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AGENTLESS STRUCTURES IN THE INTERPRETER'S OUTPUT: LOOKING INTO THE GENDER FACTOR

This paper presents the results of a small-scale study into advanced trainee interpreters' performance in tasks which involve consecutive interpretation of openly evaluative texts, with particular focus on the use of agentless structures and nominalizations by male and female subjects. It seeks answers to the following questions: i) Is the interpreter's involvement in the ongoing discourse a factor that may elicit agentless structures in the output? ii) Does the preference for such constructions seem to be related to the gender of the interpreter? The analysis is based on 40 interpretations of four formal addresses, of which two express criticism and the other two praise of the audience. One text in each set is addressed to students of English at the University of Silesia, a group to which the trainee interpreters belong and with which they identify. The results indicate that while there is no substantial difference in the use of agentless structures in contexts which involve identification of the interpreter with the ultimate receiver and in contexts which preclude identification, nominalizations tend to be used slightly more frequently in the former set of circumstances. It also appears that female interpreters are more likely to use nominalizations in texts which express open evaluation of the audience with which they identify, irrespective of the direction of valuation.

1. Introduction

The metaphor that men and women are from different planets should be jettisoned and replaced with a more accurate one: Men and women are from different blocks in the same neighborhood, and they tend to move often. Stated differently, gender based language differences are usually small in magnitude and dynamically dependent on the context. (Palomares, 2009: 538)

The issue of the relationship between gender and language is slippery as the findings of research into this area are very inconsistent. Exploratory studies undertaken into these aspects of language use that are traditionally viewed as sensitive to the gen-

der factor have been continually producing contradictory results. For example, gender differences in respect of tentativeness, often regarded as a linguistic trait characteristic of female speakers rather than males, has not been demonstrated by Brouwer et al. (1979) to exist while a later study by Carli (1990) yielded quite opposite conclusions. Much of the confusion in this area follows from the fact that the research is often limited to a narrow range of communication situations and that contextually sensitive aspects of how men and women actually use language in multiple situations requiring similar linguistic actions are ignored. And it is just because of the shortcomings of many studies and inconclusive results they produce, that the impact of gender on communication remains an open question. In the present paper we address the same question by asking whether there can be identified any connection between gender, verbal activity type and means available to achieve a certain type of effect. The effect that we attempt to describe in the subsequent sections is related to what we call *interpreter's invisibility* in the target text.

Although there is considerable agreement in the literature regarding criteria that are to be met for a translation to be ideal, the expectations encapsulated in these criteria are rarely satisfied as at least two of the criteria, namely, faithfulness and transparency, are to a certain extent mutually exclusive. It comes as no surprise then that a closer examination of the relation between the source language (SL) text and its target counterpart often reveals significant semantic surplus or, even worse, misrepresentation.

The sources of such misrepresentation are numerous and varied but not surprisingly, the factors related to participants of the translation process, especially the translators / interpreters themselves, as well as the very context of the process are decisive ones.

Although there is an expectation that the translators should remain a mere medium between the source language and the target language, it would be naive to believe that such invisibility of the translators can be easily achieved, both in the process and in the product, especially in the case of novice translators. It is just in this context that Maynard (1999) notes that "Translated texts are populated not only by the original narrator's multiple voices (and the author lurking behind the narrator) but also with the translator's voices as well". What follows from the observation is that just like any other text, the TL text produced in the process of translation is not free from subjectivity. A similar view is held also by Benveniste (1971: 225) when he says "language is marked so deeply by the expression of subjectivity that one might ask if it could still function and be called language if it were constructed otherwise".

Subjectivity is a factor contributing to the formation of stance, a term used in reference to individual speakers. In this study however we attempt to identify these individual subjective elements that re-occur in the same speaking situation in a highly homogeneous group of interpreters, who articulate their identity, more or less systematically, in the TL texts that they produce. For this reason the object of our study could be defined as *ideology* because it concerns, to quote van Dijk (1998: 8), "the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group."

Here we seek to answer a few questions related to what we call an ideological bias in the act of consecutive interpreting and to the effects of such a bias on the construction and thus the perception of the SL texts for the target listener. The area that we examine is the area of agentless constructions presumed here to be a means of diluting the cause-effect relation in an the event by its respective agent and foregrounding relations different from the ones foregrounded by the active voice. Finally, as we hypothesise here, the modes of producing the bias can be related the gender factor, which leads us to formulating our key research question: is gender a factor influencing the use of agentless construction in English-Polish consecutive interpreting?

