events such as picnics, barbeques, and Christmas parties in the course of their normal weekly meetings. Example (5) provides a canonical example of this type of discussion which occurred in many of the workplaces in which we recorded.

- (5) Context. Four representatives from the sales and marketing teams at a production company (including marketing manager Sharon) talk to their General Manager about plans for the end of year summer barbeque.
1. Anna: are we gonna have scallops for our last day barbeque
  2. Sharon: //yeah\
  3. Jaeson: /(yeah)\
  4. Anna: yeah eh
  5. Sharon: and I //heard that the um\=
  6. Jaeson: /you are so special\
  7. Sharon: = I heard the wellington trawling um fish shop
  8. down in cuba street you know
  9. they won the fish and chip award last ( ) this year
  10. Jaeson: yeah

11. Sharon: best fish and chips
12.           if you order your crayfish and your scallops
13.           and everything like now
14.           they'll have it ready for your christmas party
15.           on the [laughs]: last day
16.           when I heard that: [smiles]:
17.           I thought I better take that number down: //[laughs]\
18. Anna: /as a back up\\
19. Jaeson: //what a cheek\\
20. Sharon: /[laughs]\\ [laughs] [drawls]: purely: as a back up
21.           in case the weather is bad

After enthusiastic agreement with Anna's proposal for scallops for their Christmas barbeque, Sharon proposes in considerable detail and with extensive supporting evidence, the advantages of a particular retail outlet to supply the seafood prepared in advance. Given that they have already decided to have a barbeque, she diplomatically agrees with Anna's comment that this is just a back-up plan (line 18) "purely as a back up" (line 20) thus responding too to Jaeson's comment "what a cheek" (line 19) jocularly indicating that he is offended that they should cast doubt on the reliability of the weather.

Once again we see the enthusiastic participation of the team members in a discussion featuring food, as well as the laughter and good humor that the topic engenders. And yet, even though the planning of the function is a legitimate topic of discussion for this meeting, the talk about food seems to reduce the degree of formality of the discussion. So while this group are on the whole relaxed and collegial in their discussions, the topic of food seems to contribute to a very informal style, with teasing and jocular abuse, much like the boundary talk we saw in the larger monthly management meeting of this company in Example (3).

## 6. Food talk indexes boundaries and informality

We have described above a correlation between boundaries, informality and food. It seems that food talk "indexes" both boundaries and informality, and each time it occurs at boundaries, or creates informality, this indexicality is reinforced. Indexicality is a prevalent consideration of current theoretical discussions of identity construction (see, for example, Bucholtz & Hall (2005) where it is included in their five principles for describing linguistic research on identity). The concept has much wider relevance, however. So, for example, in our research on Māori workplaces we note several linguistic and non-linguistic acts and features which construct

(or index) Māori space: “through their talk and their behavior toward their colleagues both within and outside the workplace, members of both organizations construct the workplace as Māori space” (Holmes et al. 2011:30, cf. Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; King 2011; Leeman & Modan 2009; Shohamy & Gorter 2009). These included use of Māori terms, following Māori sociopragmatic norms, and enacting distinctively Māori cultural practices. At a further level of complexity it is important to be clear about what we mean by an indexical relationship between food and meeting boundaries. Silverstein (2003) describes ordered indexicalities, where first order is a direct index, but later orders are one step removed and thus provide an indirect index. Accordingly, we do not intend to suggest that food indexes meeting boundaries per se. Rather the pathway is indirect, with food indexing informality and informality indexing meeting boundaries. In our data, for example, these levels are most easily recognizable in Example (4): “vitamin c [pastilles]”, “bananas” and “chocolate fish” all directly index the informality of treat-giving and indirectly signal (index) talk that belongs outside workplace tasks. This issue of directness is relevant to our study because it is conceivable that informality could be indexed by other means (not related to food), leading to similar interactional trouble. Overall, then, regardless of the level of abstraction, talk about food clearly indexes complex interactional meanings for these participants.

An interesting and important point which arises from Example (5) is the effect that food talk has on the participants. The discussion occurred during a meeting where the agenda included the topic of arrangements for two social functions, the (separate) end of year parties for both staff and clients. Despite being fully sanctioned topics which are important for the organization’s business goals, there seems to be a degree of self-consciousness and even embarrassment associated with the informality which is evoked. This is most obvious in Example (6) which provides evidence that the team is very aware that their noisy, and informal, enjoyment of discussions around food could elicit criticism from others.

- (6) Context. Later in the same meeting as example (5).
1. Jaeson: um look I’m gonna shut the door
  2. cos people think //that\
  3. Anna: /( think )\
  4. Sharon: //[laughs]\
  5. Brendan: //people think that we’re\ not professional
  6. Jaeson: people think that I’m I just enjoying myself
  7. Anna: can’t have that
  8. Jaeson: //[laughs]: yeah:\
  9. Sharon: /can’t have\ that //(can we)\
  10. Anna: /stop that\ right now
  11. Jaeson: have a good time [clears throat]

In the midst of their enthusiastic discussion of their planned end of year/Christmas party, Jaeson states that he will shut the door so others will not hear their talk (line 1). The overt content of the discussion, namely food, and the enjoyment they are deriving from talk about food, is reinforced by the collaborative and overlapping style of the contributions (lines 2–5, 8–10), again clearly indicating the engagement and involvement of the team members in the discussion. While food-oriented events may be serious and ratified components of the business on the agenda, it is remarkable how often the discussion of these items is accompanied by humor and a highly engaged interactional style. The topic itself seems to generate a “cultural pattern” of informality, and consequently it develops as a means to index meeting boundaries (Blommaert 2007). In other words, talk about food normally occurs at meeting boundaries when the serious transactional business has been concluded and the meeting is becoming less formal. Accordingly, talk about food therefore evokes a “stance” of informality and becomes associated with, or indexes, meeting boundaries (see Ochs 1992; Bucholtz 2009). Food in the workplace bears an “existential relation” (Duranti 1997: 17) to meeting boundaries by way of this connection with informality. So when the group wants to talk about food as a serious agenda item, this results in interactional difficulty. This is apparent in the following 3 examples, i.e. Examples (7a–c), each of which illustrates the participants’ attempts to bring the meeting back to the agenda.

- (7a)
1. Sharon: /[[laughs]\
  2. Brendan: //[laughs]\ [sighs] //[laughs]\
  3. Anna: /anyway\ we’ve di//gressed\
  4. Jaeson: /[clears throat]\ yes let’s get back on to the subject
  5. now you had a nice little um +++
  6. agenda what we were gonna talk about
  7. there were four points

The laughter which surrounds the planning for the parties is analyzed by Anna as a digression (line 3), and the meeting chair and General Manager, Jaeson, gets them “back on to the subject” at hand and back to the agenda.

- (b)
1. Sharon: that took us what half an hour
  2. Jaeson: //what are we gonna call the\
  3. Brendan: /half an hour yeah\
  4. Anna: /that’s progress excellent\

In this example Sharon notes how long they have been talking about the topic (“half an hour”), which her sarcastic tone seems to suggest is far too long for such a frivolous topic (line 1).

- (c)
1. Jaeson: where are we up to now um
  2. h- how many more points have we got to go
  3. Sharon: points?
  4. Jaeson: yeah on the agenda
  5. Sharon: that's it
  6. Jaeson: that's it is it
  7. Sharon: yeah
  8. Jaeson: okay i just need to get going [laughs]: soon:
  9. //[[laughs] [laughs]: i know:\
  10. Sharon: /we've taken so flippin long\

The length of time they have spent on the topic of food evokes further comment later in the meeting (line 10), and once again Jaeson apparently feels the need to bring them explicitly back to the agenda (lines 1–2). Direct references to the agenda call forth formality and thus index “meetings proper” in an attempt to deflect the meeting boundaries evoked via talk about food. These references to the agenda are particularly marked, both because of their frequency, and because of the central role the agenda is, untypically, playing in this meeting. Meetings of this close-knit team do not generally need so much explicit structure. Clearly this discussion is proving interactionally challenging. It seems that a focus on the topic of food is troubling their normal patterns of workplace talk. We suggest that they are faced here with an inescapable conundrum; food indexes meeting boundaries via informality, but in this meeting food is meant to be a central, serious and formal meeting topic.

After this struggle, the group find a way to explicitly confront their interactional dilemma. In Example (6), their comments had focused on the risk of disturbing other colleagues. In Examples (7a–c), they were worrying about time wasting and getting through the agenda. In Example (8), the team use our “presence” as researchers (in the form of the audio-recording equipment) to facilitate talk about their problems, albeit indirectly.

- (8)
1. Sharon: [laughs]: do you //think that when these\ people:=
  2. Anna: /[laughs]\
  3. Sharon: = listen to these tapes they're gonna give a recommendation
  4. that no wonder we have so many meetings here
  5. [laughs]: because nothing's //ever actually:\um
  6. Anna: /[laughs]: nothing:\
  7. Jaeson: oh I never thought about + that
  8. [general laughter]...
  9. Jaeson: gee none of my meetings are like this
  10. this is only when you're around //sharon so [clears throat]\
  11. Sharon: /[laughs] what rubbish\
  12. Anna: you're so frivolous

Sharon and Anna humorously suggest that as evaluators of their interaction, we might think that nothing has been achieved in this meeting (lines 5–6), despite the fact that they have made enormous progress in planning the two food-based events which they have gathered to discuss. Jaeson jests that the informality has arisen because of Sharon's presence (lines 9–10), using yet another device to account for the lack of seriousness or frivolity which the food talk has created. As we have demonstrated, however, it is talk about food which leads to this evaluation: the team cannot take seriously the notion that this topic justifies legitimate "business" time.

## 7. Conclusion

In most previous research on workplace discourse, little attention has been paid to explicit talk about food. Our analysis of workplace discourse indicates, however, that food makes a contribution similar to that of other aspects of relational workplace interaction, such as humor, small talk and narrative. These components of workplace talk tend to occur at the boundaries of interactions, i.e. at the start and close of meetings, and between meeting topics, and both food and talk about food typically have a similar distribution.

We have demonstrated in this paper how this characteristic distributional pattern can generate interactional trouble when it is flouted. Because talk about food usually occurs at workplace activity boundaries, it is typically discounted and regarded as informal and off-record. Food talk generally occurs before the meeting proper starts or as the meeting winds down. Consequently, talk about food comes to generate informality and index meeting boundaries.

As a result food talk may be deployed deliberately to contribute to rapport building and informality or to reduce the seriousness of an intense discussion. Food may be advocated as a means of establishing good relationships with workmates, for example, and effective managers may use food talk strategically to permeate rigid meeting boundaries and lighten things up after a tough discussion. In other words, when talk about food occurs in non-boundary positions, it tends to have the interactional effect of reducing the formality of the talk, and reclassifying the associated talk as off-record and peripheral.

Our analysis also identified another somewhat unexpected consequence of the fact that food talk indexes informality and formal meeting boundaries. When talk about food occurs as a legitimate, socially sanctioned topic for meetings, it seemed to generate interactional trouble. Because food talk at work typically indexes informality and occurs at meeting boundaries, it presents a problem when it appears on the agenda as a serious and formal meeting topic. Participants provide extensive

evidence of lack of ease when this occurs, resorting to humor, jocular insult and defensive strategies to manage their discomfort.

In concluding we note that this analysis has focused on mainstream Pakeha New Zealand workplaces. We have some evidence that the topic of food is managed very differently in Māori meetings, where it is frequently a sanctioned agenda topic in a context where hosting guests/clients is generally treated as a core component of business (Marra, King & Holmes *fc*). This suggests the value of focussing on talk about food as yet another dimension of subtle differences in the discourse of culturally contrasting workplaces (Holmes, Marra & Vine 2011). This paper has thus provided a starting point for exploring a topic that, like small talk, has previously been discounted or regarded as peripheral. Hopefully we have made a convincing case for treating food talk as another illuminating dimension of relational workplace discourse.

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## Appendix

### Transcription conventions

- [ ] Paralinguistic and editorial information in square brackets.
- [ ]: : Colons indicate start and end of paralinguistic feature
- ... Section of transcript missing
- ? Question intonation where not clear on paper
- + untimed pause of approximately one second
- //here\ Overlapping talk. Double slashes indicate beginning and end.
- /here\
- ( ) Untranscribable talk

- (think) Transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance  
XF: Unidentified female speaker  
– Cut off utterance  
= Turn continues  
=

All names are pseudonyms, and any identifying material has been removed.

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# Comparing drinking toasts – Comparing contexts

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Spending on feasting and wine is better than hoarding our substance. That which we give makes us richer, that which is hoarded is lost. Shota Rustaveli: “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” (1172–1216)



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In this article I discuss drinking toasts given in cultures that attach great importance to this genre in everyday life (Georgia, Russia, Sweden) and toasts given by guests from countries where the genre is less important (Germany, the Netherlands). I show that Georgian toasts entail the most elaborate and a very specific performance. In comparison, Russian and Swedish toasts are simpler,

even though there are many similarities. Beyond a formula such as “cheers” and clinking glasses toasts in all three countries communicate moral values and underline national particularities (“do culture” in an ethnomethodological sense) and combine poetics with conversation (see Knoblauch & Kotthoff 2001; Norrick 2002). When performing toasts in these countries, foreign visitors often deviate from local cultural norms, but this is not problematic, provided they comply with the minimal genre standards (such as expressing the central formula of the *na zdarovie*-type at the end) and with those of ‘positive politeness’ in Goffman’s sense (1967).

### 1. Comparative ethnopragmatics and local constructions of ‘us’ and ‘them’

Differing pragmatics within and between cultures have been compared from several perspectives. In House’s (1986: 281) words:

Cross-cultural pragmatics is a field of inquiry which compares the ways in which two or more languages are used in communication. Cross-cultural pragmatics is an important new branch of contrastive linguistic studies because in any two languages different features of the social context may be found to be relevant in deciding what can be expressed and how it is conventionally expressed.

For a long time, studies of pragmatics with a comparative focus typically concentrated on how specific communicative functions are realized in different languages (Barron 2001: 23). For Barron a typical approach was to study the strategies employed in realizing a ‘request’ speech act in two different languages. While some scholars of contrastive pragmatics still do questionnaire studies of speech acts in different languages, such as studying how compliments or complaints are made (Farnia et al. 2010), others take broader discourse contexts into consideration and emphasize the necessity of extending their analysis beyond the specific speech act (Brehmer 2009). In his study of how gratitude is expressed in Russian (in comparison to German), Brehmer employs several complementary data sets, namely a small corpus of everyday spoken language, a questionnaire study and data from TV corpora.

Others go even further in approaching the study of language and culture and call this ‘ethnopragmatics’ (Duranti 2007). They aim to reconstruct human action as comprised of both an *affective* (to be with) and a *moral* (to be for) component (Duranti 2007: 86). Duranti’s notion of (speech) action takes into account the historical and social context from an anthropological perspective. Using examples from the Samoan language, he shows that certain speech acts have a specific indexical value because they are associated with specific social actors who define their identity in terms of the community. He calls this ‘performative agency’ (see the

review by Vergaro 2010). ‘Ethnopragmatics’ thus focuses much more strongly on interpreting talk within its natural surroundings. Pragmatics, as a usage-based perspective on language and interaction in context, not only explores speech activities, but also studies face work and identity management in larger communicative complexes and generally explores the discourse strategies of speaking and writing in natural contexts (Pütz & Neff-van Aertselaer 2008).

Here I will explore the speech genre of *toasting*, focusing on ‘performative agency’ and combining ideas from studies of intercultural communication, anthropological linguistics, conversation analysis, and gender and ritual studies (as in Kotthoff 2007). The frame of meals shared with guests varies greatly from culture to culture, and in each culture activates different knowledge schemata. I will examine specific aspects of conversation, keeping in mind what Hörning (2004) calls the ‘double character of culture’: it consists, on the one side, of symbols, rituals and texts and, on the other, of practices and interpretations. In Duranti’s sense (2007), we are doing interaction analysis as part of cultural semiotics. Toasts can be speech acts, as is the case if someone at a social gathering raises a glass and proposes: “I would like to drink to our little gathering. I hope we will all have an enjoyable evening.” But even in such a simple case more is demanded than speech alone.

There are also certain ‘felicity conditions’ in toasting (Austin 1962): One basic condition is that the toast should express a wish regarded favorably by everyone in the group. The imperative of clinking glasses before drinking an alcoholic beverage already reaches beyond the speech act into other domains of cultural semiotics. In many ways, toasts represent an ideal case or prototype of a communicative genre (Günthner 2007), showing how formal generic classifications and variations work in this case, and how the genre can be related to action. The act of drinking in toasts serves, e.g. as a way of honoring a person, a deed, a project, etc. Toasts are proposed in specific contexts (dining and/or drinking with guests or friends) and help to shape the degree of formality of these contexts. In the English-speaking world, toasters end a toast with a set phrase such as ‘cheers’, raise their glasses to each other, and after this gesture engage in the nonverbal activity of drinking together. We even find these basic features of toasting rituals in cultures where toasting is rare.

Eating and drinking are seldom just physical acts of consumption, but are rather culturally overlaid. Collectively relaxing with alcohol tends to give interaction an informal character, while toasting reformatizes it and transforms social drinking into ‘constructive drinking’ (Douglas 1984). Erdheim (2010) regards the enjoyment of alcohol as a means of transcending boundaries, particularly when alcohol is consumed ritually. Gough and Edwards (1998) point out that alcohol consumption has traditionally been used to affirm masculinity. In the past, women in many cultures and societies were even forbidden to drink, and men

were expected to consume alcohol without losing self-control (Kotthoff 1995). This body politics already indicates the social indexicality of activities whose reconstruction we, along with Duranti (2007), consider to be quite complex. Drinking talk is gendered in all the societies that have been studied up until now (see Eichwede 2006 on Russia). Frake (1972:90) writes that for the Subanon culture in Mindanao an adult male's social role depends to a considerable extent on his performance during social drinking. Kotthoff (1991, 1995), Tezelishvili (2003) and Mühlfried (2006) also describe similar relevance structures for Georgian social drinking talk. Today, changes in the gender politics of alcohol consumption and drinking talk can be observed in all the cultures discussed here: Georgia, Russia, Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany. Toasting and alcohol consumption are still largely gendered in Georgia. Women sometimes offer toasts at banquets if their social position demands it, but usually they don't toast in all-female gatherings.

Everywhere in the world toasting is practiced as a way of supporting 'positive face needs' in the sense of Brown and Levinson (1987) (e.g. thanking, congratulating, praising, complimenting). I will point out certain Georgian particularities of the genre (such as a pathetic toasting style that sometimes evokes a religious frame at the dinner table) and compare them with particular characteristics of Russian and Swedish toasts. An analysis of toasts offered by Dutch and German guests shows that they employ a non-native pragmatics and genre style. Since very few empirical studies have previously been made of this communicative genre in Russia and Sweden, the basis for comparison is limited. Thus in my comments on Russian and Swedish toasts, I must necessarily exercise great reserve, but observations in all three countries allow me to say that the toasts span a great stylistic range: There are short and long toasts, explicit or implicit ones, light-hearted and serious ones (to mention just a few contrasts). Very often, national traditions are explicitly mentioned. Toasts are used to "do culture" (Kotthoff 2004) in the sense of expressing national customs and standards. Russia and Sweden are countries with elaborate toasting customs, while the Netherlands and Germany are not. Research has also been done on the rich *zdravica* tradition in the Balkan countries (Petrovic 2006). While Ireland and Scotland also have well-known toasting traditions, I have not found any studies on them. All the travel guides to Georgia and many films portray the particularities of the Georgian banquet.<sup>1</sup> However, only insiders can interpret the nuances of a Georgian toasting performance in all its socially expressive dimensions.

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1. Especially entertaining is: *Kidnapping Caucasian Style* (1967) by Leonid Gaidai, in which a Russian ethnologist travels around Georgia to study toasts.

In other former Soviet republics besides Georgia, the toasting ritual also plays an important role, and there are numerous books offering original toasting formulations (Legkov 1990; Ivelashvili 1995; Petrovic 2006). See below an example, found at <http://www.suite101.com/content/na-zdorovie-the-truth-about-russian-toasts-and-drinking-customs-a313468>):

**No drink without a toast in Russia**

Russian traditions demand that every drink is accompanied by a toast. In the Soviet times, this habit was influenced even further by the Caucasian custom where toasting makes up an important part of oral culture. As Caucasian wines, especially Georgian ones, were considered the best in the iron-curtain Russia, the Georgian tradition of flowery parable-like toasts made its way into the country. You can see some typical samples of Georgian toasts here. Usually, they are ad-libbed by the *tamada* (tah-mah-DAH) – a Georgian toastmaster. Russian parties, too, usually have a tamada – either a hired one or just one of the revelers – whose responsibility is to make sure the guests have fun: a tamada organizes dances and party games, acts as a party cheerleader, and offers toasts. Russian toasts are usually less ornate and more to the point. But, as the Russians say, “Only alcoholics don’t toast their drinks.”

Russian toasts never come as close to the genre of prayer as is sometimes the case in Georgia, where guests often respond to a toast with ‘amen’ (Kotthoff 1999 and below). As an oral genre, the art of toasting must be learned through practice (Nodia 2000), even though there are books and web pages that offer advice on what topics to mention and the most suitable formulas, what they mean and what a proper toast should sound like in countries such as Russia, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland or Sweden. If a culture has identified a certain genre as typical of its tradition, then it can be used to “do culture” and its members will accept an outsider’s deviant participation if he or she complies with certain basic genre and politeness standards. Humor can be a central procedure in this conversational genre, both for natives and non-natives, who use it to cope with their knowledge deficits concerning the cultural standards of the genre. I will discuss the implications of this thesis below.

In Sweden, toasting with alcoholic beverages is obligatory at a table with guests, but it can be limited to the gesture of raising one’s glass to someone else (Röcklinsberg 2009). One fundamental question for all comparative research that tries to avoid reproducing stereotypes is how to define and identify the cultural groups to be compared. Their membership categorizations – be they national and ethnic identity, gender, age or profession – have lost their quasi-‘natural’ quality. Concepts from sociology, anthropology, linguistics and social psychology portray group culture as a construction of ‘us and others’ (Hausendorf 2000; Spreckels & Kotthoff 2007). Recently, many scholars (see Corder & Meyerhoff 2007 for a summary) have started to see cultural groups as communities of practice. Drawing

especially on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), communities of practice can be regarded as constituting cultural groups because they have their own sets of practices and shared interpretive repertoires. In a way that is typical for our constructionist approach, I will provide fine-grained interactional analyses in order to understand how social relationships are created and how a speaker's knowledge or ignorance of the shared repertoire and locally shared history of the community of practice influence ongoing social processes.

The space in which customary practices go unchallenged can range from a clearly defined 'community of practice' to diffuse communities with comparable consumption habits, lifestyles, attitudes and political systems. In many contexts, categorization may work with flexible demarcation lines, such as the East-West divide. Former Soviet bloc countries share historical practices in areas such as business and politics. Some sociolinguistic studies in intercultural communication (Leontiy 2009) point to communicative style features that reflect societal conditions. Differences in communicative styles can reflect various conditions such as societal backgrounds, knowledge asymmetries, differing language usage, opposing interests or value systems. Most analyses in intercultural communication research have tried to explain how different communicative styles lead to misunderstandings. However, in the last ten years, research has begun to go beyond analyses of misunderstandings in intercultural discourse (Bührig & ten Thije 2006). Comparisons of toasts offered by members of 'toasting cultures' with those by novices<sup>2</sup> unfamiliar with the culture's genre nearly always find significant differences. The latter offer much less elaborate toasts and draw on a more limited stylistic spectrum. But not all deviant speech behavior by outsiders is likely to be a source of cross-cultural irritation (let alone conflict); for in an activity as highly ritualized as toasting it may be perfectly acceptable for an outsider to deviate in certain regards from the conventional practices of insiders. I will later discuss how the toast genre indexes membership in a certain culture, stances to cultural standards, and/or being an outsider in an ethnomethodological sense. Local constructions of 'us' and 'them' through toast performance may be as acceptable to everyone in a group as are variations in the communication of in-group membership.

Speaking of "doing culture" we try to handle how degrees of salient cultural-ity are communicated. Culturality is, on the one side, always given, but, on the other side, the particular relevance of culture or respectively cultural differences can be brought into the foreground of interaction (Kotthoff 2004; Günthner forthcoming). "Doing x" means in Garfinkel's tradition to place a procedure in the foreground of attention.

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2. To be exact, they are not novices, but just not regular performers.

In Russia, Georgia and Sweden toasting practices range across a broad stylistic spectrum, from very formal drinking toasts that lend a formal character to an occasion to very informal ones. Particular styles index culturality with its preference for degrees of (in)formality. We use all available forms of expression to negotiate degrees of formality or informality (Irvine 1979). In most situations, this is in fact negotiable – and not pre-set as in the institutional discourse of, for example, a law court. Foreigners use a special stylistic spectrum, for example, they are likely to toast in an informal style that is easier to manage and at the same time echoes tendencies of their own culture.<sup>3</sup> Linke (2000) describes for Western countries a communicative tendency to deformatize situations.

