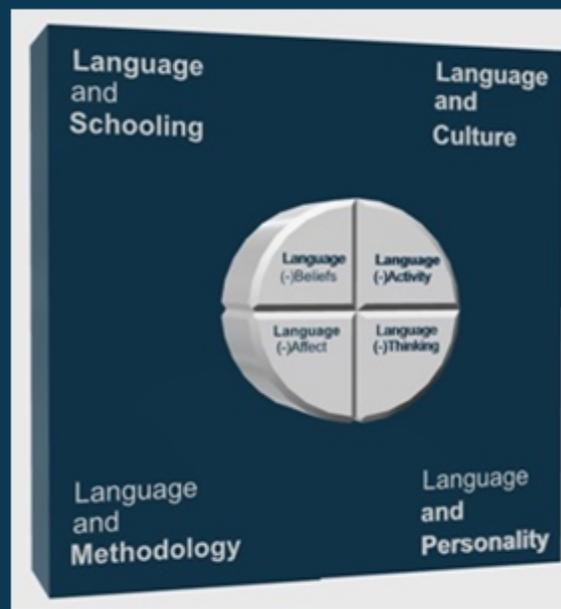


# *EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF LANGUAGE JOURNAL*

Volume 2021-2(6)

## **LINGUISTIC WELL-BEING (BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC)**

Volume Editors: Michał Daszkiewicz, Dragana Božić Lenard



Journal issued under auspices of  
the International Association for  
the Educational Role of Language

### **EDITORIAL TEAM**

Michał Daszkiewicz (Poland, University of Gdańsk), editor-in-chief  
Dragana Božić Lenard (Croatia, University of Osijek), lead editor  
Anna Babicka-Wirkus (Poland, Pomeranian University in Słupsk)  
Anna Basińska (Poland, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)  
Monika Kusiak-Pisowacka (Poland, Jagiellonian University in Kraków)  
Linda Lin (Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)  
Isabel López Cirugeda (Spain, University of Castilla-La Mancha)  
Tess Maginess (Northern Ireland, Queen's University Belfast)  
Slađana Marić (Serbia, University of Novi Sad)  
Gerda Mazlaveckiene (Lithuania, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences)

### **STRANDS COORDINATORS**

Strand 1-1: Language & Schooling: Raquel Sanchez Ruiz (Spain, University of Castilla-La Mancha)  
Strand 1-2: Language & Culture: Dragana Božić Lenard (Croatia, University of Osijek)  
Strand 1-3: Language & Methodology: Branwen Bingle (England, University of Greenwich)  
Strand 1-4: Language & Personality: Ivan Lenard (Croatia, University of Osijek)  
Strand 2-1: Language(-)Beliefs: Elena Gomez Parra (Spain, University of Cordoba)  
Strand 2-2: Language(-)Activity: Elena Kováčiková (Slovakia, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra)  
Strand 2-3: Language(-)Affect: Michał Daszkiewicz (Poland, University of Gdańsk)  
Strand 2-4: Language(-)Thinking: Giuliana Ferri (England, University of West London)

### **ADVISORY BOARD**

Ewa Filipiak (Poland, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz)  
Çiler Hatipoğlu (Turkey, Middle East Technical University)  
Eva Reid (Slovakia, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra)  
Ruperf Wegerif (England, University of Cambridge)  
Olga T. Yokoyama (USA, University of California)  
©Copyright by the International Association for the Educational Role of Language  
Peer-reviewed (double-blinded) journal

The list of reviewers of the papers included in this volume is included at its penultimate page.  
The journal's complete list of reviewers is available at its website shown on the back cover.