2. Agentless constructions

Agent can be defined as “any entity that is capable of operating on itself or others, usually to bring about some change in the location or properties of itself or others.” (Downing, Locke 1995: 114). Prototypical agents are human and are characterized by such properties as animacy, intention, motivation, responsibility and the use of one’s own energy to cause the event or trigger the process. Communicative situations require sometimes that the occurrence of the Agent be undesirable. The most straightforward way of obtaining this effect is demoting the Agent, which coincides with the subject in the process of passivisation.

(1) *The car has been repaired. / Samochód został naprawiony.*

Another linguistic device which can trigger agentless constructions is nominalization, which as Jędrzejko (1993) states, enables the speaker to omit selected participants involved in a situation.

(2) *During the slide down the slope.../ Podczas zjazdu w dół stoku...*

Apart from these two prototypical ways of avoiding direct reference, human languages are equipped with constructions that allow concealing Agents. Generations of linguists (Polański, 1993; Jędrzejko, 1993; Kardela, 1996; Nagórko, 1997), having exploited this area of language, employed a number of rivaling terms such as *impersonal constructions*, *subjectless constructions*, and *nominativeless constructions*. Let us start with middle constructions, which can be illustrated by:

(3) *This shirt washes well. / Ta koszula dobrze się pierze.*

Some linguists classify them as notional passives, i.e., as sentences which have passive meaning but whose form lacks the assisting formal marker. The term ‘middles’ is associated with the middle voice, the term that goes back to the Greek distinction between three voices: ‘active’, ‘passive’ and ‘middle’. Lyons (1971), Stefański (1990) and Quirk et al. (1991) quoting ancient Grammarians state that the middle was thought

of as intermediate between the primary opposition of active and passive. It signified either an 'action', like the active, or a 'state', like the passive, according to the inherent meaning of the verb in question and the circumstances of use. Middle constructions in modern languages are characterized by having exponents of active voice and conveying passive meaning.

Another interesting construction is the impersonal construction with *one*. Since there are several uses of the word *one* in English, the *one* that addresses this topic is the one that is referred to as the 'indefinite one' (Quirk et al., 1991). The same authors claim that *one* means 'people in general' with reference to the speaker. In Schibsbye's (1965: 276) opinion, "*one* can be an indefinite personal pronoun signifying I and others." This use of *one* is chiefly formal and is often replaced by the more informal *you*. The Polish construction, which seems to be its closest equivalent consists of a 3. sg. verb with the element *się* which makes it impossible for a 'regular' subject to come forth. These syntactic structures are translational equivalents of the German sentences with *man* and the English ones with *one*: *Się pracuje. One works here*. This is one of the reasons why they are classified collectively.

Another group of sentences which fits into this category is categorized as the third person singular neuter verbs (Fisiak et al., 1978). They comprise constructions describing weather phenomena, such as (4,5) and bodily sensations (6). Their occurrence is heavily restricted to a group of lexical items.

- (4) *Pada*. 'It is raining.'
- (5) *Świta*. 'It is dawning.'
- (6) *Jest mi gorąco*. 'I am hot.'

Sentence (7) illustrates a very unusual construction, which is the primary equivalent of passive constructions from other languages although it does not follow at least two principles ascribed to passivum. Firstly, it does not accept the adjunct phrase introducing the agent (7').

- (7) *Zbudowano dom*. 'A house has been built.'
- (7') **Zbudowano dom przez budowlanców*. 'A house was built by the builders.'

Secondly, morphemes *-no*, *-to*, whose categorial meaning is 'past action referring either to a group of people or to one individual different from the speaker and the addressee' can combine not only with transitive but also with intransitive verbs (8).

- (8) *Szeptano*. 'One whispered.'

The system of Polish language is equipped with two more devices which allow agentlessness. Sentence (9) exemplifies the existence of a group of modal uninflected forms of verbs whose unambiguous classification is probably impossible. The ending of those modal predicates is fossilized and fitting in a potential subject is unacceptable. Those elements are followed by infinitives.