## 2. Rituals of positive politeness

Toasting is definitely an interaction ritual of positive politeness in Erving Goffman's sense. Goffman (1967) distinguishes between positive and negative face work (drawing on Durkheim's theory of positive and negative rituals), i.e. supportive and protective distancing activities. Politeness has to do with saving, protecting and maintaining one's own face and that of others.

Stylistic delivery plays a greater role in this case. Collins (2004:xi) suggests that we can see how variations in the intensity of rituals lead to variations in social membership patterns, "not on the global level of 'society' but as local memberships, sometimes ephemeral, stratified and conflictual." Hence, the style of a ritual performance indexicalizes the social meaning of an event and invites inferencing (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz 2007).

The so-called 'positive face' is the one that a person (and his or her social network) receives and gives to others in terms of affirmation, appreciation, sympathy and expressions of affection. Included in positive face is a recognition of everything that makes up our personality (integrating the social network to culturally different degrees). Of course, negative face is also given a balanced treatment in toasting, because the toastmaster normally respects social distance. He or she does not publicize a toast subject's very private or critical domains. Because shared objects of reverence and praise are constituted by toasts, the positive dimension is in the foreground of interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) include among the communicative activities of positive politeness, e.g. compliments, affirmations of commonality, expressions of interest, personal inquiries, giving thanks

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3. See Linke 2000 on the cultural communicative tendency to deformatization in the German-speaking world.

and greeting others. Speakers display great emotional and rhetorical engagement in regard to the primary addressees of toasts and pay homage to them and their positive characteristics or aspirations. This engagement is accepted as shared by all the toasters and is later affirmed by clinking glasses and simultaneously drinking. Toasts are typical 'phatic communication' activities (Malinowski 1922). Their information value is usually less relevant than the demonstration of mutual esteem. Nonetheless, a toast performed before an audience publicizes moments from the toast subject's life and affirms shared values (Kotthoff 1999).

A toast performer does more than just honoring other persons and engaging in face politics for their sake. With a well-formulated toast, he can also maximize the other's esteem and authority in the group. Georgian men (and in certain cases also women) can use toasting to negotiate hierarchy and values and to present themselves as 'good Georgians' (in principle, but to a lesser degree, this also holds true in Russia and Sweden).

### 3. Georgian toasts

Greeting can be regarded as an example of a simple interaction ritual, but in many societies, toasting takes the form of a more complex interaction ritual. Like other communicative genres, toasts have a specific social distribution, value loading, and typical performance style (Holiski 1989; Kotthoff 1999).

When sitting down to share food and drink at a Georgian table, guests from most Western countries seldom realize that they are about to take part in a practice dramatically different from comparable ones in their native country (Kotthoff 1991; Chatwin 1997). They soon find themselves participating in a ritual, the ancient *supra* or table ceremony, that has little in common with the informal conversation between courses and beverages expected by most of them. At a Georgian table with guests, a master of ceremonies (*tamada*) is chosen, or the host undertakes to play this role. Performing the *supra* is an obligatory act of honoring a guest. But even within intimate groups like families and among neighbors there are many occasions for ceremonial meals and banquets, e.g. marriages, birthdays, examinations, births, returning from a trip, funerals and anniversaries – even events such as everyday visits by neighbors. Depending on the occasion, 'happy' banquets (*lxinis supra*) are distinguished from 'sad' ones (*čiris supra*), distinctions that are also enacted through the choice of foods and the topics of toasts (Holisky 1989). But even an ordinary evening spent with friends is formalized insofar as a communicative genre comes into play and sets the frame for the evening's interaction – this is the toasting genre of *sadregrzelo*. This word is made up of the components *dre*, meaning day, and *grzel*, meaning long. We find a derivation

with the circumfix *sa-\_\_\_-o*, meaning ‘that which is connected to a long life’. The substantive is derived from the causative verb *dregrzeleba* (to wish someone a long life). According to Boeder (2009), we already find the concept in the Middle Ages in the writings of the Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli.

Toasts, the *sadregrzelebi*, are generally offered by a *tamada*, assigned this task beforehand or especially chosen by the group to play this role. Often it is the host himself or a friend of the family who serves as the *tamada*. The *tamada* ensures that each draught of wine constitutes a gesture of honoring someone. Simply drinking without performing this ritual is regarded as impolite (in a sense that is more extreme and more context-overarching than in Russia and Sweden). During a typical evening shared by friends in Georgia, the following topics should be addressed in a toast (not necessarily in this order):<sup>4</sup> the *tamada* and his family, guests, their countries, the health and well-being of their families, deceased relatives or friends, parents, existing and still unborn children, world peace, the homelands of all present, the women at the table, the mothers of all those present, love, the health of the host household, the host and hostess. The toasts employ a variable set of canonical themes, but the canon is adapted to the situation. In this way, the conversation is formalized to a high degree and is fitted into a specific temporal structure. The formula for clinking glasses is *gaumaržos* (literally: he/she/it should be victorious). When drinking to a certain person it can be *gagimaržos* (you should be victorious). Goldstein (1999:27) points to some further generic particularities:

Often the *tamada*’s words are seconded by others in the gathering, who rise to say a few words about a parent or a friend. If the *tamada* knows that one of the guests has something particularly appropriate or moving to say, he may offer that person *alaverdi*, permission to pronounce the next toast. Here the *tamada*’s sensitivity is especially important as he surveys those gathered around the table, making sure that everyone is included and given an opportunity to speak.

### 3.1 Drinking to wish God’s grace

Between 1988 and 2006, I spent some 27 months in Georgia and collected about 40 hours of audio recordings of toasts, offered mainly in Georgian, but also in German and Russian.

Let us examine a toast made by a man (Coṭne) from the capital city of Tbilisi, who, with four others from Tbilisi (his daughter, our colleague Elsa, myself), was

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4. Kiknadze (2004) writes that the second toast should be to the hostess. In any case, this is very important. In Georgia there are many regional specificities centering on toasting and table customs (Böder 2009).

making a visit to the countryside in the Pshavi region. Coṭne drinks to the neighborhood and to the extended families of the Pshavs who are present (the farmer Vaxtang, the farmer Niko, a Georgian writer and another farmer). He invokes religious formulas in line 43 ('I bless you all') and in line 44 ('and may God give his grace to everyone'), which is typical. The start of the toast is clearly marked by a formal and ceremonial manner of speaking. The city-dweller, Coṭne, begins his toast with an introduction that already suggests a prayer: "praised be" (*adidos*). Indeed, in Georgia toasting is a genre that borders closely on prayer:

## (1) Toast 1

- 27 C: აღიღოს იმათი სახელი,  
adidos imati saxeli,  
**praised be the names of those**
- 28 რომელნიც თქვენი ხელიდან ჭიქას ითხოვს,  
romelnic tkveni xelidan čikas itxovs,  
**who await from your hands a glass,**
- 29 და თქვენი ენიდან სახელის  
da tkveni enidan saxelis  
**and from your tongues mention**
- 30 გაგონებას და სათქმელის თქმას.  
gagonebas da satkmelis tkmas.  
**of their own names.**

He makes much use of metonymy, as in line 27 ("praised be the names of those" for "praised be those"), line 28 ("from your hands" for "from you"), and line 29 ("from your tongues" for "from you"). Metonymy endows the discourse with pathos by elevating the particularity of its contents. Further, we often find rhetorical three-part lists:

- 31 V: gaumarჴოს ((parallel speech))
- 32 იმათ სახელსა და იმათ კაცობას  
imat saxelsa da imat kacobas  
**to the names and to the humanity,**
- 33 და იმათ ვაჟკაცობას  
da imat vaჴkacobas  
**and to the manliness**
- 34 და იმათ ქალობას,  
da imat kalobas,  
**and to the femininity of those,**
- 35 ვინც გვერდით დაგიდიან,  
vinc gverdit dagidian,  
**that accompany you,**
- 36 ავლილ-ჩავლილნი მრუდე თვალს არ გამოგაყოლებენ,  
avlil-čavlilni mrude tvals ar gamogaqoleben,  
**and cast no disparaging looks at you,**

- 37 თქვენ პატივსა სცემთ და ისინიც პატივსა გცემენ.  
tkvenpaṭivsa scemt da isinic paṭivsa gcemen.  
**whom you honor and by whom you are honored.**
- 38 ღმერთმა გაუმარჯოს სუყველას,  
ṛmertma gaumarḗos suqvelas,  
**God shall give His grace to all.**

Above, we find two such multi-part rhetorical lists (32, 33, 34 and 35, 36, 37). We encounter important cultural concepts like that of the family name (*saxeli*), *važkacoba*, which could be translated as ‘proper manliness’ (line 33), and *kaloba* (34), ‘proper femininity’ (see Kotthoff 1991 and 1995 for a discussion of the gender politics of Georgian toasts), as well as the term for honor and deference (*paṭivi*). Additional meanings, which need not be made explicit, are associated with these terms; they are invoked by virtue of the participants’ shared understanding.

- 39 მე ამით დავლოცავ აქ თქვენ სამეზობლობოს,  
me amit davlocav ak tkven samezoblobos,  
**hereby I drink to your neighbors,**
- 40 საგვარეულოსას.  
sagvareulosas. ((raises a glass))  
**to your extended families.**
- 41 N: საფშავლოს, (glasses clink)  
sapšavlos,  
**to the pšavs.**
- 42 C: საფშავლოს.  
sapšavlos.  
**to the pšavs.**
- 43 დაგილოცავთ სუყველას,  
dagilocavt suqvelas,  
**I bless all,**
- 44 და ღმერთმა გაუმარჯოს სუყველას,  
darṛmertma gaumarḗos suqvelas,  
**and may God give his grace to everyone**  
((holds the glass))
- 45 ჩვენ მასპინძლებს.  
čven maspinḗlebs  
**to our hosts.**
- 46 E: ამინ, ამინ, ამინ.  
amin, amin, amin.  
**amen, amen, amen.**
- 47 V: gaumarḗos.  
48 ((everyone drinks))

Several times, religious formulas are employed, as in (38, 43, 44). The toast is thereby transformed into a blessing of the host and his family and region. Hence,

it is not surprising that Elsa responds to the toast with a religious formula (46). Normally a round of toasting ends when an important person (here the host, Vaxtang), by saying *gaumaržos* (47), invites all the participants to repeat the wish and to drink.

### 3.2 Communicating honor and artistry

Great importance is assigned to formal and pathos-laden communication and to addressing those present as representatives of larger entities, such as their clans, regions, extended families or the institutions to which they may belong. This is a stylistic and ritualistic difference from the corresponding toasting genres in most countries of Western Europe or North America. In Georgia, people regard the pathos-laden form of toasting as normal and do not find it bombastic or pompous.

Pathos can be seen as 'keying' in the sense of Hymes (1974). Keyings form an important subgroup of contextualizations that has not been studied very much. Contextualization influences both the meaning and pragmatic function of an utterance and modulates the truth conditions of a discourse – its relation to reality. In humor or in eccentric speech, for example, truth conditions are relaxed (Kallmeyer 1979; Norrick 1993). This happens in pathos as well, but in a different direction (Kotthoff 2007). In joking, one can play with incongruent double framings, while in pathos the double framing is congruent: value systems (e.g. a current concrete frame and a general or transcendent one) are brought into alignment.

While raising and clinking glasses is part of the genre everywhere in the world, in Georgian toasts an emotional and sometimes even religious vocabulary plays an important role, as we have seen. Additionally, speakers use metaphors, metonymy, and threefold lists of parallel structures to achieve aesthetic and emotive effects. Important textual characteristics include a marked framing of the toast, more or less pronounced prosodic and syntactic line structuring, repetitive use of formulas, as well as a special picturesque and exclusive vocabulary distinct from that of everyday speech. These are used to praise the qualities of the toasted individuals.

In toasts, the speaker often draws public attention to the social qualities of specific persons. Georgian guests and their hosts expect a positive mention of their families or native regions as a sign of politeness, as well as expressions of respect for deceased members of their families. Similar to what Sifianou (1992) writes about Greek politeness standards, and Matsumoto (1988) about Japanese ones, a person is positioned in relationship to his/her social group and the duties entailed by membership.

Interdependency and reciprocity are the central ideas in the Georgian concept of *paṭivi* (honor and deference), which entails honoring others. In Georgia, an

individual's honor unavoidably extends to that of his family and village (as in many Asian and southern European cultures). Persons who honor others too little put their own honor in jeopardy. In that sense, Georgian culture resembles the many cultures characterized as sociocentric (see Foley 1997 for an overview).

During all the years of political struggle, speakers integrated toasts to Georgian independence into shared meals, transforming the dinner table into a political symposium. Toasters often integrate current events into a chain of toasts. If a table member's relative is in the hospital, someone will definitely make a toast to this person. Everyone at the table toasts each of the important persons.

Apart from the many available formulas, a *tamada* can structure topics him- or herself (discussed in Kotthoff 1995 and 1999; Chatwin 1997; Tezelishvili 2003; Mühlfried 2006). He can integrate stories and jokes into toasts, bring together topics or subdivide them into several toasts and employ various different toast strategies. He can, for example, also drink to acquired professional status or to specific political interests and thereby endow them with added weight. Furthermore, the *tamada* is a person who himself has symbolic capital, which he can increase through his performance (Mühlfried 2006: 94).

As Bohle and König (2001: 14) emphasize, “social order arises in and through the actions and perceptual routines of societal members,” which is to be understood in Goffman's sense of everyday social life as a stage on which subjects perform themselves and their relations. Historically stabilized norms, conventions, rituals and routines are the conditions for performative acts to function. The meanings draw strength from them, and there is a “reality-conferring power” in their repetition (Bohle & König 2001: 26). Drinking toasts satisfy narrow concepts of performance that include stylization and artistic display (Finnegan 1992).

We can conceive of toasts as *open texts*, since they integrate elements of other genres (such as stories). Prayer formulas have long been integrated into Georgian toasts and are now considered traditional aspects of the toasting repertoire. Elements of other genres, such as verbal dueling, can also be found in Georgian toasts (Kotthoff 1995; Goldstein 1999). Since Georgian toasts tend to appear as links in an intertextual series, and individual toasts are part of an ordered set, different forms of intertextuality can be discerned (Briggs & Bauman 1992).

In the Georgian case, toasting is strongly embedded in the historical process of nation building (Tuite 2006). Mühlfried (2006: 130ff) analyzed travel reports and found much evidence that the *supra* (traditional table ceremony) is not a relic of an earlier or even prehistoric period (as travel guides often claim), but rather assumed its current form as recently as the nineteenth century. The Persian banqueting culture also influenced it. Here as well, historians have shown that it was especially in the nineteenth century that cultural practices of ‘nation building’

were institutionalized and legitimized. Thus the poet Orbeliani used the poems he called “drinking toasts” to promulgate national values (Mühlfried 2006:132). Kotthoff (1999) points out that in the Soviet period, as well as during the transition to independence, drinking toasts were omnipresent in Georgian discourse, serving as indexes of Georgian national identity. Swedes and Russians also regard toasting as a specific account of their nation’s customs that helps them to transmit and reaffirm their national identity.

No Georgian expects as elaborate a toast from a foreigner as he would from other Georgians. I have never met any foreign visitors who relate as strongly as Georgians to cultural values such as homeland, family, nation, etc.

There are many occasions when the *tamada* explicitly tells how his toasts give expression to Georgian customs. This occurs, for example, when non-Georgians dominate the table or when a meal is held in honor of foreign guests. While the Georgian *tamada* offers Toast 2 in German, in the drinking toast itself he teaches a little lesson about Georgian customs.

- (2) Toast 2<sup>5</sup> (recorded in Tbilisi, in a large circle of German and Georgian German studies scholars, T = a Georgian professor, A = a German colleague)

- 1 T: ich MÖCHte:, ich MÖCHte de:r georgischen  
tradition FOLgen,  
**I would like, I would like to follow the Georgian  
tradition,**
- 2 HEUte,  
**today,**
- 3 ich möchte natürlich nicht AUFdringlich sein  
und  
**I naturally do not want to be importunate and**
- 4 ich werde eh unsere gäste eh  
**I will eh not force our guests eh**
- 5 nicht ZWINgen eh das glas bis zur NEIge  
auszutrinken,  
**to drain the glass to the dregs,**
- 6 Aber-  
**but-**
- 7 A: hahahaha
- 8 T: ja:,  
**yes,**

---

5. In toast 2, 3 and 6 accented syllables are made prominent within a syntactic phrase.

- 9       aber ich werde DI:E trinksprüche eh versuchen  
**but I will uh try the drinking toasts**
- 10       trinksprüche auszubringen die auszubringen SIND  
**to offer THE drinking toasts that ARE to be given**
- 11       und die ÜBlich sind an der georgischen tafel.  
**and that are customary at a Georgian table.**
- 12       a:hm,
- 13       ich möchte jetzt auf unsere ELtern das glas  
erheben,  
**i would now like to raise my glass to our**  
**parents,**
- 14       au:f das WO:hl,  
**to the well-being,**
- 15       ehm der ELtern,  
**uhm of the parents,**
- 16       auf das wohl DER eltern di:e am LEben sind  
**to the well-being of those parents who are alive**
- 17       un:d di:e MIT uns da sind,  
**and who are with us here,**
- 18       e:h un:d zum Andenken DERjenigen di:e uns schon  
verlassen  
**e:h and to the memory of those who have already**  
**left us.**
- 19       haben.
- 20       gaumarǰos

In line 2, he insists that he does not want to be importunate, thereby alluding to a common critique of Georgian table customs expressed by many non-Georgians (the pressure to drink excessively). A German colleague chuckles (7). By taking into consideration the reluctance of many foreign visitors to down a whole glass after an important toast, such as one to parents, he realizes a specific “recipient design” (in the sense of Sacks 1992) within an intercultural context. As a cosmopolitan scholar, the *tamada* knows how an interculture can be created and celebrated at the table. In principle he structures the evening when Toast 2 is offered according to Georgian standards, but he also makes concessions to practices he thinks his foreign guests prefer (not drinking a whole glass after each toast). In line 10, he “does culture” by pointing out that he will follow the Georgian custom and drink to the well-being of parents, thereby reproducing and reaffirming this old tradition. With this toast, he pays homage to his mother, who is present at the event. By also drinking to the memory of deceased parents, he evokes a transcendental context, again a typical procedure. His ‘performative agency’ (Duranti 2007) leads him to a very special realization of the generic repertoire.

#### 4. Comparing toasts and their etiquette

In the following, we will continue to compare toasts. Certain concerns are frequent toast topics everywhere in the world, such as love, friendship, health, peace, family well-being and children. All cultures regard certain occasions as special, such as weddings, birthdays, childbirth, getting a job, other life transitions and many festivities. Typical sub-topics and formulaic strategies can be distinguished for toasting women and men, grandparents, birthday children of various ages, good neighbors, respected employers, etc. I have so far presented toasts given in Georgia by Georgians on occasions such as entertaining foreign guests. These toasts differ from the drinking toasts recorded by Friesen (2012) and ten Thije (2009) in Russian circles, or the toasts collected by Röcklinsberg (2009) in Sweden.

##### 4.1 Russian toasts

After numerous personal experiences in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, I am convinced that at Russian banquets imbibing alcoholic drinks (particularly champagne, wine and vodka) is as obligatory as are toasts (Jatzkowskaja 1994; Richmond 1992; Margolina 2004; Eichwede 2006).

Friesen (2012) discusses many examples of toasts from social occasions in Russia, such as the one discussed below. Here the toastmaster seems to work with “stock conversational witticisms” (Norrick 2007: 304). Toasting can be taken as a context in which “set humorous phrases” often find expression, as Norrick discovered on other occasions. In Toast 3, a good family friend (S is male, ca. 56 years old) congratulates the ‘birthday girl’ (A is female, ca. 53 years old, ? = several of the guests) on her birthday. Many friends and family members are gathered around (B, C, D, E):

(3) Toast 3

- 01 S: ГОЛУ:бушка ты НА:ша!  
 гоLU:buškatyNA:ša!<sup>6</sup>  
**our dear treasure**
- 02 я поздраВЛЯ:ю тебя;  
 japozdraVLĀ:û tebâ;  
**I congratulate you**

---

6. The transliteration from Russian follows the scientific standards “ISO 9” (see: ISO 9:1995. Information and documentation – Transliteration of Cyrillic characters into Latin characters – Slavic and non-Slavic languages. In *Bibliotheks- und Dokumentationswesen*. Berlin: Beuth, 2002 (DIN 343))

- 03 с твоим очередНЫ:М; (-) семнадцатиЛЕ:тием;  
stvoimočereDNY:M; (-) semnadcatiLE:tciem;  
**on your repeated seventeenth birthday**
- 04 «в сторону» ну да (.) это стандартный тост был,)  
«v storonu» nu da (.) èto standartnyj tost byl,)  
«(aside)well, yes, it was a standard toast»
- 05 но ЧТО я тебе хотел пожелать (.) вот, =  
no ČTO â tebehotelpoželat' (.) vot, =  
**but what I wanted to wish you thereby**
- 06 =я тебе хотел пожелать, =  
=â tebehotelpoželat', =  
**I wanted to wish you**
- 07 =ну то что успехов в работе-  
=nu to čto uspehov v rabote-  
**=well then, that you are successful in your work**
- 08 =ты добьёшься (.) это:-  
=tydob'ëš'sâ (.) èto:-  
**=you will definitely accomplish that**
- 09 A: ((смеётся)) не интересно уже;  
((smeëtsâ)) neinteresnouže;  
((laughs)) **(that) is no longer interesting**
- 10 S: это уже не интересно, да;  
èto uže ne interesno, da;  
**that is no longer interesting, yes**
- 11 B,C: ((laugh))
- 12 S: Я тебе хотел бы пожелать-  
Â tebe xotel by poželat'-  
**I would really like to wish you**
- 13 вот (.) твоя семья рядом сидит;  
vot (.) tvoâ sem'â râdom sidit;  
**here beside you sits your family**
- 14 чтоб твоя семья, (-) всегда с тобой сидела,  
čtobtvoâ sem'â, (-) vsegdastobojsidela,  
**that your family would always remain with you**
- 15 и всегда находилась чтобы (.) рядом,  
ivsegdanahodilas' čtoby (.) râdom,  
**and that they would always be near you**
- 16 и (-) [ха ха  
i (-) [ha ha  
and [ha ha
- 17 A: lifts the speaker's hand, with which he raises  
the glass

- 18 B,C,D: [ha ha ha ha ha  
 19 S: и чтобы эта семья только прибавлялась, =  
 i čtoby ètasem'â tol'kopribavlâlas', =  
**and that this family will grow,**  
 20 =прибавлялась, =прибавлялась, =  
 =pribavlâlas', =pribavlâlas', =  
**=grow and grow**  
 21 [иещёразприбавлялась;  
 [i ešë raz pribavlâlas';  
**[and again grow;**  
 22 A,B,C,D,: [ha ha ha ha ha ha  
 23 ?1: [это кому тост? ((...))  
 [ètokomu tost? ((...))  
**to whom is this toast (dedicated)?**  
 24 A: я б-  
 â b-  
**Iw(ill)**  
 25 S: а Это уже пускай (.) ольга (.)  
 владимировна -  
 а Ètoužepuskaj (.) ol'ga (.) vladimirovna -  
**Ol'ga Vladimirovna should decide that**  
 26 [саМА умает;  
 [saMAdumaet;  
**[by herself**  
 27 A: [ha ha ha  
 28 A,B,C,S: ((laughter while S. and A. give each other  
 a friendly smacking kiss))  
 29 A: спасибо,  
 spasibo,  
**thank you,**

It is evident that the toast is being presented in a comedic style. It nonetheless fulfills generic standards with the usual phraseology (I congratulate you, that your family would always remain with you) and combines it with quite standardized humor (Norrick 1993:25), such as “on your repeated seventeenth birthday,” and an aside commenting on his own modest performance (04). This frame-breaking is also amusing. The toast continues with standardized wishes, such as to be successful at work (07) and to have her family always close to her (14, 15). The addressee does not take the toast very seriously; A comments in line 9 that job success is no longer so important for her. This is a bit cheeky as a reply to the toastmaster’s good wishes, especially her implying that she is already successful enough. However, as Norrick pointed out (1993), friends are often quick to interpret many impertinent gestures as amusing. This seems to be the case in Toast 3. Toastmaster S agrees in

line 10. The toaster and his recipients produce a distancing agency. The public's laughter continues. The wish for a growing family (19, 20, 21) seems out of place when addressing a woman over fifty, who presumably can no longer have children. That could be the reason for the guests' continuing mirth. The toastmaster's many repetitions (grow and grow and again grow) also frame the performance as overtly standardized, as a sort of staging of the minimal demands. This sort of humor should be viewed as a distancing procedure.

