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Table of Contents

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POSTMODERNISM AND AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Abstract

This paper regards the postmodern autobiography as the one challenging the traditional concepts of a completeness of the Self and revolutionizing the narrative practice, by offering new patterns of meaning which reject completeness, linearity and order in the name of randomness and chance. The status of the female autobiography in the postmodern times takes spur from Simone de Beauvoir's pondering that woman has historically functioned as the culturally constructed and conditioned Other of the man. This kind of autobiography regards the largest departure from mainstream feminism: the argument that sex is constructed through language. Feminist politics and postmodern aesthetics become inextricably linked, abandoning the presence of a single, reliable narrative voice in favor of the postmodern blurring of the boundaries between fact and fiction, history and myth.

Key words: *postmodern autobiography, Simone de Beauvoir, feminism, postmodern aesthetics.*

1.   The texture of autobiography: Definitions, traits, controversies

1.1.   Tentative definitions, autobiographical forms and practices

This chapter was named after Stephen Shapiro's essay because it seems to intertwine several considerations of mine regarding the actual status of autobiography in America. Firstly, as Shapiro himself asserts: "literary cartographers have long been precisely mapping the continents of fiction, drama, and poetry, all the while pretending that autobiography was not there, or simply coloring it a toneless black."(Shapiro 1968:425). The second reason why I entitled the chapter in this way is because it is considered a mode of expression characteristic of African Americans and because it uses subtlety to express the most intimate thoughts. Nevertheless, no matter the understatement of many critics, autobiography is a continent worth exploring.

This chapter starts with a citation from Joanne Braxton's *Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition Within a Tradition (1989),* because it is conceived that it is in this quote better than anywhere else that an African American autobiographer and scholar highlights the way the dimension of blackness, femaleness, modern discourse and cultural heritage intermingle to shape the unique individuality of an African American autobiographer. Faced with more challenges than any person is should be, the female African American autobiographer becomes the best expression of individuality and sharedness, authenticity and artificiality, disarray and regularity, independence and subjugation, traditionalism and innovatory vision. Strictly speaking, autobiography is not a genre at all in the sense of poetry, fiction and drama are. It is just a subcategory of the confusing variety of writing we place under the heading of nonfictional prose. To begin with, autobiography in the West is itself hardly value-neutral since the Self, its principal referent, is in fundamental ways a construct of culture. Thus, its division into several periods was necessarily rough and heuristic.

The word autobiography was first used, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, by Robert Southey in the *English Periodical Quarterly Review of Portuguese Literature* in 1809. Before the emergence of the term there were two categories of people's lives written by themselves: the confession and the memoir. Philippe Lejeune is the one to be considered as

punctilious in providing us with an effective definition of autobiography. His definition runs as follows: "Retrospective prose story that a real person relates about his or her own experience in which he or she gives emphasis to his or her individual life and to the history of his or her personality in particular."(qtd. in Gudmundsdottir 1998:10). According to Olney: "The term autobiography is a post-enlightenment coinage. It was fabricated toward the end of the 18th century, beginning of the 19th century out of three Greek words auto combining from *autos*-- Self, bio combining from *bios*-- life, and the *graphe* substantive derived from the verb *graphein*-- to write"(Olney, 1978:114). Jean Starobinski more sparingly defines it as a biography of a person written by himself. Rewriting Starobinski, Blanchard schematizes: "Autobiography is an act where the *writing*, the *graphein* on either side of the life, the *bios* it encloses, is itself the life and death, the presence and absence which it seeks, but only gives us as through a mirror: an image"(Blanchard qtd. in Smith, Robert. 1995:54).

As will be treated later in greater detail, the kinds of autobiography most widespread in American literature are: the puritan autobiography, the secular autobiography, the slave narrative, the memoir, the diary and the fictionalized autobiography. The beginning of the American autobiography dates back to the Puritan colonization because Early New England churches required candidates for membership to recite their spiritual histories before the congregations they hoped to join. Sometimes called *Revelations, Evidences, Narrations* or *Experiences,* these Self histories align an individual's life with the divine doctrine and imperatives.

Another heated debate nowadays is that of the hybrid character of autobiography. Is it like a memoir, like a diary, a biography or is it a fictionalized product? A memoir is slightly different in character from autobiography. It has a narrower, more intimate focus on the writer's own memories, feelings and emotions and has often been written by politicians or military leaders as a way to record and publish an account of their public exploits. The English Civil War (1642-1651) provoked a number of examples of this genre, including the works by Sir Edmund Ludlow and Sir John Reresby. Diaries were originally written for personal reference, but the successful publication of the diaries of the English 17th century civil servant Samuel Pepys in 1825 drew attention to the possibilities of the diary as a form

of autobiography in its own right. As may be quite clear, a diary is marked by daily entries revealing the most intimate thoughts of the author. From the 20th century onwards, diary publication became a popular vehicle for politicians seeking vindication. Pondering on how the word autobiography encompasses the word biography, Olney regards the former as inevitably tied to and encompassing the latter.

There are marked differences between what we consider traditional autobiography and the contemporary fictional autobiography. Firstly, instead of trying to present the author's real life and providing the reader with access to his or her past Self in autobiography, the fictional format allows the reader to disregard the real person of the author. Secondly, as Regine Hampel states in her *I Write Therefore I am: Fictional Autobiography and the Idea of Selfhood in the Postmodern Age* (2004) in "traditional autobiography the gap between the time and the place of the discourse and the story is the only one. In contrast fictional autobiography is characterized by a gap between the writer, narrator and character, a gap which is not just temporal and spatial but also personal."(Hampel, 2004:113). Thirdly, in traditional autobiography the protagonist is usually equipped, at least retrospectively, with some sense of his/her identity which he/she is then able to commit to or construct on paper. Postmodern fictional autobiography, in contrast, is full of characters who want to narrate their lives, yet can no longer rely on traditional methods. In the traditional autobiography there is recognition of a split in-between the extradiegetic level of the narrating discourse and the intradiegetic level of the story. Fictional autobiography, in contrast, "challenges these traditions by undermining the traditional chronology on the intradiegetic level and by differently treating the notion of time"(Cavalero, 1985:168).

1.2. The Autobiography Critique: Periodization, Tenets and Criticism

Autobiography, as the Greek origin of the word suggests, is a "biography written by the predicate or composed conjointly with a collaborative writer styled as told to, or with. "(Wikipedia Feb. 20:2009). The term was first used by the poet Robert Southey in 1809 in the English periodical *Quarterly Review,* but the form goes back to antiquity. In antiquity

autobiography took the form of an apology, oration or confession. Correspondingly, John Henry Newman's autobiography, published in 1864, is entitled *Apologia pro Vita Sua,* the paghan rhetor Libanus (314-394) framed his life memoir *Oration,* as an oration of a literary rather than public kind; Augustine (354-430) applied the title *Confessions* and Rousseau used the same title in the 18th century.

Since Augustine's *Confessions* (397 A.D.) we start to become aware of the conflicting nature of the Self. We encounter two contrasted senses of the Self rendered as the "Naked Self and the Self Same: the first referring to his unrepentant soul, while the second to the God's qualities. In that which is considered one of the first autobiographies of the Renaissance written between (1500-1571), and entitled simply Vita (Italian-Life), Benvenuto Cellini declares since the very beginning that every person is important and distinguished in his own life and worth being described in an autobiography, but no one should attempt to do this before he comes to the age of forty, a time when he is mature enough to strive to reveal his real Self: "No matter what sort he is, everyone has to his credit what are or really seem great achievements, if he cares for truth or goodness, he ought to write the story of his own life in his own hand but no one should venture such a splendid undertaking before he is over forty."(Cellini, 1956:15), and this is the criteria of autobiography, that has persisted until recent times.

The earliest known autobiography in English in the 15th century was the *Book of Margery Kempe* (1490), and early autobiographies of the 17th century include those of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1764) and that of John Bunyan: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666). The traits of the Renaissance autobiography include: shifting the focus of concentration from Self to context, featuring typical aspects of Self and registering self-consciousness. The writing of the American Autobiography began in the 17th century with the narratives of early European settlers by way of the explorer, travel, spiritual and Indian captivity narratives. According to Robert Sayre: two periods precede and determine the emergence of the autobiographical mode in contemporary literature. The first one covers the range from puritan conversion narratives, through Franklin's secularized version in his autobiography,to Melville's early autobiographical novels which constitute the rise of a national American fiction. (qtd. in Hornung, 1985 8/3:80).

Autobiography during the Colonial Period was marked by the development of such literary products as journals and notebooks on the frontiersman, as well as the emergence of the early fictionalized versions. The propensity towards fictionalization is accompanied by a parallel shift from autobiographical certitude to the growing metaphysical obsession. The turn of the century literary production is marked on the other hand by recognition of the harsh realities of life and the frailty of human existence. In Paul John Eakin's words: "the rise of education, cheap newspapers and cheap printing, modern concepts of fame and celebrity began to develop and it became the expectation that those in the public eye should write about themselves" (Eakin, 1991:79).

The contemporary autobiography status was defined even by John Hewitt who highlighted the immanence of misery-lit narrative versions. According to Hewitt in *Autobiographical Tightropes* (1990): "the trend of contemporary autobiography is such that increasingly fake autobiographies are encouraged, particularly those associated with 'misery lit' situations where the writer has allegedly suffered from dysfunctional family, social problems, or political oppression."(Hewitt, 1990:123). The present condition of autobiography reserves much more space for the fictional versions, protagonists voicing their ideas as though they were writing their own biography.

An alternative periodization of the American autobiography has been brought by Robert Sayre in *American Lives: An Anthology of Autobiographical Writing* (1994), who divides the American autobiography into different periods on the basis of the historical and social developments of the time. According to him, the first period, that of ***Explorers, Governors, Pilgrims and Captives,*** is represented by the explorer journals and histories and captivity narratives, and bears the name of such writers as Cabeza de Vaca with his *Adventures in the Unknown Interior of America* (1542). The second period, named as ***Great Awakenings, New Individuals*** **(1700-1775),** reveals the writing of some major full length autobiographical writings such as those of Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), John Woolman (1720-72), and Hector St.John de Crevecoeur (1735-1813). Two short classics also come from this period: *The Journal of Sarah* Kemble (1704), Jonathan Edward's *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon,*

a Negro Man (1760)- the first black autobiography in America.

According to Sayre the sixty years to come reveal autobiography becoming as closely identified with the new nation. That is the reason why this period was called *National Identities: Patriots, Promoters and Pretenders* (**1776-1837**). Autobiographies here include: Ethan Allen's *The Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity (1775),* John Adams' *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams and Discourses on Davilla*(1790). In the period to come, *Self-Liberators* (**1836-1865**), achievement of national identities did not necessarily mean personal and cultural independence. Approximately one ninth of the population was in fact enslaved and the native Indian population was not regarded as part of the nation at all. Personal accounts of this time include Lydia Sigourney's *Letters of Life (1866),* Jarena Lee's *The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee, a Coloured Lady (1836),* Lewis Clarke's *Leaves from a Slave's Journal of* Lfe (1842).

