"Perhaps you remember…?"
About students' strategies of remembering
the forgotten during secondary school
final examination interviews

ANNA TABISZ*
https://doi.org/10.25167/Stylistyka28.2019.

People experiencing examination stress may suffer from a number of cognitive dysfunctions resulting in difficulties in focusing attention, associating facts or making recollections because, under the influence of stress, the chemical transmitters in the brain responsible for memory are blocked. The main question I ask in this paper is what language strategies are used by students who have difficulty in reproducing[1] the content required during the secondary school *final examination interview.*

This paper consists of four main parts. In the first, on the basis of legal acts, I describe the formula of the new secondary school final exam in Polish, taking into account its purpose and course. In the second part, I focus on one part of the oral exam – the *secondary school final examination interview* – seeing in it agenre functioning in the educational discourse. The third part contains the results of the analysis of the questions asked of students during the *high school final examination interview*. In the last part

---

* https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1714-7052, Uniwersytet Opolski, atabisz@uni.opole.pl

[1] A reminder is the third stage of memory and its function is to recreate or recognise. This recreation means reproduction of data from memory. In turn, recognition consists in identifying previously known content, i.e. distinguishing it from other content (Arabski 1997: 117). In the paper, I use the concept of reminding as recreation.

of the paper, I describe four language strategies used by the students when their knowledge is insufficient to allow them to fully answer the questions. The research material[2] consists of 48 *interviews* (in total nearly 200 minutes of recordings) recorded during oral exams in Polish.

1. Secondary school final oral exam in the Polish language in light of legal acts

In 2015 in secondary schools (2016 in technical secondary schools), the oral secondary school final exam was changed. The presentation previously prepared by the student was replaced by a longer monologue and a conversation during the exam. In the guide published on the website of the CentralnaKomisjaEgzaminacyjna [Central Examination Commission], we read that the purpose of the oral part of the secondary school final exam is:

> "to verify the ability to create an independent oral statement on the basis of a given cultural text, in accordance with the principles of linguistic correctness, logic and rhetoric. In addition to the ability to analyse and interpret, this exam also tests functional knowledge of language and culture (especially literature). The form of the oral part of the exam determines the priorities of Polish language teaching; among others, the need to often put students in a situation that requires building multifaceted statements and sensitising them to the culture of conversation".
>
> (https://cke.gov.pl/images/_EGZAMIN_MATURAL_OD_2015/Informatory/2015/Jezyk-polski.pdf, [Access: August 2018]).

The oral secondary school final exam in Polish lasts about 30 minutes and consists of three parts: preparation (on which students spend about 15 minutes), the monologue of the student on a randomly selected subject (lasting about 10 minutes), and the related interview with the examination board (about 5 minutes). The student creates a monologue on the basis of a cultural text (literary or iconic, or popular science in the field of language knowledge) and the instructions related to it. In the assumptions of the originators of the new secondary school final exam, the text of culture should inspire the examinee, whose task is to "develop and broaden the threads indicated in the task — also by referring to other, freely chosen texts" (https://cke.gov.

---

[2] The material was made available by the Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych [Educational Research Institute].

pl). The examination committee does not interrupt the speech delivered by the student and only asks questions during the interview. The questions may only concern the monologue, which means that the examiners may not refer to facts or readings that were not evoked in the student's monologue. During the interview, the board members may ask for additional explanations, encourage deepening of selected aspects of the speech, etc.

2. *Secondary school final examination interview* as a genre

In the search for genre indices of the *secondary school final examination interview*, it is worth recalling the stance of StanisławGajda (1982), who lists the *scholarly conversation, consultation, examination, scholarly discussionand polemics* among the genres and varieties originating from the colloquial conversation. The *secondary school final examination interview* has the characteristics of both an *examination* and a *scholarly conversation.* It is characterised by formality, officiousness, distortion of spontaneity rules, complementary[3] relations between the sender and the recipient, different roles – the sender is a specialist and the recipient is a student[4] – resulting from the asymmetry of knowledge, the agreement or arrangement of which takes place in relation to the core curriculum. The *secondary school final exam interview* also has some features of a typical didactic dialogue; its course is partly conditioned by the examination committee's educational and communication objectives. The thematic line of the *interview* isdetermined by the task[5] chosen by the

---

[3] Following Małgorzata Kita's notion of complementarity, I assume that the *secondary school final examination interview* should be of complementary interaction nature, in which the behaviour of one of the partners is complementary to the behaviour of the other one. One of the participants occupies a more important position while the other one's position is minor. M. Kita emphasises the solidarity of the relation, stating that the "types of behaviour are different, but are adjusted to each other and they mutually complement each other" (Kita 1999: 124).

