EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF LANGUAGE JOURNAL

Language and School

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INTRODUCTION

Why ERL Journal and why this volume's theme?

The educational role of language - the journal's pivotal theme - is a **globally meaningful issue**. Its salience and worldwide relevance can be well understood and properly appreciated by joint consideration of the following concepts/positions: (a) the so-called *linguistic turn*, which occurred in humanities nearly 100 years ago[1] and which stipulates a shift of emphasis from speaking about the world by means of language to an opposite view whereby language becomes understood as an act of changes, as a process of harnessing the world in forms of expression and modification of the world; (b) the *interdependence between the three spheres[2]* – perceptual (constituted by reality experienced by man), subjective (man experiencing that world), and intersubjective (the sphere of meanings worked out by community and mediating the other two spheres); (c) the *assignment of meanings*, performed continuously on the individual stratum and resulting in the "narrative turn", whereby language is a medium thanks to which complex internal narrations convey meanings and each of the subjects creates a different type of the narration about the world[3]; and (d) the simultaneousness of our world's formation and language expressed in that "we ourselves are words (...) words are who we are, they extend from our essence and they define our being. They define our place in the world and they define the world in which we are placed"[4].

The issue in question **intersects pedagogy and linguistics** and also pertains to other multiple disciplines and subjects which – only if rested upon jointly – can credibly unravel the position of language in education. The degree in which the educational role of language is an interdisciplinary theme leads to two major conclusions: <u>first</u>, it necessitates the involvement of specialists having different – yet complementary – perspectives on it, many of whom can be seen in somewhat bipolar terms, as for, example: educational scientists and linguists, first/native language educators and second/foreign language teachers, theoreticians and practitioners of language, qualitative researchers and quantitative analysts, university academics and primary/secondary school teachers, early education specialists and higher education experts, but also sociolinguists and psycholinguists, syntacticians and phoneticians, speech therapists and language coaches, ethnolinguists, language anthropologists and possibly others; and <u>second</u>, there is a need for a journal combining educational and linguistic studies, which is precisely what the ERL Journal aspires to do. We believe that thanks to the journal filling an important niche, many writers and researchers who has till date struggled with the dilemma as to whether to publish in an education- or language-oriented journal, publish **here**.

Hence, the ERL Journal addresses the said multi-faceted realm and takes into account the social complexity of the eponymous issue. Published by the International Association for the Educational Role of Language, it reflects encompasses ERLA's interests comprised of what we refer to as '**Scope Major**' and '**Scope Minor**'. Under the former, ERL Association – and, as a result, also ERL Journal – focuses (more broadly) on the educational role of language at the level of SCHOOLING, CULTURE, METHODS and PERSONALITY, whereas under the latter – (more narrowly) on language-user perspective by studying language beliefs (what we THINK OF language), language activity (what we DO WITH language), language affect (how we FEEL ABOUT language),and language matrices of reality interpretation (how we UNDERSTAND THROUGH language), with all the four areas complementing and supporting one another. In our efforts to combine eight areas of the two scopes (also referred to as 'strands' in the Journal), we strive to retain geographical extensiveness and balance on multiple levels, and to have a reader-friendly and

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[1] The term was introduced first by Ludwig Wittgenestein in 1921 in his Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung.

[2] as distinguished by Jürgen Habermas in Communication and the Evolution of Society (1979).

[3] as presented by Anna Wasilewska in her discussion "Expansion of linguistic paradigm in studies on childhood and school" published in Educational Role of Language, M. Daszkiewicz, A. Wasilewska, E. Filipiak, R. Wenzel (Eds.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe KATEDRA, 2017.

[4] Likutei Sichos; further developed by Isaac Calvert in his talk at the 2nd ERL Conference in Gdańsk in 2017.

ground-breaking character, with the former achieved by means of an approachable language and the latter by promotion of innovative papers highlighting the educational role of language. Technically speaking, we assume publication of two types of volumes: <u>regular issues</u> covering any one or more of 4 strands of the Scope Major (Module 1) or 4 strands of the Scope Minor (Module 2), and <u>special issues</u> edited by academics providing a template-based volume outline.

 This – **launch** – volume exemplifies the range of issues falling within the aforementioned extensive field and runs across different areas, which, despite seeming divergent, share a lot. In this first volume we emphasise the category of learners' ***EXPERIENCING OF LANGUAGE*** at the level of language content, digital interaction, speaking and writing. We view it as a highly suitable start of our joint interdisciplinary "journey", following the previous "adventures" in the form of ERL Conferences, ERL Network and ERL Association. The concept of language experience renders it possible to explain in perhaps the simplest form what the ERL Journal is about: it has been initiated to study and share how learners and teachers from across the globe <u>experience</u> the educational position of language. Accordingly, this volume gathers 13 papers by authors from different continents relating to various dimensions of the educational world, that is to language in and outside the classroom, language skills, schoolbooks, and virtual reality. Additionally, the volume includes one review of a book whose interdisciplinary character can be seen as representative of the ERL field, and one report representing the "ERL story" from the position of one of our regulars, who has participated in all the ERL conferences held so far and has also been involved in ERL Journa's strands coordination. We leave the interpretation of all the papers and the two extras to our readers, whom we also encourage to submit their own papers presenting their own views on the eponymous concept. We hope that the ERL Journal will serve the examination and the position of language in education.

M. Daszkiewicz

Part I.

Theory and Practice of the Educational Role of Language. PAPERS

The situational factors on the learners' language – the existence of different language styles in different mathematics classroom situations

Elisa Bitterlich

Technical University Dresden, Germany; elisa.bitterlich@tu-dresden.de

Abstract

In the last decades, the role of language in mathematics and mathematics education has increasingly caught attention of many researchers in the field of education, teaching and linguistics. Within this context, a frequent use of the term 'Academic Language' (AL) is noticed. However, there is no universal definition of the exact meaning of AL. The presented research investigates the learners' discourse competences within different situations and asks the following: How does the use of language and discourse change during different situations in the mathematics classroom? For this purpose, mathematics lessons of several classes have been video-recorded and selected passages have been analyzed by means of interactional analysis. Within the frame of this paper, some initial results of a grade one classroom will illuminate that the situation and visual aids play an important role in the use of (academic) language.

Keywords: *academic language, discourse, language register, interactional analysis, interpretative classroom research*

Fundamental theoretical considerations

The role of language in the mathematics classroom is inconsistent discussed relative to the underlying traditions and purposes of research works. The paper gives a short overview of the importance of language for learning in a (mathematics) classroom and shows that language competences in *Academic Language* (AL) seem to have significant influence in the learners' mathematical achievements. But while lexical and semantical aspects of AL attract attention in many studies, discursive aspects have only received the necessary attention in more recent studies (e.g., Moschkovich 2007/2018, Sfard 2012, Erath 2016, Quasthoff & Morek 2017, Schütte & Krummheuer 2017). A closer look at specific discursive phenomena and special contextual circumstances within the mathematics classroom could clarify how crucial the situation for the learners' use of language might be and in which degree their use of language changes during these different situations. After some theoretical basics about the importance of language in educational settings and the existence of different language registers within mathematical classroom situations, some research examples and findings of a dissertation project will illuminate how the situation affects the learners' language and what this could mean for their learning processes.

The importance of language for (mathematics) learning

Many investigations have proven the close connection of language-based and subject-based learning during different classroom activities and the concomitant educational success (e.g. Townsend et al. 2012). Three (and in this regard maybe even four) meaningful aspects of language within the classroom could be identified: First, it is the central *medium* for teaching and learning processes as verbal as well as written language is the central tool to transport information (Prediger 2013). To actively participate in school, pupils need to hold special language-based competences in order to, for example, read and understand subject-specific texts, to follow the explanation of the teacher, or to give a description to classmates. But not all learners bring the same language skills into the mathematics classroom, with the result that not all of them are able to equally participate (Prediger 2013). Language, according to that, is not just a medium to negotiate specialized mathematical contents, but an essential *precondition* for learning (often taken for granted) and a *learning target* as well. The aspect that (academic) language could be seen as a central precondition and target for learning and active participation in all school subjects underlines, that 'successful' students are expected to hold good (academic) language-based competences (Gogolin & Lange 2011). If not, language could become a learning *obstacle,* in case students do not hold enough competences in language production and reception which seem necessary in educational settings (Prediger 2013).

Here, a distinction between different language registers seems useful, since several researchers in the field of mathematics education and migration research for example argue that worse school achievements cannot solely be explained with language-based competences in *Everyday Language* (e.g., Schütte 2014). On the contrary, the competences of (second-language) learners in Everyday Language are often well developed and their language skills are estimated as 'good' (Gogolin 2013). However, this often disguises their worse linguistic competences in the educational/classroom context, which seem to be more important for educational success. Linguistic competences of this kind are closely linked to the term *Academic Language.*

Academic language

Closely linked to the focus on language in the context of school and mathematics education, the term *Academic Language* (AL) is frequently used. Despite many academic examinations – in the German as well as in the English context – there exists a variety of synonymously used terms like Bildungssprache (Academic Language), Schulsprache (Language of Schooling) or Standardsprache (Standard Language). At the moment, (in Germany) an empirically-based specification of the characteristics of AL as well as models to describe the AL competences of the learners are not available (Heppt 2016). Additionally, normative views and considerations lead the discussion and open up dichotomous distinctions such as Everyday versus Academic Language or formal versus informal. Frequently, AL is seen as a language register that is used in the context of school and education in order to impart knowledge, and that orients itself by written language with its higher degree of complexity and explicitness (Gogolin & Lange 2011). Moreover, in a normative way AL is seen as „that linguistic register, whose mastery is expected from a 'successful' pupil" (Gogolin & Lange 2011: 111, translated by the author).

In this regard, especially students with lower socioeconomical backgrounds, migration backgrounds, or a different mother tongue seem to need more time and greater effort to acquire competences in AL (e.g., Butler, Bailey, Stevens, Huang, & Lord 2004, Heppt 2016). But educators and teachers in kindergarten and primary school often do not act as linguistic role models: AL often is not a learning target, since in his examination Schütte (2014) could hardly find any situation in which linguistic learning was being made explicit and oral communication was mostly implemented in Everyday Language. "The children are therefore unable to learn linguistic skills [in AL] related to the mathematical concepts" (Schütte 2014: 936). Nevertheless, AL remains to be a central and meaningful precondition for learning, in mathematical texts and achievement tests as well. Students are expected to communicate in an appropriate way during lessons. For example, they have to explain and justify mathematical solutions or to answer the teachers' questions in a correct manner. "All these activities are accomplished not only by using certain syntactical constructions and academic vocabulary but within *situated* communicative practices […]" (Heller 2015: 1). In this regard, it also seems important to consider the fact that students have to use AL in many different educational settings in different ways and become more and more familiar with AL.

Everyday academic language

If we consider the fact that learners are confronted with AL in many (or even all) mathematical contents and classes, we could contemplate that AL in the mathematics classroom could be seen as an *Everyday Academic Language*, since students get familiar with AL and its norms when participating in lessons every day for many years. Also following Moschkovich (2018) research on language and learning mathematics needs to "move away from simplified views of language as vocabulary [...] [and instead] recognize language as a complex meaning making system" (Moschkovich 2018: 38). Through the perspective that meaning is negotiated in social interactions, learning is seen as a social and co-constructive process. In this regard, language can no longer be seen solely as medium, precondition and learning target but also acquires a central significance, if not *the* central significance in the building of mathematical knowledge and the development of mathematical thought (Schütte 2018). During classroom activities, students use multiple resources from their experiences inside and outside of school. Therefore, it is important to avoid the construction of Academic and Everyday Language as a dichotomous distinction, because it depends on how we define these two types of language, respectively discourse (Moschkovich 2007). In this regard, the term

Everyday Academic Language seems to underline the fact that students (and teachers as well) do not solely use 'the' AL but rather a mix of multiple resources from different language registers (e.g., Schütte & Krummheuer 2017).

Many publications in the field of language and education or language and mathematics use the term *Discourse* to underline relationships between language, the social and situational context in which this (special form of) language is used, and the produced meanings in this context. But just like for AL, many different definitions for Discourse as well as different analytic approaches to study (mathematical) discourses (Morgan 2016) exist.

Discourse

In the context of the presented study it is important to find an underlying concept for the term Discourse that fits to the goals and methods of the study on the one hand and that is compatible with already existing studies in the field of mathematics education. As already stated above, it is differently discussed which linguistic features rank among discursive ones. Most studies on discourse in mathematics education define *discourse practices* or *discursive norms* with the focus on selected linguistic activities like explanations and arguments. Mostly it is stated that the construction and organization of such texts, which are used for the realization of specific school-based language actions (like report, presentation, discussion), has to fulfil specific conditions. Especially language-based actions like descriptions, explanations, comparisons, and argumentations were frequently listed (e.g., Bailey, Butler, LaFramenta, & Ong 2004, Vollmer 2010).

The presented study takes up a broader view on mathematical discourse and the learners' language (like Moschkovich 2018, Sfard 2012, and Gee 2005), as well as on the term *Everyday Academic Language,* instead of opening up the dichotomy between Everyday *versus* Academic Language. It should not be self-evident that AL is used in all situations or by all learners in the same way to share meaning and knowledge. A more elaborate language does not necessarily have to result in a greater learning success; and even if the situation could be characterized as an educational or mathematical discourse, the learner's language might occur as Everyday Language or less explicit, elaborate and decontextualized, but with a high impact on the learning success for the learners. "Since there are multiple mathematical Discourse practices, rather than one monolithic mathematical Discourse, we should clarify the differences among multiple ways of talking mathematically […]" (Moschkovich 2007: 28).

That is why this study aims to consider the use of the learners' language during different situations within the mathematics classroom. Moving away from such dichotomies could help to suggest mathematical (classroom) discourses as a hybrid of different discourses with many co-existing registers. In this sense, it is not enough to know what a (mathematical) word means. Learners should be able to make sense of ways in which the word is used or put together with other meaningful words and phrases to constitute a mathematical meaning and to express conceptual understanding (Prediger 2013, Moschkovich 2018). The events in the mathematics classroom present different and manifold language-based challenges to pupils and it often depends on the situation and the participants itself, if a given statement is seen as appropriate and suitable or not.

For this research project, the underlying concept of *D/discourse* is the one of Gee (2005, 2015). Following Gee, "language is a tool for three things: saying, doing, being. When we speak or write we simultaneously say something (inform), do something (act), and are something (be)." (Gee 2015: 1). In order to be recognized as a member of a community or a Discourse, it is not enough to "talk the talk" – somebody also has to "walk the walk" (Gee 2015: 1). For example, being recognized as a high-achieving student in mathematics depends on the situation itself, because what works in one setting does not necessarily work in other settings. It is not enough to speak in an appropriate manner and use a prepared list of vocabulary. One also needs to behave in an adequate way. Different situations create different opportunities to behave and the classroom participants themselves could be seen as an own micro-culture that generates special ways of 'doing mathematics'. Closely related to this, Gee (2005) distinguishes between discourse (with small-d) and Discourse (with capital D). The former he defines as language-in-use among people. In this sense, we are interested in "how the flow of language-in-use across time and the

patterns and connections across this flow of language make sense and guide in interpretation" (Gee 2015: 2) to build identities. However, such identities or activities are rarely enacted only through language as with non-language aspects. In this way, Discourse (with capital D) is defined as "language and 'other stuff'" (Gee 2005: 7), by what he means things like gestures, bodies, interactions and beliefs. Every situation creates specific language-based requirements as well as (in)appropriate and (un)suitable possibilities to use language. The analysis of Big-D Discourse embeds the former type of discourse analysis (with small d) "into the ways in which language melds with bodies and things to create society and history." (Gee 2015: 2)

Since the presented research takes up a micro-sociological perspective, I therefore use the term Discourse to signify both, language-in-use as well as some "other stuff" like gestures, actions and other context-sensitive aspects. The prime focus is on the language of students in use among different situations (discourse) but it seems also helpful to consider other influencing factors (Discourse), like the social formation, the learning content or the existence of visual aids.

Main goals of the study

To clarify the importance of the situation for the learners' language, the existence of empirical evidence would be instrumental for educators, policy makers, and funding agencies alike. To modify the existing dichotomies of Everyday versus Academic Language, respectively a 'worse' and a 'better' way of speaking in an academic context, a wider perspective on language is necessary. To see language as a process rather than as an inflexible object, studies need to consider what mathematical knowledge and discourse practices learners use in different settings, what knowledge and discourse practices learners use across settings, and how to make visible the ways that learners reason mathematically across settings (Moschkovich 2018: 39).

Consequently, one main goal of this research project is to identify which mathematical Discourses exist during different situations and which special language-based discursive opportunities as well as requirements arise from this for the learners. This resembles the two sides of the same coin: on the one hand, the opportunities and possibilities to speak and behave could be very diverse, on the other hand, there could be limiting expectations as well as (implicit) rules and norms. Following Schütte (2014), demands regarding AL have seldom been made explicit by the teachers and are often being taken for granted. "It is certainly desirable for all participating children to be given an introduction to formal and mathematical linguistic aspects, and for the teacher to act as an explicit role model in this regard" (Schütte 2014: 936). Moreover, it is useful to bear in mind that specific classroom situations lead to the emergence of different ways of using language depending on, for example, the age of the learners or the learning content. A changed view on the use of language within the classroom would affect the production of more specific materials and methods to foster the learners' language competences.

Methods and research questions

Based on a social-constructivist view on learning, mathematical and linguistic learning is seen as a collective and interactional process as it is typical for symbolic interactionism (e.g., Blumer 1969, Miller 1986). One main assumption of this approach is that mathematical and linguistic meaning emerges and develops during communicational processes (e.g., Cobb & Bauersfeld 1995, Krummheuer 2011). Learners participate in different manners during different situations. To achieve successful mathematical and discursive competences, they use resources from different registers (Moschkovich 2018, Schütte & Krummheuer 2017). Despite the high theoretical and practical emphasis on improving the learners' language skills and several research efforts in this field, there are less investigations existing to describe AL, respectively discursive (Academic) Language requirements for different social formations, learning contents and class levels (Heppt 2016).

However, opposite to previous and current research opening up dichotomous distinctions such as Everyday/Academic Language under a normative manner, I tend to describe the use of *Everyday Academic Language* during different situations in the mathematics classroom without passing judgement on "worse" and 'better' ways of using language. These dichotomies are not consistent with the current assumption that "everyday and academic practices are intertwined and dialectically connected" (Moschkovich 2018: 39) and

do not fit a social-constructivist view on learning. I suspect that one person uses language in different ways concerning the situation. By considering the interaction of the learners during different mathematics classroom situations, linguistic and discursive particularities should be identified.

There are many influencing factors that may have an impact on the learners' language activities, such as the following: The social formation of the learners (whole class discussions in which the teacher mostly has an outstanding position of regulating, determining and moderating the discussion in both ways, language and organization; or phases of group or pair work which seem to be more intimate). The (non-)existence of the teaching person or another audience. The (non-)existence of illustrative learning material for visualization what could affect the explicitness and clarity of the learners' statements. To gain a broad impression of the learners' language use during different situations of the mathematics classroom and to call into play as many different situations and micro cultures as possible, it is intended to contemplate different school types and class levels. Following these fundamental theoretical concepts and ideas, this study project aims to find answers to the following questions:

- In what extent do the language-based contributions of the learners differ in varying situations of the mathematics classroom, respectively during different mathematical discourses?
- Which scope of action and opportunities for language use can be identified during different situations of the mathematics classroom?
- Which (academic-)language-based requirements, conditions and challenges go along with that and how do the learners fulfill them?

To answer these questions, mathematics lessons of the several classes in Germany have been video-recorded during the period from 2017 to 2018. The duration of the recordings in each class varies from two to four weeks. To underline differences and similarities different school types and grade levels were observed. Selected lessons and passages were transcribed and analyzed via a linguistic analysis on selected language-based aspects and via interactional analysis (Krummheuer 2011) to illuminate how the situation and its opportunities in speaking could be characterized and if mathematical and linguistic meaning emerges.

Initial results

Until now, the database of mathematics lessons encompassed recordings from several German classes in primary school (year one to four), a multi-graded high school class 7 and 8 with children between 12 and 15, and one 12th class of a mathematics intensified course (students are between 17 and 18 years old). Many obviously interesting and meaningful scenes are already transcribed. In the following, different classroom situations of a grade one mathematics class about relational terms will illuminate language and discursive particularities of the different scenes. Due to the shortness of this paper, it is not possible to answer all research questions, but these initial results will show, how important the situation and the existence of visual aids could be for the learner's (academic) language output.

Scene 1 – Class discussion at the start of the mathematics lesson: *What does Croco like to eat?*
The following excerpt is from a class discussion in grade one and the topic is about the relation terms 'greater than' (>) and 'less than' (<). The students already know some tasks and the teacher (T) is now initiating a discussion about the formal expression of the terms with the help of a narrative about a crocodile with an open mouth named *Croco* and towers of cubes in red and blue on the board (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The towers of cubes on the board in front of the class before and after the class discussion.
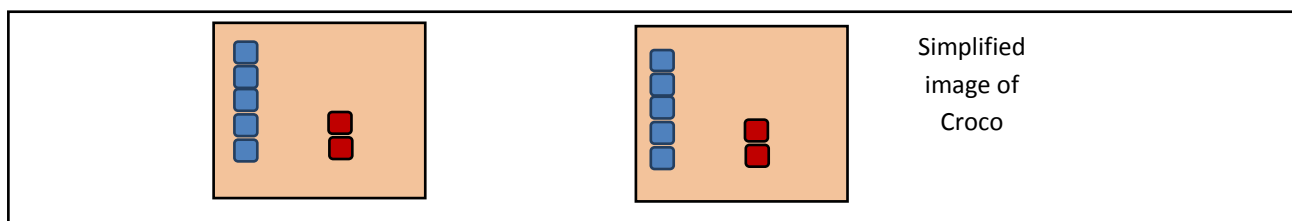
T: Our little Croco always wants to eat a lot. That's why its mouth is open that wide. And now he comes and thinks about. Shall I eat the red ones or the blue ones? What do you think, Ina?
Ina: I think red.
T: You think red [*turns Croco with the open mouth to the two red cubes*]. Why?
Ina: Red is like meat.
T: Aha. That would be a consideration. Nabil, what do you think he wants to eat?
Nabil: Blue?
T: You say blue is what he wants to eat, why? … [*Nabil does not say anything for 4 seconds*]. Simply because blue is beautiful. Okay. Rich, what do you think?
Rich: Ehm. He wants to eat red because it is like meat and fish.
T: [*turns Croco to the red cubes*] Because meat and fish. Mhm. Nagi, what do you think.
Nagi: Blue. Because that is more.
T: That is our little Croco who always wants to eat the most and that's why he looks here [*turns the crocodile between the towers and cubes that it looks to the four blue ones, writes a ">" between the four blue and the red cubes and again places Croco between them*]. Can you see this? Because he always wants to eat what is more.

First of all, we can see that the first two children, Ina and Nabil, were asked by the teacher for an explanation of their given answer. In contrast, the last two children who gave answers, Rich and Nagi, gave these explanations by themselves. We could imagine that they recognized the specific demands and requirements of the situation, that giving an answer is not enough and instead, some remarks about the 'Why' are necessary. In addition, this might be typical for educational contexts. Second, the extract shows that the teacher packs the mathematical content into a narrative, what seems to lead to student answers which are oriented towards the story and less towards the mathematical content. This typical IRE-pattern (Initiation, Response, Evaluation) continues until Nagi gives a satisfactory answer with a short justification about the mathematical insight which is less oriented to the story. Ina and Rich, instead, seem to be 'caught up' in the narrative and try to argue for 'red' as it is similar to the color of raw meat and fish. Although it is visible that there are more blue cubes on the board, two children argue for red, what leads to the assumption that they are too fixated on the story about Croco. However, it remains unclear whether the children could see the mathematical concept behind the story, since only Nagi contributed something mathematical to the situation and the rest of the students' utterances were superficially oriented toward the story of Croco and the colors of the cubes. The teacher did not guide the children in one direction and the idea of color is seen as one possible way to answer the question of what Croco wants to eat.

Scene 2 – Assistance during individual work on the tasks in the workbook: *Do you need help, Nabil?*
Directly after this class discussion the students were asked to complete some exercises about this topic in their workbooks. After four tasks in the style comparable to those on the board – two towers of cubes and in between the students had to place the correct sign – in number two there is no visual support (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The first tasks of number two in the children's workbooks.
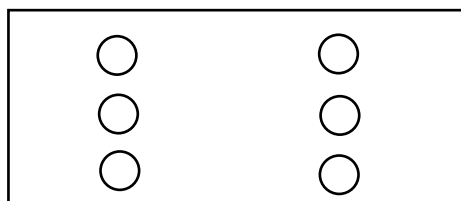
After several minutes, Nabil is still working on number two, while his seatmate Dani has already finished task three. When Dani sees that Nabil has not finished yet, the following conversation starts:
Dani: I am already done. I can help you.
Nabil: Why do you want to help me?

Dani: [*takes the pencil out of Nabils hand and signs on task* 6 O 5 *in his workbook*] Here. See here. Which he would like to eat? Six or five?
Nabil: … Six.
Dani: Yes. So you do it [*writes something in Nabils workbook*]
Nabil: [*takes his pencil from Dani*]
Baila: [*Comes to the desk of Nabil and Dani. Dani stands on Nabil's left. Baila stands to the right of him. Looks on Nabils workbook*] ehm … you are here. Think about it … [*shows three fingers with her left hand*] nine or three. Which is more?
Nabil: [*writes something in his workbook*]
Baila: That`s right.

In this scene, two students who have already finished the tasks in their own workbooks, Dani and Baila, seem to offer help to Nabil, without directly asking him if he wants it. Dani's explanation is similar to that of the teacher as it is bound to the story of Croco. It is more oriented towards the narrative and less towards the mathematical content. If Dani herself requires the story about Croco and his food to solve the tasks in her workbook is doubtful. The argumentation with Croco does not really fit the situation, thus it can be assumed that she might be aware of the underlying mathematical concept and is just using the narrative to visualize the task for Nabil. It seems possible that it becomes even more problematic for Nabil when Dani uses the story of Croco for her explanation of the tasks in number two: There are neither colors nor towers of cubes to be seen, which could be eaten by Croco. There are just numbers and a gap in which the correct relational sign (< or >) has to be filled in. The students seem to be supposed to identify the relationship between the numbers and the correct sign on their own. Nabil answers with 'Six', what could be an indication for his understanding of the mathematical concept. It remains questionable, if he requires the story of Croco to solve the tasks or if the narrative itself leads to the slow progress in the processing of tasks.

Directly after this, another student named Baila approaches Nabil and 'helps' him without asking, if he is in need of help. This could be seen as a typical discursive characteristic in educational settings or especially in this class: If there is someone who has not finished yet, students who already have finished help them to solve the tasks. Baila also offers an explanation, which, in comparison to Dani's, is more formal and oriented to the mathematical content. Since there are no visual aids in number two, she uses her fingers and shows the number 'three' to illustrate something for Nabil. Again, Nabil seems to know the right answer and it is questionable once more, if he needs the girls' help, if the story of Croco is helpful for his understanding of the mathematical concept, or if his slow progress is caused by the inappropriate and confusing use of the narrative. The connection between the story of Croco and the correct solution of the task (including the correct sign) is not verbalized until now and still remains implicit.

Concluding remarks – narratives could mask the mathematical content and affect the learners' language

The presented scenes illuminate two central aspects, which seem to be really important for (mathematics) teachers, for scientist in the area of language and education, as well as for educators designing schoolbooks.

First: If the mathematical content is bound to a narrative, this could hinder the students to see the mathematical structure in it since they might solely focus on the story. The analysis' results are comparable to those of Schütte and Krummheuer (2017), who found that if the (mathematical) content is 'packed' in a narrative, the interpretations of the learners and their verbal utterances could be bound to the story. This could hinder them to gain mathematical-based interpretations and to understand the underlying mathematical construct (Schütte & Krummheuer 2017). On the one hand, such narratives like the story about Croco seem to simplify the start of a new learning content as they "catch" the students' attention. On the other hand, educators who design work- and textbooks for school as well as teachers themselves should be aware of the risk that some students could lose themselves in the story and not 'see' the learning content just because of that.

Second: Visual aids could support the students' understanding of the mathematical content. They also could make it easier for students to follow the lesson and take part in it verbally, since verbal utterances

are also visualized. On the other hand, visual aids could reduce the learners' language explicitness, as it seems less important to verbalize all facts (Fetzer & Tiedemann 2015). Especially in scene one, the class discussion is more about the colors than on the number of cubes on the board, although this was the important aspect to answer the question "What does Croco like to eat?". Like the story-boundedness, visual aids have positive and negative aspects. Teachers and educators should be aware of these / both.

In sum, it can be stated that in the presented transcripts it was reconstructed that the learners' language is strongly affected by the situation, especially the existence of visual aids and the 'packing' of the learning content into a narrative. In this view, interaction could be seen as a "discursive practice, primarily structured by the social action it forms, rather than by its content" (Barwell 2003: 201). In the presented situations, telling the story about Croco seems more important than the mathematical structure of 'less-than' and 'greater-than' that goes beyond the story. In this regard, we can identify a central challenge for early childhood educators: On the one hand, it seems necessary to 'build up' a story about a mathematical content and to use visual aids to support the learners' understanding and to reduce linguistic requirements. On the other hand, such a narrative could be an obstacle for the children, preventing them from 'seeing' the mathematical content behind it.

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Content and language integrated learning and teaching in digital class: Latvia experience

Zenta Anspoka*, Inese Eglite**
*University of Latvia, Latvia; zenta.anspoka@lu.lv
**University of Latvia, Latvia; inese.eglite@inbox.lv

Abstract

The topicality of the research relates to the problem that in the last ten or more years approximately 300 thousand Latvian people live outside Latvia. Together with parents are living children in more than 15 countries. One of the tasks with national importance is to help to children and their family to save or to develop Latvian language and culture traditions, to give possibility to return to Latvia and to continue education process in Latvia. Latvian Language State Agency provides an opportunity to learn Latvian as a State language and to get acquainted with Latvian culture traditions, to understand social events, relationships in the society. One of possibility for this is to plan and to realize integrated content and language learning and teaching process for children outside Latvia in a digital class. That means to use Classflow site and another digital tools (Skype, a mobile phone and toys with special computer software, interactive blackboard programs etc.). Aim of the study is to analyze the experience of children living outside Latvia to learn integrated content and language with digital tools. Research is based on analyses of theories about content and language integrated learning, communicative approach for language acquirement and teacher's professional competence. Empirical research is based on pedagogical observation and teacher's survey results. As respondents are 120 children (6-14 year old) in 22 groups/digital classes and 16 teachers.

Keywords: digital class as a work organization form, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), teacher's professional competence

Introduction

Now more than 300 thousand Latvian citizens live abroad in more than 15 countries of the world. Among them are families with children who do not plan to return to their ethnic homeland soon, as well as those who intend to do so and enroll children in the Latvian education system. Regardless of the purpose of each person in terms of returning to Latvia, each of them is the national value of the Latvia, and it is essential to strengthen the link between them and the state. The Latvian Language State Agency implements this national policy and this work has been expanded in recent years to become purposeful and long-term.

As the Latvian language is a great value and the basis of Latvian identity, much has been done to ensure the learning of the Latvian language in both so-called Sunday schools and summer schools. One of the latest ways to promote a more regular and quality learning of the Latvian language is to use one of the so-called distance learning form – digital class. The approved digital class in Latvia is the one developed on the Classflow site. ClassFlow is a comprehensive teaching and learning platform - an online learning management tool that allows you to collaborate with the teacher regardless of where your child is located. The technical possibilities allow the children to meet regularly and create interactive content and methodology for learning language and Latvian culture, actively involve children in class and quickly evaluate achievements. Classflow site gives possibility to use different digital tools: Skype, a mobile phone and toys with special computer software, interactive blackboard programs etc.

Aim of the study is to analyze the experience of children living outside Latvia to learn integrated content and language with digital tools.

Research is based on analyses of theories about content and language integrated learning (CLIL), communicative approach for language acquirement and teacher's professional competence. Empirical research is based on pedagogical observation and teacher's survey results. As respondents are 120 children (6-14 year old) in 22 groups/digital classes and 16 teachers.

Results and discussion

Language is not only a mean of communication. Language is also a mean of acknowledging human thinking, self-affirmation and ethnicity. Language skill includes the skill to perform speech activities depending on the communication situation and one's own intentions. The exploration of language is not

possible without the study of culture, which includes social behaviour and situations characteristic for the particular language users (Hall 2002).

One of the solutions to achieve a high-quality language learning process is to plan and carry out two important tasks in the teaching and learning process – to help to children to acquire different content and purposefully to use language for this. One of important task is to use content and language integration as a teaching and learning approach (CLIL). CLIL provides an opportunity not only to acquire content and language in mutual relation, but also perceive learning as a purposeful activity, in which everything is mutually related and important (Marsh 2012).

Topicality of CLIL is determined by several factors. The following factors could be mentioned as the most important ones: ethnic and linguistic diversity of children groups, policy of national education and social integration and the goal of the developed learning content and the envisaged approach for its acquisition to eliminate fragmentation and duplication, provide succession of learning content acquisition and an opportunity for each children to see interconnections between the acquired in different areas, apply their knowledge in practice (Anspoka 2019).

CLIL encourages not only the learning of language and culture in a mutual interaction, but also raises teacher's and learner's expectations, increases vocabulary learning skills and grammatical awareness, motivates students´ independence, improves language skills, communication skills, generates positive attitudes (Coyle 2007).

Pedagogical practise shows that the CLIL approach enables the teacher to vary methodology, as in the learning process the content does not dominate, but rather the way how the children acquires it, and it is important for child's personal development. According to pedagogical observation content is organized thematically. Specific topics suitable for the language learner make it possible to perceive the interrelations between language and culture, language and universe, to learn different language functions in relation to the age and traditions of a nation, to expand the cultural point of view.

Since the topics are interconnected, the teacher encourages the children to activate the previous experience and improve it, gradually move towards learning new knowledge and skills: speak, read or write in Latvian about various events, facts relevant to the child's age, and analyze them at each new lesson. The thematic approach does not break the system, even when issues relevant to the children are included in a situation, unexpected events or facts, etc., are discussed. The child learns to understand that language is not only a means of communication, but also a means of thinking, self-awareness and ethnicity.

By improving own speech skills, a child awaits to see an achievement in this respect. If he or she does not see a point in doing these tasks, if the acquisition of new things is not based on previous experience, there comes frustration since the expectations have not delivered a lasting satisfaction. In this stage a child feels disappointed, becomes stressed, experiences inner anxiety that often leads to isolation, protest and reluctance to speak, and later, possibly, a refusal to read and write. This is especially dangerous during pre-school and early school age, when learning a language as a meaningful process has just begun. It is at this age that a child discovers the world and learns to live in it physically, emotionally and socially. For this reason, during the speech development process the choice of learning contents as well as the teaching methodology and the achievement assessment system must be well thought through (Anspoka 2011).

The tasks, in which the child can use the language per his level of knowledge - to tell, to name what he has seen or heard, to create a dialog, to describe the objects or creatures, to ask and answer, are very important whatever if you learn traditionally in a classroom with direct contact with a teacher or from the distance.

Digital class as a nowadays phenomenon for teaching and learning

Nowadays distance learning tools are becoming more and more important. It is determined by different circumstances. One of them is that those who learn do not live in the country whose curriculum is learned. We can also talk about the digital class as a work organization form nowadays. It is a class that exists on a digital platform and uses different digital tools.

The digital class as a form of work organization meets the same general requirements, which also apply to the so-called traditional class, which provides definite time for specific task (30 or 40 minutes depending

on the child's age), each lesson has the goal, while the work is planned for children with different backgrounds and abilities of previous experience, new lesson is a continuation of the previous lesson depending on the purpose of the study, each lesson has certain structure, as well adequate culture of communication, hygiene requirements etc. are ensured (Žogla 2001).

At the same time, the digital class also has specific features, and the most common are:
- children can learn together in different parts of the world, if they live in the same or similar time zone;
- teacher and children has indirect contact; they see each other only on the screen;
- the technical possibilities allow to provide a greater variety of visual materials and the activity of the child during the learning process;
- the teacher can use the experience of different countries in the education system when planning lesson content and choosing a methodology;
- previous work can be saved and used during other lessons;
- the child learns in a more comfortable environment and time, for example, at home;
- the child can, independently and together with the teacher, use or improve his previous experience in working with a computer, Skype program, etc. information technology tools.

According to the current procedure of the Latvian Language State Agency, children from different countries of the world meet each other and teacher in a digital classroom twice a week. The main prerequisites are the residence country of children of the same or at least similar time zone, as well as, if possible, the age and language proficiency level.

Pedagogical observation shows that the latter conditions are the most difficult to implement, therefore successful work is based on the teacher's professionalism to prepare the content of the lesson and to use the methodology that allows individualize and differentiate the work regardless of the child's needs and abilities. Classes take place after lessons or after-school activities in the school or pre-school in the residence country. As children have a different level of knowledge of the Latvian language and the ability to use information technologies, parents play significant role in helping children to cope with the use of the website and the execution of the tasks. This applies to pre-school and primary-school children. Adolescents work independently and they do not need assistance of the parents.

Children get acquainted with work rule during the first lessons for more successful cooperation, with the teacher and the parents agree on a certain gesture, sign, etc., use. This work approach allows understanding in the digital environment when the task is completed, who will be the first to answer, how to follow speech behavior and language culture, respect the one who is speaking, asks the question or provides the answer. Children also learn essential technical rules such as sound muting rules in Skype when listening to a song, reading a text, or watching a movie. It is also important to have common rituals, with which the lesson begins and ends, the teacher's emotional intelligence, and the attitude to every child. Since the teacher can not invite each child to come, to encourage him via direct contact, the teacher is forced to think both about its voice tempo, the pace and empathy so that the child could feel good and be motivated to observe, listen and perform the tasks during the lesson.

When interviewing digital class teachers, all of them admitted that the positive emotional environment makes the child to forget about fatigue after school or hobby groups, stimulates working with peers from different countries. To form each child's sense of belonging to their group, digital class teachers organize targeted birthdays or name days, celebrations of traditional Latvian holidays, important holidays and remembrance days of Latvia. It allows children to learn different traditions, folk songs, and poems, to tell them or sing in Latvian. Children can compare, how and what is celebrated in their home countries and in Latvia (Martin day, Christmas, Meteni, Easter, etc.). Consequently, it can be argued that culturally oriented content and Latvian language has been studied in a nonintrusive, meaningful process.

Teacher's professional competence – guarantor for the quality of work in the digital classes
At the same time, the professionalism of the Latvian language teacher in many aspects can determine that the learning process of the Latvian language can become a beautiful and emotional meeting not only with the Latvian language, but also with the Latvian lifestyle, Latvian cultural values in many families even

after several years. Consequently, at the level of the state education policy, it is intended that this important work would be carried out by specially trained teachers.

One of the most important questions of teacher's professionalism is the understanding that CLIL is a psychological, pedagogical and social process in which the child progressively acquires facts and values of Latvian culture and other cultures, language regularities, skills to use them, develops the sense of language as a speaker and the ability to write based on the acquired knowledge, to understand and assess the its own and other people speech. The child's conceptual thinking, perception of the world and attitude towards it develops along with the language.

When preparing digital teaching materials, the development and maintaining of the rich language is crucial. It is important for the child to hear and learn to perceive and understand language-specific sounds, semantics, textual and stylistic peculiarities step by step. Synonyms and imaginative means can not be ignored. On the contrary, it is important for the child to get used to the variety of expressions. If the child is confused, doesn't understand, it's always possible for the teacher to change the way of speech, to offer an explanation and use other pedagogical tools (Anspoka & Stangaine 2017).

It is important for a child to understand the language from the context, because only the context reveals not only the meaning of the word, but also the properties of phenomena, their quantity, states or sequence. Even it is easier for a child to learn the grammatical form of words, word derivations, compound words, etc., if these words are used in a context. At the same time, the child learns to understand that each word has two important features - sound and meaning. Mechanical memorizing the words, teaching without understanding of their meaning does not give the desired result. It is important for the child to create a match between the image and the name.

Reading aloud has a great value. The text read by the teacher or recorded text, the reader's voice intonations, timbre and tempo create associations in the child, he perceives the values expressed in the text, making them the benefits of his personality. Listening to the text, the child activates imagination, it creates emotional experience.

It is worth mentioning the use of multiple languages without fear of any harm to the child. Physically and mentally healthy, growing between two languages and two cultures, child develops higher metalinguistic skills, he learns more socio-cultural attitudes and the ability to adapt better to different cultural environments. The pedagogical process can not avoid the interactions between different languages, but at the same time it is necessary to be aware that languages do not differ from one another simply by the fact that one thing in one language has one name, in another language another name. A vocabulary is not the most important part of a language, although the non-linguist has the tendency to notice straightforward isolated words. More important than individual words is the way in which each language combines them into word groups and which are selected by us in a particular case. You should first help a bilingual child to formulate a thought, learn to choose the appropriate words, and not necessarily mechanically searching for corresponding "isolated" word (Anspoka & Stangaine 2017, Anspoka & Stangaine 2016).

The observation of the pedagogical process and the survey of teachers show that the work of Latvian language teacher with children from outside Latvia is not only about helping a child learn the words, phrases or sentences, but also how gradually and slowly to introduce the Latvian traditions, games, and most importantly - to convince the child that people, regardless of the place of residence, share the same basic values - honesty, kindness, sincerity and respect for each other. Teacher of Latvian language must be prepared to work simultaneously with children who have the experience of the Latvian language, and with children and their parents who doesn't speak Latvian. It is a real professional challenge to find the way to each child's mind and heart step-by-step. Being aware of the benefits of the digital world, it is not possible to ignore the fact that it also changes the child's attention structure, emotional contact.

As the pedagogical practice observations show, the child may be more likely to distract attention from what should be done, to lose contact with a teacher and classmates in a digital classroom, if it doesn't know how to work with Skype program or resources provided on the Classflow website, in case of technical difficulties with the computer, Internet connection, etc. The child's attention can be distracted by the great colorfulness, the various effects that can be achieved through various information technology tools, and

the fact that the teacher's presence is not direct. When planning and organizing the work in a digital classroom to help the child learn Latvian traditions in an integrated way, information about Latvian nature, social events, prominent personalities and basic language skills, the teacher should consider that the child's participation in the study process is possible if the content is equally important in the classroom, as language learning methodology and assessment methodology, which allows the child to see their own, even the smallest achievements.

When working on the Classflow website, the teacher must specially consider how to enhance learning motivation. If half of the children speak Latvian both in the family and during learning process in the digital classroom, then the other half of the child, per their parents' will, only works in the digital classroom. Consequently, Classflow and Skype become the only place where children meet with their peers and learn language spoken by one of their parents.

As teachers admit, per observations, learning becomes more meaningful if the language is used not only for learning the regularities of syntax or morphology, but at the same time for learning new, interesting information and exchange it with peers. It provides an opportunity to get to know and understand the Latvian as an ethnic culture, to promote the development of sociocultural competence, and to promote the use of acquired knowledge and skills in practical situations.

It is the natural development of language or language necessary for communication. Using language for learning content, communication becomes meaningful as language is a means of communication, not the goal (Beikers 2002). Individual work, the work in pairs and groups is equally important so that teacher could collaborate on the Classflow website, using CLIL.

The Latvian language skills for every child living outside Latvia helps to keep not only the sense of belonging to Latvia and study about Latvian nature, people, traditions, etc., but also allows you to return to your homeland at any time and integrate in society and the education system within short period.

The participation in ClassFlow depends on how successful the teacher created tasks so that children with language proficiency would have enough time to finish them especially those who need more time and effort to complete their tasks.

Observations in the pedagogical process show that the work on the ClassFlow site enables children not only to learn the language but also to get acquainted with their peers from other countries, to find out new information. In turn, the information technology tools offered by Classflow also allow include games, to send drawings, letters, and so on. It also promotes successful socialization of children, tolerance to different cultures. Purposefully planned game-lessons are aimed at letting a child to get used to perceiving statements within a text, to learn to distinguish certain words in hearing and later, as a child learns to read and write, to read them with an appropriate intonation, if necessary to emphasize specific words in a text, to pay attention to capital letters and punctuation at the end of sentences, text formatting etc. Specially prepared digital learning materials, if used purposefully, enable to use senses (sight, hearing, touch, movement etc.), based on which associations with previously obtained experience are created. The use of digital learning materials raise a child's activity, as a child sees that, just like the adults, he or she, too, can obtain information by reading or can pass it on to others in writing.

Classflow digital tools provide an opportunity to compare objects, names, to group them per various characteristics, to move them around, to combine, to separate, to shrink or to enlarge them, to colour or to mark them, to write, to edit or to check the results of work, to evaluate and listen to records or to record own speech, to add interactive online resources, etc.

The results of the study suggest that the child's experience of reading or writing in the native language is equally important. If the child goes to school and has mastered basic language skills of another language, he can more easily deal with the tasks of the Latvian language. If the child is at pre-school age and does not yet read or write in any of the languages, then excellent support for him is a teacher with his parents.

Both in primary school and at school, parent meetings are organized via Skype program during which language learning issues and problems have been discussed. Parents receive a feedback that gives them an opportunity to see where they can be useful in the process of their child's education. As pedagogical practice shows, parents also advise the teacher on how to better organize work, respecting each child's experience, character, etc. Teachers in the digital class recognize that it is very important to have a good

contact with the parents of children, and there is a reason for that as the desire to provide their children the opportunity to learn Latvian along with the studies at the school of the country of residence demonstrates their dignified attitude towards Latvia, against Latvian traditions, against people from families with whom they have more close or ulterior contact. Therefore, children and their parents are more intellectually, emotionally and physically burdened.

Conclusions

- The digital class in Classflow site as a teaching and learning platform on the Internet, allows you to collaborate with a teacher, regardless of the location of the child. The technical possibilities allow the children to meet regularly and create an interactive content and methodology for learning the language and Latvian culture.
- The Classflow website provides opportunities for effective time management, an easy and detailed evaluation process, interesting and interactive presentation techniques, support for students' individual development and assessment, home-learning opportunities and integrated language and content learning and teaching (CLIL).
- CLIL helps the child to learn not only language but also the facts and values of Latvian culture and other cultures, to develop a sense of language as a speaker and writer, ability to recognize and evaluate its own and other people speech based on the gained knowledge. The child's conceptual thinking, perception of the world and attitude towards it develops along with the language.
- The prerequisite for the successful learning of the content and language is the creation and maintenance of the rich language environment in the thematic content, as topic can be used as the tool for perceiving the speech and using language resources depending on it.
- Considering that work in the digital environment can also distract the child's attention, the child may lose the contact with the teacher and classmates, especially, if he is unable successfully to use the Skype or resources provided on the Classflow website when there is a technical problem with the computer, Internet connection etc., then the teacher, when planning and organizing the work to help the child to learn the language and the Latvian national traditions in the integrated way, information about the nature of Latvia, social events, the most prominent personalities, should be aware that a child's successful participation in the study process is possible if not only content is equally important in the class but also methodology provided for learning and assessment methodology, which allows the child to see its own, even the smallest achievements.
- Equally important is cooperation with parents of children, since the quality of lessons and the planning of future work with respect to children's needs depends on parental support.
- The teacher must be able to persuade both children and their parents that the Latvian language skills for a child living outside of Latvia help to keep not only the sense of belonging to Latvia and acquire knowledge about Latvian nature, people, traditions, etc., but also allows you to return to your ethnic homeland at any time and integrate in society and the education system in a short time.

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Secondary schools' administration perspective on content and language integrated learning: the case of Lithuania

Loreta Andziulienė*, Daiva Verikaitė-Gaigalienė**
*Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, Vilnius, Lithuania; loreta.andziuliene@vdu.lt
**Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, Vilnius, Lithuania; daiva.verikaite-gaigaliene@vdu.lt

Abstract

The aim of the present study is to investigate the present state and existing models of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the monolingual context of Lithuania and the current perspective of school administrators (school principals and vice-principals) on CLIL and its implementation in Lithuanian secondary schools. A survey of three hundred and one school administrators was conducted. The article discusses the results of the survey by considering the present state of CLIL in Lithuanian secondary schools, the factors that would motivate school administrators to be more willing to engage in CLIL implementation, and the help that school administrators perceive as necessary for more efficient CLIL implementation in their schools. The results of the present study are intended to provide suggestions and recommendations for using CLIL more effectively in Lithuanian secondary school classrooms.

Introduction

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (Coyle et al. 2010: 1) emerged as a concept in Europe in the early 1990s and has expanded throughout the countries of Asia, Latin America and Europe (Pérez Cañado 2018). CLIL involves teaching or learning a non-language subject "*with* and *through* a foreign language" or a regional/minority or state language (Eurydice 2006, 2017), or using a foreign language *as a tool* to improve foreign-language skills (Lo 2014) rather than teaching or learning *in* a foreign language, e.g. English, which is single-focused while learning a particular subject and, thus is considered as English Medium Instruction (EMI) (Pérez et al. 2018). There is no data showing the expansion of CLIL programmes in the European Union (EU), but it may be assumed that "only in a handful of countries is CLIL provision available in all schools at some stage of education" (Eurydice 2017: 13). The problem with obtaining globally comparable data as to the provision of this type of bilingual education might be caused by the variety of CLIL modes adopted by schools or education governing bodies in different countries.

CLIL is an umbrella term for various educational approaches such as bilingual education, multilingual education, and immersion where the latter is classified into partial, total, two-way or double according to the degree of exposure to a foreign language (Mehisto et al. 2012, Mehisto 2014). However, not all researchers support such a flexible interpretation of this approach, and some argue that CLIL and immersion modes bear significant differences and cannot be perceived as the same approach (Sylvén and Thompson 2015). There is no question, however, that CLIL manifests itself in a variety of forms, pedagogies and practices (García 2009) and "whether a concrete program is referred to as immersion or CLIL often depends as much on its cultural and political frame of reference as on the actual characteristics of the program" (Dalton-Puffer 2011: 183). Different national education policies and cultures dictate the variations in bilingual education; nonetheless the main principles are in line with the EU policies mentioned in significant declarations (European Commission 1995, 2003, 2008).

