

SPEECH MAPS: A NEW RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION TOOL IN ADULT EDUCATION

MARA THEODOSOPOULOU¹ , VANA PAPALOIS²

Abstract

People who speak the ‘same language’ can learn, communicate and collaborate in a better, faster and more effective way. This paper introduces speech maps as an innovative research and practice tool suitable for case focused research and study of daily situations that request a unique approach, a step beyond generic statistical statements. Speech maps are an easy to use and convenient research tool that captures the idiolect (language unique to an individual or social group) that people use to communicate their attitudes about an issue. They are also a practical tool suitable for brainstorming, problem solving, decision making, design and writing of public information, education campaigns. By using a speaker’s natural language data (oral, written statements or transcripts) the analyst reads and underlines those language elements that depict a speaker’s attitude. The analysis is based on the axes of reference and content, as well as the ‘tie arguments’, which create the element of coherence that wraps up the ‘individual logic’ of an attitude and they are used to explain, as well as to predict a speaker’s special language choices in the form of a vocabulary web. A quick and easy to follow taxonomy chart of possible language choices guides the investigator in an organized and systematic way at every step. A series of verbal examples from teachers and trainees regarding adult education and lifelong learning are used to illustrate the speech maps approach.

Keywords: adult education, communication tool, idiolect, language data, speech maps, vocabulary web.

Introduction

Information society is a term which has been introduced in our lives along with terms, such as ICT, knowledge society, literacy, lifelong learning [Torres, 2005]. The educational gap that exists through many countries or, even, among areas of a country is expected to be narrowed through the use of technologies, the proper education of teachers, community support [Guttman, 2003]. The acquisition and expansion of knowledge throughout life, the development of language understanding and communication skills and competences as well as social inclusion through education are some of the components of the lifelong learning policy context [EU, 2006].

¹ ASPETE – School of Pedagogical and Technological Education, Athens, Greece; mara_th@yahoo.com

² Post-Doc, Greece.

Information Literacy

The European Commission [2004] describes eight key competences, which are necessary for the knowledge society. These eight domains are

- Communication in mother tongue;
- Communication in a foreign language;
- Mathematical literacy;
- Digital competence;
- Learning to learn;
- Interpersonal competence;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Cultural expression.

Each one of these competences is defined in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Although the word 'information' is not explicitly referred to the overview of these domains, elements of these competences help us understand another relevant term, information literacy (IL). The term is considered to be a continuum of skills, concepts, attitudes, and experiences related to information access, understanding, evaluation, communication, application and value [Marchionini, 1999, p. 7]. In the Alexandria Proclamation is described, along with lifelong learning, as 'the beacon of the Information Society, illuminating the courses to development, prosperity and freedom...empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals.' One of the objectives set by UNESCO for the period 2008-2013 is to build inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication, make information literate communities, which will enhance the capacities of users to access, analyse and determine the relevance and quality of information beneficial to their needs [UNESCO, 2008, p. 31]. The five elements which constitute IL are

- Recognising information needs. It refers to distinguishing if the given information is appropriate and adequate or further information is needed;
- Locating and evaluating information. It recognises the importance of critically examining the quality and reliability of sources and information itself before applying it;
- Storing and retrieving information. The use and easy access of databases, libraries, files is important for both retrieving and transmitting information;
- Making effective and ethical use of information, recognising that there are ethical and unethical uses of information;
- Applying information to create and communicate knowledge. Thus, it is recognised that not only the reception and passing of information are important, but the transformation of information into knowledge.

Horton [2008] presents the eleven stages of IL life cycle starting from the realisation of the need to get information to solve a problem, identifying the information, through organising, analysing, interpreting, evaluating, communicating information to utilising it, reusing it, protecting it or discarding it, when no longer needed. So, it becomes clear that IL focuses not only on gathering information through ICT, but also on the skills needed to critically review information, apply it and produce knowledge through it. Vital for IL is the element of communication, which refers to transmission and reception of information, as well as making sense of the message(s) embedded in information [Sayers, 2006].