[4] Stanisław Gajda draws attention to the stylistic diversity of *scholarly conversations* resulting from taking into account the different probable roles of the interlocutors. The *scholarly discussion* may take place between the specialists in the field of knowledge of the subject or apprentices (e.g. students), as well as between students and specialists. The last set of roles is characteristic for the *secondary school final examination interview.*

[5] It is worth stressing, however, that in the current proposal of examination tasks, one can see signs of reality, which means that their didactic function, i.e.: A wants to know if B knows, changes partially and does not consist only in demanding information that the recipient (examiner) knows, wanting to check its credibility and correctness, and sometimes to confront his or her knowledge with the student's knowledge (Kawka 1999: 58).

student; it is usually one-way because the dialogue is usually initiated by the teacher, and is characterised by a specific set of speech acts (Nocoń 2011: 196), in which one of the highest places is occupied by directive acts, i.e. questions and instructions.

The strict rulesofthe oral exam allow us to look at the *secondary school final exam interview* as a *conversation* that is "governed" by the overriding principle of cooperation: "contribute to the conversation so as the goal or direction of the exchange of words, in which you participate, requires in its particular stage" (Grice 1975/1980: 96-97). This means that the participants communicate on the basis of a certain contract, which obliges them to "show goodwill, mutual assistance, respect for each other in the course of the work/ action they are to carry out together. However, […] even a conversation defined by cooperation has more or less conflicting moments […], manifested by the fact that one person wants to impose something on the other, to convince him or her" (Kita 1999: 125). The development of the principle of cooperation is formed by what is known as categories and conversation maxims, i.e. quantity, quality, ratio and method (Grice 1975/1980: 98).

The categories and conversation maxims are related to the purpose which the conversation is to serve. The interpretation of the objectives of the *secondary school final examination interview* requires a certain differentiation, i.e.:

– in the framework of the external-language communication plan, during the interview, the high school graduate should demonstrate the ability to focus on the issues formulated by the examiners, the ability to build a developed response, while observing the principles of participation in the interview. The student wants to "present him- or herself in the best way possible" or to impress the board in order to get the highest possible score (or at least a positive one);

– in the internal-language *interview* plan, the objectives may be indicated, which are to address a particular thesis through language actions, such as "convincing someone of something," "informing someone about something" or "expressing one's emotions".

The fulfilment of the goal, which depends on the interaction between the examinee and the examiner, influences the artificiality of the student's statements. Their subject matter content does not have a communicative function for the recipient (Szczepanek 1991: 173) both in the part of the examination,

in which the student creates a longer text, as well as during the interview. Monologue statements and answers to questions during the interview seem to be more of a source of information about the speakers themselves than about the matters under consideration. There is an agreement between the secondary school graduate and the examiner, under which the former is obliged to formulate his or her statements in such a way as if he or she were really persuasive, because his or her most important goal is to pass the exam.

It is worth noting, however, that this state of affairs should not affect the relations between interlocutors and the quality of communication, which should be characterised by openness and serve the purpose of communication and understanding. According to Barbara Myrdzik, conducting a good conversation requires the partners to act in such a way that (1) "they do not miss the point in the course of it;" (2) they make sure the interlocutor is up to date; (3) they subordinate themselves to the matter on which their attention is focused; (4) they do not strive to convince others in the discussion at any cost, but take into account the factual importance of a different view; (5) they know how to create an atmosphere conducive to the exchange of ideas; (6) they are able to listen carefully, be patient; and above all (7) they ask relevant questions and formulate accurate answers (Myrdzik 2000: 100–101). These are the questions asked during the *examination interviews* that I analyse in the next part of the paper.