Typical CLIL practice, as described by Dalton-Puffer (2011), takes place when a foreign language used in a CLIL class is not normally used outside the classroom; CLIL teachers are mainly subject teachers who are usually neither foreign-language specialists nor native speakers, and less than 50% of the curriculum is covered in a foreign language. CLIL programmes usually encompassing some non-linguistic subject lessons or series of lessons that might occupy practically all the available hours for the subject throughout a year or longer are termed "hard" CLIL programmes, whereas "soft" CLIL usually means shorter programme arrangements where part of the subject curriculum is selected for teaching through a foreign language and

very often involves the participation of a foreign-language teacher who increases the value of foreign-language learning (Ball et al. 2015).

The organisation and intensity of CLIL programmes are closely related with a school's vision and mission, and at the same time are dependent on the readiness of personnel and learners to become involved in such programmes. In Europe, therefore, considerable flexibility exists in terms of the provision of CLIL programmes in secondary schools, since communities in different countries may differ substantially and a model that is effective in one country might not be effective in another (Pérez et al. 2018). In Austria, for example, CLIL initiatives are sanctioned at all educational levels and types of school, and as neither the CLIL curriculum, nor learning outcomes, nor quantity or quality of the CLIL provision are specified in any requisite document, it is within a school's competence to choose the kind and extent of CLIL to apply (Hüttner et al. 2013). In Lithuania, education policy makers attempt to respect the national situation and suggest three possible models of CLIL, i.e. project level, school level and national level (Dalyko ir užsienio kalbos integruoto mokymo(si) gairės (Content and Language Integrated Learning Guidelines) 2010). This recommendation is based on the organisation and intensity of CLIL that learners are exposed to, while CLIL curricular models in Poland, where teacher training policy is similar to that in Lithuania, are categorised according to the amount of a foreign language used in a class (Czura and Papaja 2013). Three models of CLIL can be found in lower secondary schools, i.e. *Extensive Language Medium Instruction* when the classes are given mainly in a foreign language, *Partial Language Medium Instruction* when both state and foreign languages are used in a class, and *Limited Language Medium Instruction* when 10-50% of a foreign language is used to conduct a class (Romanowski 2018).

The degree to which a foreign language is used in a CLIL class is often interrelated with the teacher's qualification, i.e. the subject teacher's command of a foreign language that would satisfy the minimum requirements to teach both a subject and a foreign language. This issue is acute in countries where teachers major in only one subject as in Lithuania, where an attempt to start preparing potential CLIL teachers within the framework of the *History and English Pedagogy* study programme at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Andziulienė 2016) failed, and Lithuanian teachers are still trained to deliver either a subject or a language. Consequently, a co-teaching mode is an option in cases where subject teachers need assistance with a foreign language in class. School administrations encourage cross-curricular collaboration even if subject teachers have sufficient knowledge of a foreign language. This is the case in the Netherlands where teachers need to demonstrate at least B2 level according to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001, 2018, Standard for Bilingual Education 2012). Moreover, in order for a school to implement CLIL in the Netherlands, teachers need to meet another pre-requisite requirement, i.e. to have had some training in CLIL methodology (ibid.).

To conclude, in order to ensure the quality of CLIL education, the responsibility should be delegated either to local accreditation boards, if such exist, or to other education authorities as well as to the school management, all of which are considered to be the most decisive institutional bodies. This can be strengthened by sustainable collaboration among all the stakeholders involved in the process.

Prior research on the administration perspective on CLIL

The majority of previous studies on CLIL centre on the outcomes and effects of CLIL (Dalton-Puffer 2011, Pérez-Cañado 2012), whereas the number of studies on school administrations and their perspective on CLIL is insignificant (Doiz and Lasagabaster 2017). Though school internal stakeholders such as principals, vice-principals and department heads are key figures both in decision making and communicating their vision to other internal and external stakeholders, who in their turn, might be cautious about or even resistant to such innovations as CLIL, there is a lack of empirical research on the perspective of CLIL programme participants (Hüttner et al. 2013). The perception of CLIL by different stakeholder groups has been researched quite thoroughly (Codó and Patiño-Santos 2017), but in most cases the focus is placed mainly on student beliefs and opinions, and some attention is devoted to teachers and parents, whereas "management teams have remained mostly invisible" (Doiz and Lasagabaster 2017: 94).

The opinion of school administrations, however, can be retrieved from smaller or larger-scale research projects on CLIL carried out in Europe and beyond. Addressing the comparative-study gap as regards

teacher and administration beliefs about CLIL, Doiz and Lasagabaster (2017) conducted a longitudinal research in three public schools based in a bilingual Basque Community, and discovered that CLIL programme management teams from the three schools applied different strategies to solve complex issues and often needed to experiment when encountering difficulties applying CLIL in their schools. The findings report that teachers and administration reach consensus speaking of CLIL implementation, though they do not necessarily share their views at every stage. Moreover, the administration support for teachers cannot be undervalued as teachers might refuse to participate in CLIL programmes requiring more time, effort, specific knowledge and additional skills.

Estonia considers stakeholder opinion crucial in launching sustainable CLIL at all levels of education (Lancaster 2016) as "ultimately stakeholder relationships make or break any new programme" (Mehisto and Genesee 2015: 272). Understanding the crucial role of administration, Mehisto and Asser (2007) conducted a qualitative study on stakeholder perspectives, giving proper attention to school principals' and vice-principals' perspectives on CLIL programme management. The findings report that representatives of school administrations understand the significance of their roles and take responsibility for successful and sustainable CLIL implementation. This requires not only being aware of CLIL principles and having managerial skills but also involves understanding other stakeholders' attitudes and beliefs as well as maintaining close collaboration with them. Moreover, professional development for school principals and vice-principals is emphasised as an essential factor since, even having undergone the necessary training, school principals were not confidant enough in launching CLIL programmes.

Another study that aimed to investigate successful CLIL implementation from the leadership perspective was in Catalonia (Soler et al. 2017). The results disclosed school principals' and other stakeholders' perception of beneficial CLIL practice. All stakeholders believed that CLIL programmes could be beneficial if the main criteria are met, criteria such as a clearly structured programme, CLIL teacher competences and professional development in terms of language and methodology, cooperative work, management support, and sufficient and constant exposure of learners to the language being learnt. It is within a school administration's responsibility to ensure well-thought out and slow implementation of CLIL programmes, as well as to advocate for CLIL, support teachers and encourage teacher collaboration and professional learning.

In Spain, another recent study by Codó and Patiño-Santos (2017) employed an ethnographic perspective to a case in one state school and aimed to investigate the Catalan government's initiative to implement a *Plurilingual Experimentation Plan* (PEP), a designed model of CLIL implementation for all levels and types of schools. The study revealed different perceptions towards the programme from the perspectives of the various agents involved, including administrators. As far as school leadership is concerned, the study showed that PEP influences the school administration's mind set and management strategies. Having a considerable amount of school autonomy, school principals look for the possibilities for their schools to differ from other schools in order to be attractive in this "highly competitive educational arena" (Codó and Patiño-Santos 2017: 494). The latter study was conducted in the context where learning foreign languages, especially English, is fostered by another stakeholder group – parents, who have expectations for their children to work in the global market (Codó and Patiño-Santos 2017).

A different situation is encountered in Australia, where learning foreign languages is not seen as having any priority; nevertheless CLIL is offered in some schools (Smala 2014). Smala (2014) conducted a study in the Australian state of Queensland and examined the point of view of CLIL programme directors on CLIL. As CLIL programmes exist separately, without any guiding support from some higher governing body, CLIL programme directors need to perform roles that normally are beyond the administrator's duties, i.e. not only to lead teachers, but to work intensely with other stakeholders in order to show the value of CLIL, to attract students to the programmes, to deal with the necessary curriculum requirements for teaching a subject through a foreign language, and to foster teacher collaboration. CLIL programme directors believe that systematic CLIL teacher education would contribute to more effective management of CLIL programmes.

In Lithuania, an attempt to investigate the school administration's perspective on CLIL was made by Bijeikienė and Pundziuvienė (2015). Their case study at Didždvaris gymnasium aimed at examining

stakeholders' attitudes towards CLIL; however, it cannot be perceived as representing the whole population of secondary school administration in Lithuania.

Justification for the research

In the context of this state of affairs, it becomes highly relevant to investigate the current situation of CLIL in Lithuanian secondary schools by shedding some light on the perspective that stakeholders (administration, teachers and students) have toward CLIL and its implementation. Due to the restricted scope of this article, the decision was made to limit the investigation to the school administration perspective (school principals and vice-principals) especially since the 2006 survey of school CLIL teachers in Lithuania demonstrated that the school administration perspective (lack of support) was one of the three main factors hindering the implementation of CLIL (Andziulienė et al. 2007) and that the role of a principal as the instructional / curriculum leader is crucial since "a principal sets the tone for a school and ultimately takes responsibility for what is taught and how it is taught <…> [as well as] sets an example for others and dictates to a considerable extent the focus of professional dialogue in the school" (Mehisto 2014: 44).

Therefore, **the aim** of the present article was to investigate the current perspective of school administrators (school principals and vice-principals) on CLIL and its implementation in Lithuanian secondary schools. **The objectives** of the article were:

(1) To analyse the shape of CLIL provision in Lithuanian secondary schools.
(2) To determine the factors motivating a school administration to become engaged in CLIL implementation.
(3) To compare the school administration perspective in schools engaged in CLIL implementation with the perspective of school administrators in schools that have not yet been engaged in CLIL implementation.

To achieve the aim and the objectives of this study, the following research procedure was followed:

(1) A questionnaire was designed as the principal survey tool.
(2) A survey of three hundred and one school administrators selected randomly was conducted.
(3) The quantitative data were processed using an SPSS software package.

The **research methods** used were analysis of documents and survey results. The current research was carried out in order to identify the implications for, and recommendations on, a more effective use of CLIL in Lithuanian secondary school classrooms.

Methodology

A survey was used as the main research method in the present study. It examined a representative sample of the school population and covered three hundred and one schools represented by school administrators selected randomly. The questionnaire was designed and used as the principal tool for the survey.

Sampling

The research population (n=282) was calculated using the online sample size calculator Raosoft (http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html). According to the Education management information system (http://svis.emokykla.lt), in Lithuania there were 1,151 schools of secondary education in the academic year 2016/2017. With the exclusion of secondary education institutions such as specialized schools, socializing centres, adult schools and international schools, our representative sample comprised 301 schools, i.e. 28.6 % of the 1,054 overall school population.

In order to ensure the reliability of the research results, the survey covered schools representing all municipalities in Lithuania – both in urban and rural areas, schools with Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian language of instruction, and schools representing all levels of secondary education. A random selection method was used to address every third school on the list in alphabetical order.

Research instrument and data collection

The questionnaire, designed to be the main source of the data, was piloted with school principals or vice-principals in one municipality. The questionnaire consisted of three parts; however, this study is based on the first two parts that were related to the research question of the present study. The first part was intended to determine the current state of CLIL provision in Lithuanian secondary schools in terms of the number of schools implementing CLIL, the forms of CLIL, the most popular CLIL subjects, the initiators of CLIL, and the grades in which CLIL is provided most recurrently. The second part with a 5-point Likert scale (1 expressing strong disagreement and 5 expressing strong agreement with the given statement) included questions helping to define the school administration perspective on the importance of CLIL, the school community's awareness of CLIL, teachers' professional qualifications for teaching CLIL and the need for their improvement, principals' inclination towards the introduction of CLIL into school curriculum, towards the support of teachers' professional development, and towards finding resources for paying CLIL teachers. An open-ended question was included to elicit the personal opinion and recommendations of school principals for more effective CLIL implementation in Lithuanian secondary schools.

To ensure the selection of an appropriate target group of respondents, i.e. school principals or vice-principals for studies, prior phone calls were placed and agreement to complete the questionnaire was received. A total of 490 questionnaires were sent personally to school principals or vice-principals and 301 questionnaires were returned and were used for further analysis. The Cronbach α assessment of the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.84.

Data analysis

Quantitative data were processed using the SSPS software package. For the comparison of two groups of the respondents – those from schools with CLIL and those from schools without CLIL – a Pearson Chi-Square test was applied. Descriptive statistics were used for further analysis exploring the attitudes of each respondent group towards CLIL implementation.

Results

The results are subdivided into two parts: the first part presents the current situation of CLIL in Lithuanian secondary schools and the second part provides insights into the perspective of the school administration (principals and vice-principals for studies).

CLIL in Lithuanian secondary schools

The survey results revealed that nearly half of the schools surveyed implement CLIL to a certain degree. However, the majority of the schools that do not presently implement CLIL have no intention of implementing it in the future (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: CLIL in Lithuanian secondary schools.

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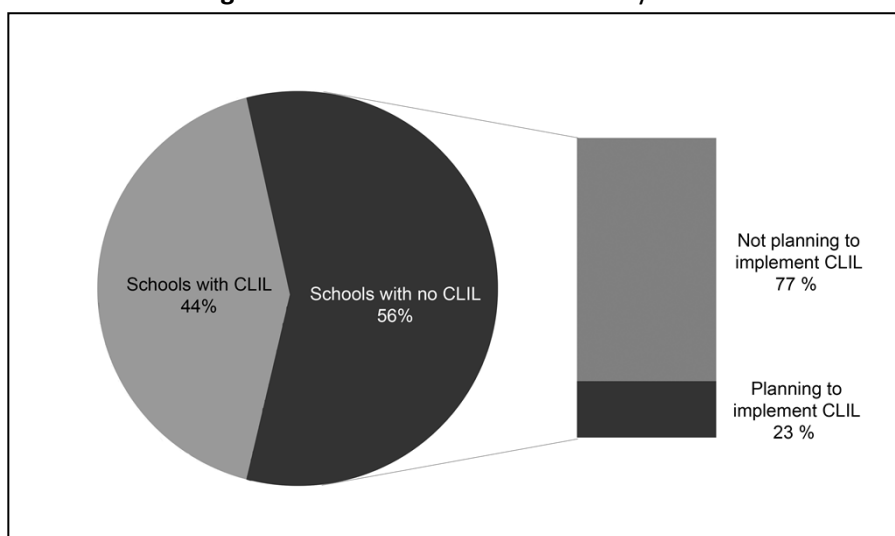
As concerns the most popular forms of CLIL implementation in the schools surveyed, the integration of CLIL in either foreign-language classes or subject classes by far surpasses other forms of CLIL such as a supplementary CLIL lesson or a separate CLIL module. The most recurrent mode of CLIL integration in the classroom is teacher teamwork, i.e. when a subject teacher works together with a foreign-language teacher. The cases where either subject teachers integrate a foreign language or foreign-language teachers integrate a subject in their classes are of nearly equal occurrence (see Table 1).

Table 1: Modes of CLIL in schools.

Mode	Relative frequency
Team work between subject and foreign-language teachers	57.4%
Subject teacher integrating foreign language	22%
Foreign-language teacher integrating subject	20.6%

As was noted in the Introduction, no comparable data concerning the number of schools implementing CLIL when the English language is integrated with a content subject were available. However, the results of the present research demonstrated that English is the most popular language used for teaching CLIL in Lithuania. Having in mind the status, role and popularity of the English language in the world, this finding cannot be considered unexpected. However, the fact that the Russian language is the second most popular language used for teaching CLIL in Lithuania can encourage debates about its relevance in the context of the geopolitical situation of Lithuania. However, the principals of schools surveyed explain its popularity by the fact that older subject teachers feel more confident teaching CLIL in Russian rather than other languages due to the education they received in the times of the former USSR. The other two languages used as CLIL languages in Lithuania are German and French (see Table 2). In the case of German, the co-teaching mode prevails, as very few subject teachers can teach in German. The situation is different with French, as in most cases it is integrated into subjects by subject teachers themselves, who received ample training in French within qualification improvement programmes supported by the French government before enrolling in CLIL programmes.

It could be generalized that the situation concerning the choice of languages for teaching CLIL in Lithuania reflects the general situation of foreign language teaching: the foreign language taught in school as the first foreign language is used in most cases for content and language integrated teaching.

Table 2: CLIL languages in schools.

CLIL languages	Number of schools
English	110
Russian	39
German	32
French	14

In terms of subjects that are integrated with a foreign language in schools, three fields of subjects can be distinguished: science, IT and arts. The most recurrently integrated subjects in the schools surveyed are geography, history, mathematics, IT, technologies, art, and music (for descriptive data, see Table 3).

Table 3: The most popular CLIL subjects.

Subject	Number of schools
Geography	45
History	41
Mathematics	34
Information Technologies	30
Technologies	27
Art	26

Music	26

The analysis of CLIL coverage over different grades in schools indicated that, although CLIL is offered in all grades at secondary schools (from 1 to 12), we can observe an increasing recurrence up to grades 7-8 where CLIL provision reaches its peak. In grades 9-10 it starts decreasing, and in grades 11-12 descends lower than the level of grades 3-4 (see Figure 2). As can be seen from the results, the first and the last grades are the least favourable for integrating CLIL in the curriculum. It is very probable that CLIL is less frequently provided in the initial grades (1-2) because school students are not considered to have sufficient foreign language skills to study content subjects integrated with a foreign language. On the other hand, the final grades (11-12) might be considered as unfavourable for CLIL classes due to the increased student workload and pressure preparing for the final examinations. Some respondents mention that CLIL is impossible due to deficient learner skills in both a subject and a foreign language. Some students face difficulties in learning a subject in their mother tongue, so learning a subject in a foreign or through a foreign language would have a negative effect on their subject achievement and motivation to study. Other respondents emphasise the importance of the Lithuanian language in the light of insufficient Lithuanian language literacy achievements.[5]

Figure 2: Distribution of CLIL classes across secondary education grades.
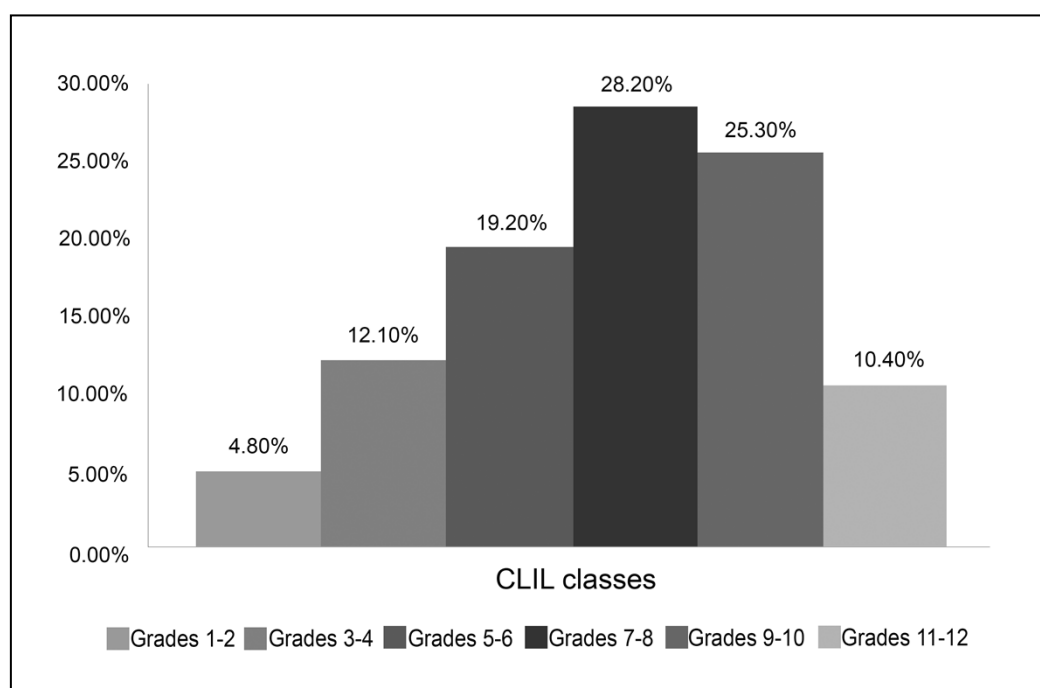
Analysing the current situation of CLIL implementation, we considered it important to determine the proponents of CLIL in schools. According to schools administrators, they are the initiators of CLIL in their schools because integrated learning is recommended as a part of the curriculum by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Foreign-language teachers are the second most enthusiastic proponents of CLIL. Subject teachers and external initiators such as parents and social partners comprise the last third of all CLIL initiators (see Table 4).

Table 4: Initiators of CLIL.

Initiator	Relative frequency
Administration of schools	37%

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[5]Pisa 2015 Results in Focus (2016). OECD.

Foreign-language teachers	32%
Subject teachers	17%
External initiators	14%

To sum up the results of the analysis of the current situation of CLIL implementation in Lithuanian secondary schools, it should be pointed out that CLIL to a certain degree is accessible to students of nearly half of the schools surveyed. Students studying in grades 5-10 are most likely to have a possibility of CLIL in their curriculum. The most frequently occurring form of CLIL is its integration into a foreign language or content subject classes when two teachers, i.e. a teacher of a foreign language and a teacher of a content subject are working together as a team. The most popular languages for teaching CLIL are English and Russian and the most popular CLIL subjects are geography, history, mathematics and IT.

The administration's perspective on CLIL

One of the objectives of the present research was to identify the administration's perspective on CLIL by exploring school principals' awareness of CLIL and its principles, the need for official regulation of CLIL implementation, the need for CLIL teacher-competence development, etc. It was also considered important to determine differences, if any, between the approaches towards CLIL of school principals who implement CLIL in their schools with those who do not.

The results of the analysis demonstrated that there is a direct dependence between CLIL implementation and school principals' awareness of its importance, i.e. two thirds of the school principals from schools with CLIL highlighted the importance of CLIL in the teaching process, whereas only one third of the principals from schools without CLIL were inclined to consider CLIL as a necessary approach in the learning / teaching process. As for the need for more information concerning its implementation, the majority of those who have CLIL in their schools claimed to be aware of CLIL principals and organization, and they contributed to awareness in their communities; however the majority of those who did not have CLIL in their schools claimed to be insufficiently aware of CLIL principles and organization and did not contribute much to the awareness in their community (see Table 5).

School principals from schools with CLIL tend to see the value of CLIL and the necessity of disseminating the idea of CLIL by sharing their good practices, modules and materials developed; encouraging teacher collaboration and promoting the CLIL-school network; whereas principals of schools without CLIL are less enthusiastic about CLIL in Lithuanian schools, doubting if bilingual education in Lithuania is necessary in general.

The lack of enthusiasm might be caused by the absence of awareness of CLIL value and leads to the principle *if I don't see the benefits of CLIL, my community and I don't need it*. If this proves to be the case, there is a strong chance that the education of school administrators in terms of CLIL and its principles would improve the overall situation of CLIL in schools.

Table 5: Importance and awareness of CLIL in secondary education from the perspective of school principals.

	In schools with CLIL	**In schools without CLIL**
School principals consider CLIL as necessary in secondary education	70.7%	30.9%
School principals claim to be well-aware of CLIL principles and organization	82.7%	34.6%
School principals contribute to their teachers' awareness of CLIL	70.8%	22%

One of the possible demotivating factors for implementing CLIL in schools – the absence of clearly defined procedures and regulations for its introduction and implementation – proved to be relevant. Both the administrators of schools with CLIL and without CLIL emphasized the need for an official document regulating CLIL implementation. The adoption of a law or regulations for **implementing CLIL** would

therefore stimulate the process of CLIL dissemination in schools. A number of school principals claim that a recommended curriculum with a clearly defined CLIL concept, principles, evaluation and organisational procedures in Lithuanian secondary schools under currently existing legal regulations would be helpful both in introducing and sustaining CLIL. Whereas now, very few see the possibility of applying CLIL on a regular basis because of difficulties in financing extra classes and the lack of suitable teaching materials or CLIL textbooks that adhere to the current curriculum.

Another possible complication in CLIL implementation is the shortage of qualified CLIL teachers. The results of the survey showed that half of the principals of schools with CLIL are satisfied with the qualifications of their CLIL teachers, and only a negligible number of principals in schools without CLIL considered their teachers' qualification to teach CLIL as sufficient. Hence, the situation of CLIL: schools that have qualified teachers are more inclined to adopt CLIL and those that do not have qualified teachers are reluctant to start teaching CLIL. On the other hand, the lack of qualified CLIL teachers in schools without CLIL might be predetermined by the fact that only half of the principals of schools without CLIL promote their teachers' professional development, whereas in schools with CLIL teachers' professional development is promoted by the majority of principals.

Considering the fact that the present teacher-training system offers study programmes for students majoring in only one subject, school principals consider it essential to provide additional foreign-language and CLIL methodology training. The majority of principals believe that CLIL classes are more likely to be given by younger-generation teachers, who have adequate foreign language skills (B2 according to CEFR - Council of Europe 2001, 2018); however with the dominance of older-generation teachers in present-day schools, the co-teaching model remains prevalent and requires further investment to boost the foreign-language skills of subject teachers.

Table 6: Teacher qualification and its promotion in secondary schools.

	In schools with CLIL	In schools without CLIL
School principals consider their teachers adequately qualified	56.4%	8.9%
School principals promote their teachers' professional development	83.5%	51.8%

As can be seen in Table 6, there is a significant difference between schools with CLIL and schools without CLIL as regards the principals' evaluation of their teachers' qualification and the promotion of teachers' professional development for CLIL teaching. However, among principals of both categories, the inclination to finance the development of linguistic competences for their subject teachers is not significantly different (see Table 7). This can be accounted for by the lack of freedom in terms of finance management, as well as by the available resources, which directly depend on the number of students in the school. The fewer the students, the smaller the funds assigned to the school, thus diminishing the possibilities for teacher qualification improvement.

Table 7: School principals' inclination towards investment in teachers' professional development and remuneration.

	In schools with CLIL	In schools without CLIL
School principals are inclined to finance their subject teachers' linguistic competences development	62.4%	42.9%
School principals find it possible to fund co-teaching (subject and foreign language teachers)	45.9 %	23.2%

The implementation of CLIL as a specific educational approach incurs extra expenses and demands additional investment not only in the professional development of teachers, but also in their remuneration. In that respect, principals of schools with CLIL appeared to be more flexible in comparison to those of schools without CLIL – principals of schools with CLIL were twice as much inclined to remunerate co-teaching (subject and foreign language teachers) than were principals of schools without CLIL (see Table 7).

School principals claim that CLIL meets severe limitations because of the current school financing policy (a student voucher system), which results in few possibilities to fund co-teaching or give teachers a bonus for CLIL classes whose preparation is more time-consuming. Thus, in order to ensure proper and continued CLIL implementation, school principals need clearly defined mechanisms and sources of financing approved by educational authorities.

As for principals' general inclination towards introducing CLIL classes into their school curriculum, a similar tendency was revealed – principals of schools with CLIL were more than twice as inclined to introduce CLIL than were principals of schools without CLIL. This general tendency was not affected by an additional variable – the availability of competent and willing CLIL teachers. The availability of competent and enthusiastic teachers increased principals' general inclination towards the introduction of CLIL classes; however, the difference in proportion between increase among principals of schools with CLIL and without CLIL was insignificant (see Table 8).

Table 8: School principals' inclination towards introducing CLIL classes into the school curriculum.

	In schools with CLIL	In schools without CLIL
Principals are inclined towards introducing CLIL classes into the school curriculum	36.9%	14.3%
Principals are inclined towards introducing CLIL classes provided there are competent and willing teachers to teach CLIL	54.9%	29.7 %

With the on-going reforms in the Lithuanian education system, school communities lack a clear vision and strategies for education in general. There is encouragement to apply the CLIL approach in schools, but some school principals expect answers to such questions as: is bilingual education important to the community? If yes, then which languages should be promoted? Which student groups should be targeted? How should assessment be carried out, and how can the continuation of CLIL programmes in different school types be ensured?

School principals admit that the role of the administration in the adoption of the CLIL approach is essential, but in successful implementation of CLIL the key actor is a teacher who is motivated, professional, creative, open to challenges, willing to share good practices and who has life-long learning competence. According to some school principals, the provision of such teachers, and consequently quality CLIL education, is possible only if an essential reform of the teacher training system is undertaken.

It maybe concluded that the opinion of school administrators plays a crucial role in the life of school communities. As correctly maintained by Mehisto (2014: 44), "the principal is logically first and foremost an instructional / curriculum leader". Therefore, principals make important decisions which, at times, are not necessarily directly dependent on external factors such as the availability of funds, human resources or legal regulations but rather on intrinsic factors such as educational, cultural, political values or personal beliefs and convictions. The definition, interpretation and implementation of CLIL therefore largely depend on the local personal initiatives of school community members.

Conclusions

Analysis of the current state of CLIL education in Lithuanian secondary schools from the school-administration perspective demonstrated that nearly half of the surveyed schools apply CLIL – in most cases initiated by the school administration or foreign-language teachers. In the majority of schools, only from 1 to 3 classes of students have the possibility of studying under the CLIL approach. Although CLIL is taught at all levels of secondary education, it is done most extensively in grades 7-10. The prevailing model of CLIL provision is co-teaching in either a foreign-language class or a subject class. The most popular subjects integrated with a foreign language are geography, history, mathematics and IT. The English language is the predominant CLIL language; the second most popular CLIL language is Russian.

From the school administrators' perspective, more effective application of CLIL in Lithuanian secondary-school education would be facilitated by:

- adoption of a national policy and / or a legal document regulating CLIL implementation;
- inclusion of CLIL in the curriculum;
- provision of methodology and recommendations for the CLIL co-teaching model;
- provision of professional development for CLIL teachers;
- definition of sources of funding and a payment system for CLIL teaching and co-teaching;
- raising CLIL awareness and benefits to school communities;
- closer collaboration between schools with CLIL and schools without CLIL in sharing good practices.

Further research on the perspectives of other stakeholders as regards CLIL in Lithuanian secondary education would contribute to the validity of the present findings and would help to better assess the current situation.

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Cyberlect in the classroom: dialogical approaches to languages
Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own (Albert Costa, 2014)

Tess Maginess
Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland; t.maginess@qub.ac.uk

Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the question of why and how, as teachers, we might need to develop a more dialogical pedagogy with students in relation to language. I begin by situating this question within the conceptual framework of Constructivism and Critical Pedagogy. I then move on to propose that there have always existed in the classroom – two languages; official and unofficial, before arguing that the language of social media – cyberlect, as I have termed, it, is the most widely used form of unofficial language among young people. The next section addresses some of the dangers of cyberlect, especially in terms of the weaponisation of language. I will then narrow the focus to an examination of attitudes to social media in the classroom. The concluding section of the paper suggests some ideas for how a Constructivist and Critical pedagogy using social media could help both students and teachers to form a Resistance to hegemonic rebranding of language driven by a neo-liberal agenda which seeks to weaponise language.

Keywords: cybelect, dialogical pedagogy, classroom, social media, weaponisation of language

Conceptual frameworks

I will draw mainly on Constructivism and Critical Pedagogy as theoretical models. There is much close-wrought debate about the many definitions of and interpretations of what Constructivism actually might mean. However, it is not my intention in this paper to drink shallowly of that Pierian Spring (Pope 1711, 2006) and others can offer far more profound knowledge and skills than I can. My understanding of Constructivism is that knowledge should be co-constructed with the learner – emanating from the premise that learners/students bring knowledge and experience - sometimes experience that would be very far from that of their teachers (Buber 1947, Imel 1991, Maginess 2015, 2017a). This 'endogenic' Constructivism, accords value and respect for the real world outside the classroom and helps combat the social patholigization of so called target marginalised groups (Chambers & Lavery 2012, Gutiérrez et al. 2010, Johnston 2006) and the 'otherness' which students may experience, as von Glaserfeld (1984) argues with playful asperity. As Duckworth and Tummons (2010) argue, educators should be more reflective and inclusive classroom practices which respect equality and diversity are especially important.

Pedagogic Constructivism also argues that the role of the teacher, contingently, should shift from that of peerless expert to a co-learning facilitator. Thus, learning should not be a passive, consumerist process, but an active 'construction' between all parties in the classroom (Qiong 2010). Learning should be dialogical, collaborative (Richardson 2003). The teacher must also be a learner (Taylor 2007). The traditional teacher-centered orientation should more generously accommodate students' ways of being and seeing and their critical insights within a community of learning (Lyle 2008). Concomitantly, there has been a call for teachers to examine their own socio-political and cultural positioning, to develop their own critical consciousness (McDonagh 2015, Doerr 2011, Gay & Kirkland 2010).

Proponents of Constructivist models, sometimes also called active learning, claim that such a paradigm promotes deep rather than surface learning and fosters both creative and critical skills among students (Harlen 2012, Kolb & Kolb 2005, Lublin 2003). Critical thinking, it has been argued by a growing body of scholars, is often sharpened and, indeed made more enjoyable through the use of arts based approaches (Maginess 2017, Race 2015, Rolling 2010, Casey 2009, Darby & Catterall, 1994). This is especially important for 'hard-to reach' learners, or those not coming from conventional or normative backgrounds). Later in this paper, I will return to how arts-based approaches can be deployed to encourage both students and teachers to develop critical thinking, and crucially, as a way of empowering learners, especially the most marginalised. That brings me to my second theoretical model; critical pedagogy. In one sense, critical pedagogy could be seen as a logical outcome of Constructivism in that active learning and dialogical relationships between 'teacher' and 'student' are, almost of necessity, ushering in a set of broader political,

social and cultural questions about power relations both inside the classroom and beyond it. Critical pedagogy is, arguably, a first cousin to transformative pedagogy and, as I understand it, both are centrally concerned with an *uncovering* of latent hegemonic power relationships and subsequently with addressing the inequalities which lie beneath the rhetoric and cultural norms of what we are persuaded to believe is 'normality'. Again, my intention is not to become embroiled in the doubtless fascinating theoretical debates about the meanings of this term, but rather more simply, to suggest that critical pedagogy has never been more important than it is in our time. Since my own field is language and literature, in this paper, I am especially concerned with how we respond to the ways in which language is used in social media by powerful people. I am beginning from the premise that students in schools and colleges effectively operate two languages, official and unofficial (formal and informal). In the present day, this could be characterised as the unofficial use of social media language and the official use of languages which come primarily from a Western tradition of print-based literacy and literature. I would argue that Constructivist approaches and critical pedagogy are of crucial importance, because, beginning at the level of language, students learning through these models, are encouraged to question how different words (and the concepts behind them) can shift, can be appropriated, can manipulate and indoctrinate. Living as we do in a post-modern world, we are all, to some degree aware that language - and the reality it purports to reflect or signify - is not a hard-bite, absolute gold standard, but rather a fluctuating currency, in danger of being debased, especially for economic and political purposes, but also, a priceless treasure; Promethean, energetic, fearless, beautiful, funny and compassionate; in short, an amazing resource for the humanising of us. Thus, I would argue that we need to encourage ourselves as well as our students towards active learning through Constructivist pedagogy and towards a critical rather than transmissive or supine pedagogy. Critical pedagogy has, in the past, enabled people, especially oppressed people, to recognise the processes by which they are 'othered' and rendered subaltern and to resist that process as best they might (Harman & Varja-Dobai 2012, Biren et al. 2003, Carr & Kemmis 2003, Freire 1970). And, for all of us, students and teachers, a critical pedagogy enables us to exercise autonomous thinking in the direction of ethical transformation (Boyd & Myers 2009). As many scholars have argued, teachers need to become much more autocritical, questioning the values and assumptions they bring with them (Riecken et al. 2006, Richardson 2003) and to offer a more culturally sustaining pedagogy to their students, which values and defends cultural pluralism and cultural equality and, contingently, social and economic equality (Paris 2012). With specific reference to language, I will argue later in this article that a Constructivist and critical pedagogic approach could help equip us with the tools so vital to becoming aware of how language is not just constructed by individuals (Jones & Brader-Araje 2002), but can be branded, sold and weaponised through social media to covertly support agendas and hegemonies which require profound scrutiny. Thus, I echo Jones and Brader-Araje (2002) who argue for the importance of applying a Constructivist approach to language; learners should be actively encouraged to question the meanings of key words and to construct these through a critical interrogation, rather than consuming language unreflectingly.

The School of Babel: the presence of two languages in the classroom

As educators, we are constantly negotiating different languages and dialects with our students across different subjects; but, perhaps, we do not think enough about how alien, how foreign, the official languages we use in education are for students. Teachers do not always invest quite enough time in eliciting what meaning or resonance any of these 'foreign' words might have for students. Let us go back to our own schooldays. In the UK we had to learn new words all the time; in geography there were 'scree' and 'fjord', or the gorgeous sounding, 'Saragossa Sea'. Little did I know there was a novel of that name, a writing back of *Wuthering Heights,* which we studied in another class. And little did I know, until my father told me, that the eels he caught in the Blackwater River near Lough Neagh in the middle of Northern Ireland (or the middle of nowhere) had spawned in the Saragossa, nor that Aristotle was the first to write about them, nor that the Northern Irish poet, Seamus Heaney, courting round the shores of Lough Neagh, was to observe them so closely and to make a self-metaphor of them in his later poetry. In Mathematics we had quadratic equations, and in Mathematics and English we had a nearly common word – hyperbola/hyperbole. In one adult education project I worked on with members of the deaf community

around facilitating them to write press releases and get them into newspapers, I used the word 'copy' – signifying a written article, but the deaf participants were signing this as an activity involving copying other people's work. It was my fault entirely, because I had not given enough thought to the particular and very specialised use of the word 'copy' in the field of journalism. And that brings me to another aspect of official languages.

Nobody ever thought to teach us to think in an *interdisciplinary* mode and the apparently discrete languages of each subject are still taught in a very constrained curriculum model. We, somehow, expect students to think in an interdisciplinary mode for 'project' work, but what are we doing to train students – or teachers – to critically and creatively consider how to acknowledge the subject-specific connotations of words in our official (and often foreign) languages? And, leading out from that, there is the sticky business of how words have different meanings in different contexts, not just between subjects, but between the world of the academy and the school and the real world?

Let us take as perhaps the most stark and apposite example, the word 'critical'. In the world, the word 'critical' is pejorative, hostile even; we try not to be critical of one another as sensitive human beings. But, in schools and academia, ironically because of the influence of theories like Constructivism and Critical Pedagogy, we are constantly exhorting students to be critical; that is to say to question ideas and texts and scientific laws. In addition, for some cultures, where the individual questioning voice is not valorised or is subordinate to what the community or the collective entity believes, being 'critical' constitutes a very different way of being; a kind of alien effrontery; something quite impudent and self-important (Wang 2017, Vassileva 1998). But hegemonic Western cultures do not always acknowledge this kind of 'otherness' in education, obliging all students to be critical. Education very often reflects and reproduces hegemonic understandings and *donnés,* so language is not questioned*.* The cultures and outlooks and experiences of students who, by some definition, are viewed as 'other' are not always taken under the notice of teachers. (Fiske 1999, Mann 2005).

And, of course, as I have implied earlier, this criticality is often bounded by a hidden agenda of what can be criticised. For example, from some acquaintance with current A level students of literature, I concluded from examining their responses that they are *trained* to look at certain recognisable features in a text like metaphor or simile and enumerate them – they are not asked if they think a novel or poem is any good or whether it is beautiful or ugly, boring or interesting, relevant to their own experience or stunningly different. So being 'critical' is often a little circumscribed.

This circumscription of what being 'critical' means, is due to the undeniable fact that, often, across the subjects, students and teachers are spancelled by a test-driven model where only certain kinds of interpretations and ways of considering these discrete subjects are assessed as being valid. In addition, modes of assessment are still primarily text-based (a hangover from print culture concepts of literacy), especially in summative assessment situations like examinations and have been duly criticized by many scholars (Vali & Buese 2007, Guzenhauser & Gerstl-Pepin 2002, Broadfoot 1996). So, even at least twenty years after the so called 'meditative turn' (Friesen & Hug 2009: 63) - in which 'media today can be said to structure our awareness of time, shape our attentions and emotions, and provide us with the means for forming and expressing thought itself' and in which the 'natural' (and often unofficial) choices of young people are to interface with the internet and most especially social media - educational assessment and, behind that, pedagogy, is still rather predicated on valorising an historical, some would say archaic, ontology. That ontology derives its authority from a print culture, a conception of curriculum as discrete, specialist, expert and, contingently, a model of pedagogy which, despite the rhetoric of constructivism and critical pedagogy, is still – and indeed even more – inclined towards transmission and instructivist or didactic approaches. We reap what we sow and education can sow its own seeds, insidiously; discouraging genuine critical and creative thinking, nodding in teacher education towards constructivist and critical pedagogy models, but in the gladiatorial, test-driven atmosphere of 'real' schools, bowing, to a neo-liberal ideology.

The connection between the scuttling back to such approaches and the increasing predominance of the neo-liberal hegemony is too vast and dispiriting a topic to tackle in this short paper. However, I would hazard that genuinely critical students and teachers may be perceived as a clear and present danger to the

overweening imperative of forming, crème de la crème - if I may borrow not entirely ironically – from Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), identities which are, above all, productive economically and which do not question the basis or operation of this singular desideratum as *the* goal of education. Perhaps this helps to explain why we have now become so obsessed with precisely measurable grades and standards, even though, inevitably, such exactitude is something of a chimera. I would argue, with scholars such as Barros (2012), Collini (2012), Barnett, (2011) and Jacobsen (2006) that that any notion of education as being about personal development (or civilisation, as it used to be, called, with some dubiety) or about making society better or more fair or more equal is suppressed and rendered subaltern and that we can observe this specifically in the sequestration of unofficial languages in the classroom. Paradoxically, students are ever increasingly navigating their 'reality' and forming their identity through the unofficial language of social media and are, I will argue, being manipulated here too. The contradiction between applying Constructivist and Critical Pedagogical models (despite the rhetoric) and a test-driven 'production' model, is creating a situation where young people are far more vulnerable to the same neoliberal hegemonies. The neoliberal revisionist 'branding' of key words, is, I would argue, dependent for its success on a supine, unquestioning and uncritical form of education which, at its core, is an undeclared official version of the same neoliberal hegemony. As will be, I hope, evident, I am not suggesting that this latest antic is a novel phenomenon, for I will argue that young people, students, pupils, have, over the centuries, developed their own unofficial language as a form of resistance, as an implicit critique of the pedagogy they are subject to. What is concerning in our time is the infiltration of the current unofficial language of social media by powerful hegemonic interests and the lack of research evidence that there is an energetic and imaginative constructivist and critical pedagogical critique of that infiltration in the classroom.

Official and unofficial languages and the emergence of a new unofficial language: cyberlect
    Language is as a central aspect of students' specific cultural and economic milieu, a key determinant in identity formation. Historically and in the present time, as I have implied, many students do not come from 'normative' White, middle class backgrounds. And some will speak in a form of dialect at home, as we did in rural Northern Ireland, quite distinct from the correct, official language of the classroom. In this increasingly diasporic world, young people may speak at home in another language altogether.In our time, by a curious paradox, young people now share a new global, unofficial, informal language; the *argot* of social media. This may help to connect students from different cultures, but it serves also to open up a new kind of distance from educators still wedded to the official languagesof the classroom(s), discrete curricula and the official, transmissive official language required to be deployed in summative assessments and a contingent insouciance about the 'real world' of the students, what students want to learn and how they are learning it and ironically, 'constructing it' (in line with Constructivist principles) and even critically assessing it and operating their own forms of critical peer pedagogy through their unofficial language. But, we all have to learn and while young people can show teachers how Constructivist and critical pedagogy can operate though the unofficial channel of social media, it might also be argued that there is a role for teachers in sharpening students' natural tendency to criticise the adult world, in western culture at any rate, by engaging dialogically with them in an educative process which also offers some transmissive knowledge, some contextualization of an issue they are discussing unofficially on social media which can foster critical and creative thinking. My point is simple; unless teachers engage with the unofficial language of their students, unless they enter the 'learner zone', they risk subjecting students to the vulnerabilities they decry in their contempt of social media. The dangers of social media are popularly expounded as most commonly, laziness of language – a slackness in grammar and spelling, the vulnerability of young people to trolling, manipulation and blackmail, especially with regard to bullying and the posting of images which encourage predatory sexual 'traffic'. But there is little comment   in educational contexts about how social media can be manipulated by powerful politico-economic interests to brand (or, to be more precise, rebrand) key tropes, or if you will key words. I will return to this a little later. At this point, it may prove useful to examine the unofficial language of social media.

Cyberlect

There is now a form of dialect or idiolect which is current among young people; that is the language of social media. I have coined a term for this – *cyberlect*. Whatever name we give it, we all understand that young people, especially, are wearing out their thumbs practising this new, unofficial global language. According to Hughes (2016), nine out of ten American teenagers hold at least one social media account. Cyberlect involves a number of elements; abbreviation; 'LOL' ('lots of laughs'), 'ELI5' ('explain like I'm five'), new combinations of letters and numbers 'B4' ('before'), 'Gr8' ('great'), phonic spelling , 'peetsa' ('pizza')), 'churoo' ('true') and 'dat' ('that'), emojis or symbols using punctuation and letters, extreme truncation or elision, depending upon phonic pun, 'c u @ 2' ('see you at 2 o'clock'), Evans (2017) argues that emojis are now the fastest growing 'idiolect' within cyberlect. This may be due to a number of factors, but one surely is that emojis are congenial to languages like Chinese and Japanese which are ideogramatic rather than reliant upon the English alphabet. Emojis are closer to this non-alphabetical and non-sequential 'grammar' than the globally dominant English. Maybe, there is a little bit of a reaction to that global dominance also, or maybe it is just faster to use images. And speed is everything. On the other hand, I may add that any attempt to register dialect (another form of unofficial language) in phone messaging is frustrated by predictive text exclusion. Thus, it is quite difficult to get through the particular linguistic rules with words like 'hotherin' (untidy) or even the rather more common tendency among many native English speakers in different parts of Britain to drop the 'g' in verbs like 'going' or 'working'. So, while social media 'language' seems Promethean, utterly democratic, even; it imposes its own rules. Of course, rules are there to be understood and then broken, and young people may well know how to get under the grammatical wire.

Apparently, within the 'APPSmosphere', Twitter is rendered quite the dinosaur by WhatsApp, Snapchat and Instagram. There is also MySpace, Beboo and Friendster. Next year, there will be other 'Apps'. The whole point is that it should not be understood by older people; it is off limits to parents, aunts and proxy authority figures like teachers. We are not supposed to understand it - or only 'soo' old versions like Facebook and Twitter. Merritt (2013) reports on a Mencap survey in which 89% of respondents believed that social media language (text-speak) was a barrier between parents and children. Kosoff (2016, unpaginated) records one telling response from a young person; 'I can't be myself on [Facebook], because my parents and my friends' parents are my Facebook friends' (punctuation supplied). A rising star in the Social Media firmament is 'After School' launched in 2014, where 'high school pupils are encouraged to post their 'deepest anxieties, secret crushes, vulgar assessments of their classmates' (Balingit 2015, unpaginated). The algorithm prevents parents getting on to the site.

However, it seems, long before teenagers and the 'generation gap' was invented, young people in schools developed idiolects among themselves. We see, for example, in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and perhaps even more strikingly, in L. P. Hartley's *The Go Between* (1953), that there was, in English Public (i.e. Private) schools (and their Irish mimicked models), an idiolect among the pupils rather different from the official language of their teachers; quite irreverent it is, too, and occasionally, rather ingenious. And there are those who can, I suspect, testify, that vulgar comments about classmates and downright bullying was not invented by social media.

The whole point of students developing their own idiolect is to keep us out, to render us as 'other'. It is a conscious form of subversion. George Steiner, in his book *After Babel* (1975) talked about the way in which Black Americans deployed and even developed an idiolect which could not be understood by the White, oppressing majority. This subaltern idiolect became a language of resistance, of secret and subversive communication. Of course, that idiolect was subsequently appropriated by Whites, via Jazz and Blues.

And, we may flip the coin on this; as teachers, some use a kind of unofficial language (not always entirely flattering) when speaking about students, especially those considered to be 'difficult'. There is, then, a kind of 'off stage' language practised by both teachers and students and, I suspect, this mirrors what happens in the rest of society. So, for example, we might be very correct 'in the public eye', especially to superiors but privately, if we are annoyed (which we all are at times) we might *revert* to a more instinctive and emotional idiolect. Alternatively, in moments of joy and delight, official language may not quite supply what we want to express, to say nothing of more subtle matters.

We may also need to remember that there are many great works of literature which challenge and subvert 'official' language and, contingently, attitudes. The subversive nature of cyberlect is not, in itself, necessarily a bad thing; for subversion, the saying of things that are not approved of officially, in a kind of sub-language, or dialect, or idiolect, can also be a courageous act of resistance to oppressive powers.

Livingstone (2008) makes some interesting points about how young people use social media. She acknowledges that young people have always been interested in the presentation of self, so social media has not invented this phenomenon. She suggests that young people frequently distinguish between the 'self' they create on social media and their private self. She notes that the content is often jokey, an indication that young people view the project of self-creation as reflexive and, indeed autocritical. Furthermore, she rightly distinguishes between different phases of the self-presented or constructed for social media. This seems to me to ring true in relation to the process of identity formation charted in literature, and indeed, in our own lives. That identity formation is not a stable, or smooth process; we 'take on', try out, mimic, a range of identities, often mixed or even frankly contradictory, before, somehow, becoming, paradoxically, unconsciously, ourselves. But even that notion of a fixed, adult identity is very much open to question, as we change or are changed throughout our lives. The question is what can educators learn from this? One important lesson, it seems to me, is that educators need to understand the difference between the literal and the performative, between the private and the public. Of course, they do understand this in classrooms, as they glimpse students 'acting out' various roles such as the inscrutable and untouchable intellectual, the party goer, the risk taker. But how much encouragement is given to students to 'perform' their avatars or, more crucially, to perform roles and identities that are 'other' within pedagogic contexts? How might we encourage students to understand the paradoxical authenticity of the ludic, of play, if we, as teachers, and indeed researchers, retain a fixed, solemn avatar? And how much attention is given to how any of these avatars are socially and culturally constructed? Given the immense importance given to 'child development', how much attention is actually paid to how young people's changing identity formation on social media might be matched with what they need to learn at various 'Key Stages'?