The friends also insert tongue-in-cheek comments, such as inquiring as to the addressee of the toastmaster's wishes for a growing family (23). It is as impudent to ask the toastmaster to identify the addressee as it is for the toastmaster himself to urge the main addressee to choose the proper addressee herself (25). The whole group plays with genre standards and seems to find it very entertaining. They certainly know the genre, but here are acting as independent performers to whom light-hearted entertainment is more important than social correctness.

While Toast 3 represents an informal realization of the genre among friends, ten Thije (2009:8) presents a typical (though modest) laudatory toast by a Russian host. This was performed in English during an evening with a Dutch delegation at the conclusion of its working visit to a Russian institution. (It is reproduced here using ten Thije's transcription conventions, which do not number the lines, slightly revised):

(4) Toast 4

Vladimir: Now my dear friends  
 I would like to thank you with all our our  
 hearts  
 For the splendid work you've done here.  
 We'll wish you bon voyage nach nach Holland.  
 All: laugh  
 Vladimir: well for just for Hans, while Hans is in a  
 quite different situation  
 because he has been part of our teaching staff  
 already.  
 He is /as for / as for/ as for Otto to whom I  
 would like to have him as a permanent member  
 in the future.  
 So for our future cross-cultural contacts for  
 many many years to come.  
 So happy return home.

Ten Thije (2009:9) finds typical characteristics of a Russian toast included in this performance, e.g. formulations such as "with all our hearts," "splendid

work,” “so for the future... contacts for many many years to come.” The double code-switching “bon voyage nach nach Holland” alludes to the multilingual framework of the project (besides the French *bon voyage*, the German ‘nach’ means ‘to’). We agree with ten Thije that the toast praises the activities engaged in during the work visit, affection for the people at the table, and wishes for continuing contacts and a safe return home. Unfortunately omitted from the transcript is the conclusion of the toast, in which the participants repeat toast formulas and clink glasses. Ten Thije uses Fienemann’s concept of ‘courteous goodwill’ to characterize the ritual aspects of the toast (which fits nicely with the above discussed concept of ‘positive politeness’).

#### 4.2 Swedish toasts

Röcklinsberg (2009: 511) quotes Magdalena Ribbing, whose etiquette book places the Swedish ‘*skål* ceremony’ in the context of “doing” national culture:

Raising one’s glass to someone goes back to the Viking mead horn. This should not be forgotten. Few words from the Swedish language, which is not very widely spoken, are known abroad, but the word *skoal* is internationally well known and is usually – and rightly so – also tied to Swedish.

(Translated into German by C. Röcklinsberg. English by H.K.)

The toasting ritual is much simpler at informal gatherings in Sweden, but still requires a very specific sequence of steps. These include reaching for a glass, raising it, expressing wishes, clinking glasses, putting down the glass, etc.

Röcklinsberg (2009: 498ff) describes an evening dominated by Swedish students. A group member replies to the introductory question, “Should we drink to cultural differences?” with “Yes, of course,” and then everyone raises a full glass and repeats *skoal* (To your health). In Sweden, toasters look each other in the eye for 6–7 seconds, take a sip, make renewed eye contact, and only then put down their glass (Röcklinsberg 2009: 500). This nonverbal ritual plays an important role.

One of my informants, the linguist Suzanne Schlyter, states that occasions such as weddings, doctoral degree parties, birthdays and the like require that a toastmaster formally laud the central persons. These toasts are often long-winded, but may be realized in a light-hearted style. Christmas, Easter, Midsummer and a few other holidays are celebrated with liquor, which is served in small glasses. After emptying such a glass in one gulp, the toasters sing an appropriate song.

In Sweden (and to a lesser degree in Russia), toasting speeches and practices vary a lot, depending on an event’s degree of formality. In contrast, whenever they gather together and consume food and drink, Georgians formalize the occasion

with “toast talk.” According to Schlyter (personal communication), at many informal Swedish gatherings the hostess raises her glass only once and greets the guests with a phrase such as, “Welcome, skål, nice to have you here.” After that, the guests are free to drink as much and as often as they please.

#### 4.3 Foreigners’ toasts

Although many foreign guests are aware of the local customs in a general way, they are seldom able to perform toasts exactly as do the natives. Still, they often realize that they are also expected to offer toasts after being praised and thanked. Thus, they respond with actions chosen from a specific repertoire of conventional toast routines. Often they express thanks and/or praise the surroundings, or they propose a drinking toast in a humorous style. Both approaches are unproblematic. It seems sufficient to comply with basic politeness standards and insofar to demonstrate not only an awareness of national customs, but also a desire to do justice to the cultural expectations of the natives at the table. The natives understand that outsiders cannot know all the rules of their toasting rituals. In addition, as we have seen, in the toasting genre insiders can allude to their national identity. This is one of the elements of toasting not expected of foreigners. They are permitted to vary and adapt the genre as long as the specific formula is expressed. Native speakers and foreigners ‘do difference’ in their toasting styles, thereby reflecting local identity constructions and their complex global situatedness.

Humor also plays an important role in foreigners’ toast performances and helps persons unfamiliar with the genre to participate. Here is a toast offered in English (from ten Thije 2009) by Hans, the Dutch delegation leader, which was translated into Russian (the Russian is not given by ten Thije and is of no interest here, slightly revised):

##### (5) Toast 5

- Hans: Alec, may I make another toast?  
 In Holland I am not used to making so many  
 toasts.  
 But now I have a special reason for this.  
 It’s eh/ the first was about the visit to this  
 institution.  
 My second is to eh the fact that it is the eighth  
 of March today  
 And we are glad that we have six such beautiful  
 examples of feminine human nature among us
- Vera: laughs
- Zina: that’s a compliment

Boris: that's a joke

Hans: some/ some eh sometimes eh our compliments are doubted a bit

But this a very serious one

I am very glad to be here with you and

I wish you everything good in your life, all the things that you as a woman deserve to have in your life

Anna: well said

Hans: (raising his glass) Tanja, Zina, Ida

Ida: Thanks. You are a proper/you are a proper gentleman  
(clinking glasses)

At first glance, Hans proposes a typical toast. Legkov's little booklet on "tosty" (1999) contains many toasts to women ("who beautify our table" and the like). However, as ten Thije (2009:10) states, his compliments elicit various reactions. A Russian woman named Vera laughs, and Zina explains that the toast was meant as a compliment, whereas the Russian Boris also thinks that it was meant as a joke. Ida thanks Hans for his toast. The Dutchman demonstrates his ability to propose a toast in an appreciated form. He expresses positive feelings for the group and sincere wishes to the women. Anna and Ida react to his gesture with compliments. Ten Thije presents another toast proposed by a Dutchman that contains a humorous story about a misunderstanding. In and around the two toasts the group chats about Russian and Dutch ways of speaking, ways of proposing toasts and what they mean. In this situation, it is evident that all the participants mutually appreciate one another and hope for future cooperation. Ten Thije broadly discusses the interpretation of the toasts. For our purposes, it is important to note that in and around the toasts the participants start a discourse on Russian and Dutch toasting practices. Both sides are not quite sure of what to take seriously and what to regard as humorous. In any case, the Dutch guests offer informal, humorous toasts. Teasing and joking while toasting are finally negotiated as a form of constituting the in-group, but not smoothly (as ten Thije points out). Although the Dutchmen do well in the genre, which is not an everyday matter for them,<sup>7</sup> deformalization via joking seems to be a strategy that helps them to produce the expected table talk and at the same time to communicate a degree of distance. As we saw in Toast 3, the natives do this as well.

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7. In Germany and the Netherlands, for the last forty years toasting has been limited to special occasions, as already noted.

Finally, in this section I examine a drinking toast given by a German visiting Georgia for the first time. A German assistant professor named Rolf made the following toast during an early evening dinner in a Georgian village in the region of Mtialeti. An extended family is sitting together with some neighbors and two Germans. This toast diverges considerably from Georgian standards, but it still compliments one of the persons present (T is an elderly woman), as well as the village.<sup>8</sup>

(6) Toast 6 (translated from the original German)

Rolf (R), Tata (T), all (a)

- 1 R: ich (- -) FREUE mich auch (- -) dass ich nicht  
nur mit  
**I (- -) am also pleased (- -) that I am not only  
permitted**
- 2 eurer faMILie am tisch sitzen darf  
**to sit with your family at the table,**
- 3 sondern auch mit einer anderen Person aus dem  
dorf,  
**but also with another person from the village,**
- 4 aus diesem schönen dorf,  
**from this beautiful village,**
- 5 das zum ersten mal  
**which for the first time**
- 6 T: spasibo, spasibo  
**thanks, thanks**
- 7 R: das ich zum ERsten, aber hoffentlich nicht zum  
LETzten mal gesehen habe.  
**which I have seen for the first, but hopefully not  
for the last time.**
- 8 a: hehehe
- 9 T: spasibo.  
**thanks.**
- 10 R: ich MÖCHte auf zukünftige anlässe wie diesen  
trinken.  
**I would like to drink to future occasions  
like this.**
- 11 Ich wünsche Ihnen allen das Beste.  
**I wish you all the best.**  
gaumarjos

---

8. In Kotthoff 2007 I present another toast by a German lecturer.

Rolf expresses gratitude and makes compliments such as “beautiful village,” which carry a strong weight because they meet the basic local requirements of a toast. Toast 6 has a main addressee, an elderly woman named Tata (an honored guest from the village). Rolf makes eye contact with her while speaking. Tata thanks him in Russian, the *lingua franca* of the former Soviet Union. She knows that Rolf understands a little Russian. Her effort to establish direct contact is unmistakable. The toast was translated later. Although Rolf’s toast is stylistically far from equaling examples such as Toast 1, he makes compliments, expresses gratitude and states a wish to continue the relationship. Thus, he includes the basic obligatory elements of a Georgian toast.

Röcklinsberg (2009:514f. English translation by H.K.) also shows how German etiquette manuals reflect the increasing informality of German toasting customs; along with rhetorical deformalization there is also distancing from toasting as an expression of German identity, as in the sixties of the twentieth century. He cites Graudentz and Pappritz (1956:384), on p. 517:

A salute with a glass is a typical German custom. Hardly any of us would dare to take a glass without ‘being accompanied by someone’. ... In exclusively German circles, in principle no guest takes a glass before the head of the household has raised his and stiffly and obligatorily nodded to his wife, as well as to other guests. We thus wait for this in every case before we ourselves drink – even if due to a longer stay abroad this custom may seem to us a bit antiquated.

In 1991, Countess Schönfeldt (189) indicates in her book *1 mal 1 des guten Tons* (in English the title might be, e.g.: ‘The ABCs of good manners’) that this custom has become less standardized (cited according to Röcklinsberg 2009:516, similar to Linke 2000):

The ceremony of toasting, whereby one holds the wine glass at the level of the breastbone and smartly calls out ‘prosit’, has died out. If there is a festive opportunity, if the guests congratulate a birthday boy or girl, if they give three cheers for a bride and groom, then the head of the household or the last speaker raises his glass and everyone follows his example and joins in the toast. If we hold a wine or champagne glass correctly, namely by the stem, then when we clink glasses, it sounds like a fairy song. On festive occasions, people clink glasses, in families with a ceremonial inclination in descending rank order, in families that just like festivities, as they happen to be sitting together. If someone has a birthday, it is customary in many families that each clinks with the birthday child. ... Simply to raise a glass and silently drink to good friends is a beautiful gesture that transcends all rules.

When they are alone together, the German university students recorded by Röcklinsberg rather playfully vary the Swedish ritual by not precisely following

the usual sequence of steps, and everyone supplements the formula (Röcklinsberg 2009:520). The group is participating in a student exchange in Sweden.

In the frame of his study of culture-specific interaction styles, Röcklinsberg (2009:496f.) discusses a relatively simple toast shared by German students in Sweden: Five students are already sitting at a table and are still busy arranging candles when Armin proposes a toast in German (translation by H.K.):

(7) Toast 7

7 Armin: okay then I would say first of all that  
 8 we toast a nice evening =  
 INA POURS WINE FOR CLAUDIA AND HANDS HER THE GLASS  
 9 Ina: [yes:]  
 10 Armin: [and this (xx)]  
 11 Claudia: [unexpected] ähehe  
 12 BREAK (0.6)  
 13 Armin: yes  
 14 Claudia: unexpected gathering  
 15 Ina: [yes]  
 16 Armin: [the unexpected] [often happens]<sup>9</sup> hehe  
 17 [often happens]  
 LAUGHTER  
 18 Claudia: [well]<sup>10</sup>  
 19 Igor: [<sup>0</sup>well<sup>0</sup>]  
 20 Ina: [well then]  
 21 Armin: [skoal]  
 22 Claudia: haha  
 23 Ina: [skoal]  
 24 Igor: [skoal]  
 25 Claudia: [skoal] ah[ha]a  
 26 Armin: [skoal] hehe  
 THEY CLINK GLASSES (1.3)

Armin expresses the central wish to raise their glasses (that we toast a nice evening) and thereby performs an obligatory part of the ritual. The toast proposal

9. The original German expression is a pithy saying, “unverhofft kommt oft.” It achieves its effect by making a paradoxical claim, emphasized by the rhyme, which is likewise unexpected.

10. The original German word is “also” (thus or therefore), which can initiate action more strongly than “well.” Germans often say, e.g. “Also, gehen wir,” which means “Well then, let’s go!”

is received positively. Claudia repeats “unexpected” (11) and expands it to “unexpected gathering.” (14) Armin supplements this with the formula: “The unexpected often happens” (German: “unverhofft kommt oft.” This is a commonplace German saying, popular because of its brevity and the rhyme, which is lost in translation).

Claudia, Igor and Ina overlap with the structuring particle “well” (German: ‘also’, meaning thus, therefore, consequently, hence), introducing the toast, which is completed with the Swedish toast formula *skoal*. Röcklinsberg emphasizes that not everyone has wine in his or her glass at the start of the toast, which points to an informal, playful performance of the drinking ritual. Quite obviously, the group is not following a strict pattern. As indicated above, Germans have no cultural requirement to share a toast when sitting together over drinks in the evening. The German students here are ‘doing being in Sweden’.

The modest toast above is, however, not hard to understand as an activity of positive politeness, and those present are expressing in word and deed their desire for a gathering that everyone will enjoy. The group is paying tribute to ‘being in Sweden’ and demonstrating its willingness to defer to the rules of the host country.

## 5. Conclusion: ‘Doing difference’ in intercultural encounters

In Germany and the Netherlands, speeches of praise to persons who are present are incomparably less frequent, and toasts play a far smaller role in the society’s genre repertoire than in countries formerly belonging to the Soviet Union or in Sweden. They are, in fact, performed only at certain festivities, like marriages and graduation parties. At the most, two or three toasts are offered, never a series of ten to twenty (as is common in Georgia), and even these are often framed as humorous and ironic. On German Internet pages, toasts are found almost exclusively in humorous contexts, and even at weddings, it is usual for parents and relatives to season their good wishes for the bride and groom with affectionate witticisms and humorously framed stories. The keying of pathos is met with skepticism, especially in Germany (see Kotthoff 2007).

The values expressed in toasts can only be understood against the background of a specific cultural history, and they “do culture” by reproducing these values, which are not always shared by everyone -even among Georgians a variety of opinions about toasting can be found. Many Georgians consider the rigid toasting order of a long evening (or lunch or even breakfast) to be overly long-winded and object, above all, to the resulting excessive alcohol consumption.

In this article, I have discussed Georgian, Russian and Swedish toasts. From Georgia I presented one quite pathetic example and another designed specifically for foreign guests. From Russia, I examined a humorously performed toast and

quite basic ones containing abundant phraseology. Toasts are realized in such a spectrum in all the countries considered here, but Georgian toasts stand out because they border on the genre of prayer. The Georgian *tamada*'s performance is especially likely to simultaneously perform his own identity and those of other table members. Everywhere toasts are often associated with the “doing” of national and/or regional standards, as they are often explicitly announced as being typical of the country's traditions. Not only etiquette books or Internet pages, but also toasters themselves explicitly stage national and regional standards.

I have analyzed how foreign table guests realize a genre that is not part of their everyday communicative repertoire. With a ritual genre devoted to reproducing cultural membership, it not only appears unproblematic when foreigners do not comply with local norms, but in- and outsiders rather jointly affirm their acceptance of cultural difference. Natives are usually aware of their ritual standards, and they do not expect foreigners to toast exactly as they do. We have seen, however, that the norms are not strict. As a performative agent, the *tamada* always varies the degree of formality in a given situation and also expresses his stance towards the generic tradition.

Hosts definitely expect communicative activities of positive politeness from the foreign guests at their table. If they express thanks and praise and make compliments in their toasts, foreign guests are on the right track. It is completely acceptable for them to fulfill the minimal genre standards that everyone knows and upholds at home, such as uttering the toasting formula at the end and clinking glasses. That foreign guests often tend toward a humorous keying is not negatively viewed, for drinking toasts can most certainly be realized in this keying. The foreign guests' drinking toasts that I analyzed in this article express connection and affiliation, and simultaneously index otherness. Thus toasting practices in intercultural situations turn out to be a way of ‘doing difference’ that by no means blocks cooperation and feelings of mutual goodwill.

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I am inclined to believe that noodle soup, with the right kind of seasoning, touches more channels of memory than—say, a lullaby or even a picture of the homeland. (Steiner 1975:68)

## The flavors of multi-ethnic North American literatures

### Language, ethnicity and culinary nostalgia

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This paper analyzes culinary remembrances by Asian Canadian, Latina, and Caribbean writers, investigating the multivalent meaning of food in literary texts. In ethnic literature, food figures as a powerful symbol of ethnicity, becoming a significant site where identity construction, community building and social critique can take place. Descriptions of culinary practices set in motion thoughts on belonging and national identity, offering affective encounters with the past. Culinary nostalgia, this paper argues, allows ethnic subjects to identify as ethnic via their relationship to food, opening up ways of engaging the politics of identity. Using a language through which to imagine alterity, these narratives provide a space for reflections on the complex interplay of “here” and “there,” of “home” and “away.”

#### 1. Introduction: Spicing up the literary mainstream

North American ethnic literature is filled with images and metaphors of food. Food tropes serve as figures of speech that construct and reflect relationships to racialized subjectivity, addressing issues of belonging, authenticity, and nostalgia. The construction of ethnic identity in literary texts has been shaped by depictions of experiences of food production, culinary creativities, appetites, food desires, and hunger. As Kalcik states, “Foodways are an especially significant symbol in the communication of statements about ethnic identity in the United States—about links with ethnicity and denial of it” (1984:55). Food also works as a powerful symbol in ethnic Canadian literature. Indeed, it is fair to say that food is a visible sign of ethnicity which figures prominently in all immigrant and diasporic

literatures, serving as an important instrument in the construction of a “home away from home” (Reichl 2003: 178).

This paper discusses culinary narratives by U.S. Latina, Asian Canadian, and Caribbean writers, analyzing the multivalent meaning of food in their literary texts. In particular, I will look at works by Esmeralda Santiago, Shani Mootoo, and Madeleine Thien, showing that culinary remembrances figure as powerful symbols of ethnicity. Descriptions of culinary practices set in motion thoughts on belonging and national identity, opening debates on what Mannur has termed “culinary citizenship,” a form of affective national identity “which grants subjects the ability to claim and inhabit certain subject positions via their relationship to food” (2007: 13). I come at the analysis of culinary narratives as a literary and cultural studies critic. Focusing on the representational function of food in diasporic North American literature, my reading of some selected culinary-themed texts is not only indebted to semiotics, but is primarily informed by an ethnic studies and a cultural studies-oriented view of food as a contested signifying practice that offers powerful ways to construct cultural meanings.

As anthropologists have long established, food helps define group identities, and through cooking and eating, people perform rituals of cultural belonging. Food is inextricably linked to survival but its importance is not only confined to its life sustaining properties; apart from its material quality, food is also one of the most important sign systems, “affording an extraordinary flexibility of interpretation as symbol, metaphor, code, and language” (Ho 2005: 10). Food studies, as critics have pointed out, owe great debt to structuralism (cf. Mannur 2010: 11 and Ho 2005: 11–12). In the wake of Claude Lévi-Strauss’ generative work *The Raw and the Cooked* food has come to be seen as an elementary substance and symbol worth studying by anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and psychologists. Since the 1970s food has therefore been treated as a cultural “text” that is loaded with meaning. In “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption,” Barthes has famously argued that food is “a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of wages, situations, and behavior” (1997: 21). Similarly, Douglas has described food as a code that structures social relations (1984 & 1997).

Recently, anthropologists and sociologists have moved away from structuralist readings of food, stressing instead ideological processes of globalization and political economy. A whole new genre of so-called “commodity biographies” (Nützenadel & Trentmann 2008: 3) has emerged, and there are now case studies of such diverse food items as sugar, cod, pineapple or chewing gum.<sup>1</sup> Food is seen as closely connected to nation-building as there is a relationship between alimentary

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1. See, for instance, Mintz 1985; Kurlansky 1998 and 2002; Beauman 2005, and Redclift 2004.

imagery and national identity (cf. Peckham 1998 and Mintz 2003). Naturally, as an essential source to survival with great symbolic force, food has been central to human history. As Nützenadel and Trentmann point out, food

serves as a lightning-rod for all sorts of anxieties and disquiet about the human condition in late modernity, about the speed of life (fast food/ slow food), the dominance of science ('Frankenfoods'), a loss of 'authenticity' and diminishing connection with nature (industrial versus organic foods), the invasion of the local by the global (McDonaldization), and physiological and mental stress and disease (obesity and bulimia). (2008: 2)

It comes as no surprise then that a host of disciplines have joined in the feast of studying the symbolic function of food.

Food, of course, has offered a means for powerful imagery in literary texts, and the analysis of culinary narratives has recently garnered great interest. Beginning with James W. Brown's seminal 1984 study *Fictional Meals and Their Function in the French Novel, 1789–1848*, a series of articles and books have followed: David Bevan's *Literary Gastronomy* (1988), Susan Leonardi's 1989 essay "Recipes for Reading: Summer Pasta, Lobster à la Riseholme, and Key Lime Pie," Mary Ann Schofield's *Cooking by the Book: Food in Literature and Culture* (1989), the 1992 issue of the journal *Mosaic* on "Diet and Discourse: Eating, Drinking and Literature," and Sarah Sceats's *Food, Consumption and the Body in Contemporary Women's Fiction* (2000) are important publications that have analyzed the various roles that food plays in literature. For all their importance in the establishment of the field of literary food studies, these texts have, however, not "adequately emphasized the importance of viewing food as a discursive space able to critically interrogate the nostalgic and affective rendering of food in relationship to racial and ethnic identity" (Mannur 2010: 12). It is only recently that a series of publications have appeared in U.S. ethnic studies, in particular in Asian American Studies, that have offered insights into the complex issues of belonging, gender, class, and ethnicity. Sau-ling Cynthia Wong's critical analysis of food tropes in Asian American literature (1993), for instance, has opened the doors for works by Jennifer Ann Ho (2005), Wenying Xu (2008), and Anita Mannur (2010).<sup>2</sup> Meredith E. Abarca's *Voices in the Kitchen: Views of Food and the World from Working-Class Mexican and Mexican American Women* (2006) is an important contribution to the field

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2. Books like *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the U.S.: The Performance of Group Identity* edited by Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell (1984); *The Taste of American Place: A Reader on Regional and Ethnic Food* edited by Barbara G. Shortridge and James R. Shortridge (1998); *Pilaf, Pozole, and Pad Thai: American Women and Ethnic Food* edited by Sherrie A. Inness (2001) also suggest an interest in ethnic foods in U.S. society.

of ethnic food studies in U.S.-Latino/a Studies and Andrew Warnes's *Hunger Overcome? Food and Resistance in Twentieth-Century African American Literature* (2004) is an important work in African American Studies. In 2007, the journal *MELUS* devoted an entire issue to the analysis of multi-ethnic literatures. Because of its connection to ethnic identity, the study of foodways has especially been important in ethnic studies.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly, this recent interest in ethnic literary food studies is also related to the proliferation of culinary-themed ethnic fiction, in particular Asian American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino/a texts. South Asian novels such as Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Mistress of Spices* (1997), Shoba Narayan's *Monsoon Diary: A Memoir with Recipes* (2003) or Amulya Malladi's *Serving Crazy with Curry* (2004) have entered the mainstream literary market. Vietnamese American writer Monique Truong's *Book of Salt* (2004) or Arab American Diana Abu-Jaber's *Crescent* (2003) constitute further examples of popular ethnic novels. African American writers Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor and Audre Lorde also rely heavily on food tropes and images of food consumption as ethnic signifiers. Jamaica Kincaid and Dionne Brand are two important writers from the Caribbean whose works are full of culinary scenes, and in U.S. Latino/a literature Laura Esquivel's *Como Agua Para Chocolate/Like Water for Chocolate* (1989/1992) set the tone for culinary narratives.