3. "Perhaps you remember […]? – the categories of questions asked during the *secondary school final examination interview*

For the purpose of the subject analysis, I use Elizabeth Perrott's classification, which, taking into account Benjamin Bloom's "taxonomy of educational goals," proposed the division of questions according to the type of thinking process that is triggered by the answers. E. Perrott divided the questions used in the learning process into two main groups: lower and higher level questions. The first group includes questions, such as recollection, understanding and application, while the second group includes analytical questions, synthesis and evaluation questions that require thinking identified with problem-solving (Perrott et al. 1995: 45). The classification of question categories and action categories proposed by Perrott is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Categories of questions according to the level of thinking they require

Level of thinking	Category of question	Category of action
Lower	Recollection	Reconstruction of facts, observed phenomena or definitions
	Understanding	Giving a description, defining the main thoughts, comparison and contrast
	Application	Applying principles and techniques to solve a problem with one correct answer
Higher	Analysis	Determination of motives or reasons, reasoning, searching for evidence/arguments supporting generalisations
	Synthesis	Solving problems, making predictions, presenting the problem in one's own original way
	Evaluation	Expressing opinions on a given subject, assessing the meaningfulness of ideas, judging the value of solving a problem, assessing the value of a literary work or a work of art

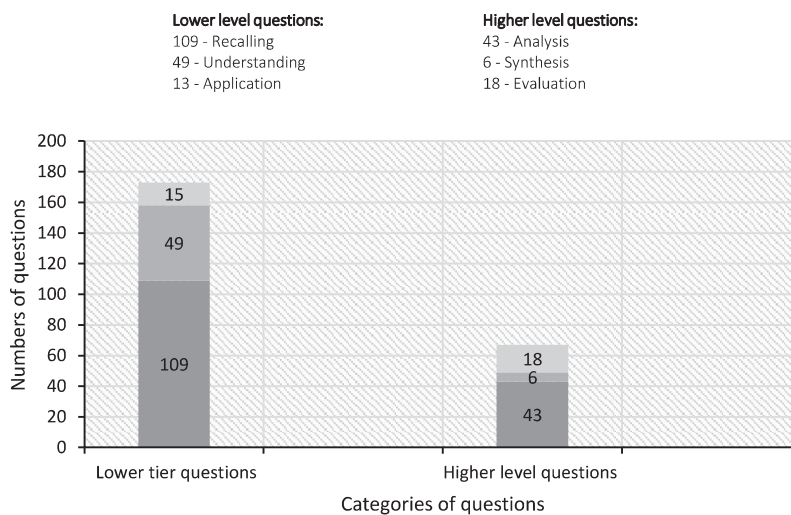Source: own elaboration based on E. Perrott (1995: 51).

Lower level questions:
109 - Recalling
49 - Understanding
13 - Application

Higher level questions:
43 - Analysis
6 - Synthesis
18 - Evaluation

Chart 1. Ratio of the number of higher level questions to the number of lower level questions
Source: own elaboration.

It seemed interesting to me to check the number of different types of questions. Chart 1 shows the frequency of the six categories of questions and the ratio of the number of lower to higher level questions. It shows that nearly 72% of the questions are questions that trigger lower-level thinking.

The analysis of 238 questions posed to the students during the *secondary school final examination interviews* showed that the most frequently used questions are those of the lower level, i.e. questions "about knowledge". As many as 109 lower level questions were reminders – nearly 50% of all questions (both lower and higher level). Answers consisted in the student quoting certain facts or information in a similar form as they had been previously presented by the teacher or given in a textbook. A reminder-based answer did not go beyond the information previously provided, nor did it change the form or order of the information. It is easy to define the answers as correct or incorrect by comparing them with the original source of information (Perrott 1995: 50). Here are some examples:

1) N: Do you know what genre is an idyll? What are the determinants of this genre?
2) N: You have recalled the biblical "Parable of the sower." What are the features of this genre?
3) N: From which language variety do these words come?
4) N: What proverbs do you know in which God, the very word God, appears?
5) N: What are the characteristics of the romantic combat concept?
6) N: What personal pattern does the "Flowers of St. Francis" [Kwiatki Św. Franciszka] refer to?

The fact that nearly half of the analysed *secondary school final examination interviews* were based solely on lower-level questions is a cause for concern. For example:

7) N: I suggest that you make it more precise because you use the terms "novel" and "epic" interchangeably. Define the characteristics of the epic and show that "Pan Tadeusz" is an epic and not a novel.
   U: […].
   N: List excerpts testifying that "Pan Tadeusz" has the features of an idyll.
   U: […].
   N: Or maybe you can recall situations that prove that "Pan Tadeusz" has the features of a fairy tale?
   U: […].