## CONTENTS

**Introduction**.....4

*RECOGNIZING THE LINGUISTIC WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS*

1. Milena Sazdovska-Pigulovska - Impact of online education on student emotional well-being.....6  
 2. Slađana Marić - Pedagogical uses of language focused on music to support linguistic wellbeing during emergency remote teaching.....24  
 3. Thoralf Tews - EFL students’ reluctance to speak in the classroom — a lesson not learned?.....39  
 4. Luisito M. Nanquil - Let us talk: shaping linguistic well-being through differentiated tasks and conversation - report.....42

*APPRECIATING THE LINGUISTIC WELL-BEING OF EDUCATORS*

5. Adrienn Fekete - Examining teachers’ well-being during the pandemic: a mixed methods study on teachers’ psychological, emotional and identity responses to online education.....46  
 6. Ervin Kovačević - Systems fail, technology disappoints, and relying on optimism is not enough: A short analysis of teacher wellbeing and digital learning solutions.....66  
 7. Elena Kovacikova and Jana Hartanska - Preparedness of future English teachers as a prerequisite of their professional well-being.....76  
 8. Zoi Apostolou and Konstantinos Lavidas - Greek preschool teacher’s views about language activities in early childhood education during Covid-19. A chance for change?.....83  
 9. Tijana Hirsch and Orly Kayam - “Why are you here?” A hearing instructor’s journey into a deaf community of practice and discussions of family language policies.....93

**List of Volume 2021-2(6) Authors** .....110

**List of Volume 2021-2(6) Reviewers** .....113

**ERL Journal – Scope Major** .....114

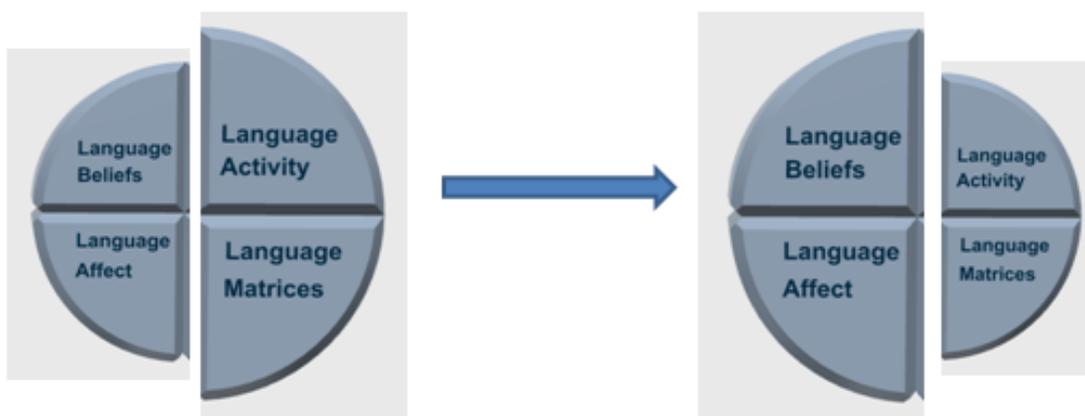
**ERL Journal – Scope Minor**.....115

## INTRODUCTION

Linguistic well-being as tantamount to educational welfare

Students that do not engage linguistically in classroom activities – for whatever reasons - do not benefit from their education as much as they could. They miss out on numerous developmental opportunities, which frequently occurs at the cost of other students and also teachers themselves, too, since, as a result of such reticent students’ silence, numerous clever ideas and thoughts are lost. The COVID-19 pandemic has been the time during which the aftermath of students’ verbal absence has been experienced on a global scale. It has clearly shown that **students lacking in linguistic well-being and remaining consistently speechless throughout their classes and lectures, being hidden behind their deactivated cameras, practically disappear and, subsequently, become likely to fall out of education altogether**. In those situations when teachers managed to keep their students linguistically engaged (which tends to imply the latter’s emotional involvement, too), language has served as a kind of glue securing students’ contact with their school settings. However, in all these circumstances where the “glue” in question was missing, students have become passive listeners often preoccupied with other online activities, in the light of which they gradually changed into passive outsiders, taking “advantage” of the fact that they could not be seen. Hence, at the end of the line lack of language and linguistic well-being have meant lack of education altogether.