- (9) *Trzeba wiedzieć co to znaczy.* 'One should know what it means.'
 (10) *Zdarza się zapomnieć o rocznicy.* 'It happens that one forgets about the anniversary.'

Impersonal predicates comprising also *wiadomo, chodzi o, wydaje się* (Nagórko, 1997: 186) are represented by sentence (10). The above presentation makes it clear that the array of agentless constructions is much wider in Polish than in English.

3. Research project

3.1. Objectives

In this paper we look into the interpreters' linguistic choices in tasks which involve consecutive interpretation of openly evaluative texts. In particular, we are interested in agentless structures and their use by male and female subjects in contexts which prompt identification of the interpreter with the group of ultimate receivers. The questions we ask are as follows: i) Is the interpreter's involvement in the ongoing discourse a factor that may elicit agentless structures in the output? ii) Does the preference for such constructions seem to be related to the gender of the interpreter?

3.2. Subjects

Material for analysis comes from four groups of trainee interpreters studying translation and interpreting in the English Department of the University of Silesia, each group comprising, on average, 15 students. Two advanced groups had practiced simultaneous (SI) and consecutive (CI) interpreting for five semesters prior to the study, the other two groups had practiced for 3 semesters. All subjects were native speakers of Polish who studied English as language B and either German or Arabic as language C.

3.3. Source texts

Four source texts (ST) were prepared in English for the purpose of this analysis, all of them formal addresses in which the speaker evaluates the audience. The STs, whose length varied from 565 to 688 words, were delivered at an average pace of about 108 words/min and recorded with pauses, three shorter texts divided into two units, the others into three. The texts were written in the active voice, with no passive, impersonal or otherwise agentless constructions involved. The speaker uses the 1st person singular and is the source of evaluation. The audience is always addressed directly with 2nd person pronoun, so that impersonal *you* or nebulous *we* is carefully avoided. STs 1 and 3 are critical towards the audience, while STs 2 and 4 express positive judgment of the addressees. Another variable used in the analysis was the 'loyalty factor', which made STs 1 and 2 different from STs 3 and 4. In STs 1 and 2, the criticism and praise, respectively, were aimed at the students of English at the University of Silesia,

a group to which our trainee interpreters themselves belonged. Each of the STs 1–4 included 16 instances of *I* in the subject position accompanied by a finite verb form and 21 of *you* as an agent. These instances (altogether 370 in the outputs for each ST) served later as points of reference in the interpretation of data (focal points).

3.4. Procedure

Recording sessions took place in a standard laboratory used for teaching simultaneous and consecutive interpreting between 19th March and 2nd April 2009. Each student interpreted at least two texts. Before the task, the subjects received a briefing concerning the identity of the speaker and the target audience. Altogether 129 outputs were collected, among them 33 samples of ST1 and ST2 and 21 samples of each of the remaining STs. The analysis was conducted on 40 randomly selected outputs, 10 for each of the STs. For each ST, 5 samples came from male and 5 from female interpreters. The 40 outputs were then transcribed and analyzed. The data collected were categorized into: i) agentless constructions including ii) nominalizations, iii) other forms of modulation, iv) manipulation of the deictic centre. Throughout this discussion we will be concerned with the first two categories.

4. Results

The initial analysis of the collected data encouraged us to investigate the material from three perspectives. Firstly, we are interested in the overall proportion of agentless structures and nominalizations in the outputs for particular STs. Secondly, we will look for some correlation between the performance of the interpreters with regard to these structures and their gender, a variable essential in the study. Thirdly, we will contrast outputs for texts that involve identification of the interpreter with the audience (STs 1 and 2) with texts where no such identification occurs (STs 3 and 4) to see whether the ‘loyalty factor’ may trigger agentless structures.

On the whole, agentless structures are not represented significantly in the corpus of collected interpretations, as shown in Table 1. Outputs obtained for ST1 contain 1,62% of agentless constructions, which means that the 370 focal points triggered agentlessness only 6 times.