> N: Can you define a fairy tale? How does the fairy tale end? What are its charac-
> teristics?
> U: […].

In the quoted conversation, all questions asked to the student belong to the reminder category[6]. The student is only supposed to show that he or she remembers specific messages "processed" during the lesson; that he or she is able to exchange genre determinants of idyll and fairy tales and to recall relevant fragments from the reading. It does not go beyond the "ready-made knowledge", which he or she reproduces in an unchanged form and order. Of course, knowledge is extremely important, especially during an exam, but it is worth noting that by means of questions such as reminding, one assesses only a superficial understanding of the phenomena, and what is remembered can also be forgotten (Perrott 1995: 45).

Reminder questions – "about knowledge" – trigger a semantic memory, in which information transmitted in a typical school way is stored[7]. It functions within declarative memory[8] as a system "in which denotations (phrasemes) are created between items of information with the participation of the language system" (*Psychology of memory* 1997: 151). Semantic memory is "a kind of mental thesaurus of organised knowledge" (Nęcka et al. 2006: 325) and "stores information of the type, 'What is x?' where x can represent a situation, person, object, phenomenon, etc. So, […] is the knowledge of something" (Arabski 1997: 103), which *apriori* can be considered a form of school knowledge required, inter alia, during the examination.

In the further part of the paper, I analyse language behaviours as being a reaction to the most numerous category of questions – reminding – in which the examiner expected the student to recreate some specific "hard knowledge".

---

[6] As Perrott notes, teachers tend to abuse this category of questions (Perrott 1995: 45). In the context of the assumptions of the authors of the new formula of the secondary school final exam, this problem seems interesting. Studies to check the frequency of using particular categories of questions during the exam should be carried out on a wider scale, but my modest observations confirm this thesis.

[7] This type of memory also identifies with the notion of language knowledge as a subsystem of general knowledge about the world (*Psychology of memory* 1997: 153).

[8] I refer to the classification of types of memory according to Squire and Zoli-Morgan, who distinguished declarative memory (*explicit*), and within it facts and events and non-declarative memory (*implicit*), which consists of skills and habits, precedence, classical conditionality, non-associative learning (Nęcka et al. 2006: 324).

4. "It would have been better if I hadn't had spoken at all" – the attitudes of students towards their own ignorance.

If we consider the *secondary school final exam interview* to be a *conversation* subordinate to the principle of cooperation, it can be assumed that its participants undertake communication activities which "in most ordinary cases of proper information exchange bring positive results" (Antas 2008: 170). The modal framework for the behaviour of the student (S) and the examiner (E) can be defined as follows:

(S)	(E)
I want you to imagine that I know it.	I want you to imagine that I don't know
I say this because I want you to know that I know	what you know and that you want to tell me.
what you know and that I want to tell you that.	I say this because I want you to tell me that.

The questioner expects an answer to his or her question; "he or she wants the student to know". One can speak of a specific bond between the examiner and the student – a "psychological readiness to interact; a willingness to talk" (Grabias 2001: 265), and to pursue a common goal. The final shape and success of the *secondary school final examination interview* depends on two basic factors:

1. The manner of conducting the interview – in this context, the personality traits of the examiner, his or her habits, as well as the general attitude, the willingness to make an effort to discover the intentions of the sender, and the type of questions asked – seems to be very important[9]; and

2. The personality and temperament of the student (e.g. the ability to cope with difficult situations), and – above all – the substantive knowledge and competences of the student him- or herself.

The official examination situation and the stress associated with it, as well as various disturbances of memory, thinking, attention and concentration,

---

[9] I believe that reminder questions should not dominate the oral examination in the Polish language.

which many people cannot cope with, cause high school graduates to take different attitudes towards their deficiencies or lack of knowledge. There are two basic attitudes (see Figure 1).
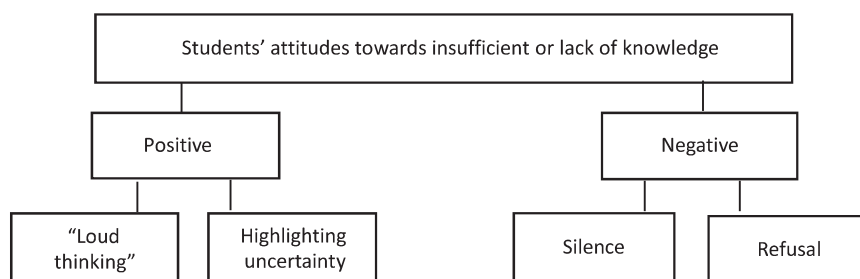

Fig. 1. Students' attitudes towards insufficient knowledge or lack of it during the *secondary school final examination* on the Polish language
Source: Fisher 1999: 29.