**This heavy reliance of education on language and linguistic well-being has caused teachers to ponder pedagogical phenomena and to reflect on affective and axiological issues much more than they normally do**, with the typical focus being on the cognitive and psychomotor aspects of language. From this perspective it can be argued that the pandemic has had its “silver lining” in that it has the potential to mark something of a Copernican turn in how most teachers see the educational role of language and in what facets of language use teachers have come to emphasize in their attempts to maximize their students’ linguistic well-being, which can be presented by the following graph:



As the pandemic has left no-one completely unaffected, under ERL Framework (within which ERL Journal is developed) we have sought our linguistic well-being, too. One of the new ways of keeping its

members and other participants mentally sane is productive is the recently introduced (monthly) event called **ERL Strokes**, the idea of which is **to exchange 2-minute “strokes” between different nations, professions, races, or ages, and in this way to foster interpersonal communication and good (but nearly forgotten) old practices of telling stories, jokes, riddles, and sharing interdisciplinary and/or everyday discoveries**. The event has served to maintain and boost the participants’ (“stokers”) linguistic well-being and has been attended by academics and university students, with the two groups sharing the need to communicate and experience new content through all kinds of social occasions. (The term ‘strokes’ has been derived here from Eric Berne’s transactional analysis,, whereby strokes are defined as fundamental units of social action, and used in a wider sense as referring to different types of “verbal pieces” which have something educational and/or entertaining in them and which can be easily be passed from mouth to mouth (and thus t exploit the educational role of language).

Accordingly, ERL Journal’s Volume 6 presents a pool of texts, which jointly constitute **a reflection of which conceptual notions have remained in focus throughout the pandemic and how the search for linguistic well-being has proceeded**. Specifically, we find papers addressing the emotional facet of online education, pedagogical aspects, preparedness, technological challenges, etc. The reading of papers indicates that the pandemic has come to constitute something of a pedagogical awakening in causing linguists to view reality in pedagogical terms (as well as the other way round). The volume is composed of two parts relating to the linguistic well-being of students and teachers, which is meant to emphasize that fact that issues relating to the eponymous concept pertain to all educational “players”. The papers are complemented by two reports, one written by an academic and one by a student (again – for the sake of balance), both addressing spoken language as the medium particularly meaningful throughout the pandemic. Volume 6 follows Volume 5 (*COVID-19 – A Source of Threat or Opportunities for Linguistic Education*) in its focus on the pandemic and its educational implications. We do advise our readers to study the content of the preceding volume in order to see the progress of our knowledge and conclusions concerning the impact of pandemic on linguistic education, with Volume 6 offering, as opposed to Volume 5, more questions and viable solutions.

*Michał Daszkiewicz*

## Impact of online education on student emotional well-being

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.01>

Milena Sazdovska-Pigulovska  
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University  
[milena.sazdovska@flf.ukim.edu.mk](mailto:milena.sazdovska@flf.ukim.edu.mk)

### **Abstract**

*The shift to full online education has resulted in tremendous changes, such as creation of virtual classrooms, digital collaboration and distance learning. Students not only had to learn how to participate in virtual collaborative environments, but they are still adjusting to new methods of learning and using technology. Conducting online classes and exams at translation and interpreting studies is all the more challenging due to their interdisciplinary nature and a variety of generic and soft skills that suddenly need to be exercised online. Hence, after posing two research questions, it can be initially hypothesized that the digital transformation of education has an impact on students from an emotional point of view as well. Namely, it was visible that students dealt with the new arisen situation as well as with educational and social challenges in different ways and by expressing various emotional responses. This study aims to explore the ways in which tele-education affects student emotions and whether it influences their emotional well-being. For the purpose of this study, survey research was conducted among 91 students at undergraduate translation and interpreting studies in North Macedonia who were given the opportunity to explain how they personally dealt with educational novelties and challenges. The responses indicate whether students experience emotional consequences of (extended) online education. Based on the survey results, conclusions can be made about future practices that would benefit translation and interpreting students from an emotional point of view.*

**Keywords:** *online education, distance learning, emotional well-being, emotionally charged words, translation and interpreting studies*

### **Introduction**

The global Covid-19 pandemic marked the beginning of a new era in the field of education. It not only affected the methods of teaching and learning nowadays, but it also affected how students communicate with each other and the teachers during class and after class. The digital transformation of education contributed to the advent of technology in all spheres of education, which resulted in inevitable use of technology and digital communication on the one hand, but also in decreased physical contact and socialization among students on the other hand. Some changes were long anticipated and enthusiastically accepted by many members of the academic staff due to the desire to modernize and to improve the quality of teaching as well as in order to keep up with more advanced European universities (Sazdovska Pigulovska 2021a: 262). However, other novelties, such as minimized face-to-face interaction, were not eagerly accepted among students.