The chapter *Survivors and Self Teachers* includes the literary production of civil war and post-civil war America. In these autobiographies we see the emergence of a demonstrably different concept of Self. The dark evil Self was no longer within but outside, in the shape of the wartime enemy. Apologists from north and south continued to build up the evidence for heroism or horror, autobiographies of this period are William Dean Howells' *My Year in the Log Cabin* (1893) and *Boy's Town* (1904), Hamlin Garland's *Boy Life on the Prairie* (1899).

The period beginning in the late nineteenth century and extending up to WWI, what historians call the Age of Reform, or the Progressive Era, would add even more to the richness and significance of American autobiography. Named as *Lives in Progress* (**1900-1935**)**,** it bore the experience of reform, immigration followed by a facing with the difficulties of acculturation and assimilation. Autobiographies of this time include: Jack London's *What Life Means To Me* (1909), John Muir's *The World and the University* (1913), Du Bois' *The Shadow of the Years* (1920), Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Love and Marriage and the Breakdown (1927). The* modern experience to autobiography was brought by Anais Nin, Gertrude Stein, and Dorothy Day in a period named *Experimental Lives* (**1920-1960**)**.** They were influenced by the modernist awareness and by experiments with the narrative point of view. Autobiographies of this period are: F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Crack Up* (1945),

Gertrude Stein's *The Gradual Making of the Americans* (1925), Richard Wright's *The God That Failed* (1946), Dorothy Day's *Having a Baby and Love Overflows* (1952), Anais Nin's *The Diary of Anais Nin* (1931-1934).

All autobiography involves a quest for identity, a revisiting of the past, a reconstruction of the paths that led to the present, a definition of the Self, or an attempt to defend the Self. That is why the subsequent period in the American autobiography was named ***Quests for Identity* (1960-onward).** Finding one's identity in the sense of what is unique and shared, what is permanent but also subject to change and what is real and in some ways an artifice has been the great goal of the best recent autobiographers. Autobiographies of this period include: James Baldwin's *The Discovery of What it Means To Be An American* (1961), N. Scott Momaday's *The Way To The Rainy Mountain (1969),* Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*'(1975), Annie Dillard's *American Childhood* (1987), bell hooks' *Black is A Woman's* Color (1981).

There are several people who have been writing about the actual status of autobiography in America. James M. Cox describes autobiography as growing out of the political necessities and discoveries of the American and French revolution. According to him:

The Self is in fact a fallen prince, tracing its nobility back to the charging fruitful vale of a faraway kingdom, and although the kingdom will not literally come again, freedom is its essential condition, and the text prophesies and then celebrates a return to that royal status. (Cox, 1971: 252-277).

Olney, one of the founding fathers of the theory of autobiography, claims that no matter how fictional autobiography may be, it is the truest of all books if you know to read between the lines:

It is the truest of all books; for while it inevitably consists mainly of extinctions of the truth, shirking of the truth, partial revealments of the truth, the remorseless truth is there, between the lines, where the author-cat is racking dust upon it which hides from the disinterested spectator neither it nor its smell (Olney, 1988:428-441).

While reviewing James Olney's *Metaphors of Self* (1972) critics consider the Self a trope worth being explored and delved into. Louis Renza tracks the complexity of the autobiography and the Self-concept in the chaotic connotation of the first person pronoun: "For some years now the first person

pronoun has been in a disarray as a transparent signifier of an authorial signified. Instead of referring to the writing Self the I places this Self under erasure as a rhetoric-linguistic shifter, figure or trope."(qtd. in Olney 1980:268-295). Karl Weintraub, on the other hand, assigns the growing importance of the autobiographic genre to the "historical understanding of its existence and to the emergence of the historical mindedness we call historicism. "(Weintraub, 1975:822).

Tracing the emergence of the Self as a concept in Western culture we can say that it has only been since World War II, when the formal analysis of all branches of literature flourished, that autobiography began to receive attention as a literature. The bulk of autobiography criticism recognizes the development of Anglo-American criticism and Cultural Criticism and contains the considerations of different schools of criticism, and a multitude of critics. According to Sidonie Smith, the most fruitful approach to the subject of autobiography is to approach it neither in a formal, nor in a historical way, but rather to see its tendency to create order out of chaos.

Two bibliographical essays have recently advanced our understanding of the subject of autobiography: the essay appended to William C. Spengemann's *Forms of Autobiography* (1982) and the introductory essay in Olney's anthology *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (1980). Situating the first surge of critical interest in autobiography in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Spengemann cites three contributing phenomena: the increasing number of autobiographies, the increasing number of critical essays, and the influence of Wilhelm Dilthey's call for history-grounded autobiographical documents. According to him, the factors leading to the development of such criticism were: "the romantic preoccupation with the industrial revolution, the myth of the self-made man, social Darwinism and the survival of the fittest, Freudianism and psychoanalysis and ultimately the outburst of the literary activity." (Spengemann, 1982:73).

By contrast the second generation of critics has concerned itself with matters of self-representation and has regarded the critic as a psychoanalyst of sorts, interpreting the truth in its psychological dimensions. A third generation of critics, the structuralists and poststructuralists, have challenged the notion of referentiality. By considering this personal account as a narrative artifice that does not exist outside language, they view the text as a web of meaning in

which relations are spun. Gates writes: "Blackness is not a material object or an event but a metaphor; it does not have an essence as such but is defined by a network of relations."(Gates, 1990:83).

The criticism revolving around autobiography can also be discovered by dealing with the separate considerations and assumptions many autobiographers make about the art of autobiography writing. According to Gibbon, autobiography should be more markedly influenced by truth and historicity rather than show a propensity towards the fictional characteristic of the novel: "Truth-naked, unblushing truth, the first virtue of more serious history must be the sole recommendation of this personal narrative."(qtd in Gibbon 1795:37) Yeat's preface to the first of his series of autobiographies, on the other hand, emphasizes the unwilling fictionality of a non-fictional genre like autobiography. He notes: that he might have changed nothing to his knowledge, but many things without his knowledge. Du Bois seems to confirm the historical authenticity of African American autobiography while stating: "No Black American author has ever felt the need to invent a nightmare to make his point." (qtd. in Stone, 1960: 517).

Other autobiographers such as Spender, Olney, Pascal and Hegel deal with the importance of the construction of the Self in the act of autobiography: While Spender considers that the real challenge of every autobiographer is to depict as faithfully as possible his real present Self: I have written of many presences, ghosts from the past which surround me and my aim has been to describe what I am. I want to depict these omnipresent selves rather than a new and emergent Self of today."(Spender 1951:39), Olney seems to set order to the various debates circumscribing autobiography by pointing out that each life reflects an "unrepeated and unrepeatable being."(Olney, 1972: 92).

Roy Pascal in his influential book _Design and Truth in Autobiography_ (1960) argues that the true autobiography tells us not merely of remembered deeds and thoughts, but is for both author and reader "a spiritual experiment, a voyage of discovery." (Pascal 1960:72). Past and language are regarded as patterns within which we create emotions and the moral character of the subject under consideration. Furthering the considerations about the postmodern condition of the Self, Hegel confirms the fragmentation, indeterminacy and hybridization by stating: "Since I cannot say what is my opinion, because nothing can be said that it is not general, therefore I mean

everybody when I say I."(Hegel, 1977:398).

1.3.1. Postmodernism and the Status of Autobiography.

The origin of the term postmodernism remains uncertain, though we know that Frederico de Onis used the word "postmodernism" in his _Antologia de la Poesia Espanola Hispano-Americana,_ published in Madrid in 1934, and Dudley Fitts picked it up again in his _Antology of Contemporary Latin-American Poetry_ (1942). As suggested in _Autobiography and Postmodernism(1994),_ edited by Kathleen Ashley, Leigh Gilmore and Gerald Peters, "postmodernism results from a second wave of loss of belief in the twentieth century, prompted especially by the Cold War, the McCarthy hearings, the Vietnam War, and other events of the 1950s and 1960s which suggested the breakdown of traditional systems of meaning."(Ashley, Gilmore, Peters, eds. 1994:59). More profound and pervasive than the first loss, the second claimed that everything was dead to this generation: traditional values, social institutions, and even the novel and the author were proclaimed dead. On the other hand, while attempting to make a picture of the traits characterizing postmodernism as a movement and as a discourse, Warhol and Hendel state that postmodernism lacks a disciplinary or scientific stability and engages two divinities at once: sameness and difference, unity and rupture, filiations and revolt." (Warhol, Hendel eds.1993:66).

A glance at the history of autobiography studies reveals that at the end of the 1970s the study of autobiography was being remade. Two collections of essays published in 1980 inaugurated a new wave of interest: _Women's autobiography: Essays in Criticism_ by Estelle C. Jelinek, and _Autobiography: Essays Critical and Theoretical_ by James Olney. Jelinek's collection situated feminist criticism in relation to autobiography, and Olney's collection examined autobiography through a range of merging post-structuralisms.
According to Leigh Gilmore in his "The Mark of Autobiography: Postmodernism, Autobiography and Genre"(1994), postmodernism runs counter everything that is conventional and the concepts of Self and identity bear this influence more than anything else. In his own words: "Postmodern autobiography challenges the concepts of Self and identity underlying conventional autobiography, offers new patterns of meaning which oppose

traditional concepts of completeness of Self, and queries its narrative practice and revolutionizes it."(Gilmore, 1994:39). If autobiography traditionally features a first-person autodiegetic narrator who retrospectively recounts the story of his/her life using a two narrative level (that of the narrator, and that of the character), in the postmodern autobiography the narrator can use different verbal persons for him/herself, can employ another person to act as a focalizer, or invite several narrators with their own stories. In postmodern autobiography identity is never given a priori, it is never complete. According to Mike Featherstone in his *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity (1993):* "The shifting boundaries of identification, involve an illusory image of presence, a sign of absence and loss."(Featherstone, 1993:69).

1.3.2. A Woman's Autobiography and Postmodernism.

Postmodern feminism is anteceded by the publication in 1949 in post war France of Simone De Beauvoir's *Le Deuxieme Sex (The Second Sex).* Asserting that the woman is made and not born, De Beauvoir investigated how woman has historically functioned as the culturally constructed and conditioned Other of the man. To follow the feminism development trend, a second generation response titled the New French Feminism furthered the concerns raised by De Beauvoir. In contemporary times, postmodern feminism has relevantly developed to refer to the second generation of French Feminists. Recognized in North America as the postmodernists, these feminists: "aimed to expose the internal contradictions of metaphysical discourse privileging the subject of certainty, the cogito, a disembodied and male-identified consciousness."(Taylor ed. 2003:142).