The first of them — positive — is one in which the student reacts properly at the expected stage of the interview, fulfilling, together with the examiner, a common direction of conversation. There are two main strategies within it: the strategy of "loud thinking" and the strategy of highlighting uncertainty. Applying the second, negative one, the student reacts incorrectly at a given stage of the conversation, and in doing so breaks the basic principle of conversation: the principle of cooperation. In the analysed material, this attitude is expressed through silence or in a directly articulated refusal to cooperate.

4.1 Positive strategies

4.1.1 "Who is Marek Kondrat?" — the loud thinking strategy

The strategy of "loud thinking" can be characterised by the words of Tadeusz Kotarbiński, "I try to say beautifully what I have to say, especially when I have nothing to say" (Kotarbiński 1986). According to the philosopher, it is easy to speak when you have something to say, but it is difficult to have something to say when one has to speak, which is illustrated by examples 9 and 10:

    8) T: Listening to your speech ||err, here I've come up with a question arose, Who is Marek Kondrat? Do you know what character that is? Who is it?

> S: Marek Kondrat is an artist […].
> T: You've said he is an artist, but could you be more precise, please. What kind of an artist he is? What does he do?
> S: A writer.
> T: ‖ err, [with resignation] My second question is: […]

9) T: What universal truths do fairy tales convey? Give the titles and discuss them briefly.
   S: Many very good truths.
   T: Universal truths. Name them.
   S: For example, there may be goodness, dedication, justice….
   T: And cite some titles that would confirm the words you said.
   S: They are best presented in Anders' (*sic*) works, but I would prefer to quote Disney, because I identify myself more with the characters presented in this type of work. Examples include Sleeping Beauty or Red Riding Hood.

The decision of the students who apply the loud thinking strategy can be presented as follows:

> I speak, although I don't have much to say, however, I know that something has to be said.

Female students, even if they do not have "hard" knowledge on a given subject, undertake a conversation – in accordance with the principle of co-operation – putting into the conversation as much as they are able to say in order to achieve the superior goal, i.e. to pass an exam. They try to compensate insufficient knowledge resources in various ways. Both examples use safe generalisation tactics ("Marek Kondrat is an artist"; "Many very good truths"), which makes it possible to consider the answer partially correct. In example 9, there is also an interesting way of shifting the subject: "They are best presented in Anders' (*sic*) works, but I would prefer to quote Disney". In this way, the student adapts the thematic area to her knowledge acquired through experience rather than at school, during Polish lessons[10].

"Loud thinking" seems to be a good strategy for at least two reasons. First of all, the examiner receives a signal that the student is trying to deal with the issue. This attitude is conducive to asking guiding questions with tips to help the student build the correct answer (Perrott 1995: 63). Secondly,

---

[10] It seems that she does not know that the titles she mentioned come from the collection of fairy tales and stories for children entitled, *The Tales of Mother Goose* (1697) by Charles Perrault.

a loud thinking person performs a kind of "memory search" – an operation consisting in finding the necessary information in the long-term memory (*Psychology of memory* 1997: 166), although it should be mentioned that emotional blocks caused by examination stress may be an obstacle in searching for memory.

4.1.2 "It seems to me..." – the strategy of uncertainty

Another strategy showing a positive attitude of the student during the *secondary school final examination interview* is the strategy of uncertainty. The student applies it when he or she is uncertain about the answer, but assumes that the judgments he or she expresses are true. For this type of strategy, a general paraphrase can be adopted:

> I speak, although I am not sure if what I say is true.
> I suppose that what I am saying is likely/possible.

The secondary school graduate does not want to unambiguously attribute truthfulness to what he or she talks about; "safely", they use exponents about the function of possibility and probability in their statements, such as "it seems to me", "I think" or "probably"[11], for instance:

10) T: How do you understand the features of mock-heroic poetry? Can you provide the characteristics of a mock-heroic poem?
S: It seems to me that in mock-heroic poetics, that in fact that there is a hero in it.