During the past two years, all discussions were focused on how online education affected the quality of education. Academic staff across the world made unprecedented efforts to organize conferences on this topic and to take part in scholarly debates and panel discussions on how to improve the quality of online education and student achievements. Students across the world were asked to evaluate teachers and their online teaching and examination methods with the purpose to assess their effectiveness and the level of technology used at their respective universities. However, students were rarely asked how they personally dealt with or felt about introduced changes and whether students experienced

emotional consequences from the shift to full online education. This creates a strong need to investigate how online education affects student emotional well-being, and not just the quality of education.

### **Subject of research and purpose of the paper**

Much attention has been dedicated by researchers all over the world to the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic on the academic field. Research conducted nowadays centers around students' learning effectiveness by focusing on aspects such as how students perceive their academic performance and satisfaction in e-learning environments (Kerzič et al. 2021), whereas some research studies have been dedicated to students' mental health and overall wellbeing (Lischer, Safi & Dickson 2021, Elmer, Mephram & Stadtfeld 2021). Although some of the research studies have focused on the impact of e-learning on student emotional well-being (Clabaugh, Duque, Fields 2021, Hassan et al. 2021), emotional aspects of online education remain peripheral issues. Moreover, what remains under-researched are emotional aspects of online education in the field of multidisciplinary studies, such as translation and interpreting education.

In fact, with the exception of one study showing tremendous impact of the pandemic on how translators and interpreters work professionally and mentally (French Professional Association, 2020) and another study on the effect of emotions on translation performance (Kitanovska Kimovska & Cvetkoski 2021), no studies have focused on emotional aspects of online translation and interpreting education. This particular group of students underwent unprecedented changes by reinventing modes of translation and interpreting in order to adjust to the new reality of online environments so as to be able to pursue their education further. Hence, a need arises to explore how this particular group of students coped with the educational changes and novelties in the current pandemic context from an emotional point of view. This study aims to fill this gap.

The main goal of this paper is to discuss the concept of well-being and to examine contribute factors to well-being as well as whether online education affects students' emotional well-being. On the basis of data collected via online survey research involving Macedonian translation and interpreting students, the author argues that the e-learning environment has an impact on students' emotional well-being.

### **Definition of emotional well-being**

Well-being is a multidimensional and broad concept. According to the Council of Europe, well-being includes mental and physical health, physical and emotional safety and a feeling of belonging, sense of purpose, achievement and success, whereas five major types of well-being can be distinguished: emotional well-being, physical well-being, social well-being, workplace well-being, and societal well-being.<sup>1</sup> Emotional well-being is of particular interest to this study and can be defined as "the ability to be resilient, manage one's emotions and generate emotions that lead to good feelings"<sup>2</sup> and it is often referred to as psychological well-being (Seligman 2011). Moreover, emotional well-being is closely linked with social well-being, which implies "the ability to communicate, develop meaningful relationships with others and create one's own emotional support network."<sup>3</sup>

Some research findings suggest that students with higher levels of well-being tend to have better self-esteem, more satisfaction with their schools and life as well as healthier relationships with others (Park 2004). According to OECD research, students' well-being includes subjective, emotional and cognitive functioning (Trends Shaping Education 2018). Hence, it is worth to investigate the link

---

<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/improving-well-being-at-school>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 1.

between education and emotional well-being in an academic context. For that purpose, previous research in this field has been taken into account.

To begin with, numerous previous studies have been conducted on the impact of Covid-19 or online education on student mental health. Lischer, Safi and Dickson (2021) investigated the mental health status of 557 undergraduate students at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Switzerland during the 2020 pandemic, whereas their online survey results show symptoms of anxiety or mild anxiety that are caused by various factors, especially challenges of distance teaching which created stress for the surveyed students. A similar study also conducted in Switzerland is that of Elmer, Mepham and Stadtfeld (2020).