Interestingly, Kosoff (2016, unpaginated) records one young person saying that the appeal of social media was that, 'I also like being able to make stories' as well as to listen to the stories of others. While this is a slender platform from which to argue that young people tend towards, yearn towards what Blatt-Gross (2013) argues, are 'artful behaviors' as an intrinsic part of human nature, there is surely something to be learnt from this in terms of how education can help young people to make meaning, to construct meaning; as they form their identities, they seem to naturally conceive of this process as making stories. We may elicit from this that young people , just like the rest of us, right through to old age and even and maybe especially, in dementia, are concerned with the existential question, 'who is it can tell me who I am' (Shakespeare 1606, 1975: 981). We all 'perform' identities. Social media does nothing more than dramatise this in our time. As I have noted above, this is not to say that young people using social media are always entirely in control of the avatar or persona that they create; my concern is about those who are interested in these 'stories', these 'profiles' for deeper ideological purposes in terms of harvesting 'Big Data'. Might we just slightly be in danger of sleepwalking our way into an era where we do not hear that language is being callously chiselled and channelled towards hatred and division; from the casual acceptance of internet insult to the far more sinister global surveillance of social media (Grassegger & Krogerus 2017) to influence opinion in elections?

The predominant notes in the popular discourse about young people and social media are (1) The disastrous decline in literacy and (2) The risks young people place them themselves at in engaging with social media. The first note is suspiciously pure and takes no account of the general 'decline' in historic standards of literacy. We may blithely counter that language has always been on the move, transgressing pervious norms and standards. I will return to this shortly. In relation to (2), there is no doubt whatsoever that there are risks; whether the risks are greater because of social media is a more complex question. Much of the attention has focused on the sexual risk young people are subject to being groomed by sexual predators. This is, without doubt, a most grievous risk, though social media did not invent grooming; as those of us from a so-called more innocent age, can testify. There is another risk, pernicious too, and that is

that young people, being young, are encountering words for the first time and do not always know how certain key words have shifted meaning, or rather, how certain key words have been so reconstructed as to constitute not just a semantic shift but a cultural and political shift of a very dangerous kind. This too, is not an enterprise which can be blamed on social media, but, as we will argue, this semantic shifting can be prosecuted in insidious and very deliberate ways.

The 'weaponisation' of social media language

There are powerful people who are not slow to see the potential of social media for prosecuting ideas which are, to put the matter charitably, highly dubious and astutely attuned to the psychometrics of 'branding'. This kind of cyberlect increasingly inscribes a tone which scornfully dismisses 'political correctness' as a creation of the new bugbear of the 'liberal media' and favours direct attack and invective, often emotional rather than rational in nature. So, the gloves appear to be off, and there are plenty of people who find this liberating; and thus social media can be viewed as a kind of emancipation of unofficial language, unfettered and uncorrected by the Establishment.

We might reflect that highly charged and vitriolic language is not at all new – there are plenty of examples in the past; the pamphlets of seventeenth century writers on religion and politics in England come to mind. Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (1729) deploys just such an unofficial and 'liberated' free speech to advocate, among other things, that the impoverished Irish might ease their economic bothers by selling their children as food for rich gentlemen. Swift's purpose was critical, satirical; and what he was critiquing was the very danger of a state of affairs in which The Powers that be stir fear and prejudice and traduce honest and authentic criticism of the official language. Politicians are not known for their command of satire, but rather of spin, the first cousin of which is propaganda. Tim Adams (2017), in a review of Timothy Snyder's *On Tyranny: Twenty lessons from the Twentieth Century*, cites the Polish Jewish philologist, Victor Klemperer, who argued that the Nazis commandeered language before they commandeered everything else. Propaganda comes from all quarters; ISIS and others exhort martyrdom and Jihad, their technological weapon of choice; social media. The word 'Radical' here is collocated with Fundamentalist conservative values, but then 'Fundamentalist' in America seems also to be collocated with religious and social conservatism. Could it possibly be that there is some curious, mirroring?

If we are not careful to attend to language – official and unofficial, if we do not question our own languages – official and unofficial, we are in danger, as students and teachers, of being drawn down into a kind of miasma where we do not know who we are. A case in point is how language has changed in the UK and America under a neo-liberal linguistic 're-education' around words like 'socialism' – now a vile, rather shameful label. Now 'liberal' has now also come under fire from the rampaging Right – 'liberal 'is collocated with 'elite', with comfortable, middle-class patronising and privileged persons. And, indeed, the latest neologisms include radical liberal (an oxymoron) and 'libtard' (an unappetising conflation of liberal and retard, thus in one fell swoop, 'retarding' attitudes to people with disabilities as well as attitudes to those who have the temerity to speak up for tolerance and inclusion). As for the word, 'radical' - once the equivalent of original, exciting thinking, it has now become a synonym for Islamic fundamentalism. Dare any teacher use such words now in any approving way?

I would argue that young people need *not* to follow the supine adults who consume, wholesale, the fast rebranding of key words like 'social', 'liberal' and 'radical' and, concomitantly, the fakery of fake news. Of course, from a post-modernist standpoint, what we you read in the papers, never mind social media, is rather dependent upon the stance of the source. In the UK and Ireland, it must also be said that the enthusiasm for independent investigative journalism has been, it seems to me, in the last 20 years, actively discouraged, within an increasingly ratings driven model. I fear we may all be becoming, to quote Pink Floyd (1979) 'comfortably numb'. And, as teachers, what exactly are we doing?

The fjord in the classroom: official and unofficial language

Much contemporary educational theory exhorts us towards Constructivist approaches; to be facilitators rather than instructors, to narrow the gap between ourselves and our pupils some recognising how problematic this is in practice (Windschitl 2002). I have written (Maginess 2015) about the importance of

'entering the learner zone'; of crossing over into the world of the students, attending carefully to how they speak and what they speak about, to learn their language, even though it is, in a certain sense, a foreign language. But this is not the same thing as mimicking students, of speaking their language, wholesale. I think this would be greeted with well-deserved ridicule by students. And to do so would be to deny that there are, in reality, these two languages, official and unofficial and that would be dishonest, for just 'doing cyberlect' will not be enough to satisfy any ideal of education – even going beyond the 'production' or commodification models to a rather more capacious idea of education as 'civilising' or even radical or transformative through Constructivist and Critical Pedagogy approaches, as I have noted above. I return to my opening epigraph: 'Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own.' We must know the other to know ourselves and, I might add, to expand ourselves, to lead out from ourselves. And, as is well known, the Latin root of the word education, *educare*, means to lead out.

The curriculum – literature as an example

Now, I wonder, if as educators, dabbling, delving, divining, we are not *all* struggling with what Harold Bloom (1975) has termed 'the phenomenon of belatedness'; that is to say, in matters of language, and indeed literature, which is supposed to reflect the acme of fine language, to say nothing of reflecting our identity, we are a bit behind our pupils. And we are a bit behind how language changes and we are a bit behind about contemporary literature and we are a bit behind the uncomfortable possibility that young people are not at all interested in exploring language through literature and do not do anything so old-fashioned as read novels or plays or poems, but assemble their apprehension of the world in radically different modalities – through the internet, via social media. We are inclined to bend to a curriculum (at least in the UK and Ireland) which has about it a certain archaic, backward looking character.

It is little wonder, therefore, that our students glaze over, that their expressions are impudently bored or chillingly obedient. This has not always been the case – we have had brief periods where the curriculum was more responsive to contemporary work, but then nobody could spell, which was hardly a 'consummation devoutly to be wished for', to borrow from *Hamlet.* To be sure, it is important to honour the past, even if it is not our past, but one imposed by the jackboot upon us, because that is, after all, part of our identity, whether we wished it or resisted it.

It is important equally, not to succumb to that age-old appetite for the new, the latest, for it may not be metaphor at all, but only a current, modish sensation. Our students have not invented this impulse; it has always been there. And, in the current zeitgeist, this imperative towards the latest, towards the novel, is very firmly advocated in academia and it is not unrelated to a wider culture of disposability, of the fear of obsolescence. Why is the latest theory automatically the best theory?

Our curricula impels us backwards, counsels caution in the consideration of whether this or that poet or novelist will last, will have any relevance in a hundred years. So we tend to be conservative about what writers we put on a curriculum and it would follow that we still teach our pupils a view of language that is also conservative, official. And yet, paradoxically, writing skills and even basic literacy have declined and it is not uncommon to find Masters' level students, whose first language is English, making basic grammatical mistakes.

Listening to students' language: dialogical approaches

Looking at the problem from the other end of the telescope, it is often the case that teachers do not listen to the language that students actually use, to what might amuse, excite and challenge these students. Education is still largely instructional or transmissive and as Lyle (2008) puts it, monologic. If students are not reading books, what are they doing? They are, evidently, engaging with various forms of social media. This is, if you will, their alternative education; the stuff they learn about outside the classroom. We may object that what they are learning is trivial, shaped towards immediate gratification, scandalous, bullying, sensational, emotion-driven, subjective and increasingly infiltrated by 'fake news' (Cohen 2017).

My view is that we need to enter the learner-zone a great deal more. We need to question our own paradoxes as adults, as educators. There are no easy solutions, but we might start by focusing on how teachers' language can alienate pupils/students. We need to think about how we can truly use dialogical

approaches, based on authentic questions, on valuing students' knowledge on co-constructing knowledge with them (Lyle 2008, Maginess 2015) so that they teach us, as we teach them. Young people will, in every age, engender an alternative language, whether that be drawn from cyberlect or from other idiolects, as a form of resistance. But what if we were to be part of that Resistance? I acknowledge this is tricky. As teachers, we might, instead of condemning cyberlect, or other non-standard forms of language, learn from our students. They will not give up all their secrets – why would they – but imagine if we asked our students to teach us? This might not entirely prevent the formation of a further kind of resistance, but, perhaps it is worth a try. Imagine if we dared to challenge the traditional hierarchy where the teacher is expert? So, let us say we are teaching a poem which must be studied for the curriculum. And instead of the usual prescriptive emphasis on dutifully identifying the technical features of the poem, we ask students to text their response in their own language(s) and encourage them to tear it apart, contend with it, and then, re-write it. Suppose we get them to teach us how to use 'click' feedback, suppose we get them to record and upload their version, suppose we get them to use the internet, then, to establish the context, historically, of the poem. Suppose we get them to try and produce a song out of the poem and record that, in their own rhythms and their own language. They will learn immediately, the similarities and differences in language. In other words they will learn to know who they are, by learning another language. Suppose we get students to produce their own graphic novels or documentaries on social issues (Nayar 2011, O'Neill 2017). Suppose, in a history lesson about the Second World War, we get students to teach us how they understand words like 'liberal' and 'radical' and 'socialist' by searching these words using social media. And suppose we then get them to 'hot spot' what these words meant 100 years ago. Suppose, in a lesson on geography, we get our students to share with us what their family in the UK are saying on social media about the impact of Brexit. Suppose we think about how to approach teaching mathematics using gaming, which I gather is very popular. Suppose we involve young people in creating their own resource app, featuring jobs, writing CVs, etc., as they have done in Jamaica (Author unknown, 2017). More generally, as McLoughlin and Lee (2010: 28) argue, 'digital students want an active learning experience that is social, participatory and supported by rich media'. They argue that we need to encourage learner control and much greater use of resources such as Web 2.0 – the Social Web. Furthermore, they contend that social media modes such as blogs, wikis, twitter, podcasting, Flickr (photos) vodcasting and Youtube be not only allowed but welcomed as modes of learning. And they further claim, citing Stabbé and Theunissen (2008) that this kind of self-regulated learning leads to higher order thinking. This certainly echoes the literature on the benefits of the Constructivist model referred to earlier in relation to deep rather than surface learning. McLoughlin and Lee (2010: 31), also draw attention to programmes like the European funded SRPLE initiative which promotes beyond classroom 'learning spaces' which capitalise on the interests and digital competencies that learners possess. And the University of Edinburgh's Global Justice Academy lecture also specifically argues for a critical pedagogy which would promote radical digital citizenship which would be alert to questioning and challenging 'forms of exploitation, expropriation and oppression that are entangled in today's algorithms' (Global Justice Blog 2017).

In the crucial area of assessment, we might think about how students can do creative multimedia presentations for assessments using their phones, as has been trailed in Higher Education, for example, through the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative featuring classroom engagement with WIKI software for collaborative projects and the use of e-portfolios (Dabbagh & Kitsantas 2011). Such approaches undoubtedly help to integrate formal and informal learning, official and unofficial languages and move pedagogy into a dynamic new arena of 'translanguaging' (Baker 2011) and towards a more culturally sustaining pedagogy, where students from a range of cultures and backgrounds can feel more inclusive. Students, according to Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2011), felt that they were an important part of the classroom and that their needs and opinions mattered. And then, we begin to have students *thinking critically* and communicating with us, engaging with us as active co-producers of knowledge. In such a nexus, students are more likely to question the very orthodoxies and vernacular of their own cyberlect as well as the official language that we use as teachers. And this may sponsor the idea that students could figure out how to speak in different languages, knowing the potential and knowing the limitations of both official and unofficial languages. Perhaps such approaches might begin to muster a resistance to the

swamp; by which I mean the swamp into which we are being sucked, where all that sticks up are gilded towers emblazoned with slogans; sad, bad, fake, very bad, new friend, sick. I rather believe that language is a bit more rich, more various, more 'incorrigibly plural', to borrow from Louis MacNeice (1966) capable of showing that we are 'other'. So we must not cease in the quest to know what is other, for if we do, we will drown in a swamp specially manufactured to consume us – in every sense. The importance of language in education has never been more crucial. Let us encourage our students to teach us. Let us put out our hand, that we none of us are swamped, silenced, drowned.

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The educational role of language in experiences with virtual reality

Slađana Marić

University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Serbia; s.maric.ff.uns@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper focuses on developing a wider understanding of 'the educational role of language' in the digital age. Features of virtual reality and the relationships with diverse learning settings are closely explored in a brief literature review of VR application in education. In addition, a small qualitative case study was conducted through an online survey posted on Facebook "VR in Education" pages and groups - directed towards participants actively engaged in current issues about virtual reality in educational processes. Data included thirteen completed questionnaires from participants, from eleven different countries, that have experienced learning and/or teaching in virtual reality contexts or are focusing their work and research on issues on immersive virtual environments in education. The qualitative method of content analysis of data received through questionnaires was applied, and the results were presented through thirteen short stories of learning and/or teaching experiences and reflections on the use of virtual reality immersive technologies in the learning and teaching processes. A special focus in the analysis of these stories was directed towards the possible interconnections in learning and teaching content of other subjects through English (as a first, second or foreign language) or other languages.

Keywords: educational landscape, digital learning environments, language-learning experience, language spaces, virtual reality (VR)

Introduction

For decades educators and teachers are trying to incorporate new alternative ways of using technology in learning and provide learning environments that will offer realistic contemporary learning experiences and real-life language learning experiences. Weiss (2006: 2) recalling on the definition by Ursula Franklin in "The Real World of Technology" (1990), acknowledges that technology should not be regarded as more than "a toll" in education, but "*a practice*, or *a system* that involves organisation, procedures, symbols, new words, equations, and most of all, a *mind set*".

The workforce of the 21st century is increasingly imposing a demand on education today by focusing on skills such as creativity, empathy, critical thinking, and technological or digital and media literacy (Hu-Au & Lee 2017). Learning is "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb 1984, as cited in Weiss 2006: 4). Almost a decade ago, Passig (2009: 291) stated that virtual reality "is poised to change the way we demonstrate ideas and familiarise children with some difficult to explain knowledge", and it has, to some extent. New virtual reality learning environments, as part of the increasingly complex landscape of digital technology, are creating new possibilities for different experiences and learning paths on different levels of formal education, informal learning and professional development. In this paper the focus will be on developing a wider understanding of 'the educational role of language' in the digital age. Features of virtual reality and the relationships with diverse learning settings are closely explored through a literature review of VR application in education, and the results of a small qualitative case study, conducted as an online survey via a post on Facebook "VR in Education" pages and groups.

Learning in the digital age: virtual reality in education

Virtual reality (VR) is "a part of a larger family of technology-mediated experiences involving a varying degree of blends of reality with virtual components. Related areas along this continuum of reality and virtuality are *augmented reality* and *mixed reality*" (Hu-Au & Lee 2017: 215)[6]. It is also defined as "an immersive, computer-enabled technology that replicates an environment and allows a simulation of the

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[6] Augmented realty (AR) system allows for combining, supplementing, projecting or superimposing virtual 2D or 3D objects (or information) placement and orientation on real world objects or within the real world. In practice it the main purpose of using AR has been for explaining a topic of interest as well as providing additional information (Bacca, Baldiris, Fabregat, Graf & Kinshuk 2014). Mixed reality allows merging of the real and virtual worlds to produce new environments and visualizations where physical and digital objects co-exist and interact in real time. It is a hybrid of reality and virtual reality, encompassing both augmented reality and augmented virtuality through immersive technology.

user to be present and interact in that environment" (Lloyd, Rogerson & Stead 2017: 222). Virtual Reality or "artificial reality", "virtual/artificial worlds" represents "a fully-immersive, absorbing, interactive experience of an alternate reality through the use of a computer structure in which a person perceives a synthetic (i.e., simulated) environment by means of special human-computer interface equipment and interacts with simulated objects in that simulated environment; also, several persons can see one another and interact in a shared synthetic environment (Inoue 2008: 2)". Virtual Reality Learning Environments (VRLEs) are "interactive learning environments that favour the immersion and allow to simulate a realistic environment in which users can perform specific tasks" (Curcio, Dipace & Norlund 2016: 1). Inoue (2008: 1) notes that educational virtual reality (EduVR) learning environment "is not only an interactive multimedia tool but also a learning environment that is extremely close to reality".

The key to the learning process in the virtual world is the embodied avatar through which students interact with the environment, embodied virtual agents, or real people. The embodied "self" via avatar is not the separation of real-world "Self"; instead, it is the link between the real "self" mind/cognition and the virtual "body" enabling immersion and learning (Pasfield-Neofitou, Huang & Grant 2015: 723). According to Nooriafshar, Williams and Maraseni (2004: 3) virtual reality used in education were recognised as the most convenient in situations where "access to the real object or environment is hard or impossible", where "using the actual objects is unsafe or poses a health hazard for the user", and "obtaining and experimenting with the real object is too expensive."

A diversity of materials can be provided in these novel interactive learning or entertainment environments, where students simultaneously read or listen to and interpret images, graphics, animation, text and sound, connecting perception and instant action. In the findings published in the Global Nomads Group toolkit for teachers "Virtual Reality for The Classroom" (2018), three types of VR are distinguished: (1) Full Immersion, Computer Generated (CG) VR; (2) Cinematic VR; (3) Desktop VR. The first type includes Head-Mounted Displays (HMDs) (e.g. Oculus Rift, HTC Vive) that in the entertainment and educational contexts can offer 3D computer animation, field of vision (FOV) of 110 degrees, and "full interactivity" with the 3D environment – through fibre-optic gloves, controllers, camera sensors, and eye-tracking systems. The second type is most common in film making and media and known as "360-degree videos". The third type is currently the most common and affordable in major educational settings. It is the least immersive option, as it uses a monitor of a standalone device (tablet/computer) to display content and allow interactivity with the environment, largely depending on the outside controls for interacting (mouse, keyboard, touch-screen). Virtual reality, as a computing platform, offers the possibility to eliminate the indirect control of the mouse, keyboard or a display. Therefore, the interactions usually are based on movement sensors, eye tracking or simply the voice or speech of the person wearing VR. It is important to understand VR as something apart from "only engaging and interacting with pre-made 3D objects", as learners can now interact with the sound as well (narration, sound effects and music). Furthermore, they can engage in creating VR content.

In one of the earliest literature reviews (research up until the end of 20th century) on virtual reality environments in computer assisted language learning (CALL), Klaus Schwienhorst (2002), explored the concept of learner autonomy through three different approaches: 1) an individual-cognitive (Kelly), emphasizing learner awareness; 2) a social-interactive (Vygotsky), emphasizing interaction and peer collaboration and 3) an experiential and experimental (Bruner), emphasizing active participation of the learner in the learning process, arguing that "VR concepts can support these approaches by looking at VR theorists and empirical CALL research using VR". Virtual reality continued to be in the focus of educational research (Nooriafshar, Williams & Maraseni 2004, Weiss 2006, Inoue 2008, Passig 2009, Dutra Piovesan et al. 2012, Bacca et al. 2014, Curcio, Dipace & Norlund 2016, Hu-Au & Lee 2017, Stojšić, Ivkov-Džigurski & Maričić 2018), and language learning in particular, providing a practical and theoretical insights into to the capabilities of virtual reality in foreign language education (Szabó 2011, Grant, Huang & Pasfield-Neofitou 2013, Repetto 2014, Lin & Lan 2015, Pasfield-Neofitou, Huang & Grant 2015, Chen & Chen 2016, Lloyd, Rogerson & Stead 2017, Bonner & Reinders 2018, Bambury 2018, Peixoto et al. 2019).

As noted by Szabó (2011: 67) "improving achievement is one of the common aims of parents and teachers at all educational levels, from kindergarten to secondary and higher education". This is in most

cases very dependent on the knowledge and skills of language or languages, where "we look at people and frequently describe them in terms of how much they speak, how extensively they read, how well they write or how attentively they listen (Daszkiewicz, Wenzel & Kusiak-Pisowacka 2018: 18). In the context of learning languages, the importance of authentic foreign language environment remains the main goal in providing quality language learning experiences, not forgetting the issue of high cost for obtaining this environment (Chen & Chen 2016: 23). As noted by Grant, Huang and Pasfield-Neofitou (2013) research into learning in virtual environments indicates that anxiety in language performance can be reduced in such learning environments, although, learners may need to develop a range of digital or technical skills in using VR to facilitate interaction. One of the preliminary results confirmed that "students found the virtual environment less stressful in terms of language use".

According to Steve Bambury (2018) virtual reality has the potential "to redefine the way students can learn languages in a variety of ways", through (1) using live AR translation; (2) live tutoring and language labs inside virtual worlds; (3) AI – *Artificial Intelligence* integration with AR and VR (e.g. *Mondly*); (4) 360 video scenarios with voice-recognition (e.g. *ImmerseMe*) and (5) "language-based memory places" or virtual spaces that learners can build and include 3D models, text boards, images, GIFs, and a "living dictionary" with audio recordings of the vocabulary associated with each object, or interactive scenes for review or revision of key conversational language (e.g. *CoSpaces Edu*).

The teaching and learning methods and approaches with VR can be regarded as inherited from the pre-VR pedagogical era and are now in the state of experimental improvement, extension or transformation, providing space for the new pedagogical approaches to emerge. Students are learning through:
- "going on a virtual field trip";
- "bringing science to life";
- "recreating real-life structures in virtual space";
- "creating fictional spaces";
- "solving mysteries";
- "becoming the story through role-playing games", etc.

In the most recent published research on VR in education, Stojsic, Ivkov-Dzigurski and Maricic (Stojšić, Ivkov-Džigurski & Maričić 2018: 365) used a reflective writing as a method for "triggering teachers in-depth thinking about their teaching practice" on four main themes: *support, integration, perceived impact and benefits*, and *barriers and limitations of VR in teaching*. They conducted their research in the context of formal education in the Republic of Serbia with a sample of 12 teachers as participants in this qualitative study. These teachers reported on their using of mixed-virtual reality and augmented reality through group learning activities or in project work, where students bring their own digital media devices (BYOD[7]) and use them in specific learning tasks for specific learning targets. The findings from the research of Stojsic at al. (2018), indicate that teachers used different VR experiences in order to match the content with the curriculum and lesson goals, but also combined VR in teaching with other digital tools (videos, podcasts, wikis, blogs or forums, and mobile apps).

Research methodology
The research strategy
Previous academic research exists regarding the 'the educational role of language', as well as, the implementation and the role of VR in Education, in general and in specific subject areas, such as learning languages or learning English language as a second or foreign language. As such, the proposed research *case study* took the form of new research, merging the two existing research subjects, therefore, regarding to the educational role of language in experiences with virtual reality.

The aim of the research
The aim is of this paper is to develop a wider understanding of 'the educational role of language' in the digital age. We explore in what contexts of learning and/or teaching participants used virtual reality. In the

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[7] BYOD – Bring your own device; a model of digital media integration in classrooms

field of our research interest are the participants' reflections on the use of immersive technologies in the learning and/or teaching processes:

1) the VR environments used;
2) the language and its role in learning in such environments,;
3) the possible examples of meaningful and engaging, socio-linguistically and culturally loaded materials use in learning and teaching;
4) the features of virtual reality and the relationships with diverse learning settings.

Data collection method and tools

In this survey, an original *online questionnaire* was used in gathering data on current uses of VR in learning and teaching settings. The *questionnaire*[8] was designed in English language in the Google Forms, where the questions were with multiple answer options, closed and open-ended (Appendix 1).

The population to which the inquiry was addressed, included speakers of English language as individuals with experience in learning and/or teaching in virtual reality contexts or focusing their work and research on issues of immersive virtual environments in education.

The questionnaire was distributed, from December 2nd to 4th, 2018, as a post on Facebook pages and within groups focusing on immersive virtual environments in education: (1) VIRTLANTIS (group); (2) Virtual Worlds Best Practices in Education (group); (3) VR in Education (group); (4) VR Education. Virtual Reality and Education. Realidad Virtual y Educación (group); (5) Virtual Worlds: Best Practices in Education (page); (6) Music Education Virtual Reality – MEVR (page); (7) Virtual Reality for Education (page); (8) Virtual World Language Learning's Page and (9) VR All Art.

The selection of the sample

The method of *non-probability - purposive sampling* (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007: 114) was used to develop the sample of the research under discussion. Purposive sampling was used in accessing 'knowledgeable people' or those who may have specific or in-depth knowledge about particular issues, based on their professional role, access to networks, expertise or experience, all with the aim of acquiring "in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007: 114). The sample included data from 13 completed questionnaires by individuals actively engaged in issues in the field of "VR in Education" discussed in specific groups or pages on social media site Facebook. These 13 individuals (from 11 different countries) were speakers of English and other languages, with experience in learning/teaching in virtual reality contexts or focusing their work and research on issues of immersive virtual environments in education (e.g. teachers, teacher trainers, English language teachers, professor trainer, researcher, VR developers, student and a senior citizen).

The type of data analysis

The *qualitative content analysis* (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007) was used in analysing the gathered data. The process of qualitative content analysis of answers from the questionnaire included several processes:

- coding (defining the main units of content analysis (*text*) and selecting the instruments for noting the units of content analysis, *indicators* – word, phrase, sentence, etc.);
- categorisation of data;
- examination of the interconnectedness of units of analysis (categories).

The results were presented through thirteen short stories of learning and/or teaching experiences with virtual reality from thirteen participants. Stories follow the same structural organisation of text into several sections:

- demographic information gathered as a result of the survey - information about the participant (role – student, teacher, developer, other);
- previous usages of VR (type of VR, brand);

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[8]   Link   to   the   survey   http://tiny.cc/215f1y   or   https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdS0eJLq7D Fks5Nb1ozBHj5CX3TGcrv0vFy4R8io6bWT_g1Q/viewform. The questionnaire was piloted in November 2018.

- information about the VR content used (theme, language, sound) and the aim or purpose of use;
- VR preferences, future intentions for VR usage.

A special focus in the analysis of these stories is directed towards the possible interconnections in learning and teaching content of other subjects through English (as first, second or foreign language) or other languages.

Research limitations

This study has two main limitations, often associated with educational qualitative research, the overall number of participants (rather small data sample of 13 questionnaires), and generalisation based on the data and results from the *purposive sampling* as rather limited. The third limitation might be the time allocated for the survey.

Results

The number of participants that responded to the questionnaire was in total 13. The participants were from many different countries (England/Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Italy, India, UAE, UK, USA, and two from New Zealand and Ukraine). The participants were: four *teacher trainers*, two *English language teachers*, two *teachers*, one *student of master studies*, *researcher*, *VR developer*, *professor trainer*, and one *senior citizen*.) Based on the information gathered through the posted questionnaire, the results were presented through thirteen short stories of learning and/or teaching experiences with virtual reality. Stories follow the same structural organisation of text into four main sections (information about the participant, previous usages of VR, information about the VR content used and the aim or purpose of use, VR preferences, and future intentions for VR usage), with a special focus directed towards the possible interconnections in learning and teaching content of other subjects through English (as first, second or foreign language) or other languages.

Story 1 – Teacher trainer (England/Sweden) using VR in teaching in the virtual classroom through virtual worlds for 5 – 10 years. Experienced a VR in the English Language lesson or lecture. VR used: *Aris* and *Second Life*[9]. VR "has been very successful - running a course with VR for the 24th term in a row in the spring" [P1][10]. The content was in English, and the participant speaks English as the first language. Language in VR was used for listening and speaking (interacting with the program or other participants). Language is not seen as an obstacle in the personal VR learning experience. The participant used VR to run a language course. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, there was sound (music, songs, sound effects, speech, conversation, etc.). The content preferred in learning/teaching with VR is *spoken business English*. The program or app the participant likes the most in learning/teaching is *Second Life*. In the future, the participant would like to experience VR in the same teaching context "28th cycle of the course" and retire after that.

Story 2 – English language teacher (Ukraine) using VR in personal learning through virtual worlds for 2 – 3 years. Experienced VR as part of the self-initiated learning (not for teaching). Not experienced VR in the school or faculty lesson in a specific subject area. The content of learning was in English, and the participant speaks English as the second or a foreign language (first language is Ukrainian). Language in VR was used for reading, listening to a story, and listening and speaking (interacting with the program or other participants). Language is not seen as an obstacle, but as an important factor in the personal VR learning experience. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, there was sound (speech and conversation). The participant "really enjoyed having conversations, meeting people from different countries". The program or app the participant likes the most in learning/teaching is *Second Life*. In the future, the participant would like to experience some new opportunities for language practice.

Story 3 – Senior citizen (Finland) using virtual reality (VR) in learning in a virtual classroom, within virtual worlds, for 5 – 10 years. Not experienced VR in the school or faculty lesson in a specific subject area. Used only *The Second Life,* a free 3D virtual world. VR experience "creates a relaxed environment, comfortable"

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[9] Second Life – an "open social virtuality" that allows the users "to immerse themselves in a wide variety of social contexts, participating in individual and group activities" (Lin & Lan 2015: 486).

[10] [P1] – citation of the answer from the questionnaire by Participant No. 1

[P3]. The content of learning was in English, and the participant speaks English as the second or a foreign language. Language in VR was used for listening and speaking (interacting with the program or other participants). Language is not seen as an obstacle, but as an important factor in the personal VR learning experience of learning English and Spanish language. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, there was sound (speech). The content this participant prefers in learning with VR is *learning languages*. The program or app the participant likes the most in learning/teaching is *Second Life*. Considering the future, the participant notices that "communities in VR are already quite creative".

Story 4 – Researcher (Italy), an expert in the field of VR. Using VR headsets (such as Google Cardboard) in teaching in the physical classroom for one year. Tried VR in the Science lesson or lecture. VR brands used: *Google, CoSpaces*. For this researcher, VR "is valuable for SEN" [P4]. The content was in Italian. Language in VR was used as a text for reading, and for reading and answering quick questions (multiple choice answers). Language is not seen as an obstacle, but as an important factor in the VR learning experience. In the VR environment used for learning/teaching there was some background music. The contents preferred in learning/teaching with VR are *science* and *arts*. The program or app the participant likes the most in learning/teaching is *CoSpaces*. In the future, the participant would like to experience more VR content. The comments were: "VR is useful and powerful to get attention and engagement; very good also for storytelling and coding".

Story 5 – Teacher trainer (USA) using VR (*Google Expeditions* and *Merge cube*), in teaching in the physical classroom for 2 – 3 years. Tried VR in Biology lesson or lecture. VR brand used: *Merge* and *Google*. This researcher is "using more AR because of tablets instead of phones/goggles, apps are expensive" [P5]. The content was in English (the participant's first language). Language in VR was used as a text for reading. Language is not seen as an obstacle, but as an important factor in the VR learning experience. In the VR environment used for learning/teaching there was no sound. The content preferred in learning/teaching with VR is the content from *Merge* or *Google Expeditions*, and these are also the programs or apps the participant likes the most in learning/teaching. In the future, the participant would like to experience more "VR science content and other contents areas" [P5].

Story 6 – Teacher (New Zealand) using VR headsets in teaching in the physical classroom for 2 – 3 years. Tried VR in Biology and Science lessons or lectures. VR brand used: *HTC Vive* and *Google Cardboard*. The content was in English (the participants' first language). Language in VR was used for listening and speaking (interacting with the program or other participants). The participant thinks that languages in not important in the VR experience. In the VR environment used for learning/teaching there were some sound effects "that in particular make the experience more immersive" [P6]. The content preferred can be characterised as "keep talking and nobody explodes, plank style games, any realistic space/physics /biology simulation" [P6]. The participant would like to be able "to create personal bespoke experiences" – "as there are a lot of possibilities and software companies are not aware of them". The participant commented that VR is "very powerful but costs need to come down. Full immersive VR is not likely to become mainstream until there are 'must have' applications that justify 1:1 teaching".

Story 7 – Teacher trainer (UAE), an expert in the field of VR. Using VR in teaching and learning in both the physical and virtual classroom for 4 – 5 years. The types of VR used are: 360° videos on desktop computers, tablets and mobile device screens, VR headset such as Google Cardboard, VR headset designed for education K – 12, VR devices for gaming and Virtual Worlds. Experienced VR in the English Language lessons, History, Geography, Mathematics, Biology, and Media Literacy. VR brands used: "most of them". The content was in English, and the participant speaks English as the first language. Language in VR was used in different ways depending on the app. Language is not seen as an obstacle in the personal VR learning experience, but as an important factor in learning with VR. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, the presence of sound (music, songs, sound effects, speech, conversation, etc.) "varies from app to app". The content preferred in learning/teaching with VR is *History*. In the future, the participant would like that "wireless 6DOF headsets, multi-person VR becoming more accessible in schools". He is the creator of a website dedicated to learning and teaching with VR.

Story 8 – VR developer (Ukraine), an expert in the field of VR - developer program. Used VR devices for gaming it in both, physical and virtual classrooms for 2 – 3 years. Tried VR in school subjects such as

Robotics/programing. The content was in Ukrainian. Language in VR was used as a text for reading and for listening to a story. Language is not seen as an obstacle in the personal VR learning experience, but as an important factor in learning with VR. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, there was sound (music, songs, sound effects, speech, conversation, etc.). The content preferred in VR is *educational content*. In the future, the participant would to experience "simulation of the flight to Mars".

Story 9 – English language teacher (UK) using VR in teaching in the physical classroom for 6 months. Types of VR used: 360 degrees videos on desktop computers, tablets and mobile device screens, VR headset such as Google Cardboard, VR headset designed for education K – 12, VR devices for gaming and Virtual Worlds. Tried VR in English Language and Biology lessons. Brands used: *Oculus* and *Google*. The content was in English, and the participant speaks English as the first language. Language in VR was used as a text for reading, for listening to a story, for listening and speaking (interacting with the program or other participants) and for reading and answering quick questions (multiple choice answers). Language is not seen as an obstacle in the personal VR learning experience. The participant used VR to learn and teach language. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, there was sound (music, songs, sound effects, speech, conversation, etc.). In the future, the participant would like to experience VR "remote 360 3D live access to learning".

Story 10 – Teacher trainer (US) using VR headset for 6 months in order to be able to train or teach other teachers in using it. No experience in specific school or faculty subjects through VR content. Brand used: *Lenovo*. The content was in English (first language of the participant). Language was used as a text for reading, and for listening and speaking (interacting with the program or other participants). Language is not seen as an obstacle in the personal VR learning experience. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, there was sound (music, songs, sound effects, speech, conversation, etc.). The content preferred is learning with "virtual field trips". In the future, the participant would like "to see VR used for kids with emotional problems" [P10].

Story 11 – Professor trainer (Belgium) using VR in teaching in the physical classroom with VR headset 1 – 5 months. Experienced VR in the Pedagogy and didactics lecture. VR brands used: *Roundme*, *Panopto* and *Google cardboard*. The experience of this participant was the following: "It is hard to know where to start in VR when you're new to it, but after convincing myself to just start, and some ups and downs, it really has a positive effect on the learning goals. Key, is to research what to do and don't do with VR in education" [P11]. The content was in Dutch. Language was used for listening to a story. Language is not seen as an obstacle in the personal VR learning experience. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, there was no sound. The content preferred in learning/teaching with VR is "content where people have to experience the atmosphere in a certain situation of have to pay attention to multiple focus-points" [P11]. The program or app the participant likes the most in learning/teaching is *Panopto*. In the future, the participant would like to experience VR with "more interaction with other users" [P11].

Story 12 – Teacher (India) using VR headset designed for education K – 12 in teaching in the physical classroom for 2 – 3 years. Experienced VR in History and Geography. VR brand used: *View master*. For the participant, VR experience is "an enriching experience for students without having to travel and provides opportunities for students to interact and learn s wide variety of topics" [P12]. The content experienced was in English, and the participant speaks English as the first language. However, the teacher used VR content with "no language at all" [P12]. The teacher does not see language as an obstacle in the personal VR learning experience, but as an important factor in learning with VR – "because when students are interacting with the scene, teachers get the opportunity to reflect on students' learning" [P12]. In the VR environment for learning/teaching, there was sound. The content preferred in learning/teaching with VR is: environmental science, history, geography, and science. The programs or apps that the teacher likes the most in learning/teaching are: *Merge cube* and *Google expeditions*. In the future, the participant would like his students have "more opportunities to interact with each other and content" [P12].

Story 13 – MA student (New Zealand) using VR - Google Cardboard for learning through play. Not experienced learning with VR in school or faculty subject areas. The content experienced was in English (first language). The language was present in the menu, audio narration and explanations, and it is not seen as an obstacle in the VR learning experience but was not regarded as important in learning. There was

sound in the VR content experienced. For the participant, the virtual reality to be experienced in future are *Oculus Quest*, games and travel videos.

Concluding discussion

In this small qualitative study regarding the experience of participants (from 11 different countries) as teachers, teacher trainers, English language teachers, professor trainer, researcher, VR developers, student and a senior citizen, we managed to capture some reflections on the use of immersive technologies in the learning and teaching processes. This study has several limitations, the number of participants was small, the time allocated was 3 days, and the questionnaire was posted on the pages and groups of users on one social media space focusing on VR in education and arts, and therefore generalisation based on the results is rather limited. However, these limitations are often associated with educational qualitative research. What distinguishes this small-scale research is the focus on the role of language in the learning and teaching experiences with VR.

The participants used VR in the contexts of learning and teaching in the physical classroom (6), virtual classroom (2), both, physical and virtual classrooms (3), and not in a classroom, but as self-initiated learning (at home/school/work) (2). The type of VR used was in most cases VR headset such as Google Cardboard (4), Virtual Worlds (3), 360° video on desktop computers, tablets and mobile phones (2), VR headset designed for education K -12 (1), VR devices for gaming (1), "all the above mentioned" (2). The brands that were used by the participants were: *Aris, Second Life, Google Cardboard, CoSpaces, Merge, HTC Vive, Oculus rift/GO, Lenovo, Roundme, Panopto*, and *View master*.

There were participants that have been using such technology for: only up to five months (1), 6 months (2), one year (1), 2 – 3 years (5 participants), 4 – 5 years (1), and 5 – 10 years (2). Regarding the content, participants have tried VR in many school lessons or faculty lectures in Biology, English Language, Geography, Science, but also in Mathematics, Media Literacy, Robotics/programing, and Pedagogy and didactics.

The participants experience with VR was regarded as "very successful", "very positive", "enriching experience", "learning in a relaxed environment, comfortable", "valuable for SEN", "VR really has a positive effect on the learning goals", and "fun".

The language in VR was English - as the first language to participants (8; 61.5%), English as a second/third/foreign language (2; 15.4%), Italian (1; 7.7%), Dutch (1; 7.7%), and Ukrainian (1; 7.7%). Language was used in most cases in one or a combination of the following types: as a text for reading (6; 46.2%), for listening and speaking (interacting) (6; 46.2%), for listening to a story (4; 30.8%), there was no language at all (1; 7.7%), "varies from app to app" (1; 7.7%), "in the menu, audio narration" (1; 7.7%). Language was perceived as not being an obstacle in the VR learning experience by all the participants (13; 100%). Eleven participants stated that language is important in the VR learning experience, while two stated that it may not be important. Those that agree add that language was: 1) the main subject of learning; 2) very important; 3) main means of communication in a training course and 4) important for allowing students to interact and teachers to reflect on students' learning.

The content preferred in learning/teaching with VR was: spoken business English, languages (English, Spanish), science, arts, physics, biology, geography, history, education content in general, virtual field trips, "content where people have to experience the atmosphere in a certain situation", environmental science, etc. Tools and programs or applications that participants recommended were: *Second Life, Merge cube, Google expedition, Cospaces,* etc.

The participants in this research would like to experience in future the VR becoming more accessible in schools (e.g. wireless 6DOF headsets, multi-person VR, remote 360 3D live access to learning), as well as seeing more content available, such as, "simulation of the flight to Mars" [P8], more VR science content, content in travel, more content that provides opportunities for interaction, uses of VR in solving emotional problems, etc. Furthermore, virtual reality is regarded as "useful and powerful to get attention and engagement" [P4] but still expensive to become part of mainstream education.

Possible advantages of using educational VR or VR for educational purposes:
- VR can make the initial learning more interesting and fun;

- provide opportunities to learners for self-directed, lifelong learning;
- provide learners with the feeling of immersion;
- new and inventive ways to teach and engage students in learning;
- provide the learner with the sense of physical imagination;
- offer opportunities for intuitive interactions;
- more content in open access that can meet the needs of learners or an individual instructor's curriculum needs;
- help in not making race and gender barriers through visiting different countries and experiencing different cultures (Inoue 2008: 1);
- experiencing things that cannot be experienced in the real world, events and places in the past or future.

It is always good to keep in mind the notion that "education can be seen as a discovery, exploration and observation process, besides the eternal construction of the knowledge" and virtual reality can offer such education through *immersion, interaction* and *involvement*; "it presents an opportunity of learning with a real situation, but artificially created, facilitating the visualisation and the interaction sensation with the study focus" (Dutra Piovesan, Maria Passerino & Soares Pereira 2012). In conclusion, VR is re-shaping the socio-cultural life, educational or learning processes in the 21st century, as learning "centres on experiences", where visual and auditory content (images, language in all its forms, music, sound) are key factors in shaping both the message and the participants. Furthermore, "the ability to create empathy in students and to change perspectives" is regarded as one of the strongest arguments for VR as a learning tool (Hu-Au & Lee 2017: 221).

Acknowledgements

Conflict of interest statement

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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APPENDIX 1

VR in Education: What is your experience?

Your participation is voluntary. The answers will be shown in an aggregated form in an article. The aim is to develop the wider understanding in creating opportunities for immersive and interactive learning. This questionnaire is open from December 2 to 4, 2018. Thank you for you participation!
* Required

Which of the following best describes you? *
- □ BA student
- □ MA student
- □ PhD student
- □ Teacher
- □ English Language Teacher
- □ Teacher Trainer
- □ Professor (Higher Education)
- □ Researcher
- □ Artist
- □ VR Developer
- □ Other:

You are from? (Country) *

How familiar are you with the concept of virtual reality (VR)? *
- □ I do not know what VR is.
- □ I am only slightly aware of what virtual reality is.
- □ I am aware what VR is.
- □ I am aware what VR is and I am using it in my learning.
- □ I am aware what VR is and I am using it in my teaching.
- □ I am aware what VR is and I am developing content for others.
- □ I am aware what VR is and I am an expert in this field.
- □ Other:

You used VR in learning *
- □ in the physical classroom
- □ virtual classroom
- □ both, physical and virtual classrooms
- □ not in a classroom, but as self-initiated learning (at home/school/work)
- □ Other:

What type of VR have you used in your learning and/or teaching? *
- □ 360 degree videos on desktop computers, tablets and mobile device screens
- □ VR headset such as Google Cardboard
- □ VR headset designed for education K - 12
- □ VR devices for gaming
- □ Virtual Worlds
- □ All the above.
- □ Other:

For how long are you using VR in educational purposes? *
- □ 1 - 5 months
- □ 6 months
- □ 1 year
- □ 2 -3 years
- □ 4 -5 years
- □ 5 - 10 years
- □ Other:

If you have tried VR in a school lesson or at a faculty lecture, in what subject area(s)? (Check all that apply) *
- □ English Language Lessons
- □ History
- □ Geography
- □ Music Lessons
- □ Mathematics
- □ Biology
- □ Media Literacy
- □ Non applicable.
- □ Other:

Which brand of VR have you used?

Please describe your experience with VR and your opinion of it. *

In what language was the content in the VR environment you experienced? *
- □ English - it is also my first language
- □ English - I speak English as a second/third/foreign language
- □ Chinese
- □ Japanese
- □ Russian
- □ Italian
- □ Spanish
- □ Greek
- □ Arabic
- □ Hindi
- □ Other:

Language in VR was used *
- □ as a text for reading
- □ for listening to a story
- □ for listening and speaking (interacting with the program or other participants)
- □ for reading and answering quick questions (multiple choice answers)
- □ there was no language at all
- □ Other:

Was the language an obstacle in your VR learning experience? *
- □ yes
- □ no
- □ Other:

Do you think that language was important in your VR learning/teaching experience? *

Was there any sound in the VR environment you used for your learning/teaching, and did it have any effect on your overall experience in VR? (music, songs, sound effects, speech, conversations, etc.)*

Would you like to share what content you prefer to learn or teach with VR? *

Would you like to share what program or app you like the most in learning and/or teaching with VR?*

What would you like to experience in VR in the future? *

Please share any additional comments or thoughts about VR used for learning and education

The ethnolinguistic vitality of Arabic in the Australian multicultural landscape

Gemma Tarpey-Brown*, Abdel-Hakeem Kasem**
*School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia; gemmagtb@gmail.com
**School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia;
hakeem.kasem@deakin.edu.au

Abstract

This paper investigates the ethnolinguistic vitality of Arabic in Australian society and the implications such vitality has on claims of a successfully multicultural Australia. Vitality in this regard is defined as 'that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations' (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor 1977, p. 308). To conduct this research, empirical data was collected to understand the way members of the Arabic ethnolinguistic community view their own vitality. Additionally, secondary sources were studied to present an overview of the place Arabic holds within the Australian multicultural landscape. A total number of 53 (n=53) students across Melbourne were surveyed. The results indicate that when looking at the variable of demography and informal institutional support, Arabic held a high rate of vitality. However, participants believed Arabic had a low vitality in regard to the level of social status and formal institutionalised support.

Keywords: *ethnolinguistic, ethnolinguistic vitality, Arabic, Arab community, multiculturalism*

Introduction

This research paper investigates the ethnolinguistic vitality of Arabic in Australian society and the implications such vitality has on claims of a successfully multicultural Australia. The research findings will be published in two separate publications. Whilst this paper will focus on analysing and discussing the results of the Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality Survey, the second paper will focus on analysing and discussing the relationship between Arabic and Islamophobia and the role of institutional support in language maintenance of Arabic in Australia.

Today, Arabic is the third most spoken language in Australia, following English and Mandarin, meaning it is a central part of communication in the daily lives of over 320,000 Australians (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2017). In an international context, Arabic is the official language of 26 sovereign states and is spoken by more than 315 million people worldwide (Simons & Fennig 2018). It is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. This information allows us to understand the global significance of the language, showing it to be a vital form of communication in the international sectors of economics, politics, security and trade. Yet, the continuing demographic growth of the Arabic ethnolinguistic community in Australia stands in direct contrast with the growing lack of institutional support provided for the language, the normalisation of Islamophobia both in Australia and other Western countries, and the growing rate of racial incivility targeting Arabic speakers. This research project is therefore framed by these conflicting circumstances.

Central question and methodology

The central research question explored in this paper is "*what is the ethnolinguistic vitality of Arabic within Australia, and what implications does this vitality have on claims of a successfully multicultural Australia?*". In order to address this question, it was necessary to follow the theoretical framework presented by Bourhis, Giles and Taylor (1981) and Ehala (2010). This framework posits that ethnolinguistic vitality can be assessed by investigating four key variables: the demographics of the community, the level of institutional support given to the community, the social status of the community, and the intergroup distance between the minority ethnolinguistic community, and the majority community[11]. These have been measured by constructing and distributing a Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality Questionnaire (SEVQ) to fifty-three young Arabic-speaking Australians in the city of Melbourne, Victoria. The SEVQ is a crucial tool when examining the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language. Bourhis et al. (1981: 147) stressed the importance of the questionnaire "in determining patterns of intergroup behaviours" and for monitoring

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[11] In this case, Arabic is the minority ethnolinguistic community, and English is the majority ethnolinguistic community.

"the position of minorities as distinctive collective entities in intergroup settings". Given Australia's multicultural history, the issue of rights, respect and representation of minority communities is often at the forefront of social debate.

In addition to ethnolinguistic vitality theory and its methodology, this paper is informed by post-colonial theory, and relies on Ghassan Hage's concept of Australian multiculturalism, which he presents in *White Nation* (1998), to critically explore the rupture between the presentation of Australia as a multicultural success, and the reality wherein Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds are often made to feel categorically 'un-Australian', and Other (see Ang 2003, Asmar 1992, Hussein & Poynting 2017).

Literature
The role of languages in Australia

Prior to the arrival and implementation of European settler-colonialism, the Australian continent was a space where multilingualism was a necessary part of life. This rich linguistic diversity was eradicated by the British, who instead introduced the norm of monolingualism (Clyne 2011). Where once the continent was home to a rich plethora of indigenous languages, it rapidly became a country that enforced English language proficiency in an attempt to produce a culturally homogenous society (Ang 2003). It is important to situate this research in this history, before noting that multilingualism has once again established itself across the continent, in the Australian linguistic landscape of the 21st century. However today, very few of the languages spoken, taught and maintained in Australia are indigenous to the continent (LoBianco & Slaughter 2009). Nonetheless, this history of language death does not stop modern Australia from identifying as a country that prides itself on its linguistic diversity and multiculturalism (Piller 2016). Data from the recent 2016 census indicates that 21% of Australians speak a language other than English at home (ABS 2016).