A prominent voice of postmodern feminism is that of Helene Cixous. In appropriating Derrida's concept of *differance,* she coined the term *lecriture feminine* (feminine writing) and analyzed its difference from canonized masculine writing *(literatur).* The largest departure from mainstream feminism is the argument that sex itself is constructed through language. The most notable proponent of the argument being Judith Butler in her 1990 book *Gender Trouble* whereby she criticizes the approaches of Beauvoir, Foucault and Lacan and the distinction drawn between biological sex and socially

constructed gender. The same orientation is advocated by Mary Joe Frug who regards human experience as located inescapably and as helplessly entrapped within a system of meaning produced by language: "cultural mechanisms encode the female body with meanings."(Frug, 1992:1047). While privileging the autonomous or metaphysical Self, the autobiography valorizes individual integrity and separateness and devalues personal and communal interdependency.

Another way of looking at postmodern feminism is by having a look at the intertwining of the dimensions of feminism and postmodernism. As asserted in *Women'*s *Lives into Print: The Theory, Practice and Writing of Feminist Auto/Biography,* (1999) edited by
Pauline Polkey, postmodernism wavers between integrity and annihilation, wholeness and separatism:

While postmodernism's usefulness for feminism is debated in conference rooms and scholarly journals, the term postmodernism itself has become a catchphrase for any discourse that questions and subverts accepted notions of reality. Postmodernism's varying impulses range from the playful to the nihilistic to the polyphonic to the inarticulable. (Polkey ed.1999:103).
This is the reason why postmodern writing experiments with such formal elements and textual practices as genre closure, narrative shift, and unlinearity. This experimentation sometimes called meta-fiction or deconstructive fiction was primarily associated with white male writers from the 60s and lead to the assumption that there are no postmodern women writers.
The disruption of postmodernism by 20th century realism placed writers such as Virgina Wolf, Gertrude Stein, Djurna Barnes in the background. This problem was referred to by Betty Friedman in her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) as the problem that has no name. Resultingly, novels such as the *Diary of a Mad Housewife (1970)* by Sue Kaufman; *The Bell Jar (1963)* by Sylvia Plath; and *Fear of Flyingv (1973)* by Erica Jong; and successively autobiographies of writers such as Maxine Hong Kingston, Audrey Lorde and Gloria Anzaldua exemplify a postmodernism more thematically and stylistically innovative than that of male writers.

What seems to reconcile feminist politics and postmodern aesthetics is the abandoning of a single reliable narrative voice in favor of multiple narrators and shifting points of view for stable entities. The connection

between the genre and the cultural ideology is brought forth by many postmodernist ethnic writers like Maxine Hong Kingston and Audre Lorde. While the former blurs the boundary between fiction, art, and history by revisiting Chinese myth and talk story to connect the dead ghosts of the cultural and familiar past with the live ghosts of the present world; the latter blurs the boundaries of biography, autobiography, and mythology to express in a daring way her activism, individuality, and even her lesbian inclinations. Reformulated in Smith's words, postmodernist female writers "refuse the univocal, fixed subjectivity in the name of the multiplicitous, polyvocal, fragmentary and contradictory."(Smith, 1987:184).

There are many points of contact between feminism and postmodernism, but there are some differences between them as well. The main issue, according to Jessica Dallow, is: "the bridging of feminist activism and postmodernism's deconstructionism" (Dallow, 2007:170). Postmodernists attempt to deconstruct many of the categories that feminists have placed at the centre of their theories and deny the presence of any essential core in any of the subjects. In Eileen Schlee's words: "there is no essential core natural to us, and so there is no repression in the humanist sense."(Schlee, 1993 13/2). Feminists are pointed towards their oppressive categories and forced not only to answer for them but to destroy them.

In conclusion, we may state that autobiography is a form of communication that unites inner and outer worlds, past and present, individuality and collectivity. Autobiography does not communicate raw experience; it presents rather a metaphor for the raw experience. As an author translates his life into language he creates for himself a symbolic identity and sees himself through the mirror of language. In a world of Others, the subject who claims to be himself is just lying while trying to present a false image in front of the community. Autobiography lies in the domain of the intransitive, shifting from reality to fiction and vice versa.

In the mobile, multicultural environment of the contemporary United States, autobiographical storytelling becomes a means of simultaneously unfolding convergences and divergences. The majority of autobiography critics still persist in either erasing the woman's story, relegating it to the margins of the critical discourse, or uncritically conflating the dynamics of male and female selfhood and sexuality. But women and mostly female

autobiographers are never easy to be challenged, denied, or-- even worse-erased. The female autobiography is to be regarded as a matrix where gender and identity meet, a site where subject positions converge to produce what we call the female Self. The truth is that women are there, part and parcel of society, and will continue to fight to get a say in the rumorous, multicultural and multiracial reality of the United States.

While African-American female autobiographies are formally written self-reports that intertwine objective fact and subjective awareness, their agenda develops from the ideals of selfhood at the time of slave narratives, to the personal triumphs after emancipation, and to the task of full definition in the time of WWII. Black female autobiography forces are such that they impose careful treatment of extra textual conditions, bring the Self as wrapped in gender, and inscribe culture by sticking to impersonation.

One of the beliefs rejected in postmodern autobiography is the concept of identity characterized by completeness, causality, linearity and order. Instead it is shown that we are subjected to randomness and chance. Unlike many other theories that tend toward a definitive closure, postmodernism develops toward openness flexible enough to allow diverse, heterogeneous and contradictory elements to cohabit, emerge and merge without final resolutions. So the postmodern approaches merge in the face of the modernist search for authority, progress, universalization and rationalization and involve a radical questioning of the grounds upon which knowledge claims are made.

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A CASE STUDY: THE INFLUENCE OF RAP/HIP-HOP MUSIC: STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF ABUSIVE LYRICS TOWARD FEMALES, THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to analyze how college students perceive the violent/offensive rap/hip-hop music lyrics and if such lyrics influence their thoughts and guide them toward violent behaviors. Moreover, this study aimed at exploring gender related perceptions toward the songs with abusive lyrics that contain violence and offensive words for the portrayal of females. The hypotheses for this research were as following: 1) College students develop negative attitudes about rap/hip-hop music lyrics; 2) College students develop negative attitudes on offensive rap/hip-music lyrics about the portrayal of the woman; 3) There are gender differences on college students perceived attitudes about offensive rap/hip-hop music lyrics. The sample of N=82 students was drawn from "Beder" University College by using convenient sampling method. The data collected was analyzed using description means via SPSS 21. The results showed that students don't develop negative attitudes about rap/music lyrics. College students do not develop negative attitudes on abusive rap/hip-music lyrics about the portrayal of the woman.

Keywords*: portrayal of females, hip-hop culture, rap music, violent lyrics, media effects*

INTRODUCTION

Scholars claim that music plays an important role in learning and the communication of culture. People learn from the role models that they see and hear. Music is often a major part of a youth's world. Rap and hip-hop are not synonymous, though they are so closely associated that some use the terms interchangeably. Others invest in them with distinct values - either rap describes commercialized music and hip-hop the sounds of the underground; or rap suggests a gritty style (as in gangsta rap) and hip- hop a more politically and socially conscious approach (as in backpack hip- hop) (Bradley & DuBois, 2010). According to McDonnell (1992), "Rap music is a symbol of hope, increased pride, and self-esteem at a time when any other evidence of the three has been eroded by prevailing social conditions" (as cited in Davis, 2011).

While some rap and hip-hop music and the artists can stand for good influences on the youth promoting self-expression, this genre of music also can have some extremely negative impact on the attitudes and behaviors of the young people. Recently "gangsta rap" music lyrics have been the greatest concern. In some cases, lyrics communicate potentially harmful health messages. Such lyrics are of special concern in today's environment, which pose unprecedented threats to the health and well-being of college student. The effects of these lyrics on youth language and behavior have been huge, influencing and damaging the minds of children, teens and young adults, making them more violent and aggressive.

Rap music has been at the center of concern about the potential harmful effects of violent media on youth social behavior. Statistics show that violent lyrics has increased with time. Studies show that gangsta rap is the number one predictor in regards to the increase of violent references within certain songs. Literature suggests that violence in rap music has increased in response to the complex interplay of changing social conditions such as the elevated levels of youth violence in the 1980s (Herd, 2009).

A study conducted by Armstrong (2001) examined 490 rap songs produced from 1987 to 1993, found that only a minority of the songs, 22 % expressed violent and misogynist (abusive) lyrics. Brutality and 'graphicness' in 'gangsta' rap lyrics, however, celebrates a 'rape culture. Songs with violent lyrics increase aggression related to thoughts and emotions and this effect is directly related to the violence of lyrics. A study published by the American

Psychological Association (APA) showed that violent songs led to more aggressive interpretations of ambiguously aggressive words, increased the relative speed with which people read aggressive vs. non-aggressive words, and increased the proportion of word fragments (such as hot) that were filled in to make aggressive words (such as hit). The violent songs increased feelings of hostility without provocation or threat, according to the authors, and this effect was not the result of differences in musical style, specific performing artist or arousal properties of the songs. Even the humorous violent songs increased aggressive thoughts (APA 2004).

Although we listen to Rap/Hip-Hop music, we believe that it has a negative impact on today's youth. The music is entertaining, but do people pay attention to the lyrics of rap and hip hop? The lyrics in this genre of music is provocative, usually talking about money, sex, or disrespecting women. The disrespect of women in music is something that needs to be stopped. The more the media portrays women in a negative light, or in a way that encourages stereotypes and gender roles, the more people will continue to disrespect women without consequences. Music plays a huge role in so many people's lives, so if they hear their favorite artist bashing women, they will feel that it's okay to do so. However, in many recent studies such as that of Weitzer (2009), it has been argued that popular music over the past thirty years contributes to a larger cultural resistance to feminism, in attempt to block progress toward gender equality and resuscitate male domination (as cited in Frazier, 2013). Adams and Fuller (2006) assert that rap music reduces women to objects "that are only good for sex and abuse, which "perpetuate ideas, values, beliefs, and stereotypes that debase women (Adam & Fuller, 2006).

Adolescents choose as a model a favorite rapper in this case which change their perceptions about world and their behaviors. The music is entertaining, but do people pay attention to the lyrics of rap and hip hop and does what they listen make them more violent toward women? Disrespecting of the women should be stopped because it has consequences. This study is important because the influence of violent/offensive lyrics results in belligerent actions from youth. Additionally, they influence opinion's which lead to actions. According to the literature, it seems not to have particularly negative impact on youth but generally it has consequences as adolescents have a tendency to become a real gangsta and naming in vulgar words women.