Table 1. Agentless structures and nominalizations in the interpretations of STs 1–4

	ST1	ST2	ST3	ST4
	to students of English – critical	to students of English – laudatory	to Australian athletes – critical	to British athletes – laudatory
Agentless structures	1,62%	9,47%	4,05%	4,59%
nominalizations	4,32%	3,42%	3,24%	2,43%

The surprisingly high value obtained for ST2, 9.47%, was boosted up by one token: *udało się /udało się wam* 'you managed'. The fact that ST2 is a praise abounding in phrases *you have managed to turn it into, you have succeeded in* probably justifies the over-representation of this structure, which might be regarded as the prototypical way of expressing praise in Polish.

The other category that this paper is concerned with are nominalizations. On the whole, they are not as common in the target texts as agentless constructions, but their presence must not be ignored, particularly with reference to ST1 (criticism of students). Hatim and Mason (1996: 240) in their discussion of motivatedness in the use of language remark that nominalization "is a device which may be used locally in texts to serve a variety of global ideational aims such as the expression of alienation." Interestingly, the authors illustrate the mechanism involved in nominalization with the predicate CRITICISM: "the conversion of an agent-verb sequence into a single noun as in 'someone criticised' vs. 'there has been criticism.'" Thus, processes do not have to be expressed by verbs, entities such as people or things do not have to be realized by nouns and attributes by adjectives. When a process is realized by a nominal instead of a verb, what we have is an 'event' or a happening. Viewing the phenomenon from this perspective, we can consider nominalizations to be examples of simple grammatical metaphors, which are characteristic of certain genres.

In our data, several nominalizations are found as in the examples (11–16):

- (11) [1_4T_11_F] *mniej­sza chęć studiowania za granicą* 'a smaller willingness to study abroad' [You don't show more interest in international exchange projects]
- (12) [1_50_5_F] *przyzwyczajanie do opuszczania tych zajęć* 'a habit of missing courses' [you have developed a habit of missing out courses]
- (13) [1_50_5_F] *ciagle ignorowanie zasad na uczelni* 'the permanent disregard for norms at the university' [you notoriously ignore (social norms)]
- (14) [1_50_2_M] *tak jakby łamanie norm społecznych* 'apparent breaking of social norms' [you notoriously ignore (social norms)]
- (15) [1_4T_11_F] *jest również nawyk picia* 'there is also the habit of drinking' [You have already had too much (alcohol)]
- (16) [1_50_2_M] *na przykład palenie w niedozwolonych miejscach* 'for instance smoking in places where smoking is prohibited' [You persist in breaking the no-smoking regulations]

On the one hand, the popularity of nominalizations can be justified by its syntactic adaptability. It is the potential that the construction has to be modified in various ways that makes it so user-friendly. Additionally, the reduction of function words results in the increase in the lexical density, which is not to be underestimated in the context of interpreting tasks.

On the other hand, however, nominalization can also be used to mask responsibility and by the concealment of agency, become a tool of ideological manipulation. Fowler's (1991) remark that nominalizations, so pervasive in official and formal discourse, are "inherently, potentially, mystificatory" highlights the ideological opportu-

nities offered by the unexpressed information hidden in a derived nominal clause. Interestingly, the highest number of nominalizations has been observed in ST1, i.e., the criticism of a group of students to which the interpreters themselves belonged. Yet we should remember that the total figures of agentless constructions, including nominalization, obtained in our experiment were low, and the terms we have just been using, *the highest* and *the lowest*, should be relativised.

As the second step in this analysis, we looked for a possible correlation between the gender of the interpreter and the (dis)preference for agentless structures. The results of this part are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Agentless structures and nominalizations in the interpretations of STs 1–4 by female and male subjects

	ST1		ST2		ST3		ST4	
	Criticism of students		Praise of students		Criticism of Australian athletes		Praise of British athletes	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Agentless structures	3	3	16	20	6	9	7	10
Nominalizations	12	4	10	3	3	9	6	3

Table 2 shows the absolute numbers of agentless constructions and nominalisations in the studied outputs. The general impression is that agentless structures do not seem to constitute a factor to discuss. In this respect, ST2 seems to stand out, but this is due to the overrepresentation of *udalo się* discussed above. It is nominalizations that appear to manifest some correlation with the gender of the interpreter. Females use them more often in STs 1 and 2 (three times more often than males), i.e., in the texts where identification with the group of ultimate receivers is involved. Table 3 presents the results for texts involving identification against those where any group-bias is precluded.