This generic element of IL is also mentioned by Sharon Weiner [2010], ‘information literacy is applicable in all disciplines, involves metacognition, and is a way of thinking combined with a set of skills...it doesn’t belong to any single discipline, but instead belongs to all of them’.

In the global society of knowledge and digital communication technologies, the opportunities for dialogue and global communication literacy are significantly increased. This paper discusses the PSLO research and dialectic tool which is based on the universal language process by which individuals and social groups verbalise similar attitudes in different ways to distinguish their unique identity and personal culture as well as to turn dialogue into joint social action through the use of proverbial language (practical experience based, didactic statements of universal truth and value). Based on the values of natural curiosity, mutual respect and unassuming use of language the PSLO method is a useful tool to facilitate communication literacy and link separate lines of monologue into meaningful dialogue and joint action using the concept of idiolect (individual use of language about an issue) at a communication level.

Speech Maps

The speech maps theory is based on ongoing PSLO (Psycho-Social Lexical Orientation) research [Papalois, 1992] and analyses a speaker’s (individual, social group) idiolect at a communication level. According to speech maps theory, each word has two layers of definition: denotation, connotation at speech community level and a third idiolect manifestation definition at an individual level. Denotation is the dictionary definition of a word (e.g. America denotes the country south of Canada and north of Mexico, [Heidrich, 2004]). Connotation is the thoughts, feelings and images associated with a word at a language community level (e.g. America connotes freedom, individualism and opportunity). Manifestation is a short statement that expresses in a nutshell the idiolect that organises a speaker’s viewpoint and common sense logic about an issue. During manifestation people differentiate their individual definition of an issue in relation to a speech community’s definition of the same issue. Specifically, the speaker

selects those appropriate language tools for individual expression (figures of speech, tenses, familiar vocabulary, grammatical forms and syntactic structures) and focuses attention on those aspect(s) of an issue that are of personal relevance. In terms of evaluation, the speaker forms a positive, negative or neutral evaluation based on a dialectic among feelings, beliefs and facts. In terms of filtration, the speaker announces the logic on which evaluation is based and the evidence of the personal element of evaluation takes the form: 'X - Not Y'. Here is an example of the manifestation definition at a psycho-social lexical level of the word America based on the specific individual's lifelong learning with regard to the word America: 'My brother lives in America. In Michigan. *America is not all about politics. America is a great country, nice people, lots of history, cool shops and awesome places to visit*'. 'I have visited America several times. My sister lives there. America is a great country, nice people, great universities, great history, awesome places and cool shopping'. The above statement is clearly a positive evaluation of America (as indicated by the words great, nice, cool, awesome). However the speaker 'puts' a filter to differentiate between the country, the people but not its politics.

Speech maps research is based on the psycho-social lexical orientation of a speaker's statements (oral, written statements and transcripts) and is a simple, quick and easy to follow way to make sense of what people aim to communicate in real life or virtual settings. Researchers and practitioners in lifelong learning can use the speech maps approach in decision making and negotiation in training (what is at stake in training communication), communication planning ('speak the same language'), cross-checking, triangulation and pattern generalisation in research.

No previous linguistic training is needed to do speech maps. Through careful listening or reading of a text, a word's manifestation (X not Y) emerges and is highlighted. Based on the language evidence present in this specific part of text, the next step is to draw a circle and put in it the keyword (noun) on which evaluation is based. If more than one aspect of an issue is discussed more than one concentric circles are drawn. In the form of rays drawn from the circle(s) outwards you put communication elements selected and stressed by the speaker as special like: choice of tense (emphasis on the past, present or future, a finished or not yet finished action), person (first/I, We, second/you/You, third He, She, It/They), vocabulary (relevant adjectives, adverbs, speech figures), sentence structure emphasis (subject, verb, object), direction of evaluation (positive, negative, neutral), content of evaluation (feelings/emotions, facts/indisputable information used as evidence, beliefs/ideas, suggestions, knowledge). A word's speech map can be as detailed and colourful (use of different colours to illustrate different points) or as basic according to practical or research purposes and time demands. Speech maps verification and final testing is achieved through text evidence that supports communication coherence

(ideas that fit together in a natural and sensible way) and is triangulated by cohesion (a speaker's statements over time or in different circumstances about an issue) and the speaker's final approval (where possible).