Arabic has a noted presence in the Australian linguistic landscape, especially in urban centres (Clyne & Kipp 1999). Piller (2016) focuses on the Australian linguistic landscape and its cultural reality in her work on the intersection of social justice and linguistic diversity, with a case study carried out in the Sydney council area of Auburn. Auburn is one of the most linguistically diverse suburbs in Australia, with 83% of households speaking a non-English language (ABS 2016)[12]. In Auburn, Arabic is the primary language spoken at home after English (ABS 2016) and is considered to be a "public but unofficial language" (Piller 2016: 16). The only official language of Auburn Council is English, meaning all official signage, such as street signs, directional signs and signs on public institutions, appear in English. Here, it is argued that in Auburn, there is a clear disjuncture between the monolingual language policy set forth by the council and the prominence of Arabic (and other non-English languages) throughout the community. This is an example of the monolingual mind set that currently exists in Australia, which presents major challenges for language education policy and bilingual development (Clyne 2008, Scarino 2014). The monolingual mind set limits the development of coherent and extensive language policies which should respond to the prominence of community languages in Australian society. This limitation can be seen as producing attitudes that devalue community language bilingualism amongst Australian students and has been read by Zelasko (as cited in LoBianco 2017) to represent the "bilingual double standard". This double standard is found when English speakers who learn foreign languages are celebrated and viewed as intellectually and academically talented. Comparatively, speakers reaching English fluency whilst maintaining their community language are rarely viewed through such a positive lens. Rather, such bilingualism is seen as a necessary form of acculturation, or assimilation, in order to be deemed tolerable (Hage 1998).

Ethnolinguistic vitality

An ethnolinguistic community is defined by Kramsch (1998) as a community wherein the language, imbued with cultural practices and values, becomes the common identifier of the group. Giles and Johnson (1987) further Kramsch's definition in suggesting that ethnolinguistic communities are formed by drawing on the social psychological processes involved in identity formation. They argue that ethnolinguistic identities are constructed along a complex amalgamation of language, ethnicity and intergroup belonging.

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[12] For context, 22% of households speak a non-English language Australia wide (ABS 2016).

Thus, there is a noted connection between an individual's linguistic practices and their cultural identity. This connection is then extended to a wider community, where a person positions herself alongside other members of a speech community who identify similarly. A speech community in this context is akin to an ethnolinguistic community, and such communities often interact and are in contact with each other, especially in the current global environment of hyper-mobility. This hyper-mobility stems from a multitude of factors. However, when discussing the effect of inter-language contact, instances of long term contact are often the focus. Pauwels (2016: 17) lists the main types of mobility that impact the linguistic "constellations" of ethnolinguistic communities as being "migration – voluntary as well as forced, colonisation and invasion". Given the fact that modern Australia is a nation founded by colonisation and relies heavily on immigration, different ethnolinguistic communities are constantly in contact with the national language of English. Therefore, languages in Australia are always experiencing a shift of some kind, often through a stage of bilingualism, and then on to English monolingualism (LoBianco & Slaughter 2009).

In order to understand the relationship that exists between ethnolinguistic communities in multicultural societies, Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) argue that a language's vitality ought to be studied in order to ascertain how that language is being altered. Vitality in this specific context is defined as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations" (Giles et al. 1977: 308). This definition has been extended by Ehala (2010: 204) as that which "manifests itself as group members' readiness to participate in collective action, and this readiness is created by a shared understanding of the world, of the group and of one's relations to both". Giles et al. developed a theoretical framework in 1977, to investigate the role of socio-structural variables in cross cultural communication, language maintenance, language shift, loss and second language learning (Gogonas 2009). This framework presents three main factors that contribute to the ethnolinguistic vitality of a speech community: "status factors (such as economic, political, and linguistic prestige); demographic factors (such as absolute numbers, birth rate, geographical concentration); and institutional support" in the form of recognition of a group and its language in the media, government and educational policy (Giles & Johnson 1987: 71). However, whilst analysing these factors presents an overall assessment of a group's vitality, Bourhis et al. (1981) also argued that it was important to investigate whether members of the speech community agreed with the so-called objective results[13]. In order to research the perspectives of the speech community the SEVQ was developed (Giles et al. 1977, Bourhis et al. 1981). By collecting data directly from group members, an understanding of how these members minimised or exaggerated the ethnolinguistic vitality of their language could be sought.

Ehala and Yagmur (2011: 101) highlight the pertinence of ethnolinguistic vitality studies in the field of sociolinguistics and social research, due to its ability to monitor the effects of globalisation and increased global mobility on the dynamics of linguistic communities. Highlighting two ways such increased mobility can manifest, the authors first discuss the production of large minority communities in countries that were once culturally homogenous nation-states. The other centres on the potential vulnerability of an ethnolinguistic group, given the "invasion" of dominant languages, cultures and infrastructures. In the case of Australia, both manifestations have occurred[14], yet the first is most relevant when discussing Arabic. Situating Arabic in its socio-historical context and noting its status as a community language in Australia is a crucial step in researching the language.

Methodology
Research design
In this ethnolinguistic vitality study of Arabic in Australia, a mixed methods approach was used when analysing and discussing the results of the survey, within the theoretical framework provided by Bourhis et al. (1981) and Giles et al. (1977). They posit that ethnolinguistic vitality can be ascertained through empirical research investigating ingroup perceptions of their own community. In order to examine such

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[13] As ascertained through the collection of documents relating to an ethnolinguistic community's demographic, economic, sociological and historical situation.

[14] The invasion of a dominant language in this context relates to the British colonial destruction and degradation of Indigenous Australian languages.

perceptions, a survey consisting of forty questions was developed that was largely adapted from those presented by both Bourhis et al. (1981) and Ehala (2010). Whilst using the ethnolinguistic vitality framework to carry out the data collection and analysis, the results have been simultaneously framed within the current landscape of Australian multiculturalism, and its Islamophobic undercurrents (see Akbarzadeh 2016, Colic-Peisker et al. 2016). This has been done in an attempt to fully explore the social status prescribed to the Arabic language, and those who speak it, in Australia. Lastly, in presenting the results, the 7-point Likert Scale has been condensed into a 5-point Likert Scale. This means that the two most extreme options, 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree', have been merged with 'agree' and disagree' in order to provide better clarity to the frequency graphs and distribution tables.

Instrumentation

The research project used a forty-question survey adapted from various SEVQs that have been published since 1981. As noted in the literature review, the SEVQ was designed to assess the ethnolinguistic vitality of a speech community by looking at the following three key factors of a specific community:

1. Demography
2. Formal and informal institutional support
3. Social status

After decades of studies that used the Bourhis et al. model, researchers began to note some limitations of the study, primarily regarding its psychometric and quantitative method (see Abrams et al. 2009). Ehala (2010) has since developed another form of the SEVQ, which is based on variables more attuned to the 21st century's globalised, heterogeneous and linguistically diverse societies. Ehala suggests that rather than using the three variables above, SEVQs should instead focus on the following:

1. Perceived strength differential
2. Intergroup discordance
3. Intergroup distance

Utilitarianism of the language

Given the rapid change of community languages within the linguistic landscape of Australia (ABS 2011, ABS 2016), as well as the decentralisation of institutional, media based, and governmental forms of information, Ehala's SEVQ is a highly relevant tool when trying to answer the primary research question outlined in this article. This is largely because Ehala highlights the importance of intergroup distance. In this instance, "intergroup distance" is defined as the "sum of racial, linguistic, religious and cultural differences between the ingroup" (L1) – which in this case is the Arabic-speaking community – and the dominant cultural group, the monolingual English speakers (L2) (2010: 212). In the article Ehala provides an example to best demonstrate a situation where a high level of intergroup distance would exist. The example he offers is that of a minority Muslim community residing in a predominantly white/Christian European city. He argues that this situation, given the two groups distinct religious identities, will have a substantially large intergroup distance. According to Ehala's SEVQ, if the intergroup distance is perceived to be large, then the likelihood of the minority ethnolinguistic community losing its distinct cultural and linguistic identity and undergoing language shift at an advanced rate are low. The Arabic speaking community in Australia has often been viewed as the enemy within (Hage 2002), or the 'pre-eminent folk devil' (Poynting et al. 2004: 3), experiencing targeted, racialized violence (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 2003, Dunn 2004, Itaoui & Dunn 2017). Given these factors, it may be the case that the community will perceive itself to be quite distant from that of the linguistically dominant English-speaking community.

The subjective ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire

The forty questions in the survey were broken up into different categories, depending on their structure. The first 20 questions were mostly comparative, where the participants were asked the same questions about both Arabic and English and had to rate their response on a seven-point Likert scale. The second section of the survey focused on language use, with the aim of producing a comprehensive understanding

of the main language domains (Fishman 1964) Arabic is spoken in, from the family domain, through to the friendship domain and the educational domain. Following on from this, some additional questions were included wherein participants were asked about their experiences of racism, and whether there was a higher rate of racial abuse directed towards them whilst they spoke Arabic. Furthermore, participants were asked to express their own opinions regarding the effect Islamophobia is having on the way in which both native and non-native language learners engage with Arabic. The final three questions on the survey asked participants to note their gender, age and the languages they spoke at home. These questions were asked for demographic purposes, as well as to collect further data on language maintenance efforts within the Arabic ethnolinguistic community.

Research locations

The research was carried out at three Victorian government secondary schools in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Hume and Moreland. Both suburbs are located in the north of Melbourne and were selected based on demographic factors relating to the linguistic composition of the LGAs.

Research sample

Participants were sought from local government secondary schools across Hume and Moreland. The pre-requisites for participants were that they were from Arabic-speaking backgrounds, identified as members of the Arabic community and were at least 18 years old. The age of participants ranged from 18-23, with most being 18 years old (*n=34*). This means that this ethnolinguistic vitality study is informed by the opinions of Arabic-speaking Australian youth, from both first and second-generation backgrounds. Given that a high percentage of the Arabic speaking community in the Hume council area were born in Iraq, some of the Year 12 students who participated had experienced an interrupted education. Gender parity between participants was also sought, however most participants were female (*n=37*). At the end of the data collection process, the total number of surveys collected and analysed was 53 (*n=53*).

Findings and discussion

The results of the SEVQ are presented in tables and frequency distribution graphs. The results have then been evaluated and critically analysed. The questionnaire collected key information on factors pertaining to the demographics and social status of the Arabic-speaking community, as well as the level of institutional support (both formal and informal) received, and the perceived intergroup distance between the Arabic ethnolinguistic community and the majority English speaking community. These four factors, when combined, "interact to provide the context for understanding the vitality" (Giles et al. 1977: 309) of Arabic in the Australian multicultural landscape.

Subjective ethnolinguistic vitality results

The results of the SEVQ are divided into the four variables that contribute to ethnolinguistic vitality: social status (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4), demographics (Figures 5 and 6), the level of formal and informal institutional support received by the Arabic ethnolinguistic community (Figure 7) and the perceived intergroup distance between itself and the dominant English-speaking community (Figures 8 and 9).

Social status

The questions examining perceptions of the social status of Arabic were mostly comparative, whereby the results indicated that the English-speaking and Anglo-Australian community were always perceived to have a higher vitality rate than the Arabic ethnolinguistic community.

Figure 1 below shows that 51% of participants believed Arabic culture and tradition were "somewhat highly regarded" in Australia and 19% believed it be 'highly regarded". Comparatively, 40% believed Anglo-Australian culture and tradition to be "highly regarded", and 38% responded "somewhat highly regarded". Such figures demonstrate that participants believed Anglo-Australian culture and tradition to be only slightly more regarded than the cultures and traditions associated with their own Arab heritage.

Figure 1: Perception of Arabic and Anglo-Australian culture and tradition in Australia.
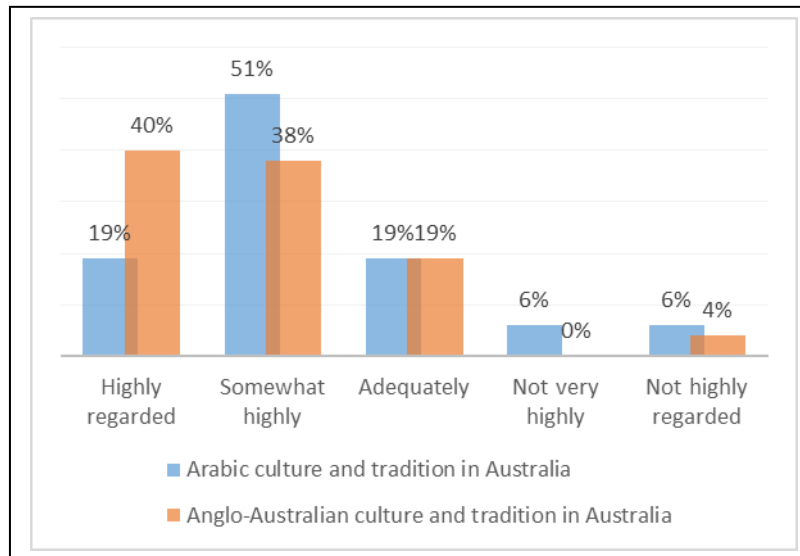
For many Arabic-speaking Australians, the Arabic language is key to their culture and their roots (Clyne & Kipp 1999: 156). In Figure 2 below, responses to the question "how highly regarded is the Arabic language in Australia?" showed that 25% of participants believed it was highly regarded. Yet when asked how highly regarded Arabic was internationally, 38% responded saying it was "highly regarded". A similar trend is seen regarding English, in that 78% said the language was highly regarded in Australia, yet this increased to 89% in the international context. This result suggests participants were aware of the dominant role English plays in international institutions and businesses and how it acts as a global lingua-franca (De Swaan 2013).

Turning to the gap found between the perception of how Arabic is regarded here in Australia, compared with internationally, this indicates that the Arabic-speaking Australians surveyed believed Australian society views Arabic with less regard than the international community. Here is the first indication that the Arabic ethnolinguistic community perceive the anti-Arab, and more broadly Islamophobic, attitudes currently permeating Australian culture are affecting the social status of their language in Australian society.

Figure 2: Perceptions of Arabic and English language in Australia.
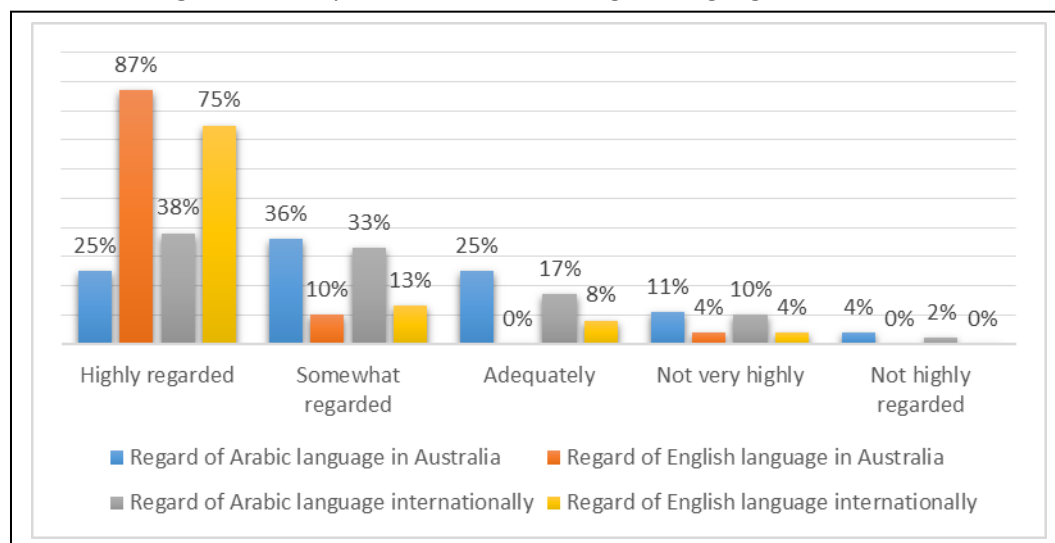
Further exploring perceptions of the social status of Arabic, Figure 3 below demonstrates the marked difference in respect granted to speakers of Arabic and speakers of English in Australia. Notably, no

participants disagreed with the statement that English speakers were highly respected, whilst 21% of participants either somewhat or fully disagreed with the statement that Arabic-speakers were highly respected in Australian society. The distinction between respect granted for English speakers in Australian society, compared to those who speak Arabic brings to the fore Australia's monolingual mind set. Alongside this we see undercurrents of assimilationist ideals. Whilst the White Australia Policy has been dismantled, and the dictation test removed, the primacy granted to Australia's Anglo-Celtic heritage lingers on (Hage 1998: 82). This is evidenced by the fact that the Australians from Arabic speaking backgrounds who were surveyed feel their heritage, expressed through language, is not granted anywhere near the same level of respect as the English language in Australian society.

Figure 3: Perception of English and Arabic speakers in Australian society.
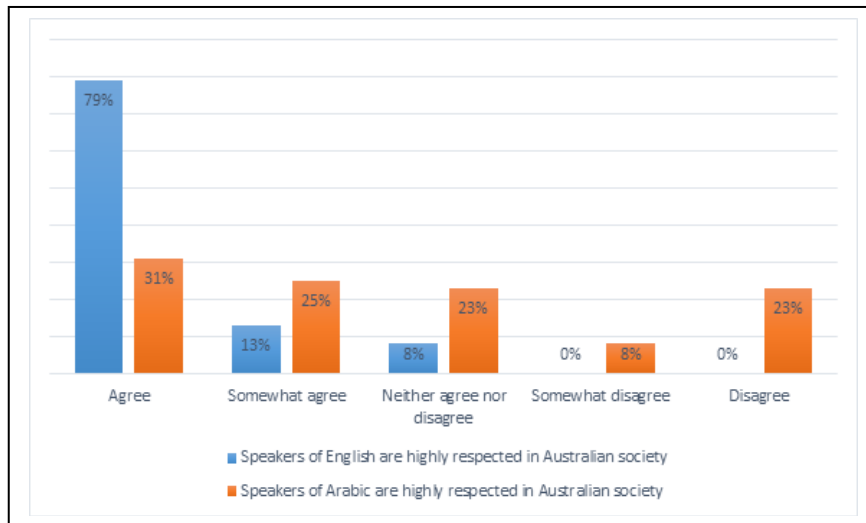
Figure 4: Negative representations of Arabic speakers in the media change attitudes toward Arabic.
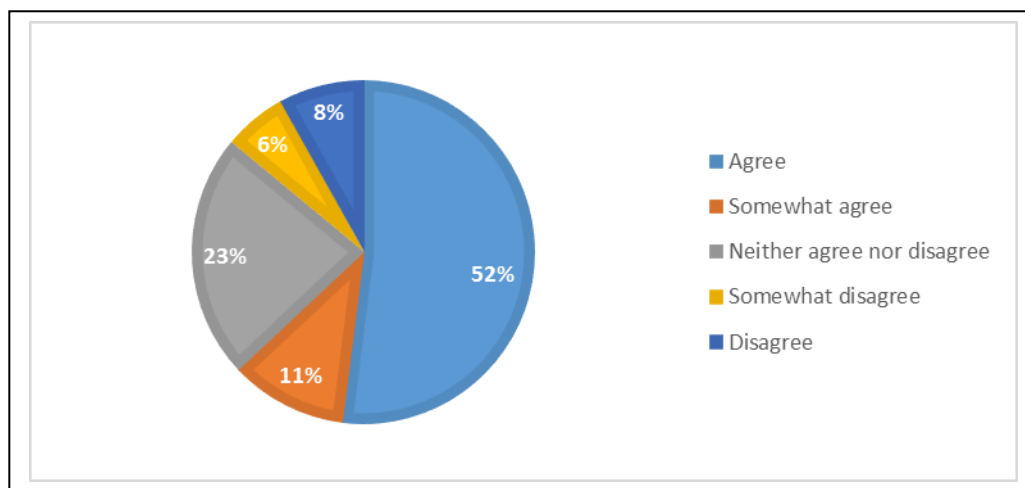
The notion of respect is an important one when looking at the social status of Arabic, for as Landry and Allard (1994: 5) argue, the status variable pertains to the prestige of the linguistic group in the society at large. Smolicz (1987) is more specific, in that he states outsider evaluation of the minority language wherein the speakers of the majority language regard it respectfully is crucial in maintaining a high language status.

Figure 4 above indicates that 52% of participants believed negative representations of Arabic speakers in the media change attitudes toward the language. Such beliefs are supported by the fact that in 2017, a study into five Australian newspapers owned by News Ltd. revealed that in the space of twelve months,

2,891 negative articles were written about Muslims and Islam[15] (OnePath Network 2018). Of these 2,891 articles, 152 of them were front page news. For the Arabic-speaking Australians surveyed, it appears notions of respect and prestige aren't part of the equation when speakers of Arabic are presented in the Australian media, a social institution where "Muslims have been characterized as non-members of the Australian community – relegating them to the space of the 'other', alien, foreign and incompatible with Australian cultural values" (Aly 2007: 32). Whilst this is not a uniquely Australian phenomenon (see Ahmed & Matthes 2016, Osuri & Banerjee 2004, Said 1997), it is an ever-present factor within our society, and as the majority of the Arab-Australians who participated believed, it is continuing to negatively affect attitudes towards the Arabic language.

Demographics

The demographic variables in this study related to perceptions of the Arabic ethnolinguistic community, including their distribution throughout Australian cities, their sheer size (Giles et al. 1977: 309) and their proportional representation (Shaaban & Ghaith 2002) in the linguistic landscape of Australia. Participants' awareness of their community's size and growth is shown below in figure 5, where 42% agreed that the Arabic-speaking population was increasing in Australia. Conversely, 19% disagreed, believing that their community was not increasing. These results indicate that the participants had a sound awareness of their community's size and growth patterns. For, as discussed earlier, the Arabic speaking population is indeed continuing to grow across Australia[16]. It is also a relatively young community, with census data revealing that in New South Wales, 69% of Arabic speakers are under the age of 44 (ABS 2016). This suggests that in the next few decades, the population will remain relatively constant, as emigration from Australia is unlikely. The fact that 42% of participants believed their community to be increasing suggests that the community is welcoming new members and is acting as a cohesive unit. Whilst such results suggest the community has a good rate of vitality, it may alternatively be the consequence of xenophobic media reporting. This could stem from the fact that often, the Arabic ethnolinguistic community, and by extension the Muslim community, is reported to be "taking over" Australian suburbs, transforming them into a "monolingual and monocultural ghetto" (Tim Blair as cited in Abdel-Fatteh 2017: 1). By inferring Muslims/Arabs are taking over, the size of the community is exaggerated.

Figure 5: Increase of the Arabic speaking population across Australia.

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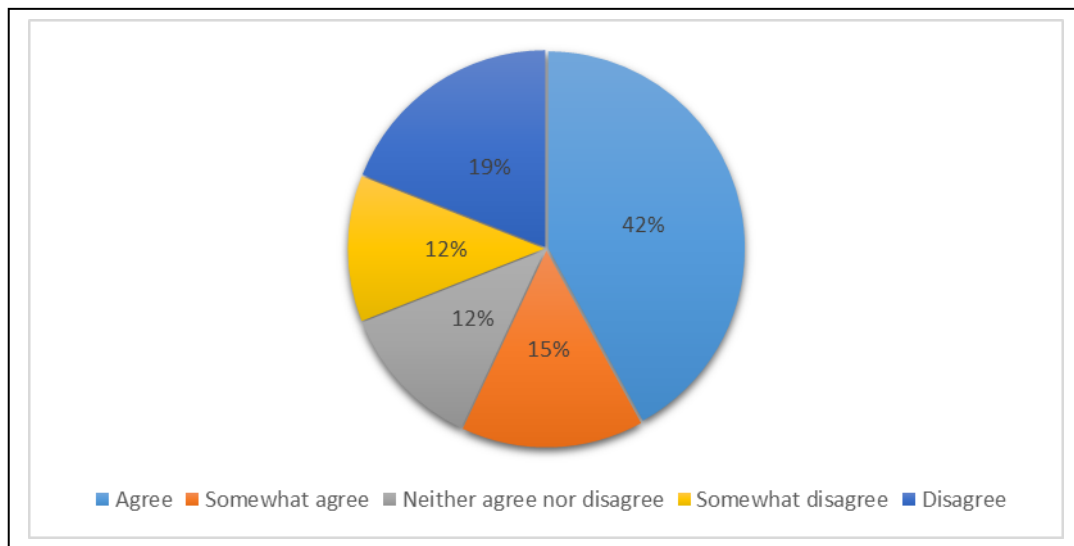
[15] The study denoted an article as negative if it referred to Islam or Muslims alongside words such as radical, violence, terrorist and extremism.
[16] Between 2011-2016 in the state of Victoria alone, the population grew by over 11,000 people (ABS 2011, ABS 2016)

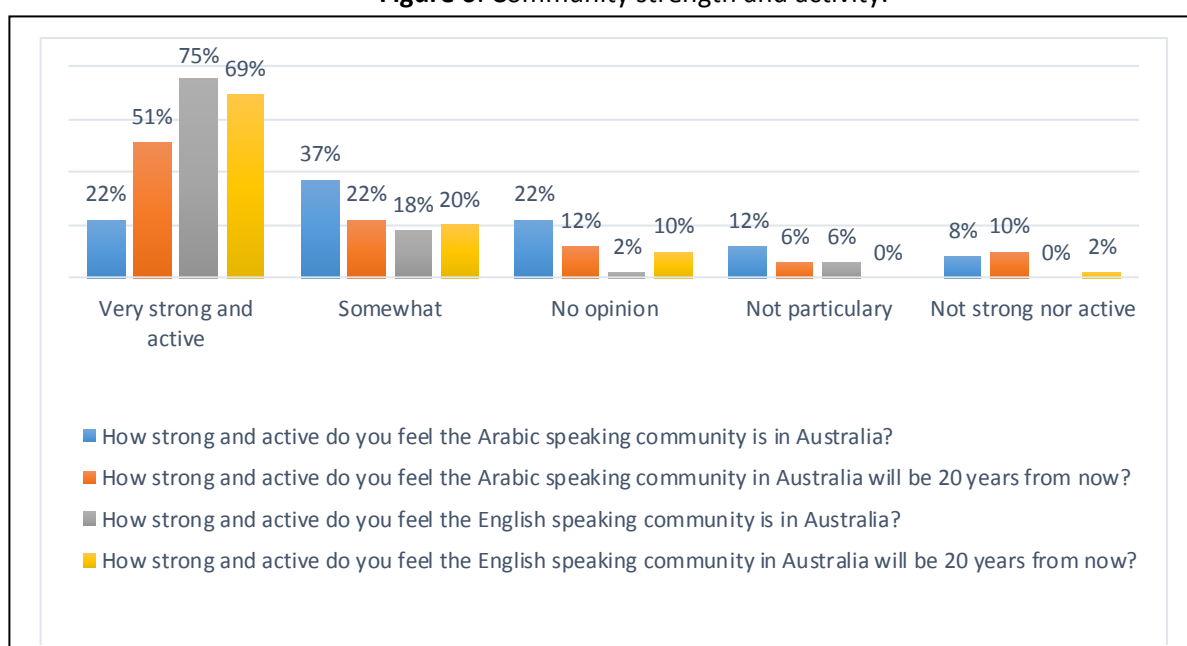Figure 6 below outlines the responses to a comparative question which asked participants how strong and active the Arabic ethnolinguistic community is in Australia today, and how strong and active it will be in twenty years. It also asked the same question regarding the English-speaking community. By asking participants to assess how active their community is, we are given an insight into the vitality of the community as seen by its members (Noels, Kil & Fang 2014). Participants believed that today, the Arabic ethnolinguistic community is seen to be "somewhat strong and active" (37% of participants). However, the majority of participants (51%) believed that in twenty years the community will be "very strong and active". When looking at the response to the questions that dealt with the English-speaking community, a direct reversal of opinion is evident. 75% of participants believed that today, English is a "very strong and active" language in Australia. Yet, when asked how strong and active it will be in twenty years, this percentage dropped. The participants' perceptions clearly suggest that they believed the dominance of English in Australia will decline over the next two decades, whilst the Arabic ethnolinguistic community will become more active within the broader society and therefore increase in vitality. Such beliefs could instigate and further encourage language maintenance efforts and ensure the ethnolinguistic vitality of the community does not experience a decline. Additionally, it indicates the belief that English language will no longer remain as dominant as it is today across Australia, possibly suggesting that a more pluralistic and multilingual Australia is inevitable, regardless of how entrenched the monolingual mindset may be.

Figure 6: Community strength and activity.

- How strong and active do you feel the Arabic speaking community is in Australia?
- How strong and active do you feel the Arabic speaking community in Australia will be 20 years from now?
- How strong and active do you feel the English speaking community is in Australia?
- How strong and active do you feel the English speaking community in Australia will be 20 years from now?

Formal and informal institutional support

The three questions that examined perceptions of institutional support focused on cultural events, education, and media. According to Yagmur (2011), these factors are the hardest to measure through the SEVQ. This is due to the focus the survey places on formal institutional support rather than investigating the community's own institutional structures that promote internal solidarity.

The questions in this section of the survey followed the same comparative structure, whereby participants were asked about the support given to both Arabic/Arab and English/Anglo-Celtic resources (Figure 7 below). On all three factors English was always perceived to be substantially more supported than Arabic. Whilst not surprising considering English is the national language, it does conflict with Australia's multilingual past, present and future (Clyne 2005), and clashes with the presentation of the Australian nation as a 'truly pluralist' cultural egalitarianism (Hage 1998: 83). As demonstrated by the

participants' responses, the tensions between 'being' Australian and speaking languages other than English, remains prevalent throughout the culture and society today.

Figure 7: Representation of Arabic and English language in culture, media and education.

Questions	Total (N)	Very Well Represented (%)	Somewhat Represented (%)	Adequately Represented (%)	Not Very Represented (%)	Not Represented (%)	Most Frequent Response
How well is the Arabic speaking community represented in certain aspects of cultural life (such as festivals, concerts, art exhibitions, conferences etc.) in Australia today?	**53**	23%	36%	30%	9%	2%	**Somewhat Represented (36%)**
How well is the Anglo-English speaking community represented in certain aspects of cultural life (such as festivals, concerts, art exhibitions, conferences etc.) in Australia today?	**53**	49%	30%	17%	2%	2%	**Very Well Represented (49%)**
How well represented is the Arabic language in the mass media?	**53**	15%	26%	26%	21%	11%	**Somewhat Represented (26%)**
How well represented is the English language in the mass media?	**53**	79%	13%	4%	4%	0%	**Very Well Represented (79%)**
How well represented is the Arabic language in education in Victoria?	**53**	25%	19%	25%	19%	13%	**Very Well Represented (25%)**
How well represented is the English language in education in Victoria?	**53**	87%	8%	4%	2%	0%	**Very Well Represented (87%)**

In Figure 7 above, we are able to see that of all three factors, educational support for Arabic was seen to be the most well represented. One quarter of participants believed that the Arabic language was "very well represented" in the education sector in Victoria. Comparatively, 87% stated that English is "very well represented" in education across the state of Victoria. The fact that 32% of participants believed Arabic is "not very well" or "not represented" is supported by the lived experience of the participants, considering that 42 of the 53 participants had to spend their Saturday mornings at a local government school in order to learn the language, as it was not offered as part of their schools' curriculum (DET 2017). It is important to frame these results alongside the issues raised by LoBianco and Slaughter

(2009)[17]. They argue that Australia is experiencing a deep and persistent malaise in language education, whereby the linguistic diversity within society is increasing, yet educational policy surrounding additional language learning is far more restrictive than it was in the late 1980s-1990s (LoBianco 2010). When looking at the educational support provided to Arabic specifically, a clear trend emerges. As the population of Arabic speaking Australians has increased, the level of educational support granted to the language has decreased. A decade ago, in 2008, Arabic was taught in eleven public schools[18] across the state of Victoria (Department of Education and Training [DET] 2010). Today, this number sits at five[19] (DET 2017). Regarding enrolments, there was a surge between 2007 and 2010. From 2011 overall enrolment numbers once again began to decrease. The steep decrease in educational language support given to the Arabic language limits the vitality of the ethnolinguistic community, in that the language is being largely ignored by policy makers, and the multilingual skills of Arabic speaking Australians are not being harnessed, remaining an untapped national resource (LoBianco & Slaughter 2009).

Turning to institutional support from the mass-media, 21% of participants believed that Arabic was "not very well represented" in Australian media, whilst one participant wrote that Arabic was represented "badly" in the media[20]. 26% of participants believed it was "somewhat represented". On the other hand, English was seen to be "very well represented" within the Australian media (79% of participants). Yagmur's argument regarding the difficulty of the SEVQ to fully capture the level of informal institutional support is highly relevant here, as the Arabic ethnolinguistic community produces multiple Arabic language newspapers, holds many religious and social events where Arabic is the primary language spoken (Clyne & Kipp 1999) and is active across multilingual community radio stations (Hess & Waller 2015).

Regarding the Arabic community being represented in cultural events, 23% thought that it was "very well represented". Comparatively, 49% of participants believed the Anglo-English speaking community was "very well represented" across certain aspects of cultural life in Australia. These responses exacerbate the idea of Australia as a nation that heralds its Anglo-Celtic history and heritage, ignoring both its linguistically diverse citizenry, and its true history as "a white settler society founded on the expropriation of Aboriginal land and the denial of the very humanity of Indigenous people" (Hussein & Poynting 2017: 341).

Intergroup distance

The intergroup distance variable was introduced to the theory of ethnolinguistic vitality by Ehala (2010), who argues that this variable is determined by both discursive and symbolic factors. Clyne (2005) also notes the importance of distinct cultures when looking at languages in migrant communities. He posits that the more cultural distance an ethnolinguistic community is from the mainstream Anglo-Australian identity, the more the language will continue to be spoken, and maintained. The results presented below in Figure 8 illustrate Clyne's argument. 38% of participants agreed Arabic speakers held a different world view to English speakers. Here, whilst noting that there is a marked difference between the world view of Arabic and English speakers, participants may be showing their adherence to the renowned Sapir-Whorf hypothesis[21]. On a similar note, 47% of participants believed that the language they spoke highly effected what others thought about them.

Nonetheless, how does the idea of a language shaping and defining a person's reality reflect on the ethnolinguistic vitality of Arabic? For the most part, it establishes that the Arab-Australians surveyed believed their world view to be different from that of Anglo-Australians. From this, it is inferred that there is a prominent intergroup distance between the two ethnolinguistic groups. This distance suggests that members of the Arabic ethnolinguistic community have a distinct identity. Such distinctive identity

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[17] The work of LoBianco and Slaughter (2009) is discussed in the literature review.
[18] Six of which were primary schools, five were secondary schools.
[19] Three of these schools are secondary, and two are primary.
[20] The question was misinterpreted by the participant. However, their response is relevant given the results shown in Figure 5.
[21] Sapir and Whorf put forth that 'the structure of anyone's native language strongly influences or fully determines the world-view he [sic] will acquire as he [sic] learns the language' (Brown as cited in Kay and Wempton 1984: 66).

makes it difficult to shift one's group membership, and therefore also difficult to lower the group's vitality (Ehala 2010).

Figure 8: Perceptions on Arabic and English language speakers.

Questions	Total (N)	Agree (%)	Somewhat Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Somewhat Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Most Frequent Response
The world view of Arabic speakers is different to the world view of Anglo-English speakers	52	38%	10%	23%	23%	6%	Agree (38%)
Arabic speakers can be identified by their visual appearance.	51	18%	29%	27%	14%	12%	Somewhat Agree (29%)
All Arabic speakers are Muslim	52	6%	0%	6%	6%	83%	Disagree (83%)
All monolingual English speakers are Christian	52	17%	15%	13%	2%	52%	Disagree (52%)
The language you speak effects what people think about you	49	47%	16%	24%	6%	6%	Agree (47%)

Regarding religion, and the role of language in shaping ethnic identity, 29% of participants "somewhat agreed" that Arabic speakers could be identified by their visual appearance. One participant added that this was true "mostly for women". The assumption that the participant was referring to the *hijab* plays on the slippage between Arab and Muslim identity. However, the conflation between Arabic speaker and Muslim was negated by the majority of participants, with 83% disagreeing to the statement "all Arabic speakers are Muslim". Given that 17 of the participants spoke Chaldean and Assyrian alongside Arabic, there was obvious acknowledgement of the ethnic and religious diversity within the Arabic ethnolinguistic community. Most participants (52%) also disagreed with the statement "all English speakers are Christian". This shows that whilst there is a distinct level of intergroup distant regarding heritage culture, the participants are well aware of the equally complex and heterogeneous identities of monolingual English-speaking Australians.

Figure 9: Sense of belonging to the Arabic and English ethnolinguistic communities.
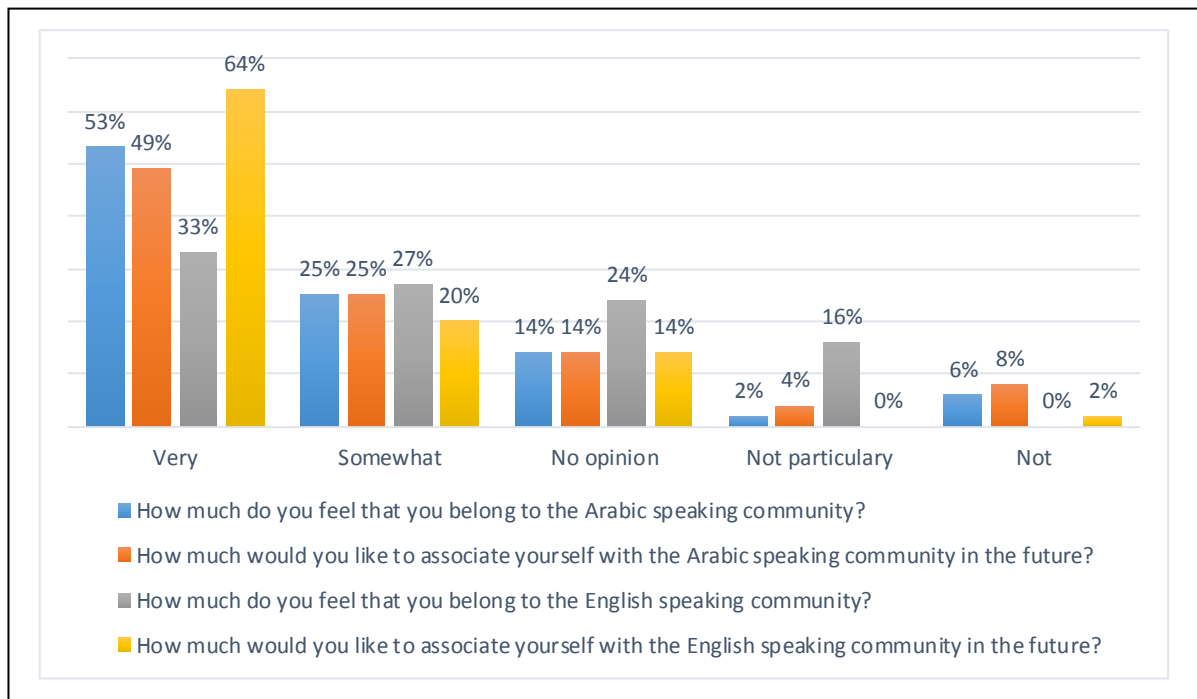
Figure 9 above demonstrates participants' sense of belonging to the Arabic and the English-speaking communities. The notion of belonging plays an important role in assessing the ethnolinguistic vitality of Arabic as it investigates the potentially fluid identities the participants have constructed, merging and moving between both English and Arabic. Bhabha (1983) argues that "fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation" (p. 18). This is because it infers a level of rigidity and an unchanging order within the subject's identity. Bhabha's argument is especially relevant in the context of the modern multicultural Australia, given the great diversity within the country's citizenry.

The results also highlight the lack of fixed identity amongst participants, indicating that they believed they could develop a sense of belonging across both ethnolinguistic communities. The majority of participants (52%) said they felt they "very much" belonged to the Arabic speaking community. When asked how much they would like to associate with the community in the future, the numbers stayed relatively stable, only decreasing by 3% (down to 49%). Conversely, 34% of participants said they "very much" felt that they belonged to the English-speaking community. Unlike the response to the Arabic based question, when asked "how much would you like to associate yourself with the English-speaking community in the future?", the number of participants who responded "very much" almost doubled (to 64%). These results can be interpreted in two distinct ways, neither of which is exclusive of the other. Firstly, we can read the results as conveying the participants' desire to maintain their plurilingual, hybrid identities, in speaking both Arabic and English in the future. The results about belonging to the Arabic speaking community hardly shift, showing that participants don't want to limit their connection to Arabic. However, in showing an increased desire to associate with the English-speaking community, the participants' reveal their hope for a more pluralistic Australia, where the concept of "being" Australian is not limited by the languages you speak.

Conclusion

The investigation into the ethnolinguistic vitality of Arabic has been framed within the complex and at times contradictory multiculturalism that exists in Australia. By contextualising the study in this way, a nuanced understanding of the ways in which the Arabic ethnolinguistic community perceived both itself, and the Anglo-Australian English-speaking community has been developed. Given that Arabic is spoken

by over 320,000 Australians and is the third most spoken language in the country following English and Mandarin (ABS 2016), the importance of examining the vitality of the language was evident[22].

The results of the Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality Survey (SEVQ) further challenged the success of Australia's multiculturalism, in that it showed a distinct difference between the vitality of the Arabic language and the English language in the Australian linguistic landscape. The results highlighted the discrepancy between the size and social activity of the community, and the amount of formal institutional support the language received. When specifically looking at language education, Arabic was seen by 25% of participants to be well represented. Comparatively, 87% of participants noted that English was well represented. Such results once again demonstrate Australia's issue with the monolingual mind set, and the lack of a truly pluralistic education curriculum that allows bilingual Australians to view their language skills as important recourse in growing the Australian nation both here and on the international stage.

The results pertaining to the social status variable showed that participants believed there to be a lack of respect held in Australian society for the Arabic language. Additionally, participants believed that the way in which Arabic is portrayed across Australian media platforms negatively affects people's perception of the language. However, these results reveal that Arabic remains a strong presence in the Australian linguistic landscape, with a high rate of vitality, despite its low social status and lack of formal institutional support.

Limitations and recommendations

The limitations that arose throughout the research process centred on the ability to generalise the results, as the SEVQs were only distributed to Arabic-speaking residents in Melbourne, Victoria who were aged between 18 and 23. Given that Sydney is home to the largest Arabic-speaking community in Australia the ethnolinguistic community in Sydney may view itself as having a different rate of vitality than the community based in Melbourne. Additionally, the sampling process could have produced more diverse participants, allowing for a cross-generational sample. It is recommended that in future studies into the ethnolinguistic vitality of Arabic, a sample of Anglo-Australian participants are included so as to provide more validity, as well as more complex comparative data. However, the results of this study, conducted with 53 participants from the same age demographic, still provides invaluable insight into the way the Arabic language is used, maintained and engaged with. In doing so, it has paved the way for further research into the vitality of Arabic in Australia, on a larger and national scale.

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[22] Especially when considering the unique position Arabic holds in the Australian public imagination, and media landscape. Here, we are referring to the fact that Arabic is closely connected to Islam, and as such is often associated with acts of terrorism and violence amidst the current wave of Islamophobia (see OnePath Network, 2018)

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Educational role of language and Polish youth slang – literature review

Anna Dąbrowska
University of Warsaw; adabrowska@pedagog.uw.edu.pl

Abstract

The impact that language has on human cognitive processes unquestionably points to its educational value. A man acquires a language and through language learns the world. Thereby language becomes both the tool and the object of cognition. Language shapes the user's perception of the world as well as introducing them into a given linguistic and cultural community. Youth slang - being a socially-based language variety - primarily performs a social function. So far it has been classified as a lower language register of limited usage and therefore has not been studied with respect to its educational value. However, in the present-day cultural context youth slang becomes more commonly used and, consequently, the question What exactly does youth slang teach? seems vital. The article will cover the following problems: What is the educational role of language? What do we mean by educational role of language referring to the particular variety which is Polish youth slang?

Keywords: *educational role of language, youth slang, functions of language, sociolect*

Introduction

The significant contribution of language in cognitive processes indisputably indicates its educational role. People learn language and thanks to language they discover the world. Language thus becomes a tool and object of cognition. Language shapes the image of the world of its user and introduces him to a particular language and cultural society. In what area and in what way would its educational role be revealed? And can this term be used at all in the strict sense of the word with reference to language? Language is not an autonomous subject, which could set certain educational goals and then realize them. The question concerning the educational role of language will be referred to the specific part of language communication which is the sociolect of teenagers.

"Youth slang" mentioned in the title, which is a socially conditioned variety of language, has above all a social function. In Poland until recently it was treated as a lower register of language with limited use. Its educational significance was not considered. In today's cultural conditions the scope of its use is widening, hence the question What does youth slang teach?, is important.

In this article the following problem will be addressed What is the educational role of language? and What do we mean by educational role of language referring to the particular variety, which is Polish youth slang? In other words – In what way can the educational role of language be revealed through Polish youth slang?

Educational role of language – how do we understand it?

The expression "Educational Role of Language" contains two terms requiring consideration: educational and role. Education (in the strict sense) is understood as actions and processes as a whole, which aim to convey knowledge, shape certain qualities and skills. It thus presupposes the conscious undertaking of actions, which in a planned way lead to the realization of desired goals. In this sense language would not be able to fulfil an educational function, because it would not be able to consciously design and carry out planned actions.

As far as the term "role" is concerned, in the subject literature we can rather meet the category not "role of language", but "functions of language". Between the two terms can be seen a certain nuance of meaning. Function rather refers to specific tasks that language can carry out in culture, society and human communication and thought. The term "role" meanwhile underlines the significance of language in different areas. In this sense its educational character seems to be fully understandable. Even if in the subject literature there is no direct mention of the educational role of language, there are clear educational benefits of using language for researchers for whom it is the subject of academic consideration. It is this sense that we can discuss its educational role of language. The absence of any direct references in literature makes it necessary to pursue one's own research agenda. Classical concepts have been employed in this article to analyze various areas of language, showing to what

extent the educational role penetrates each of its layers, creating an inseparable whole. Let us analyze functions of language, discovering areas in which its educational role is visible.

Human language from the structural point of view, which is understood as a conventional system of signs which are the basis for producing an infinite number of utterances, enabling communication, has two planes according to Ferdinand de Saussure (2004):

1. *Langue* is a code existing in the minds of the interlocutors, which enables communication. It is a system, composed of signs and rules, how to connect them in sentences, and sentences in whole texts, of which in theory there are an infinite number. *Langue* is a potential, which becomes real in communication.
2. *Parole* is the use of a language system – every "language behaviour" expressed by text or utterance.

Language, which is understood as a code, is general, social, limited in nature. Speech acts are specific, individual and unlimited. (Grzegorczykowa 2007:14) Concrete functions correspond to the planes of language.

Functions of *langue*:

1. Communicative (generative) – it enables communication, it constitutes the basis for producing and understanding texts by the interlocutors.
2. Cognitive – language becomes for its users a form of discovering the world; it becomes the representation of the world in their minds. It interprets reality, creating a linguistic image of the world. It constitutes a form of abstract thought.

Functions of *parole*:

Leaving aside particular functions of individual language use, the entirety of language actions of the society using the spoken language fulfils with regard to that society unique functions. These are not though conscious actions, but the role of the entirety of language actions observed ex post. We can distinguish two functions (Grzegorczykowa 1991):

1. Culture-forming – it involves gathering and storing knowledge in the form of written texts or utterances stored in the memory of the speakers.
2. Socializing – its aim is to unite members of a given society.

This socializing function we can easily refer to the particular variety of language, which is youth slang. This function will be discussed in the further part of this article.

Where is the educational role of language reflected?

In both areas mentioned above (in the planes *langue* and *parole*) the educational role of language can be noticed. As far as the plane *langue* is concerned, language is the basis of creating of communique and serves to aid understanding, while people learn by communication, a huge part of which is verbal. The discovery of the surrounding world, immediate and distant, as well as social reality takes place thanks to the possibility of communication, which is created by language.

According to E. Cassirer (1977), language enables people to think symbolically, it develops symbolic imagination. Thanks to linguistic means of communication people become symbolic beings, capable of considering abstract matters, far removed from "the here and now", capable of creating the plane of intercourse between generations. Ernst Cassirer named humans symbolic animals (Cassirer 1977: 80-81). According to him people do not live only in the physical world, but also function in the symbolic world, which consists of: language, myth, art and religion. These are "different threads" from which the symbolic net is woven. We could say, that among these elements language is the basic material, thanks to which the others can develop. It is through language that a human's ability to create symbols is expressed. In the film "Quest for Fire" directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud there is a scene where the characters are trying to communicate and convey information about a storm, which took place earlier and during which a huge tree was blown over. The message concerns a different time and space from the communicative situation. In this way language is born. In order to convey essential information in this case a sign is needed. It allows people to refer to a remote context, but also to express abstract content – thoughts and ideas. Language is thus what differentiates humans from other living beings.

Since language serves communication, a functioning language system must have sufficient potential to create utterances which meet the communicative needs of the users. Thus fulfilling the communicative (generative) function, it fulfils simultaneously the educational role for it users. Language is not a transparent, passive tool. Thought shapes language, and language shapes thought. Mutual interactions are present. H. G. Gadamer (1979) claims that language is not a tool. A tool is – of itself – something whose use can be mastered: a tool can be picked up and put down when it has fulfilled its task. It might seem that the situation is similar in the case of language: we take in our mouth words of any language which are lying ready and we allow them to disappear again after use into the general collection of words which we have at our disposal. According to Gadamer this is not the same. It is a false analogy, because awareness never stands facing the world, picking up – in a languageless state as it were – a tool of communication. We are already embraced by language in all our knowledge about ourselves and the world. Every language classifies and interprets reality in a different way – for example by broadening lexis in a given field and minimizing it in another. A person immersed in a language might not even notice this fact. It is only knowing another language system and the different way of perceiving reality connected with it that leads to reflection.