Table 3. Agentless structures and nominalizations in texts which involve (STs 1–2) and which do not involve (STs 3–4) identification with the addressee in the outputs by female and male subjects

	STs 1–2		STs 3–4	
	Criticism and praise of students of English		Criticism and praise of Australian and British athletes	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Agentless structures	19	23	13	19
Nominalizations	22	7	9	9

5. Discussion and concluding remarks

In this paper we have attempted to look for correlation between the frequency of agentless structures in interpreters' outputs, the gender of the interpreter and the 'loyalty factor', that is a situation in which the interpreter identifies with one of the communicating parties. The answers we obtained to the questions formulated on the outset of the research are discussed below.

i) Is the interpreter's involvement in the ongoing discourse a factor that may elicit agentless structures in the output?

Generally, the answer to this question is no, as passive structures, the major agentless construction in English, were not used very frequently. What is more, the highest number of agentless structures came, surprisingly, from the praise of students (ST2). However, it is worth noting that the highest number of nominalizations was elicited by the text which conveyed indirect criticism of the interpreter as a member of the group at which the criticism was leveled (ST1). In this case nominalizations can be interpreted as a means of concealing agency by foregrounding the product of an action rather than its driving force, thus absolving the receivers – and the interpreter – from direct responsibility for the undesirable state of affairs.

ii) Does the preference for such constructions seem to be related to the gender of interpreter?

As regards agentless structures, these occurred more frequently in male interpreters' outputs, although the contrast is not very strongly marked. Both male and female interpreters tended to use them more often in texts that involved identification with the audience – a difference which, however modest, may indicate the need to disguise the agent in order to protect the receiver's (and the interpreter's) face (ST1) or to avoid excessive self-praise (ST2). A more strongly marked difference, however, concerns the use of nominalizations. These occurred with the same frequency in male and female outputs for texts that precluded identification of the interpreter with the audience (STs 3 and 4), but three times more often in female than male outputs for texts which involved the 'group loyalty factor' (STs 1 and 2). It is with regard to nominalizations that certain gender-related preferences can be observed in contexts which entail emotional involvement of the interpreter.

The obtained results emphasise the covert meaning-making potential of nominalization, which in our data is used more often to protect the face of the group of receivers if the interpreters are themselves members of this group. However, a closer look at the data reveals that this tendency is only well-marked in outputs produced by female interpreters.

Halliday and Matthiessen (1999) argue that grammatical metaphor such as nominalization and its congruent counterparts differ in terms of their textual, experiential and interpersonal meaning. Nominalization is thus claimed to involve a reconstrual of experience with textual and interpersonal consequences. The textual effect of nominalization is that it creates "a textual package," as a packed and compacted portion of information ready to take on its role in the unfolding of the argument. In other words,

nominalization creates “a vast potential for distributing and redistributing information in the clause” (Halliday and Matthiessen, 1999: 239).

But there seems to be another side of the coin, which involves “the interpersonal price of decreasing negotiability” of nominalisation (Halliday and Matthiessen, 1999: 239). While clauses can be enacted interpersonally as propositions open to negotiation as far as their truth is concerned, nominals are taken for granted and preclude discussion.

Finally, as we stressed above, nominalizations leave information about the configuration of roles unexpressed, as a result of which they contribute to a language that is obscure. As such nominalizations also have ideological implications. They become ideological metaphors of mood, affecting also the epistemic dimension of the propositions. We said “contribute to a language that is obscure.” This is an important claim and an important characteristic in the context of our study. Language that is obscure is often a safe language, to use a title of a book by Allan and Burridge: it is a language used as a shield and weapon. In this case, more a shield than a weapon.

Careful not to overinterpret the data obtained in this small-scale study and abstaining from any categorical statements about the sources of this defending strategy more common among women interpreters than male interpreters, we will refer to the results of some studies on sex differences carried out between 1935 and 2005, restricting the presentation only to those that consistently produced similar results (Ellis et al., 2008: 916ff). The differences we quote concern the feelings of guilt and embarrassment, attitudes to failure, emotionality and empathy, friendliness and hostility and the readiness to provide care to others (Table 4). We believe that some of these findings may shed light on the possible origin of the differences we observed.