11) T: You said, and rightly so, that "Pan Tadeusz" has features [...]. Could you, please, elaborate on that, give examples and confirm with your knowledge of the text that the action ends well, that the threads are finished?
S: So, the theme of Tadeusz who at the end of the epic marries Zosia, clearing Father Robak or Jacek Soplica of guilt charges [...] and I think that's probably it.

---

[11] For more on epistemic modality in the student's secondary school final examination interview, see the chapter on epistemic modality in students' secondary school final examination interviews, in Tabisz 2016.

The probable reason for the adoption of uncertainty strategies by the students is their poor knowledge of the facts enabling them to confirm the veracity of their judgments. In the 10th example, the student expresses a conjecture based on an attempt at semantic analysis (association of a *hero* with the protagonist). However, his limited knowledge does not allow him to develop his speech.

There is another explanation for the expression of uncertainty by secondary school students. The adoption of this strategy may result not only from their insufficient knowledge to confirm the truth of their theses, but also from the specific asymmetry between them and the examiner, the imbalance not only in the social roles they play, but also in the "inequalities in the areas of knowledge". The assumption that the examiner knows more causes students to increase the distance to their own judgements and the feeling of uncertainty, as exemplified by the use of modulating words, such as "unless" in quote 11.

4.2 Negative strategies

In the material studied, the negative attitude of the student is revealed by two strategies: the strategy of silence and the strategy of refusal.

4.2.1 […] – the silence strategy

A quite frequent way to mask ignorance is to adopt a strategy of silence, which gains the character of intentional communication behaviour on the language plan[12]. As Izydor Dąmbska notes, "One can speak of silence in at least two meanings: wider and narrower. In a broader sense, silence is any kind of silence […]. In a narrower sense, it is the result of conscious abstention from speaking" (Dąmbska 1963: 75). And it is in the latter sense that we should consider the attitudes of the students, which can be illustrated as follows:

---

[12] Apart from treating language as a means of communication, IzydorDąmbska presents other categories in which silence can be considered, i.e. (1) as a tactical means of action; (2) as a symptom of character; (3) as a moral category; (4) as an aesthetic category; (5) as a mystical category (Dąmbska 1963: 73).

I am not speaking because I do not want to speak because I have nothing to say.
For example:

12) T: Well, then maybe you would try to give the title of some other literary work that also has a multidimensional character?
S: [13 s] I am thinking, but nothing is coming to mind.
T: Juliusz Słowacki?
S: [10 s].

The attitude of silence is a violation of the generally accepted norms of behaviour during the exam. The structure of the *secondary school final examination interview* is based on the principle of the exchange of the initiating issue and the issue arising in response to the initiation. This structure includes silence, but only if the participant in the dialogue is in the role of the recipient (the secondary school graduate is silent when a question is asked). If the student is the sender, then speaking is an obligation and the "silence […] is an offence or admission of guilt" (Dąmbska 1973: 104).

In the quoted passage of conversation (example 12th), both of the student's answers are preceded by very long pauses, which can be considered as silence. The secondary school graduate, having no knowledge of the subject in question, does not make any attempt to establish a dialogue and extinguishes the contact through direct verbalisation of the lack of knowledge of the subject in question: "I am thinking, but nothing is coming to mind". However, it is interesting to use the phrase, "I am thinking"; it implies that the student has made an attempt to "search the memory", but the attempt was unsuccessful.

4.2.2. "Do you know other texts of culture? I haven't got the slightest idea…" – the refusal strategy

The second negative strategy used by the students in a situation where they cannot answer the question asked is the strategy of refusal[13]. "The refusal is an acute interpersonal move; it heralds a blockade of action for which the partner was striving and about which he cared" (Nęcki 1996: 115). For example:

---

[13] The name refers to the pragmatic and contextual typology of pragmatic acts proposed by Aleksey Avdeyev and Zbigniew Nęcki (Nęcki 1996: 100).

13) T. You used the phrase that "Pan Tadeusz" contains elements of mock-heroic epic and you started to positively analyse the notion that the book shows protagonists as heroes, but in what situations, i.e. could you go to the second part of this term – mock-heroic – and indicate such situations in the content of "Pan Tadeusz"?
S: Mock-heroic, err, means heroes in comic situations. But it is difficult to recall something like that.||I cannot recall any.