With the growing popularity of multiculturalism in the literary marketplace a great number of ethnic culinary narratives have thus appeared on the literary scene that have "spiced up" the market of North American literature. Of course, the interest in culinary narratives is linked to the desire for ethnic food, which is evidenced in cities throughout North America. Restaurants that serve ethnic food are in abundance and the marketing of exotic foods as pleasurable delights has become commonplace. As Bell Hooks has argued, "within commodity culture ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (1998: 181). To some critics, the abundance of representations of food preparation and consumption in ethnic texts helps produce self-exoticism that borders on "food pornography," which as Wong has put it, constitutes a process of "reifying perceived cultural differences and exaggerating one's otherness in order to gain a foothold in a white-dominated social system" (1993: 55). The lush evocations of exotic food in Asian American novels, for instance, Wong argues, comes close to prostitution because "superficially, food pornography appears to

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3. According to Anderson, the concept of foodways refers to "a whole interrelated system of food conceptualization and evaluation, procurement, distribution, preservation, preparation, consumption, and nutrition shared by all members of a particular society" (Anderson 1971: 57).

be a promotion, rather than a vitiation or devaluation, of one's ethnic identity" (1993:55). As Döring et al. have succinctly summarized, "[t]he discourse of multi-cultural meals and consumerist variety becomes a means of erasing difference: the other is consumed" (2003:7).

With a readership hungry to consume delectable representations of otherness, ethnic culinary narratives also contain pre-packaged marketable cultural otherness. As Mannur has put it

within the framework of popular multiculturalism, ethnic-themed novels became the flavor du jour, satiating America's appetite to consume difference often in what we might conceive of as 'sugar-coated' realism wherein a culinary idiom deliberately and strategically produces narratives of otherness. (2010: 83)

Despite the criticism that has been launched against the commodification of ethnicity, in general, and the packaging of ethnicity within a palpably "exotic" framework in culinary texts, in particular, ethnic texts that include scenes that prominently feature acts of preparing and eating food fulfill important cultural work in North American literature.

As I want to show, ethnic culinary narratives engage the complex narratives of home and belonging, offering "meta-critiques of what it means to route memory and nostalgic longing for a homeland through one's relationship to seemingly intractable culinary practices which unflinchingly yoke national identity with culinary taste and practices" (Mannur 2007:29). Focusing on instances of culinary nostalgia in Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican*, Shani Mootoo's "Out on Main Street," and Madeleine Thien's "Simple Recipes," I want to show how these texts intervene in debates about home, displacement, and diasporic identity. These food narratives, I want to argue, expose the logic of culinary citizenship, allowing ethnic subjects to seize identitarian positions via their affective encounter with food (cf. Mannur 2010:29). Affective culinary encounters enter their narratives primarily in the form of remembrances. All three narratives feature first-person protagonists whose memories are structured by the ambivalent relationship to the past, which is discursively rendered through nostalgic meditations on food. By recreating food memories, these texts entangle the languages of food, nostalgia and desire. Most crucially, they complicate traditional notions of imagining food as authentic manifestation of national essence, offering a form of critical nostalgia that flouts conventional narratives of authenticity.<sup>4</sup>

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4. As Maira has it, "desire, in the cultural politics of the diaspora, is closely intertwined with the collective yearning for an authentic tradition or pure place of origin" (2002:194). Unlike mere cultural nostalgia, critical nostalgia, according to her, is a critical praxis that is reflexive in form and that entails a critique of dominant social relations.

2. “Lo que no mata, engorda” (“What doesn’t kill you, makes you fat”)<sup>5</sup>

“Tell me what you eat, I’ll tell you what you are,” Brillat-Savarin famously stated in 1826 (1994). Food has long been regarded as an important identity marker. As Padolsky states:

From an ethnic perspective, the assumption has been that your identity can somehow be connected to, or even induced from, the foods that have significance for you and your group, foods that reflect your ethnic language, culture, history, traditions, religion, and so on. If you are Ukrainian, you eat cabbage rolls; if you are Jewish, you eat matzo ball soup; if you are Chinese, you eat har gow, and so on. In other words, you are what you eat. (2005: n.p.)

For many ethnic writers, though, food and identity are not linked by this simple metaphoric formula. Rather than affirm the terms of culinary ontology, Esmeralda Santiago’s *When I Was Puerto Rican* (1993) complicates an easy relationship between food and ethnicity. As Barszewska Marshall has pointed out, “the epigraph to a key chapter in *When I Was Puerto Rican*, for example, highlights the power of food, and perhaps pride, to harm: “Lo que no mata, engorda” (“What doesn’t kill you, makes you fat”)” (2007: 63).<sup>6</sup> Inserting the symbolism of food into the nexus of issues surrounding ethnic identity, belonging, pride, and shame, this autobiographical book exemplifies the politicized nature of food for the ethnic subject.

Esmeralda Santiago is a prominent member of the Latina boom in the U.S. literary market of the 1990s. *When I was Puerto Rican* is the first book in a highly praised, bestselling trilogy.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the cycle of memoirs, Santiago speaks her complicated relationship between ethnicity and food. The meditation on a guava that opens the book introduces the primary ethnic signifiers of the book: fruits.

I had my last guava the day we left Puerto Rico. It was large and juicy, almost red in the center, and so fragrant that I didn’t want to eat it because I would lose the smell. All the way to the airport I scratched at it with my teeth, making little dents in the skin, chewing small pieces with my front teeth, so that I could feel the texture against my tongue, the tiny pink pellets of sweet.

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5. Santiago 1993:63

6. Negrón-Muntaner uses the term “boricua” to name the type of Puerto Rican identity that emerged through anti-colonial struggle. As she states, it is “the indigenous name many Puerto Ricans call themselves in a nativist gesture to indicate the end of colonial subordination and the beginning of a still politically undefined new era” (xiii).

7. The other two books are *Almost a Woman* (1998), and *The Turkish Lover* (2005).

Today, I stand before a stack of dark green guavas, each perfectly round and hard, each \$1.59. The one in my hand is tempting. It smells faintly of late summer afternoons and hop-scotch under the mango tree. But this is autumn in New York, and I'm no longer a child. (Santiago 1993:4)

The smell and taste of a guava trigger the protagonist's memories of her childhood and what follows is a bittersweet narrative of her growing-up process. The story focuses on the development of Esmeralda—or Negi as she is endearingly called in the story—from a young girl in Puerto Rico to a young woman in the States. Highlighting her conflicts as a female subject, the book invests food practices with significance that speak to conditions of migration and diaspora. But it is not a nostalgic narrative; instead it critically interrogates both Puerto Ricanness and Americanness by exploring the themes of ethnic pride, assimilation, and cultural belonging and highlighting their contradictory meanings.

While it is clear that there is an affective relationship with her childhood, the narrator is cognizant of the difficulties and hardships growing up on the island. As Marshall has stated, the opening of this autobiography has often been read as criticizing New York as an impoverished place that lacks juicy fruit while the homeland Puerto Rico with its pleasures of fruit will be nostalgically remembered.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, Esmeralda's decision to put the guava down in the American supermarket and turn "toward the apples and pears of my adulthood" (Santiago 1993:4) might also suggest that the protagonist chooses American culture over Puerto Rican. But, as she says, the American apples and pears are also "predictable and bittersweet" (Santiago 1993:4). This opening section then, one has to bear in mind, is not only about a contrast between New York and Puerto Rico but also between a young woman and a child. And since foodways have shaped Negi's growing-up process, this difference between Negi, the child, and Esmeralda, the woman is signified through recourse to fruits. As Marshall explains:

Santiago does not reject the unripe guava at the Shop & Save because unripe guavas promise little pleasure. As a child, she did not only eat more ripe yellow guavas than she should have, because their juicy fragrance was so enticing; she also used to eat one unripe green guava after another, with no control, because she enjoyed the sour hardness that made her grimace as she ate [...]. As an adult, however, she remembers that whenever she overindulged in eating such unripe fruit, her mother would make her drink castor oil. And so she chooses moderation; the fruit she selects is not tasteless, but its ripeness is predictable and

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8. Szadziuk, for instance, argues that this episode emphasizes the "tasteless predictability of the fruit staples in a New York supermarket" (1999:111).

its taste is “bittersweet”—a taste between the sweet juicy ripe fruit and the sour crunchy unripe fruit that tempted the child to overindulge. (2007: 62)

Clearly, the protagonist’s changing relationship to guavas mirrors her struggle to juggle her multiple identities. What follows is Esmeralda’s story to come to terms with her diasporic subjectivity. In Puerto Rico, she is caught between two social binaries: the divide between the Puerto Rican city dwellers and country folk, known as *jibaros*, and the cultural dynamics of Puerto Rican nationalism and American imperialism. In New York, she experiences divided loyalties between the U.S. and Puerto Rico, which for a long time leaves her feeling insecure about her identity.

The story is set in the 1950s. This is the time in Puerto Rico when the U.S. government launched an industrialization program known as “Operation Bootstrap,” which achieved rapid industrialization of the island’s economic structure but also brought agricultural decline, dislocation and large-scale emigration.<sup>9</sup> The book reflects these changes: the Santiago family resemble many Puerto Rican immigrants of the 1950s: they lived in the rural countryside but as economic transformations were taking place, they had to go to the cities to look for jobs, and because jobs were scarce there, they had to move on to the U.S. The childhood experiences of Negi and her siblings are marked by traumatic memories. As Khader has pointed out, “the adverse circumstances of poverty, machismo, and personal trauma in Puerto Rico as well as racism and discrimination in the United States deprive her of a real sense of home in both insular and continental spaces” (2003: 65).

Throughout this first part of the trilogy, the protagonist seems to defend her loyalty to Puerto Rico via its food. This becomes especially visible in the chapter “The American Invasion of Macún,” in which food is used as a weapon in the protagonist’s cultural resistance to colonialization. In this chapter, Santiago tells—from a child’s perspective—the colonial efforts to Americanize Puerto Ricans through the imposition of U.S. values, attitudes, and beliefs. As Gabaccia has stated, foodways of immigrants have traditionally been perceived by Anglo-American culture

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9. Since Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States in 1898, it has occupied a strange colonial position as an “unincorporated territory.” The 1917 Foraker Act granted Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship and freedom of movement in the United States. In 1952, the Free Association State, or Commonwealth, was created and Puerto Ricans were allowed to be self-governing in their internal affairs. By 1990, almost half of all Puerto Rican descendants lived in continental United States. For further details on the colonial situation of Puerto Rico, see Meléndez, *The Colonial Dilemma: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Puerto Rico*.

as culturally inferior. In the 1940s, for instance, efforts were made in the U.S. to Americanize immigrants by “reforming” their eating habits. As Gabaccia explains:

To create a scientific, healthful, and national cuisine, domestic scientists proposed [...] programs of education for immigrants and minorities throughout the United States. [...] As late as 1940, the Home Economics Section of New York’s Department of Welfare recommended that immigrants should eat [...]: for breakfast, hominy grits with milk and sugar, bread with butter, and milk and coffee; for dinner, baked beans, coleslaw with carrots, bread with butter, and custard pudding with raisins; and for supper, cream of carrot soup with rice, cottage cheese and prune salad, bread with butter, and tea. (1998: 128–29)

As part of this program, “American experts come to the newly formed commonwealth to join island experts in order to establish breakfast programs and to instruct rural islanders on proper hygiene and nutrition” (Marshall 2007: 50). Guided by a concern for standardization, these reformers also brought their ideas to public school classrooms. In *When I was Puerto Rican*, an American expert, equipped with a food chart, talks to the children and their mothers at a community center:

In heavily accented, hard to understand Castilian Spanish he described the necessity of eating portions of each food on his chart every day ... There was no rice on the chart, no beans, no salted codfish. There were big white eggs, not at all like the small round ones our hens gave us. ... “But *señor*,” said Doña Lola from the back of the room, “none of the fruits or vegetables on your chart grow in Puerto Rico.” (Santiago 1993: 66)

When Negi has her first “American” breakfast of *huevos Americanos*, she thinks that the food smells and looks disgusting:

I rearranged the food so that none of it touched and dipped my spoon into the gelatinous hill, which was firmer than I expected. It was warm and gave off that peculiar odor I’d smelled coming in. It tasted like the cardboard covers of our primers, salty, dry, fibrous, but not as satisfyingly chewy. If these were once eggs, it had been a long time since they’d been inside a hen. (Santiago 1993: 76)

The internal struggles against this form of cultural imperialism manifest in the protagonist in physical symptoms when Negi vomits the American food. When a teacher reprimands her for vomiting, Negi defends her actions by claiming the milk is sour. When the teacher then offends her by saying “I suppose you’d find it less repugnant to go hungry every morning!” (Santiago 1993: 82), Negi’s anti-colonial defiance explodes: “My Mami and Papi can feed us without your disgusting *gringo* imperialist food!” (Santiago 1993: 82). While this chapter can be read as an assertion of Puerto Rican identity based on rejection of all things American, it can also be argued that there is a greater dynamism at work in the protagonist’s

disavowal of American food. Her internalized shame over her poverty also plays a crucial role. According to Marshall, Negi vomits to expel “the shame of being Puerto Rican in a colonial context” because Boricua pride has roots in colonial shame (2007: 51). Negi’s reaction, as Maragh has put it, “has more nuances than simply shame over colonialism; her shame from the discrimination in the city dweller/jíbara dichotomy also affects her stance” (2010: n.p.). Santiago details the connection between food and Puerto Rican nationalism, but she does so with a distance, subjecting her past to an internal critique that allows for a creative rewriting of her story and a renewed reconnecting to home.

Conspicuously, Santiago offers a critical version of a nostalgic project of recovering the past, showing that a fantasy of an idyllic childhood on a tropical island cannot be achieved in the context of trauma, poverty, and deprivation. Ultimately, it is also the parents’ constant fighting that drives her family apart. As a result, Negi often withdraws: “I disappeared into my room the minute the air tensed and wrapped myself in a thin sheet that didn’t silence their insults but made me invisible to the hate that clouded their eyes” (Santiago 1993: 195). Clearly, Negi does not feel at home on the island and once in New York yearns for another life. In the end of the book, the protagonist defends her right to be hungry for more, both literally and metaphorically, when she auditions in order to study Performing Arts. And by the end of the third memoir, as Marshall has pointed out

ice cream replaces the guava as the most telling food for understanding her relationship to eating: while it was once a food consumed as a form of self-feeding to cope with shame and anxiety, with a sense of greater self-confidence, it is finally enjoyed in a free and easy manner, with giddy and unselfconscious pleasure. (2007: 49–50)

No matter how much Negi tries to defend her loyalty to Puerto Rico via reference to its food, that food also fails to compensate for the traumatic experiences there. While most of her culinary remembrances of the past are positive, there are also negative ones. For instance, she remembers that one aunt makes beans that are tasteless, rice that is sticky, and “greasy fried chicken” (Santiago 1993: 166). Negi also hates the flavor of the canned milk that another aunt poured over her cereal (cf. Santiago 1993: 136). In *Almost a Woman*, the follow-up to *When I Was Puerto Rican*, the feeling of homelessness is cast in the semantics of alienation and displacement. Puerto Rico, she states “was no longer familiar, nor beautiful, nor did it give a clue of who I’d been there, or who I might become wherever I was going next” (Santiago 1999: 2). Santiago claims culinary kinship with Puerto Rico and mobilizes a culinary idiom sweetened with the taste of Puerto Ricanness, but instead of offering a nostalgic reflection of the past, she shows that food plays an important role in coming to terms with the pangs of migratory displacement.

### 3. Chum Chum and Kitchen Indians

Remapping the idea of home in the diasporic imaginary is also central to the Indo-Trinidadian Canadian writer Shani Mootoo. Mootoo has achieved literary fame with her novel *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996) as well as her short story collection *Out on Main Street* (1993). In the title story of this collection, which I want to analyze here, two ethnic Canadians (one is an immigrant from Fiji and the other from Trinidad) engage in a battle over who can claim cultural ownership to a particular “Indian” sweet. This text criticizes the desire to imagine certain food items as authentic manifestations of national and cultural essences. Similar to Esmeralda Santiago’s *When I Was Puerto Rican*, Mootoo engages the notion of cultural citizenship, problematizing narratives of belonging. Offering a critique of essentialist conceptions of ethnic identity, Mootoo’s story “Out on Main Street” disconnects affective aspects of food from notions of cultural authenticity.

The story is set in an Indian café on Main Street in Toronto, which metaphorically stands for Canada and its multicultural realities. In the “Kush Valley Sweets,” members of different cultural backgrounds meet. The unnamed female narrator and her partner Janet, who are both Indo-Trinidadians, enjoy walking on Main Street because they love to “see pretty pretty sari and bangle, and to eat we belly full a burfi and gulub jamoon” (Mootoo 1993:45). Notions of cultural purity and authenticity are called into question from the beginning in this story, as becomes clear from the description of the narrator’s family:

[W]e is watered-down Indians – we ain’t good grade A Indians. We skin brown, is true, but we doh even think ‘bout India unless something happens over dere and it come on de news. Mih family remain Hindu ever since mih ancestors leave India behind, but nowadays dey doh believe in praying unless things real bad, because, as mih father always singing, like if is a mantra: “Do good and good will be bestowed unto you.” [...] Mostly, back home, we is kitchen Indians: some kind a Indian food every day, at least once a day [...]. (Mootoo 1993:45)

Identifying their culinary citizenship as “kitchen Indians,” a term that highlights that they perceive their identities as not rooted in national identities, the two women complicate a simple logic of ethnic food as a signifier that evokes ethnic and cultural community. The couple’s nostalgic yearning for Indian desserts does not mean that they long for India; instead, as the story makes clear, the affective relationship of the two women with these particular Indian desserts is completely dislodged from nostalgic notions of home. The couple’s nostalgia rather follows the praxis of a critical nostalgia. As Mannur states:

Critical of the forces that align the desire to consume with a longing to preserve the affective hegemony of “Indian” food, the couple’s nostalgia for “Indian” food,

rooted in their diasporic location, at once consuming Indian food and at once distrustful of the hegemonic ideals of the Indian nation-state, is necessarily rhizomorphic and anti-Manichean. Their nostalgia does not attach itself to a specific place but attaches itself instead to a more critical interrogation of how a set of cultural practices can allow subjects—queer or straight, men or women—to attach meaning to culturally significant acts. (2010:41)

The couple's critical interrogation of the cultural scripts that structures culinary citizenship involves a questioning of traditional notions of nations and ethnic identities. Labels like "Indian," "South Asian," or "Indo-Caribbean" prove slippery terms as descriptive categories for their multi-racial identities. The two protagonists' cultural identities are further complicated by the religious affiliations of their families: While the narrator's family remained Hindu after moving to Canada, Janet's family converted to Presbyterianism. Furthermore, the sexual orientation of the two women positions them outside of the traditional heterosexual framework of this Indo-Canadian cultural space. The two women are cognizant of their difference and before they enter the Indian eatery, the protagonist voices her concern: "Going for an outing with mih Janet on Main Street ain't easy! If only it weren't for burfi and gulub jamoon! If only I had a learned how to cook dem kind a thing before I leave home and come up here to live!" (Mootoo 1993: 48–49). As a butch-lesbian who wears jeans tucked into her "jim boots," (Mootoo 1993: 48) she does not conform to the standards of heterosexual Indian femininity, and the space of the Indian eatery makes her feel like an outsider. As she states:

Before going Main Street I does parade in front de mirror practicing a jiggly-wiggly kind of walk. But if I ain't walking like a strong-man monkey I doh exactly feel right and I always revert back to mih true colours. [...] De men dem does look at me like if dey is exactly what I need a taste of to cure me good and proper. [...] And de women dem embarrass fuh so to watch me in mih eye, like dey fraid I will jump up and try to kiss dem, or make a pass at dem. Yuh know, sometimes I wonder if I ain't mad enough to do it just for a little bacchanal, nah!

(Mootoo 1993: 48)

Her anxiety to enter the store is, however, also related to her awareness of "only" being a "kitchen Indian." In front of the store, the protagonist pauses for a moment: "I rumfle up mih memory, pulling out all de sweet names I know from home, beside burfi and gulub jamoon: meethai, jilebi, sweetrice (but dey call dat kheer up here), and ladhoo. By now, of course, mih mouth waterin fuh so!" (Mootoo 1993: 49). She derives pleasure from consuming sweets on Main Street but feels discriminated against by the looks that give her the feeling of being an uninvited intruder. Upon entering the eatery, she orders a *jilebi* and *burfi* for Janet and a

piece of *meethai* for herself, triggering off a debate with the storeowner about national legitimacy:

He opens his palms out and indicate de entire panorama a sweets and he say, "These are all meethai, Miss. Meethai is Sweets. Where are you from?"

I ignore his question and to show him I undaunted, I point to a round pink ball and say, "I'll have one a dese sugarcakes too please." He start grinning broad broad like if he half-pitying, half-laughing at dis-Indian-in-skin-only, and den he tell me, "That is called chum-chum, Miss." I snap back at him, "Yeh, well back home we does call dat sugarcake, Mr. Chumchum." (Mootoo 1993: 51)

Ignoring the storeowner's question concerning her national origin, the narrator offers the following explanation to her partner: "You know, [...] it's true that we call that 'meethai' back home. Just like how we call 'siu mai' 'tim sam.' As if 'dim sum' is just one little piece a food" (Mootoo 1993: 51). Subversively, the narrator then mimics the storeowner's words and refers to him as "Mr. Chum-chum" throughout the rest of the story. Refusing to grant primacy to the storeowner's semantics, she criticizes conventional notions of cultural authenticity and linguistic purity and opts for a hybrid and plural concept of identity, of which Trinidad is a good example:

Yuh know, one time a fella from India who living up here call me a bastardized Indian because I didn't know Hindi. [...] De thing is: all a we in Trinidad is cultural bastards, Janet, all a we. *Toutes bagailles!* Chinese people, Black people, White people. Syrian. Lebanese." (Mootoo 1993: 52)

Rejecting originary identities or authentic claims to a homeland, the narrator refuses to locate any group as necessarily "original." The storeowner, as it turns out, is a Fijian immigrant of Indian descent and therefore is not more "authentically" Indian than the narrator.

Ironically though, the histories of the storeowner's and the narrator's lives are interconnected and bound together by the relation to sugar. As Mannur explains:

The narrator, it is worth emphasizing, is the descendant of indentured laborers from India in Trinidad, and the store owners are Fijian Indians, descendants of another labor-driven diaspora that brought Indians to work in the sugar cane fields of Fiji in the nineteenth century. Patron and customer, then, have more in common than a mere appreciation for *meethai*. Both are descendants of diasporic workers, presumably descended from indentured labor brought to work in sugar cane fields, and now, both owner and customer feud over the "authenticity" of *meethai*—a food in which sugar is the primary ingredient. (2010: 45)

Mootoo's project of foregrounding issues of cultural authenticity is reinforced by her literary use of dialect, which reproduces the speech patterns of the narrator.

The author's refusal to write in standardized English "can be understood as a gendered response to linguistic and political hegemony" (Mannur 2010:44). As Sen has commented:

'baigan' or 'geera' could have easily been written as 'eggplant' or 'cumin' without sacrificing the meaning. But [...] the 'baigan' and 'geera' are far more evocative than 'eggplant' or 'cumin' because they are fossil sounds bearing the impression of over a century-old Indo-Caribbean presence. (2005: 195)

Employing a culinary idiom that critically repeats exoticism, Mootoo's "Out on Main Street" exposes the idea of a stable point of origin as inadequate. This story thus flaunts difference on all levels, and it is through exaggerated culinary language that the flavor of authenticity is exposed as artificial. Troubling the logic of culinary identifications with diasporic memories, Shani Mootoo offers a powerful criticism of Canadian politics of multiculturalism. As Schneider has it, Mootoo's story poses a challenge to Canadian multiculturalism, "an identity discourse which proposes that Canada consists of ethno-racial and cultural groups neatly separated from each other, just like the multitude of stones making up a mosaic." (2008: n.p.) This writer, as Howells has put it, "is writing [...] against the reification of ethnic cultural identities, which many people see as the major flaw in Canada's multiculturalism policies" (2002: 149–50).

#### 4. A simple recipe for making rice

Food also becomes a way of engaging the complex issues of belonging in another Canadian short story: Madeleine Thien's "Simple Recipes." Thien is the Canadian-born daughter of Malaysian-Chinese immigrants who now lives in Quebec-City. "Simple Recipes" is the title story of her first collection of short stories, which was published in 2001. In finely crafted and crystal clear prose, this story contrasts a father's care in cooking for his family with his violence toward his son. Like Santiago's *When I was Puerto Rican* and Mootoo's "Out on Main Street" this story depicts an ethnic subject who reflects about her past and her relation to ethnic identity through the lens of "culinary citizenship."

The story begins with the first-person narrator remembering her father's simple art of making rice. Cooking rice for dinner after the family has immigrated to Vancouver is a ritual that father and daughter can perform together. They savor the tastes and smells of their faraway homeland and can establish an intimate bond. As the girl fondly remembers:

There is a simple recipe for making rice. My father taught it to me when I was a child. Back then, I used to sit up on the kitchen counter watching him, how he

sifted the grains in his hands, sure and quick, removing pieces of dirt or sand, tiny imperfections. He swirled his hands through the water and it turned cloudy. When he scrubbed the grains clean, the sound was as big as a field of insects. Over and over, my father rinsed the rice, drained the water, then filled the pot again.