The relationship between thought and language was considered and researched in connection with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which is known as the hypothesis of linguistic relativism. According to it language is a social system, in which we grow up and think from childhood and which shapes our perception of the world. There are differences between individual language systems, which are a reflection of different environments constructing them; hence people thinking in different languages perceive the world in diverse ways. (Whorf 1982, Sapir 1978) A particular language through characteristic lexis and grammatical categories throws light on the reality surrounding its users and refers to its own cultural context. Language, constructing the representation in the human mind, teaches people to notice phenomena distinguished by language and interpret them in a certain way. This is an inseparable element of using language. In this way language directs human thought. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1997: 3) wrote that a limit to thought can only be set in language, and what lies on the other side is simply nonsense. The majority of thoughts are linguistic in character. Becoming aware of certain hitherto nonverbal intuitions, feelings and impressions happens when we try to name them, even if we alone receive the expressed content. This is why poor, primitive language speaks volumes about the way of thinking of its users, while rich communicative, precise language adapted appropriately to the situation as well as testifying to their way of thinking also "broadens" the horizons of the world. It is a perfect tool for deep reflection, without which it would be extraordinarily difficult. So enriching one's own language broadens the horizons of thought. J. Stewart (2010) even claims that a person's quality of life depends on the quality of communication. Everything people learn from others from the beginning of their life is acquired in the very communication process which is why a high communicative competence enriches and simplifies life, while a low competence can even lead to isolation.

The Educational Role of Language becomes apparent together with perfecting communicative competence (Hymes 1980, Kurcz 2000). Paraphrasing L. Wittgenstein, we can say that together with enriching language the user "broadens his/her horizons".

As far as the plane of *parole* is concerned and its culture-forming and socializing functions, in these areas too the educational role of language is visible. The culture texts and utterances contain knowledge about the world, which people gain by learning language. According to C. Levi-Strauss (2003) language introduces people into a particular culture, which they can only get to know fully when they know its language. Language introduces people into the social world, teaching them processes and relationships taking place in it. Language is the basis of culture, it is a conveyor belt of customs, traditions and values gathering common experiences of particular societies. It thus constitutes the source of getting to know individual cultures, and sometimes it is a mirror of social and cultural changes.

The educational role of language is revealed in its many diverse areas. It is not homogenous, however, but expressed in a variety of styles. This leads to the question whether and how its educational role may also be revealed in its different varieties? One of them is the style of

communication typical of the youth. Let us now take a look at how the educational role of language can be expressed in the Polish youth slang.

Educational role of Polish youth slang
Polish youth slang – what is it?

Youth slang is a socially conditioned variety of language, thus it is a sociolect. I define it, after S. Grabias, as a variety of language which is formed in the milieu of young people as a result of an expressive, spontaneous creativity in language (Grabias 1997: 141). In Poland, in the country quite homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, youth could successfully communicate by general Polish, but for specific reasons creates its own language. These reasons are social. According to Piekot, slang as a sociolect is simultaneously a social and a linguistic construct (Piekot 2008: 39).

Functions and features of Polish youth slang

Youth slang as a sociolect serves to integrate and distinguish a certain group, as well as to identify its members. It follows that those who aspire to or belong to a certain community use this sociolect and thanks to the use of the slang they build this community. Having its own language underlines the status of the group. The language created by the community interprets reality in a way which is in accord with their reception of the surrounding world and their values.

The specific features of youth slang are: creativity and connected with that changeability, its expressive and playful character (because it is built as a result of a play on words), as well as a resistance to the models conveyed by adults, and a note of secrecy serving to conceal transmitted content. According to H. Zgółkowa this tendency had diminished by 2012 (Zgółkowa 2012).

The features mentioned above foster the strengthening and constant updating of the group relations. The identification with the aid of the characteristic language of a certain community requires the knowledge of the current version of it, which involves communication and constant contact. Otherwise its use does not reflect membership of the group, and so it is not authentic.

The expressiveness is considered to be one of the most important features of youth slang. M. Widawski claims that slang is the most colloquial, unconventional and expressive variety of language, in which the choice of elements of language is subsidiary to its expressiveness (Widawski 2010: XI). Its emotional character means that it stands out among the other varieties of language and in social consciousness it is connected with the milieu of young people. Thanks to the use of slang teenagers underline, sometimes even demonstrate, social bonds and express their judgement of reality. In youth slang often expression dominates over the meaning of particular words. The same word articulated with another intonation, in another context could express the same strong emotions but the opposite meaning. For example the phrase "What a babe!", depending on the situation can mean equally "pretty girl", as well as "not a very attractive girl" in the opinion of the speaker. In the example mentioned above in the foreground is the expressive function, not the informative function. It is a matter of expressing a judgement and attitude to the named person, behaviour or phenomenon in the way that is understandable, private and characteristic for the group. As a result one of the most important aims of the use of sociolectal phrases is maintaining and emphasizing the bonds of the community.

Youth slang in the new cultural context and its educational role

Youth slang was created by teenagers to communicate informally with their peers. Recently, however, we can notice a tendency for the use of the specific youth language to spread. J. Miodek points to the distinctness and expansiveness of youth slang (Bralczyk et al. 2014: 138). Over the last years in Poland some dictionaries of youth slang have appeared. For example ed. by B. Chaciński, H. Zgółkowa, P. Filciński and S. Wójtowicz, M. Widawski (Chaciński 2003, Zgółkowa 2004, Chaciński 2005, Filciński & Wójtowicz 2007. Widawski 2010). According to J. Miodek a few decades ago the youth used to know slang, but it was considered to be the lower register of language and it was not the done thing to speak in this way outside a narrowly defined situation. Nowadays it is talked about and even promoted. Those who used it as teenagers, continue to use it, even when they grow up.

The reasons for this relatively new phenomenon, the increasingly widespread use of youth sociolect, can be sought in the changing cultural context. Among them homogenization of the style of the representatives of different generations and the trend for being casual and young have a great significance. The fact that certain elements of the style of representatives of different generations is becoming gradually more uniform is a more and more noticeable feature of contemporary social reality. The style of dressing, taste in music, the choice of cultural activities are subject to the same mechanisms of popular culture. Both parents and their teenage children can wear jeans, T-shirts, listen to similar music and watch the same TV programme and at the same time parents use cool youth language to get through to their children. It is one of the ways in which youth slang is expanding.

Language is moreover one of the important elements of presenting oneself. Conscious use of youth slang by adults could be a strategy, whose objective is to build a certain image of oneself. In so doing the speaker presents him/herself as a laid-back person. Z. Melosik remarks the consumer culture is becoming prevalent and pleasure as well as a casual style are a compulsion (Melosik 2005: 14-15). With this style promoted by different media the style of communication is clearly evolving in the direction of using emotional colloquiality, even in formal, public situations or in asymmetric communication, for example: teacher – pupil. Simultaneously there is increasing approval for the use of the laid-back, teenage style of utterances by adults in different communicative situations.

In the face of the cultural conditions favouring the expansion of teenagers' sociolect it is worth considering its educational role. There are at least a few instances of it.

Youth slang is created in opposition to formal language. It is connected with contestation. It enriches the Polish language, because it has added many new words to the general Polish language. Youth slang strengthens the phenomenon of stylistic variety in language and fulfils different social functions. A young person begins to become aware very early on of the internal variety of language and the need to use different language styles depending on context and communicative situation. Using slang in the correct way gives him the opportunity to perfect the skills of a stylistically appropriate language communication. Young people learn in what situation, with which interlocutor to use a specific variety of language – formal, informal or for example slang.

Knowing another language or another variety of it is meeting another image of the world contained in it. Slang gives a chance to see reality in another way, maybe hitherto unknown to the user of language. This happens through the prism of the experiences of the community speaking this language, which encapsulated and crystalized its values and perception of the world in its own language.

Distinguishing any phenomenon through slang makes pupils aware of its existence. For example the word "dysgooglia" (dys + google). It is built by analogy with "dyslexia" and "dysgraphia" and means a certain dysfunction. In this case it concerns a lack of skill in searching for necessary information in the internet. The language, which is a mirror of cultural changes reflects in this way new tendencies.

The evaluation contained in the sociolect, which is visible through the emotional and evaluative character of the lexis of slang, unifies the attitude of members of the community to the people or phenomena described. It happens like that in the case of the words "brown-nose", "brown-nosing", which means to be polite in order to gain a benefit. Not only do they point to the existence of a certain stance, but their contemptuous resonance makes the members fully aware of the negative assessment.

Slang makes members conscious of the existence of the community and it is an external sign of belonging to it. Elaborating its own language by the group is evidence of its position, as it requires constant updating and frequent contacts. A young person, if he/she wants to join the community, should learn and use its language. It is one of the criteria of identification: familiar – unfamiliar (stranger).

Furthermore slang could be a perfect source of knowledge for scholars about the community speaking that language, about how it perceives the surrounding reality, for example the reception of school as oppressive in slang. This is evidenced by slang words regarding school and teachers, drawing on prison metaphors: school as - … prison, pupil as a prisoner, question at the blackboard as execution, conviction, the end of the schoolyear – freedom at last. This way of reception is included in a slang expression, for example: *School is like a police station. They interrogate you, and you don't know*

anything. School is like a toilet. You go, because you have to. School is like a lottery. Millions of chances, no wins (Wileczek 2011: 168-169).

Conclusion

Language as a social construct plays a certain role with regard to people. This is a tool for communication, so it enables cognition of reality through, obtaining information, exchanging thoughts, as Austin (2006) wrote, we have access to the thoughts of other people thanks to language. Language is not completely transparent and together with acquiring language people receive a particular proposition of the reception of reality. This is an image seen through the prism of that language.

Language relates a person to a particular community and thanks to that it is a sign and also an element shaping his/her identity as well as being the key to participation in a given culture. In language communication a person discovers the characteristic nature of the language and cultural community, as well as becoming aware of being a part of it. People present themselves through utterance and written communique. Speaking or writing, they do not only convey certain content, but also communicate a great deal about themselves. The conscious choice of certain elements of language, lexis and structures, for example slang, during the utterances can constitute an integral part of the creation of their own image. All these elements contribute to the educational role of language.

Awareness of the existence of various socially conditioned varieties of language, including youth slang, helps identify the existence of well-consolidated communities functioning within the linguistic and cultural society. Through the use of its own language, a community becomes integrated and gives expression to its values. Young people read them, and by learning its language also learn to understand the community. The correct use of youth slang may also be an expression of the user's communicative competence, demonstrating his or her ability to adapt to the other person's way of speaking and to the communicative situation. The educational role of slang is therefore realized through the communicative practice of persons for whom it represents a way of drawing on the riches of linguistic expression.

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Use of monologues, games and problem solving activities
for development of speaking skills

Klaudia Pavlikova

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra; klaudia.paulikova@ukf.sk

Abstract

Oral communication is one of the most important aspects of information exchange between individuals. Considering teaching of foreign languages, it is evident that the development of speaking covers quite an extensive part of the foreign language learning process. The study presents the importance of speaking within mastering a foreign language on a theoretical basis and provides an insight into real teaching-learning environment. The practical part of the study introduces the implementation of three activities into the teaching process - monologues, games and problem solving activities. With the aim of finding possibilities for improving the quality of the teaching process in the terms of the development of speaking, action research is used as the tool for data collection and evaluation. The findings and the results of the study demonstrate how the three activities develop speaking and what benefits their use brings to the foreign language classes.

Keywords: *foreign language education, speaking, monologues, games, problem solving activities, action research*

Introduction

The ability to communicate in a foreign language has been gaining more and more importance and popularity in the recent decades. The demand on knowing a foreign language is getting higher, especially when it comes to English, the global language. The modern era of education provides us with countless possibilities on how to acquire the language in the most efficient ways. There are numerous approaches, methods and special techniques developed for the purposes of successful and effective foreign language education.

Considering speaking in the foreign language, it can be stated that it covers the basis of everyday communication. Even though all the four communicative skills are essential in order to develop proper and complete communicative competence, speaking is considered as the core skill by many. The reason can be found in the great demand of communication as the most important aspect of language knowledge in the modern world (Howatt & Smith 2014).

Nature of speaking

Due to the fact that the vast majority of conversations is carried out exclusively by oral communication, it is clear that speaking is one of the most important aspects of language to be mastered. Brown and Yule (1983) note two basic functions of speaking – transactional and interactional. The transactional function, as the authors represent it, aims at transferring specific information (facts and knowledge) to a desired audience. It is the transactional function of language that allows any cultural development (religious, social, trading) to occur. Socializing and maintaining relationships is done under the interactional function of speech. It is the language used for everyday communication, negotiation of relationships, turn taking and time filling (ibid.). Richard (2008) remarks that in talk as transaction the main focus is on the message. In talk as interaction, however, the focus is on the speakers and the way they wish to communicate their message. Considering the nature of the teaching process as it comes to foreign language education, the teachers are aiming at achieving both – transactional and interactional function of speaking (Thornbury 1995).

It is important to identify four mental processes – conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring, which take place when producing an utterance. The production begins with conceptualization, which is a sincere planning of the content desired to be communicated. This involves taking all the circumstances (e.g. other participants, changes in the course of conversation) into account and being able to adjust the concept to possible changes. The next step, formulation, involves preparing and formulating the message into meaningful units of words, expressions, phrases and sentences (Levelt 1989). It is at the stage of formulation, as Thornbury (1995) explains, when speakers make decisions

about the stress and intonation of the units to be communicated. Following formulation, the process of articulation takes place. It is the process of physical release of the message, which engages the movement of articulatory organs in order to produce sound. Self-monitoring, at last, marks the ability of speakers to monitor themselves, thus having the opportunity of self-correction in the case of making any mistakes (Levelt 1989). Carter and Nunan (2001) and Thornbury (1995) further add that the success of these processes depends merely on automation. Due to the fact that human beings are not able to focus their attention on every single aspect of their speech production, it is essential that the four formerly mentioned processes are automated to such a great deal as it is possible, because lack of it may cause difficulties in speech. It is no surprise, as Ur (1996) explains, that speakers of foreign languages are experiencing much more difficulties in producing fully valuable speeches, as the switching between mental processes while speaking in a foreign language is not as automated as in their L1.

It becomes quite clear, however, that the nature of speaking is not only affected by the mental processes, but also by context. Bygate (1987) and Long and Doughty (2011) refer to speaking as having a reciprocal dimension, i.e. of existing among more than just one participant. It mostly occurs simultaneously and the participants are able to contribute to the flow of the conversation freely and at any time. They either have equal rights for speaking, or are in a sub-ordinate position to others. The oral communication, therefore, is much more dynamic and unpredictable than the written one (Thornbury 1995).

Furthermore, speaking is mostly a face-to-face occurrence. Providing that the speakers have the ability to see each other, the communication becomes easier, as there are many paralinguistic means to be used in order to communicate a meaningful and well understandable message, such as physical movements, gestures or face expressions (Carter & Nunan 2001).

The use of expressive devices is also part of features of speaking. Speakers, as Luoma (2004) explains, use various specificities of speech connected to sound – change of pitch, stress, vary volume or intonation. What is more, they often add emotional load to their speech, which together with the use of paralinguistic and physical means contributes to a well comprehensible, dynamic and rich utterance (Harmer 2001).

Richards and Burns (2012) refer to connected speech as another feature of spoken utterance. Speaking as such not only requires the proper use of phonemes individually, but also to connect them into a real, fast speech. This includes assimilation, elision, linking and the use of weak forms. Even though it is a natural occurrence for native speakers of English, connected speech may be difficulty causing for non-native speakers. The reason for this is seen in the fact that non-native speakers are not aware of all the context due to not being familiar with all the expressions of the language, therefore they are not able to guess the meanings so well as natives do (Harmer 2001).

Carter and Nunan (2001) furthermore mark speaking as a phenomenon, which happens in real time. Speakers are required to decide what message to communicate without long hesitations and are not allowed to take extra time for checking and correcting their message.

In addition to that, a spontaneous, real time speech may possess specific lexis and grammar. There is a need to consider the significant difference between spoken and written language, as the former is organized at the level of "self standing clause-like chunks, assembled according to incremental add-on strategy" rather than sentences, which are a typical organizational form of writing (Richards & Burns 2012: 200). There are certain lexical expressions and phrases, which are more commonly used in spoken interaction, than in the written one. As examples expressions of agreeing, disagreeing, surprise or shock may be mentioned (Harmer 2001).

Teaching speaking

Considering teaching speaking, it is very rare to deal with one language skill at a time only, as the four skills are integrated. The education of languages should reflect that, as well, and integrate all the language skills into the teaching process in order to be as effective as possible (Hinkel 2010). Moreover, there is a tendency to consider speaking as a medium for communication rather than a language skill to be taught (Long & Doughty 2011). Speaking as such in the average classroom is very often restricted to check comprehension. Thus activities that would develop thinking and improve practical use of the

language in communicative situations are almost completely omitted (Fisher, Frey & Rothenberg 2008). Despite that learners of foreign languages find speaking as the most important skill to be mastered and also the most difficult one to be learned (Gani, Farjina & Hanifa 2015). Gondová (2013) explains that the learners of foreign languages are good at taking tests and passing exams but they lack the ability to use the foreign language efficiently in real situations. They often have difficulties in speaking, which may originate in lack of confidence, problems with accuracy and fluency, or insufficient background knowledge about the language. This makes them afraid of speaking and causes them not using the foreign language as effectively as they could (Pauliková 2017). Therefore the whole process of teaching should be concerned not with how to make the learners interested in speaking, but rather how to find the most efficient ways to teach it (Richards 2008). Communication is the foremost goal to be reached; therefore learners need to be provided with sufficient circumstances for the ability of expressing their attitudes, opinions and feelings (Kováčiková & Gajdáčová-Veselá 2016).

There are plenty techniques and types of activities that are offered under various teaching methods and approaches. Their choice may depend on many things. On one hand it may be the most frequently used teaching approach, which determines the overall flow of the education process, on the other hand it can be determined by the national curriculum, school or even teacher, who decides about the most appropriate and effective ways of teaching for a successful educational process (Harmer 2012).

The success of the education of foreign languages does not however solely lie in the use of one or another method. Scrivener (2005) admits that teachers nowadays use a mixture of approaches and techniques, which are chosen and adjusted according to their own experience in the classrooms. As the main aims of teaching techniques are motivation, help in the development of critical thinking and facilitation of the learning process in order to prepare the learners for the ability to use the language beyond the borders of the classroom (Pokrivčáková 2013), it is vital for the teachers to find and implement such approaches in their foreign language education that meet these criteria and are beneficial for the development of the learners' skills.

When it comes to the use of specific activities for the development of speaking in the foreign language, it is important for the teachers to define, whether the techniques meet the criteria of a successful activity. Ur (1996) defines these in high participation, adequate language level, a lot of talking and high motivation among the participants. Moreover, it is important to set the main objectives of the activities. As Brown (2004) and Kováčiková and Gajdáčová-Veselá (2016) state, the use of approaches, techniques and activities for speaking should be based on a precise planning of the field of focus – the control over the activity, whether it is aimed at speaking individually, in pairs, or groups and if the attention is paid on the practice of accuracy, fluency or other feature of speech in a foreign language.

Monologues, games and problem solving activities

There is a great variety of activities designed for developing speaking. In an effective teaching process, learners should not only retrieve formerly gained knowledge but the activities should also lead to success in real communication beyond the class (Harmer 2012).

Monologues and presentations are defined by individual oral work of students and are aimed at practicing all the areas of the language system. They not only enhance the use of all the language skills but are also confidence building. They require a clear task and time for preparation, which is followed by the performance, often extremely time consuming, though (Harmer 2012). Integration of the four skills is seen as a great advantage by Al Issa and Al Qubtain (2010), as well. They note that besides speaking, there are many more ongoing processes. The audience listens to the speaker's utterance and very often they read the instructions or even make notes or write questions for further discussion. Giving oral presentations is a great way to "encourage the presenting students to practice meaningful oral English" (ibid: 229).

Problem solving activities present a "problem" to the learners, who are, either alone, in pairs, groups or as a whole class required to find solution to it. These activities are constructed for the learners to enhance their critical thinking in the given language. In addition to that, they are very beneficial as the learners are forced to think in the target language, which improves their overall communicative competence to a great deal (Harmer 2001). Reid and Kováčiková (2018) describe certain kinds of

problem solving activities as improving divergent thinking, enhancing creativity and developing higher level thinking skills.

"Games are effective tools for learning because they offer students a hypothetical environment in which they can explore alternative decisions without the risk of failure. Thought and action are combined into purposeful behaviour to accomplish a goal. Playing games teaches us how to strategize, to consider alternatives, and to think flexibly" (Martinson & Chu, 2008: 478). Being one of the most attractive means of practicing language for the learners, games are considered to be advantageous in FLE for more reasons. With their possibility to be performed in pairs, groups or even as a whole class, they not only help in the development of the speaking skill on many levels, but also act therapeutically, which can be considered as an extra advantage (Harmer 2001). The variety of games available for practicing speaking is huge. There are verbal games, board games, memory games, cumulative games, creative games, etc., all with the function of teaching and amusing (Pokrivčáková 2013).

Research

The main goal of the researcher was to investigate the phenomenon of the development of speaking by the three previously mentioned techniques in a real teaching environment. For that purpose, action research was conducted at a local language school with adult learners. There were two main aims that were highlighted as follows.
1. To find out what ways for improvement of the teaching process of the development of speaking the three activities –games, monologues and problem solving activities offered in the teaching process.
2. To find out whether the activities implemented were beneficial for both the learners and the teaching process and whether there were any suggestions for further improvement of the lessons.

The research questions were, therefore, stated as follows:
1. How may the speaking skill of learners of English be improved by the use of monologues, games and problem solving activities?
2. What are the reflections on the collected data and suggestions for future improvement?

Action research

The investigation itself was divided according to four main phases - planning, action, observation and reflection.

Planning

The initial planning phase clarified the most crucial points of the study – the reason for conducting action research, the fields for improvement and the concrete, specific actions that needed to be carried out to be successful in the investigation. The main reason for investigating the issue of developing speaking by action research was the intention of improving the quality of the teaching process. Despite the fact that the learners of English were improving in their studies and the overall teaching process was found appropriate and successful, a long term observation of the lessons had revealed that very often the learners were not challenged enough to do their best. Moreover, the practice that was provided by the textbooks was not enough, offering just a limited number of activities for improving speaking. The very important aspect of successful language teaching process – the motivation of learners, was therefore missing.

Action

Based on the information from the first phase the main action was conducted. There were three activities chosen for the investigation – monologues, games and problem solving activities. The activities were implemented into the lessons of English with the aim of finding out whether they were beneficial for the development of speaking skill. The action lasted for the amount of two months and the activities were implemented repeatedly. There were two groups of learners chosen for the investigation and the activities were adapted according to the course book and the corresponding topic of the lesson.

Observation

The observation was done simultaneously with the action. While implementing the activities into the lessons, the observer carried out an observation of all the happenings. The information collected were noted down for a subsequent assessment of the data. The observation itself was concerned with the activities that were implemented, whether the learners found them interesting, motivating and challenging for speaking, whether the activities developed their confidence, complexity of speech or any of the aspects such as accuracy and fluency. The observation also focused on whether the learners switched to their mother tongue while performing. Subsequently to the observation, the collected data were evaluated.

Reflection

The last phase of the action research was processing and evaluating the collected data. The main aim was finding out whether the activities used in the action phase were successful and beneficial. The reflection included an interview, which was incorporated into two lessons with all the learners. After the interview the collected data were evaluated and the conclusion was made.

Research sample

The research sample was chosen according to purposive sampling. There were two groups of adult learners chosen for the study. Both of the groups attended English lessons 2 times a week for 90 minutes in a local language school situated on the west of Slovakia. Group A consisted of 6 learners that were attending an "elementary" course with the proficiency level A2. Group B consisted of 6 learners that were attending an "intermediate" course with the proficiency level B1.

Implementation of the activities into the teaching process

The four phases of the action research were thoroughly planned in order to collect valuable and credible data. The whole course of the investigation lasted for two months and its main aim was finding possible ways for improving the development of speaking skill of the two groups of learners. The activities were implemented repeatedly and their duration was 20 – 25 minutes on average.

Games

Games have been a part of the teaching process within the language school for a longer period of time. There are two main reasons why they were implemented into the research procedure, as well. First of all, as the data in the theoretical part showed, games offer a perfect basis for practising accuracy. The second reason was that due to the fact that games are „played" and offer a funny and relaxing atmosphere, they do not evoke a feeling of studying hard. The main aim of the games was practicing the target language, thus training accuracy as much as possible. One of the partial goals of the researcher was finding out whether the games were beneficial in any other aspects of improvement and whether they were able to contribute to the development of speaking in a foreign language in any other way than practicing already mastered linguistic structures.

Action and observation

The course of the activity went very well as all the learners had practiced playing games before. They were handed a sheet of paper with a board game on it (for the group A it was 'Where were you' for practicing the past simple of the verb be; for group B it was „Conditionals race" for the practice of zero and first conditional, both games retrieved from Speak Out Teacher's Resource book). They were divided into groups of three and given counters and a dice for each group. Their task was to go through the games and at every square they got to fulfil the given task – answer a question or complete a statement correctly. The first who got to the finish square was the winner.

The games were very challenging as all the learners wanted to win. They were completing the tasks and moving closer to the finish willingly and with joy. They were all paying attention to creating accurate structures, which was not very difficult for them as they had acquired these in their previous studies.

Both of the groups were equally successful in completing the games and in doing well in creating meaningful sentences with little or no mistakes. They did it with confidence and the more squares they completed, the more spontaneously and easily they forwarded in taking their turns to answer.

Findings and reflection

Games were perhaps the most motivating and challenging activity used throughout the study. The learners not only had the chance to practice the patterns and structures on their own but were exposed to input of information from the other participants of the game, as well, thus having the responsibility to check and correct their possible mistakes. The learners paid extra attention on producing accurate sentences, therefore the chance to switch to mother tongue was completely eliminated, which can be considered as one of the greatest advantages. On the other hand, because the learners were taking turns and producing short utterances, the possibility to develop their fluency was decreased.

Referring to the difficulties in speech production, it was clarified that games, besides of being very motivating and confidence building for speaking, also worked as great source for improving accuracy without switching into the mother tongue. The list of all benefits and deficiencies is depicted in the following table.

Table 1: Benefits and deficiencies of games.

Benefits	Deficiencies
- challenging and motivating	- no focus on fluency
- extreme focus on accuracy	
- no switching to mother tongue	
- building confidence	

Problem solving activities

The activity of problem solving was introduced to the lessons in the language school for the first time. Many sources claim that they are a great source for improving thinking in the target language, which provides great help for development of general language competences of learners. The researcher's aim was to find out whether problem solving activities were beneficial for the development of speaking in a foreign language and whether the learners were able to think and cooperate with others in the target language in order to find a solution for a given task. A complementary aim was to find out if the activity was useful for the development of the speaking competence in the means of decreasing learners" difficulties in speech.

Action and observation

The learners were handed a problem solving task on a sheet of paper. It was the same task for both of the groups and the name was „Musical Recital', found in Pokrivčáková (2013) (original source: www.brainbashers.com). The learners were asked to work in pairs and read the tasks to each other. Their task was, according to the hints given in notes, to find out the correct order of people, their musical instruments and the composers they performed.

The students started reading the tasks to each other aloud. They kept reading all the hints all over again in order to find the solution of the puzzle. As they were reading, they were repeating the key information to be able to move forward in solving for many times. They were also noting down the most important information in English and discussing the possible answers with their partners. Even though the majority of learners enjoyed the activity and had no difficulties to solve it (it took them five minutes on average), some of the learners seemed to struggle with it and not find it satisfying at all. Both groups of learners did well in the activity, except two learners from Group A and one from Group B, who could not keep the pace with the other learners. Even though they managed to fulfil the task and solve the problem, it took them much more time than their classmates and seemed very frustrated while working.

Findings and reflection

The outcomes show that the problem solving activity was not found attractive for all the learners. Moreover, due to the fact that the language used in it was very limited with a repetitive tendency, it can be stated that it was not the best solution for developing accuracy, fluency, confidence, or complexity of speech in a given language.

It must be stated, on the other hand, that the learners used solely English while performing the activity. They were reading, repeating, noting down and discussing with their partners – all in the target language. For this reason it can be assumed that these kinds of activities help in the development of thinking in English. Moreover, the fact that the learners were asked to work in pairs made them cooperate and search solutions together, which provided them with opportunities for critical thinking. The advantages of problem solving, as result, lie in the development of thinking in the target language and helping in thinking critically, which is one of the key factors to overcoming problems with speaking. The findings are also depicted in the table below.

Table 2: Benefits and deficiencies of problem solving activities.

Benefits	Deficiencies
- develop thinking in the target language	- no focus on separate aspects of speech
- boost critical thinking	- not suitable for all the learners

Monologues

Giving shorter or longer speeches in a person's life is a natural occurrence. Being able to do it also in a foreign language requires either good speaking skills background knowledge of the language, or enough preparation. Monologues are manifold in their nature. Learners may talk about different topics on their own for a given amount of time, give presentations or lectures on various subjects, or even perform something. Provided that the learners of foreign language are given enough time and resources for preparation, even the ones at the lowest proficiency levels can give good quality speeches. The implementation of monologues and presentations was completely new for the learners, as these activities had not been used before due to their extremely time consuming nature. By implementing them into the course of study the researcher aimed at finding out to what degree the learners were able to give meaningful, fluent speeches and whether the activity was providing any help in overcoming difficulties with fluency, accuracy and confidence in speaking.

Action and observation

The researcher provided all the learners with various pieces of information (about holidays of various countries, information of artists, cuisine, etc.) in printed form. Both of the groups were provided materials corresponding to their own language abilities. The researcher explained the task. The learners needed to read their articles and summaries and prepare a short few minute presentation about the given topic. They were explained that they all had a different topic to be summarized and their main task was retelling the read information to their classmates. The time for preparation was approximately ten minutes and the learners were allowed to take notes and use dictionaries for assistance with unknown words or phrases (both printed and online versions, which the students used on a daily basis).

During the preparation the learners of both groups were reading their papers attentively and highlighting all the information they considered important. They were using the dictionaries provided and taking notes to their notebooks. When the ten minute limit for preparation was over, they were asked one by one to present their topic to the rest of the class.

The presentations went very well. The learners gave their speeches one by one. The stronger ones did it without reading their notes; some however, used their papers for assistance. They all were describing the issues they had been given at the beginning with pleasure and interest. They were paying extra attention on saying everything important they had come to so that their classmates would understand the main idea of their speech. They concentrated on saying everything accurately and in as a complex way as possible. They did it confidently and were very satisfied, when, after finishing they were praised by the teacher for their good work. The teacher did not intervene in the process of giving the

presentations at all. After finishing, one or two follow up questions were asked, which the learners answered without any difficulties.

The presentations in Group A went as well as those in Group B, because all the articles they had been given were equivalent to their level of proficiency. In both of the groups, however, were two weaker students, who needed more time for expressing their thoughts with a slower speed of speech than the others had. Despite that fact, they all did very well in the presentations and were happy to perform in English for such a long time.

Findings and reflection

Even though the activity was very time consuming (ten minutes overall preparation and three to five minutes of presentation per student) it must be stated that it was very successful from various viewpoints. Due to the fact that the learners had time for preparation, their utterances were smooth, fluent and they could perform with confidence without feeling stressed about what to say. As both the input and output of information happened in English, the learners were encouraged to think in the target language (which was also observed by the researcher – learners were mumbling and whispering in English while taking notes and preparing their speeches). Moreover, they did not switch to mother tongue, at all. They concentrated on creating meaningful and accurate sentences, therefore the activity showed to be beneficial for developing accuracy, as well. Lastly, the learners were exposed to new information, which provided them with new opportunities to widen their background knowledge about certain topics in the target language.

As a disadvantage the time consuming nature of the activity must be mentioned. The length of it would not be a problem alone, but some of the learners (especially those, who had already performed), got bored very quickly and did not pay attention, even when they were asked to.

Summing up all the previously mentioned facts, it can be stated that monologues and presentations are very beneficial for the development of speaking and elimination of difficulties. They not only develop fluency and accuracy in the target language, but also boost confidence, improve the overall complexity of speech and provide the learners with possibilities to acquire language from various, new sources of information. The benefits and deficiencies are also listed in the subsequent table for a more detailed view.

Table 3: Benefits and deficiencies of monologues.

Benefits	Deficiencies
- improve thinking in English - no use of mother tongue - improvement of fluency - develop accuracy - Improvement of complexity of speech - Enhancement of confidence - Good exposure of new information in the target language	- extremely time consuming

Conclusion

Considering the activities that were implemented into the teaching process, it can be stated that the whole action research was very successful. The great variety of the opportunities for speaking made the lessons of English not only more challenging and motivating for the learners, but also added value to the teaching process itself, as there were numerous new possibilities for developing speaking. Games and monologues were found extremely beneficial for the development of accuracy in speaking. Monologues also improved the fluency in speech, which is also a vital aspect of the speaking skill. All the implemented activities were found to be improving confidence of the learners, which is important not only for their inner good feeling of performing well, but also for the overall quality of their performance. Problem solving activities were best for developing thinking in the target language. The overall complexity of speech was found to be developed by the use of monologues. To conclude, it may be

assumed that by implementing these activities into the teaching process on a regular basis it is highly possible that it will contribute to eliminating speaking problems the learners are likely to experience throughout their language studies. Moreover, the overall performance of the learners can be improved.

Reflections and suggestions for further improvement

The observation of the lessons revealed that the previously mentioned activities helped in improving the effectiveness of the teaching process and the overall performance in speaking. The next step was investigating the issue from the viewpoint of the learners themselves. For this reason an interview was conducted, which represented the last phase of the action research. The main aim was to find out whether the learners were satisfied with the three activities and whether there were any suggestions for the further improvement in the quality of the teaching process. Their reflections were process into a table for a better overview.

Table 4: Suggestions for future improvement.

Participants' suggestions for future improvement
- Implement discussions about real life topics into every lesson
- Use more whole class debates/discussions
- Use more monologues/presentations on the lessons
- Concentrate more on grammar
- Concentrate more on vocabulary
- Implement more variable topics into the lessons
- Use more games

The learners stated that they were satisfied with the activities that were implemented throughout the study. They admitted noticing some minor changes on their own speaking performance, which was mainly visible on the fact that they became more confident. They stated that the numerous opportunities for speaking made them feel good and able to react more spontaneously. As for the suggestions for further improvements, they suggested using as many speaking activities in the lessons as possible. They suggested using discussions about real life topics on every lesson, as they considered that very important to be able to communicate on a daily basis. They also suggested more monologues and presentations, as they saw great benefits of self expressions. Monologues not only made them use the language without stopping for a longer span of time, they also made them think in the language, which they found very important. Another suggestion was implementing speaking activities that would focus solely on grammar or vocabulary, as they thought they lacked skills in these areas of speaking. They asked for more variability in the lessons, as they thought the topics provided by the textbooks did not prepare them well for the situations beyond the classroom. Lastly, they asked for using more games for a relaxed atmosphere.

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Digital text production as narrative: an analysis of text production in a multilingual classroom at primary school

Anna Lyngfelt

University of Gothenburg, Faculty of Education, Sweden; anna.lyngfelt@gu.se

Abstract

In the study presented digital text production in a multilingual classroom is discussed. This involves students aged 7-8, manifesting their literacy by making use of both their writing and reading competence. To be able to discuss the text production, Bakhtin's theories about heteroglossia are crucial, allowing for both social and historical contexts of utterances (Bakhtin 1994). These theories are here intertwined with Bruner's notion of human beings as constituted by 'narratives' (Bruner 2002). By the use of linguistic ethnography (Creese 2008) and text analysis based on sociosemiotics (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006), the following questions are discussed: How do multilingual students make use of digital tools for meaning making in their digital text productions, and in what sense could they by creating these texts be said to contribute to their own literacy development? Text productions from four students are analysed to illustrate how multivocal spaces are created, and how these 'spaces' can explain the students' literacy development.

Keywords: *meaning making, literacy processes, multilingualism, narratives, sociosemiotics*

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss digital text production in a multilingual classrooms a manifestation of literacy, constituted by both reading and writing competence. The creation of digital texts is considered to be the result of literacy approaches, where bottom up-readers as well as top down-readers manifest their competence by the creation of digital texts, using all possibilities available to them. Digital tools are here considered not only as a means for communication, but also as a way of developing literacy. By letting multilingual students get the chance to express themselves multimodally, while responding to a written assignment in Swedish, the students demonstrate their work with combining linguistic capacity with non-verbal communication; through their text productions it becomes clear how the students struggle to manifest and develop their literacy.

Below, the students' text productions are considered to be the result of the creation of *multivocal spaces*, which in turn is regarded to bet he result of discursive practices taking into account social and historical contexts that individually and collectively matter to the students involved. As Tierney (2018) writes, we have the capabilities to support different languages and various modes of thinking and expressions in our educational systems - a statement which here opens the way for an understanding of a variety of meaning making in an educational setting, locally. To approach multilingual students' text productions, and consider them to be the result of *multivocal spaces* created by the students, is therefore an attempt to grasp and develop a view of the students' text productions as 'global meaning making' (Tierney 2018). By focusing on what is being manifested in the text productions, the students' roles as agents in a process are fore groundedand explained as self-determination.

By the use of linguistic ethnography, possible answers to two questions will be discussed: How do multilingual students, aged 7-8, make use of digital tools for meaning making in their digital text productions, and in what sense could they by creating these texts be said to contribute to their own literacy development? For this a theoretical framework is needed, stressing the importance of the social and historical contexts that individually and collectively matter to the students.

Literacy and translanguaging

As Heath once stated (1983), a 'literacy event' could be described as any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretative processes. According to Street (1984) and Barton (1994), these events could be explained as 'literacy practices', since they include both social practices and conceptions of reading and writing. Yetit is rare to find studies where both reading and writing are approached as intertwined (Lyngfelt 2018). Also, when multilingual classrooms receive attention, the approach is often either linguistic or oriented towards

social and cultural circumstances. Studies seldom make use of the complexity that the term literacy tries to capture: 'literacy' as processes and products at the same time, dependant on conceptions of what reading and writing are andc ould be to students, as a result of the possibilities and limitations that specific situations offer.

Theoretically and methodologically, *translanguaging* (Garcia & Wei 2014) and linguistic ethnography (Creese 2008) make it possible to consider reading and writing as intertwined social activities; the conception of literacy as translanguaging (Garcia & Wei 2014) captures a complexity that is here understood as an approach to the use of languages, where multilingual students practice language systems including combinations of different modes like text, still images, sound etc. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, Jewitt 2008, Bearne 2009). Also, 'translanguaging' makes it possible to take discursive practices into account; it facilitates the understanding of the social context in which 'languaging' (Swain 1985) takes place. As Garcia writes, translanguaging makes it possible to grasp multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage, in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds (Garcia 2009). This, in turn, creates opportunities to consider the multilingual students' conditions and social circumstances during their literacy practice, which Wei (2011) refers to as their 'translanguaging space'.

Multivocal spaces and literacy

In this context, translanguaging space is understood as a space where 'translation' takes place between traditions of reading and writing at school, and digital experiences acquired outside school, and these combine into new identities for the students. As Dewilde writes (2016), the boundaries of imagined translanguaging spaces shift, since individuals create the rules of interaction and interpretation within these spaces, in line with the individuals' perception of boundaries. However, what adds complexity to these (individual) spaces is the fact that they are linked to spaces created by others, since individuals' experiences, attitudes and values are acquired in interaction with others and as a result of certain social conditions. As Wei points out, translanguaging space is a 'lived space', created by social practices in everyday life (Wei 2011). Here, this means that traces from the students' broader linguistic repertoires co-exist and contribute to the creation of a diversity of translanguaging spaces, in the school setting where the students find themselves.

However, the concept of 'heteroglossia' is needed to deepen the understanding of translanguaging and translanguaging spaces. As Bailey (2007) points out, inspired by Bakhtin (1994), there is a need for focus on 'voice' rather than language when discussing utterances; as Bakhtin writes there are in every utterance traces not only of the social and political forces that have shaped it but also historical forces. This means, for Bakhtin, that heteroglossia allows for theorizing of both social and historical contexts of utterances, and by doing so letting the here-and-now draw meaning from the past. Hence, linguistics needs to be intertwined with sociohistorical views of human interaction, if (like here) students' text productions should be understood as the result of a literacy practice, where students put efforts into making use of their pre-understanding as well as up-to-date knowledge.

Thus, 'translanguaging space' may be considered to be inadequate as a conception. The term *multivocal space* is therefore suggested, to capture not only voices making themselves heard in the same space of an individual (here-and-now), but also echoes of social and historical contexts that contribute to the constituting of the individual's space; *multivocal spaces* do not limit discursive practices to 'lived spaces' created by social practices in everyday life, but take into account social and historical contexts that individually and collectively matter to the students involved. Also, this is an attempt to contextualize global meaning making as "modes of operation of people who cross the line" (Tierney 2018: 12), who are skilled at adaptation and engage in digital innovations or forms of translanguaging, especially along borders where cultures cross or brush up against one another (Kim 2016).

Since texts are looked upon as a part of daily practice, the students' experiences of literacy, acquired inside and outside school, are likely to play a role in their digital text production; to be able to create *multivocal spaces* they both have to make use of competence they have, and adapt to what is expected from them in the school context. Thus, it is likely that there are traces of different strategies for approaching text in the students' text productions, i.e. both students demonstrating bottom-up

processing, by being careful with individual meanings or grammatical characteristics of the most basic units of the text, and out of that creating whole texts, as well as students that use top-down strategies to produce their texts (and of course strategies in between, constituted by shifts in perspectives). By top-down processing, the students make the most of what they bring to the situation, and out of that develop a structure with details necessary for the receiver of the text production. To conclude, if literacy includes both reading and writing, conceptions of reading processes may be relevant also for writing processes. However, to be able to analyse these complex processes, linguistic ethnography is needed, as well as analytical tools derived from sociosemiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006).

Linguistic ethnography and tools from sociosemiotics

As Creese (2008) writes, it is the consideration of what is to be gained by conjoining the two terms linguistics and ethnography that defines linguistic ethnography. Within this field, ethnography can benefit from the analytical frameworks provided by linguistics, while linguistics can benefit from processes of reflexive sensitivity required in ethnography. While linguistics provides an authoritative analysis of language use not typically available from participant observation and the taking of field notes, ethnography provides linguistics with a close 'reading' of social context. Accordingly, linguistic ethnography helps to combine close detail of local action with interaction embedded in a wider social world. Consequently, the students' texts are here viewed as processual and constructed in social discourse and action; ethnography contributes to the unravelling of details of how language varieties and discourses work for the students involved (Blommaert 2010).

It is from this perspective that the idea of texts as praxis is relevant. However, here texts are also regarded as narratives. As Bruner stresses, we *are* narratives and *become* what we tell about (Bruner 2002). By this he means that we become autobiographical narratives by which we tell about our lives, since the ways of telling and the ways of conceptualizing become so habitual that they finally become forms for structuring experience itself, guiding the 'life narrative' not only up to the present but also into the future. Accordingly, life *is* how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold.

In this context, narratives are considered to contribute to shifts in the students' perspectives, by the use of personal experiences acquired both inside and outside school, making the students 'life stories' unstable; narratives are thought to be facilitated by the opportunity to use a variety of digital tools, opening up for 'possible life stories'. Considering the rapidly changing media landscape, this approach seems relevant; the 'voices' in use by the students are made possible by the resources of new media. As Vasquez and Felderman (2013) point out, most young children are immersed in digital practices from an early age, and even if they do not have access to digital technologies at home, they are often able to develop skills in working with digital texts and tools (Bearne 2009).

To sum up, since everything anybody ever says always exists in response to things that have been said before, and in anticipation of things that will be said in response (cf. Bakhtin 1981), the students' text productions are conceived as *multivocal spaces* consisting of narratives; the students' text productions are regarded as being constituted by 'voices', including interpersonal experiences acquired inside and outside school, revealing ideas about what the students would like to become as well as thoughts of how they perceive themselves while creating their texts. In the context, it is of course of special interest to see what the students reveal that they would like to become as readers and writers, and how they reveal what matters to them in the role of 'writers' of digital text production.

For this purpose - to catch how *multivocal spaces* are created by the narratives constituting the texts – tools derived from sociosemiotics are used here. Following the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), it is important to study how *signs* are put to use and received, since small signs – like the combination of images and signs – may have significant consequences for the students' meaning making. However, in the context, Cope and Kalantzis' (2010) notion of what digital tools have a capacity to change is also important; Cope and Kalantzis suggest that the resources that new media offer fundamentally change the conditions for text production and that this, in turn, could be used as an asset from an educational point of view. Even if Cope and Kalantzis' main focus is not discussing literacy or language development, and even less *multivocal spaces*, their ideas about the changing balance of *agency* that new media offer, and the need for *conceptualization* when using new media, are relevant (Cope & Kalantzis 2010: 96). In

particular, Cope and Kalantzis' notion of the changing balance of *agency* is interesting, since according to them it makes the students co-designers rather than users of new media. Their notion of *conceptualization*, as a result of metacognition while making use of new media, is crucial as well, since it opens the way for understanding *how multivocal spaces* are constituted by the students (cf. Cope & Kalantzis 2010).

Students' creation of multivocal spaces: design of the study and results

The empirical data draws upon empirical data collected within the research project *Digital Arenas in Literacy Practices in Early Primary School*, *DILS* (2012 – 2016).[23] The main objective here was the search for critical perspectives on classroom studies that focus on meaning making by the use of digital tools; the project aimed at increasing the understanding of students' and teachers' use of digital tools in classroom contexts. By studying digital interaction among the students, instructions from the teachers and the outcomes of various tasks where use of digital tools was needed, the use of multiliteracies was observed and related to sociocultural contexts (Sofkova Hashemi & Cederlund 2017).

The project involved three classes in early primary school in Sweden, with pupils aged 7-9 and their teachers. These classes represented various socioeconomic backgrounds and were found in three schools situated in different places, one in a small town and two in different parts of a city. The focus here is limited to the work in one of the schools, the school characterized by a school setting where the students did not necessarily choose the majority language (Swedish) for communication in the classroom; an Arabic-speaking teacher is involved, and several of the students learn Swedish through Somali.

Even though text analysis was not the main focus of the DILS project, this study makes use of text analysis and interviews with four focal students in one of the city schools in order to look at the students' use of the digital resources available to them, in the multilingual classroom.

The design of the study

By the study of a written assignment, where students were asked to individually produce information for an (imaginary) alien arriving on earth for the first time, the students' digital text productions are investigated. To be able to create text productions, the students had the opportunity to choose between the use of computers and iPads for their 'texts'. As already indicated, four focal students, representative of the group of students as a whole when it comes to the variety of literacy development, were chosen for the text analyses and short interviews. Here they are called Zaid, Edy, Bina and Ramona, and they were all using iPads for their presentations - even though they had the choice to use computers. After having finished their text productions, during two lessons, these students were offered the opportunity to comment on their work one by one.

Results of the study

The results of the study show that *agency*, in terms of autonomy (for the students) instead of control (from the teachers' perspective), is likely to change the way outcomes are achieved. This is obvious from the text production of one of the four focal students, Zaid.

Zaid

Zaid efficiently combines sound, still images and words to make it clear to the alien what it needs on earth. By the use of eight still images (seven photos), he lets pictures be foregrounded and supported by his own voice telling (almost) the same thing as is written in small letters in the background of the pictures.

Image 1 consists of a photo of the written assignment that the students got, while the second image shows a sink and a water tap. Added to this second image is Zaid's voice saying, 'I taught it to drink

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water with his mouth'. In the background, in small letters, is written, 'It needs water' (with almost correct spelling)[24].

The third image consists of a desk in the classroom and a chair with a rucksack hanging on it. Added to this is Zaid's voice saying 'I taught it lots of words. The same information, 'I taught...' is printed in the background in small letters (with incorrect spelling). In the next image, number four, the reader is faced with papers on a table showing the solar system and hand-drawn pictures of planets. Here Zaid's voice says, 'I taught it lots, lots, lots of things about space.' However, Image 5 is informative, with a photo of the students' winter clothes hanging in the corridor. No text is added but Zaid's voice says 'I taught it needs clothes not to freeze to death'.

Text is omitted also in the next image, number 6. Here the reader sees a photo of the swing in the schoolyard and Zaid's voice says, 'I taught it how to swing, using a swing'. Finally, in Image 7, there is a photo of a desk with a computer. No recorded voice is added but in small letters you can read, 'I taught it canteen is called computer' (with the ending omitted in 'called'). An additional image is also added, but without any photo (just a pink background) and tiny letters saying 'The end'.

To sum up, Zaid uses multiple resources for meaning making: sound, still images and words. He uses still images as a basis and his own recorded voice and typed letters to stress the messages conveyed by the pictures (photos) that constitute his text (picture two to seven). By letting the photos be foregrounded he manages to communicate efficiently; by showing the photos it would be easy for the receiver (the alien) to understand not only that water and clothes (etc.) are important but also what they look like and where to find them. By doing so, Zaid finds a way to communicate through the resources that (probably) suit him the best - photos and the use of his voice - instead of struggling with the spelling of words.
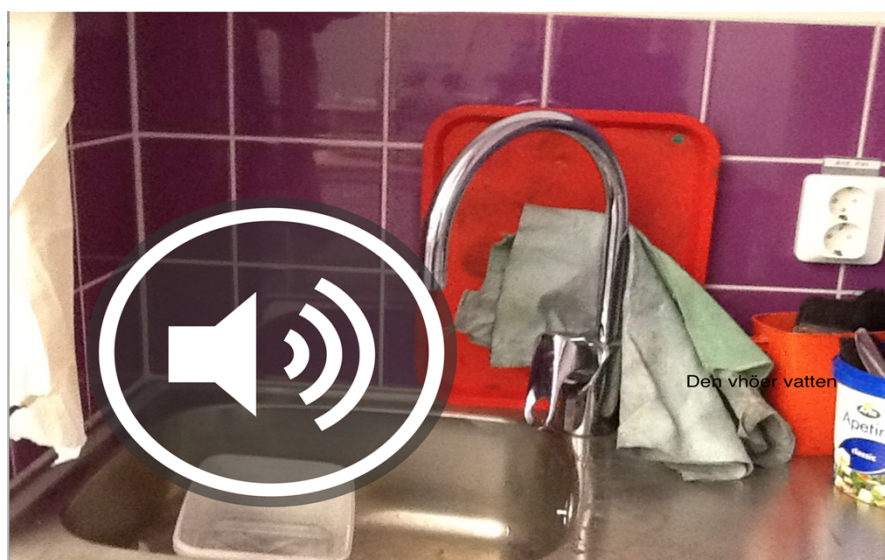
Zaid's Image 2.