Often the proper refusal is preceded by preparatory measures, an expression of hesitation or an indication of circumstances preventing it. This tactic is observed in the above example, in which the student initially tries to define the concept, but then starts to withdraw from the act of cooperation: "It is difficult to recall something like that"; and he gives up his goal, justifying himself with the words, "I cannot recall any". Such a conversational move seems to be highly inappropriate during the exam; it proves that the basic principle of cooperation has not been observed, and the violation of the maxim of quantity may result in the failure of the exam.

Further examples of refusal strategies (14 and 15) are interesting as they immediately admit ignorance, abandoning all explanations of their incompetence. Such an attitude may be connected with the fact that the analysed material comes from the secondary school final examination, so it is difficult to talk about the real negative effects of the refusal, e.g.:

14) T: What is the name of such a combination of many genres? Do you remember the name?
S: I can't remember.

15) T: Do you know any other texts of culture relating to this particular subject, issue?
S: I haven't got the slightest idea. I won't guess; it doesn't make sense to do so.

The phrase "I can't remember" proves that the student is having difficulty in recreating the specific content he or she knows, but is suffering from the "temporary inaccessibility of the memory trace". Such difficulties arise, as I have already mentioned, in various circumstances, such as a state of fatigue or emotional tension, when the situation of remembrance is significantly different from the situation of remembering, and when there are no guidelines guiding the given content (*Psychology of memory* 1997: 228). Undoubtedly, the oral secondary school final examination is for many students such a circumstance. The attitude of those who seem to have difficulty in recalling the desired content can be exemplified as follows:

> I don't speak; I have nothing to say because I don't remember what I remembered before.

The attitude of the person from the 15th example is slightly different. It can be described as follows:

> I don't speak because I have nothing to say; I didn't have anything to say before, either.

The question is whether such a *refusal* (example 15) can be of any benefit to the student. On the one hand, he violated the maxim of quantity. On the other hand, however, he observes the maxim of quality: "Try to make your contribution to the conversation real". Worth mentioning here is P. Grice's conviction that the very phenomenon of communication assumes first of all sincerity. Admitting ignorance through expressive phrases, such as "I haven't got the slightest idea. I won't guess; it doesn't make sense to do so" sounds extremely credible and honest. It is obvious, however, that such an attitude should be characterised by "real communication" and not "artificial communication" – an *examination interview*, the content of which does not have an informative function.

5. Conclusion

The inability or difficulty of secondary school graduates to reconstruct material[14] previously acquired and saved has various causes. One of them may be the phenomenon of the forgetting of "not used information recorded in the form of memory traces" (*Psychology of memory* 1997: 228), which is often the result of poor organisation of the learning process, not revising or revising too rarely, thanks to which the result is an improper consolidation of knowledge. Another reason may be the difficulty in recalling certain content due to the temporary unavailability of the "record". Such difficulties arise in various circumstances, including situations of high emotional tension that many exam participants experience.

The positive attitude discussed in the article is characterised by those secondary school graduates who have knowledge of the issues discussed dur-

---

[14] I assume that this is the case, because the content of the exam results from the curriculum requirements that the teacher is obliged to carry out.

ing the interview, but not enough. That is why in their statements they use either the uncertainty strategy or the strategy of "loud thinking" that supports recollection. On the other hand, a negative attitude is characteristic of those who are unable to recreate knowledge and, breaking the overriding principle of cooperation, resign from participating in the conversation through refusal, i.e. a message informing the recipient about the termination of contact or through silence.

Finally, perhaps it is worth considering the very formula of the *secondary school final examination interview*, which, contrary to the assumptions of the creators of the new secondary school final examination, is more reminiscent of an "interrogation" rather than a conversation based on a dialogue, in which both parties have an influence on the course of the dialogue. I am thinking here of a dialogue as being something "that happens between people and not something that one person does to another" (Stewart 2000: 45). This would mean that the student would not only recreate ready-made knowledge, but would also become a "pending speaker", a "dialogue listener". One of the ways to change the character of the *secondary school final exam interview* is to ask open questions that trigger the higher-level thinking processes (these questions constituted less than 30% of the examined material). The openness of the questions would bring the *secondary school final exam interview* closer to "real communication", which has an informational function and would give the student the opportunity to both demonstrate their knowledge and, more importantly, the right to express their own judgments, reflections and views on the issues raised. Perhaps in such a situation the student would not have to use strategies masking their ignorance.