The instructions are simple. Once the washing is done, you measure the water this way—by resting the tip of your index finger on the surface of the rice. The water should reach the bend of your first knuckle.

My father did not need instructions or measuring cups. He closed his eyes and felt for the waterline. (Thien 2001: 3–4)

Food tropes often serve as figures of speech which depict celebrations of families and communities, creating usable histories to establish connections with the past. The girl's culinary remembrances, as it turns out, are, however, disturbed by extreme violence that destroys the notion of a usable past. The nostalgic *sepia* feel that the opening paragraph establishes is soon destroyed by the depiction of the dinner table as a battleground between father and son when the father beats her brother for refusing to eat dinner. Bell and Valentine note that "the dinner table has been identified as an important site for the socialization or 'civilization' of children" (1997: 63). Equally though, as Padolsky has stressed, "it is also the site of enculturating gender roles and ethnic identity for the whole family" (2005 n.p.).<sup>10</sup> When the narrator's older brother furiously chokes on the food that the father has prepared, violence erupts. The father puts his chopsticks down and hits the brother whereupon the boy attempts to stab the father with a fork. Later, the father beats the brother with a bamboo pole. Thien writes:

The bamboo drops silently. It rips the skin on my brother's back. I cannot hear any sound. A line of blood edges quickly across his body.

The pole rises again and comes down. I am afraid of bones breaking.

My father lifts his arm once more.

On the floor, my brother cries into the carpet, pawing at the ground. His knees folded into his chest, the crown of his head burrowing down. His back is hunched over and I can see his spine, little bumps on his skin.

The bamboo smashes into bone and the scene in my mind bursts into a million white pieces. (2001: 15–16)

The beautiful language used to describe the father washing rice stands in sharp contrast with the violent behavior of the father against the son, and the reader feels the full force of the girl's shock when she says: "This violence will turn all my love

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10. Cf. also the introduction to this volume for the many works focusing on child socialization during family meal times.

to shame and grief” (Thien 2001: 18). The cultural significance of the chopstick and the fork cannot go unnoticed. The narrator’s brother rejects the Asian food because he wants to be Canadian. Conspicuously, the mother tries to comfort the ailing brother the next morning with French toast. Speaking about Asian identities, Ho has stated that “food is a critical medium for compliance with and resistance to Americanization, a means for enacting the ambiguities of an Asian-ethnic identity that is already in a constant state of flux” (2005: 3). Depicting a father’s and son’s violent struggle over conflicting ideas of ethnic identity and acculturation, this story shows that “the home is a site of multiple, sometimes contradictory, consumption practices crossed by complex webs of power relation between household members” (Bell & Valentine 1997: 59).

The young girl recalls this incident as the moment her family fell apart: “I feel loose, deranged, as if everything in the known world is ending right here” (Thien 2001: 16). While scenes of domestic violence abound in Asian Canadian and Asian American literature—one might think of Sky Lee’s *Disappearing Moon Café* (1990), yet another culinary text—Lowe warns against viewing Asian American culture exclusively “in terms of master narratives of generational conflict and filial relation,” as such an interpretation would essentialize Asian American culture (1996: 135). As Cho has remarked, “reading the scene of domestic violence in ‘Simple Recipes’ as one of intergenerational conflict risks obscuring the social bases of this violence” (2011: 122). In this story, the depiction of domestic violence epitomizes the power of affect in ethnic subjects’ relationships to food. The daughter’s question to herself—“How to reconcile all that I know of him and still love him?” (Thien 2001: 19)—resonates throughout the story and the entire collection. “This violence will turn all my love to shame and grief” (Thien 2001: 18), the girl painfully states. These feelings will structure the culinary remembrances of her past, troubling nostalgic notions of childhood home.

## 5. Conclusion: Not a simple recipe

Food, as Padolsky has argued,

locates us geographically in particular bodies, buildings, neighbourhoods, communities, and cities; it also locates us in particular cultural spaces with important boundaries that comfort, console, and redeem us but across which we can also sin, trespass, escape, and betray. (2005: n.p.)

The connection of food to ethnicity, however, he warns, “is far from self-evident” (2005: n.p.). In this essay, I have analyzed the function of culinary nostalgia in narratives of dislocation. Drawing on three texts by multi-ethnic North American

authors, I wanted to bring to the table narratives that depict culinary memories. While Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican* depicts the protagonist's vexed relationship with her Puerto Rican past in the U.S., Shani Mootoo's "Out on Main Street" and Madeleine Thien's "Simple Recipes" deal with memories of multi-ethnic immigrants to Canada. As I have argued, all three texts engage in discussions about the imbricated layers of food, nostalgia, and national identity, establishing food as a language for expressing nostalgia. But the affective value placed on food is not simply a nostalgic gesture to remember the past. As a reflexive form of nostalgia, culinary nostalgia has the function of engaging the politics of identity. While culinary remembrances take on nostalgic significance, functioning as placeholders for cultural distinctiveness, the three narratives discussed here display protagonists whose memories affectively position them as ethnic subjects critical of nostalgic longing for home. All three narratives complicate a simple logic of culinary identifications within diasporic memories, using descriptions of food to structure the narrators' ambivalent relationship to ethnicity.

"For today's diasporic people," as Kunow has pointed out, food "has become essentially a *janus-faced signifier*, pointing to the 'here' of diasporic life worlds at the same time as it gestures to the 'there' of home they cannot really go back to" (2003: 173). Food, however, as I have shown, does not only function as a symbol of identity in these narratives. It also transmits affect, constituting a powerful discursive space in which the affective relationship of the protagonists to food can be critically interrogated. Affect, these narratives show, has a materiality, which lies in everyday processes such as cooking and eating. As an affective relation, food connects to citizenship when the protagonists' passion for the food of their childhoods links them to the imaginary habit of establishing a connection with their past. Narratives therefore engage "culinary citizenship," which allows the protagonists to reconnect imaginatively with their "homelands." And, as it turns out, for diasporic subjects, the recipe for cooking narratives of the past is anything else but simple.

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# Men eat for muscle, women eat for weight loss

## Discourses about food and gender in *Men's Health* and *Women's Health* magazines

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This chapter examines discourses about food in *Women's Health* and *Men's Health* magazines, and finds gendered ideologies about foodways. While the concept of “good food” is prevalent in both magazines, what is “good” depends on the gender of the target audience. Both magazines advocate controlled eating, but what this is varies. Eating for women is portrayed as having the goal of improving appearance, while for men it is more about improving performance. Further, women are portrayed as both more emotional and more in need of strict control over their actions. We show how these subtle differences in advertisements and articles aimed at women and at men are part of the construction of hegemonic femininity and masculinity.

### 1. Introduction

This chapter is a sociolinguistic study which will address the Discourses about food and gender found in the U.S. magazines *Women's Health* (WH) and *Men's Health* (MH). The over-arching research question is, what are the messages about foodways (the term we will use here to talk about how people eat and the social meaning attached to ways of eating) that are sent to the readers of these magazines, and in what ways are these messages gendered? The next section will introduce the theoretical framework for this analysis, and then we present the themes about foodways and gender in these data.

#### 1.1 Critical discourse analysis and hegemonic discourse

This analysis is framed within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000; Fairclough 1995; Wodak 2009), a theoretical framework which aims to analyze relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control in text and talk. In some cases these relationships between different social groups

are openly acknowledged (e.g. in discussion of gender differences), and it is the role of CDA to point out that they are not natural and inevitable but socially constructed and naturalized. In other instances, asymmetrical social structures may not be explicitly referenced, but are indirectly manifest in language use; for instance, articles in parenting magazines may subtly assume an audience of mothers. In these cases, it is the role of CDA to make these ideologies visible in order to question their validity. Thus CDA, while focused on language, has a social goal. Our goal in this chapter is to raise awareness about how Discourses that are supposedly about food are also part of the construction of narrow and normative gender roles.

The term “Discourse” in this context means more than just text or talk; it means how certain ways of speaking are combined with certain cultural models to produce and reproduce social categories and the social meanings attached to them (Gee 2004). In this research we examine Discourses about food, which represent and reproduce stereotypes about ideal men and women and their gendered foodways.

A final concept that is integral to this analysis is the concept of hegemony. Hegemony refers to power that is achieved through consent; certain groups of people or ways of being are granted social prestige (and thus power) because there is a consensus that they are superior and inherently more valuable than other people or ways of being. In this paper, we will talk in particular about hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity. Hegemonic masculinity means that there is a certain way of being masculine that is normative, that is, which is considered the best, or even only way to be a man. As we will see, this is fit, muscular, and self-disciplined. Hegemonic femininity involves being thin, well-groomed and in control of your emotions. In most cases, both of these also involve being white, middle class, and heterosexual. These ideals are produced and reproduced through a variety of public and personal means of communication; in some contexts they are also challenged through alternative Discourses, (e.g. about giving in to the decadence of overeating, finding non-thin people attractive, etc.). This chapter will address what Discourses about foodways are present in WH and MH magazines.

## 1.2 Previous research on discourses of food and gender

There is a strong Discourse about “good food” in most societies, and, as this analysis will show, the U.S., as portrayed in these health magazines, is no exception. Overtly, “good food” is defined and described as food which is good for you; most narrowly, this means good for your physical health. Work in Sweden (Aronsson & Gottzén 2011) shows that food morality at the dinner table focused on avoiding soft drinks, confections, and fast food. Good food is often set up against “bad food” or junk food in a clearly dichotomous relationship. In Counihan (1992),

her analysis of the food journals of U.S. college students showed that they often discussed this in terms of the four food groups; since that time, the concepts about what is a nutritious diet have changed. The food pyramid replaced the four basic food groups, and in 2011 the image was updated to a food plate, upon which percentages of different categories of foods are depicted.<sup>1</sup> But the underlying principle for all of these models of the ideal diet is that there are fixed ideas about what one should eat, and these do not vary across cultures or individuals. This “balanced diet Discourse” is well-represented in WH and MH.

A competing Discourse, however, shown in Counihan (1992), is that individualism and independence are expressed through food preferences and eating habits. Many people believe that we show our individualism through our unique and personal food choices. How and what we choose to consume is, according to Counihan, a significant part of our identity. However, this Discourse is not supported in MH and WH. While there do seem to be a few expressions of this idea, they are not very common or explicit, and the choices presented are trivial. For example, at the end of one recipe in an issue of WH there is a passage that suggests, “If you like, drizzle your chicken with a bit more teriyaki sauce” (WH March 2011:98). While this is an invitation to be somewhat individualistic, it seems like more of a token gesture to personal tastes than anything else. In fact, most recipes are to be followed exactly to avoid adding unexpected calories or sugar. In other sections, the reader is given “a couple of [food] options,” such as choosing from an apple or a glass of milk (WH March 2011: 122). Nowhere is it recommended that the reader eat any snack he or she wants, as long as it falls in a certain nutritional range. The implicit assumption here is that individualism is dangerous, and that unless an expert is advising you on what to eat, you could not possibly make a healthy choice.

It is evident from earlier research, however, that the cultural connotations of food do not end there; certain diets bring about particular assumptions about people. Eating habits and diets are part of individual identity but also part of collective consciousness (Fischler 1988; Beardsworth & Keil 1997). In many societies, there is a sense of “you are what you eat”, and thus people who habitually eat certain foods are seen as sharing characteristics of their cuisines. Kittler and Sucher (2008) researched the associations that people had about people who had particular diets. They found:

Vegetarians were considered to be pacifists and likely to drive foreign cars. Gourmets were believed to be liberal and sophisticated. Health food fans were described as antinuclear activists and Democrats. Fast food and synthetic food eaters were believed to be religious, conservative, and fond of polyester clothing.  
(Kittler & Sucher 2008: 3)

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1. see (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>)

Further, Discourses about food include the ideology that certain diets are seen as “moral” (Kittler & Sucher 2008). Part of this “morality”, of course, is linked to what has been called the “cult of slimness” (Beardsworth & Keil 1997: 175). This is a gendered cultural theme, as women are far more inclined to find their current body weight above what is desirable (Fallon 1990: 93). However, being slim is considered a sign of control for everyone, and thus is an issue of great concern in both MH and WH.

A study examining the effects of diets on interpersonal perceptions showed that people who were described as eating a low calorie diet (called a “feminine diet” by the researchers) were rated more positively in terms of interpersonal characteristics such as being conscientious, attractive, sensitive, intelligent, assertive, strong and having self-control (Mooney & Lorenz 1997). Here gender differences became apparent: overall the male eaters were rated more positively, and research participants were more likely to say that they wanted to eat like the male eater described to them, regardless of the diet he supposedly followed. The flipside of this is that female eaters, regardless of what they eat, are judged more harshly, by both men and women.

An important aspect of the Discourses about food is that it is not just *what* one eats, but *how* one eats it. Counihan (1992) notes that the students in her study felt that good eating was done at mealtimes, and snacking and bingeing was bad eating. Ochs et al. (1996) showed that U.S. American families tended to focus on delayed gratification, especially for children; the emphasis was on eating healthy foods first, and then being rewarded with dessert. Although data from Italy showed that this was less generationally divided – that is, both adults and children were expected to enjoy the reward of sweets after eating a healthy meal – in both cases some foods were seen as foods of necessity and others as foods of luxury.

What emerges here is the issue of control; what is perceived as uncontrolled eating or lack of self-discipline means that the eater is immoral or socially inferior. Although we will not go deeply into issues of body image, clearly societal views about weight are closely linked to ideas about “good” eating. Counihan and Kaplan (2004: 8) write “dominant culture ... projects a belief that thinness connotes control, power, wealth, competence and success.”

Again, gender is an important issue; this type of control is even more important for women than men. We see hegemonic Discourse here, as described by Counihan:

Men gain control of women not only by making them feel insecure about their weight and food consumption, but by having the “right” to be judges of their weight. In fact, women are much more likely than men to be the targets of judgmental comments made by both women and men on all topics related to

eating. The acceptance of this fact and its constant reproduction by women as well as men reinforces the subordinate position of women, the judged, relative to men, the judges. (Counihan 1992:61–62)

As this work by Counihan suggests, the identification of gendered Discourses in the evaluation of food consumption – something linked inextricably with gender roles – is not unique to either this analysis or these magazines. For example, Sunderland (2004) provides an overview of gendered Discourses, including the Discourse of compulsive heterosexuality and the concept of Discourses being damaging which we will also address below in the section on the construction of hegemonic gender identities. Further, work by Ambjörnsson (2005) focuses more specifically on talk about body image and framing of female bodies as in constant need of improvement, a theme which is strong in these data.

In the following sections, we will first briefly describe the data used, outline our methodology, and then present an analysis of some Discourses about food in WH and MH. Although in a broad sense many of the themes are found in both magazines, we found subtle differences in the representation of the ideal diet and eating behaviors of men and women.

## 2. Data and methodology

*Men's Health* and *Women's Health* magazines publish 10 issues per year. Although they have more of a focus on exercise than other men's and women's magazines (such as *GQ* or *Cosmopolitan*, which focus more on fashion) they overlap in their inclusion of articles which address body image, pleasing one's sexual partner and foodways. There are also competing magazines titled *Fitness* and another titled simply *Health* which compete with WH. These publications overtly aim to influence their reader's eating behaviors and exercise practices, offering tips and advice columns along with longer seemingly autobiographical pieces.

No information is publicly available about the readership of WH and MH, and our inquiries to the publishing company did not yield any more specifics. Thus our description of the target audience is based on our subjective interpretation of what type of reader would be interested in the material included in these magazines. From our reading, the target market for WH is women ages 18–35 and heterosexual. The latter, as we will show below, is consistently implied in advertising, articles, and features. The age range is based on the fact that much of the content is aimed at readers who live either by themselves or with male partners and do not have children, but have the ability to spend extra money on fitness and beauty regimens, as well as on pricey, name brand foods. Female readers are expected to

look to WH for guidance on how to lose weight, eat properly, and get the ideal feminine body.

This advice should be followed exactly as prescribed; the purpose of the magazine is to provide women with the recipes, advice, hunger-fighting strategies, and workout plans that they desperately need. While the reader is constructed as able to follow advice, she is not able to deduce what is best for her body on her own. WH relies on “experts” to solve the mystery of caring for one’s body and figuring out what is appropriate to eat.

Likewise, the ideal reader for MH is an 18–45 heterosexual male who is gainfully employed but has the time to spend working out and cooking, and places value on gaining muscle and losing fat. The male reader is also presumed to be in a relationship or looking to be involved in sexual encounters with women. MH magazine is also brand specific and encourages readers to spend money on specific food brands, which implies that male readers have excess money to spend as well. However, unlike for the female readers of WH, the recipes and cooking suggestions given in MH are presumed to be cooked and consumed by men. Thus, even though both magazines instruct both men and women to cook and eat in a healthy fashion, it is only the WH readers that are in any way presumed to be cooking for the opposite sex. Overall, target readers for both magazines focused on their bodies; time and resources are presumed to be available for eating particular diets and participating in specific exercise programs to obtain the ideal body.

To conduct this study, we sampled eight WH and eight MH magazines published in the fall of 2010 and from January to August of 2011 (see Appendix for full list of magazines). Our approach is qualitative; after reading the magazines, we developed a list of recurring themes about food. Then, with this list of themes, we paged through the magazines and made notes on what ads, articles, or columns had content which fit into these themes. This chapter does not deal with all of these themes, but focuses on the issues which we know, from previous research, to be linked to gender: the construction of some foods as “good” and others as “bad” and the connection between food and control, looking at guilt and morality as forces which motivate controlled eating.

### **3. Discourses of food (and gender) in *Women’s Health* and *Men’s Health* magazines**

This section will address two Discourses about food in these magazines, the Discourse of “good food” and the Discourse of “control”, and how they differ in terms of the gender of the target audience. As will be discussed in the final section, all of these Discourses contribute to the construction of hegemonic gender roles

which dictate that there is one ideal way of being masculine and feminine, and what we eat is part of the equation.

### 3.1 Eat good food... It makes you a better person

WH and MH position food not only as something to be consumed because it is good for you, but as a means of determining what kind of person you are. Food needs to be good for your body and persona.

Take for example, an article written about summer dips, an excerpt of which is shown in (1). Not only are these recipes supposedly better for the body than Ranch dressing, they are also located within a recurring feature in the magazine called "Slim-Down Strategies." Considering this one example in the larger context of the magazine, we begin to see that the ideal reader is being told to see herself as a person who always needs to be slimmer; one way to accomplish that is by eating "good" food.

- (1) Move over, ranch dressing! These five dunkworthy alternatives are creamy, healthy, and full of fresh summertime ingredients (June, p. 86)

Good food is also about "tricking" yourself into believing you are eating something indulgent – those foods that taste good but are not good for you. For example, instead of eating that ice cream sundae, if you are craving decadence, eat a chocolate covered pretzel instead; see (2). Food must work double duty, to keep you well fed, and somehow make you feel better about yourself at the same time.

- (2) These slim sticks satisfy the wickedest cocoa craving without seeming portion-controlled or low-cal (WH June 2011:90)

This message is hardly varied in the men's version of the magazine; however, there does seem to be more importance placed on men actually enjoying their food. In an article on how to make kebobs we read, "By mixing and matching proteins, vegetables, marinades and sauces, you can create the taste you crave most. When it comes to meat on a stick, you're in charge of your own delicious destiny" (MH June 2011:100). Additionally, rather than the monthly feature being called "Slim-Down Strategies" as it is in WH, the MH version is entitled "The Best Life." Here, men get to eat for pleasure, to live life to the fullest (literally and figuratively, perhaps?), while women must be ever mindful that what they eat must make them smaller.

Another monthly feature in WH is called "Your Flat-Belly Day." This article gives what are, again, "good" foods that make up three meals and two snacks for the perfect diet to slim your waist. These foods are typically fresh, organic, and brand specific. Good foods are not generic. These meals remind the (female)

reader at every turn that bad foods must be avoided and that there are ways to “indulge without the bulge.” Your flat-belly day, which consists of eating 1,500 calories, need not be ruined if you want ice cream; simply substitute a Skinny Cow White Mint Truffle bar (100 calories) for the Wholly Guacamole snack pack (100 calories) from your afternoon snack (WH April 2011:76). If you are going to eat good food, you best not indulge – those extra 100 calories will surely settle on your hips and create an unsightly bulge.

How food is constructed in language influences how we feel about what we eat. Men tend to be given permission to eat and are advised to substitute high calorie “bad” foods with better alternatives; although there is an assumption that they need to work on their diet and exercise routines, there also is an apparent assumption that they can eat with gusto and still achieve the ideal form. Women, on the other hand, are given the message that they need to constantly focus on their bodies and how the food that they eat affects their weight; inevitably, this is about limiting intake. One article tells women that they can “Eat More *and* Lose More!” But rather than giving them permission to eat well and in ways that satisfy them, the article outlines five rules that must be followed – when and what to eat – so that they can slim down. Contrast that with an article on how men can flatten their bellies, as shown in (3); good food is not defined the same across gender lines.

(3) No need to skip burgers and dogs at this summer’s barbeque...

(MH June 2011: 129)

“Good” food is not just constructed in specific ways in the articles in both magazines, but also in the advertisements that purchase space in these publications. Special K cereal positions itself as “The Granola That’s On Your Side, Not Your Hips” (WH July/Aug 2001:93). Planters Nuts are “Specially mixed for a remarkably nutritious snack” (MH April 2011:73). All Whites Egg-Whites urges the male reader to “Open a carton of can. 100% egg whites. And enough lean protein to give your lift a lift” (MH April 2011:107). Typically, only advertisements for sports-related products in the women’s magazine focus on foods for women promoting strength or athletic performance. PowerBar tells women to “Feed your muscles right and they’ll come back for more” (WH May 2011:69) but most other advertisements emphasize the positive effects for a woman’s beauty and slimness, not her fitness and athletic performance, as reasons to eat a certain product.

This is quite different in MH, where there is a much greater emphasis on food to build muscles and contribute to high performance than in WH. While there is occasional mention of muscle-building in WH, (e.g. in an article giving statistics about the properties of various foods, it was claimed that a “28% increase in muscle endurance after consuming caffeine” – WH 2011 Training Guide: 66), there is a much greater focus on not having fat than on having muscle. Even in

the WH 2011 Training Guide, the word “muscle” is rarely used. In MH, however, there are often entire columns and articles focused on building big muscles. The MH 2011 Training Guide talks about “Your customized Muscle Program” on the cover, and the table of contents lists articles titled “Small Muscles, Big Results”, “Free Your Muscles”, “Major League Muscle” and “Muscle News”. The relationship between food and muscles is often stressed, as in a recipe for “Muscle Ice Cream” (MH August 2011: 18), the “Muscle Salad Matrix” (MH August 2011: 48) and “The Lean Muscle Diet” (MH March 2011: 9). It is clear that for men, “good food” builds big muscles. Men should be powerful; women should be diminished in size.

A more significant difference, however, appears in the discussion of something that is indirectly related to muscle building: meat. Eating meat is often linked ideologically with being big and strong, and protein is believed to be necessary for developing muscles. In the WH magazines, we found few mentions of the virtues of eating meat. On the contrary, women are told to “slice meat thin to cut about a quarter of the calories” (WH April 2011: 84) and “eating more produce is an easy way to slim down” (WH January/February 2011: 24). The only articles which suggested eating meat focused on a very narrow set of choices – certain deli meats, chosen carefully (WH April 2011: 84) and free-range chicken – but see the wording of the latter in (4).

- (4) Organic-fed, pasture-raised skinless chicken breast is remarkably healthy, but most of us don’t eat chickens that roamed free and fed on grass.

(WH January/February 2011: 98)

In other words, skip the chicken. And the turkey bacon as well, as discussed in that same issue (WH January/February 2011: 98). So not only is red meat rarely mentioned as an option, even poultry is discouraged in WH.

Men, on the other hand, are clearly the market for meat sellers. It starts with the ads: BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com, Oscar Mayer hotdogs, Boar’s Head (lower sodium ham). None of these ads appear in the WH magazines we sampled. There are also multiple articles about meat:

1. “Meat Up!”, a bulletin about eating more protein to stay satiated on three meals a day
2. “The Science of Steak” on how to best cook steaks (MH March 2011: 74–78)
3. “The Meatball Matrix: fast, cheap, delicious and fun to make. Is this the perfect guy food?” (MH December 2010: 98)
4. Recipe for Bloody Mary skirt steaks (MH August 2011: 50)
5. Grilling recipes from around the world (all involving meat) (MH August 2011: 126f) – compare to the grilling guide for women, which does not include any meat! (WH June 2011: 142f)

6. Part of “essential guy skills of summer” is “mix up an amazing steak marinade” (MH August 2011: 137)
7. Article urging men to make slow-smoked barbecue (MH September 2010: 122f).