21

This work will explore the following research questions: 1) How do college students perceive and respond to the portrayal of women when exposed to abusive lyrics? 2) Do college students listen to abusive lyrics towards females and develop abusive behaviors toward females? 3) Are there gender differences on how college students interpret abusive messages found within popular rap/hip-hop songs?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultivation Theory suggests that when audiences are exposed to television or media overtime in this case to rap music, they can construct their perception of reality based on what they see on television or what they hear (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). Cultivation theory specifically looks at how the media influences perceptions of reality and states that the more a person is exposed to the media and the roles portrayed by artists, the more a person begins to believe that what they are exposed to is quiet normal. This theory forces researchers to confront three important methodological questions: (1) How should television exposure be measured? (2) How should cultivated perceptions be measured? and (3) What is the appropriate test for the relationship between exposure and perceptions? As cited in Potter 1994, the beginning point for answering each of these questions is to focus on the conceptualizations of the theory. This has been helpful up to a point for a conceptual critiques of the theory (Bryant, 1986, and Potter, 1993).

According to Cundiff (2013), the meanings underlying the songs' lyrical messages were analyzed through the lens of cultivation theory, which proposes that "when people are exposed to media content or other socialization agents, they gradually come to cultivate or adopt beliefs about the world that coincide with the images they have been viewing or messages they have been hearing" (as cited in Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994, p. 22). So, rap/hip-hop artist through their expressions and lyrics they provide a bad or a good example to them. The cultivation theory also suggests that the more they are exposed to this kind of music which contains elements such as violence, aggression, and sexuality, the more they accept the objectification about women. An overview of cultivation theory is illustrated in Figure 1.
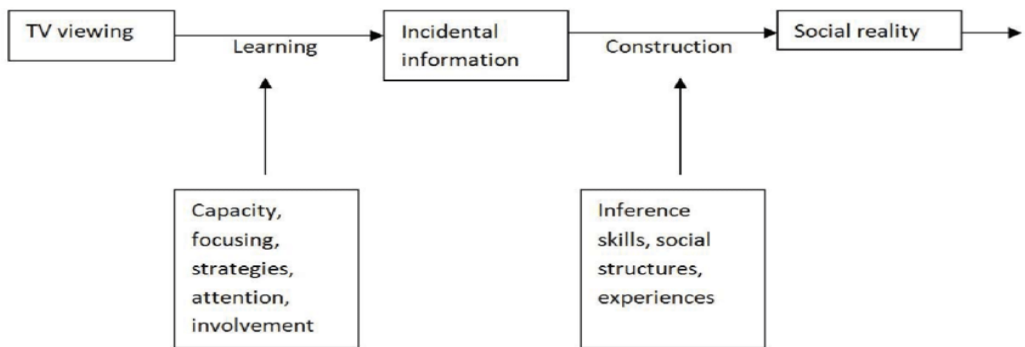
Figure 1. Cultivation Theory Overview (Hawkins & Pingree,1983).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Music and Youth

Music is present in everyday life and is available through the radio, internet, and new technologies, which allow youth to listen in different settings or even situations, alone or with friends (American Academy of Pediatrics 2009). For adolescents, music as pleasure also tend to be associated with experience of life. Music can turn them into emotional, reflective, celebrations, triumph, and so on. Moreover, music can communicate these emotions and control their mood. Another important point is that music influences the socializing process. For example, when they listen to the music, they feel less lonely. Also, in friendships it helps to maintain their relationships. In larger gatherings, such as parties, dances, or clubs, music reduces inhibitions, attracts attention and approval, provides topics for conversation, and encourages dancing. Music styles are defined as the selection of a certain type of music and a personal style to go with it, is one of the most powerful identifying markers in the school crowd structure. In high schools, usually they create subgroups according to their music preferences (Roberts, Christenson, & Gentile, 2003, p.153).

3.2. The effects of violent music and lyrics on behavior

Music for a large number of people's lives can have various emotional effects. Related to the emotional effects, there may also have physiological effects. For example, heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration rate are known to increase with arousing music. Yet, we don't know which aspects of music have the largest effect on emotional and the physiological state, but a few studies have found that it depends on the type of music. Lyrics that individuals are exposed to are considered as they may have an emotional response from music which contain happiness and sadness. As they listen to a song that contains lyrics with happines or sadness, they feel happy or sad (Stumbras, Sullivan, Barthakur, Jilot, Robertson, 2013). Parents often are unaware of the lyrics to which their children listen to because of the increasing use of downloaded music and headphones. Research on popular music has explored its effects on schoolwork, social interactions, mood and affection, and particularly behavior. The effect that popular music has on children's and adolescents' behavior and emotions is of paramount concern. Lyrics have become more explicit in their references to drugs, sex, and violence over the years, particular certain genres. A teenager's preference for certain types of music could be correlated or associated with certain behaviors. As with popular music, the perception and the effect of music-video messages are important, because research has reported that exposure to violence, sexual messages, sexual stereotypes, and use of substances of abuse in music videos might produce significant changes in behaviors and attitudes of young viewers (AAP, 2009). Songs with violent lyrics increase aggression related to thoughts and emotions and this effect is directly related to the violence of lyrics according to a study published in APA (2004).

In a study conducted by Anderson and Carnage (2003), five experiments examined results of songs with violent lyrics on aggressive thoughts and hostile emotions. Experiment 1, 3, 4 and 5 proved that college students who listened a violent song felt more hostile than individuals who listened a similar but nonviolent song. Experiments 2-5 proved a similar growth in aggressive thoughts. These effects were replicated across songs and song kinds (e.g., rock, humorous, non-humorous). Experiments 3-5 also demonstrated that trait hostility changed positively related to kingdom

hostility, however did not moderate the song lyric effects. Discussion focuses on the potential function of lyric content on aggression in brief-term, in relation to emotions and other media violence, development of aggressive personality, differences among lengthy-term and short-term effects. Results showed that violent songs led to more aggressive interpretations of ambiguously aggressive words, increased the relative speed with which people read aggressive vs. nonaggressive words (Anderson & Carnage, 2003, p. 960-971). There is a debate about media effects on youth. Media include: newspapers, televisions, internet, magazines radio and so on.   In a survey that was conducted in junior high school and senior high school, students were asked what media they would choose to take with them if they were stranded on a desert island. They were allowed to nominate a first, second, and third choice including TV, a set of books, video games, computer, newspapers, VCR and videotapes, magazines, radio, and music recordings and the means to play them. Because radio and music recordings include music, most of the choices where about music. Music is very important for youth. This also can be seen from their amount of listening music. Often we underestimate the amount of listening music of youth. Music's tendency to slip between foreground and background raises questions about what kind of "listening" should be counted as true exposure. Background listening out to be included and for those who might disagree we offer this challenge "background" music when youth are studying, chatting, or doing chores and observe their responses. Amount of listening is not uniform across all groups of youth. First, age makes a big difference: adolescents devote more time to music than school age children, and older adolescents devote more time to music than younger adolescents.

There is a lot of criticism about the lyrics that emphasizes negatives such as violence, racism, misogyny, suicide, substance abuse and so on. It is hard to accept but music has become aggressive and is dangerous for interpretations of young people as much as for adults. There have been few experimental studies of the effects of violent music lyrics on listeners (Roberts, Christenson & Gentile, 2003, p.153).

3.3. Rap/Hip-hop Music and Violent lyrics

Rap music has become an important part of generation and, consequently, is currently a central element in several programs that serve youth. Understanding attitudes towards and perceptions of popular music will be a vital step in informing varied approaches to incorporating popular music into programs aimed toward youth (Tyson, 2005, pp. 59-82). Violence is a problem for youth and rap is in the centre of the concern about harmful effects of violent or misogyny lyrics. This article explores the role of converting images of drug use in rap music from the 1970s to the 1990s. A sample of 341 rap music lyrics have been coded for drug mentions, behaviours and contexts; drug attitudes and consequences; and track genres. The article examines ability factors of the increasing awareness on drug use rap track which includes the rise of the drug struggle; modifications inside the drug use conduct of rappers and listeners, rise of gangster rap and different rap music genres, and converting social images of drugs in American society (Herd, 2009 p.395-406). The impact of rap music on college undergraduate student's reckless behaviour and compare the difference in levels of reckless behaviour participated in by listeners of rap music versus three other genres when engaging in driving over 80 mph (miles per hour), driving greater than 20 mph over the speed limit, and having sex without contraception. Rap music and the effect it has on an individual's behaviour will always draw criticism. However, just as there is rap music that glorifies violence, drug use, reckless behaviour, there is also rap music that sends a positive message and denounces violence, drug use, casual sex, and reckless behaviour. The study showed that rap music's had an effect on marijuana use, and violence or aggressive behaviour towards someone (Stubbs, 2004). Early rap studies that have been conducted, discuss some of the more recent rap investigations that have been dominated by negative effects investigations. They argue that the suspicion of negative effects and stereotyping of African-Americans have driven support for censorship of this musical genre. Although psychologists and lay critics have focused on the potential negative effects of rap music, the current chapter provides evidence that the effects are not all negative and that rap music audiences may use their culture and "agency" to empower themselves (Dixon & Brooks, 2002 p. 106-116).

3.4. Rap/Hip-Hop Music and Portrayal of Females: Misogyny

Music has been a way to interpret social expressions like triumph and hope. Regardless of this, music can stimulate the mind and soul and is a reflection of the cultural and political environment from which it is. Rap music has been a cultural expression of urban African- American youth in Bronx, New York, in the late 1970s. What is misogyny? It generally is hatred against woman that objectify them and specifically makes men the owner in a very major way. Furthermore, misogyny revels in different forms are dictated by class, wealth, education, race, religion and other factors, but its chief characteristic is its pervasiveness. In this case women are taken as objects.

Misogyny in gangsta rap is the advancement, glamorization, bolster, humanization, legitimization, or standardization of abusive thoughts regarding lady jects which denigrate them. Not only as a gender but considering also values, beliefs, and stereotyping of women. This misogyny has been accepted by music industry and aired in radios, shows, or music videos. There seem to be a trend from music artist to the misogyny theme (Adams & Fuller, 2006, p.939). Standard misogynistic themes in rap music may be illustrated via naming and shaming sexual objectification mistrust of women legitimating violence and prostitution and pimping. Rap music has a popularity for being misogynistic but surprisingly very few studies have systematically investigated this measurement of the music (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). A study that was conducted to understand perceptions of misogyny in youths ages 18 to 24 regarding hip-hop and rap music where the participants were mostly African-Americans, the findings showed that the listening habits and age are important to consider when examining youth's views of misogynistic content in hip-hop and rap music. The younger the youth, the more they listened. This is important in that it appears that older youth listened less and had less-positive reactions to the misogynistic lyrics. This may imply that as youth matures, they may re-examine their opinions about hip-hop and rap (Gourdine & Lemons, 2011).