Speech Maps – an example

A news text accessed on the Internet (BBC Sport, see Appendix) about 'Candidates for 2016 Olympics' is used as an example to illustrate the four speech maps used by the four different candidate city representatives to support their bid under the article's 'What they say' heading in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 2 October 2010. In this specific text, all statements are de facto expected to be positive and refer to a future time frame due to the nature of their target of communication: to successfully win the Olympic Games for the host city of their country.

Speech Map no. 1 Chicago

Manifestation definition: 'It's a very city-central Games –not just a compact Games plan but one that's in the heart of the city'. Here, Chicago 2016 spokesman Patrick Sandusky uses the figure of visualisation to paint a picture that 'people will walk out of their hotel and *straight* into sports venues, or our theatres, our museums, our restaurants'. From everything that Olympic Games mean (connotation) in the language community of our global society, Chicago's Olympic bid focuses attention on the noun sports venues.

The practical/pragmatic value of Chicago's bid gives emphasis on the third person (they – the people who will participate or attend the Olympics), future time reference (brought closer by painting a realistic picture through visualisation) and a positive factual perspective.

Speech Map no. 2 Madrid

Manifestation definition: 'Vitality is not a joke, it's a serious proposal..not just 16 days of extraordinary competition but a very joyful 16 days and a very happy seven years in the run-up'. The thematic point chosen by Madrid's representative Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr., Spanish IOC member as relevant to the other Olympic Committee members is: Olympic family. The first person (Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr., 'I can almost promise' in singular and plural form on behalf of the Spanish Olympic Games Organising Committee ('we will make all the members of the Olympic family, everybody who has anything to do with the Olympic Games, not just 16 days of extraordinary competition but a very joyful 16 days and a very happy seven years on the run up'). Future is the point in time emphasised as expected due to the nature of the speech task at hand (Olympic bid). Finally, belief is the positive direction emphasised by Madrid's representative (Joy

and vitality can ensure an extraordinary competition and a very joyful 16 days and a very happy seven years in the run up).

Speech Map no. 3 Rio de Janeiro

Manifestation definition: ‘To give an opportunity for new continents, new cities, new countries, a new atmosphere for the Games’ (a case of new versus old).

The word ‘opportunity’ is the chosen thematic point to be presented as relevant to Olympic Games and the IOC Committees final decision by Carlos Nuzman, president of Rio 2016 bid committee. The first person in plural form (‘we have a feeling...’) and the present time (‘many IOC members wish to change’) demonstrate clearly that the Rio de Janeiro bid upholds president Jacques Rogge’s ‘rotation of continents’ philosophy offering a ‘perfect timing’ option. Finally, it is a positive belief on which Brazil’s bid is based in terms of Direction (‘It is clear that the youth of the world come from every part of the world’).

Speech Map no. 4 Tokyo

Manifestation definition: ‘We have the budget already secured in cash...It is quite meaningful’ (a case of budget secured in cash v. not secured in cash).

The thematic point inside Japan’s Olympic bid is secured budget. Hidetoshi Maki, deputy director general, Tokyo 2016 uses the first person (‘I am so happy...we have the budget already secured...I think this is a strong point’) to support his bid. In terms of time Japan’s case should stand somewhere in the middle between past and present as it emphasises their ongoing work over the years to secure the financial aspect of the bid. Finally, the positive direction of Japan’s bid is based on fact (‘budget already secured’).

Conclusion

The realisation of the Knowledge Society requires many prerequisites, such as free access to information, narrowing the educational and digital divide, free expression, training for proper use of ICT. The transformation of information to knowledge passes through, among others, analysing, understanding and effectively communicating information. Speech maps focus on the communication element of information offering a tool for analysing individual language patterns – idiolect and their implications for clear communication and effective strategies in meaningful learning.