Kerzič and others (2021) analyzed academic student satisfaction and performance in the e-learning environment during Covid-19 among 10,092 higher education students in 10 different countries across 4 continents and conclude that e-learning was primarily perceived through the quality of administrative, technical and learning assistance, teachers' active role during online education and IT infrastructure, but less through online interactions. Clabaugh, Duque and Fields (2021), on the other hand, investigated academic stress and emotional well-being of 295 US college students during Covid-19 and conclude that about one-third of those surveyed reported difficulty coping with Covid-19 and elevated levels of emotional stress, with 30% of students' even planning to reduce or withdraw from classes if they continued to be conducted online.

Dubey and others (2020) conducted an international study on the psychosocial impact of Covid-19 and emphasize that anxiety among Chinese college students during the Covid-19 outbreak results from disrupted daily life schedules as well as disrupted academic activities by lockdowns. Moreover, Zapata-Ospina and others (2021) conducted an overall study of mental health interventions for college and university students and conclude that universities must offer specifically-structured mental health programs for students that should be "multidisciplinary, inclusive, dynamic and culturally sensitive", such as "digital psychoeducation" for students facing Covid-related mental issues.

By contrast, the study presented in this paper discusses the impact of online translation and interpreting education during the global pandemic on student emotional well-being. For the purpose of this study, the emotional aspects of online translation and interpreting education were analyzed on the basis of the PERMA model (Seligman 2011). It is a widely used approach to assessing well-being in students and a number of studies have been conducted thus far by applying the PERMA framework (Kern et al. 2015, Lambert & Pasha-Zaidi 2016, Umucu et al. 2020). Namely, the PERMA theory of psychological well-being is founded on the following five building blocks:

- positive emotion (traditional conceptions of happiness tend to focus on positive emotions from past and present experiences and positive emotions about the future);
- engagement (it is an experience involving full deployment of someone's skills, strengths and attention for a challenging task);
- relationships (connections to others are fundamental to well-being and central for adaptation, whereas they are enabled by one's capacity for love, compassion, kindness, empathy, teamwork, cooperation, etc.);
- meaning (a sense of meaning and purpose can be derived from a feeling of belonging); and
- accomplishments (means pursuing achievement, competence, success and mastery).<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The definitions of the five building blocks under the PERMA model are taken over from the University of Pennsylvania website: <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/learn-more/perma-theory-well-being-and-perma-workshops>.

### Research questions and hypotheses

After discussing the concept of well-being and establishing a link between education and emotional well-being in an academic context, the following two research questions are discussed in this paper:

R1: Which are the main risk factors to translation and interpreting students' well-being?

R2: Does the digital transformation of education have an impact on students from an emotional point of view?

The two research questions lead to two hypotheses being proposed. Translation and interpreting education relies on experiential education as a non-traditional method where the focus is also put on how students work and cooperate, and not only on how they translate or interpret (Sazdovska Pigulovska 2021b: 56). Based on this fact, the following first hypothesis can be made in relation to the first research question:

H1: Risk factors to translation and interpreting students' well-being extend beyond environmental factors, and include emotional factors as well.

The first hypothesis is made bearing in mind previous research on this topic. According to OECD research, risk factors to well-being include both environmental factors (learning environments) and individual factors (personal experiences) (Trends Shaping Education 2018). Choi determined three factors that affect student well-being including the learning environment, the level of student engagement and the connectedness or relationships with peers and teachers (Choi 2018).

In relation to the second research question, the author makes the following second hypothesis:

H2: Online education affects translation and interpreting students' emotional well-being.

This second hypothesis is based on the author's initial observations showing that many students at the author's institution struggled with the new arisen situation and novelties when education turned online at the beginning of 2020, which resulted in absent students from online classes, visibly diminished interaction of those present, switched off cameras, missed assignments, etc. Hence, the changed behavior of students was also visible through a myriad of emotional responses expressed during online classes, such as low confidence, insecurity and hesitation during class, lethargy and demotivation, absence of empathy as well as under-engagement expressed through absence of interest in teamwork and cooperation, etc.