In fact, written language is scarcely needed for the narrative in this text production. By his work, Zaid shows that learners can make use of a variety of available resources, in which they actively convey knowledge in its various modes and permutations. Also, this text production shows that the key shift in the use of new media is not the medium but the capacity to support learners to be knowledge producers rather than knowledge consumers. To Zaid, the changing balance of *agency* that new media opens the way for, makes a big difference; it draws attention to his knowledge and ability to communicate instead of focusing on his limited ability to use the majority language (Swedish). When

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[24] I have made comments on the students' spelling in my text, to give the reader an idea of the kind of verbal language that characterizes the students' texts.

commenting on his text in the interview, he refers to his text production by saying that 'if you start with a picture you could always add something to it if someone doesn't understand – sound, for instance'.

Zaid's text production could be looked upon as a result of top-down processing; he makes the most of what he brings to the situation, and develops a structure with details necessary for the receiver of the text production. His *multivocal space* could be regarded to be constituted by modes representing experiences that he himself knows are important for the alien (to be able to drink, etc.). Also, he uses his experience of what an iPad could be used for, when creating his text. In addition to this, Zaid could be said to contribute to his own literacy development, by starting his communication with still images, sound etc., and after that adding words that he knows in Swedish. By doing so he makes the most of his communicative abilities.

Edy

If photos carried the narrative in Zaid's text, written text dominates Edy's text production. The production consists of two still images: one with typed text in black on a green background and one with black text on a red background. To Image 1, a recorded voice is added, where the student reads aloud what he has written, and to the text in Image 2, three pictures are added, showing photos of the alphabet on the wall of the classroom. If in Image 1, spoken and written text independently act as resources, the photos of the alphabet in Image 2 relate to the students' meticulous work with the written text rather than to the text content. Compared to Zaid's work, this text production is not very much developed from a multimodal perspective, probably because Edy finds his way into text production by starting to figure out what phonemes correspond to the graphemes he needs to be able to create words - one by one - to make sentences.

In fact, Edy's text production clearly shows the efforts of learning a new (verbal) language. Also, it should be pointed out that even if the spelling is far from perfect, the written text is informative and easy to understand. Among other things, like information on how you eat, Edy repeatedly tells the alien that it is important to go to an employment agency (Image 1). In the next image (Image 2), Edy is instead occupied with his own role when taking care of the alien ('I will warm you', 'we will go shopping', etc.).
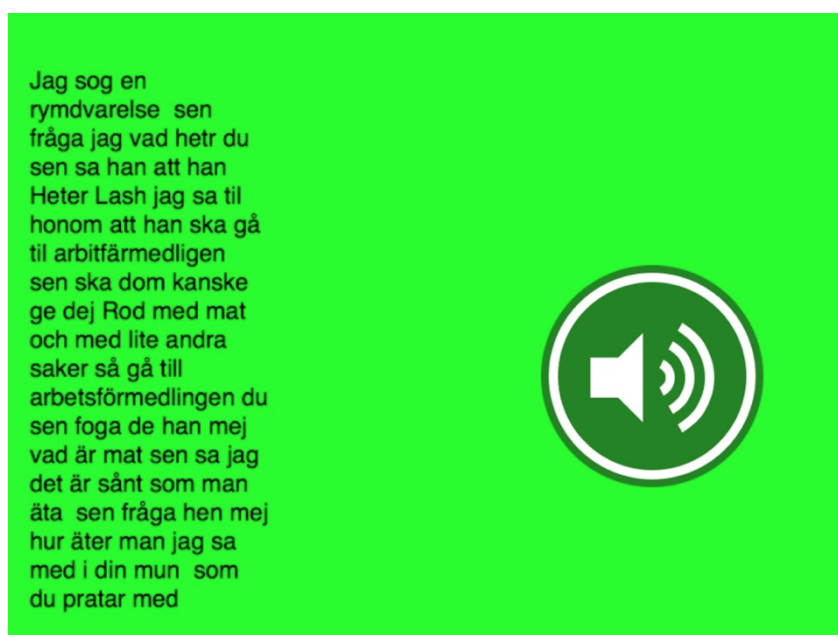
Edy's Image 1.

In spite of all the possibilities offered by digital tools, Edy's text production could be said to represent uniformity, since the use of modalities is limited. Nevertheless, this text production opens the way for considerations when it comes to diversity; it shows that the opportunity to use a variety of modalities

can be rejected by one student while the others keep combining modalities in a variety of ways, in the same classroom. In this case, it is likely that the student chose the modalities that seemed adequate to him, for expressing himself and developing literacy.

It is worth noticing that the way Edy chose to create his text production fundamentally differs from how literacy is being taught in the classroom where he finds himself.[25] Thus, the diversity of text production that digital texts reveal may give important information to teachers about *how* the students work when struggling to learn to read and write. In this case the student is obsessed by letters; when being interviewed, he keeps referring to his text by reading it aloud, pronouncing one letter after another.

It could be argued that the 'voices' that Edy's experiences from outside school represent - that it is important to visit the employment agency, etc. - dominate his narrative and by doing so constitute a *multivocal space*. However, his struggle with achieving literacy at school seems to be just as important to him, which means that his narrative also tells something about how eager Edy is to be able to read and write. Without being conscious of it himself, his working process could be categorized as a bottom-up process; Edy is very careful with individual meanings or grammatical characteristics of the most basic units of his text, and out of that creates his whole text. He could also be said to take responsibility for his own literacy development, by reading aloud and focusing on word forms rather than meaning. In addition to this, it could be argued that when it comes to *multivocal space*, Edy's 'space' is less open for communication than Zaid's. Even though Zaid's communication is mainly non-verbal, his *multivocal space* is not a closed universe in the sense that Edy's text is. One example of this is Edy's dialogue with himself while recording the reading of what he has written (which is a part of his text production). This could be compared with Zaid's less form-centred efforts (verbally), to convey (content) oriented messages as a 'writer', concentrating on main ideas.

Bina

Bina's text production consists of six still images, each image including text and several photos. Three of the images also include recorded voices where (mainly) the text that is written down is read aloud. Overall, this text production gives a collage-like impression.

Image 1 consists of two photos: one of the spaceship that the student found as an illustration in the assignment and one of her friend sitting in a room using her iPad. To the first photo the following sentences are added: 'She can live on the planets.' and 'They can go to all planets.', and to the second, this is added: 'They can drink water from the water tap' (all readable but partly incorrect spelling). The sentences that go with the first photo are also recorded and read aloud, by two voices.

The second image consists of one photo on the left and two photos on the right. On the left you find a photo of a soup pot (from the canteen) and four sentences: 'They can eat soup. They can eat fruit. They can eat meat. They must eat to live on earth.' (readable but partly incorrect spelling). On the right, there is one photo of the students' classmates standing in a row wearing winter clothes, and one of the place in the canteen where you find water and ketchup. The text aside the photo of the classmates is 'They need clothes To Be warm during winter.'

In the next image, number three, there are five photos and one sentence is added to each photo. On the left, there are two photos taken in the schoolyard: one with one of the students' friends in the background and another with a friend in the foreground. On the right, there are another three photos of the schoolyard: one of her friend, one of a swing and one of two classmates using their iPads outdoors. To the photos on the left, the following text is added: 'You can play football. You can go to shop.' (but 'shop' is hard to read because of the spelling). On the right, you find this information: 'u can take a shower' and 'You can play outdoors'. However, the fourth image consists of two photos: one of herself sitting with her iPad (probably taken by a classmate) and one of some bookshelves at school. Beside the first photo, you can read 'You can paint', and beside the next is written 'You can read at library' (but the last word is difficult to read because of the spelling).

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[25] The teacher in this specific class is likely to be inspired by whole language theories (Clay 1991), and (aware of it or not) uses top-down strategies rather than a bottom-up approach, for literacy development.

The next image, number five, consists of four photos taken at school: on the left there are two photos showing where you hang your clothes in the corridor (photo 1) and where you get food in the canteen (photo 2). To these photos, the following text is added: 'You can hang clothes' (incorrect spelling) and 'You can eat'. The student's own recorded voice is added here, saying the same things as are written. On the other hand, there are two photos to the right: one of a sign saying 'Woodwork' and one of the school from the outside. To the first photo Bina has added two sentences: 'You can Jöback' (probably 'jobba' in Swedish – 'work' in English) and 'It is good to work'. The added voice relates to this information, saying 'You can work' and 'It is good to work at school'. Beside the second photo Bina has written 'Here is the school', and this is also what the voice tells us. However, in Image 6there are two photos, both of a classmate. In the first photo, she looks down at an iPad and in the second she has her head raised, sitting in the same place. The text beside the first photo says 'You have to go to school to learn' while the text added to the second one is 'You can learn' (but half of the word learn is omitted here). Also, a voice is added to this image, saying, 'One must work at school'.

Even though Bina uses multiple resources, her text production introduces difficulties in making use of the resources to communicate. Her multimodal repertoire could be said to be limited; even though she uses photos that might be relevant to the recipient, a 'reader' may find it hard to relate them to each other and see the point of combining them. When being interviewed, this student also finds it difficult to comment on her text. Instead she relates to a project about Saturn that they had been working on earlier at school.

Man kan hänga klädr

Man kan äta

Man kan Jöback

Det är bra at jåba

Träslöjd

Här är skolan

Bina's Image 5.

In the context, it should be pointed out that children are supposed to have natural synesthetic capacities (Cope & Kalantzis 2010); they are expected to naturally find it easy to use a variety of modes to express themselves – capacities that school literacy are said to separate, instead of building upon. However, Bina's text production shows that synaesthesia in terms of multimodality is a complex process in terms of meaning making. This student does not seem to find the process easy, when it comes to shifting between modes and efficiently making use of the combination of them. Nevertheless, it is obvious that she is more comfortable with one mode than another, and that the starting-point for meaning making that she foregrounds, still images, could be a way of extending this student's repertoire, by trying to get her to shift from this favoured mode to less comfortable ones. Here, the conception of *multivocal space* could be used to understand what matters to Bina (her friend and the fact that you are supposed to work at school, etc.), and with this as a starting-point develop her story by trying to make sure that the parts constituting it make sense to the reader. Also, Bina's text raises the question of whether it is possible to create a narrative that could be regarded to be a *multivocal space*

without voices connected to each other; the text could be argued to be more characterized by *heteroglossia* than a space with voices related to each other. To find traces of bottom-up or top-down processes in Bina's text is also difficult. However, to strengthen Bina's efforts in taking responsibility for her literacy development, a start might be a talk with her about what matters to her in her narrative.

Ramona

Ramona's text production consists of eight still images where text and photos are equally important. In Image 1, there is a photo of three spaceships (taken from the written assignment). The background is pink and the text is written in light blue, saying three things in different places in the image: 'Here I have a picture of the alien.', 'Alien' and 'Ramona tells.' All through the text production, Ramona pays attention to the layout of her still images; this is used to indicate similarity and difference, and makes it possible for her to step aside and consider the information needed in the communication.

On the left side of Image 2 is a light blue text on a dark pink background (there is no photo). Here she starts by standing back, saying 'Imagine if an alien arrived on earth and knows nothing. What would we do then? We would tell it what to survive it needs water and air water is needed to drink and air is needed to breathe. What else would we say? We would tall (tell) that it needs his or her mum and dad.' Considering the information needed, she puts a photo of a dark pink mug with water in it (taken from above), standing on a white table. Below it she adds a reflection of her own: 'But imagine if the alien does not know what water is. Hm… What would we do then? I know I have taken a photo of a pink glass with water in it.' (three spelling mistakes and problems with word order). Now the text is written in purple.

In Image 3, Ramona alternates between generalization about what the alien needs (food) and her own particular comments on this. To the left there is a photo taken in the canteen showing food to be served. Here the text is black on a red background, saying: 'Here I have some nice food for the alien.' (incorrect spelling of food, but readable), and further down: 'Mm…. What nice food'. On the right, red text is written on a black background, saying: 'What else does the alien need apart fromwater, air and its mum and dad?', and at the bottom of the image: 'Yes it needs food to eat to survive.'

In Image 4, the colours have changed again. On the left, there is no photo but a text in yellow on a blue background, declaring: 'I would tell the alien that when you wake up you go to the loo (tåa, probably toa in Swedish) and wash your teeth. Further down, she comments on this: What else can you tall (tell) the alien?, and even further down she develops her thoughts: You can tall (tell) the alien how to drink milk and how you eat. Again, she shifts between generalization and her own, particular comments, by letting the following information turn up at the bottom of this image: 'Also it is good if you explain ('förklarar' spelled 'feklarar') how you do things, like (typ in Swedish) you tell how you draw a nice flower or a heart.' On the right here, she shows a photo on the top, with a flower and a heart, both hand-drawn on a sheet of paper. Beneath it there is information on what has been presented, as well as her own comments (all in blue text on a yellow background): 'Here I have drawn a flower and a heart.' and (further down) 'Isn't it nice.'

In Image 5, there are no photos on the left, but instead text in purple on a light blue background presenting Ramona's own reflections: 'I will tell a bit more about the alien. The alien needs to go to school to learn maths.' Further down she develops her thoughts: 'It also must learn to write and paint.' At the bottom of this part of the image she adds a photo conveying information on where the alien could develop its abilities: 'Here is my school.)'. To this information a photo is added (on the right side of the image), showing the school entrance with letters saying 'Welcome' and a sign telling people where to find things at school.

In Image 6, Ramona thinks aloud. By using text in turquoise on a grey background, she says 'Hmm….. What else can you write about an alien? I know we can show the alien what to do during the breaks. Hmmm…...' Further down she develops her thoughts by addressing the alien personally: 'I know we can show how you play basketball.' She removes the distance to the alien, for herself and for the reader, by using 'we': 'We can also let the alien have a swing.' In this left part of the image, Ramona also delivers information that is good to know, including her own comments on what she is presenting: 'Here I have two pictures of the basketball court and a swing. Then the alien might understand what basketball is and

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swing' (an omitted a here). To the right there are two photos making the information more precise, showing the place in the schoolyard where you can play basketball, and a photo of the swing.

The next image, number seven, consists of text on the left (purple text on black) with another reflection: 'We can also tell the alien about library, yes then the alien learns how to read.' Beneath it Ramona comments on what she has just said: 'Books are good to learn, aren't they?'. Further down she addresses the alien, as well as any possible reader: 'Have a look here. I have cool pictures of library and books.' As a complement to this, two photos are added (on the right), that inform the reader about where to find books: one of the entrance to the school library, including the sign 'Library', and one of shelves filled with picture books.

In the last image, number 8, the left part is filled with black text on a green background saying 'We can also tell the alien about the alphabet then he will learn letters. That (omitted 't') is a good thing later when the alien is going to write then he knows the letters.' Here Ramona continues presenting her thoughts from Image 7, by connecting to the contents of the books. She also develops her thoughts further, by (again) commenting on her own ideas: 'How cool, he will know very many things.' ('very' with slightly incorrect spelling - 'jete' in Swedish, meaning 'jätte'). Using her imagination, she adds: 'It will also be fun to know what the alien is going to write, wouldn't it?' To make it clear to the reader what it is all about, there are two photos (on the right) of the alphabet on the wall of the classroom, showing different parts of it. To the first photo Ramona has added a recording of sound from the classroom (five seconds of small talk), which could be regarded as a kind of information on what school work is all about. This recording, as an ending, could also be said to conceptualize what Ramona stresses throughout the whole story: that it is important to learn new things if you are an alien arriving on earth, and that this could be done at school.

Ramona's Image 5.

As a multimodal text producer, Ramona is an active *conceptualizer*, who is able to generalize from the particular. When being interviewed, she comments on her working process by saying 'first I thought, and then I started to make my text.' She is also thinking aloud throughout the whole working process. A typical example of this is her comment 'What should we do if the alien does not know…?'. In fact, you could say that Ramona's text production makes it clear what constitutes a new situation when digital

media are being used. Here we find learning that engages the learner as co-constructor of concepts, as a definer and theory-maker, since Ramona reflects on what she stresses as important to know for the recipient of her text production. She draws distinctions by the use of contrasting colours when writing. Also, she accentuates certain themes in her 'text' by her use of colours. Pink, purple and blue colours for instance, are used in Image 1 and 2 when she focuses on the importance of drinking, while in Image 3 - when Ramona deals with a new perspective on what is needed - she uses a new colour theme: black and red. In the rest of her text production she gradually goes back to the blue scale colours, while step by step summing up what is being offered at school if you want to learn new things. By this, her use of colours, she differs from the other students, and even if Ramona is not fully aware of why she creates her text production as she does, this could probably be explained by her ability to stand back and consider the information needed in the communicative situation. In fact, the ability Ramona has to think about her thinking (metacognition) requires weaving together the experiential and the conceptual, and it is this weaving that could be said to constitute her *multivocal space.* Thus, it is the quality of voices that are not only linked to each other but also interact (as in a choir), that makes this text production work as a presentation that could be perceived as complete to an intended recipient.

Since Ramona, while being asked about her working process, stresses that she started thinking before she made her text, her thinking is likely to be closer to a top-down process than a bottom-up process. However, she is not consistent – now and then she leaves the path of main ideas and seems to start from 'the bottom' to explore what her text is all about, by beginning with details to see what she will end up with. Perhaps it is the fact that she is happy to combine her 'written' story with narratives constituting her identity as a schoolgirl that makes it easier for her to create the text production, and not only her linguistic and digital abilities; by her text production she seems to take full responsibility for her own literacy development.

Students' multivocal spaces and development of literacy
To sum up, the concept of *multivocal spaces* could be used to capture how texts are being created and constituted by 'voices' emanating from experiences acquired inside and outside school. The voices dominating the students' texts could be said to constitute narratives not only emanating from the students' experiences socially and historically, but also conceptions about what they would like to become as writers (cf. Bruner 2002). Accordingly, Ramona is likely to be a text producer that connects her story to other successful stories at school, which altogether makes the narrative of her as a successful student even more developed than before, both in her own eyes and in the eyes of others. Also, Edy could be said to try hard to develop a narrative of his own as someone who is struggling hard at school. What kind of narratives of themselves Zaid and Bina are contributing to – and wish to create – is more unclear; Zaid could be regarded as a young student who does not care about norms of how text productions are usually constituted, and the same could be said about Bina. Here the teacher, as a representative of the majority language, has the power to influence the narratives that constitute the students; in fact, the narratives that students like Zaid and Bina develop about themselves at school are dependent on the teacher. Thus, by focusing on *multivocal spaces* as narratives, which in turn are constituted by more or less dominating voices, not only the creation of the texts could be studied but also how the creation of texts is likely to be due to negotiations within and outside the students' minds. As Tierney writes (2018), spaces allowed for in educational systems are politically embedded; some spaces may operate and support meaning making that is seamless, while other spaces may prove inaccessible or present barriers to meaning making and impede peoples' ability to be protagonists. By the text productions presented, viewed as manifestations of literacy being processed, the students' subordination becomes obvious; the students are fully dependent on the views of meaning making surrounding them, which may involve varying degrees of respect for cultural ways of presenting their knowledge as their journey across borders. However, the (political) contexts in which *multivocal spaces* take place (locally), is not the main focus of the study presented here.

As a tool for the analysis, sociosemiotics has been useful (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006); all text productions are constituted by signs expressed by modes, as demonstrated above. However, to convert from one mode to another in a communicatively meaningful way, and make a point of combining

different modes, seems to be difficult. At the same time, the variety of text productions gives some useful information: by the use of modes the students reveal their preferences of modes. Of course, these preferences are context related and change over time. However, in all contexts it must be regarded as useful from a language developing perspective to pay attention to these preferences and from these develop the abilities to communicate that the students need. Respect for cross-cultural meaning making, locally, is then a prerequisite.

As shown above, all students work hard to communicate, and by their text productions it is possible to discern their working processes (top-down, bottom-up, etc.). In this context, the possibility that *agency* offers to the students is crucial, by an assignment encouraging the use of digital resources; *agency* could here be said to be a prerequisite for *conceptualization* and the creation of *multivocal spaces* that allow the students to communicate*.

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The role of the lexicon of school books in school achievement

Valéria Juhász
University of Szeged; juhaszvaleria@jgypk.szte.hu

Abstract

A key constituent of reading comprehension and learning ability is vocabulary. Mapping the children's vocabulary will help consciously planned developing work. In this study research on vocabulary development will be presented, and then the importance of the role of vocabulary in understanding the lexicon of texts will be introduced. The research (Nagy 2004, Nation et al. 1997) shows that knowing the 5-6000 most frequent words is sufficient to understand everyday texts, because they cover almost 95 per cent of texts. The 2008 research of the 'Vocabulary net' department shows that the schoolbook families of various publishing houses contain 40 thousand words from 3rd to 8th grades. According to the 2004 examination by Nagy (2004), children in the 4th grade can recognise 4000 words on average by reading, which rises only to 4500 by the 10th grade. It can be seen from this data that an average child can hardly keep pace with the new terminologies/lexicon of the schoolbooks. Finally, a series of books will be presented whose lexicon is in line with the children's hypothetical vocabulary, and its aim is to teach the repetitive words of the texts by using the sight word technique (but not as the method for teaching reading but as a level of reading ability, see Juhász 2019).

Keywords: vocabulary, lexicon of school books, reading comprehension, learning abilities

The concepts of reading

The concept of reading has changed a lot due to the research in this field (Steklács 2013). An early concept of reading grabs the aspect of knowing letters. Then, reading out meaningfully meant knowing reading. Kingston (1967) brought the communication aspect into its concept. Then, the comprehension of reading was added to the concept. Snow (2002) determines reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. A decade later, in PISA assessment (2015) reading was defined in a broader concept of literacy: "Reading literacy is understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential, and participate in society" (PISA 2015: 49).

Predicting facts and abilities about the success of learning to read

Acquiring literacy skills needs several well working skills and cognitive processes such as speech perception and comprehension, verbal and visuospatial working memory, working intermodal relationships, executive functions, part-whole relationships, visual and verbal seriality, visual and verbal long-term memory, concentration, spatial orientation, rhythm perception and shape constancy. In addition, knowing the names of the letters and letter knowledge in kindergarten predict later reading success. Other factors such as the size of the vocabulary, language awareness and the automatic level of the recognition of grapheme-phoneme correspondences influence reading acquisition (Blomert & Csépe 2012).

A competent reader

After learning to decode reading, one must develop oneself to be a competent reader to make oneself a competent learner. But who can be referred to as a competent reader? Based on Steklács's (2013) research we can summarize it as the followings: a competent reader is someone
- who has a positive attitude to reading, who loves reading and getting information or experience from books;
- who uses what he/she has already known for what he/she is reading;
- who makes conclusions from what has been read;
- who has effective reading strategies to enhance his/her own comprehension;
- who admits what he/she understands and what they don't;
- who creates mental representations about what has been understood during and after reading;

- who asks questions in connection with the read ideas;
- who makes comparisons between the meaning of what is being read and the critical meaning of it;
- who has a rich vocabulary and good speaking skills;
- who makes connections between previous, relevant knowledge and what is being read;
- who has an effective word recognition;
- who summarizes what has been understood;
- who reads fluently enough to be able to concentrate on meaning;
- who chooses a thinking process or procedure.

From the list above it can be easily understood why all of them are crucial in meaningful reading. However, in this paper the focus is kept only on vocabulary and word recognition in schoolbooks.

Assembling the lexicon of a language or assessing the vocabulary of a person is desirable from different points of views, but as for the results they might only be approximate. On the one hand, it will be determined by the continuous changing of the number of the words, and on the other hand, by the possibilities offered by the methods and the equipment (Gósy 1999). For the teachers – from the point of view of their efficiency – it is essential to map the size of their students' vocabulary, because it is a very important factor in predicting reading comprehension (Baker et al. 1998, Stahl & Fairbanks 1986), and in learning ability and academic performance, too. Vocabulary in itself does not guarantee understanding a text; however, its lack guarantees failure in understanding (Biemiller 2005: 223). If we know the words that are typical with a normally developing child at a certain age, we can carry out a scientifically planned and so a more effective development with those children who have a poorer vocabulary (Neuberger 2017). Knowing only the size of the children's vocabulary is not enough to start their development, because if we are to support their academic performance, we need to monitor their vocabulary on a regular basis; that is what we need to compare with the words used in the schoolbooks, and the difference between the two will steer our developing work.

Defining the estimated size of the vocabulary

With every vocabulary assessment it has to be decided what is considered one word. All the possible forms of a word are included in the corpus (or they are considered a word family), and perhaps some inflected forms, too. Do the compound words whose meaning can be transparently deducted from the meaning of the constituting words belong to the corpus, or only those ones whose joint meaning is more than the summarised meaning of the individual words of the compound word? Making the distinction here is a problem in itself. Do function words (the, a, an, and, that, etc.) belong to the lexicon, or content words have to be counted only? What kind of differences does it cause to make a distinction here? How to decide on the phrasal verbs or the proper nouns? The research reports do not often contain these corpus arrangement details.

The vocabulary estimations of individuals published in the international and national literature are usually based on data from written materials (sometimes spoken language corpuses are included) (Crystal et al. 1998: 115). Such are e.g. writers' dictionaries: Petőfi, a famous Hungarian poet's dictionary contains 22,719 words, his comrade's, János Arany's (who translated e.g. Shakespeare into Hungarian) is estimated to have five times as many words in his vocabulary, and the Mikes dictionary based on the letters written in exile in the Ottoman Empire contains a million and a half words (Balázs 2017). Assembling dictionaries by the frequency of words is based on texts from different genres, vocabulary estimations are done according to them (Crystal et al. 1998).

Vocabulary development of individuals

In the table below there is some data connected to the growth of vocabulary and its estimated size.

Table 1: The size of the estimated vocabulary by age.

author	age	estimated size of vocabulary
Crystal (1998), Gósy (1999)	3	1,000–1,200 The least 150, the most 2,500 (Gósy 1999: 189)
Crystal (1998)	4	1,500

Crystal (1998)	5	2,000
Crystal (1998) Büky (1984) Gósy–Kovács (2001)	6	2,500 2-3,000 active Also contains data about an estimation of 8-24,000
Crystal (1998)	7	3,000
Meixner (1971)	8	260-1,468 active vocabulary
Crystal (1998)	9	4,000
Crystal (1998) Pléh (2006)	11 above 10	5,000 30-40,000 the widely read
Nádasdy (2007)	adults	3-5,000 (an average blue collar worker) 8-10,000 (smaller vocabulary together with the passive one) 50-60,000 (whole vocabulary of a literate man)
Lukács (2014)	adults	50-100,000
Gleason-Ratner (1998)	adults	75–150,000 (cited by: Gósy-Kovács 2001)

The table above shows clearly that between the estimated active and passive vocabulary the difference might be a few tens of thousands of words. The daily vocabulary building is between 3-15 words (Gósy-Kovács 2001), between the ages 1-15 the daily vocabulary building is 2-3 words (Pléh 2006), and Macher (2009) writes about 9 words a day until the age of 6.

The number of words recognised by reading by the age

Nagy (2004) assessed how many words the lower graders recognise by reading. It was compared with the results of the 10th graders.

Table 2: The number of words recognised by reading (Nagy 2004).

Time	Number of words recognised by reading
At the beginning of grade 2	3,600
At the beginning of grade 4	more than 4,000
Grade 10	4,200-4,500

These 4,000 words refer to the fact that at the beginning of the 4th grade taking the national average the students have a vocabulary of 95 per cent of the everyday text words. After the 4th grade until the beginning of the 10th grade the growth of the critical vocabulary is only 350 words according to Nagy's (2004) assessment.

The number of the words recognised by reading is mainly determined by the number and the degree of use of the words in the student's mental lexicon. If we compare the data by age in table 1 with the number of words recognised by reading on average, we can hypothesize that the 'truth' is somewhere between the data of Crystal (1998) and of Pléh (2006) (with a rather large deviation, individual differences, plus adding the difference between the active and the passive vocabulary) concerning the average vocabulary of the 10-11 year olds.

The relationship of vocabulary and comprehension

According to Crystal (1998: 115) if we examine an arbitrary text, the 100 most frequent words make up 60 per cent of the text, the 1000 most frequent words make up 85 per cent of the text, and the 4000 most frequent words make up 97.5 per cent of the text. Nation et al. (1997) refer to the research by Francis and Kucera (1982) who based on the frequency of the words in the Cobuild dictionary observed that the 1000 most frequent words make up 72 per cent of texts, the 2000 most frequent words make up 78 per cent, the 3000 most frequent words make up 84 per cent, the 4000 most frequent words make up 87 per cent, the 6000 most frequent words make up 90 per cent, and approx. the 16000 most frequent words make up 96 per cent of the everyday spoken texts (Schonell 1956). According to Laufer's (1989) research one has to know 95 per cent of the words of the text to understand it well. According to

Hirsch's (1992) examination knowing the 3000 most frequent word families (roughly 5000 words) covers 95 per cent of the texts, which is sufficient to understand the text by reading (Laufer 1989, Nagy 2004).

Varga Kornél's (NYI) report on the results of the 'Vocabulary net' Department of the Hungarian Pedagogical Association changes the viewpoint of the lexicon of schoolbooks. The entire vocabulary of 99 primary schoolbooks in the Hungarian language was examined. The books were on the 2008 available schoolbook list, selected from three publishers in the main school subjects from grades 3-8. In these books 65,000 (!) basic words were identified (only verbs, nouns – except for proper nouns – and adjectives totaling 60,000 words), i.e. uninflected words. Doing the examination of the whole book series by publishers 40,000 words on average were identified.

In the graph below the number of new words is shown the children are exposed to in a school year based on the schoolbooks (blue column).

Figure 1: The number of words in a given year in the schoolbooks (Varga NYI).

Students meet 8-20000 words in one year in their school books. Blue columns mean new words in a given year
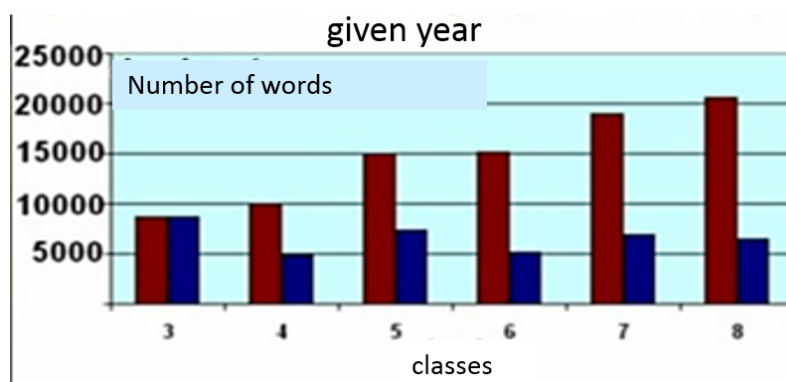
The graph shows that 5th graders come across 15,000 words in their books, out of which approx. 8,000 words are new. The students meet several thousands of new words every year while they do not come across many thousands of words they learnt in the previous years.

If we compare Varga's data with the critical vocabulary described by Nagy (2004), it can be seen that the 5,000-word critical vocabulary is rather little so that the children can understand the schoolbook texts. If we take the 40,000-word vocabulary as average, the 5,000-word critical vocabulary is only 12.5 per cent. Though little is known about how much the children's vocabulary overlaps the vocabulary of the schoolbooks, nor do we know how many of the students have an insufficient vocabulary to understand the schoolbook texts. According to the data shown in Table 1, the children's vocabulary is presumably way too below the threshold to understand the texts used in the schools (except for Pléh 2006).

Pilot research

One part of a teacher further training programme was focused on making the teachers sensitive to the schoolbook lexicon. Twenty-seven teachers took part in the training, representing different subjects; inter alia history, maths, music, Hungarian, P.E., etc. The teachers received an only two-page lesson from a 5th grader history book illustrated with pictures. Their task was to underline the words they think should be explained in the history lesson to make the children understand the text. The children were not classified into groups of gifted learners, regular learners or learners with special needs. The least number of words underlined by a teacher was nine; the most was twenty-four. These results surprised the teachers themselves, they started commenting on them, began explaining each other (without request) why they thought they were right to underline those words. Nevertheless, some consequences can be drawn from this pilot research:

- One is that in a 45-minute lesson nine unknown words are too many as children have about 6 lessons a day in the 5th grade. If they hear only half of this amount of unknown words, it means 24-30 words on a daily basis, and many of these words might not repeat at all. A week would mean 5 times more, i.e. 120-150 new words.
- The other one, the 24 unknown words mean an extreme, and that there are colleagues that are more sensitive to the children's diversity. This number of words can only be processed by children with very good abilities, and according to teachers' experience, only with the teacher's assistance.

Vocabulary building

The metaresearch by Hattie (2008) observes that out of the reading development programmes vocabulary building is the one which defines the most strongly the development of reading comprehension, before repeated reading programmes, development of visual perception, direct reading comprehension development, and letter-phoneme automation development.

It is indispensable to repeat the new words many times in different contexts to make it become part of the mental lexicon. This research makes it clear, too, that the lexicon of our schoolbooks is at least questionable.
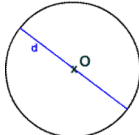
The content of the mental lexicon influences the word form recognition system, i.e. a sensible word can be recognised faster than a series of letters/words that does not make sense. It is easily understandable why it has an extreme importance how big the size of children's vocabulary is when they get down to learning to read.

Vocabulary building starts with defining what words and expressions are worth teaching the children from a given text. Selecting the lexicon cannot be done by chance. Vocabulary building must be a decision-making process which takes the following into consideration:
- How much the word in question is a representative member of the word family the student has to learn;
- How much the word can be transported, i.e. how much the student will have to use it in speaking and writing.

Before selecting the word teaching method, it has to be tracked down how often the word appears in the text, i.e. if its meaning can be deducted from the context, and if the structure of the word helps to reveal the meaning (Fisher 2016: 51). As long as the meaning cannot be deducted from the text, another word teaching method has to be chosen, e.g. mnemonics, word cards, synonyms, antonyms, descriptions, dramatization, i.e. gesturing the word or the Frayer method.

Figure 2: An example for the word card from Frayer method (Fisher 2016).

word, abstract noun: diameter	writing a definition based on experience/previous learning: A straight line passing from side to side through the centre of a body or figure, especially a circle or sphere.
picture:	Antonym or a non-example: A straight line that touches a curve or curved surface at a point, but if extended does not cross it at that point.

The metacognitive strategy (according to the effect size of Cohen's d, d=0.53 Hattie 2008) is very effective in the long run as this strategy provides a technique for learning the meaning of a word. The teacher demonstrates how to think about the meaning of the word, how to try to understand the word from previous experience, from the structure of the word, or from the context.

Word categorisation works, too, when the words are put into groups based on their orthography/spelling: e.g. hardship, friendship may be in the same category as their stems end in –d, and the suffix is the same. But words can be grouped by other categories, e.g. teaching new words in word families also makes sense. When teaching a word, the characteristics of the word must be

examined and the possibility if the word will turn up later, perhaps in another form. Only those words should be taught directly or from a dictionary which cannot be taught by induction.

The relationship between vocabulary and reading motivation

One of the aims of teaching reading is to expose the children to the biggest number of words possible through reading. Vocabulary gained from everyday experience, i.e. not from reading experience, is relatively week (compared to the vocabulary available from reading), and it does not provide a properly flexible framework for accepting new knowledge, adaptability to strange situations, and proper base in quality and quantity to develop problem-solving thinking.

To make this knowledge accessible, and to develop the need for a lifelong, effective and purposeful studying, it is indispensable that the children have reading motivation and that it be maintained in the long run.

A cardinal question in creating reading motivation is to give the children texts in which most words are known for them. Without this their reading will become erratic, comprehension will be slow, hard and tiring. As a result, the further reading willingness will be demotivated. In other words, it is not only necessary to give the children interesting books or texts that this way or another can be related to their interests to create reading motivation, but it is necessary to adjust the texts not to their age but to their reading age, in which the frequency ratio of the words meet the above mentioned criteria. Reading age refers to a child's reading ability after a given number of years learning to read; i.e. a child with typical reading development after three years of learning to read will be able to read on the third graders' level. An atypical child might be on the same level but in the 5th grade. In this situation this child should not be made to read textbooks for the 5th graders, but the ones that match the 3rd graders. This is why it would be very important to offer schoolbooks, compulsory reads to children on a wide scale where they could be adjusted to the reading age.

Guthrie's and Wigfield's (2000) research says a lot about the size of the vocabulary. They observed that the children who had more choices what to read, read more and more willingly, so it was obvious that their vocabulary was larger, which meant their academic performance was better, too (Anderson et al. 1988, Fisher et al. 2016). These kinds of research results motivate teachers to take books into the classrooms that are adjusted to the age and the reading age, and so make reading available for even more students. Interestingly enough Rowe (1985) (based on his own research) claims that reading comprehension developing programmes have a bigger direct effect on vocabulary development (d=1.77) than on the reading comprehension results (d=0.70), which later can of course be reconverted.

Books which help to develop sight word reading

To reach the sight word recognition reading technique, children should read a lot of books according to their reading age. The reading age means the children are offered books to read which give them sense of achievement but there are also some challenges in them. There are some series of short books which offer stories to read on various reading levels beginning with picture books and the 2ndlevel offers some short sentences with big pictures. The words in this series of books are repeated many times to reach sight word level soon, and at the beginning the format of the words does not change much. In Hungary one of the series I could offer for example is Aranyfa series. (Examples can be found for this: https://en.calameo.com/read/003374024b2fbca20ed92).These kinds of series can be found in other languages as well, e.g. https://czytamsobie.pl/.

Closing remarks

This paper sheds light on the fact that the 5-thousand-word vocabulary which is sufficient to understand average texts is rather insufficient for the children to understand the words in the schoolbooks. From grades 3 to 8 the 40,000 words in the schoolbooks and the too many unknown words in the teaching units make it practically impossible for an average child to have a sense of achievement in school. However, because it is our aim to educate and make our children be used to lifelong learning, creating a positive attitude towards learning is indispensable. Considering the given conditions, for the majority of students it can hardly be implemented. In order to maintain learning motivation in the long

run, besides many other factors the vocabulary of the schoolbooks has to be rethought and rediscussed by the policy makers and textbook authors.

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Linguistic transfer in English as a foreign language in a single free writing task in Polish students with and without dyslexia

Marta Łockiewicz*, Martyna Jaskulska**
*University of Gdańsk; marta.lockiewicz@ug.edu.pl
**Derdowski High School in Kartuzy; mal.jaskulska@gmail.com

Abstract
The aim of our study was to examine the spelling, grammar, syntax, and lexicon skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in a free writing task of Polish students with and without dyslexia. We wanted to identify the potential linguistic transfer difficulties. We assumed that these difficulties would result from the deficient phonological skills, which is characteristic of dyslexia, and from language interference. 72 students with and 78 without dyslexia wrote a short text in English. We found that Polish secondary and junior secondary school students with dyslexia, as compared to the participants without dyslexia, made more spelling errors in the EFL free writing task. They, however, wrote equally long texts that did not differ in terms of grammar (including missing words), syntactic, and lexical errors. We found that 16-year-old native speakers of a semi-transparent Polish, having studied an opaque English for, on average, 8 years, were able to produce coherent compositions. However, they included errors that resulted from a negative linguistic transfer between Native Language and FL.

Keywords: English as FL, free writing, spelling, grammar, dyslexia, Polish

Introduction

Behavioural symptoms characteristic of dyslexia, a specific learning disability, include difficulties in word recognition and decoding (which is not fluent and/or accurate) and in spelling (Lyon Reid, Shaywitz and Shaywitz 2003: 1-14). A secondary disturbance, poor reading comprehension, may lead to limited general knowledge and vocabulary. These difficulties, studied extensively in NL (Native Language), result from cognitive deficits, which include impaired: phonological awareness, verbal working memory, rapid automatized naming (RAN), access to mental lexicon, and pace of information processing (Crombie 2000: 112-123, Krasowicz-Kupis 2008: 151-153). Literacy problems are also expected in FL (Foreign Language), as phonological skills in NL influence FL reading and spelling proficiency (*linguistic transfer*) (Geva & Verhoeven 2000: 261-266). Literacy learning in both NL and FL likely depends on comparable language learning mechanisms, as the same cognitive skills: phoneme awareness, letter-sound knowledge, and RAN in emergent readers predict reading development in alphabetic orthographies of a diverse level of transparency: English, Spanish, and Czech (Caravolas, Lervåg, Defior, Málková & Hulme 2013: 1398-1407). Cummins (1979) proposed in the linguistic interdependence theory that the competence already achieved in NL influences the subsequent development of FL competence. Thus, learners exhibit comparable semantic, syntactic or phonological aptitudes and/or difficulties in all languages they study, as the Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis (LCDH) states (Sparks, Patton, Ganschow & Humbach 2009: 203-243, Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, Humbach & Javorsky 2006: 129-160). NL skills differences between more and less successful learners appear early in elementary school and are related to FL proficiency and achievement in high school, which provides evidence for a long-term cross-linguistic transfer (Sparks, Patton, Ganschow & Humbach 2009: 203-243). A cross-linguistic skill transfer was confirmed between, among others: Chinese and English (Chung & Ho 2010: 195-211), Hungarian and Romanian (Gál & Orbán 2013: 173-193), Italian and English (Palladino, Bellagamba, Ferrari & Cornoldi 2013: 165-177), Urdu and English (Farukh & Vulchanova 2016: 221-233), Polish and English (authors 2016, Nijakowska 2010), and Dutch and English (van Sette et al. 2017).

Language interference also constitutes a problem for the speed and accuracy of FL learning and is discussed in terms of a negative linguistic transfer (Odlin 1989, Zybert 1999), and a positive one (Zybert 1999). Such a situation occurs when learners apply their NL rules to FL production, which may lead to transfer errors, especially if the languages are dissimilar (Zybert 1999). In fact, when learning a foreign language, a common linguistic system is created, as L1 and L2 interact with one another to facilitate comprehension and production (Wodniecka, Mieszkowska, Durlik & Haman 2018: 92-131). Arabski (1968: 71-89) states that in the case of English-Polish pair of languages, the linguistic interference

includes: external active (negative transfer: using NL structures and habits), external passive (confusing categories non-existent or differently constructed in NL), and internal (analogy: incorrect use of FL rules) interference. In this study we wanted to investigate linguistic transfer in the spelling, grammar, syntax, and lexicon skills in the free writing task between Polish as NL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Poland is a monolingual country, in which 94.8% of the population claim to be of exclusively Polish nationality, and only 1.55% indicate national or ethnic identity other than Polish (Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2015: 29). English instruction formally begins in the Reception Year (entered usually at 6 yrs.), though kindergartens also offer English courses. 98% of students study it in secondary school, and the majority of them choose it as one of the obligatory subjects to be tested at the 'matura' exam, an obligatory external exam after secondary school graduation (www.cke.edu.pl). Exposure to English of Polish learners is then limited to school and media (e.g. the Internet, and/or television). This is not an immersion context, as students are taught English only during EFL class, and they are instructed in Polish when they attend all other classes. Moreover, EFL learners in Poland have limited opportunities to communicate in English in everyday life, as they usually have no contact with native speakers outside of school.

Differences between an analytical opaque English, and a synthetic inflectional semi-transparent Polish include, respectively: more fixed (order of words indicates a word syntactic function) vs. flexible (suffixes and inflections: declension and conjugation indicate a word syntactic function) SVO pattern, no double negation vs. multiple negation, articles vs. no articles, inversion vs. no inversion in questions (cf. Dansk & Kurcz 1984: 245-269, Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams 2011, Milewski 2006). English phonology is transcribed with the International Phonetic Alphabet, whereas Polish also with the Slavonic Phonetic Alphabet (Ryndak 2014: 83-89). Both languages include phonemes not present in the other repertoire. Therefore, Polish learners of English encounter difficulties stemming from phonetic/phonological, orthographic, grammatical, syntactical, lexical differences between NL and FL. Moreover, in less consistent languages, to which English belongs, it takes longer to learn to read (Caravolas et al. 2013: 1398-1407) and write (Caravolas and Volín 2001: 229-245), as compared with more consistent languages, to which Polish belongs.

The aim of our study was to examine the spelling, grammar, syntax, and lexicon skills in learning EFL in the free writing task of Polish students with and without dyslexia. We wanted to identify the potential linguistic transfer difficulties in the students' writings. We assumed that these difficulties would be connected to the deficient phonological skills, which is characteristic of dyslexia (the better the phonological skills in NL, the better the phonological skills in FL), and language interference (overgeneralization of NL spelling, grammar, syntax, and vocabulary rules and their usage in FL production). We expected a negative transfer in both cases, as dyslexia stems from a phonological deficit, and semi-transparent synthetic Polish and opaque analytical English differ substantially. This research is a part of a larger project that aims to investigate the problems of Polish children with and without dyslexia in learning NL and FL. We assumed that Polish students with dyslexia, as compared with Polish students without dyslexia, would make more spelling errors in the free writing task. Poor spelling in English as FL has been reported in Norwegian (Helland & Kaasa 2005: 41-60) and Swedish and Finnish (Lindgren & Laine 2011: 753-766) learners with dyslexia. An earlier study (author 2016) demonstrated poorer spelling in dyslexia of single, unrelated English words dictated to native speakers of Polish. These words were selected specifically to include phonological structures challenging for learners with specific difficulties in reading and writing. In the free writing task used in the present study, the students themselves chose vocabulary and phrases to use. Moreover, in such a task we could examine not only spelling, but also grammar, lexical, syntactic errors, and the length of the text, which allowed us to more fully describe the EFL writing in dyslexia. We found no other study that would compare these features of a written text in FL of Polish students with dyslexia learning EFL. Difficulties in FL learning are only mentioned as, for example, reported by teachers or parents (Bogdanowicz 2011). In an earlier study by Jurek (2004: 98-116) Polish adolescents with dyslexia, as compared with their peers without dyslexia, self-reported bigger difficulties in spelling, but also grammar and the ability to create a text in foreign languages that they studied, mostly English (90%) and German (30%) - both orthographies

having a different degree of transparency. We wanted to investigate these self-assessments through the examination of the actual spelling, grammar, syntactic, and lexicon skills of EFL in Polish learners.

Materials and methods
Methods
The following methods were used in the research:

Questionnaire - completed by the parents and students, informing about: demographic data, English education and exposure, dyslexia report.

Test Matrices. *Standard version* by Raven (1991), a Polish adaptation, assessing nonverbal intelligence. This task was used to match the criterion and the control group for the intelligence level.

Polish single words reading task by Krasowicz-Kupis (Jaworowska, Matczak & Stańczak 2010), measuring the accuracy and fluency of decoding 89 unrelated words. This task, standardised and normalised for Polish speakers, was used to confirm reading deficits in NL in the criterion group.

The free writing task – measuring spelling (i.e. the number of spelling errors) and writing (i.e. the number of grammar, syntactic, and lexical errors) accuracy in FL (English). The students were given an A-4 sized blank piece of paper, with the beginning of the expected composition printed at the top of the page: *For the next holiday, I would like to go to...* The participants were then instructed to finish the sentence, and then further elaborate on the topic, within the time limit of 5 minutes. We used a simple topic that required no specific knowledge and was pleasant to write about, as the task was performed in FL. Since we were interested in the words and sentences accuracy, not in the content and ideas, there was no time given for preparation (e.g. planning, note-taking). The participants performed the task without stopping, and no time was provided for revision, editing, and self-correction after writing. However, the participants could have corrected themselves when writing. The compositions were hand-written.

We assessed the following categories of errors: spelling (orthographic or phonological mistakes), grammar (a breach of grammatical rules), syntactic (applying typically Polish rules of syntax, e.g. implied subject; not following SVO pattern), lexical (wrong collocations; false friends). Moreover, within the grammar category, we differentiated a subcategory of missing words, the omission of which resulted in faulty grammar. The length of the text was measured with the number of words, not sentences, as an earlier study demonstrated that Polish students with dyslexia failed to use punctuation correctly in NL when writing an essay (Makarewicz 2007: 109-125). Polish single word reading task was administered individually; the participants completed all the other tasks during a group session.

Participants[26]
72 (48%) secondary and junior secondary school students with and 78 (52%) without dyslexia, all native speakers of Polish, participated in the research. Dyslexia was confirmed by a legally valid, independent psychological report following the ICD-10 (2000: 201-207), and including: IQ over 85, achievement test scores for reading and spelling below the -1 SD cut-off (decoding, text reading, reading comprehension, writing), processing deficit symptoms including phonological skills, assessed with standardized testing measures. Moreover, dyslexia group read single actual Polish words less accurately (*Mdn*= 81 for the criterion group, *Mdn*= 87 for the control group, U = 1055, Z = 6.61, $p \leq .001$, r = 0.54) and more slowly than the control group (*Mdn*= 82 for the criterion group, *Mdn*= 60 for the control group, U = 1173, Z = 6.15, $p \leq .001$, r = 0.50). The groups were matched for: gender ($\chi^2(1)$ = 2.26, p = .136), age (M_{age} = 16.23 yrs., SD_{age} = 19.02 months, $t(147)$ = 0.125, p = .900), IQ ($t(148)$ = 0.54, p = .588), English instruction (M = 8 yrs., SD = 1.95 yrs., $t(133.58)$ = 0.26, p = .799). The results of 2 students were excluded, as they had spent more than 6 months living in a foreign country, and of 6 due to the IQ level below average. All the students and their parents expressed informed consent for the children to participate in the study.

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[26] The present study combines evidence from the two databases (for high and junior high school students) used in authors (2018, 2016, 2015), and authors (submitted).

Results
Quantitative analysis
The Mann-Whitney test for independent samples (Table 1) showed that participants with dyslexia, as compared to the participants without dyslexia, made more spelling errors in the free writing task (Mdn = 3.00 for the criterion group, Mdn = 2.00 for the control group, U = 1786.00, Z = 3.78, p ≤.001, r = 0.31), but an equal number of the following errors: grammar (Mdn = 5.00 for both the criterion and the control group, U = 2651.50, Z = 0.45, p = .654, r = 0.04), including missing words (Mdn = 2.00 for both the criterion and the control group, U = 2540.50, Z = 0.883, p = .377, r = 0.07), syntactic (Mdn = 0.00 for both the criterion and the control group, U = 2440.00, Z = 1.68, p = .093, r = 0.14), and lexical (Mdn = 0.00 for both the criterion and the control group, U = 2765.5, Z = 0.19, p = .985, r = 0.02). In total, students with dyslexia spelt 92% of words in their texts correctly, while their normally reading peers: 96%. The texts did not differ in length, as measured with the number of words written (Mdn = 48 for the criterion group, Mdn = 53.5 for the control group, U = 2259, Z = 1.68, p = .094, r = 0.14).