Admittedly there is occasional mention in MH of avoiding eating a lot of meat, especially processed meat products (e.g. MH 2011 Training Guide, “50 Ways to Optimize Your Diet” includes tips like slicing your steak thinner, avoiding “weird processed things like salami and olive loaf” and stuffing burgers with veggies). But in addition to the sheer volume of meaty ads and articles which give the message that eating meat is a good source of both eating pleasure and protein, both things that real men should have lots of, there are several explicit references to the manliness of meat. Meat is a “guy food” (MH December 2010: 98) and cooking it is an essential “guy skill” (MH August 2011: 137). Thus “good food” for men is not only contributing to their physique, but also their masculine identity.

Another difference in the way food is portrayed as “good” or “bad” in MH versus WH has to do with the connection between certain foods and sexual performance. In articles aimed at men, food is often touted as being able to contribute to better sexual performance; this is never mentioned in WH. As will be discussed in the final section, there are clear links here to larger societal Discourses about gender and sexuality, namely that women are constructed as passive in sexual relationships and men are under pressure to “perform”.

It is also striking that there are far more advertisements for alcohol – especially beer – in MH than WH. In addition to ads, one issue of MH had an entry in a column “The Best List” on the five best summer beers (MH August 2011: 24), another had a recipe for Guinness-Braised Short Ribs which is touted as “The one meal every man must try” (MH December 2010: 12), and tips for serving wine are provided in another issue (MH April 2011: 60). We found no similar columns discussing alcoholic beverages for women. We see this asymmetry as connected to ideas linking femininity to being quiet and well-behaved, and drinking alcohol as leading to unruly and uncontrolled behavior. As will be discussed in the next section, control is paramount in the gendered Discourses about food in MH and WH, with women being expected to be more controlled – by themselves and others – than men.

### 3.2 Food and control

Control is not just about our own appetites. It is about who gets to decide what others eat. In this respect men and women are very different. Adams claims that in

the U.S. “the message of male dominance is conveyed through meat eating – both in its symbolism and reality” (Adams 1990:189). College students studied by Counihan consistently define male and female eating in terms of how much is consumed (Counihan 1992:61). Women are expected to eat daintily, while men are expected to eat more abundantly, as discussed above, this is clearly represented in MH and WH.

In a culture where cheap, fatty foods are more accessible, available and affordable than healthy ones, tactics for overcoming cravings abound. Many of the tactics presented in WH and MH are the same for men as they are for women. Both sexes are advised to resist temptation and that deprivation through control is its own reward. Women, however, are portrayed as more in need of stringent control, while men are allowed more latitude in their eating habits.

Apart from simply being a means for satisfying hunger and gaining nutrition, eating is a behavior which helps to construct the self in a number of meaningful ways. What and how we eat says a great deal about us and our place in society. As Counihan points out, “It must be done in a proper and controlled manner lest we project an undesirable, immoral, or gender inappropriate self” (Counihan 1992:59). But how do we determine what is proper, and how do we control ourselves in the face of cravings and temptations? These are issues discussed at great length in the WH and MHmagazines that we examined.

One of the first issues to arise is the idea of “bad” eating. Unsurprisingly, bad eating is characterized as uncontrolled eating almost without exception. Eating that is done alone, or between meals, is bad (Counihan 1992:58), as is eating for pleasure. Eating in excess or even past the point of minimal satisfaction is also characterized negatively, the assumption being that the appetite is something that needs to be suppressed, not addressed. Other behaviors such as snacking and eating on the run are also devalued, but discussed as necessary in some circumstances (Counihan 1992:58) – especially, as we will see, for men.

Eating is something that is strongly linked to control. The “slim down strategies” in one issue focus on gaining control; the reformed overeater confides, “Before, if I wanted it, I ate it. I had no limits.” She took charge by keeping a food diary and weighing in every week (WH April 2011:72). In “Food: A Love/Hate Story” (WH March 2011:126), the teaser reads “New research on the biological, social and cultural forces that shape our appetites could help us find harmony at last”. This article goes on to endorse enjoying food and not depriving oneself, which is in clear contradiction to most of WH Discourse on food. The catch is in the quote by the author of a book on overeating, given near the end of this article, as shown in (5).

- (5) It’s a lot more liberating to say ‘I can eat whatever I want, whenever I want, as long as I know how much I *actually* want’. (WH March 2011:127)

In other words, if we are simply in tune with our bodies, we won't overeat. This reinforces the usual message of WH, that is, that overeating equals failure.

For men, this message is mitigated. We found no articles that directly addressed lack of control or over-eating due to emotional reasons in the issues of MH we examined, and changing eating habits was more commonly framed as a matter of adjusting your lifestyle as opposed to your attitudes. For example, in an article titled "Ditch the Diet, Lose the Weight" (MH August 2011: 84f), poor eating habits are discussed as the result of deadlines and meetings, not lack of willpower to resist fattening foods. Other suggestions include taking breaks while eating, so the hormones that make you feel full have time to do their stuff before you overeat ("Slow Down, Slim Down", MH June 2011: 35) or not putting the serving dishes on the table so you have to get up to get seconds (MH September 2010: 36). The message here is that men are not lacking in control; they just need to adjust their habits. The main suggestion for men linked to control is portion control (e.g. in "Ask Men's Health, MH June 2011: 16, there are tips for what ice cream to eat); so while control is required for both sexes, it's framed differently for men than for women.

There are generally two consequences for uncontrolled eating: the first is that you feel guilty, and the second is that your behavior is viewed as immoral. These two aspects of food and control will be addressed in the next two sub-sections.

### 3.2.1 *Food and guilt*

Emotion is clearly linked to eating and food. A favorite family meal can often bring back fond memories, just as a night of snacking on fatty foods can easily bring on strong guilt. While eating can be the root of positive and negative emotions, it is these negative emotions that are given precedence in these magazines, especially WH. This supports a cultural stereotype of women being more emotional than men.

In WH and MH, the most common emotion we came across was guilt. The reader of these texts is told that others feel guilt (and so too should we) for engaging in "bad" eating practices. It is right and appropriate to feel guilty for splurging, unless it is with a "guilt free treat" (WH March 2011: 84). Grazing, bingeing and indulging are also behaviors that can cause tremendous guilt, so it is best to simply abstain from them. A growling stomach, after all, is much less cumbersome than a heavy conscience.

There is Discourse in WH that directly addresses the issue of guilt. One particularly salient example comes from an article on weight loss and control. The one-page spread begins as shown in (6).

- (6) In early November 2009, while bingeing on her kids' leftover Halloween candy, Jennifer was suddenly flooded with guilt. (WH April 2011: 72).

Here there is no mistaking the message being sent. If you lose control and indulge yourself in sweets, you will feel *flooded* with guilt. There are many similar stories played out throughout the WH and MH magazines, and they all have a similar moral: gain control of your appetites and yourself, or be overweight and immoral.

Guilt is a powerful emotion, but it is also a very negative one. This Discourse teaches readers it is acceptable and even appropriate to hate yourself for losing control. By feeling remorse for one's food transgressions, you just might learn some self-control. However, this Discourse is not without challenges, although they are few and far between.

Only one section that warned guilt could be a bad thing when it comes to eating was found in our analysis. In this editorial piece, the author advised readers to not feel guilty over every little indulgence. She wrote that, "As emotions go, guilt is pretty futile" (WH March 2011:8). She went on to suggest appreciating special treats instead of regretting them is a better tactic. Even so, her acknowledgment that the normative stance is to feel remorse over eating for pleasure did not resonate in the rest of the magazine, nor was it repeated in subsequent issues.

We all have a unique and personal relationship with food. Everyone has their own tastes and preferences, as well as dietary needs. What is satisfying for one person is not for another, but the one thing we all have in common is that whether we want to or not, we all must eat. In one particularly insightful article in WH, the author discusses how a person's relationship with food can be as tumultuous as any other relationship and that memories are often linked to food (WH March 2011: 126). There is a vast array of factors that influence our tastes. Our upbringings, family eating habits, our biological needs, as well as other cultural factors come together to influence our shifting relationships with food.

Although our own experiences with food tell us that eating is just as much about pleasure as it is about guilt, and that very few people, if any, are able to entirely separate food from emotion, these Discourses are not represented in WH and MH. Instead, maintaining self-control in the face of temptation is framed as the moral high-ground, and there is little if any recognition that while one may be flooded with guilt after over-indulging, that does not erase the enjoyment of consuming tasty morsels we crave. This relationship with food is complex and emotional, but in the WH and MH magazines, eating for pleasure is downplayed, and feelings of guilt are brought to the fore.

### 3.2.2 *Food and morality*

There is clearly a tension caused by the pleasure gained from eating and the idea that morality is linked to eating practices in American society. There is an ideology perpetuated by these magazines that values controlled eating and the eating of "good" foods, and devalues so-called "bad" eating. As Counihan discusses, there is

a moral superiority to be gained from being in control of one's appetite and eating practices (Counihan 1992: 59). While eating certain foods may make an individual feel better in the short term, such indulgences are usually framed as being not just unhealthy but immoral (Aronsson & Gottzén 2011).

In American society, controlled eating is implicitly linked to ideas of individualism and self-determination, which are highly valued. Thinness becomes a metaphor for control in this important aspect of life. One who is overweight (by America's stringent standards) can therefore be read as a person lacking self-control and the will to resist temptations. As a meritocracy, American society equates lack of achievement in any realm to lack of deservedness; thus lack of an ideal shape is attributed to lack of character.

In the Discourse of "controlled eating as morally superior" in these magazines, it is irrevocably assumed that eating abstemiously is better than indulgence. It is also understood that controlled eating is the key to obtaining a desirable physique. In American culture, being overweight is a symbol of loss of control in addition to being unattractive (Counihan 1992: 60). In both the MH and WH magazines there is an abundance of examples warning of the dangers of food. One such article warns in bold type "Read the Fine Print!" and goes on to discuss the troubling fact that despite manufacturer efforts to warn consumers of the contents of food items, "people are heavier than ever" (WH April 2011: 68). Eating is dangerous not just for your health, but also for your personal, social, and moral well-being.

This perception is most plainly displayed in the Discourse of "food as the enemy". Both magazines present food as dangerous, and the reader is warned to work hard to avoid temptation. Much of the fear mobilized by this Discourse centers around the idea that many easily available foods are unhealthy and fatty. Readers of the March 2011 issue of MH are warned that they must be cautious around sweets, lest they become "junk food junkies" (MH March 2011: 25). In this piece, people who eat excessive amounts of junk food are compared to lab rats who display addictive behavior when fed a sweet, fatty diet. This does not conjure up a favorable image of overweight individuals. Another article titled "How a Fat Nation Can Slim Down" (MH December 2010: 130) makes reference to this author's article in the previous month – titled "I Hate Fat People" – and concedes that it's not entirely the fatso's fault if they are overweight; we live in an environment designed to make us overweight. So not just food, but our entire cultural approach to food, is the enemy.

These two articles discuss "fat" people in very negative ways. Although culturally embedded foodways and temptations are recognized, a person's size is most frequently portrayed as a personal decision, with those at the small end of the spectrum being more moral, controlled and self-determining. "Fat" people are seen as somehow different from "us." As Counihan discusses in her article on

college students and eating, “They fear losing the moral authority that comes from self-control, and they fear the social condemnation that comes from being fat. Fat is not only supremely unattractive in our culture, but it is a clear symbol of loss of control” (Counihan 1992: 60). Thinness, on the other hand, is a sign of control and beauty. Counihan claims, “The thin body proclaims its wearer eats right, is good, and fits society’s ideals” (Counihan 1992: 60). Those who give in to the temptations of sweets and fast food are discussed as rightly feeling guilty for their indulgence. Guilt is an emotion strongly linked to feelings of morality. In American culture, abstention is the moral high ground, while giving in to cravings and losing control is a health-food sin (Counihan 1992: 59). This theme is extended to other arenas in addition to food, as in the article titled “Boost Your Willpower” (WH July-August 2011: 114–116), which gives tips on how to resist all sorts of temptingly bad behaviors – food, texting your ex, or procrastinating at work. The message is that self-control is something to strive for in every area of your life. Tips to control appetite include drinking grapefruit juice (WH June 2011: 18) to avoiding drinking alcohol (MH February 2011: 32). Most of the Discourses regarding tactics for weight loss center on ways to “keep you satisfied” which is a code word for “in control.”

#### 4. Construction of hegemonic gender identities

Hegemony implies a lack of heterogeneity in the ideal; in other words, there is *one* “right” way to be masculine or feminine. These ideals are clearly constructed by Discourses about food in WH and MH magazines. This section addresses the potentially damaging nature of such Discourses.

Women should be, above all, slim and trim. Fitness and muscularity are less of an issue than being slender, which is the assumed goal of every woman. Obviously, this discourse ignores appreciation of different body types and different standards of beauty. Men should also not carry excess weight, but need to be more concerned with muscles. This asymmetry is linked to an age-old cultural theme of valuing women for their appearance and men for their performance. Even when not explicitly stated, the goal of muscles is not just an attractive appearance but also achievement in sports. And, of course, in bed. The MH 2011 Training Guide, in a section on obtaining flat abs, cites as reason 2 to do the exercises that “A Flat Belly Will Improve Your Sex Life” (MH Training Guide 2011: 67). Improving your diet and exercise routine will give you more stamina, better erections, and even more penis length, according to this guide. Also in this issue is an entire section devoted to “The Better Sex Workout: Build Strength and Stamina for Peak Performance” (MH Training Guide 2011P: 142f). While there are also references to food that can make a woman a better sexual partner, they do not focus on performance but sex

drive – with the implicit assumption that women don't have strong sex drives. For example, in one issue readers are told that libido is increased by consuming zinc, so make sure it's in your multi-vitamin and eat more zinc-rich foods like oysters, crab, wheat germ, chickpeas and steak! (WH May 2011: 131).

It should be noted that WH and MH both construct the readers as overweight and as people who need to get back in shape. Article after article and ad after ad suggest the many improvements the reader could make in their lives – they need to exercise more, or at least differently, to eat better and less. There is no discernible difference in this regard between the magazines aimed at women and those aimed at men, although one marketing difference does seem to place more responsibility for fitness on women than on men. The spines of the WH magazines change with every issue and are pointedly focused on how women's bodies need to change. For example, the spine of the January/February issue reads, "Look great naked!"; March: "Shrink your belly"; the April issue reads, "Slim Sexy Body"; and May, "Shed two sizes." Contrast this blatant requirement that women must always be sexy and getting smaller with the spine that is on every issue of MH: "The World's Leading Men's Magazine." This one declarative statement in no way holds men accountable for their bodies. Instead, this statement asserts that this magazine is where men find answers and assistance for becoming better men, with no judgment.

It is also glaringly obvious that hegemonic masculinity and femininity as constructed in MH and WH is heterosexual. All of the references to romantic or sexual relationships are explicitly between men and women, and nothing other than a heterosexual relationship – not same-sex relationships, not celibacy – is discussed.

Finally, in terms of personality traits, self-control is paramount. While WH and MH provides a forum to recognize that slips in control happen to us all, it's clear the goal is not to create acceptance for eating which is not strictly controlled, but to provide tips on how to avoid it. One of the clear consequences of not exercising self-control presented is not being attractive to the opposite sex. Note this excerpt from the "The Better-Sex Workout" in MH.

- (7) Isn't the promise of sex why you go to the gym in the first place and lift heavy objects while listening to "Eye of the Tiger"? .... honestly, most guys work out for one thing – to attract women.

....

What would encourage you to put down that meatball Parmesan sandwich and pick up an apple and dumbbell instead? The knowledge that women prefer to run their fingers over hard abs rather than a flabby belly.

(MH Training Guide 2011: 143–144)

This is somewhat in contrast with Counihan's findings that women are never the judges of men's weight, but both men and women castigate women about their weight (Counihan 1992: 61–62). Here we see that men are motivated by the drive to be sexually attractive to women by being lean and muscular. Similarly, in WH there are constant references to behaviors you should adopt that will make you "sexy", and it is clear that the judges of this are men.

The images of the ideal woman and ideal man as portrayed in the Discourses about Food in WH and MH are, we argue, counterproductive to the development of physical and mental health, which is supposedly the goal of these magazines. They frame readers as inadequate and morally lacking in their diets, and present unrealistic goals for improvement. Individuality is squelched, and the consequence of poor eating – which is almost a certainty by WH and MH standards – is being unattractive to the opposite sex and guilt-ridden about failure and loss of control.

In addition to loading eating with a lot of emotional baggage, these magazines also present good nutrition as an impenetrable labyrinth which the reader cannot possibly navigate without help; and there is no gendered difference in the helplessness of the readers when it comes to common sense about healthy eating habits. Eating right is only possible with the inside secrets, tips and tricks provided by WH and MH. These Discourses cleverly serve to expand the readership of their magazines, but do a disservice in perpetuating stereotypical gender ideals.

## 5. Conclusion

In MH and WH, both men and women are given many tips in each magazine about how to eat right to stay, or become, thin. For much of the Discourse of food in these magazines, the focus is on control and eating to stay minimally satisfied and maximally shapely. Both sexes are expected to be trim and lean, and men are also expected to be muscular and strong. Both readerships are told to dine in peace, fight cravings with healthy alternatives, and strive to stay full on three meals a day. It is implied that it is a moral failing to not be able to exert self-control over one's eating. This is more extreme for women than for men, however, as the latter are expected to enjoy beer, meat and eating in general in ways that are presented as un-feminine and thus not recommended for women. With the permission to eat more heartily comes the pressure to perform, however; while women are urged to eat right and exercise so that they can be slender and attractive (to men), men must eat right and exercise so that they can perform better in sports and in (hetero)

sexual activities. Women may be more judged for their appearance, but men are judged more on their performance. In this way, the Discourses of food in WH and MH contribute to the construction of hegemonic masculinity and femininity that are limiting for all men and women.

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## Appendix A

### List of magazines included in the analysis

#### Women's Health issues:

- 2011 special issue: Training Guide
- January/February 2011
- March 2011
- April 2011
- May 2011
- June 2011
- July/August 2011

#### Men's Health issues:

- 2011 special issue: Training Guide
- September 2010
- December 2010
- February 2011
- March 2011
- April 2011
- June 2011
- August 2011



# “Bon Appétit, Lion City”

## The use of French in naming restaurants in Singapore

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In multilingual Singapore, French can frequently be found in the names of local food retailers and restaurants. This study attempts to investigate the form and function of French in these business names. By considering which meanings French expresses in the local corporate context, the reasons behind the use of French will be discussed. At the heart of the analysis is a corpus of 47 names found on shop signs in different locations of Singapore. Results suggest a link between form, the type of food retail business, and the food served. Functionally, French expresses cultural and social meanings, while stressing individual and collective identities. We present evidence for the use of French as an emergent commercial register peculiar to Singapore.

### 1. What's in the name of a restaurant?

Already Confucius stressed the importance of naming things appropriately realizing the close link between language and social context (Watson 2007). Since his times our lives may have become more complex, but the fundamental idea of the social impact of naming remains true. This is particularly so for commercial enterprises whose names are vividly displayed in public space. The sizeable budgets that the corporate sector spends on branding and name development each year reflect the importance attached to effective naming (Fox 2011).

Naming a business is a meaningful semiotic act, the result of which often gains material form in a shop sign. An example is the one in Figure 1 below.

Such a sign is a complex semiotic ensemble whose various elements (shape, font type, image, writing, layout, etc.) are all able to express meaning (Kress 2010). The most salient element, however, is the written mode. So, let us focus on what the words on the sign in Figure 1 are able to tell us (in no particular order of preference):

As a speaker of a European language (and most other languages), I will be able to identify the type of business appropriately. The place this sign is attached to is thus a restaurant. If I have a faint idea about features of the French language, I will

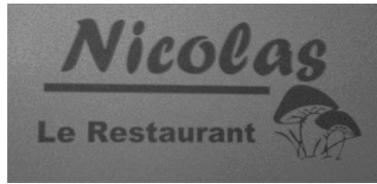


Figure 1. Nicolas: Le Restaurant

classify the language on the sign as French, due to the use of the masculine definite article *le*. The fact that I identify these words as French will probably lead me to think that the food that is served here is also French. The arrangement and size of the words suggest that *Nicolas* is the actual name of the establishment. Again common sense recommends that this may be the first name of the patron or the chef, and, should I have a more than rudimentary knowledge of French, that it will be pronounced without the final sibilant. The choice of the first name as the main restaurant name over a family name, e.g. Monsieur Sarkozy, may call forth a welcoming atmosphere. And last but not least, if I should guess in which place on this planet this sign is found, I may be inclined to say Europe, or France, or a French-speaking environment, because of the language these words are apparently in. Would I now be surprised to know that this restaurant is actually located in Southeast Asia, in Singapore to be exact? Would I find it puzzling, if the food served is actually Asian and not French? Would I not be curious to find out why other food retailers use this naming practice? Those were the questions that came to our minds.

By studying a collection of 47 business names from the food retail sector in Singapore, all of which make use of the French language to different degrees, this paper aims to elucidate three issues. First, we intend to discover the forms of French that are used in naming eateries. Second, we shall shed light on which meanings are signaled via the use of French, so as to, third, come to an understanding of what motivates the authors of these names to use French.

In the following section, we will set the frame by presenting the language situation in Singapore and how French fits into the scene. We will proceed with a review of the literature on the value of foreign languages in advertising, before we discuss the approaches that inform our analysis and the methods of data collection. Finally, we will examine the forms and functions of French in the names of food retailers in Singapore.

## 2. Singapore's linguistic market and the status of French

The Republic of Singapore is a multilingual nation with four official languages: three languages that represent the three dominant ethnic groups (Mandarin

Chinese, Malay and Tamil) and English. Nearly all Singaporeans are literate in an ethnic language and English. From the founding days of the republic English has assumed the status of language of wider communication and public life. It is the medium of instruction in schools and universities, it is the dominant language of political and commercial life, and as such is a gatekeeper to academic and professional success (cf. Cavallaro & Serwe 2010; Ong 2011; Ong & Zhang 2010). In the business world Mandarin has undoubtedly become another major player challenging the status of English, yet recent controversies have shown that English is still considered the default trade language among Singaporeans, even between those of the same ethnicity (The 2010; Wee 2003). Consequently, shops that intend to reach the broadest customer base will use English in service and advertising. Even most ethnic businesses, e.g. Chinese pharmacies or Malay clothing stores, use English as the dominant display language. All in all, English in writing and speech rules the commercial linguistic landscape of contemporary Singapore. So how does French fit in here?

France maintains close ties with Singapore. Singapore is France's third biggest trading partner in Asia and is host to approximately 6000 French expatriates. International French brands are visible in the shopping districts of the city, and French food and beverage is as popular here as in any other urban center around the world. From the 1970s onwards, educational policy has supported the learning of French as a modern foreign language at secondary and tertiary levels making it, besides Japanese and Korean, the most popular foreign language today. All this goes to show that Singaporeans in general are exposed and accustomed to the French language, while those with secondary and tertiary education may even possess a running knowledge of the language.

Secondly, in Singapore, like in the other leading Asian economies Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, the French language has made noticeable inroads into public space. An article in Singapore's biggest daily newspaper relates the occurrence of lexical forms such as *de* or *d'* in names of local businesses as the owners' attempts to associate their shop with "French chic" or "French air of sophistication" (Rahmat 2008). Another newspaper report claims to explain the reasons behind housing developers' frequent choice of European foreign languages as a resource for building names as an attempt to "complement and enhance the development and help to brand and define its positioning" (Tay 2009). The perceived increase of French for commercial names has recently been the topic of an episode of a satirical television series suggesting compulsory French lesson for taxi drivers as a remedy for their inability to pronounce the names of private housing estates adequately (mediacorpch5, 24 November 2010).

In summary, while English firmly remains Singapore's leading commercial language, a trend to use foreign languages and in particular French, or scripts that visually appear to be French, exists. Similar phenomena have been reported for

other Asian cities. In the following section we thus want to take a closer look at what scholars have found out about the use of French and other foreign languages in advertising and commerce.

### 3. Foreign languages as added value

Foreign languages can be effectively exploited to establish a favorable image of a business. In print and television advertising they often function as adornment. Kelly-Holmes (2005) demonstrates for Europe that non-native varieties in advertising texts tend not to transmit factual information. They lack any referential function, while their symbolic meanings take center stage. Kelly-Holmes (2005) calls such use of foreign languages *linguistic fetish*. With respect to French, Piller (2003) argues that its symbolic meanings comprise a cultural stereotype based on the perception of continental French culture.<sup>1</sup> French in advertising text across Europe, as well as Japan, has been found to convey elegance, sophistication and femininity (Haarmann 1989; Martin 2007). Yet, as Kelly-Holmes (2005:24) stresses, the outcome of the symbolization process is not fixed and static but always locally constructed as “the product of social, political, economic, historical and linguistic relations between different countries”. Interestingly, this associative force does not diminish, according to Piller (2003: 173), even if the items are “ludicrously incorrect”.