Nowadays, in song and famous lifestyle, this backlash offers a thrilling question as to the prevalence that topics of raunchiness and hyper-sexuality have within famous track. For the leisure industry, the reality remains that sex sells; there is a name for bodies, mainly female our bodies, to be on show to

increase file sales and other revenue streams, whether that of the artist or fashions and dancers. Women absolutely remain the item of sexual desire, the selling point, and the figures on exhibition. Music plays a significant role in our lives and those of age 14 and up are active listeners. Music is shown from MTV and other like YouTube. But the performance in music videos is objectification of women (Frazier, 2013). Armstrong (2001), conducted a content analysis of 490 rap songs from 1987 to 1993, in which 22% contained lyrics featuring violence against women including assault, rape, and murder. His study classified rap songs into different categories in which rappers either pride themselves on sex acts appearing to harm women, justify other acts of violence, warn women who challenge male domination that they will be assaulted, and/or seem to invite male violence against women (Armstrong 2001). Results indicate that men exposed to misogynistic rap music endorsed significantly greater acceptance of violence towards women than those in the non-violent/control condition. Also, men with a high level of hostility towards women endorsed significantly greater acceptance of violence towards women, a significantly greater acceptance of rape myths and endorsed significantly more positive attitudes towards violence than low hostile men. Although no interaction effects were found between music condition and hostility level, this study provides empirical evidence of the potential deleterious influence of exposure to misogynistic rap music lyrics on men's acceptance of violence towards women (Jeffries, 2000).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Sample

The participants were undergraduate students at University College "Beder" and who provided information about their perceptions of rap hip-hop music, how they were influenced by the lyrics of rap/hip-hop music, and how they saw the abuse of portrayal of female in the lyrics of this genre. The total number of participants were $N = 80$ college students aged from 18-21 years old studying in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year of their undergraduate studies. In total, there were $N = 35$ males (42.7%) and $N = 47$ females (57.3%).

4.2. Instrument/Measurement tool

In this study, an online questionnaire was used to obtain audience perceptions and attitudes. The items of survey were on a Likert type scale (from 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*) used to measure the statements about rap/hip-hop music. The questionnaire consisted of 14 items. The first three questions were about demographic data. In the survey, there were included 10 offensive songs about the portrayal of women and items consisted of options (1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Very offensive*) used to measure negative attitudes on offensive rap/hip-music lyrics about the portrayal of the woman. Moreover, there were used 10 violent songs with option such as (1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Very violent*) to measure negative attitudes on violent hip/hop music lyrics (Cundiff, 2013).

4.3. Data collection

The questionnaires were distributed online on google forms and they were sent via email to each student who submitted them by email. The original version of the questionnaire was in English and it was translated in Albanian. Participants were told about the aim of the study and where these data were going to be used. They were assured about the anonymity and confidentiality of the data.

4.4. Design approach

The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency distributions and descriptive analyses were used to analyze negative attitudes about rap/hip-hop music lyrics and negative attitudes on offensive rap/hip-music lyrics about the portrayal of the woman.

4.5. Measures

Students' attitudes about rap/hip-hop music lyrics. This measure was assessed by asking respondents *"How often do you listen to rap/hip-hop music?"* The items were on a Likert type Scale (1= *very frequently* to 5= *never*). The respondents reported attention by listening rap/hip-hop music and this composed into three categories (1 = *the instrumental affects* to 3 = *both equally*).

     Students' attitudes on offensive rap/hip-music lyrics about the portrayal of the woman. This measure was assessed by asking *''Which of the following do you find most offensive in rap / hip hop songs containing abusive lyrics?''* The items were on a Likert type Scale (1 = *Derogatory naming and shaming of the women* and 4 = *None of the above*). Then, they were asked *"How offensive about the portrayal of women you feel the following songs ar*e" (1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *very offensive*).

5. RESULTS

     The data were analyzed by using SPSS 21.0. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample. When the students were asked about how frequently they listen to rap/hip-hop music lyrics, the majority of the them 29.3% (24 students) responded that they listen sometimes to rap/hip-music. Around 24.4% (20 students) responded that they frequently listen rap/hip-hop music. About 24.4 % of the total students (15 students) responded that they listen very frequently and at the same percentage 24.4% rarely listen to rap/hip-hop music. The smallest percentage of the total students 9.8 % (8 students) responded that they never listen to rap/hip-hop music as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. How frequently do students listen to rap/hip-hop music lyrics?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very frequently		
	Frequently		
	Sometimes		
	Rarely		
	Never		

Table 2. What kind of attitudes do college students develop about rap/hip-hop music lyrics?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Negative		
	Positive		
	Neutral		

From the statistics based on Table 2., it is revealed that most of the students (53.7%, n = 44 students) develop neutral attitudes toward rap/hip-hop music About 26.8% (22 students) develop negative attitudes toward rap/hip-hop music. Meanwhile, 19.5% (16 out students) develop positive attitudes toward rap/hip-hop music.

Table 3. Do you feel that explicit rap/hip-hop songs are more offensive to women or men?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male		
	Female		
	Equally offensive to both		

As shown in Table 3., the results claim that 48.8% of the participants, where 19.5% of male participants and 31.7% of female participants think that rap/hip-hop music is equally offensive to both.

Table 4. Which of the following do you find most offensive in rap / hip hop songs containing abusive lyrics?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Derogatory naming and shaming of the women		
	Legitimation of violence against women		
	Sexual Objectification of women		
	None of the above		

Descriptive analysis shown in Table 4. Explains that 52.4% (43 students) students find the sexual objectification of women as most offensive in abusive lyrics about the portrayal of females.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study presented the recent literature regarding audience perceptions about rap/hip-hop music lyrics which contain violence and are offensive toward portrayal of the females. Moreover, it provided a broad picture of research findings related to this issue, which helped us to extend our understanding about effects of violent music and lyrics on behavior.

According to the results which tested the first hypothesis related to students' attitudes about rap/hip-hop music lyrics, the majority of college students responded as neutral about their attitudes toward rap/hip-hop music. The second hypothesis consisted of students' attitudes on offensive rap/hip-music lyrics about the portrayal of the women, it appears that they see rap music as offensive not only for females but also for males. According to the results, mostly offensive in lyrics about the portrayal of women they see sexual objectification of women. So, students develop neutral thoughts about portrayal of females in rap/hip-hop music lyrics. The third hypothesis which was focused on gender differences of college students about their perceived attitudes on offensive rap/hip-hop music lyrics about the portrayal of women. There were no gender differences about the reported lyrics of the songs which contain violence and abusive lyrics about the portrayal of women.

Regarding the limitations of this study, there was a low number of participants attending this study though it was limited to only one institution. The study was limited also to its use of a quantitative design only, while a qualitative design could offer a broader spectrum of students' attitudes and perceptions about rap/hip-hop music lyrics and how they influence the portrayal of women by using interviews.

Youth are more exposed toward music especially adolescents. Every genre of music can negatively influence their perceptions and their behaviors but as stated to studies it is rap/hip-hop music and heavy metal. According to the literature, rap/hip-music has moderate effects. The younger the youth, the more they listen. This is important in that it appears that older youths listened less and had less-positive reactions to the lyrics (Gourdine & Lemons, 2011). Theory suggests that people create their perceptions of reality based on what they hear and see. Rap/hip-hop may be the largest cultural force. It has an impact on different areas like: art, politics, news, sports, technology and so on. Therefore, its influence is so massive nowadays.

This study concluded that students over 18 years of age were more mature and the rap/hip-hop music lyrics do not have a major impact on the portrayal of women and the use of violence. They do not see the singers of this genre as role models to take the example but rather see music only as a tool to get satisfaction. Also, both male and female participants share the same view that singers abuse with the female portrait in their lyrics.

These findings have implications for both existing and future research. This work is grounded in the assumption that hip-hop as a genre is negative with regard to the given message. Findings of this study overwhelmingly contravene that assumption. Finally, it was interesting to find out that students do not develop negative attitudes but rather are more neutral on this.

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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LENIENT TEACHERS FOSTERING POSITIVE PERSONALITIES TOWARD THE STUDENTS

Abstract

The first and foremost role of the teachers appears as a transferor of knowledge and information. But more than that, they reflect a personality in terms of behavioral aspects, since behaviors are being learned through practice and the teachers as role models fulfill their duties. A certain characteristic of personality will influence the students and they are likely to reflect the desired characteristics they learned from the teachers throughout their learning process. But what kind of teachers might reflect these characteristics? The lenient teachers are able to engender role models, since these respective teachers give importance to both learning materials and personality. Teachers play important role in order to make the lesson happen with the aid of their personal approaches/thoughts through which intended learning occurs. Lenient teachers are aware of their responsibility and as stated by (Strict Teacher Vs Lenient Teacher); teachers with their personal aids can help students gain interest towards their study, the students are likely to gain more confident and also they are likely to demonstrate brilliant personalities. Because these valuable traits, the students are able to study

effectively and they can show successful performance in the future and also the students might gain the characteristics of "humor, collaboration, and geniality". As research methodology, literature review was utilized in this educational study. Therefore, the students firstly "prefer lenient teachers because they're easier to get along with and to talk to during class" and secondly "another benefit the lenient teacher's comfortable environment affords is greater student participation in class discussion. This promotes participation and activeness" and also, "for some students they learn better without thinking of all the academic stress placed on them through the school day."

Keywords*: lenient teacher, personalities, characteristics, participation, traits, responsibility*

1. Introduction

The role of the teachers in teaching/learning always appears very significant. But the teacher`s role is not only making the students masters of a particular subject but also they should reflect a kind of personality through which the respective students are counselled as stated by Lanier (1997), "as they grow and mature -- helping them integrate their social, emotional, and intellectual growth -- so the union of these sometimes separate dimensions yields the abilities to seek, understand, and use knowledge" in order to make better decisions for individual lives and any possible contribution to their respective society (Lanier, 1997), since the teachers are known as role models in every nation.

On the one hand, Lanier (1997) adds that the "teachers are reinventing themselves and their occupation to better serve schools and students" and on the other hand, "the most respected teachers have discovered how to make students passionate participants in the instructional process by providing project-based, participatory, educational adventures" But what kind of teachers might be most respected in schools?

Of necessity the students imitate their teacher's actions, since children always follow suit the example of adults. It might be teacher`s positive or negative action on a daily basis. Sometimes teachers might reflect angry behavior, the next day they can show negative reactions that can impair the efficiency of the students (Roles of a Teacher).

Therefore, teachers are in need of reflecting prosocial behaviors and in this regard, they are kept responsible for their behaviors and manners in the classroom. They are best known for their role in terms of building a warm atmosphere, arranging the tone of the classroom, monitoring and nurturing the respective students and also considering many other pedagogical roles of themselves for positive outcomes of the lesson (Roles of a Teacher).