### Methodology

To test the previous hypotheses, the author conducted a survey in order to investigate students' personal opinion, contributing factors and emotional experiences with online translation and interpreting education through an online questionnaire. The survey was conducted at the Department of Translation and Interpreting within the Faculty of Philology in Skopje, North Macedonia in the 2020/2021 academic year and involved a representative sample of undergraduate translation and interpreting students who completed three semesters of online classes. The online questionnaire was voluntarily and anonymously answered by a total of 91 undergraduate students out of a targeted sample size of 100 respondents. The respondents are regular students enrolled in second, third or fourth academic year, with an age range between 20-24 years.

The online questionnaire was distributed via Google forms, as a user-friendly tool for less regular attendees as well as via the Microsoft Teams platform for regular attendees of different online courses taught in second, third or fourth academic year. The questions were comprehensive as they did not focus on specific academic courses, but on the overall online education experience, which extended over a period of three full semesters.

### Survey design

The author uses qualitative survey design to assess students' personal experiences and emotional aspects of online translation and interpreting education, considering that it is difficult to quantify emotional aspects and experiences. The online survey questionnaire thus mainly relies on open-ended questions allowing the respondents to elaborate on their experiences and opinions on one side, and which reveal key information such as contributing factors on the other side. In addition to this, the online questionnaire also contains two closed-ended question and three nominal questions, which integrate open-ended components for explanations. Eight questions address issues related to the topic of interest and owing to their conciseness the online questionnaire yielded a high response rate. In order to obtain pertinent responses, this cross-sectional survey study was administered only one time, after the respondents completed three online semesters.

A dichotomous yes or no question was used to open the questionnaire in order to segment the respondents' personal experiences into positive or negative experiences, and help understand whether students regard online education as a positive or negative experience. This question was followed by open-ended questions asking respondents to elaborate further on reasons for their personal experiences, which led to conclusions on contributing factors to student well-being. Three nominal questions with multiple answer choices were used for systematic organization of emotions experienced, so students were given some initial ideas as they could understand various sentiments as emotions (for example, exhausted) and thus provide information that is not pertinent for analysis. In order to avoid false conclusions or confirmation bias by limiting the categories of emotions that were experienced by students, an open-ended component was added to the nominal questions (categorized as "other"), which allowed the respondents freedom to describe other emotions they experienced personally.

The emotional aspects of online education were analyzed on the basis of the five building blocks under the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011), which is a widely used testing technique for assessing well-being in students. Hence, for the purpose of assessing students' emotional well-being and risk factors during online translation and interpreting education, the online questionnaire was constructed by focusing on the following issues:

- whether surveyed students experienced online translation or interpreting education in the current pandemic context as a positive or negative experience (question 1) and which are the main contributing factors for their personal experiences with the new e-learning environment (question 2);
- possibility for establishing student-student and student-teacher relationships and their quality (question 3);
- whether students experienced a feeling of belonging to the educational institution or to peer groups, and thus whether they felt a need for psychological support (question 4);
- whether students achieved accomplishments in the new educational model, and thus whether they prefer to continue with that model in the future (question 5); and
- whether students were sufficiently engaged during online education and which specific emotions they experienced in that process (questions 6, 7 and 8).

### Data analysis

For the purpose of analyzing the data collected through an online questionnaire, the author applies a qualitative data analysis. In particular, thematic iterative analysis was conducted as a method of analyzing qualitative data, which enables qualitative insight related to the two research questions posed in this paper. Namely, the open-ended questions gave the respondents freedom for autonomous explanations of their personal experiences as well as opinions, which revealed students' needs and preferences that were previously unknown to the author. This also provides insight into areas for improvement that were previously disregarded and which could improve student experience with online

education. The dominance of open-ended questions was also aimed at avoiding bias, considering that responses on emotional aspects should not be limited with predetermined choices.