What counts for advertising texts in newspapers and magazines has also been detected for public display signs. Backhaus’s (2007) study of language use patterns on public signs in metropolitan Tokyo revealed that the use of foreign languages is most prevalent on signs that belong to the corporate sector. The foreign language material comes in the form of what Backhaus (2007) classifies as slogans, catchphrases and titles. English dominates, while only a few signs make use of French. Backhaus (2007: 109) concludes that signs that quantitatively and/or visually emphasize foreign elements either serve an indexical function of stressing the national origin of the business or a symbolic function “to imply a foreign background that actually does not exist.”

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1. While French, German or Italian trigger ethno-cultural, usually country-specific, background knowledge, Piller (2003) argues that the use of English as an exogenous variety in advertising is disconnected from the culture of its two most populous speech communities on the British Isles and in North America. English expresses instead a social stereotype as opposed to a cultural stereotype: “a general symbol of modernity, progress, and globalization” (Piller 2003: 175).

In Hong Kong, construction companies have been shown to make use of English, Italian and French to adorn private housing developments. Jaworski and Yeung (2010: 176) show how these languages and the layout of signs are used to “turn their dwelling spaces into idealized oases of tranquility, Edens of happiness and pleasure, and castles of sovereignty” by invoking interpretive frames of spectacle and brand. The use of foreign names gives a sense of exclusivity, luxury, high culture or sophistication to the edifice by transforming the mundane reality into something extraordinary.

In a survey of signs in Taipei’s shopping districts, Curtin (2007, 2009) highlights the distinctive character of using French. While generally all foreign languages appear on signs connected to the sale of global fashion and high quality service, Curtin (2007) notices that significantly more French is used in names for clothing and beauty products, restaurants and housing complexes. Moreover, she discusses examples of *pseudo-French*, which is writing that appears to be French due to the use of diacritics. Curtin (2007) concludes that all instances of French serve a decorative function, because the Taiwanese audience has no access to the referential meaning. On the other hand, this allows the sign creators to make creative use of the language. For Curtin (2007) these forms of French and pseudo-French express a social, localized stereotype: they “point to both a globalized world of fashion and European cosmopolitanness and to a local Taiwanese prestige that indexes a shop and its clientele as having the distinctive taste of Taipei’s modern, urban scene” (Curtin 2009: 229).

These studies claim that across Asia, European languages are purposefully used in naming corporate ventures, in order to associate a business with contemporary high culture and luxury. The French language shows a high frequency of use in certain business sectors, such as clothing and food. In the following chapter, we want to explore how these meanings are made, which shall then enable us to discuss the motivations that inspire the sign makers.

#### 4. Meanings and motivations of French in business names

The analytical tools employed by Scollon and Scollon (2003) and Blommaert (2010) on the use of foreign languages on signs aid in determining the types of meanings French makes in the name of a food retailer in Singapore. These authors differentiate between three ways of meaning making or semiosis: *indexical*, *symbolic*, and *emblematic*. According to Scollon and Scollon (2003), a shop sign produces situated, local meanings through its placement, its written content and its shape. This way of making meanings describes its indexicality. A sign featuring a French name to designate an eatery in Singapore, for instance, may point to the

type of cuisine available in the premises. At the same time, the use of French on the sign can conjure up “something else which is not present or which is ideal or metaphorical” (Scollon & Scollon 2003: 133). This is its symbolic meaning, which is based on the current social and/or political ideology attached to the language. In the case of French in Singapore this may be luxury fashion and fine dining. Moreover, since formal acquisition of the language is largely restricted to those with a university education, using French in the name of a restaurant may appeal to the knowledge of this stratum of society and thus exude an air of sophistication and exclusivity. A special type of symbolic meaning making is what Blommaert (2010) refers to as emblematic meaning. Words on a sign convey emblematic meaning, if they are void of any linguistic meaning or denotational value in their context of use. The use of pseudo-French as discussed by Curtin (2007), or features such as diacritics and graphic accents, the gendered definite articles, or certain derivational affixes that are stereotypically perceived as features of French are examples. Scrutinizing the ways in which the French items in a restaurant name make meanings should lead us a step closer to uncovering the reasons why French is being used in the first place. Ben-Rafael’s (2009) structuration principles of linguistic landscapes allow us to better fathom possible motivations.

Trying to see through the apparent chaos of signs in public space, Ben-Rafael (2009) postulates a four-dimensional frame within which the motivations of a sign maker evolve. The sign is seen as the product of an actor’s rational considerations of the local context, and as emphasizing a particular type of motivation. The first parameter is called *the presentation of self principle*, in case the sign is primarily designed to create a memorable (corporate) identity. By using French in Singapore, for example, one can set one’s business apart from those of other competitors. On the other hand, a sign maker may judge the local socio-cultural context as more significant. Therefore, the design will “‘play on’ and anticipate clients’ cost-and-benefit considerations” (Ben-Rafael 2009: 45). This is the second parameter, which Ben-Rafael (2009) terms *good-reasons principle*. Considering the consumers’ tastes, an Asian business owner may choose French to bring about associations with high-quality products, elegance, and sophistication. Yet, the design of a shop sign may simply signal group membership. This third principle is *the principle of collective-identity*: A sign plays on conventionalized displays of group membership to act as an identity marker. Choosing a particular language may thus signal the geographic origin or the culinary style of the product. Lastly, the design of a sign may have to abide to publically imposed conventions. *The principle of power-relations* refers to legislative norms set by governments or trade organizations that guide the sign maker’s design choices. To the best of our knowledge, restrictions on the use of languages on corporate signs are not evident in Singapore. While English is the language of commerce and enjoys the greatest

reach among the different ethnic groups, there are no laws prohibiting the use of French, or any other language.

With these analytical tools, we shall subsequently analyze our collection of French in the names of food retailers. By doing so we will explore the connection between the ways French makes meaning and the types of motivation that spurred the process of naming.

## 5. The corpus of shop signs and the sample of food retailers

The collection of names of food-related businesses analyzed in this paper is part of a larger corpus of shop signs featuring French or French-like features that the authors have been collecting over the past four years in Singapore. Sparked by our interest in their form and function, we set out to photographically document instances of French on shop signs. We deliberately avoided to restrict data collection to the major shopping areas in the city center and surveyed residential neighborhoods as well. The names of businesses on signs or stickers were usually displayed outside the premises and fixed to the wall just above or beside the entrance, or on the shop-window. We documented the totality of the sign, including linguistic and non-linguistic materials. We also noted which goods or services were offered, and recorded the location of the shop. To verify the information gained in the field, we consulted the shop’s webpages, if available. For this corpus we only selected Singaporean-founded or owned businesses and excluded international or foreign brands. Overall we collected photos of 219 shop signs.

We classified each item according to industry type following the Singapore Standard Industrial Classification 2010 (Department of Statistics, Ministry of Trade & Industry 2010). The distribution of signs across industry types was:

- 24% retail in specialized stores
- 25% manufacturing and retail of food, as well as restaurants
- 42% other personal services (hairdressing shops, beauty salon and spas), 9% miscellaneous (e.g. consulting, interior design, IT, software development)

Following studies on public signage by Backhaus (2007) and Reh (2004), the signs in each industry category were classified according to the languages used:

- monolingual French signs (Category A)
- signs using French and another language (Category B)
- use of French function words and another language (Category C)
- coinages (Category D)

Within each category, except for D, we differentiated between idiomatic use (1) and non-idiomatic use (2) (see Table 1 & Appendix A). Thus we coded idiomatic monolingual French as A1. We classified a name as A2, if it lacked a graphic accent or was misspelled.<sup>2</sup>

## 6. Analysis and discussion of form and function

We will proceed with an analysis of the forms of French in the names of food-related businesses in order to determine the links between names and types of food businesses. Then we shall go on to examine the motivations that lie behind the preference for French.

### 6.1 Forms of French in the names of food retailers

Overall, 47 shop signs from the *manufacturing and retail of food, as well as restaurants* category qualified for analysis. Table 1 shows their distribution across the different formal types.

**Table 1.** Food signs according to form (\*excluding signs from category D)

Category	Total number	Subcategory	Total number
A	23 (48.8 %)	A1	18
		A2	5
B	13 (27.7 %)	B1	8
		B2	5
C	9 (19.2 %)	C1	3
		C2	6
D	2 (4.3 %)		
		Idiomatic *	64.4 %
		Non-idiomatic *	35.6 %

Almost every second sign is a monolingual sign in French (Category A), while slightly more than a quarter are bilingual ones including another language besides

2. Labelling words on signs as either French or English can be problematic. In our corpus we counted lexemes such as *café, cuisine, boutique* and *patisserie* as English because they are either established loanwords or appear without graphic accent. If graphic accents are used, however, the items are classified as French.

French (Category B). Almost a fifth of the signs feature a French function word (Category C) and there are 2 coinages (Category D). Across categories A to C, the French content is predominantly idiomatic with only every third sign revealing some form of non-idiomatic use. Only the set of names that make use of French function words (Category C) reveals a higher proportion of non-idiomaticity. We can thus argue that, if French is used to name a food retailer or restaurant in Singapore, it is most probably idiomatic and the name will appear as likely on its own as it does in conjunction with other languages.

Looking at the distribution of types of food businesses and the type of food on offer across the categories of names reveals two interesting aspects (see Appendix A). Firstly, the majority of food businesses with a monolingual French name turn out to be restaurants. Cafes and cake shops bulk large in the other categories. The latter is particularly interesting, because many of these cake shops or bakeries sell Asian products under a French name. Secondly, among the restaurants, those that specialize in French food items almost exclusively come with a monolingual French title. With one exception, the names of these restaurants are also all idiomatic. The eateries that serve Asian food are usually bilingual. The level of idiomatic use of French is among these names significantly lower.

Armed with this knowledge, we will now proceed with our analysis of the possible motivations that lie behind the use of French to name food-related businesses.

## 6.2 Functions of French in the names of food retailers

Based on the insights from the quantitative analysis, we will look closer at two general types: signs or names that use French to sell French food; and signs that use French to sell Asian food. For each type we intend to uncover what the possible reasons are for choosing French. We hope to do so by analyzing how French makes meaning (indexical, symbolic, emblematic) and which type of motivation the name reflects. Moreover, we want to examine the signs in category C, meaning those names that make use of a French function word. Here we will look in particular at the use of the preposition *de*.

### 6.2.1 *A French name for French food*

The majority of eateries that make exclusively use of French on their shop signs (Category A) indeed offer French or French-inspired food. Only 5 out of 23 shops in this category do not offer French products. In this section we would like to focus on the 18 names that all belong to restaurants specializing in French cooking. Our data reveal two different naming patterns with respect to the use of French here: names that refer to the local context, and names that refer to a French cultural context. Let us begin with the former.

*A sign of a French identity.* 12 of the 18 monolingual French names that refer to restaurants specializing in French food refer to actual aspects of the business or the locality. For instance, the names shown below highlight the positive quality of the owner or staff (Figure 2), the product (Figure 3), the physical surroundings (Figure 4), or the physical size of the business (Figure 5).



Figure 2. Les Amis



Figure 3. Beaujolais



Figure 4. au Jardin: Les Amis



Figure 5. La Petite Cuisine

The sign in Figure 2 belongs to the flagship restaurant of the Singaporean fine-dining company *Les Amis Group*. According to the company’s website the restaurant *Les Amis* ‘the friends’ employs “knowledgeable ... warm and approachable” staff unlike other fine dining restaurants who tend to employ “stiff, snotty and unfriendly” service professionals (*Les Amis*, 24 November 2011). The French name obviously means business, because *Les Amis* ‘the friends’ indexes the personal quality of the staff. At the same time it may very well point to the quality of the relationship between the group of owners, who happen to be three men trained in the art of French cooking. Whatever the primordial reason, actual contextual factors motivate the French name.

Apart from the quality of the staff or the owner, the product on offer may provide the reason for choosing French. The sign in Figure 3 is placed outside a food retail space where, according to the outlet’s website, patrons can “wine and dine in a cosy and charming ambience that captures the joie de vivre of France in ... Singapore” (*Beaujolais*, 20 January 2012). Obviously, the inspiration for the name *Beaujolais* is the most famous product of the region by the same name in southeastern France. Not only this particular type of red wine is sold in these premises: the name indexes metonymically the beverages this restaurant and bar specializes in.

The signs in Figures 4 and 5 exemplify French restaurant names that make direct reference to aspects of their geographical locale: the physical surroundings (Figure 4) and the size of the establishment (Figure 5). *au Jardin* ‘in the garden’ is located in the lush greenery of Singapore’s Botanic Gardens, while *La Petite Cuisine* ‘the small kitchen’ is literally housed in a low and narrow building, a fact that restricts the floor space of the restaurant significantly.

*A symbol of authenticity.* A different kind of motivation seems to be the basis of the remaining six monolingual French names. Unlike the names discussed above, these lack direct local contextual reference. Indeed they refer to specific socio-cultural concepts of French food culture.



Figure 6. L'Estaminet: Bar-Tabac



Figure 7. Les Bouchons: Steak Frites



Figure 8. Les Bouchons: Rive Gauche

The sign in Figure 6 hangs above a pub in Singapore, but *L'Estaminet: Bar-Tabac* is the generic name for beer pubs in the working class areas of northern France and Belgium. *Les Bouchons*, used on the signs in Figures 7 and 8, are small restaurants typical of the French city of Lyon that are known to serve quality local cuisine and wine.<sup>3</sup> Two restaurants of the same name operate in Singapore: *Les Bouchons: Steak Frites* (Figure 7) in the traditional but fashionable Chinatown district, and *Les Bouchons: Rive Gauche* (Figure 8) at the shores of the Singapore river near the civic district, a traditionally popular area for dining and clubbing. *Rive Gauche* 'left bank' is an idiomatic expression that refers to the subculture of intellectuals and artists in Paris located at the left bank of the river Seine. Residents of these quarters are known for their refined culinary tastes. In comparison, *Steak Frites* 'steak and fries' refers to a popular everyman's French dinner feast. Both restaurants are run by a duo of French expatriate chefs who seem to have deliberately chosen these names to reflect their French origin (Ee 2007).

*Summary.* The discussion shows that restaurant owners in Singapore who specialize in French cooking and choose a monolingual French name for their business seem to use this as a strategy to signal their membership in the community of French restaurants. Choosing French over English therefore constitutes a claim for authenticity. Our analysis shows, however, that this can be achieved via two different routes: by contextualizing the local environment as French; or by symbolically transforming a retail space in Singapore into a typical French place.

3. That *les bouchons* can be translated as 'the corks' seems to be of secondary relevance here. The evidence from the newspaper interview cited supports such a non-literal reading.

### 6.2.2 A French name for Asian food

Let us now turn to those places that serve Asian dishes but go by a French name or whose name partly consists of French lexemes. As mentioned above, one type of food retailer stands out here, namely cake shops and bakeries. We shall discuss these in the subsequent section. Next, we will analyze those restaurants names that combine Chinese and French, in order to clarify which motivation may lie behind the use of French here.

*French for bakeries and cafes.* Using French on a shop sign in Singapore does not always indicate that the products are of French or European origin. Yet French appears to be a popular language used in names of local cake shops and cafes. The three monolingual French signs in Figures 9 to 11 below are examples.



Figure 9. Rive Gauche Patisserie



Figure 10. Petit Provence



Figure 11. Bon Goût

*Rive Gauche Pâtisserie* ‘Left bank pastry shop’ (Figure 9) and *Petit Provence* ‘Little Provence’ (Figure 10) are both franchises in the bakery business. *Bon Goût* ‘Good taste’ in Figure 11 sells bakery products and offers dine-in facilities, as well as a large collection of Japanese Manga comics. All three establishments specialize in the production of Japanese pastries, such as mochi or Japanese cheesecake, or Asian adaptations of French originals, such as green tea-flavored macarons. Yet, no authentic French products are on sale. While the Asianness of shop and product in Figure 11 is arguably displayed via an icon that resembles a Japanese or Chinese character, nothing on the signs points to the Asian character of the products, but the names rather point to a French background.

So why is French used, if no French food is sold? Let us recall that across many Southeast and East Asian countries, fashion and beauty stores run under French labels or use French in their advertising largely for emblematic reasons (Blommaert 2010; Curtin 2009). These examples suggest that Singaporean businessmen in the bakery industry have adopted such a strategy. The French used in these examples is not primarily indexical as it is in the restaurant names in Section 6.2.1. On the other hand, along with Curtin’s (2009) findings, we would suggest that French makes for symbolic meanings here, as it conveys modern contemporary pan-Asian culture as opposed to traditional local Asian tastes. French is used almost completely devoid of stereotypes of French culture. Comparable to the use of English across countries in continental Europe, French in the signs in Figures 9 to 11 expresses a social stereotype. The shop sign in Figure 12 below is a further illustration.



Figure 12. Bonheur Pâtisserie

In terms of form the name on the sign in Figure 12 is a French-English bilingual sign, because *pâtisserie* without a graphic accent was tagged as an English lexical item. The languages in bilingual restaurant names (Category B) often show a distribution of work: English (or another language) denotes the type of establishment or the product offered, while French provides the actual name of the shop. The name of the bakery in Figure 12 follows this structure: English identifies the type of shop (*Pâtisserie*), while French provides the actual name, *Bonheur* ‘happiness’. Also note that the whole noun phrase follows an English syntactic matrix with the head noun in second position, rather than a French one, where the head should come first (*Pâtisserie du Bonheur*).

In line with the argument developed above the choice of the French noun *Bonheur* ‘happiness’ as the name of the bakery is undoubtedly motivated symbolically, in order to position the shop as a contemporary Asian bakery. This interpretation finds further support at the level of word formation, as the semantics of the compound sticks to a traditional way of naming businesses among ethnic Chinese shop owners in Singapore (and the region). Stores often carry auspicious names that may foster the economic or psychological well being of patrons and owner, e.g. *Fortune Seafood*, *888 Eating House*, or *Happy Fish Soup*. *Bonheur Patisserie* ‘Happiness Patisserie’ uses this traditional cultural practice with a twist. The use of French in a traditional structure aligns the shop symbolically with contemporary culture without losing sight of its traditional roots. Like the names in Figures 9 to 11, this example illustrates how French is a medium that conveys associations of contemporary pan-Asian food culture. French in these names hardly connotes aspects of continental French culture, but instead, has become appropriated to express a social quality. This might also explain the declining levels of idiomatic usage of French in this category and the type of industry (e.g. the lack of gender agreement in *Petit Provence* above. It should be *Petite Provence*), since cultural authenticity is not intended.

*French for Asian food in restaurants.* A number of multilingual names in category B combine French and an Asian language. In this section, we would like to discuss the names of two restaurants that offer Asian food and combine French and Chinese on their shop signs. Again, we will ask the question how and why French is used here.



Figure 13. Café d'Orient



Figure 14. Le Chasseur

Figure 13 shows the name of the establishment in French printed in large letters, *Café d'Orient* 'Cafe of the Orient', with a subtext in Chinese characters smaller in size that says *xin xiang gang cha can ting* 'the new Hong Kong restaurant'. Figure 14 features Chinese characters above the French noun phrase, and both scripts are in an almost equally large font size. Here the translations are *le shi xuan* 'restaurant of eating pleasure' and *Le Chasseur* 'the hunter'. Similar to other bilingual signs, French provides the name, while the local language refers to the type of cuisine or establishment.

The use of Chinese characters in these names can be said to index the fact that Chinese dishes are served. However, the type of Chinese script is meaningful. The restaurant in Figure 13 is located in a middle-class residential area of Singapore. It has its own air-conditioned premises and serves currently fashionable Cantonese and Western-style dishes from Hong Kong. In comparison the restaurant in Figure 14 is one of many small stalls in a traditional open-air food market serving local Chinese Singaporean dishes at convenient prices. Based on their location and the food served, we can assume that they differ in clientele and social appeal. While *Café d'Orient* provides for contemporary modern Asian cuisine, *Le Chasseur* offers traditional local food. This fact is marked already in the type of Chinese characters used (cf. also Scollon & Scollon 2003). The sign in Figure 14 uses traditional Chinese characters, while the one in Figure 13 makes use of simplified Chinese characters. The latter were introduced after the Cultural Revolution and are currently used as the standard form of Chinese script in China, while the traditional characters are common among the Chinese diaspora and in traditional Taiwanese culture. Yet the question remains: why use French at all?

Let us now turn to the different meanings that the French parts make in these signs. In the sign in Figure 13 the French noun phrase makes contextual reference, because it informs about the origin of the food. It is noteworthy that even a lack of knowledge in French will not inhibit communication, since the nouns, *café* and *orient*, are also loanwords in English. But at the same time and more importantly, the phrase is clearly identifiable as French due to the stereotypical features of French writing, namely the graphic accent, the preposition *de* and the apostrophe. This has symbolic consequences based on the evidence presented in the previous section. French is the vehicle that carries over associations of culinary contemporariness and trendiness in modern, urban Asia: the new Hong Kong versus the traditional.

Different motivating factors apply to the use of *Le Chasseur* 'the hunter' in the sign in Figure 14. The name makes little indexical meaning in its immediate context: neither is fresh game sold here, nor does it refer to the owner's profession. Given the physical proximity of the business's immediate competitors in the

open-air food court the main reason for the choice of French seems to be the will to distinguish itself. The meaning is thus an emblematic one, as the foreignness of the name alone becomes most meaningful.

*Summary.* Across all the examples in this section French makes for meanings largely disconnected from a cultural ideology of France. It is used to name food retailers that offer contemporary Southeast Asian and East Asian products. In these names French has the symbolic meaning potential of enhancing the business’s claim to being up-to-date and distinct from traditional outlets. On the other hand, eateries serving traditional local food may use the language to dis-align themselves from competitors. For both types of businesses then the motivation to use French appears to be the presentation of the shop’s uniqueness or distinctness. At the same time though, we may be observing the development of a new naming convention among food retailers that specialize in contemporary Asian cuisine. A French shop name may thus be an expression of a collective corporate identity. In summary, the use of French fails to appeal to particular cultural stereotypes here, but shows a potential to express a social stereotype, a function that in the past was served mainly by English in Singapore and Asia at large.

### 6.2.3 Using a French function word

The use of French prepositions, the definite articles or suffixes in business names in Singapore spreads across many industry sectors and has already been the topic of much media debate and online mockery. In our sample of food retailers, their use is less widespread. Nevertheless, we can distinguish two structures of use that also differ in meaning and motivation.

The restaurant names on the signs in Figures 15 and 16 below seem to have a French noun phrase matrix that includes the preposition *de* as the head of a post-modifying prepositional phrase.



Figure 15. Pasta de Waraku: Japanese Casual Pasta & Cafe Restaurant



Figure 16. Cafe de Hong Kong

The restaurant in Figure 15 specializes in Japanese variations of the Italian classics and was set up by a Japanese expatriate businessman in Singapore. We should add that Japanese-style Italian food is very popular in Asia and many restaurants serving this kind of food exist. *Waraku* is, according to the restaurant's website (Ueki, 24 November 2011), a Romanized version of a binomial Chinese compound of *wa* 'harmony' and *raku* 'contentedness'. Together with the noun *Pasta* and the French preposition *de*, *Waraku* forms a complex codeswitched whole, which translates as *Pasta de Waraku* 'Pasta of harmony and contentedness'. The French preposition is responsible for the compound's structure and coherence. In Figure 16 the variant *dē* does likewise. This restaurant serves popular dishes from Hong Kong, which, as mentioned above, are often a blend between Western and Cantonese. The sign features a Chinese phrase as well as a French-matrix compound: altogether the name is *xin tian di xiao chu* 'food of the new world' *Cafe dē Hong Kong*. The Hong Kong Island skyline as a backdrop suggests that 'new world' refers to the city of Hong Kong.

So what is behind the use of a French preposition apart from providing textual cohesion? Firstly, using *de* makes sense emblematically: it creates a recognizably different structure as compared to the English equivalent (*Waraku Pasta* or *Hong Kong Cafe*) and makes for a distinct corporate identity. Secondly, since Singaporeans perceive the preposition *de* and its variants as a feature of French, as evident from media sources (Rahmat 2008), this construction conveys symbolically that the food served in these premises is contemporary Asian. The preposition thus captures the same associations of modernity versus tradition as the names discussed in the previous section. Moreover, the structure plays on names of popular and successful Asian brands that produce contemporary fusion food, such as Hong Kong's biggest fast food chain *Café de Coral*.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of instances of *de* in our sample (6 out of 8) are different from the kind just discussed and an expression of a much simpler but equally creative motivation.

Quite obviously the names on the signs in Figures 17 and 18 are not based on a French phrase structure, but the use of *d'* or *de* is based on an English matrix. *d'* reflects an approximation of the pronunciation of the English definite article



Figure 17. D'Garlic: Western kitchen



Figure 18. d'cottage

*the* in Colloquial Singapore English (Deterding 2007). Clearly, this is a strategy to create and emphasize difference, but also shows that the sign maker is attune to the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the local variety of English. Interestingly, this phenomenon spreads equally across companies of different types: from designers (*de marque espace design*), consultants (*De consultants*), hotels (*D'Kranji farm resort*), to florists (*De Flowers' House*).