1.1. Responsibilities of the teacher

Teachers in general have a lot of responsibilities; they should find ways for increasing the curiosity of the students towards learning materials. They should create an atmosphere where the respective students will feel free to ask questions, and also the students can easily communicate with the

teachers, and the students will not be afraid discussing any topic they like to know. Because the teachers aim to stimulate students` interest towards learning materials. Like that, the students are likely to reach learning outcomes of the particular lesson. In this regard, the following characteristics of the teachers are likely to contribute to the students` learning the lessons fruitfully and manners of the respective teachers in a positive fashion as a role model.

1.2. Tolerance of the teacher

Lenient teachers are tolerant. For that reason, students are likely to see the class as a safe environment where they can easily communicate with each other/teachers and they can easily express their feelings and thoughts, since tolerance opens ways for discussing any topic they like to share in the classroom. Also, tolerance engenders empathy through which the students put themselves in the position of their friends/teachers and treat each other accordingly.

1.3. Mildness of the teacher

Lenient teachers are mild. Therefore, the respective students are likely to be inoffensive in their behaviors and manners in the classroom that can create a congenial atmosphere for feeling free to ask any questions they are interested to know. Because there is a role model that reflects how to be mild towards each other.

1.4. Geniality of the teacher

Lenient teachers are genial. Because geniality can create an enjoyable class where the students will like learning and geniality can cause learning appetency in students through which the students increase their desires towards learning. The more students enjoy the lesson the more they might show desires for learning.

1.5. Compassion of the teacher

Lenient teachers are compassionate. In this endeavor, compassion reflects understanding of the feelings of others and showing the feelings of how much you are concerned about them. Through compassion, compassionate teachers

demonstrate their actions how to be compassionate in manners and behavior towards students. Therefore, the students are likely to be more open in order to understand the world around them (Alrubail, 2015).

1.6. Permissiveness of the teacher

Lenient teachers are permissive. This approach supports student-centered teaching, since the lenient teachers "are focused on letting the students run the show. The students choose what and how to learn, and are supported in their learning by the teacher. But the ultimate decisions about learning are made by the students" (Boyd, (n.d.)).

1.7. Easygoingness of the teacher

Lenient teachers are easygoing. With the aid of easygoing nature, the lenient teachers can fully support their students' trough planning clear expectations and fulfilling them in the class every day. So that, the respective students will get accustomed to follow relevant actions and behaviors which are likely to become second nature to them. Secondly, teachers consider clear, concise, and easily understandable rules and regulations in order to manage the class simply and easily, since number of rules might vary. After considering high expectations and well-defined classroom rules, teacher need to consider consistency for better classroom management. Because, "consistency is key to creating a learning environment that fosters academic success" (3 Ways to Be Firm).

1.8. Courtesy of the teacher

Courtesy opens ways for learning a lot of polite behaviors, since it gives a comprehensive outlook to the students to see the world through which the students learn to respect themselves and as mentioned in (Why's and How's of Teaching); "thus develop a higher self-esteem and happier, healthier relationships with others". Also, courtesy is inseparable friend of virtue and one pays the way for the latter. Therefore, it is better to instill courtesy in students during childhood and the lenient teacher can teach that knowingly or unknowingly, since courtesy is one of the characteristics of lenient teacher.

1.9. Other distinct characteristics of the lenient teachers

First and foremost, it is better to know several distinct characteristics of lenient teachers. Firstly; as stated by Fisk (2017); comfortability makes the students "feel comfortable enough to be vulnerable, work through their confusion with me, and ask any questions they have (especially when they think they're 'stupid questions')."

Student priorities depend on their personal interest and they might show interest towards other course but as mentioned by Fisk (2017); the lenient teachers never "take that as an attack on (them) as a teacher or a person" this is just personal preference of the students". Regarding mindful grading, the lenient teachers have a comprehensive outlook on learning process and Fisk (2017) adds that their only "goal is for the students to learn and grow, not to be worried about whether they're going to get enough points to pass."

More than that, accounting for unknown, Fisk (2017) gives emphasis on that the lenient teacher does not blame for wrongdoing/wrong going but focuses on the learning process positively, since "there's no way for (us) to know exactly why some of my students might not be performing as well as (we) wish they would, but as a teacher it's (our) responsibility to support them in their learning regardless."

2. CONCLUSION

Teachers are responsible for teaching lessons and manners. Of necessity they form a personality for students and therefore become a role model to them, since they are not just responsible for teaching knowledge and information. Lenient teachers fulfill a duty of role model in practice. They help students in terms of their social, emotional, and intellectual growth. For the first two, they help through role modelling and for the latter they boost the students through teaching knowledge and information. Like this, the lenient teachers equip the students with due knowledge and manners in order to make them have valuable personal characteristics for contributing to the respective society.

Lenient teachers mainly focus on how to promote actively participating of their students and what to do in this endeavor for the sake better learning? And also the respective teachers show an embodiment of lenient traits. If students like this personality, they will try to form leniency

towards others and acquire other characteristics such as; tolerance, mildness, geniality and etc. from the particular lenient teacher as well.

Lenient teachers show themselves as touchable personality through which students find themselves in a congenial atmosphere where they can easily communicate with each other, participate in learning process, and discuss any topic they would like to know. Because geniality can solve many problems in the class and decrease academic stress. As a last, lenient teachers are those who promote participation and activeness of the particular students.

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THEORETICAL VIEWS ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN

Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the main theories of language development. The main focus of this paper is the language development of children, including various language elements. In this study, four main theories of language development were discussed: nativist, behaviorist, constructivist, and interactionist. Nativist theory is based on the concept of innate ability of children to learn the language. While, behaviorist theory has at its center the learning through behavior, imitation as well as practice of habits. Instead, constructivist theorists believe that children are actively involved in building their knowledge according to the impacts that the environment exerts on them. Besides, interactionist theory combines the biological readiness of children to learn their language and their language experiences in their environment to enable language development. These are the main theories faced by linguists as they strive to understand the complex process of language acquisition and development.

Keywords: *language, nativist, behaviorist, constructivist, interactionist, theory children.*

1. Introduction

Individual's development is a complex process that begins in the prenatal period and continues throughout its living. Development takes place in several dimensions such as physical development, cognitive development, perceptual development, social development, linguistic development, etc. All these dimensions are interlinked and help one another develop. Different development theorists over the years have supported nature or growth as the main factors influencing the development process. Nature is considered as inherited genetic trend for development and on the other hand, growth which includes environmental conditions that influence development. Those who believe in natural inclinations tend to expect children to reach certain stages of development at the same time because of maturity. By contrast, those who believe in environmental enhancement emphasize external environmental impacts on the individual (Sigelman & Rider, 2009, p. 34).

At the same time, different theorists have given different thoughts on how the child learns the language, speaks, and expresses, or how he links language knowledge with cognitive experiences during expression. They have provided various explanations regarding the mental mechanisms that act when expressing themselves through language. Numerous studies have highlighted the active role of parents, teachers, schools, and the social and cultural environment in the development of language and communication for children of 0-6 years (Gleason & Ratner, 2009). According to Miller, development theories "describe changes over time in one or more areas of behavior or psychological activity such as thought, language, social behavior, or perception" (Miller, 2009). There are different ideas on how children learn to speak and understand the language. Researchers continue to study how this amazing process takes place so quickly in the early years of life.

Through this paper we can find answers to the following questions:

1. Which are the main theories of language development in children?

2. How does the language development in children occur according to each theory?

3. Which are some factors that impact the language development in children?

2.   Literature Review
2.1. Language

Language is the main means of communication and one of the main elements that affect, in one way or another, every aspect of life and the development of the individual. It is influenced by many external and internal factors. Some external factors are the environment and social activity, school activity, culture to which it belongs, reading literary and scientific texts, learning foreign languages and knowledge of other cultures (Gleason & Ratner, 2009). Additionally, it is influenced by internal factors such as linguistic, mathematical, emotional intelligence, etc. (Gleason & Ratner, 2009). Imitation and reinforcement play an important role in language development as well. Undoubtedly, it is not incidental that children speak the same language as their parents and the dialect and the emphasis they are talking about.

Language and speech are constantly evolving and changing depending on how life experiences are. They begin to appear early in the infancy, about the age of 3 to 6 months, when the sound and the first string sounds and develop at a very rapid pace up to the age of 6 when the child is capable of correctly pronouncing the sounds of the language he speaks. At age 18, the child gains the vocabulary momentum and in 2 years he builds up a substantial vocabulary of about 200-300 words and has begun to form two-word sentences (Nadelman, 2004). The vocabulary and sentence structure of the child is enriched day by day through his social activity and cognitive capacity. The child is accustomed to correctly pronounce the sounds of the language he hears and speaks. It also develops syntactic skills, the formation of sentences and meaningful and linguistically correct texts. There are two periods in language development: the shortest one that prepares nerve pathways and central mechanisms that need to connect the sensory paths with the motions and one longer, determined by high psychic activities expressed through the mechanisms pre-formed language (Montessori, 1967). The entire pre-school period is what will determine the child's academic future.

2.2. Nativist Theory of Language Development

Chomsky's nativist theory of language is based on the concept of innate ability to learn the language, and the stream was called nativism. We do not speak the same language and the rules for grammar are not the same for all languages, then how can we have a universal grammar? We learn the

rules system that specifies the sound-sense relationship. Chomsky believed that every language has some basic principles of language that have created nerve circles in the brain (Chomsky, 2006) like basic principles that enable the functioning of solid parts of a computer. Just as computer equipment can accept different types of programs, the brain language structure can process the specific characteristics of many different languages. This is what we call "grammar" or in more technical terms "universal grammar" of the language (Chomsky, 2006). Nativists support the idea that spoken language is an entirely biological, human, and innate attribute. From a native perspective, input plays a minimal role in developing the child's language skills. According to them, it is argued that:

"input for the child is an inadequate database to promote the language structure;
children need relatively little exposure to input to promote the language structure; and
children should be equipped with a born linguistic knowledge so that they can build the language" (Hoff & Shatz, 2008).

Noam Chomsky examined issues related to language learning from a rational perspective. He proposed that language consists of two elements, "competence which is the system of rules that is owned by a native speaker, language knowledge and performance which is considered as the actual language use by the speaker, multiple verbal behaviors with all instability and mistakes" (Chomsky, 2006). From Chomsky's point of view, the role of the linguist is to study linguistic competence. He discerned the superficial structure of the sentence from what lies beneath it, the deep structure (Chomsky, 2006). This was the concept of generative transformative grammar.