Table 4. Selected results of research into gender-based differences as compiled, systematised and commented by Ellis et al. (2008: 916–928)

Variable	Number of studies	Consistency score	Diversity score	Time range	Generalization
‘attribute personal success to luck or other external forces’ (p. 921)	22	.909	2	1963–1988	Females seem to attribute more of their successes to luck or other external forces.
‘attribute failure to internal forces’ (p. 921)	10	1.000	2	1973–1982	Females more frequently attribute failure to internal forces.
‘feelings of guilt, embarrassment and shame’ (p. 916)	25	.880	7(1+)	1963–2004	Females have greater feelings of guilt, embarrassment and shame.
‘emotionality in general’ (p. 916)	44	.773	7	1910–2003	Females probably are more emotional in general.
‘feelings of empathy’ (p. 916)	42	.500	6	1936–2003	Females possibly have greater empathy.

'emotional expressiveness in general' (p. 916)	62	.903	6(1+)	1972–2005	Females are more emotionally expressive.
'friendliness' (p. 927)	11	1.000	4	1957–2001	Females are friendlier.
'hostile/ conflict behavior' (p. 927)	14	1.000	2	1931–2003	Males are more hostile.
'stress/ distress/ worry/ anxiety associated with providing care to others' (p. 916)	10	1.000	2	1985–2001	Females have more stress/ distress/ worry/ anxiety associated with providing care to others.
'providing care/ nurturance for others in general (excluding one's offspring)' (p. 928)	12	.917	4(1+)	1953–2005	Females provide more care to others in general.

Far from claiming that the above can be treated as the ultimate source of such linguistic maneuvers aiming at the concealment of someone else's guilt – especially if this embraces the interpreter's own failure – or at the avoidance of self-praise, we find it essential to indicate the possibility of such interpretation and the need for further research in this area, without committing ourselves to whether the above characteristics are the product of nature or society.

Appendix

Source Text 1

Ladies and Gentlemen, Students of English at the University of Silesia,

it's a pleasure to be able to meet you here, in this new and modern site, which this Faculty and above all you, future teachers, translators, interpreters and researchers have deserved for a long time and for which you had to wait for too long. I'm proud that I represent an institution which contributed to the successful completion of this project, whose ultimate purpose was, and let me spell this out very clearly, to provide you, students, with better conditions for self-development and to create an atmosphere conducive to asking questions, pursuing answers and establishing international student networks – networks that will in future develop into firm, dynamic and fertile centres for improving the quality of human resource development in the context of higher education and vocational training. I'm afraid the joint effort of the University of Silesia, Sosnowiec Town Hall and European Union has not brought the fruits we all have been hoping for.

As Co-ordinator for Student Mobility, it is with sad disappointment that I noticed that you do not show more interest in international exchange projects than three or four years ago, when there were fewer opportunities to study abroad and less encouragement to do so. Actually fewer of you, students of English at this Faculty, I might think well-prepared for such co-operation in terms of language competence and translation skills, have applied for participation in the Life Long Learning Programmes in this academic year than in the two previous years together! Not

only are you reluctant to embark on such now widely available projects, but even if you do, you do not treat your participation seriously. From the reports I regularly receive from the Host Institutions, I know that you have developed a habit of missing out the courses offered, with the result that you come back with a lower ECTS score than you should, which is of course unacceptable. Let me be clear on this point, if you persist in this deplorable practice, as Co-ordinator for Student Mobility I will have to impose financial penalties on your Home Institution.

Another worrying symptom of your low motivation for self-development is that you refuse to enrol on any extra courses that Host Institutions offer to Erasmus students, and which reflect their special profiles and interests. Rather than benefit from the Host's competence and experience in a particular area of study, you take the line of least resistance sticking to the minimum ECTS requirements, if you meet them at all, which, as I said, is not the case.

The last issue I have to raise, however unwillingly, is the problem of conduct and social norms which apply in the host countries and which you notoriously ignore. Apart from missing obligatory courses, you persist in breaking the no-smoking regulations, which are now very strict and very clear at the same time. Moreover, while I don't want to pretend I have the authority to ask you to curb your drinking habits, I must insist on your controlling your behaviour once you have already had too much. In short, you are too loud in the campuses and you effectively prevent other students from pursuing their studies. I regret to tell you that in this way you are doing your Home Institution a disservice. Even more do I regret to have to tell you this in these modern, inspiring and motivating settings. I will be looking forward to meeting you here next year, hoping to have warmer things to say.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Source Text 2

Ladies and Gentlemen, Students of English at the University of Silesia,

I hardly need to tell you how happy I am to be here, in this wonderful, modern site, and how impressed I am to see that in such a short period of time you have managed to turn it into a homely place, radiating positive energy and wrapped in stimulating atmosphere. And impressed as I am with these spacious, high-tech rooms and halls, I know it's not walls that have made this building into a dynamic centre of research and education. This energy and this atmosphere have not come from glass or steel, they have come from you.