Table 1: Descriptive characteristic of the compared groups: spelling, grammar, syntax, and lexicon skills in English as Foreign Language of Polish students – the free writing task.

	dyslexic	non-dyslexic	
	Mdn	*Mdn*	
number of words	48.00	53.50	*U* = 2259.00, *Z* = 1.68, *p* = .094, *r* = 0.14
spelling errors	3.00	2.00	*U* = 1786.00, *Z* = 3.78, *p* ≤.001, *r* = 0.31
grammar errors	5.00	5.00	*U* = 2651.50, *Z* = 0.45, *p* = .654, *r* = 0.04
missing words*	2.00	2.00	*U* = 2540.50, *Z* = .883, *p* = .377, *r* = 0.07
syntactic errors	0.00	0.00	*U* = 2440.00, *Z* = 1.68, *p* = .093, *r* = 0.14
lexical errors	0.00	0.00	*U* = 2765.50, *Z* = 0.19, *p* = .985, *r* = 0.0

Note: median figures given.
*Missing words are a subcategory included in the category of grammar mistakes

Qualitative analysis
Below, we present examples of errors from the students' works:
(1) spelling: deletion (*galery* – a silent consonant), substitution and addition (*buetifull*), segmentation (*withmore*), shifting (*symphatetic*);
(2) grammar: incorrect tense (*I always dream about it* – the context made it clear that a Present Perfect construction should have been used), incorrect gerund/infinitive (*I like to skateboarding*), incorrect inflectional ending (*I want to finished),* preposition (*on*or *at summer,*different then the European countries*), article (*the Los Angeles*), suffix and/or prefix (*Warsaw is interestal/interested*), copying Polish rules of concord*(*these holiday* – in Polish 'holiday' is always plural), keeping inversion when it should be dropped (*There are many cities, where is a beach*),missing words, such as: articles (*from north of Europe*, *I'd like to go to UK*), subjects (*In London are some modern skateparks*, *In Budapest is very hot*), verbs (*I going to ride a bike*, *now when crisis raging*);
(3) syntactic: *I'd like to travel to Washington where lives the president*, *I always was going to the beaches*;
(4) lexical: word formation errors (*monasters*), incorrect combinations of words in collocations (*do photos*), faulty word translation, the so-called false friends (*shopping gallery- galleria handlowa*, meaning *a shopping mall* in Polish); homophones confusions (*travel by plain, * grate country*).

Discussion
The participants with dyslexia, as compared to the participants without dyslexia, made more spelling errors in the FL free writing task. This result is consistent with earlier reports of spelling difficulties of FL learners with dyslexia (Helland & Kaasa 2005: 41-60, author 2016), which occur even in the free writing task (Lindgren & Laine 2011: 753-766), when students can themselves select the vocabulary they want to use. Moreover, this finding supports the phonological deficit hypothesis of dyslexia (Hoien, Lundberg,

Stanovich & Bjaalid 1995: 171-188, Snowling 2000), which assumes that dyslexia is mainly caused by phonological awareness and working memory disturbances. The fact that difficulties with phoneme-to-grapheme conversion appear in FL with a different degree of transparency from NL further evidences the linguistic transfer of phonological skills (Geva & Verhoeven 2000: 261-266), and the common conditioning of NL and L2 language learning (Caravolas et al. 2013: 1398-1407). According to the Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis (Sparks et al. 2009: 203-243, Sparks et al. 2006: 129-160), even though students may exhibit semantic, syntactic, or phonological difficulties in more than one language (Ganschow and Sparks 2000: 87-100), deficits in the phonological code prove to yield the biggest difficulties in foreign language learning, and influence such affective factors as motivation, attitude or anxiety (Bjaalid, Hoien & Lundberg, 1997: 73-82, Sparks & Ganschow 1993: 58-74).

We found that our participants with dyslexia, as compared with the controls, wrote equally long texts that did not differ in terms of grammar, including missing words, syntactic, and lexical errors. It seems that their FL difficulties stem from limited phonological knowledge and they express it in faulty spelling. These findings are in contradiction to Jurek's report (2004: 98-116), as her informants with dyslexia, in a self-report questionnaire, declared that they believed that their own grammar and text writing skills in FL were poorer, as compared to those of their peers without dyslexia. We assume that Polish students with dyslexia might believe that their problems in FL learning extend to all literacy aspects, which our study does not support. Such lack of skills assumptions may be detrimental for study motivation. Making errors, which is inevitable, may upset the learners and lower their self-confidence, and if persistent, even cause lack of motivation (Ellis 1985). Kormos, Kiddle and Csizér (2011: 495-516) claim that learner-internal factors: attitudes and self-related beliefs, which are under the influence of external factors: social, cultural, and instructional setting, affect persistence and effort in second language acquisition. Consequently, students might give up studying English and lose interest in the subject. Moreover, we believe that an attitude of general lack of foreign language skills' aptitudes might be reinforced by teachers, as Polish literature reports NL problems in: compound sentences compositions, proper using of adverbs and adjectives, poor grammar with regard to concord and government, morphology and syntax awareness, and shorter essays, as characteristic, though secondary, in dyslexia (Krasowicz-Kupis 2006: 53-69, 2008: 299-314). Since literature has shown a connection between NL and FL skills (Cummins 1979, Sparks et al. 2009: 203-243, Sparks et al. 2006: 129-160), being aware of Polish students' with dyslexia NL literacy problems, the teachers might expect that they would experience also analogical problems in FL literacy, especially that publications directed at parents and teachers explicitly mention such difficulties (Bogdanowicz 2011). Therefore, we believe that our findings carry important implications for the teachers of English as a second language in Poland. The teachers should concentrate on adjusting their instruction to the specific needs of dyslexic students' problems in spelling acquisition. At the same time teachers should reinforce students' self-efficacy and self-confidence as to their FL skills at grammar, syntax, and active lexicon. Textbooks and courses designed for the teachers of English as a second language working with students with dyslexia were developed within DysTEFL and DysTEFL2 projects (Nijakowska 2016: 32-38).

Qualitative analysis of the short texts written by the students in our study shows that after on average 8 years of studying English as FL, they were able to construct a text of, on average, 50 words within 5 minutes, out of which 96% (in the control group) and 92% (in the dyslexia group) were correct. Thus, they fulfil the curriculum requirement of producing short, comprehensible written texts (Ellis & Niesobska 2015). The spelling errors: deletions, substitutions, additions, incorrect segmentation, or letter shifting are characteristic of dyslexia (Mather & Wendling 2012: 147-177). Many of the spelling, grammar, syntactic, and lexical mistakes in the works of the students in our study result from a negative linguistic transfer due to language interference (Benson 2002: 68-70, Odlin 1989, Zybert 1999). In spelling, students deleted silent letters and double consonants when only one was pronounced. The most common grammar errors comprised missing words, including: the definite and indefinite articles, subjects, and verbs. In Polish, no articles accompany nouns and personal pronouns are frequently dropped due to the fact that inflection of the verb denotes both the action itself and the action's doer (in such a situation we talk about 'the implied subject'). Tenses which are especially difficult for Polish students are the ones that do not appear in Polish, for example the progressive form (in Polish usually

rendered by adverbial phrases), or the perfect tenses. Moreover, the English Present Perfect and Simple Past sentences may both translate to Polish identically. Other grammar errors stemmed from copying NL rules of concord and nouns countability. Moreover, the participants used typically Polish constructions of a sentence, translating Polish sentences word-for-word into English. SVO order rules in Polish are rather flexible and it is not necessary to follow the exact SVO pattern to form correct sentences. This leads to problems when students apply NL rules when writing in FL, which results in, for example, forming questions with no inversion or keeping inversion when it should be dropped, e.g. in case of indirect questions. On the lexical level, students sometimes used calques of Polish words, assuming that if they look similar, they probably mean the same. The participants also used incorrect articles and phrasal verbs. This can be explained by the fact that the two groups of lexical items do not exist in Polish. In addition, the aforementioned errors could be classified as external active (e.g. missing subjects and verbs, copying rules of concord, nouns countability, using Polish word order in a sentence, vocabulary calques) and external passive (e.g. silent letters or double consonants deletion, missing articles, improper Present Perfect usage, no inversion, incorrect use of articles and phrasal verbs) errors according to Arabski's (1968: 71-89) classification. Thus, certain consistency in a pattern of errors can be noticed (Arabski 1968: 71-89). Kubiak (2003: 39-49) claims that in the second language acquisition the occurrence of an interlanguage, characterised by strong interference, is inevitable, and every effort must be taken not to consolidate it. In our study, examples of errors based on the negative linguistic transfer referred to problems with inflectional endings (grammar), incorrect combinations of words in collocations (lexical), and homophones confusions (lexical). These errors resulted either from a poor knowledge of FL grammar and vocabulary (a competence error), or from an incorrect application of known rules, due to, e.g. inattention or distraction (a performance error) (cf. Hoien & Lundberg 2013). Negative linguistic transfer errors were more conspicuous. This finding carries important implications for EFL instruction. Since numerous errors committed by Polish learners of EFL result either from an unjustified application of Polish grammar rules to a work created in EFL, or a lack of sufficient knowledge of English grammar rules, as the above-listed evidence suggests, we believe that EFL instruction should include an explicit explanation of similarities and differences between NL and FL (in grammar, syntax, lexicon and phonology), with an indication which difficulties might appear, as they can be predicted on the basis of interlingual differences and the examination of typical errors committed by learners. This is especially important as EFL textbooks usually fail to include comparisons between NL and EFL (Paradowski 2006: 125-144). Thus, teachers need to adjust their teaching to the specificity of a given NL that their students use.

Limitations

The 5-minute time given to students proved enough for them to produce coherent, though short, texts that demonstrated a characteristic pattern of errors. However, the writings were quite diverse in terms of content (e.g. descriptions of locations vs. reasoning for the choice of location) and the structures used (e.g. dominant Present tense or auxiliary verb *will*). We would like to conduct further studies in which we would use a closed test procedure to identify the most difficult grammar, syntax, and lexical aspects of writing for Polish learners of English.

Conclusions

In our study Polish secondary school students with dyslexia, as compared to the participants without dyslexia, made more spelling errors in the FL free writing task. However, they wrote equally long texts that did not differ in terms of grammar (including missing words), syntactic, and lexical errors. These findings verify the assumptions of the LCDH and phonological deficit hypothesis. They may also help dyslexic students improve their performance, enhance their self-esteem, and prevent them from feeling excluded. Moreover, we found that 16-year-old native speakers of a semi-transparent Polish were able to produce short and coherent texts, having studied an opaque English for 8 years. These works, however, included some errors that resulted from copying the rules of NL to FL. Thus, we confirmed the occurrence of both types of negative linguistic transfer between NL (Polish) and FL (English). Poorer performance of the learners with dyslexia, as compared with that of the learners without dyslexia,

demonstrates the negative linguistic transfer. Copying the rules of NL to FL, when not applicable, demonstrates the negative linguistic interference.

The acquisition of English as a Foreign Language is an important part of the obligatory curriculum internationally. In Poland, it is taught from the first year of education and included in state examinations. Our results show the need for adjusting second language instruction to the differences between NL and FL to avoid or diminish characteristic mistakes that all learners are likely to make. This is consistent with Odlin's (1989) observation that specific errors are connected with specific learners' backgrounds. As certain types of errors, which we identified in our paper, are likely to appear in the works of the majority of EFL Polish learners, the teachers could prepare in advance exercises designed to promote the idea of certain grammar rules being different between Polish and English. Such exercises, when introduced early, could prevent learners from establishing and consolidating incorrect linguistic habits, and be complimentary to the content of the used textbook. Thus, they might help develop methods that would enable students to eliminate at least part of the mistakes.

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The NMET impact on the English writing of mainland Chinese students

Linda Lin

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University; eclindal@polyu.edu.hk

Abstract

This paper examines the impact of the writing component in the NMET (National Matriculation English Test) on the development of learners' writing skills in China. By analysing the results of three types of data, a writing test (WT) taken by 83 participants who received considerably high scores on the NMET, a questionnaire survey and three focus-group interviews, the study finds the NMET has had a major negative impact on the writing of this group of learners. Factors attributed to this impact include the test design, and the implicit and explicit marking criteria of the NMET.

Keywords: *NMET, writing skills, assessments, negative impact, English learning in China*

Introduction

China possibly has the largest English-learning population in the world (Zhao 2016). Learning English for most of these learners, however, is to a large extent instrumentally motivated (Cheng 2008). The primary motivation for most learners is to pass various English examinations, in particular, the high-stakes tests that can determine their future (Cheng 2008, Fox & Curtis 2010). Of these tests, the NMET is the most influential one since it has been playing the role of "a traffic wand" in China ever since it was introduced in 1985 (Cheng & Qi 2006: 64). This is to say that the regimes of the NMET define the national curricula that are designed for the English subjects and the approaches to teaching that teachers adopt in the classroom (Gu 2014, Qian & Cumming 2017, Zhao 2016). Although a number of local examination authorities have developed their own municipal Matriculation English Test (MET), most METs are merely imitations of the NMET because they follow "the same testing syllabus" and adopt "similar test formats" (Xu & Wu 2012: 175).

The NMET is the test of candidates' English proficiency in the university entrance test battery in China. Together with the tests in Chinese and Mathematics, it is one of the three compulsory tests for all candidates and is thus crucial in university admission decisions. The main objective of the NMET is to test candidates' ability in reading and their knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary (Hu 2003, You 2010). Little importance is attached to productive skills. This is evident in how the assessment of the two productive language skills is implemented in the NMET. Speaking is absent, i.e. this skill is not tested (except for English majors). Writing is tested, but according to studies (e.g. Qi 2007, Xie 2015, You 2010), the writing component cannot objectively measure the writing skills of candidates. This problem is mainly attributed to the task requirements and the adopted assessment criteria of the NMET.

Task requirements

The test requires that candidates write a short text around 100 words in the form of guided writing, for example, a description of a place/person, a letter/email, or a composition on a social issue. The task prompt is in Chinese. It lists all the main points that candidates should cover. The points are often listed according to the sequence in which they should appear in the text, which means candidates only need very little effort to organise the text. With most of the content and organisation provided, the test has by and large turned writing into translation (Wu 2008, You 2010). This can be seen from the task prompt for the writing component of the 2017 NMET paper (Paper II).

Figure 1: A translated writing prompt from the 2017 NMET paper.

National Matriculation English Test (Paper II)
2017
Part IV. Writing (*25 marks)
You are Li Hua, who is teaching your British friend, Leslie, Chinese. You need to write an email to Leslie about your next lesson. Your email should include the following points:

Adopted assessment criteria

It seems that there exist two sets of marking criteria in the scoring process of the NMET, the *de jure* criteria, the intended ones by the test developers, and the *de facto* criteria, the enacted ones by many of the NMET raters. According to the official NMET writing construct, the "main idea, coherence, grammar and vocabulary, writing purpose, authorship and readership" should be raters' foci in marking (Mei & Cheng 2014: 180). However, studies indicate that most raters regard candidates' discrete-point knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary as the core assessment criterion (Hu 2003, Qi 2007). This requirement may not be explicitly written into the official assessment criteria, but in practice, language accuracy plays a crucial role in deciding on scores for the candidates. You (2004: 104) contends that this practice prioritises the "correct form", the discrete-point knowledge of English grammar, rather than the "well-developed thought", the communicative function of writing. The judgment of language-use has also extended to that of candidates' ability to use complex sentence structures and sentence connectors. This is evidenced in Wang's (2013) NMET preparation book, one of the most popular books used by NMET candidates. This book particularly lists the official band-descriptors for Band 5, the highest band for compositions on the NMET. The purpose is to help candidates understand the factors contributing to top-grade essays. There are four criteria on this band, which are in Chinese. They were translated into English by the author of this article:

Addresses all the main points of the task;
Uses a relatively wider range of sentence structures and vocabulary;
May contain errors in grammar and vocabulary but the errors are caused by candidates' effort in using complex sentences and advanced/infrequent lexis;
Effectively uses sentence connectors.

Of these four marking criteria, two directly address the issue of sentence structures and vocabulary (Points 2 and 3). Point 2 is straightforward and easy to understand. However, few students may understand Point 3 due to the implicit message it contains. Wang's book particularly interpreted this point for the purpose of drawing readers' attention to the importance of using complex sentence structures and advanced lexis on the NMET (pp. 17-18). This specification highlighted the importance of complex sentence structures and low-frequency words for achieving a top grade on the NMET:

This is to say, candidates who merely use simple words and sentence structures cannot demonstrate their language abilities, and therefore are less likely to attain high scores even if their compositions are error-free. On the contrary, those who purposely deploy complex sentence structures and advanced lexis are considered stronger candidates with a higher command of the English language. These candidates will be rewarded with high scores on the NMET.
*Translated by the author. Original text in Chinese (see Note 1)

The assessment of sentence structures and vocabulary has also extended to the use of set-phrases, idioms, proverbs and clichés known as "shining phrases" and frequently used phrases or sentence structures in the academic writing of native speakers of English, which are known as "beautiful structures". These "shining phrases" and "beautiful structures" are therefore highly recommended to the NMET candidates by teachers and authors of NMET preparation books.

It is also worth noting that the focus of Point 4 is on cohesion and coherence. However, instead of emphasising the need to deploy a variety of cohesion and coherence devices, this point highlighted the use of sentence connectors. This could be misinterpreted by many NMET candidates that inserting sentence connectors in a text is the most effective way to achieve cohesion and coherence in writing.

Candidates' ability to maintain a desirable appearance of their writing scripts, which includes clear and neat handwriting, is also assessed (Paltridge 2007, Qi 2007). This requirement, an unwritten rule though it may be, is a critical factor for deciding on candidates' scores. It is so important that some researchers (e.g Wu 2008, Xie 2015) maintain that clear and neat handwriting is one of the four key *de facto* assessment criteria for the writing component of the NMET (the other three being writing to a word limit, inclusion of main points required by the task prompt and language accuracy).

These task requirements and, to a larger extent, the assessment criteria, either explicitly or implicitly stated, have resulted in negative impacts on the learning, teaching and assessment of writing in China (Cheng 2008, Cheng & Qi 2006, Qi 2007). The most salient impact is possibly on students' perception of what counts as good writing. Since long and difficult sentences/lexis, beautiful structures/shining phrases, and a large number of sentence connectors are much valued by many NMET raters, some teachers believe texts with these features are closely related to high-quality writing. They therefore provide extensive training for students to include such items in their writing. One of the approaches to such training is to provide NMET exemplary texts and essay templates for students to memorise. Other writing skills, for example, logical development of arguments, cohesion and coherence, and appropriatness of content in terms of the communicative context required by the task, are virtually ignored (Qi 2004). This misplaced focus in teaching, together with many teachers' own limited knowledge and experience in English writing (Jin & Cortazzi 2006), might cause students to misunderstand what good writing should be like.

Another major impact of the task requirements and the adopted assessment criteria for the writing component is the reliability of the NMET scores. Students' misconception of what count as good writing, and particularly the prevalence of memorising NMET exemplary texts and essay templates have triggered "polluted scores" in the high stakes English tests in the country (Cheng & Curtis 2010: 270). If a candidate happens to have memorised an essay similar to the topic in the writing task, s/he can slightly modify the essay or simply copy the essay onto the answer sheet. Those who unfortunately have not memorised the right essay are encouraged to integrate "relevant chunks from the samples" into their own writing (You 2010: 154). Since exemplary texts and essay templates are instrumental for the NMET, many candidates concentrate on skills to cope with the writing requirements of the test, but their writing skills are not much improved thereby (Wu 2008, You 2010). This partially explains why Qi (2007) believes the writing section in the NMET cannot objectively gauge the writing skills of the candidates.

Although Qi's view has been shared by many students, teachers and researchers alike (e.g. Song 2016, Xie 2015, Zhao 2016), limited empirical data can be found about the impacts of the NMET on the writing skills of these learners. This study attempts to address this issue by examining the writing skills of a group of students at a university in Hong Kong. All these students completed their secondary school education in mainland China.

Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered for the current study. The main instrument was a writing test (WT). A questionnaire survey and three focus-group interviews were also conducted to explore participants' English writing experience during their secondary school studies, the strategies they used to manage the writing component in the NMET and the challenges they encountered in the university because of their background of learning English in China.

Participants

A total of 83 first-year undergraduate students in a university in Hong Kong were invited to participate in the study (35 males and 48 females with an age range of 16 to 22). These students were all from mainland China. As English is used as the medium of instruction in the university, candidates from mainland China must meet the English proficiency requirement by scoring an overall mark of 120 out of 150 on the NMET. This means all the 83 participants attained considerably high scores on the NMET (ranging from 120 to 141).

Test administration

To minimise the possible impact of a change of language environment on the participants, the WT and the questionnaire survey were administrated in the second week of the new academic year, i.e. two to three weeks after these students entered Hong Kong. The three focus-group interviews were conducted at the end of the semester so that students would fully understand the challenges they faced when functioning in academic contexts by the time they were interviewed. To further control external variables, the participants were also asked to declare in their consent form for the study if they had received additional English support (e.g. receiving private tutoring) after being enrolled into the university. The information gathered indicated that no student had received such help.

The WT was designed to examine the participants' writing skills. It required that all subjects write a 500-word expository essay; and it was administered under controlled conditions regarding time, venue and accessibility to dictionaries and electronic devices. To maximise participants' opportunity to write on topics they are familiar with and comfortable to write about, a pool of nine topics was provided for them to choose from. Here is an example of the nine topics:

Increasing concerns have been expressed in Hong Kong and mainland China about youngsters starting to experience sex at an early age, some even before they are ten years old. Discuss the causes of this problem and suggest ways to deal with it.

Essay scoring

Two experienced language instructors rated each essay and the 9-scale band descriptors (Task 2) for IELTS (International English Language Testing system) were deployed for the rating. These descriptors have undergone careful research and piloting for their reliability and predictive validity (Shaw & Falvey 2008, Shaw & Weir 2007). To further improve the inter-rater reliability in the rating process, the study adopted a two-stage scoring procedure, first holistic scoring and then analytical scoring for scripts that received markedly different scores from the two raters (i.e. different by two scales or above). These measurers ensured the essay scores awarded by the two markers agree strongly with each other (see Table 1). The high reliability of scores provides a firm foundation for analysis for the study.

Table 1: Correlation between two essay-markers.

	Intra-class correlation coefficients
Before adjustment	.75**
After adjustment	.93**

*** Significant at .01*

Questionnaire survey and focus-group interviews

A questionnaire survey was administered to all the 83 participants after the writing test. The questionnaire, which contained a total of 15 multiple-choice questions in English, was designed mainly to elicit subjects' strategies for coping with writing tasks in English, which they learnt before entering university. As a follow-up measure, three focus-group interviews were also conducted. A total of 35 discussants attended the interviews.

Findings and discussion
Writing skills of mainland students

The results of the WT showed that, on average, the writing proficiency of this group of students was considerably low. This is evidenced by the mean score that the 83 essays received, which was 4.11 (the maximum possible grade was 9, see Table 2). Although one student managed to attain 7 on the test, the low standard deviation (SD) of the participants' scores (1.32) indicates that this student was a rather special case and most students in the group received low scores and very few performed satisfactorily.

Table 2: Participants' performance on WT.

Essay	Min	Max*	Mean	SD
Grades	1	7	4.11	1.32

** Maximum possible score is 9*

Figure 2 presents detailed information about the writing performance of these learners. The large majority of them received 4 or 5 on the IELTS 9-scale band (32.5% and 25.3% respectively). The scores for almost 15% of them were 2 or below, which are exceptionally low scores. This result stands in marked contrast to the high scores these participants received on their NMET. When converted according to the 9-band scale used in the IELTS marking scheme, the NMET scores of an overwhelming majority of them fell between 8 and 9 (48% and 47% respectively), which are remarkably high.

Figure 2: WT and NMET scores according to IELTS 9-scale band.
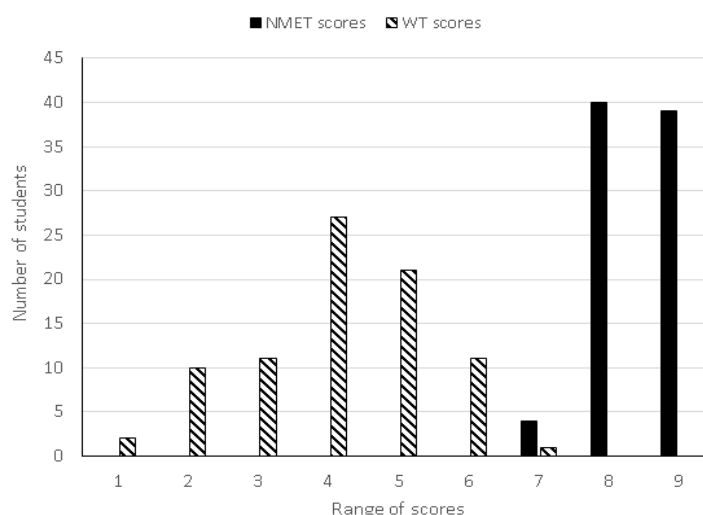
This contrast is not surprising when considering these students' limited writing practice in secondary schools. This limitation is evidenced by the survey questionnaire data of the present study. When asked about experiences in writing, a considerable percentage of the participants (34%) reported they had very limited experience in this skill (see Table 3). Most respondents who had some training in writing (52%) did not start practicing writing until they had to prepare for the NMET which according to the focus group interview, was normally in the last semester of secondary school studies. Many of those who had some experience (31%) only practised writing at the paragraph level, meaning they seldom had to write a complete essay.

Table 3: Student experience in writing.

Student experience in writing	Percentage
Writing experience was very limited	34%
Writing was only to prepare for exams.	52%
Training was largely paragraph writing rather than essay writing.	31%

These findings add empirical evidence to research by Zhao (2016) and Xie (2015) who reported that writing skills are not emphasised in the curricula for secondary schools in China. As a consequence, writing skills are normally not taught in secondary schools until Senior III, the year students sit for the NMET. Before this year, writing practice is fundamentally at the sentence level, i.e. combining simple sentences to make complex sentences and translating sentences from Chinese into English (Qi 2007).

Strategies for achieving high scores on the NMET

When asked about strategies adopted for their high writing scores on the NMET, most participants attributed their success to the following four factors: maintaining clear and neat handwriting (68%), using beautiful structures and shining phrases (51%), inserting sentence connectors (69%) and extending the length and complexity of their sentences in writing (67%).

Table 4: Writing strategies recommended by teachers.

Strategies	Percentage
Maintaining tidiness of scripts	68%
Writing long and complex sentences and advanced words	67%
Using connectors	69%
Using beautiful structures and shining phrases	51%

These strategies, according to the discussants at the focus-group interview, were recommended by their teachers who received information from "insiders" of the NMET, i.e. those who had participated in the marking of NMET writing scripts. This result accords with a number of studies (e.g. Paltridge 2007, Xie 2015) which have documented some of the "insider" views. In accordance with these views, both explicit and implicit assessment criteria are adopted by the NMET markers. One of the most surprising implicit criteria is candidates' ability to maintain a desirable appearance of their writing scripts, which includes clear and neat handwriting. This "insider" view was confirmed by the discussants of the current study. Of their comments, one was most illuminating. The comment was a quote from the participant's secondary school English teacher: "You will receive at least 21 marks (*out of 25*) if your handwriting is clear and tidy and you have covered the main points required by the writing prompt". This remark explains why almost 70% of the subjects believed that their tidy and neat handwriting was a key factor for their high scores on the writing task of the NMET.

The other three strategies reported by the subjects were inserting "beautiful structures" (51%), writing complex sentences and difficult words (67%), and using a variety of sentence connectors, such as *however, moreover, besides,* to achieve cohesion and coherence in their writing (69%). These three strategies, according to the discussants at the focus-group interviews, were also based on views of the NMET insiders and were very much recommended by their teachers.

The popularity of these writing strategies has contributed to the three major problems in the writing of Chinese mainland learners: use of unnecessarily difficult words and overly complex sentences, overuse and misuse of sentence connectors, and "flowery prose" (Singh & Fu 2008: 121). The first was documented in Zhao (2009: 24) who reported that many learners "deliberately employed complex sentences and low-frequency lexis in their NMET compositions". Xie (2015) also discussed how some test-takers deployed sophisticated words and complex sentences to manage rater impressions. The second, overuse and misuse of sentence connectors, was also well-documented in the literature (see Gao 2016, Leedham & Cai 2013, Lei 2012) and can be exhibited in a paragraph written by one of the participants of the current study.

Firstly, as we all know, economic development is based on the environment. If the lands are all deserts and there is no water, we will not be able to construct a beautiful city. **Also**, assume that we can construct a beautiful city, the environment is not good enough for people to live in. **So**, environmental protection plays an important part in the modern society.

The third, flowery prose, is closely related to learners' deployment of "beautiful structures" and "shining phrases" in their writing. These structures and phrases are highly regarded by students, teachers and authors of NMET preparation book in mainland China. Wang's (2013) book, for example, lists 209 proverbs and clichés, and 43 famous quotes and proverbs at the end of the book (pp. 296-309). These items were divided into categories according to themes in the book, but there was no explanation as to how to use them in context and, in particular, what types of writing genres the different proverbs/clichés/quotes might best be used in. This is possibly because many people in China believe that these structures and phrases are a "panacea" (You, 2010: 154) and therefore can be employed in any genre of writing. After all, "it is these beautiful and native-sounding sentences that will make your writing stand out". This "panacea" has contributed to the production of "flowery prose".

Apart from NMET preparation books, learners in China can also learn "beautiful structures" and "shining phrases" from sample essays and essay templates provided by their teachers. The template below represents a typical example in this regard:

Nowadays, there is a widespread concern over the issue that _____ (essay topic). In fact, there are both advantages and disadvantages in _____ (the main issue). Generally speaking, it is widely believed that there are several positive aspects as follows. First _____ (first advantage). And secondly_____ (second advantage).

Just as a popular saying goes, "Every coin has two sides", _____ (the main issue) is no exception, and in another word, it still has negative aspects. To begin with, (first disadvantage). In addition, _____ (second disadvantage).

To sum up, we should try to bring the advantages of_____ (the main issue) into full play and reduce the disadvantages to the minimum at the same time. In that case, we will definitely make a better use of the _____ (the main issue).

This template for argumentative essays was from a participant of the current study who received it from his secondary school English teacher. The italicised parts (in brackets) were in Chinese in the original template and were translated into English by the author for the purpose of the present study. There are 110 words in this template and the total word limit for NMET essays is around 100.This means if this template is adapted by students for the NMET, they will only need to compose very few sentences by themselves. More importantly, the template contains "beautiful structures" and "shining phrases", such as, "*it is widely believed that*", "*every coin has two sides*" and "*reduce … to a minimum*" and other elements required for top-grade compositions on the NMET, such as advanced lexis, complex sentence structures, and sentence connectors. It is not difficult to envisage that a candidate who has memorised this template will obtain a high score because all s/he needs to do is to translate the italicised parts into English and some of the translations (e.g. main issue of the topic) may have been given in the test prompts already.

This by and large explains why many participants in the current study memorised exemplary essays (58%) and essay templates (79%) before the NMET (see Table 5). Memorising these texts and templates forms a crucial part of the intensive training for the NMET. Because of the availability of these templates and exemplary essays, some teachers even never provide specific feedback on students' compositions because teachers can simply ask students to compare their compositions with the provided exemplary texts so as to identify areas they need to improve (see Paltridge 2007, Yu 2012, Zhao 2009).

Table 5: Extensive training for the NMET.

Preparatory tasks	Percentage
Reciting exemplary essays	58%
Memorising essay templates	79%
Vocabulary and grammar training	78%

Another important aspect of the extensive training for the NMET is grammar and vocabulary. Most participants for the study (78%) received such training. This practice, as reported by the discussants in the focus-group interviews, was partially attributed to the centrality of language accuracy, including the use of sophisticated lexis and complex sentence structures, in the marking of NMET writing scripts. It is not difficult to understand the importance that most respondents attached to vocabulary and grammar because these two facets of knowledge have been regarded as the foundations of a language (Barani & Seyyedrezaie 2013, Delmonte 2008). Lexical knowledge is even considered as a "precondition" for other language skills (Roche & Harrington 2013: 2). This belief is apparently shared by many Chinese learners who believe that "learning English is largely a matter of learning new words" (Jin & Cortazzi 2006: 11). One learner metaphorically describes this learning belief: "Words are the bricks a building is made up of. Without bricks, where will the building be?" (Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons 2004: 234). So, to learners like this one, learning English is a matter of collecting bricks (i.e. new words).

The problem of this learner belief is that from knowing the meaning of a word to being able to use it appropriately in contexts is an arduous and onerous journey for most EFL (English as a foreign language) learners. These learners need to be guided by teachers to use words they have learnt to write and speak in English because learners' productive language skills can improve only from their efforts in language production (Schmitt 2014). However, this much needed guidance seems absent from the teaching of

English in China. This absence is evident in Qi's (2004) study in which a teacher vividly describes how she prepares her students for the NMET:

The most important training is in vocabulary. Every year I print the NMET vocabulary list for my students and ask them to memorise every single word on the list. I facilitate their memorisation by conducting frequent quizzes in class. At each quiz, I give students 100 English words and ask them to write the corresponding Chinese meaning of these words and then vice versa, i.e. give students 100 Chinese words and ask them to write down the corresponding English meaning. The quizzes take place every week.

Translation of the author. Original text in Chinese (See Note 2)

Writing problems encountered by mainland students in Hong Kong – a snapshot

After undergoing such training, many students might have gained strategies for obtaining high scores at the NMET. However, these strategies backfire when the learners encounter the demands of academic writing in their overseas studies (Edwards, Ran, & Li 2007). This explains why many mainland students in Hong Kong universities experience serious challenges. A number of interviewees for this study reported that they found it difficult to manage their studies in the university, ranging from understanding lecture content, comprehending technical reading, to speaking and writing effectively in English. Consequently, many of them could not perform satisfactorily in their assessments. One of the examples was Kathy (a pseudonym).

Kathy was from Beijing. She attained a very high grade on the NMET (142 out of 150), particularly in writing (27 out of 30, see Note 3). Kathy believed the grades a learner received from high-stakes English tests were the most reliable indicators of her English proficiency. In her view, two factors were essential for obtaining top grades on such tests: memorising as many low-frequency words as possible and composing long complex sentences in essay writing. To achieve the vocabulary goal, she memorised word lists and set-phrases from her textbooks as well as from preparation books for TOEFL (*Test of English as Foreign Language,* one of the most widely accepted university admissions test) and even GRE (*Graduate Record Examinations*, a standardised worldwide admissions test for graduate studies). To accomplish her mission of using long and complex sentences in writing, she diligently worked on grammar and used many sentence-connectors (mainly conjunctions) in her essays.

Kathy's strategies seemed to have worked well considering her outstanding performance on the NMET. However, after entering the university, she suffered a series of setbacks, of which the most frustrating one was the low grades she received for her essays. Comments on her essays related to the low grades were mainly twofold:

1. lack of cohesion, coherence and clarity in her content development;
2. use of overly long sentences and unnecessarily difficult words

This was a major setback for Kathy. In her secondary school, she seldom needed to ponder over the content development of her essays because of the essay templates she memorised. More importantly she was taught to employ long sentences and difficult words in order to achieve a high mark on the NMET. To her, these were crucial skills for effective writing. However, it was these very skills that had become a major barrier to her success in writing academic essays at university. Kathy was confused, frustrated and even depressed. She was advised to change her dense and ponderous writing style, but she found it difficult to make such a change. The main reason, she claimed, was that she did not know how to compose simple sentences anymore.

Conclusion and implications

This study has provided both qualitative and quantitative data about the impacts of the writing component of the NMET on students' writing skills in mainland China. The results of the study suggest that instead of testing learners' writing skills as it intends to, this high-stakes test mainly measures candidates' test-taking skills and even memorisation abilities. One impact of this problem is many learners' misplaced motivation for writing, i.e. rather than write for communication purposes, these students learn to write for passing examinations. A more serious consequence is that the NMET has shaped many learners' views of what count as good writing. To these learners, an effective essay is a

flowery prose that contains many overly long and complex sentences, unnecessarily difficult words, and beautiful structures and shining phrases (Qi 2007, Singh & Fu 2008). This misconception could hinder their long-term development in writing academic texts.

The results of the study have also provided empirical data for Qi's (2007) observation that the writing component in the NMET cannot discriminate between different candidates' writing proficiency. Since this test is ineffective in testing students' writing skills, are form of the NMET is urgently needed in China, in particular in changing the writing component of the test, its test design as well as its marking criteria.

Notes

1. 学生仅用基本的词汇和基本的句型，不能体现出较强的语言运用能力。即使表达无语法错误，也不能得高分。相反有些错误，目的在有意识地使用复杂结构或较高级词汇，仍属于较高当初。

最重要的是背单词。我每年都把NMET考试大纲的单词印发给学生，要他们背，然后测试。我给出100个英语词，要他们写出汉语意思，再给100个汉语词，要他们写出英语词。每周考。

3. The total score given to the writing section of the NMET varies, ranging from 25 to 35, in different provinces/capital-cities that set their own NMET papers. The scores allocated to this section depends on the decision of each local government.

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Parent Reading Belief Inventory: adaption and psychometric properties with a sample of Greek parents

Chrysoula Tsirmpa*, Nektarios Stellakis**, Konstantinos Lavidas***
*University of Patras; tsirmpa.chrysoula@hotmail.com
**University of Patras; nekstel@upatras.gr
***University of Patras; lavidas@upatras.gr

Abstract

In recent years, the importance of parents' beliefs in their children's literacy has increasingly been recognized. The main purpose of this article is to investigate: a) the internal consistency of the 7 subscales of the PRBI, b) the factor structure and c) the concurrent validity in a sample of Greek parents. In this survey 168 parents of preschool children attending the 13 public kindergartens in the city of Pyrgos, during the school year 2017-2018 participated. Six of the seven subscales of PRBI demonstrated adequate internal consistency. Principal component and parallel analyses revealed a four-factor structure and preliminary evidence of concurrent validity was also revealed. On the basis of the results, PRBI is considered an appropriate tool for investigating the beliefs of parents in Greece as well. The evidence shows the continuation of the research to a wider sample for the definition of the factor structure tool on Greek specimen.

Keywords: parents' beliefs, home literacy practices, PRBI, psychometric properties

Introduction

Children's literacy according to new perceptions, begins from the moment of birth and is influenced and enhanced by the experiences they take in the family and the wider social environment. It's developed and conquered naturally in the family environment and is based on everyday experience and knowledge. This is a non-formal learning that happens spontaneously through reactions with the environment and adults and its main means is oral speech. It includes a wider range of behaviors, related to learning reading and writing but they occur much before the child's entrance to elementary school and the learning of reading in the conventional way (Clay 1966, Teale & Sulzby 1986, 1989, Whitehurst & Lonigan 1998). As children are actively engaged in using language to read and write and to explore print in their play, they learn how written language works. When children have opportunities to participate in meaningful literacy activities in supportive literacy-conscious environments, they refine their understanding and knowledge of print. Therefore, long before children attend school and take part in formal lessons to learn to read and write, they already know what written language can be about, who communicates with writing, and some of the ways this is done (De Silva & Feez 2015). According to surveys, in almost every family, there are reading and writing activities, irrespective of nationality, race, social class, educational level or the parents' financial status (Teale 1986, Purcell-Gates 1996, Battle 2009). Although almost all families are given opportunities for reading and writing during their daily routine, the quality of these activities varies according to the family environment (Battle 2009). Important factors related to the quality of these activities are among other things parents' beliefs about literacy (Mullis et al. 2012). In Greece, only a few small-scale surveys have been carried out related to family literacy beliefs and how these are related with the home literacy practices (Kardasi 2014, Melesanaki 2014), and to the authors' knowledge, no attempts have been made to look into psychometric measures of the Parent Reading Belief Inventory (PRBI). The current research will cover the relevant research gap and will help us to understand families' cultural models that will serve as the foundations for competent collaborations between early childhood educators and families.

Parents' literacy beliefs

The meaning of beliefs is a multidimensional meaning that is difficult to define. In this research, as in many others related to literacy, parents' beliefs are related to established and socially constructed conceptions regarding literacy and the way someone becomes literate (Weigel et al. 2006). Parents' beliefs develop according to social culture, parents' personal experiences and the unique interactive relationship between parents and children. They are connected to child-rearing goals, child

development in general and the role that parents (need to) play in child development (Rowe & Cassilas 2010). Moreover, they influence the methods the parents follow and the children's motives for reading (Sigel & McGillicuddy-DeLisi 2002, Lynch et al. 2006, Rowe & Casillas 2010, Baker & Scher 2010).

Previous important approaches have shown that some parents believe they need to play an active role to the children's literacy skills development, while others believe that it is the school's responsibility to teach children writing and reading. Similarly, whereas some parents believe that creating a rich, stimulating environment is important to their children's development, others may not (Stone et al. 2014). In addition, in the cases that the parents regard reading as a pleasant activity and have a more active role in the literacy skills development, children show more interest for reading, have more knowledge about writing and score better results at school (DeBaryshe & Binder 1994, Sonnenschein et al. 2000, Weigel et al. 2006).

Sonnenschein et al. (1997) researched the beliefs of preschoolers' parents, in relation to how they consider children learn to read more efficiently and found out that they could categorize the parents' beliefs in two groups: (a) those that highlight the reading "skills" and that need to be taught to children and (b) those that highlight the "entertainment" through reading. Evans et al. (2004), in corresponding research referred to two main approaches regarding the different parents' beliefs: (a) the "graphophonemic" or "bottom-up" approach and (b) the "constructivist" or "top-down" approach. Based on the first approach, parents paid attention mostly in gaining literacy skills, such as phonological awareness and the knowledge of letters and words, whilst in the second approach parents paid more attention to reading comprehension. Weigel et al. (2006) researched as well, preschoolers' mothers' beliefs and discovered that they could categorize the mothers in two groups: the "Facilitative" and the "Conventional". The first category's mothers had a more active role in their children's literacy development, contrary to the second group's mothers, who believed they couldn't do much for their children and considered literacy development more of a school project.

Literacy beliefs of Greek parents

Knowing parents' literacy beliefs may be an important key to understanding the differences in Greek children's literacy experiences at home and school. Unfortunately, in Greece, only a few small-scale surveys have been carried out related to family literacy beliefs and there is a need for further research. In Greece, all of the parents give great importance to children's literacy development, because they believe that this will help them to succeed at school and in their lives. However, there are differences in parents' attitudes and behaviors towards literacy, which are related particularly, to the socio-economic and educational level of the parents. The parents, with a higher socio-economic and educational level view literacy development more as entertainment and less as acquiring skills. These parents have great aspirations for their children, they involve their children mainly in informal literacy practices, have children who love reading and the books are part of everyday life. On the other hand, parents of middle and lower educational and socio-economic background have traditional views and are more involved in direct literacy activities. These parents don't believe in their self-efficacy, because they feel they are not capable, or because they think that teachers more than parents are responsible for literacy development and the need information about the ways for enhancing children's literacy development. In addition, the sex affects the involvement of parents in everyday literacy activities and in kindergarten, with the mothers being more involved than fathers (Kardasi 2014, Melesanaki 2014).

Parent Reading Belief Inventory (PRBI)

The investigation of parents' beliefs about literacy concerned and keeps concerning to the present day researchers who want to see how parents' beliefs are connected with the practices they follow. The development of PRBI is one of the first efforts to plan a valid and reliable tool to research the parents' beliefs and their possible connection with the practices they follow in the family. DeBaryshe and Binder (1994) designed this instrument to assess attitudes about what and how children learn from reading as well as parents' beliefs about their role as teachers of their children. 42 items are organized in seven subscales and parents indicate the extent to which they endorse each item on a 4-point Likert scale

(1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree). The names and content of the scales are as follows: (1) *Teaching Efficacy* (items1-9): views on parents' role as teachers of school-related skills; (2) *Positive Affect* (items10-20): positive affect associated with reading; (3) *Verbal Participation* (items 20-27): the value placed on children's active verbal participation when reading; (4) *Reading Instruction* (items 28-31): the appropriateness of direct reading instruction; (5) *Knowledge Base* (items 32-36): whether children acquire moral orientations or practical knowledge from books; (6) *Resources* (items37-40): whether limited resources are an obstacle to reading; (7) *Environmental Input* (items 41-42): the malleability of language development.

DeBaryshe and Binder (1994) distributed the questionnaire to 155 Afro-American and Euroamerican parents of children aged 2-5 years old, of low financial status and found a strong connection between beliefs and practices. Through the data analysis, the researchers discovered that the beliefs predicted the literacy practices mothers'-children's along with the children's interest in books. The researchers developed the items so that a high score reflects beliefs that parents are important teachers, children should be active participants during shared book reading, the goals of reading are enjoyment, knowledge and oral language development rather than direct reading instruction, limited resources should prevent parents from reading with their children and language development is influenced by environmental stimulation. In addition, the reported reliability and validity rates were satisfactory. In particular, regarding the internal consistency of seven subscales, the rates Cronbach's alpha ranged from .50 to .85 and only in two (Reading Instruction and Environmental Input), the internal consistency rates were below 70 (DeBaryshe & Binder 1994).

Previous research approaches about the adaption of PRBI

In many researches abroad, PRBI has been applied and used, in order to research the relationship between the parents' beliefs and the results they have on children, since it has been proved that they affect the child's development and its school course. However, the minimum study efforts of the tool's psychometric properties did not show adequate findings regarding the confirmation of the seven subscales as they are suggested by the tool's creators. Only minimum proof was found for the reliability of most of the seven subscales.

In particular Gonzalez et al. (2013), wanted to research to what extent PRBI measures parents' beliefs. Their sample consisted of 136 Latino and Afro-American parents who had preschool age children. In this research there were evaluations of internal consistency similar to those referred by the creators ranging from 0.68 to 0.83. Using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) separately for each of the seven subscales, revealed an adequate fit for only two of the seven subscales (Reading Instruction and Resources). Similarly Radisic and Seva (2013) adjusted the PRBI in Serbia, using a sample of 227 parents from different municipalities of Belgrade whose children attended public kindergartens. The researchers taking into consideration the theoretical underpinnings of PRBI of seven subscales estimated alphas coefficients ranged from .50 to .77 that were not fully comparable with the original values reported by the authors of the PRBI. Furthermore, the researchers found out that the initial structure of the seven subscales (theoretical underpinnings of PRBI) through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is not confirmed since it appears poor fit keeping in mind the various fit coefficients that were used and mostly the coefficient Comparative Fit Index (CFI<0,7) that refers to the difference between the observed and predicted data.

The investigation of the factorial structure through the Exploratory Factor Analysis revealed structure up to five factors. In particular, structure of two factors that explain 54.6% of the variation excluding only four items revealed the Principal Component Analysis of PRBI that occurred to a sample of 77 Dutch participants (Boomstra et al. 2012). Moreover, the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) research showed similar rates to those of PRBI creators, except one subscale (Environmental Input) that was reported very low Cronbach's alpha. The Principal Component Analysis of PRBI showed a five factor structure excluding eight items that Wu and Honig (2010) accomplished in a sample of 731 mothers of preschoolers, in public and private schools in Taiwan. The researchers used PRBI in combination with Family Information Survey. The five subscales are: Knowledge Base, Verbal Participation, Positive Affect,

Teaching Efficacy and Reading Instruction. Alpha coefficients were adequate ranging from .63 to .90. Finally, structure of a factor was revealed by the Rodriguez et al. (2009) analysis. These researchers investigated the Mexican-American parents' beliefs using PRBI coupled with Home Literacy Activities Questionnaire. In the research 274 preschoolers' parents, with low income and from an urban area southwest of USA took part. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Parallel Analysis revealed one factor structure. All the questions in the questionnaire were able to form only one factor that was explaining only the 55.3% of total variance. Moreover, concurrent validity was examined with the tool Home Literacy Activities Questionnaire revealed small (|r|<0.36) relationships between literacy beliefs and home literacy practices.

Findings only for the reliability of the range were found and in the researches of Dhima (2015) and Husain et al. (2011). Specifically, in the research that took place in Albania, through a sample of 265 Albanian preschoolers' parents (Dhima 2015), were confirmed the reliability of the creators' factors in most of the seven subscales and only the Reading Instruction subscale had an adequate Cronbach's alpha. Similarly, in Husain et al. (2011) research PRBI was filled in from 72 mothers in Malaysia, with children aged 4-6 years old. In this research is shown only one very satisfactory factor of internal coherence Cronbach's alpha=0.92, of all the statements of the tool.

Lastly, the most recent work that is-to our knowledge-available has been done in Turkey by Iflazoglu Saban, Altinkamis and Deretarla Gul (2018). The researchers investigated Turkish parents' early literacy beliefs through the PRBI and tested the validity and reliability of the Turkish PRBI, as well. The PRBI was, in fact, adapted to Turkish by Turkay and Iflazoglu Saban (2011) and Simsek Cetin et al. (2014) but as the adaptation studies presented different results, a new study was needed to overcome the weakness in the previous studies. The new study was conducted in the central districts of Adana, a city in southern Turkey and 952 parents with children aged between 3-7 years old, participated. The researches utilized the PRBI, in combination with the Home Literacy Inventory (HLI), the Child Literacy Behaviours (CLB) and the Personal Information Form that they had prepared. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient values ranged from .48 and .87 and were not entirely compatible with the original values as stated by the authors of the PRBI. The confirmatory factor analysis indicated that a seven-factor structure in the original form of the PRBI was validated, excluding three items that did not have significant t-values. In conclusion, considering the values from both confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis, the PRBI is considered a valid and reliable tool to investigate parents' literacy beliefs in Turkey (Iflazoglu Saban et al. 2018).

Research objectives

Although the PRBI is considered a useful tool for investigating parents' beliefs about literacy, satisfactory empirical findings for reliability and validity of a specific factor structure of many subscales to all former researches, don't exist. The purpose of this research is to examine:
  a) the internal consistency of seven subscales of PRBI;
  b) the factors structure of the instrument;
  c) the concurrent validity of PRBI.