The discussion of the examples in this section suggests that the use of *de*, if used as a French preposition, is triggered by largely similar reasons as French lexical items in the names of restaurants and bakeries that specialize in contemporary Asian cuisine. While a *de* in the name may reflect the motivation to present the business as something special, the medium chosen to do so, namely the French language, shows that the sign maker adheres to a certain degree to a conventionalized formula. As such the preposition *de* and the compound structure that it produces convey just like lexical items an image of contemporary, modern Asian food.

## 7. Conclusions

Throughout this paper, we have examined a corpus of business names in the industry sector of *manufacturing and retail of food, as well as restaurants* in Singapore that make use of the French language. Our intention was to describe the forms of French used in these names, to explore what kinds of meanings French makes, so as to analyze what motivates the sign makers to use a foreign language like French.

The formal classification of the names on the shop signs with respect to languages used, level of idiomaticity, type of food retail business, and type of product revealed a number of issues. First, a link between form and food seems to exist. Monolingual French names are used predominantly for restaurants that serve French food. The names are also almost exclusively idiomatic. In contrast, names that feature French and another language are more often used for bakeries and cafes. Interestingly, however, these outlets often do not specialize in French food per se. The bilingual signs also show a division of labor with respect to the languages used: French is overwhelmingly used for the proper name of the shop, while English, and at times Chinese, provide the information on the type of food business or the product.

When it comes to the motivations for using French for the name of a food business in Singapore, our analysis was able to show that these are multifaceted. On the one hand, the use of French can function as an expression of a French cultural stereotype, as Piller (2003) argues, most probably to signal authenticity and culinary group membership. Seldom did we spot a purely decorative use spurred by the need to highlight an isolated commercial identity (Kelly-Holmes 2005). On the other hand, we observed French being used to signal social meaning: as a symbol to distinguish new local Asian cuisine from its traditional counterpart. In general, this finding is in line with the function that Curtin (2007, 2009) ascribed to the use of foreign languages in the signscape of Taiwan's fashion districts. While these businessmen may have chosen French for the sake of delineating their commercial venture from competitors, the concentration of French in names of bakeries and pastry shops as well as restaurants serving contemporary Asian cuisine suggests the development of a commercial register that is partially peculiar to Singapore (Agha 2005). Future ethnographic studies on attitudes of patrons and retailers are thus much called for, in order to elucidate and elaborate on the enregisterment of a Franco-Singaporean commercial register.

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## Appendix A

Sample of business names in manufacturing and retail of food, as well as restaurants

Number	Category	Name	SSIC category	Food style
1	A1	L'Artisan	Restaurant	French/ Continental European
2	A1	Nicolas: Le Restaurant	Restaurant	French
3	A1	Le Bon Marché	Restaurant	French
4	A1	Les Bouchons Rive Gauche	Restaurant	French
5	A1	Les Bouchons: Steak frites	Restaurant	French
6	A1	La Fondue	Restaurant	Swiss/French
7	A1	Bistro Petit Salut	Restaurant	French
8	A1	La Petite Cuisine	Restaurant	French
9	A1	Au Petit Salut	Restaurant	French
10	A1	Les Amis	Restaurant	French
11	A1	au Jardin: Les Amis	Restaurant	French
12	A1	André	Restaurant	French
13	A1	Beaujolais	Restaurant	French
14	A1	L'Angélu	Restaurant	French
15	A1	Bon Goût	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Japanese
16	A1	Bistro du Vin	Pubs (including bars)	French
17	A1	L'Estaminet: Bar-Tabac	Pubs (including bars)	French
18	A1	Canelé: Pâtisserie Chocolaterie	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	French
19	A2	Petit Provence	Manufacture of bread, cakes and confectionary	Japanese

(Continued)

Number	Category	Name	SSIC category	Food style
20	A2	Rive Gauche Pâtisserie	Manufacture of bread, cakes and confectionary	Japanese/ French
21	A2	La Tanglin Boulangerie	Manufacture of bread, cakes and confectionary	French/ Continental European
22	A2	Le Chocolat Café	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Contemporary
23	A2	Le Carillon de L'Angelus	Restaurant	French
24	B1	Bonheur Patisserie	Manufacture of bread, cakes and confectionary	Contemporary
25	B1	Pâtisserie Glacé: by Chef Yamashita	Manufacture of bread, cakes and confectionary	Japanese
26	B1	ri shi xi yang shi: Ma Maison: Japanese Western Foods	Restaurant	Japanese/ Western
27	B1	Café d'Orient: xin xiang gang cha can ting	Restaurant	Hong Kong/ Cantonese/ Contemporary Asian
28	B1	Laurent Cafe & Chocolate Bar	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	French
29	B1	Baguette: the Viet Inspired Deli	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Contemporary Asian
30	B1	fine art café	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Contemporary
31	B1	le shi xuan: Le Chasseur	Hawkers and stall-holders selling cooked food and prepared drinks	Chinese
32	B2	Café Ma Maison: Pâtisserie et café	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Japanese
33	B2	The Patissier	Manufacture of bread, cakes and confectionary	Contemporary
34	B2	Chateau de Chillon: Restaurant and Wine bar	Restaurant	French
35	B2	Lé Muria: Food & More	Restaurant	Asian
36	B2	Keen on crêpes	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	French
37	C1	li ying: Le Cafe Confectionary & Pastry	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Chinese
38	C1	Pasta de Waraku	Restaurant	Japanese/ Western
39	C1	De Coder's Café	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Contemporary
40	C2	D'Pastry	Manufacture of bread, cakes and confectionary	Contemporary

(Continued)

Number	Category	Name	SSIC category	Food style
41	C2	shou zao bao dian chuang xin kou wei li man: D'bun: Freshly Hand Made Bun	Manufacture of bread, cakes and confectionary	Chinese
42	C2	xin tian di xiao chu: Cafe dē Hong Kong	Restaurant	Hong Kong/ Cantonese/ Contemporary Asian
43	C2	d'cottage	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Contemporary
44	C2	D'Fusion Prata	Hawkers and stall-holders selling cooked food and prepared drinks	Asian
45	C2	D'Garlic: Western Kitchen	Hawkers and stall-holders selling cooked food and prepared drinks	Western
46	D	saybons: French Food Factory	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	French
47	D	Teclique	Cafes, coffee houses and snack bars	Contemporary

# Talking about taste

## Starved for words

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There is a relative dearth of taste words in English, in contrast to words for other senses. We argue that this does not reflect an accompanying lack of knowledge about taste or an inability to perceive tastes. Taste knowledge was explored in an object description task and a rating task in an experimental setting and showed that whilst participants knew a lot about taste, they used few words to describe it. A search of taste words in a public corpus showed that taste words are often derivative from a source noun, refer to components, and that they are also ambiguous and polysemous. Our lack of accurate and diverse taste words has led many to assume that we are not able to perceive a wider range of tastes, which taste receptor studies have disputed. Words have been assumed to map directly onto physiological and psychological constructs in a number of fields, including not only taste but semantic memory, and this idea of language restricting thought needs to be challenged.

### 1. Introduction

The present chapter is concerned with talking about taste from the perspective of taste words, what they mean and how they are used. Our discussion is within the language and thought debate (or to use Dan Slobin's terms "thinking for speaking", Slobin 1996). The main question stemming from the Sapir and Whorf Hypothesis: Do linguistic phenomena parallel perceptual or cognitive phenomena? In other words, can our language affect the way we perceive, interpret and experience the world?

People generally accept the assertion that there are only four taste words in ordinary English: "sweet", "sour", "salty" and "bitter" (though "umami" is also sometimes included) (Conn 1992; Delwiche 1996; Erickson 2008). Though "umami" is also sometimes considered a fifth basic taste (Conn 1992), we will not be including it in our analysis, because four tastes appear to be a more commonly used inventory. Indeed, according to Erickson, "these four [salty, sweet, bitter, and sour] would very probably be at the top of any culture's list of taste words"

(Erickson 2008:62). People even seem to go so far as to think that humans are only capable of sensing these four tastes (Delwiche 1996; Erickson 2008; Hanig 1901). However, Erickson (2008) has shown this not to be true, arguing that we have a greater range of taste perception using evidence from psychophysics, taste receptor research and neuroscience. He argues “we tend to believe in the reality and validity of our words. [...] Allowing scientific theory to be constrained or led by the terminology in common use would have made our current understanding of mathematics or physics impossible” (61–62).

### 1.1 Language and the mind/brain

Let us start with an analogy from semantic memory research. Semantic memory, like other forms of memory such as working memory and episodic memory, may be impaired due to neurological damage. There are several case studies of people with neurological impairments such that they lose their knowledge for living things or for nonliving things (Capitani et al. 2003). A patient with such an impairment may show impaired knowledge for living things relative to nonliving things, or vice versa. One such patient, JBR reported in Warrington and Shallice (1984), presented with an impairment for living things. When asked to describe a number of objects, he gave good responses for nonliving items such as a *flashlight*, which he described as “a hand-held light”, but gave incorrect or vague responses for living items such as *daffodil*, which he described as a “plant” (838).

These patterns reflect an impairment of semantic memory, as, for the most part, the impairment is not affected by the input modality, such as word or picture recognition, or any other processing impairment, such as an impairment in visual processing. The phenomenon of category-specific impairments has led to a boom in research to determine the content and organization of semantic memory that would yield such a pattern following damage. Some explanations of this type of impairment proposed that there are different knowledge structures for living things as opposed to nonliving things (Caramazza 2000; Caramazza & Mahon 2003; Caramazza & Shelton 1998). Because these knowledge structures are considered to be separate, they can therefore be damaged separately, resulting in a category specific impairment for living (or nonliving) things. However, this assumes that words for categories map onto representation categories in the brain. For example, we can categorize things as “animal”, “vegetable” and “mineral” and following the logic of earlier explanations of semantic impairment (see Caramazza and colleagues), we would then have neuronal bundles dedicated to “animals”, “vegetables” and “minerals” which neuropsychological and neuroscience research does not support (Barsalou 2003; Martin et al. 1995; Patterson, Nestor & Rogers 2007; Tyler & Moss 2001).

## 1.2 Describing object knowledge

In the exploration of category specific impairments for living and nonliving things, researchers have often asked non-impaired participants to describe living and nonliving objects using object description tasks, also known as feature generation tasks (Farah & McClelland 1991; Garrard et al. 2001; Vanoverberghe & Storms 2003; Ventura et al. 2005; Vinson et al. 2003). In an object description task, participants are asked to list features of a given item. The resulting features are categorized by the researcher, e.g. as visual features (color, size, shape), encyclopedic features (origin, category membership, associations), and so on, and tallied for the different object categories. Thus feature types are compared across category to support the argument, for example, that living things have more perceptual (visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and gustatory) features than nonliving things which have more functional (what they do/how they are used) features.

It is assumed that when participants complete an object description task, they list features from a multi-sensory image such that the resulting features reflect the relevant modalities of object knowledge (Cree & McRae 2003). For example, for “apple” participants evoke an image in their minds that has the visual, tactile, olfactory and gustatory features of an apple. However, the assumption that features are listed from a multi-sensory image might not be true for all objects and modalities. An apple has a specific flavor, but the description of that flavor in ordinary English vocabulary is “sweet” or “sour”, depending on the type of apple. These terms do not describe the whole taste profile of an apple. Other descriptions for the flavor of an apple could be given, such as “crunchy” or “fruity”, but these terms are texture related and attributive, respectively, rather than a gustatory description. Ankerstein, Varley and Cowell (2012) argued that the object description task for the purposes of developing feature type profiles for object categories is biased for some of our sensory modalities. There are many words in ordinary English for senses such as vision, a multi-dimensional sense which includes color, size, shape and motion, and touch which includes temperature, texture, shape, weight, density, in contrast to words for uni-dimensional senses like smell and taste (Krifka 2010).

The comparative lack of taste vocabulary was empirically illustrated by Ankerstein et al. (2012) who compared data from an object description task and a rating task in which participants rated their knowledge of objects on a five-point scale, e.g. “In your knowledge of an apple, how much do you know about tasting it?” The rating task, in contrast to the object description task, did not require participants to list specific features. The object description and rating task data were gathered from 30 (15 males, 15 females) native speakers of British English for eight familiar fruits and vegetables. The object description task was audio recorded, the

resulting verbal descriptions were transcribed and the features were categorized according to feature type including encyclopedic (origin, category membership, associations) and perceptual (visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory and gustatory). For the object description task, taste features comprised about 6% of the total features given for fruits/vegetables. Most of the other features named were encyclopedic (36%), visual (33%) and tactile (10%). These data alone might suggest a lack of taste knowledge or the relative lack of importance of taste for object knowledge. In the rating task, however, taste knowledge was rated at ceiling, with median rating of 5.0, in contrast to the visual (4.9), tactile (4.7), and olfactory (3.4) modalities. Thus the lack of taste features given in the object description task did not reflect a lack of knowledge or importance of taste.

In order to investigate the particular use of taste words for the current study, the data from the object description task were re-analyzed to identify taste words named in an experimental setting for fruits and vegetables. The 109 taste features listed in the object description task were re-labeled and tallied. Vague taste features, such as “tastes like a lime” were not included in the current analysis and hence the current analysis used 96 taste features. Features like “crunchy” were labeled as “tactile/texture” if they were not modified to clarify what the participant meant. For example, “tastes crunchy” was labeled as a taste feature if the participant unambiguously stated that for him/her, it was a taste feature, likewise for vague features such as “lovely” and “nice”. In order to reduce experimenter influence, the words used by the participants were used in the current analysis. For example “tastes acidic” could be reinterpreted as “sour”, but this was not done in order to prevent biased analysis. The taste words are given in Table 1.

In all, 13 different taste words and phrases were used to describe the set of fruits/vegetables. Most (74%) of the taste features were “sweet” (40%), “bitter” (18%), “sour” (16%). Most of the other taste words given were idiosyncratic, given only once or twice in the data set.

In sum, despite knowing a lot about taste as reflected in the rating task, in which taste knowledge was rated at ceiling, participants used comparatively few taste words in the object description task to describe flavors, at least for this set of fruits/vegetables. So whilst people may report knowing a lot about what a “banana” tastes like on a five-point Likert scale, they are unable to articulate the full perceptual taste profile of a banana. Many people resorted to words like “sweet” which is not specific to “banana” as “sweet” was also used to describe “pear”, “carrot”, “apple” and “lettuce”. So whilst banana does have a distinctive taste, people are unable to describe it, though they can describe its distinguishing visual characteristics (crescent shaped, yellow, smooth).

Table 1. Taste features given in Feature Generation Task

	Apple	Banana	Carrot	Lemon	Lettuce	Pear	Strawberry	Tomato	Total
Acidic_taste	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bitter	0	0	0	15	0	1	1	0	17
Crunchy_taste	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Taste_Lovely	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Taste_Nice	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
No_flavor	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Not_tart	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Sharp	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
Sour	1	0	0	13	1	0	0	0	15
Sweet	9	5	3	0	1	6	10	5	39
Tangy	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Tasty	5	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	10
Zesty	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	16	7	4	36	3	10	13	7	96

### 1.3 Taste words in use

In order to further explore taste words in use, we ran collocation searches in a publicly available corpus. A website, [descriptivewords.org](http://descriptivewords.org), provided an independent list of taste words which were then contextualized through searches in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), a 425 million word corpus. COCA is freely available and contains a wide range of texts from American newspapers and magazines as well as academic and fictional texts, and spoken language. Due to its size, scope and topicality, it is a good source for the investigation of taste words in use.

The website [descriptivewords.org](http://descriptivewords.org) lists 28 descriptive words and adjectives for taste in alphabetical order. The number of taste words is similar to Erickson's (2008) claim that we have at least 31 different taste words, without resorting to metaphorical descriptions. We are aware of other taste words lists, such as that provided by Lehrer (1983) for wine words, but as Erickson would argue, many of these are metaphorical, e.g. "pretentious", "sensuous" and "mettlesome". The taste words used in this study are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** List of descriptive words and adjectives for taste from [descriptivewords.org](http://descriptivewords.org)

alkaline	overripe
bitter	peppery
bittersweet	raw
bland	ripe
burnt	salty
buttery	sour
crisp	spicy
fishy	spoiled
fruity	sugary
gingery	sweet
hearty	tangy medicinal
hot	tasteless
mellow	unripe
oily	vinegary

The taste words listed by [descriptivewords.org](http://descriptivewords.org) fall into several categories: the four basic taste words, derivational adjectives from noun stems, compounds, vague descriptors, ambiguous (polysemous) and attributive words. A basic COCA collocate search (i.e. surrounding words) was run for each individual adjective, for the two words before and after the adjective. In some cases, when the search did not yield sufficient results, the number was raised to four surrounding words. No other search restrictions were set, other than to exclude common grammatical words such as articles and prepositions.

The four basic taste words appear in the COCA and all of them are used to refer to taste. “Sweet” appears most commonly in connection to “potato(es)”, referring to a specific kind of potato, just as “sour” is connected to “cream”. “Bitter” collocates with “cold”, “end” and then “taste”, showing that the basic taste words are not restricted to taste exclusively. “Salty” also is used outside of taste and collocates with “air”, followed by “taste” and “snacks”.

Many of the taste words, “buttery”, “fishy”, “fruity”, “gingery”, “hearty”, “oily”, “peppery”, “salty”, “spicy”, “sugary”, “vinegary” are derived words from noun stems. All of these adjectives, except “hearty”, are based on added ingredients, such as seasonings, oil, butter and so on. They are formed by the addition of the suffix *-y*. For a word such as “gingery” for instance, there are combinations in the COCA like “gingery chutney”, “gingery fish” or “gingery chicken

soup” and there is no difficulty in understanding that ginger was added to the dish. The same holds for most of the other adjectives: if something is buttery, then butter was added, and so forth. “Fishy” and “fruity” are less specific in their references than the other features. They refer to a general quality of fish or fruit, respectively, without naming a specific source. “Fruity” is not restricted to the word “taste”, but is also commonly used to describe the aroma of wine and cocktails. The results for “fishy” are similar; it often collocates with “smell”, as in a “fishy smell”. This is also part of a general trend for taste words, that they are not only used for taste, as in “oily real-estate salesman” (San Francisco Chronicle) and “sugary colors” (Harper’s Bazaar), which we discuss as ambiguous (polysemous) words.

“Hearty”, though a derivative, is unlike the other derived words because “hearty” does not refer to added ingredients. It is a vague descriptor that mostly co-occurs with “breakfast” and “meal(s)”, taking on the meaning of “being nourishing and strengthening”. Other vague descriptors from the wordlist are “tasteless” and “bland”, which contrast with the terms “spicy” and “hot”. “Hot” can be used as a synonym for “spicy”, or with the meaning of ‘high in temperature’, for example in “hot chocolate”. “Bland” meaning ‘mild’ or ‘soft’ and “tasteless” meaning ‘without taste’ as a derivative of “taste” are both vague terms. Hence, “bland” does not have a fixed meaning, but varies in meaning depending on the context. This is illustrated in two examples from the COCA: “bland” is associated with young vegetables and bitterness: “immature carrots often taste bland or slightly bitter” (Mother Earth News); and, used to describe the taste of the Cavendish banana, “bland” takes on the meaning of ‘sweet’: “It [the Cavendish banana] has one, bland taste: sweet” (Smithsonian).

There are two compounded words in the wordlist, “bittersweet” and “tangy medicinal”. “Bittersweet” is an adjectival compound, encompassing two of the basic tastes: bitter and sweet. It yields by far the highest results for “bittersweet chocolate”, followed by the word “moment”. “Tangy, medicinal” is not in the COCA. A collocation search for “tangy” and “medicinal” yielded two results, in reference to the smell of a heat rub cream (Harper’s Magazine) and to the taste of a whisky (Time Magazine).

The adjectives “mellow” and “crisp” can refer to texture as well as taste. “Crisp” commonly collocates with nonedible nouns such as “shirt” and “air”, but also with “apple” and “bacon”. “Mellow” is also used for nonedible nouns like “mood” and “voice”, but is also used for taste as in “sweet, mellow flavor” (Vegetarian Times).

“Ripe”, “overripe” and “unripe” relate to the stage of ripeness of fruits and vegetables, and “raw” to food that has not been cooked or processed, thus refer-

ring to both food quality and taste. “Ripe” often functions as a pre-modifier for nouns, existing in combinations such as “ripe avocado” or “ripe tomato” but is also used for taste: “They taste fully ripe and brim with fruit” (The Chronicle Wine Selections). “Unripe” has non-taste collocations, referring to food quality as in “unripe fruit can be astringent” (Mother Earth News), but also collocates “taste” in a description of the tannic compounds of grapes: “Some (tannins) taste ‘green’ or unripe; others taste mature” (San Francisco Chronicle). “Raw” appears in the combinations: “taste raw” and “raw taste”, and yields high results for “raw meat”. Thus, it refers both to food quality and taste.

The terms “burnt” and “spoiled” describe the appearance or quality and taste of food, either by cooking or due to natural (aging) processes. “Burnt” like “fishy” and “fruity” displays a connection to smell in the phrasing “the smell of burnt popcorn” (NPR). “Spoiled” is mostly found as a modifier for “milk”, “meat”, or “food” and may be more of a descriptor of food quality than taste, but has been used to indirectly describe taste: “we want it to be self evident for those of us with low vision or issues of taste and smell so that we know when food is spoiled” (AgingDesign, NPR Talk Nation). “Alkaline” is a term borrowed from chemistry and but can also refer to taste as in “turmeric, garlic and ginger also work beautifully to perk up the murky, alkaline flavor of pumpkin” (New York Times). There are also instances of the phrasing “alkaline food” in discussions of its health benefits, clearly referring to food quality or attributes rather than just taste.

In sum, the COCA searches showed that many of our taste words, including the taste primary “salty”, are derivative, based on noun stems. Many of the taste words listed were also shown to be ambiguous (polysemous) or vague, describing not only taste but food quality. Other words were also not specific, for example “sweet”. It can describe the taste of an apple, pear, or banana and does not offer a clear description of a particular taste. Taste words such as “gingery”, “buttery” and “fishy” are more descriptive of components in the sense of ingredients than they are taste descriptors. Thus we argue here that taste words do not necessarily refer to the essence of the perception.

## 2. Discussion and conclusion

The present chapter explored taste words, what they mean and how they are used. Our general findings are that there is a relative lack of taste words in English, in contrast to other words for perceptions, but that this does not reflect a concomitant lack of knowledge about taste or an inability to perceive tastes. A

search of taste words in a public corpus showed that taste words are often derivative from a source noun, refer to components, and that they are also ambiguous and polysemous.

The object description task compared individual taste words named for a set of fruits and vegetables with a perceptual rating task. The results showed that whilst taste was rated as an important (the most important?) modality in knowledge of fruits and vegetables, the number of individual taste features given in the feature generation task was low and largely restricted to three of the four basic taste words: “sweet”, “sour” and “bitter”. “Salty” is presumably not relevant to fruits/vegetables. These results are similar to findings reported by Erickson (2008), that participants rely on and assume four basic tastes. In Erickson’s study (reported in Section 7), participants were exposed to a range of taste stimuli and asked to compare them and account for their taste composition. The taste stimuli included four of the basic tastes and tastes that were not considered to be one of the basic tastes. Erickson reported that “after the experiments it became disconcertingly clear that the subjects were biased towards the idea that the four basic tastes should account for the comparison [non-basic taste] stimuli!” (Erickson 2008:69). He added that many participants reacted with surprise during debriefing that there might be more than four tastes. Just as the words we have for “animal” and “vegetable” may have shaped our earlier theories of how semantic memory is organized, the words we have for taste appears to shape the way we think about taste.

In semantic memory research and research into taste, words have been assumed to map directly onto physiological and psychological constructs, hampering further developments in these fields. This is beginning to change as new research challenges these *a priori* assumptions (Ankerstein et al. 2012; Delwiche 1996; Erickson 2008). Thus, sometimes language can influence our ideas about thinking and perception, misleading us into thinking language and thought/perception are necessarily linked.

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**Dolci**



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Language and food are universal to humankind. Language accomplishes more than a pure exchange of information, and food caters for more than mere subsistence. Both represent crucial sites for socialization, identity construction, and the everyday fabrication and perception of the world as a meaningful, orderly place. This volume on *Culinary Linguistics* contains an introduction to the study of food and an extensive overview of the literature focusing on its role in interplay with language. It is the only publication fathoming the field of food and food-related studies from a linguistic perspective. The research articles assembled here encompass a number of linguistic fields, ranging from historical and ethnographic approaches to literary studies, the teaching of English as a foreign language, psycholinguistics, and the study of computer-mediated communication, making this volume compulsory reading for anyone interested in genres of food discourse and the linguistic connection between food and culture.

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