As Co-ordinator for Human Resource Development, now visiting and evaluating higher education institutions co-operating in the framework of European Union, I note with enormous satisfaction that you, students of English at the University of Silesia, have managed to establish and successfully develop five student societies – a truly academic achievement very few student communities can boast. Still fewer can pride themselves on founding a society that has won recognition on a regional scale, as you can with your Arabic Culture Society. In three other cases – the Student Societies for Translation Studies, for Historical and General Linguistics and for Theatreology – you have succeeded in drawing your colleagues from other institutes, which is a remarkable and telling success in times when the number of young people willing to spend their leisure on academic pursuits and discussions is steadily decreasing. With your enthusiasm and vivid, inquisitive minds you have shown the rest of your community that shared scholarly passions can become a rich source of satisfaction and – yes, I will use this word – fun.

It would be a huge mistake if I failed to mention that you perform exceptionally well on proficiency tests which European universities hold for visiting students. The reports that reach me from various host institutions speak in a single voice – for three years now you have shown very high levels of language competence and invariably scored very high in tests for Speakers of English as a Second/Foreign Language. Moreover, in teacher training courses held now by

a number of European universities, you excel in teaching skills and have already established a reputation as well-prepared, motivating and passionate teachers.

Impressed with your language skills and teaching potential, now I'd like to address those of you who pursue the demanding translation studies – you have done an excellent job here with your conference interpreting and translation courses involving German and Arabic. What I'd like to note is that not only did you pioneer a programme with language C representing typologically a distant system, but you are eager to incorporate your language C competence when doing research for your MA degrees as well. Secondly, and this is a point I find exceptionally important, as a group of students undergoing a very comprehensive translation training, you play a crucial role in the international exchange programmes operating between the University of Silesia and Universities in Vienna, Amsterdam and Bologna. It is with these institutions that you have managed to establish a regular exchange. This mobility became the basis for a translation student network that you have started and later developed into an invaluable source of information, offering mutual access to data bases and translation corpora.

Last but not least, I feel this account of your achievements would be incomplete if I ignored the important aspect of presenting research and sharing ideas with others. You actively participate in international meetings and conferences for young linguists and trainee interpreters, both at home and abroad, for instance last year in Split, Poznań and Łódź, where I had the pleasure of talking to some of you. As part of your Student Societies activities, you organize informal lectures and presentations for your colleagues from other institutes of this Faculty. You participate actively in the life of student community writing to international student magazines, like *Alumnus* and *Focus on College*. With all this I won't exaggerate if I say that today you set an example for your fellow students at other European universities.

Thank you very much for your excellent work.

Source Text 3

Ladies and Gentlemen, Sportsmen and Sportswomen, members of the Australian Olympic Team,

I'm pleased to meet you here, on the hospitable premises of this newly-erected, modern Olympics Sports Centre, whose aim from the start was to cater for your needs and to provide you, promising athletes of this land, the optimum conditions for training and development. I'm proud that I represent an institution which contributed to the successful completion of the project, which is now one of the finest examples of modern sports architecture, fitted with facilities very few such centres in the world can boast. And proud as I am that I've had my modest share in fostering Australia's sporting culture, I'm afraid the joint effort of four official sponsors of the Australian Olympic Team has not brought the fruits we all have been hoping for.