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Appendix

Chicago

Overview:

Chicago was chosen ahead of four other US cities to bid for the Games – Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

The city plans to build five new permanent venues and 11 temporary ones, with 22 of their planned 27 venues in four clusters within 15km of the Olympic Village, which will be based south of McCormick Place and itself house 11 venues. The new venues will compliment existing structures such as Soldier Field, United Center, Sears Center and Wrigley Field.

The bid costs (\$49.3m/£33.3m) are being borne by the private sector, as are the costs of the Games, while infrastructure costs will be financed by the US government.

Pros: It is expected that Chicago's world-class architecture, renowned skyline, multi-cultural, historical, and pop-cultural contributions will be

positive factors as the Olympics bid is weighed, while the city also boasts significant transportation infrastructure.

Although there is no official IOC rotation policy, the Americas may have an edge as previous games will have been held in Asia, Europe, and Australia: London, Beijing, Athens, and Sydney.

Cons: In a long standing dispute with the IOC, some IOC members also resent the large share of revenue taken by the United States Olympic Committee. Additionally, the controversy over the participation of Cuba in the 2006 World Baseball Classic is said to have hurt America's chances.

What they say: We've got two great plusses, we think – the City itself, the passionate, sports-loving diverse people of our city who really want to welcome the world back to the States. And the plan itself is also a real winning plan – not just a compact Games plan but one that's in the heart of the city.

“So if the Olympics come here people will walk out of their hotel and straight into sports venues, or our theatres, our museums, our restaurants. It's a very city-central Games.”

Chicago 2016 spokesman Patrick Sandusky

Face of the bid: A feast of the rich and famous are backing the bid. Basketball legend Michael Jordan has become an unofficial spokesman for Chicago's cause, while President Barack Obama – a former Illinois senator – media mogul Oprah Winfrey and Olympic champion swimmer Michael Phelps have also lent their considerable support.

Fact of the bid: Chicago was actually chosen to stage the 1904 summer Olympics, but the Games were moved to St Louis to coincide with the World's Fair.

Madrid

Overview:

Madrid, one of the few major European capitals yet to host the Games, hopes to follow in the footsteps of Barcelona, which brought the Olympics to Spain in 1992.

Madrid's pedigree is a good one, with 85% of venues already built and in place, and a history of hosting Olympic qualifying events. Split into two clusters, the competition venues will be shared between the Eastern Zone and the River Zone, with Madrid currently completing new swimming and tennis venues and looking to expand and modernise existing sporting facilities.

The city's bid – estimated cost \$42m (£28.6m) – will be entirely underwritten by the government.

Pros: Madrid hope to build on their 2012 bid which, though ultimately unsuccessful, prompted a good reaction from the IOC – it was overall second in technical evaluation, while the city was ranked top in seven categories;

“Government support, legal issues and public opinion”, “General infrastructure”, “Environment”, “Sports venues”, “Olympic Village”, “Transport concept” and “Overall project and legacy”.

Cons: The greatest downfall of Madrid's bid, though, could be that the 2012 summer Games is scheduled in London and the 2014 winter Games due to take place in Sochi, Russia. Staging three consecutive Olympic Games in Europe would, on the face of it, appear unlikely.

What they say: “I can almost promise that we will make all the members of the Olympic family, everybody who has anything to do with the Olympic Games, not just 16 days of extraordinary competition but a very joyful 16 days and a very happy seven years in the run-up. Vitality is not a joke, it's a serious proposal.”

Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr, Spanish IOC member

Face of the bid: Flamenco dancer Sara Baras has been named official envoy of the bid, while officials and players from local football clubs Real and Atletico Madrid - including Raul and Iker Casillas - are lending their support.

Fact of the bid: In the 2012 bidding process, Madrid actually placed first in the third round ahead of London and Paris, before being eliminated in the fourth round.