Method
Participants

In this survey only parents of children-aged 5 years old- attending public kindergarten in the city of Pyrgos, in Greece, during the school year 2017 – 2018 participated. The city of Pyrgos has 14 kindergarten schools, but the survey was carried out only on 13, because in one kindergarten the students are Roma so it was excluded from the beginning because of the different cultural status these parents have. Moreover, because of the different cultural status also parents from other countries were excluded even though their children attend the 13 kindergarten schools, because our purpose was to investigate only Greek parents' beliefs. Sampling was "convenient" on the basis of physical proximity to the researcher. The total number of parents of Greek descent from the 13 kindergartens was 188, but 168 parents responded to the research. However, 15 parents' responses were excluded from our

analysis due to missing values (at least 10 out of 42 items). Additionally, 6 parents' responses have not been taken into account, as they were multivariate outliers with critical values far beyond the Mahalanobis distance (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). So, the final sample included 147 parents, out of which the 89.8% were mothers and 10.2% fathers. Regarding their marital status, the highest percentage of parents (92.5%) was married and had 2 children (56.6%). 52.4% of the parents had a girl attending the kindergarten and 44.9% a boy. As far as the age of parents is concerned, most of the fathers were 41 plus (50.4%), while the mothers were between 36-40 years old. On the educational level of the parents, the highest percentage in both cases was at least high school graduates, 45.9% fathers and 47.9% mothers.

Materials

The research instruments that were used in this research are (a) the "Parent Reading Belief Inventory" (PRBI), (DeBaryshe & Binder 1994), that is about the parents' beliefs and the importance of the reading in kindergarten children (it was shown in detail in paragraph "Parent Reading Belief Inventory, PRBI") and (b) the adaption of Grover J. Whitehurst's "Stony Brook Family Reading Survey (SBFRS)", modified by Weigel et al. (2006) and is about home literacy practices.

The adaption of the SBFRS, by Weigel et al. (2006) was to assess literacy and language activities at home with 79 mothers and their children in the USA. This particular survey includes 15 questions and refers to how often literacy practices take place in the family environment. More specific, questions 1-2, 5-9 and 12 refer to the literacy experiences, which are a result of the constant parents-children interaction, questions 3-4 and 10-11 to the experiences that discover and develop children on their own and questions 13-15 refer to the parents' personal reading habits, which work as literacy role models to the children. This instrument as criterion measure will allow us to support the concurrent validity of PRBI.

In order to use these two instruments we asked permission from their creators. Before using these two instruments we used adaptation that included a two-stage procedure: a) Translation check. Initially the surveys were handed to two English teachers to translate first from English to Greek and after three days, so there won't be a memory effect from Greek to English (Johnson 1998). After checking both publications there were no important differences in translation. The small differences concerned some words or phrases, which were accordingly modified so the statement is more comprehensible (i.e. "like" changed to "as", "they like to speak" turned into "they are great speakers", a sentence that was in plural number changed to singular and in two cases words were added to emphasize more the meaning of the sentence). Afterwards, the modified surveys were given to 15 parents who had certified good use of the English language and they were asked to answer first the English one and after one week the Greek, intending to see if the two instruments as they are distinguished in the two languages English (authentic) and Greek measure the same way. From the similarity check in these two different publications the match reached 90% (Johnson 1998). After the translation procedure, a cultural adaptation of the questionnaire was need. This process was carried out in order to identify any areas presenting linguistic problems and to assess the respondent's level of understanding with the purpose of revealing inappropriate items and translation alternatives. The questionnaire was administered to five parents of preschool children, and after completing the questionnaire participants gave their general impression on the clarity of the items, the relevance of the content to their situation, the comprehensiveness of the instructions and their ability to complete it on their own. All of the parents admitted that everything was understandable and there was no difficulty to complete the questionnaire. b) Test-retest reliability meaning to what extent the answers repeated themselves the same way from the same people in two different measurements. In particular, we gave the surveys to fill in to 15 parents and a week later, so there is no memory effect, the same parents filled in the survey again. From checking the answers of the individuals before and after we discovered satisfactory reliability test-retest since the matching touched 85% (Franzen 2013).

Procedure

Having the approval and permission from the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, the kindergarten teachers were informed for the purpose and the procedure of the research in order to arrange group meetings in school with the parents whose children attended the respective kindergartens. Kindergarten teachers organized face-to-face survey sessions with the parents, in the school place, during which the parents were informed by the researcher, for the purposes of the research, signed their agreement and filed in the two surveys (PRBI and SBFRS). In case the parents did not attend, a second meeting took place in school. However, when they couldn't attend at all, the kindergarten teachers would give the surveys to be filled in at home, accompanied by a document with all the relevant to the research information. The parents returned them and handed them in a sealed envelope at the kindergarten and later the teacher would give the envelope to the researcher.

Data analysis

We initially investigated the reliability of the PRBI scale by counting the internal coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of seven subscales of PRBI. Cronbach's alpha coefficients close to 0.7 are considered satisfactory (Cronbach 1951). Then to determine the extracted number of factors, we based on Horn's (1965) parallel analysis. Parallel analysis is considered the best method of extracting factors than Kaiser-Guttman rule (eigenvalues greater than one) and scree plot (keep the number of factors before the change of the slope). Scree plot and Kaiser-Guttman rule usually overestimate the number of factors and are prone to subjective bias (Jackson 1993). At parallel analysis, principal components analyses, was made using a simulation 1,000 random samples based on permutations of the actual data. We used permutations of the raw data set because some 42 items distributions showed a slight departure from normal distribution (O'Connor 2000). The eigenvalues of the factors that turn out from the actual facts we compared with the 95th percentile eigenvalues from the simulation. When the eigenvalues of the actual data exceed the 95th percentile eigenvalues from the simulation, those factors can be considered actual factors in the dataset and therefore maintained in the final factorial structure. When the 95th percentile eigenvalues from the simulation are larger than the eigenvalues from the PCA you know that those factors probably are spurious (Wood, Akloubou Gnonhosou & Bowling 2015). To extract the factorial structure of the overall fluctuation of parents' responses to 42 items of PRBI after the parallel analysis we performed a factor analysis with the method Principal Component Analysis. Details about this method will be discussed in the result section. Finally, in order to support the concurrent validity of PRBI, we test the correlations of the extracted factors with the statements of the literacy practices as measured by Stony Brook Family Reading Survey.

Results

Reliability of the seven subscales of PRBI

The factors of internal coherence Cronbach's alpha in the first six subscales according to the structure which is proposed by the creators (see Table 1) are considered satisfactory (Cronbach 1951) and almost similar to those that were figured by the instrument's creators.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha of the PRBI by subscale.

Subscales	Items	DeBaryshe & Binder 1994	Present study*
Teaching Efficacy	1-9	.73	.70
Positive Affect	10-20	.85	.83
Verbal Participation	20-27	.83	.84
Reading Instruction	28-31	.63	.64
Knowledge Base	32-36	.82	.80
Resources	37-40	.79	.88
Environment Input	41-42	.50	.43

*To estimate the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, we took into consideration the creators' suggestion to reverse the responses in 17 statements.

The factorial structure of Parent Reading Belief Inventory (PRBI)

Parallel analysis for the current study was run in SPSS (v. 24) utilizing a script developed by O'Connor (2000). A thousand datasets were generated based on permutations of the raw data, using a Principal Component Analysis method and the script produced eigenvalues from the actual data, mean eigenvalues and 95th percentile eigenvalues based on the random data sets. For the four first factors eigenvalues (10.88, 2.88, 2.30, and 2.17) from the raw data are above the corresponding 95th percentile estimates created by the simulation. Simultaneously the slope of the generated scree plot (see Figure 1) indicates the cutoff for the number of four factors to extract from the factor analysis.

Figure 1: Screenplots of parallel analysis with 1000 random sample from actual data.
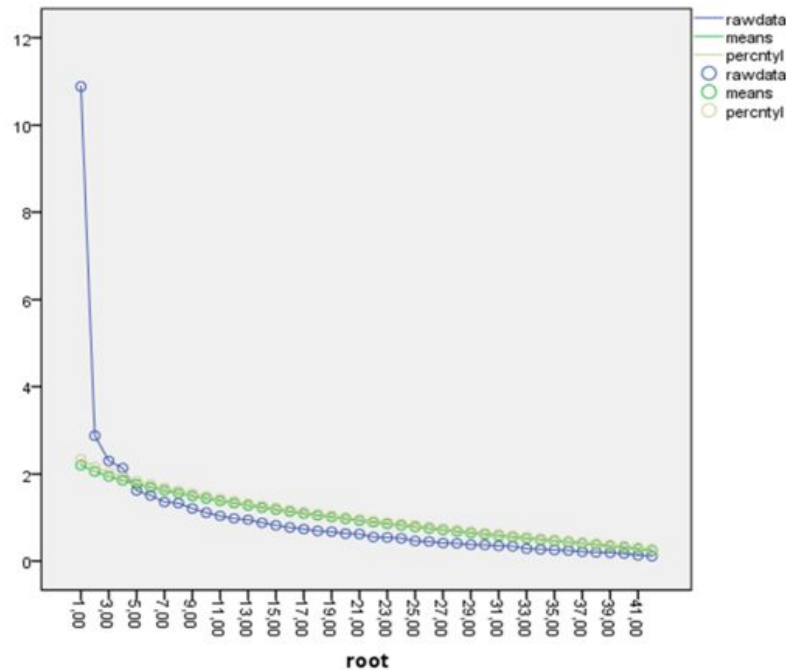
For the extraction of the factorial structure of the 42 items on four factors we exploited the method of Principal Component Analysis (Gorsuch 1983, Pett, Lackey & Sullivan 2003). Not only the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (p<0.01) indicating that the correlation between the items is adequate for factor analysis but also the indices Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO=0,842) και Measure Sample Adequacy (MSA at least 0.6) revealed that parents' answers define a satisfactory factorial structure. For the best distinction of the factorial structure oblique rotation was used and at the same time on factorial structure were included items with absolute loadings at least 0.4 (see Table 2). The oblique rotation was decided by taking into consideration the correlation (see Table 3) of extracted factors (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). The factorial structure of the four subscales even though it explains only the 43.34% of total variation is considered satisfactory since it indicates groups of similar semantic items. From the final structure 10 items were excluded (1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 15, 18, 41 and 42) with low loadings (|loadings|<0.4).The factorial structure of the four factors (subscales) differs from the structure the creators (DeBaryshe & Binder 1994) of the seven factors suggest. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients, (see Table 2) we calculated for each factor showed satisfactory levels of internal consistency (Cronbach 1951). We also notice marginally adequate convergent validity of our factor structure since most loadings on every factor are in absolute value close to 0.7. Respectively we notice satisfactory discriminant validity among the factors after there aren't noticed cross loadings of items among the four factors (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007).

Table 2: Factors structure, loadings, communalities, extracted variance and Cronbach's alpha.

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	Communalities
21	.78				.55
33	.77				.64

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Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	
35	.77				.57
22	.73				.48
23	.73				.51
34	.69				.51
36	.63				.37
27	.59				.46
26	.58				.48
20	.53				.36
25	.47				.40
24	.45				.43
17	.44				.38
32	.40				.34
30	.40				.21
37		.78			.52
40		.78			.65
38		.77			.73
39		.72			.63
16		.70			.45
14		.52			.51
19		-.66			.43
28			.80		.61
31			.66		.48
29			.63		.38
9			.48		.45
11			.42		.37
12			.41		.37
6				.70	.46
8				.66	.45
2				.60	.40
7				-.58	.48
Variance	25.91%	6.85%	5.48%	5.08%	43.33%
Cronbach's alpha	.87	.84	.71	.67	

Taking into consideration the high loadings on every subscale, the four subscales, identify: F1) *Knowledge Base* (whether children acquire moral orientations or practical knowledge from books; F2) *Resources* (whether limited resources are an obstacle to reading); F3) *Reading Instruction* (the appropriateness of direct reading instruction) and F4) *Teaching Efficacy* (views on parents' role as teachers of school-related skills). Table 3 shows descriptive measures and correlations between factors. For the creation of the four variables, one for each factor, we calculated the average of respondents' answers for the items that belong to each factor, after reversing the respondents' answers to items 19 and 7. More specifically according to the parents' beliefs: a) high score on F1 (Knowledge Base) mean that children acquire more knowledge through reading; b) high score on F2 (Resources) mean that exist more obstacles on reading; c) high score on F3 (Reading Instruction) mean that parents get involved more to the reading procedure through several relevant practices and d) high score on F4 (Teaching Efficacy) mean that parents believe they don't play a significant role as their children's teachers.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and Pearson product correlations among factors.

Factors	Mean	SD	F1	F2	F3	F4
F1	3.26	.33	1			
F2	1.69	.42	-.51*	1		
F3	3.01	.39	.41*	-.27*	1	
F4	2.06	.47	-.35*	.25*	-.34*	1

** p<.001

Finally, we notice (see Table 4) satisfactory correlations to the four factors with the items of SBFRS scale that was used as criterion measure supporting the concurrent validity of PRBI. For example, taking into consideration the scores for every subscale of PRBI related to item 1 of SBFRS, that refers to the frequency of reading books to children, we would say that: The more the parents read to the children the more knowledge they acquire (r=.41**), less obstacles exist on reading (r=-.54**), more practices conveyed relevant to reading (r=.16*) and less parents believe they aren't important teachers for their child.

Table 4: Correlations among four factors of PRBI and SBFRS items.

	F1 Knowledge Base	F2 Resources	F3 Reading Instruction	F4 Teaching Efficacy
SBFRS_1 "How often do you or another family member read a picture book with your child?"	.41**	-.54**	.16*	-.08
SBFRS_2 "How often does your child ask to be read to?"	.37**	-.50**	.25**	-.03
SBFRS_3 "How often does your child look at books by himself or herself?"	.23**	-.28**	.23**	.01
SBFRS_4 "How often does your child draw pictures?"	.15	-.11	.12	-.11
SBFRS_5 "How often do you or another family member sing or recite rhymes to your child?"	.20*	-.14	.19*	-.22**
SBFRS_6 "How often do you or another family member tell stories to your child?"	.33**	-.32**	.28**	-.24**
SBFRS_7 "How often do you or another family member play games with your child?"	.19*	-.21**	.06	.03
SBFRS_8 "How often do you go to the library with your child?"	.07	-.13	.12	-.08
SBFRS_9 "How many minutes did you or another family member read to your child yesterday?"	.17*	-.27**	.24**	-.09
SBFRS_10	.35**	-.28**	.04	-.23**

"Approximately how many picture books do you have in your home for your child's use?" SBFRS_11				
"How often does your child watch educational television programs for children?" SBFRS_12	.09	.01	.12	-.09
"At what age did you or another family member begin to read to your child?" SBFRS_13	-.38**	.30**	-.12	.23**
"How many minutes per day do you spend reading (not counting time spent reading with your children)?" SBFRS_14	.19*	-.20*	.22**	-.16
Do you enjoy reading? SBFRS_15	.25**	-.25**	.06	-.13
"How often does your child see his/her parents writing on a weekly basis?"	.13	-.13	.12	-.06

*$p<.05$ & **$p<.01$

Discussion

The purpose of this article was to consider the internal consistency of seven subscales of PRBI, the factorial structure and the concurrent validity of the particular instrument, to a sample of Greek parents.

Internal consistency

Given to the sample of Greek parents involved in the survey, the Cronbach's alpha internal cohesion coefficients are consisted satisfactory and almost similar to those calculated by the PRBI's creators. More specifically, the estimates for internal consistency ranged from .64 to .88 for the six of the seven subscales (Teaching Efficacy, Positive Affect, Verbal Participation, Reading Instruction, Knowledge, Resource) and only for the last subscale (Environmental Input) we had low reliability. In low reliability on the particular subscale had ended up both Wu and Honig (2010) on sample from Taiwan and Boomstra et al. (2012) on sample from the Netherlands. Also low and unsatisfactory internal consistency values in this subscale as well as in other surveys carried out in other countries. More specifically in Mexico Rodriguez et al. (2009) found low reliability on Environmental Input and Reading Instruction subscales, in Albania, Dhima (2015) on subscales of Environmental Input, Reading Instruction and in Serbia, Radisic and Seva (2013), on Environmental Input, Resources, Teaching Efficacy subscales.

Factorial structure

Through this specific Exploratory Factor Analysis have emerged four factors (Knowledge Base, Resources, Reading Instruction, Teaching Efficacy) and 10 items with low loadings were excluded (1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 15, 18, 41 and 42). These items were overlapped by others that best reflected parents' literacy beliefs. The factorial structure of the four subscales although it only explains the 43.3% of the total variance is considered satisfactory since it indicates groups of similar semantic variables. The existing structure is characterized by a marginally acceptable converging validity of subscales but satisfactory discriminant validity between the subscales. With respect to the reliability check the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha calculated for the specific factor, showed satisfactory levels of internal consistency. A similar structure but with more factors revealed the surveys carried out in Taiwan and the Netherlands. More specifically, in Wu and Honig (2010) survey, the factor analysis resulted in the retention of 24

items from the original PRBI scales, organized into five subscales (Knowledge Base, Verbal Participation, Positive Affect, Teaching Efficacy and Reading Instruction) with adequate alpha coefficient. Respectively, Boomstra et al. (2012) kept the seven subscales but with 38 items, excluding 6, 8 17, 41 in order to qualitatively evaluate these items.

Concurrent validity

Preliminary support for the concurrent validity of the PRBI was evidenced by its association with the frequency of mothers' and children's literacy practices. Our preliminary results coupled with Debaryshe and Binder's (1994) study, suggest that the relationship between parents' beliefs and practices begins to emerge when on examines domain-specific beliefs and directly relevant practices. In particular and with respect to the four subscales, we found satisfactory correlations between the subscales and the SBFRS items, which was used criterion measure.

Implications and limitations

On the basis of the above results, we could say that the PRBI, according to the factorial structure presented, is considered an appropriate tool for investigating the beliefs of parents in Greece as well. This fact comes to cover the gap that exists in methodological tools in our country and provides researchers, educators and specialists with a tool to explore parents' beliefs about literacy with satisfactory reliability and validity.

The survey was carried out on parents whose children attended public kindergartens in the city of Pyrgos, in Greece which is considered an urban area. However, this sample is not considered representative and the results cannot be generalized concerning the psychometric properties of PRBI. In addition to the survey, the majority of participants are mothers since they are more likely to come to kindergarten, so this way we cannot have evidence for the Greek fathers' beliefs. In a future survey we could address a larger sample of parents, including a larger percentage of fathers and research to be carried out in more regions of Greece, so that we can make a generalization of the results of the beliefs of Greek parents and the factorial structure of the PRBI, in a large scale.

Moreover, the research was done on parents of Greek origin, so we do not know what happens when a parent has a different background and how that affects his/her beliefs. In future research, parents could also be included, one of them having a different background, and see how the mother's and father's different origins affect beliefs and hence the literacy practices that they use. Consequently, future research should continue to empirically refine the PRBI construct by recognizing the multiple domains of influence.

It would be quite interesting if we wanted to deepen in parents' beliefs to combine quantitative and qualitative research and to complement the questionnaires to be combined with interviewing parents. The information collected could be used to guide the revision elimination and/ or addition of items and in this way, new and considerable elements can arise that will enhance validity and reliability of PRBI.

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Part II.

Facts and Opinions Concerning the Educational Role of Language.

REVIEWS & REPORTS

Convergence of ESP with other disciplines – a book review

Dragana Božić Lenard

Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia; dragana.bozic@ferit.hr

The book entitled *Convergence of ESP with other disciplines* edited by Nadežda Stojković, PhD, Gabriela Chmelíková, PhD and Ľudmila Hurajová, PhD is a collection of 11 research papers submitted by 17 scholars who conduct research and teach at different worldwide universities. The publication covers diverse topics in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) ranging from material development and competences improvement to the application of different pedagogy directions and assessment methods.

Being a branch of English as a Foreign Language, ESP courses are focused on developing English language skills in a particular discipline such as engineering, law, medicine, agriculture, humanities and social sciences. Two most important **features** of ESP are a **conversational function** (ways in which language is used in real communication) and **educational pedagogy and psychology** (learner's interests and needs affecting one's learning motivation). One of the most widespread **misconceptions** is that ESP is all about **content knowledge** when in fact pedagogical content knowledge is what a skillful ESP teacher has – understanding of social, developmental and cognitive learning processes. Paying close attention to students' multidimensional needs, ESP is a highly **student-centered approach** which focuses on both students' linguistics and psychological needs thus establishing a humanistic context where language plays multilevel educational roles.

The first two chapters unpack the issue of **material development** for writing and listening skills, respectively. Chapter 1 opens by recognizing the complexity of English for Tourism Purposes *per se* and the difficulty in the instructional purpose of writing skills. It presents a semi-automatic free writing system *arText* and analyses its **educational purposes** in teaching ESP classes. The chapter empirically demonstrates the **usefulness of technology integration in language classes** by using real corpus examples. Chapter 2 presents the rationales accompanied by practical examples for three-stage listening material development, namely pre-listening, during-listening and post-listening tasks thus providing a language educator with valuable **language teaching resources**. The chapter also presents Chinese **students' attitudes** to the developed materials, chosen topics and designed tasks. Pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of ESP material development, a **theoretical pedagogical framework** for ESP material development, falling within ERL Journal's scope major *Language and Methodology*, is established.

Chapter 3 examines the **teaching potential of research articles** in language teaching placing a special emphasis on vocabulary teaching in medical geology as an emergent field of knowledge in the realms of medicine and geology and falling within the same scope as the first two chapters. Adopting corpus linguistic methods, the chapter provides a comparative analysis of a series of research articles on medical geology and students' research papers thus examining the feasibility of using research articles as an instruction tool in language teaching.

Upon introduction of English language courses at tertiary educational institutions in China, **curricula** had to be **assessed** the topic of which is presented in Chapter 4. Adopting the well-established framework of Hutchinson and Waters, the author conducts a **three-fold needs analysis** involving students, potential employers and language teachers. The chapter provides short reflection on challenges and opportunities in course development and can be related to the same ERL Journal scope as the previously mentioned chapters.

In Chapter 5, **improving social skills**, in addition to acquiring know-how, is discussed. Being the least advanced transversal skills, the chapter examines the undergraduate Polish **students' opinion** on their abilities to use social skills. The results point to a slight dissonance between optimistic students' opinion and their class behavior. Even though the research was conducted on a small questionnaire corpus, the real chapter value lies in the authors' recommendations of **practical examples** to be universally applied. Additionally, the chapter gives pieces of advice on **material development** and attaches the

questionnaire should it be found useful, by potential ERL Journal's scope major *Language and Personality* readers, to be replicated.

Chapter 6 opens with a definition and elaboration of **linguistic and cultural diversity**, which is to be both acknowledged and harnessed in the chosen ESP field of aviation. The chapter goes on to exemplify a **multi-faceted nature** of cultural and consequently linguistic diversity situated in ERL Journal's scope major *Language and Culture*. It elaborates on three types of culture, namely national, professional and organizational culture, which are explained by the cultural dimensions theory and associated with aviation. The chapter addresses the need for ESP teachers to revisit their understanding of language instruction, go beyond a traditional way of language teaching and introduce a triple bottom line – language skills, background knowledge and cultural sensitivity.

Chapter 7 pays attention to a very intriguing and yet not sufficiently studied topic of **recurrent word combinations** which usually have pragmatic and/or discourse functions recognized within certain contexts. The strong point of the research is in its two-fold nature of having both a qualitative and quantitative dimension. Even though the research was done on two Korean learner corpora, their substantial sizes contribute to scientific merit. In addition to descriptive statistics results, the chapter provides structural and functional classification of word combinations accompanied with **corpora examples**. The chapter suggests **pedagogical implications** when teaching **writing skills**, i.e. it proposes steps in language pedagogy such as grammar and coherence markers teaching, genre awareness, instruction on hedges, etc.

The issue of incorporating **cultural knowledge awareness** in language teaching falls within ERL Journal's scope major *Language and Culture* and culminates in Chapter 8 by bringing together some new factors with those previously discussed in Chapter 6. The chapter might be the most beneficial to language teachers engaged in **translation studies** because it highlights desirable characteristics of a potential translator/interpreter. Also, it tackles the importance of acquiring **multicultural, cross-cultural and linguacultural background knowledge** as the most significant transferable skills for present-day graduates. The chapter benefits from **practical examples** which demonstrate communication failures as a result of miscomprehension and misinterpretation not only of the target but the source language as well pointing to the need of language learners becoming conversant with different corpora.

Language teachers involved in translation studies might find Chapter 9 very useful. The chapter investigates the use of **translator's notes** in Chinese translations. Translator's notes are additional information in the forms or notes, footnotes or endnotes inserted in the text with the aim of text clarification and they are prevalent in Chinese translations. The chapter lists three types of a single example, namely the source text in English, translator's notes in Chinese and back translation also in English, and all listed examples are consistently categorized. The chapter empirically proves that translator's notes are worthy of studying because they might **solve** the problems of **translatability** and since they might be culturally-related, it can be related to ERL Journal's scope major *Language and Culture*.

Chapter 10 sheds light on the important issue of both **intrinsic and extrinsic motivation** in English **speaking classes** by carrying out a statistical analysis of closed-ended students' questionnaires. It also provides a comparison of Lebanese students studying at different higher education institutions and coming from different sociocultural backgrounds. Consistent application of scientific methods contributes to this chapter's scientific merit. The chapter provides a reader with a **correlation** of extrinsic, intrinsic and amotivation on the one and linguistic, academic and sociocultural factors on the other hand thus falling in ERL Journal's scope minor *Language(-)Affect*. Scientists engaged in examining the issue of language learning motivation might benefit the most from the chapter because its methodology is replicable and applicable to a wider population of students.

In examining common and different features of **English for Specific Purposes** (ESP) and **Content and Language Integrated Learning** (CLIL), Chapter 11 gives a viewpoint of how the said approaches can be **implemented** in tertiary education, which situates it within ERL Journal's scope minor *Language(-)Activity*. Upon comparing and contrasting ESP and CLIL, which, as approaches, are difficult to set apart, the authors list the most important points to reflect on when considering how to approach language and content teaching, which all language practitioners would benefit from. Another valuable contribution of

this chapter is in shared internationally gained authors' teaching and researching experience the result of which is an institutional research project involving both teachers and students and their attitudes to teaching in the English language, readiness to embrace CLIL approach and enhance their English language competences by taking some teacher training classes. The chapter undoubtedly points to **new horizons** in **English language teaching/acquisition** at higher education institutions.

This publication covers a diverse and an extensive list of ESP topics also applicable to general and academic English language teaching, which makes it an excellent tool for language instructors. One of the **strongest features** of the publication lies in its **diversity**; it covers the most important language teaching issues, exemplifies on different ESP subfields and offers appropriate teaching methodologies which are to stimulate professional situations. In addition to a clear presentation of the relevant literature, specific chapters' research results and case studies serve to reinforce the points being made. **Sound research methodologies** invite researchers to replicate studies involving different participants. Another strong point of the publication are **practical in-classroom exercises** ready to be used by language instructors. Overall, the publication provides valuable insights into **innovative teaching practices** and sheds light on fundamental language teaching issues thus covering the major scopes of language and schooling, methodology and culture. Language instructors, especially ESP experts, will appreciate the publication whose scope will cater for their language classes needs and inspire further research in the field.

Educational role of language – past, present and future visions?

Elena Kováčiková

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia, Faculty of Education; ekovacikova@ukf.sk

Languages do not serve as communication means only anymore as above its fundamental function they open the doors and reveal a lot aboutthe world of linguistics, culture, sociology, psychology, neuroscience, literature, mother tongue acquisition and interconnections of different existing and non-existing languages at various layers and through different aspects.The conference under the title ´Educational Role of Language´ is held in Craiova, Romania on 17-18 June 2019. It is the fourth time when the people-experts working, studying, exploring or investigating the language in the fields of schooling institutions or research centres focusing onforeign or native language acquisition, teaching and learningand literary research, gather in order to discuss their academic success, issues and challenges. The previous three meetings encompassed thelanguage as a common denominator of all the discussions, plenary talks, and group sessions with the promising potential for international cooperation in further research. An idea that sparkled on the meetings was developed into the ERL association as a proof of the thoughtful and meticulous work of the organizers and initiators. This paper recalls the previous work and achievements of the ERL conferences held in the university premises as well as the present state and future directions of the successful series, ending with the definitions of ERL association.

Educators, teachers, students, linguists, experts from the organizing country and abroad assembled in the premises of the University of Gdansk in Poland on 9-10 June 2016 with the aim to take their important part in the 1st International Pedagogical and Linguistic Conference ERL – *Learn to speak, speak to learn*. As the aim of the ERLis to bring together academics combining language and educational science, "*following the rationale of the ´linguistic turn´of studying how languages shape understanding of the world and people´s functioning in it"* (Institute of Pedagogy, 2014 online), this direction was consistently followed . After the official opening and welcoming the participants by the university authorities, prof. Anna Wasilewska and Dr. Michal Daszkiewicz on behalf of the organizers introduced the idea of the conference. The plenary session began with the contribution of the professor Wenzel from the University of Gdansk titled with Predictions on General Education and the role of language in it, followed by prof. Filipiak, Dr Clegg from England, Prof. Philpott from Leeds Becket University, Dr. Sousa from Portugal and prof. Capraru from Romania. Their talks ranged from cultural, educational, parenting and psycho- and neurolinguistics aspects with the language as a common feature.Prof.Wisniewska-Kin from Poland discussed the cognitive matrices of children when speaking, followed by the talk of prof. Kusiak-Pisowacka and Prof. Gmerek on reading and translation. The plenary talks concluded the contribution of prof. Kuszak talking about the role of language in the literature. Afternoon group sessions were divided into four themes according to their orientations. Within two days, 48 contributions were presented, discussed and connected and in 4 potentials of the joint international projects, namely Potential of Language for General Education, Language Activity of Children, Personal Experiencing the Language, and Linguistic Matrixes of Reality Interpretation(Cf. http://www.educationalroleoflanguage.ug.edu.pl/1st-conf-programme-0, online). To sum up, the academics from 15 countries in June 2016 with ERL I commenced the journey of the following gatherings.

A year later, the second International Pedagogical and Linguistic Conference under the heading ´Educational Role of Language – Social and Cultural Determinants (ERL II) was held in the same academic ground of the University of Gdansk on 12-13 June 2017. The main question on how is the educational role of language determined socially and culturally was supported with a number of partial queries determining particular themes that appeared in the previous conference. These questions enhanced deeper understanding and closer insights into the research problems comprising language in different contexts, i.e. language potential for general education, language activity of children, personal experiencing of language, and linguistic matrixes of reality interpretation. The exemplary questions under the particular themes helped the participants to fit more precisely into the directions of language

research. Thus, the main concepts apart from the educational and linguistic fields were broadened with the sociolinguistic and anthropologistic views that were bound with the language.After the official gathering and opening talks by the university authorities, the talks presented by prof. Anna Wasilewska and Dr. Michal Dszkiewicz from the University of Gdansk were delivered. Prof.DeborazZuercher from the University of Hawaii at Manoa explained the situation of multiligualism in Hawai. Then, Dr. Roderick Nielsen from Deakin University in Australia was talking about ´demystifying´ the language in teacher education. It was followed by Isaac Calvert from the University of Oxford discussing teaching and learning Hebrew language. That day the round of the overseas plenary speakers was closed with the contribution of Janice Myck-Wayne from the California State University on special need learners. Prof. Kusiak-Pisowacka from the University in Krakow discussed the intercultural competences in a foreign language classroom. The following day, the plenary session offered knowledgeable presentations by Melanie Aplin and Leela Koenig from the English-Speaking Union on oracy and Dr.Chizuko Suzuki from Japan on still resonant topic of critical thinking in education. This gathering was special because in the second year of ERL existence the two on-going projects initiated in the ERL I were introduced. The first one was carried out under the title Oracy in the school culture and it was developed in the cooperation of prof. Otilia Sousa and Dalila Lino from the Polytechnic Institute from Portugal and Dr. Magdalena Waswrzyniak-Sliwska and MArtynaPiechowska from the University of Gdansk, Poland. The second project born under the ERL cooperation was a comparative study on ´Productive language development in L1 and L2 among 9-year old pupils from teacher´s perspective in Iceland and Poland´ presented by its coordinator Paula Budzynska from the Copernicus University in Torun and SigriðurÓlafsdóttir from Iceland. The last two contributions proved meaningfulness and purposefulness of the ERL meetings resulting in fruitful international cooperation in research. Within the two days, forty contributions were presented in the afternoon group sessions divided into the four rounds according to their fields of interests. It is necessary to add that thanks to the appropriate number of attendees it was possible to make closer connections based on the professional interests and therefore the ideas for the further cooperation were developed later on. The number of participating countries reached 20 in the ERL project proposals.

The venue of the third International Pedagogical and Linguistic Conference 'Educational Role of Language. How do we understand it?' was organized under the auspices of the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences in Vilnius within 14-15 June 2018. The international focus of the conference was broadened by the partnering co-organising universities, namely University of Gdansk, Poland; University of Craiova in Romania, and the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia. After the official opening of the conference by the university authorities, the plenary session was commenced by a cross-country analysis presented by Alina Reșceanu Monica Tilea from the University of Craiova, followed by the role of language learning from the eyes of Cristina Berry from the Georgetown University, USA. The contribution of the ERL founder Michal Daszkiewicz revealed the ERL developments, scopes and studies. The representative of the University of Hamburg, Helmut Johannes Vollmer discussed the language of schooling directed to thinking and interaction. The other day, the plenary session continued with the contribution presented by EglePetroniene from the Lithuanian University of Education Sciences and the view on the amplitude of language education referred to CEFR, followed by BranwenBingle from the University of Greenwich on the personal construct theory to critical literacy and language analysis, and it was concluded by the Greek team of experts from the University of Western Macedonia talking about students' attitudes towards foreign languages and multilingual learning in Greece and Cyprus. As for the group sessions, similarly as during the previous years, 44 papers were presented in the four sections defined by the different views on the language. These were language beliefs or what we think of language, language activities or what we do with language, language experience or how we feel about language and language matrices or how we perceive through language.

All in all, within 3 intensive years of annual ERL meetings, the participation circle of 92 academics from 26 states (Cf. http://educationalroleoflanguage.ug.edu.pl/erl-network-0, available online) has been created and several projects have been founded. Year 2018 was special with the announcementand the birth of the ERLA - as the International Association for the Educational Role of Language created on the

basis of the ERL network. The intention of the ERLA is to ´*bridge the gap between linguistic and educational studies.* ´(Cf. http://educationalroleoflanguage.org/, availableonline) with its mission to broaden the issue of the language through all aspects internationally through networking and setting up the grounds for meaningful studies and research. Only thus, the role of language can be enhanced and comprehended to its full extent.

The distinguished French linguist and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva concludes her knowledgeable book saying humbly: "*that still unknown object-language*." (1989, p. 329). Not doubting her statement we truly believe that annual ERL conferencesand active work of ERLA association can bridge the gaps and find the answers and fundamental concepts for that ´unknown´ in the role of the language.

Acknowledgements

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VOLUME 2019-1(1) AUTHORS

Loreta Andziulienė orcid.org/0000-0002-9584-4550: LITHUANIA, Vytautas Magnus University, Education Academy; currently a lecturer and PhD student at Education Academy of Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania and a PhD student at Tartu University, Estonia, with an interest in education, teacher training, ELT methodology,and CLIL. loreat.andziuliene@vdu.lt

Zenta Anspoka orcid.org/0000-0002-5431-9602: LATVIA, Doctor in Pedagogy science, professor at the University of Latvia, senior researcher, expert in Education at the Council of Sciences of the Republic of Latvia. Scientific interests: general didactic, language learning and teaching methodology for preschool and school, bilingual education. Author of monographs, more than 100 scientific articles, more than 50 methodological and teaching books, member of international and local projects. zenta.anspoka@lu.lv

Elisa Bitterlich orcid.org/0000-0003-4175-5189: GERMANY, Technische Universität Dresden; a doctoral student works as scientific assistant at the professorial chair for Primary Education/Mathematics at the Technische Universität Dresden, Germany, since 2016. Besides teacher students' collective orientations about the learners' heterogeneity and the dealing with (linguistic) heterogeneity, her research interest areas include interpretative classroom research, mathematical learning and the language of the learners during different situations of the mathematics classroom (especially the use of narrations and contexts). She is also involved in the project „TUD-Sylber" which is part of the 'Qualitätsoffensive Lehrerbildung', a joint initiative of the Federal Government and the federal states of Germany which aims to improve the quality of teacher training. elisa.bitterlich@tu-dresden.de

Dragana Božić Lenard orcid.org/0000-0003-4479-1329: CROATIA, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Information Technology Osijek, Department of Core Courses. She obtained her PhD in Linguistics and MA in the English language and literature and the Croatian language and literature from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. She works as a postdoctoral research fellow at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Information Technology Osijek, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia, where she teaches English for Specific Purposes courses. Her research interests include ESP, sociolinguistics and computational linguistics. She is a member of the editorial board of The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes published by the Faculty of Electronic Engineering, University of Niš, Serbia, a member of the advisory board for the Cambridge Scholars Publishing, a member of the Scientific Committee of International English for Specific Purposes Teachers' Association (IESPTA) and a strand coordinator for ERL Journal, to name a few. dragana.bozic@ferit.hr

Anna Dąbrowska orcid.org/0000-0002-5192-2684: POLAND, University of Warsaw, Faculty of Education. Primary research interests: adolescent literacy, linguistic worldview, linguistic competence, communicative competence, adolescent literacy, adolescent slang, sociolinguistics Representative publication title:(Il)literacy in Youth as an Obstacle to Living a Valuable Life, The Cultural Activity of Youth and Their Linguistic Worldview, Cultural Factors in Youth Literacy, Adolescents and self-improvement – in light of young readers' letters to the editor in youth magazines, Is Slang Cool? Educational Aspects of the Presence of Students Slang in Public Discourse, Youth Slang as a Community-Building Element in School Communication, The Equal and the More Equal. Communicative Competence and Educational Paradoxes, On the Expansion of Adolescent Language as Illustrated by Advertising Messages, Communication Styles of Girls and Boys. adabrowska@pedagog.uw.edu.pl

Inese Eglite orcid.org/0000-0003-4906-3400: LATVIA, Mg. paed., PhD student, lecturer at the University of Latvia, Latvian as a second language teacher. Research interests: bilingual education, language learning and teaching methodology for preschool. inese.eglite@lu.lv

Martyna Jaskulska orcid.org/0000-0001-8950-785X: POLAND, University of Gdańsk, Faculty of Languages; a teacher of English in Derdowski High School in Kartuzy. My scientific interests include: dyslexia, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics. Recently I have worked on difficulties of Polish students with dyslexia in learning English as a foreign language. mal.jaskulska@gmail.com

Valéria Juhász orcid.org/0000-0001-7925-4393: HUNGARY, University of Szeged, Juhász Gyula Faculty of Education, Head of the Department of Hungarian Language and Applied Linguistics , my main research fields are early literacy, teaching reading and writing focusing on dyslectic learners, teaching foreign languages to children with special needs. I am also interested in teaching listening and reading comprehension, strategies of comprehension, and teaching vocabulary in content areas. juhaszvaleria@jgypk.szte.hu

Abdel-Hakeem Kasem orcid.org/0000-0001-8742-5818: AUSTRALIA, Deakin University, Melbourne, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Educaton; the Convenor of Arabic Language Program at Deakin University. Hakeem's teaching has received plaudits at Deakin, and via national and international commendation. His work – especially in the development of world first-class comprehensive Arabic online resources in 2006 – is widely known in the Arabic teaching community at a national and international level. In 2009, the Australian Learning and Teaching Council awarded him a National Teaching Excellence Award in the Humanities and the Arts category, for pioneering this Arabic program that led to innovative and creative approaches to teaching foreign languages at tertiary level in Australia. Hakeem's research interest involve Arabic language and culture studies, blended learning, e-learning, and cross-cultural communication. He has contributed to numerous national and international conferences and published widely in national and international publications. hakeem.kasem@deakin.edu.au

Elena Kovacikova orcid.org/0000-0002-3302-7141: SLOVAKIA, Constantine the Philosopher University, Faculty of Education, Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Communication. The projects she is currently involved in: APVV-15-0368 -Practice in Centre of the Subject Field Didactics, Subject Field Didactics in the Centre of Preparation for Practice KEGA 006UKF-4/2017 Contrastive Analysis as Effective Supportive Method in Teaching English Pronunciation at Primary Schools. ekovacikova@ukf.sk

Konstantinos Lavidas orcid.org/0000-0003-2225-1137: GREECE, University of Patras; Research and Laboratory Teaching Staff member, Department of Educational Sciences & Early Childhood Education at the University of Patras Greece. His research interests: ICT in Education, Statistics and Educational Research. He has published many articles about education and particularly about new teaching approaches with ICT. lavidas@upatras.gr

Linda Lin orcid.org/0000-0002-1011-3944: HONG KONG, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University; she holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests include syntactical analysis, academic writing and vocabulary studies. She is currently working with Stanford University to develop an AWE (Automated Writing Evaluation) platform to assist Chinese learners of English to effectively identify common language errors in their writing. eclindal@polyu.edu.hk

Anna Lyngfelt orcid.org/0000-0003-3048-5603: SWEDEN, University of Gothenburg; Assistant Professor at the department of pedagogical, curricular and professional studies. She is now working with a project about the development of literacy by the use of fiction in multilingual classrooms. Also, she is doing research about how to make use of multimodal text production to develop literacy, and reading comprehension in relation to aspects of democracy. anna.lyngfelt@gu.se.

Marta Łockiewicz orcid.org/0000-0002-7461-8503: POLAND, University of Poland, Institute of Psychology; an assistant professor at Division of Psychology and Psychopathology of Development; her scientific interests include: dyslexia, school failures prevention, psycholinguistics, bilingualism. Currently,

She studies Polish students with dyslexia difficulties in learning English as a foreign language, and teaches English as a foreign language; a member of Polish Dyslexia Association. marta.lockiewicz@ug.edu.pl

Tess Maginess orcid.org/0000-0002-5078-8997: NORTHERN IRELAND, Queen's University, Belfast. Director of the Open Learning continuing Education Programme, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work. Her home discipline is literature. Her research encompasses adult education, older people's learning, innovative pedagogies with non-traditional learners, arts based education and research and literature. t.maginess@qub.ac.uk

Slađana Marić orcid.org/0000-0002-9270-7016: SERBIA, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy; PhD in Teaching Methodology; an educator, researcher, conference speaker, and prolific author. After graduating in Music Pedagogy at the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad and in English Language Philology at "The Faculty of Legal and Business Studies Lazar Vrkatic, PhD" in Novi Sad, Sladana completed her MA in Gender Studies and MA in Management in Education (ACIMSI, University of Novi Sad). In 2018 she started working as a Research Assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy within the project titled "Digital Media Technologies and Socio-educational Changes" (III47020) funded by The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia. In 2019, defending her doctoral dissertation titled "Interactive Learning of Music and English Language with Digital Media" she completed her doctoral studies in Teaching Methodology at the Faculty of Philosophy of University of Novi Sad. Her research interests lie in the areas of the educational role of language, digital pedagogies, media literacies and their role in digital learning and teaching. Sladana has published internationally and regularly gives talks at international conferences, presenting her work at online conferences and face to face events in Greece, Serbia, Cyprus, Poland and Malta. sladjana.maric@ff.uns.ac.rs

Klaudia Pavlikova: SLOVAKIA, PhD student at the Faculty of Education, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. She teaches English as a foreign language to teenagers to adults, in groups or individually, at a local language school. She aims at finding the most suitable ways to prepare her learners for the successful use of language. klaudia.paulikova@ukf.sk

Nektarios Stellakis orcid.org/0000-0002-1934-8715: GREECE, University of Patras; Assistant Professor at the Department of Educational Science and Early Childhood Education, University of Patras, Greece. His research and teaching areas are: literacy and early literacy; literacy practices in pre-school education, and family literacy. The period 2013-2018 he was Regional Vice-President for Europe at the World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP). nekstel@upatras.gr

Gemma Tarpey-Brown orcid.org/0000-0003-4962-5290: AUSTRALIA, Deakin University, Melbourne, Faculty of Arts and Educaton; an early career researcher. She has recently graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University majoring in Arabic and Literature with First Class Honours. Gemma was the recipient of the Global Citizenship Award from Deakin University in 2017. Her research interests are in Arabic cultural studies and the complex relationship between language shift and language maintenance, identity and power. Gemma is currently working for the Australian Red Cross. gemmagtb@gmail.com

Chrysoula Tsirmpa orcid.org/0000-0002-0610-2425: GREECE, University of Patras; a kindergarten teacher and a PhD student at the Department of Educational Science and Early Childhood Education, University of Patras, Greece. Her research focuses on family literacy and especially on parents' beliefs and practices about literacy. tsirmpa.chrysoula@hotmail.com

Daiva Verikaitė-Gaigalienė orcid.org/0000-0003-4724-3723: LITHUANIA, Vytautas Magnus University, a PhD in Linguistics, an Associate Professor of Language Education Programme Group at Education Academy of Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania, with an interest in discourse analysis, linguistic pragmatics, ELT methodology, and CLIL. daiva.verikaite-gaigaliene@vdu.lt

VOLUME 2019-1(1) REVIEWERS

Patman Antadze-Malashkhia (Georgia, Tbilisi State University)
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ERL Journal – Scope Major

Key premise. **The educational role of language, reaching far beyond school(ing), is determined by multiple aspects relating to culture, methodology and/or personality**. To be suitably comprehensive, studies blending educational with linguistic studies need to comprise all these aspects.

LANGUAGE and SCHOOL

LANGUAGE and CULTURE

LANGUAGE and METHODOLOGY

LANGUAGE and PERSONALITY
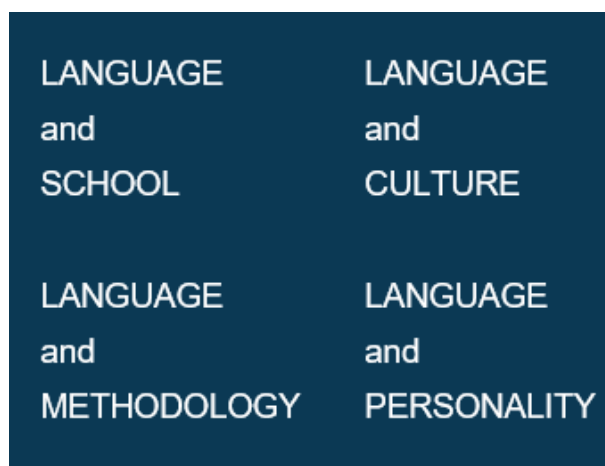
General rationale. Language lies at the heart of schooling, culture, (learning and teaching) methods, and personality – thus underlying education on the individual and on the social level. Its social existence determines its experiencing by an individual person and vice versa. Both these levels matter when it comes to learning and teaching methods as well as schooling as a whole. Socially determined and individually experienced, language shapes culture and education, and, from an individual perspective, it defines a person's place in the world and defines the world in which a person is placed.

Specific issues. Accordingly, ERL Journal welcomes papers addressing issues such as: language of schooling, bilingual education, language identity, intercultural competence, discourse analysis, children narratives, personal constructs, language in special education, transversal skills, language mediation, academic language, elicitation, plurilingual teaching, CLIL, functions of language, etc.

Expected outcome. Systematization of knowledge concerning the educational position of language; aggregation of empirical findings pertaining to social and cultural determinants of how language serves education; development of interdisciplinary educational and linguistic studies; recognition of problems calling for research and discussion of ways of putting language theories into practice.

ERL Journal – Scope Minor

Key premise. **A person's education is determined by how language operates on four levels – beliefs, activity, affect and thinking**. To be maximally educational, the experiencing of language by a person comprises these four dimensions, which implies a need for their comprehensive studies.
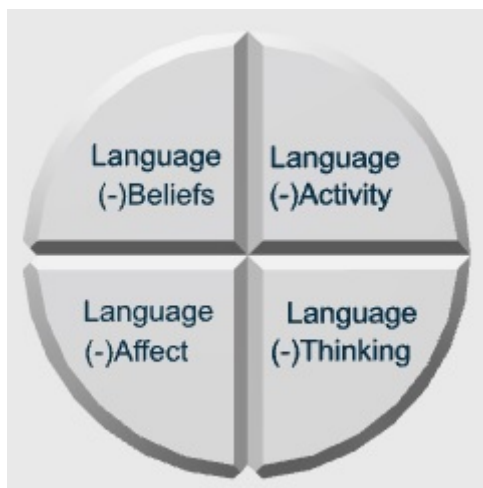
General rationale. How language affects a person's education depends on multiple axiological, psychomotor, affective, and cognitive factors. For instance, what a person thinks of language (e.g. on whether it is worth speaking or not) and how much a person speaks determines that person's mental faculties. Conversely, how a person understands a given issue (as well as how s/he feels about it) impacts on how interesting utterances s/he produces. Hence, there exist relationships between language and all the aforementioned educational domains.

Specific issues. Accordingly, ERL Journal welcomes papers concerning issues falling within one or more of the four domains, such as: status of language in school curricula, language of textbooks, language activity of children or grown-ups, stages of language fossilization, argumentative skills, language learning styles, verbalization of knowledge, approaches to oracy, personal experiencing of language skills, language image of the world, cognitive discourse functions, language reflectivity, etc.

Expected outcome. Collection of theoretical proposals and empirical data supporting learner-oriented educational practice; exploration of the relationship between language and four educational domains; detection of factors determining learners' language identity/personality; accumulation of data providing assistance in construction of language-grounded educational systems.

ERL Journal is designated for papers on cross-disciplinary, educational and linguistic, issues. It is meant to address (I) the position of language and how it is put into practice across different schools, cultures, methods and personalities, and (II) the experiencing of language by learners in terms of their language beliefs, activity, affect and cognition. ERL Journal includes theoretical and empirical papers, presenting qualitative and quantitative approaches. Resting on the overarching premise of language shaping our reality and education (assignment of meanings to the world and subject matter learnt), it ultimately aims to unravel this process and to boost the position of language in education.

ERL Journal is international, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, and double-blinded.

It is open access and follows free-of-charge policy for authors.

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