As President of the Australian Wines and sports fan deeply concerned about Australian long-established sporting tradition, I note with dismay that you thwarted the enthusiasm of the Australian people, let down young sports lovers and seriously disappointed your fellow athletes who could not represent their country in the Olympic Games this year but supported you throughout these two weeks with their hopes, good wishes and strength coming from real devotion to Olympic ideals. Of the planned 65 medals – a number that in your conceit you prematurely boosted to 70 in the interview just before the flight to Beijing – you managed to gather only 46. And while I appreciate and thank you for the 14 golds, 15 silvers and 17 bronze medals you came back with, I cannot help wringing my hands at the thought of the Australian Olympic Team relegated to the position behind Germany and Great Britain. I cannot believe that within just two weeks you demoted this country, whose enthusiasm for and devotion to sports competition and Olympic ideals had become legendary, to the status of mediocrity. The real problem, however, lies not in the number of honours you received or, I should say, you failed to receive,

but in the nonchalant disposition you showed while preparing for the Games and during the two weeks in Beijing, as well as in the disturbingly self-complacent attitude you have manifested since your rather infamous return. Attitude which I consider thoroughly unacceptable.

As a sponsor of the Australian 2008 Olympic Team I find it truly regrettable that instead of benefiting from the excellent conditions that the Olympics Sports Centre now offers, you practiced only half-heartedly in your home clubs, claiming that you had already shown the public during the previous Olympic Games what an unbeatable, invincible and versatile team you were! You refused to take advantage of advice offered by professional analysts, who had warned repeatedly that Britain's swimming power was growing. You laughed off the preposterous idea that young Asian teams were a real threat to Australian athletes. When the Games were already in full swing you openly ridiculed the suggestion that Germans could score higher in the final ranking than you! What a deplorable lack of self-criticism and elementary prudence you showed! I regret to tell you that through your arrogance you have brought dishonour to the Australian Olympic Association and belied the best Australian sporting traditions. With all this I cannot but tell you today that you have succeeded in turning this year's Olympics into the blackest days of Australian sport.

Thank you for your attention.

Source Text 4

Ladies and Gentlemen, Sportsmen and Sportswomen, members of the British Olympic Team,

when I stood here before you a month ago, I hoped with all my heart that the last four years of hard work, uncompromising self-discipline and – yes, in many cases austere self-denial in the name of Olympic ideals and athletic achievements might bring the fruits you all rightly deserved. I'm standing in the same place today, proud to address you, British athletes, medalists, people of sport, upon your return from Beijing, and honoured to represent an institution which can boast the fourth Olympic Team in the world. And while I realise that the success of the Team is a joint effort of many people who contributed their time, energy and resources to this national project, nobody understands better than I do that it's you, British sportsmen and sportswomen, that endowed it with the soul, the spirit and the morale which can only come from strain, perseverance and faith. I am here today to thank you for what you have done – for yourselves, for the Olympic tradition, for Britain and for the spectators.

As President of the British Olympic Association I note with pride and enormous satisfaction that you won 47 medals, including 19 golds, which is the best Olympic performance the British Olympic Association have recorded since 1908! You achieved a spectacular success for which the British had waited for a century: you have promoted Britain to rank four, behind such Olympic giants as China, United States and Russian Federation and before such long-established sports powers like Germany and Australia. With 19 golds, 13 silvers and 15 bronze medals you have shown the world that Britain has still a lot to contribute to the world's Olympic dreams. You have proved that the tradition of sports competition, fair play and cooperation is in Britain as much alive as ever.

I don't have to tell you how truly impressed I am by the excellent, superb results that you achieved in such a vast array of disciplines and events. Of the over 40 world records broken during this year's Olympic games, you, British athletes, set more than one fifth, you were unbeatable in cycling and swimming, you excelled in sailing and rowing, you achieved phenomenal results in athletics, boxing and modern pentathlon. With your stamina and perseverance you gave a breath-taking performance, succeeded in drawing the British to follow the broadcasts with unwavering excitement, and kept them right there in front of their TV sets throughout the magic two weeks.

What I find exceptionally important, though, is the way in which you achieved this remarkable success. Through your attitude you have shown the world a true fidelity to Olympic ideals and to the long-standing tradition of fair-play and cooperation in competition. You have demonstrated that partnership, friendship and care for the others are not part of the Olympic myth but imperishable values that give sense and meaning to sports pursuits. I won't exaggerate if I say that it is your attitude that is the most valuable and lasting contribution to the Games – it is thorough your attitude that you shape the next generations of athletes and bring credit to this country and the best British Olympic traditions. I'm happy to be standing here in front of you today, I'm fully aware of this historic moment when I'm looking at your tired but elated faces, and I take it as an honour to be able to thank you all. Thank you.

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