2.3. Behaviorist Theory of Language Development

On the other hand, behaviorism is the flow that has at its center the learning through behavior, imitation, and practice of habits. Skinner tried to develop the classical behaviorism model of language learning in his famous book "Verbal Behavior" (Skinner, 1957). According to Skinner, "a child acquires verbal behavior when relatively unmodified, selectively reinforced vocalizations gradually take forms that produce the appropriate consequences in a given verbal community" (Skinner, 1957, p. 31). Also, according to Skinner, language is formed through operative conditioning or reinforcement.

As a representative of the behavioristic perspective, Skinner rejected the language concept (*langue*) by considering it as an abstract concept and determined that the only concept that can be scientifically examined is the word (*parole*) (Noam & Skinner, 1959). He asserted that language development is entirely behavioral – a concept of development that operates in the verbal laboratory. According to him, language is taught only through imitation, conditionality and reinforcements given by parents and extensive contact with the environment (Noam & Skinner, 1959). Thus, children gradually create a "verbal repertoire".

Moreover, according to Skinner, language is formed through operative conditioning or reinforcement. When a parent or primary guard reacts to baby's stuttering with a smile or vocalization, children continue to stutter even more. Considering reinforcement as an important element that increases the likelihood of recurring behavior, this theory supports the fact that parents reinforce language development in many ways. In line with this theory, studies have shown that as much as a mother responds to her baby's vocalizations, the sooner they will learn the language (O'Grady, 2005; Oates & Grayson, 2004).

The arguments against behaviorist dynamics focus mainly on the question of whether the child develops the ability to use and recognize grammatical constructs, and if grammatical mistakes are not corrected by parents, then how is the grammatical competence and meaning understood? (MacCorquodale, 1970). It is important to emphasize the fact that children are able to create distinctive sentences and use words in contexts different from those in which they are exposed. In this way, it should be the level of intelligence that is involved in the use and application of these constructs (Sundberg & Michael, 2001).

Some parents pay less attention to the vocalizations of their children, who continue to develop language despite this (Chomsky's point of view). Formation in the way presented by Skinner is a long process, while a child's linguistic development especially during the second and third year of life is quick.

2.4. Constructivist Theory of Language Development

While the behaviorist approach centers completely around the effect of the child's learning condition (without perceiving biological or hereditary capacities or inclination to gain proficiency with the language abilities) and

native approach centers around local, hereditary learning abilities (without perceiving the effect of natural components or social), the constructivist approach combines both of these theoretical components. Notwithstanding, there are diverse perspectives on language learning under this stream. Some constructivist scholars perceive that the capacity to create syntactic learning gets from the manner in which the human personality dissects and sorts out data and isn't really conceived. What constitutes the constructivists is the idea that children are actively involved in building their knowledge according to the impacts that the environment exerts on them.

Piaget, as a biologist-oriented constructivist, claimed that children develop skills under a predetermined framework. As the child passes to the next stage of development, biologically determined, he is ready to learn the other concept at each point of cognitive conflict (raised by the child's experience) either through assimilation of information in the existing framework or accommodation of information in a scheme of new. Piaget believed that language is a representative system that does not develop beyond self-centered speech until the child enters the stage of concrete operations around the age of seven (Singer & Revenson, 1996, pp. 58-60).

In Piaget's theory, egocentrism can be explained as an obstacle that hampers the logical thinking of the child. He explained that egocentrism is related to language learning, in the quality of inner speech. Egocentrism can take different forms at different levels of development but is characterized by a lack of differentiation in thought between itself as an object and other objects (Heo, Han, Koch, & Aydin, 2011). In this theory, it is shown that a child at the preoperational stage is initially unable to differentiate between the thoughts of others and their own opinions. Egocentrism, differentiation, and interaction are related to one another and these egocentric thoughts of the child at a preoperational stage will be reduced by the increase of interactions and cognitive development, while differential thinking increases in the stages of concrete and formal operations of children (Heo, Han, Koch, & Aydin, 2011).

Piaget emphasizes that the relationship between logic and language actually has the opposite of what Chomsky proposes. According to Chomsky, language is based on the essence of reason and logic is not derived from it. Chomsky even goes beyond saying that this essence of reason is born. In contrast, although Piaget admits that the structures present in a child of 14 to 16 months are the intellectual bases on which the language is developed, he denies that these structures are born. He claims that the language does not appear until the completion of the sensorimotor intelligence stage (Piaget,

1970). Since the last phase of the sensorimotor period further, the child is able to imitate certain words and attribute them a vague sense, but the systematic appropriation of the language does not start until the end of the second year (Piaget, 1970). According to Piaget, speaking is gained as soon as symbols are placed because the use of signs, such as symbols, includes a skill that is brand new in terms of sensorimotor behavior and consists in rendering a thing through something else (Piaget, 1970).

2.5. Interactionist Theory of Language Development

The other approach combining nativism and behaviorism as well as constructivism is interactionism. According to this approach, the biological readiness of children to learn the language and their language experiences in their environment unite to enable linguistic development. These theorists believe that it is simultaneously necessary for the child to develop and practice language (Miller, 2009, pp. 427-428).

Interactionism or interaction means that language is created by social interactions, from the interaction of the child with the adults. One of the representatives of this approach is Lev Vygotsky. In many cases in communication, especially with younger children, adults simplify the language by restricting it, with the justification to become more understandable to children. However, studies have shown that such an approach is wrong because children learn to speak the language they hear (O'Grady, 2005; Oates & Grayson, 2004). So, they learn the language by imitating it.

According to Vygotsky, linguistic development passes to an internal stage where the child first observes interaction among other people and records the language in the verbal memory (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 86). According to him, the child develops conjunctions and language as a result of social interaction with others and greater knowledge of activities that have specific goals. Vygotsky states that the development of thought is determined by language, for example by the linguistic means of thought and by the socio-cultural experiences of the child (Vygotsky, 1986). Therefore, verbal thought is not an innate natural form of behavior but is determined by the historical-cultural process and has specific laws and features that cannot be found in the natural forms of thought and speech (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 94).

To reiterate the socio-cultural elements, the child will have to imitate the adults and the behaviors they observe around. To imitate, however, it is

imperative to have the ability to move from something known to something new. Vygotsky says that every child can do much with the help of adults but within the limits set by the development stage. If an imitative ability would have no limit, each child would be able to solve problems without the help of adults. But, being not the case, the child is only successful in solving problems that are of the same difficulty level as they could only solve (Vygotsky, 1986, pp. 187-188). Lev Vygotsky thinks that in the beginning, language and thought are developed independently. Thinking is rooted in the paramilitary stage, while language and speech have the roots in the paralyzing stage. After 2 years of age, language and thinking are closely related, and thinking becomes more verbal and the language gains the skills to control behavior.

3. Methodology

The research methodology used in social sciences and more specifically in the field of language acquisition can have quantitative and qualitative character which is conditioned by the data collected and the sample. In general, field scholars prefer one way or another depending on the advantages and disadvantages that each of them carries. For the realization of this paper I have used two main methods: descriptive and analytical research. The descriptive and analytical research method is applied throughout the paper. The methods have been selected depending on the object and purpose of the work, the issue and the goals addressed in it. Mostly the paper is focused on theoretical literature, derived from different sources, always based on the goals and objectives of the study. The literature review through the theoretical materials has helped us to describe, analyze and interpret the acquired material.

4. Results

This article briefly addressed the views of the four main theories of language development in children. Chomsky's native approach supports the idea that children have an inborn ability to learn a language while the behaviorist approach is based on learning through behavior, imitation, and practice of habits. Further, the constructivist approach combines elements from both of these theories and supports the idea of complex mental representations learned through the interactions of the child with the world.

Lastly, the interactionism that combines nativism and behaviorism, as well as constructivism, explains that language is mainly developed through the interaction of the child with the cultural and linguistic system.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Language is a complex network of knowledge and coordinated movements despite the fact that it is being often considered a skill. It allows individuals to communicate with each other by talking and listening. To assess how this complex ability is taught, researchers nowadays unite the natural approach to the approach of self-esteem, which still leaves place for questioning in another course of linguistic development. Practice, language use, imitating, and correcting mistakes whenever a child interacts with adults provide language acquisition in all its components. Chomsky based his theory with respect to the idea of natural capacity of people to gain proficiency with the language. As indicated by him, language learning is naturally and hereditarily pre-customized, and does not rely upon the child's intellectual capacities or environmental motivating forces. Behaviorism is the stream that has at its center the learning through behavior, imitation as well as practice of habits. According to Skinner, "a child acquires verbal behavior when relatively unmodified, selectively reinforced vocalizations gradually take forms that produce the appropriate consequences in a given verbal community" (Skinner, 1957, p. 31). Constructivist theorists believe that children are actively involved in building their knowledge according to the impacts that the environment exerts on them. According to interactionism, the biological readiness of children to learn their language and their language experiences in their environment merge to enable linguistic development. The aim of this paper was to present the dilemmas faced by the researchers who attempt to explore the language acquisition in children. A few parts of language advancement and acquisition are hard to be clarified. For example, it is hard to clarify how children map significance to words as well as how grammatical structures are formed. Scholars trust that language acquisition is a consequence of nature, but on the other hand, different studies mentioned above have demonstrated that language isn't just impersonation, yet without a syntactic structure, child will create the structure. Listening is not enough for language learning, interaction is also needed. The theories mentioned in this work are the main theories faced by linguists as they strive to understand the complex process of language acquisition.

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DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR AFFECTS LEARNING PROCESS: "A CASE STUDY OF BESNIK SYKJA HIGH SCHOOL"

Abstract

The education system, not only in Albania but also in other countries, represents different problems that need interventions and improvement, starting from the legislation for these kinds of problems, to its implementation. One aspect of it is also the disruptive behavior phenomenon that occurs in the classroom. This study tends to investigate exactly for the frequency of this phenomenon, its negative influence that affects the teaching and learning process, gender differences if there are any, and the importance that effective classroom management has on reducing and improving the situation. For this reason, to have an insight of the reality in the high school in Albania, this study was applied through a focus group interview to twelve (12) teachers of a public high school in Tirana, who shared their experience and understanding about disruptive behavior. They claimed that talking out of turn, talking to each other, usage of the phones, inattentiveness, lack of interest, etc., are the most common type of disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Key words: *disruptive behavior, teacher, student, teaching, learning.*

1.   Introduction

Considering the real condition of Albania's education scheme, it can be said that many problems need to be considered not only as a study subject but also as an attempt to come up with some efficient suggestions and recommendations that will assist other skilled organizations to intervene and enhance it. The focus of this research is therefore linked to a significant problem, such as disruptive conduct that can happen frequently during class time and interfere with the teaching process. Experience has shown that such behaviors appear to be common, articulated in distinct ways and forms, and can occur for various purposes. After analyzing literature review and collecting empirical information, it will ultimately provide not only an insight into the present scenario in an Albanian high school, which may be a guideline for other schools facing the same problem, but also some addition al suggestions on what can be done to enhance the situation.