Rio de Janeiro

Overview:

The Brazilian Olympic Committee chose Rio de Janeiro ahead of Sao Paulo three years ago to bid for the 2016 Olympic Games. It is the first time the city has proceeded to the candidature stage after failed attempts for the 1936, 1940, 2004 and 2012 Games.

Rio plans to stage all the competitions inside the city, bringing “dynamics to the games and facilitating the athlete's interaction”, according to the bid website. There will be seven competition centres in four Olympic regions – Barra, Copacabana, Deodoro, and Maracana - with football matches held in the cities of Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Salvador and Sao Paulo.

Rio's bid is divided into a \$2.8bn (£1.92bn) budget for operating costs, and \$14.4bn (£9.90bn) for construction and security.

Also, the city's infrastructure - including major, and recently renovated, airport Antonio Carlos Jobim International Airport (Galeao) - will aid the city's bid.

Pros: Rio's successful staging of the Pan-American Games in 2007 - labelled the “best in history” by the president of the Pan-American Sports Organisation - and their future hosting of the 2014 World Cup will only add to the city's experience and bolster their burgeoning reputation.

The fact that giving the 2016 Olympics to Brazil would uphold IOC president Jacques Rogge's "rotation of continents" philosophy also lends great weight to the potential success of the bid.

Cons: The city can count itself somewhat fortunate to have made the last four after scoring below Doha in the IOC's weighted –average score, eventually only winning through – it is believed – because of Doha's small population, lack of facilities and plans to stage the Games outside of the IOC's proposed window.

What they say: "We have a feeling that many IOC members wish to change, to give an opportunity for new continents, new cities, new countries, a new atmosphere for the Games. It is clear the youth of the world come from every part of the world."
Carlos Nuzman, president of Rio 2016 bid committee

Face of the bid: The bid has great political and popular support, from Brazil and other countries in the region, but the 'face' gets no more famous or influential than legendary footballer Pele.

Fact of the bid: Brazil has already secured the right to host the 2014 World Cup and has its sights on the fourth double hosting in history; after Mexico in 1968 and 1970, Germany in 1972 and 1974, and the United States in 1994 and 1996.

Tokyo

Overview:

Tokyo was selected as Japan's candidate city in August 2006, beating off competition from Fukuoka on the island of Kyushu and, reportedly, Osaka, Sapporo and Nagoya.

Tokyo is touting "the most compact and efficient Olympic Games ever" with a dramatic setting on the waterfront, enabling the city to redevelop a rundown area, previously primarily used for industry and shipping, just as London and Barcelona did in previous hostings.

Tokyo plans to construct a new 100,000 –seater stadium but, of the 34 planned venues, 23 already exist with many venues used during the 1964 Games set to be refurbished.

A budget of 400bn yen (£3.06bn) for construction of the venues and infrastructure has already been put aside by the government, while organisational costs of 310bn yen (£2.37bn) will be raised through sponsorship and marketing, although it has been underwritten by government.

Pros: The city's successful staging of the 2002 Football World Cup, 1964 Summer Olympics and 1972 and 1998 Winter Olympics mark it out as arguably the most experienced player in the last four, while it will also boast excellent public transportation, including three ring roads which are

currently being built around the city to help reduce congestion problems, and ample accommodation for visitors.

Cons: Tokyo could suffer from the fact that Beijing hosted the Games in 2008, although it would by no means be the first time the Olympics have been staged on the same continent within eight years.

What they say: “I'm so happy that we have the budget already secured in cash. It is quite meaningful and I think this is a strong point of [the bid].”
Hidetoshi Maki, deputy director general, Tokyo 2016

Face of the bid: Only a few top-level sports stars hail from Tokyo and even fewer are recognisable outside of Asia - but Hidetoshi Maki has dismissed that as a failing, saying: “The Olympics is not staged by the person, it is staged by a team. We are promoting the team and the city itself.”

Fact of the bid: London's successful 2012 bid has had a great influence on the Tokyo 2016 bid, with Maki adding: “We are so impressed with the London bid. They believe that the Olympics promote sport to the youth and all the ages. That idea is followed by Tokyo.”