Literature

Antas J., 2008, *O kłamstwie i kłamaniu*, Kraków.
Arabski J., 1997, *Przyswajanie języka obcego i pamięć werbalna*, Katowice.
Dąmbska I., 1963, *Milczenie jako wyraz i jako wartość*, „Roczniki Filozoficzne", vol. 11, issue 1, p. 73–79.
Dąmbska I., 1973, *O funkcjach semiotycznych milczenia*. – I. Dąmbska, *Znaki i myśli. Wybór pism z semiotyki, teorii nauki i historii filozofii*, Warszawa–Poznań–Toruń, p. 93–104.
Gajda S., 1982, *Podstawy badań stylistycznych nad językiem naukowym*, Wrocław.
Grabias S., 2001, *Język w zachowaniach społecznych*, Lublin.

Grębowiec J., 2013, *Mówić i działać. Wykłady z pragmatyki języka*, Wrocław.

Grice H. P., 1975/1980, *Logika a konwersacja*, translated by B. Stanosz. – *Język w świetle nauki*, ed. B. Stanosz, Warszawa, p. 91–114.

Kawka M., 1999, *Dyskurs szkolny. Zagadnienia języka*, Kraków.

Kita M., 1999, „*...porozmawiajmy o rozmowie". Kryteria typologii rozmowy jako interakcji werbalnej*, „Stylistyka" VIII, p. 119–131.

Myrdzik B., 2000, *Czy rozmowa jest metodą? – Nowoczesność i tradycja w kształceniu literackim. Podręcznik do ćwiczeń z metodyki języka polskiego*, ed. B. Myrdzik, Lublin, pp. 95-103.

Nęcka E., Orzechowski J., Szymura B., 2006, *Psychologia poznawcza*, Warszawa.

Nęcki Z., 1996, *Komunikacja międzyludzka*, Kraków.

Nocoń J., 2011, *Stylistyczne aspekty dyskursu edukacyjnego. – Odmiany stylowe polszczyzny – dawniej i dziś*, ed. U. Sokólska, Białystok, p. 187–200.

Perrott E., 1995, *Efektywne nauczanie. Praktyczny przewodnik doskonalenia nauczania*, Warszawa.

Psychologia pamięci, 1997, ed. Z. Chlewiński, A. Hankała, M. Jagodzińska, B. Mazurek, Warszawa.

Stewart J. (ed.), 2000, *Mosty zamiast murów. Podręcznik komunikacji interpersonalnej*, Warszawa.

Szczepanek A., 1991, *O strukturze semantyczno-składniowej prac maturalnych. – Zagadnienia komunikacji językowej dzieci i młodzieży*, ed. J. Porayski-Pomsta, Warszawa, p. 173–184.

Tabisz A., 2016, *Modalność epistemiczna w ustnych wypowiedziach maturzystów*, „Stylistyka" XXV, p. 429–443.

https://cke.gov.pl/images/_EGZAMIN_MATURALNY_OD_2015/Informatory/2015/Jezyk-polski.pdf

"Perhaps you remember…?" About students' strategies of remembering the forgotten during secondary school final examination interviews

The basic question I pose in this paper is the following: What language strategies are used by students who find it difficult to reproduce the content required during a secondary school final examination interviews?

The text consists of four main parts. In the first part, on the basis of legal acts, I describe the formula of the new secondary school final examination in Polish, taking into account its purpose and course. In the second part, I focus my attention on one part of the oral exam – the final examinationinterview– seeing it as a species functioning in the educational discourse. The third part contains the results of

the analysis of the questions asked to the students during the secondary school final examination interviews. In the last part of the paper, I describe two attitudes adopted by students in a situation when their knowledge is insufficient to be able to fully answer the questions asked. The first positive attitude is expressed through an uncertainty strategy or a 'loud thinking' strategy that supports recollection. On the other hand, the second attitude – negative – characterises those students who are unable to recreate knowledge and who, breaking the overriding principle of cooperation, resign from taking part in the conversation by refusing, i.e. by sending a message informing about breaking contact, or by silence.

Finally, I postulate that during the examination, more often open questions should be asked, triggering higher level thinking, seeing this as an opportunity to bring the final exam closer to 'real communication', serving as information and giving the student the opportunity both to demonstrate knowledge and, more importantly, the right to express their own judgments, reflections and views on the issues raised. Perhaps then they would not have to use strategies masking his ignorance.