Disruptive Behavior

The most significant problem that concerns this study is disruptive conduct, a phenomenon that impacts the process of learning from a contextual view. Different theoreticians also refer to this phenomenon in varying terms such as misbehavior, the behavior of conduct, the behavior of problems, indiscipline, etc. "Disruptive conduct is any conduct that substantially and/or persistently interferes with the teaching process and/or the rights, safety, and security of those in the teaching-learning setting" (p. 4), according to Algonquin College (1995). As understood, disruptive conduct can be said to have a huge effect, taking into account different elements of the teaching-learning setting, and it is very important. Another problem raised by Kuhlenschmidt and Layne (1999) is that educators tend to take behavioral reactions from learners as something private that concludes they are accountable for such behavior.

Besides, some educators tend to take the behavioral responses of learners as something private that can aggravate this phenomenon by taking sudden reactions without reflecting on them in search of useful alternatives. These writers also claim that educators may feel pressured to cope instantly with behavioral circumstances, which implies professors take a stance or

respond in some manner without ensuring that such activities are sufficient to cope with the student(s); However, it is necessary to analyze and reflect on the assessment of behavioral issues before taking any action to arrive at better choices on these types of behavioral issues. These kinds of teacher perceptions can occur particularly when they are in their first years of the learning experience and they may find it hard to manage disruptive behavior situations. But that would lead to other problems like the state of Kuhlenschmidt and Layne.

Classroom Management

Classroom management is regarded to be the most efficient technique for reducing and improving the disruptive behavior phenomenon. Unal (2012) points out that "Classroom leadership is the complete spectrum of teacher attempts to supervise operations in the classroom, including teaching, social interaction and student conduct (p. 41). Taking the same concept into account, Brophy (1986) supplements the teacher's concept as a manager when reporting that the leadership of the classroom relates to the teacher's attempts to create and retain the classroom as an efficient teaching and learning setting. The teacher is therefore regarded responsible for developing instruments to keep the class going without any class interruption to effectively attain the class objectives.

According to Qinglan (2003), "Effective leadership needs educators at the start of the college year to identify their expectations for their students." Ground rules are the primary concern of young learners ' educators. More specifically, teachers ' classroom leadership abilities can be said to have a direct effect on the accomplishments of learners given that teaching in a messy and poorly regulated classroom setting does not have excellent outcomes.

As can be seen, the teacher's responsibility is the management of the classroom, its processes, and control, and this has a direct influence on how the teaching environment is developed.

Classroom Management Strategies

Classroom management can be understood or described as any intervention the teacher carries out in the classroom to regulate and handle

issue activities in search of the issue alternatives. Consideration of leadership methods in a classroom context is essential to reduce the disruptive behavior phenomenon. Strasser (1967) says that learning strategies are a generalized lesson or lesson plans that include a framework, required learner behavior, and a description of the tactics needed to implement the suggested approach to tackle a particular scenario. In other words, teaching strategies guarantee that certain ideas or material are learned and minimize the conduct of problems while maintaining learners involved throughout the class.

In reaction to academic and behavioral issues that concern learners and educators, Kern and Clemens (2007) state that background strategies that concentrate on structuring the workplace to avoid problems and improve motivation have received attention when intervening and preventing behavioral issues in the classroom. All in all, such classroom management strategies can be said to be useful not only in providing educators and learners with a secure setting but also in providing security for the entire teaching-learning cycle.

2. Methods

2.1 Sampling and procedure

Participants in this study were *N = 11* high school teachers, who were part of "Besnik Sykja" high school in Tirana. The focus group interview was applied just for a group of the teachers of this school. The target group for the study was teachers of different ages (ranging from 25 to 60+ years old), years of teaching experience (ranging from three (3) to forty-four (44) years of teaching experience), and teaching different courses (**Natural Sciences**: Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry and **Social Sciences:** Literature, English Language, Psychology, Philosophy, etc.). Initially, it was taken permission from the school directory staff through an informed consent form and from the teachers too. They were prior informed about the aim of the study.

2.2 Measurement tool

In this research, a self-constructed structured close and open-ended interview questions were used. Close-ended questions of the interview were used to obtain demographic data and open-ended questions were used to obtain information about the Disruptive behavior affecting the learning process. The items of the interview were open-ended questions dividing into some categories, such as: **Disruptive behavior and Teaching – learning process (its impact); Gender issues; Classroom management, and Importance; Comments and Suggestions;**

The questions included in the interview were clearly stated and aimed to obtain the needed information about the teacher's perception and opinion related to disruptive behavior that daily occurs in their lecture hours. The interview used for the focus group consisted of five (5) parts. In the first part, there were questions related to the demographic information and professional background. The second part of the interview questions consisted of gaining information about:

Table 1.

Domain	Number of Questions	In the Interview Questionnaire
Demographic data	Four (4)	Q.1 - Q.4
Disruptive behavior and Teaching – learning process (its impact)	Eight (8)	Q.5 - Q.12
Gender issues	Three (3)	Q. 13 – Q. 15
Classroom management, and Importance	Eight (8)	Q. 16 – Q. 23
Comments and Suggestions	Three (3)	Q. 24 – Q. 26

2.4 Design and approach

For this study, a Qualitative Design, through a focus group interview has been used, and implemented in a high school in Tirana, in order to obtain some contextual data and to gain an insight in the situation. To analyze the data, the researcher interpretation took place, while consulting the literature related to studies conducted earlier in this field.

3. Results

The data collection for this research has been achieved by a self-constructed interview applied in a focus group with high school teachers as participants. The results have been evaluated through some main domains, such as *Demographic data (general information); Disruptive behavior and its impact in the teaching-learning process; gender issues; Classroom management; and Comments.*

4. Discussion and conclusion

Disruptive conduct can be regarded as an element of all the problems addressed by the education scheme. But, since it has become a problem for educators from elementary school to high school, it has acquired its attention. And, variations can be discovered in the category, display method, disruptive behavior frequency, and so on during these phases. For this reason, the phenomenon of disruptive conduct requires the attention of schools, school employees, mental health professionals, policymakers, other organizations dependent on the Ministry of Education, etc.

More specifically, this research seeks to provide an insight into disruptive conduct happening in high schools as literature and other research were more oriented towards this lower-grade phenomenon. This research's hypotheses helped to find some precise outcomes linked to the schools' actual condition. They will be discussed based on information gathered from the view of the educators.

In the **first hypothesis**, this study intended to prove that *Disruptive behavior affects negatively the teaching-learning process.* To understand that,

a variety of questions that fell under the domain of "Disruptive behavior & teaching – learning process (the impact)", part of the focus group interview, were asked to the teachers. And their answer was unanimous and stated that:

- It takes a lot of teachers and students' time
- Ruins the planned schedule for the lesson
- Distracts other students' attention
- Makes it difficult to explain properly

And their responses are also endorsed by previous literature and other research, such as those behaviors that distract educators and learners from their teaching process (Fernandez & Balboa, 1991). They interact with the classroom's favorable climate, the students ' social interaction with each other, and their involvement is reduced (Doyle, 1986). Another perspective on what disruptive conduct causes states that schools with frequent disruptive behaviors have less academic engagement time, and learners in disruptive schools tend to have reduced grades and less standardized testing (Shinn et al., 1987). Also, tries to regulate disruptive behaviors cost significant time for teachers at the expense of academic instance.

In the **second hypothesis**, it was intended to prove that Disruptive *behavior is mainly caused by boys.* To understand that, a series of questions that fell under the domain of "Gender issues", part of the focus group interview, was asked to the teachers. About this category of the interview, the teachers' perspective was almost the same, and they expressed that there are no gender differences in causing disruptive behaviors since girls now are acting almost as boys and they do not try to minimize this thing. Instead, the opposite happens, and the girls feel proud while doing a certain behavior that before sometimes, it may be considered as a masculine action, such as talking with inappropriate words in front of everybody, fighting, etc.

Anyway, there still exists a slight difference in the way how boys and girls show disruptive behavior in the classroom. Then, in the secondary school research by Borg and Falzon (1989), Houghton, et al., (1988), Kaplan, et. al., (2002), Merrett and Wheldall (1984), and Stephenson, at. al., (2000), this last view of them has a positive background from literature linked to

problem behaviors and stresses that male learners are more difficult than female learners in most of the problem behavior.

In the **third hypothesis**, the focus was to demonstrate that *Effective classroom management strategies and techniques can improve the classroom atmosphere.* And, to have a better understanding of that, some questions fell under the domain of "Classroom management", part of the focus group interview, that was asked to the teachers. And to answer the questions, they stated numerous ways and strategies of how classroom management can improve classroom situation and minimize disruptive behavior, as follows:

The major and the most important definition of classroom management and very helpful insight for the teachers resulted to be:

- K**nowing the psycho – socioeconomic characteristics of a student!!!**

And, after that, they stated definitions and strategies such as:

- Organization and orientations
- Student-centered teaching
- Dividing the students into levels of academic achievement while preparing the lesson plan, not to differentiate them, but finding ways to motivate them.
- All-inclusiveness – practicing as a methodology
- Motivating students
- Creating the teacher-student relationship
- The lesson should be touchable by students
- Using appropriate materials and teaching methods
- Giving importance to the lesson
- Dedication and communication
- Identify and put into attention the positive behavior

Also, in this case, the literature supports the findings of this study by focusing on preventive rather than reactive procedures that create a positive classroom environment in which the teacher focuses on properly behaving students (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Furthermore, teachers ' capacity to organize

classrooms and handle their students ' conduct is critical to attaining both beneficial student education results and teacher retention. Monitoring the conduct of the student enables the teacher to recognize learners who engage in inappropriate conduct and avoid escalating misconduct (Colvin et al., 1993).

As can be seen from the outcomes of this study, all three hypotheses have been endorsed by the data collection of empirical information obtained from high school teachers, as well as the literature and other previous studies. This suggests that the disruptive behavior phenomenon still occurs in distinct concentrations and grades, in distinct ways of showing and exhibiting it in the classroom, it appears to be constant, and it appears that there is still no approach or technique discovered that can help to decrease significantly problematic behaviors in schools, which would benefit these learners and educators.

But, given the focus group's last domain interview *Comments*, educators were told to convey if they had any other concerns except the interview issues linked to the disruptive behavior problem. And, their focus was more on why disruptive behaviors occurred. They said that even though they occur in the school building, the school itself cannot be regarded as a significant reason for these behaviors. Their declaration was that external factors, such as Family background, were more emphasized by skilled educators and older by era (emigration, rates of divorce, economic income, social status, parental involvement, form of parenting, etc.; Community (they said the college itself could not assist this phenomenon altogether); Media (too much information, too much data, too much exposure, etc.); Technology (elevated phone utilization rates, virtual world, social isolation, etc.). And, if viewed from this perspective, the scenario appears to be more complicated than it can be considered.

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