Considering that this study involves initial and small-scale research, thematic analysis as a qualitative research method enabled the author to identify patterns among students' emotional experiences and responses relating to online translation and interpreting education, such as positive or negative emotion from personal experiences, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment as well as contributing factors. It also helps identify weaknesses of current online education that could be considered risk factor to students' emotional well-being. It is also possible to use the results from the thematic analysis for determining future trends in online translation and interpreting education.

The results confirming the first hypothesis (on the risk factors to students' well-being) were obtained by identifying patterns among students on the basis of thematic analysis. Namely, the collected data was analyzed by themes, whereby 6 preliminary codes were generated by the author, which will be mentioned bellow. The preliminary codes assigned to data collected were used to identify common themes (patterns) as well as to define and name different themes that enable deeper insight into contributing positive or negative factors to students' well-being.

Additionally, after generating clear names for each theme, they were visually presented on figures, some of which were assigned percentage values to demonstrate which aspects or factors prevail. The online survey results are thus presented on eight figures, which serve as basis for making observations and conclusions, which subsequently lead to a concluding discussion at the end of this paper. Results presented on the figures can also show trends in online translation and interpreting education as well as students' needs and expectations from online education based on the occurrence of their responses.

The results concerning the second hypothesis (on the impact of online education on students' emotional well-being) were obtained by searching for emotional responses among explanations for students' personal experience with online education, classified into two groups as emotionally charged positive or negative words or emotionally neutral words. In particular, the sentiment analysis technique allows understanding of the intentions and emotions of responses, which can be classified as positive, negative or neutral,<sup>5</sup> and were used to determine overriding emotions among students.

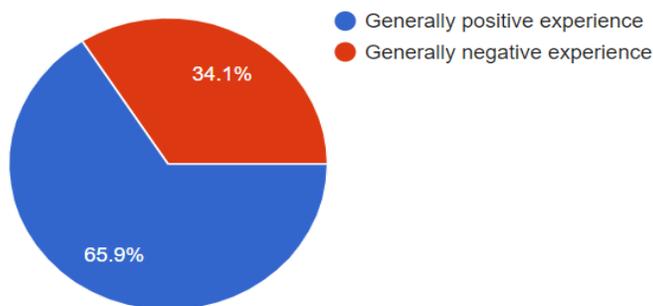
### **Results from the online survey research**

The online questionnaire was completed by 91 full-time translation and interpreting students from North Macedonian and it was aimed at investigating emotional aspects of online education in the current pandemic context and assessing students' emotional responses. Bearing in mind that one of the most important aspects for psychological well-being is positive emotion from past and present experiences and positive emotions about the future (Seligman 2011), the questionnaire was opened with a dichotomous yes or no question to determine students' personal experience with the new e-learning environment and whether they perceive online education as a generally positive or negative experience. The aim was to segment the respondents' personal experiences into positive or negative, and their subsequent explanations on the reasons. 65.9% of total surveyed students personally consider online education a generally positive experience, compared to 34.1% who generally experience the new e-learning environment in a negative way, as presented on Figure 1.

---

<sup>5</sup> Datapine website: <https://www.datapine.com/blog/data-analysis-methods-and-techniques/>.

**Figure 1: Student personal experience with online education**



The first question results show that the positive experience prevails, however this is a very general first conclusion that could be impressionist. Hence, to explain the reasons for this initial result that could reveal contributing factors, this dichotomous question was followed by an open-ended question allowing respondents to elaborate further on the reasons for their personal experiences by explaining in their own words why online education was a generally positive or negative experience for them personally. The responses were analyzed by conducting thematic analysis, which allows to analyze collected data by themes and to generate clear names for each theme.

**Risk factors to translation and interpreting students’ well-being**

The inductive approach to thematic analysis allows for collected data to govern the themes of relevance to this particular survey. The initial codes served as grounds for mapping 6 common themes of relevance to students’ positive or negative experience, which reveal contributing factors and are presented on Figures 2 and 3 bellow. Firstly, six preliminary codes were assigned by the author to data collected from the second question, as follows: easy access, collaboration, personal interest, accomplishments, time management and comfort zone, on the basis of which positive themes were mapped. The results from the second question reveal common patterns in students’ positive experiences, as presented on Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Students’ personal reasons for positive online education experience**

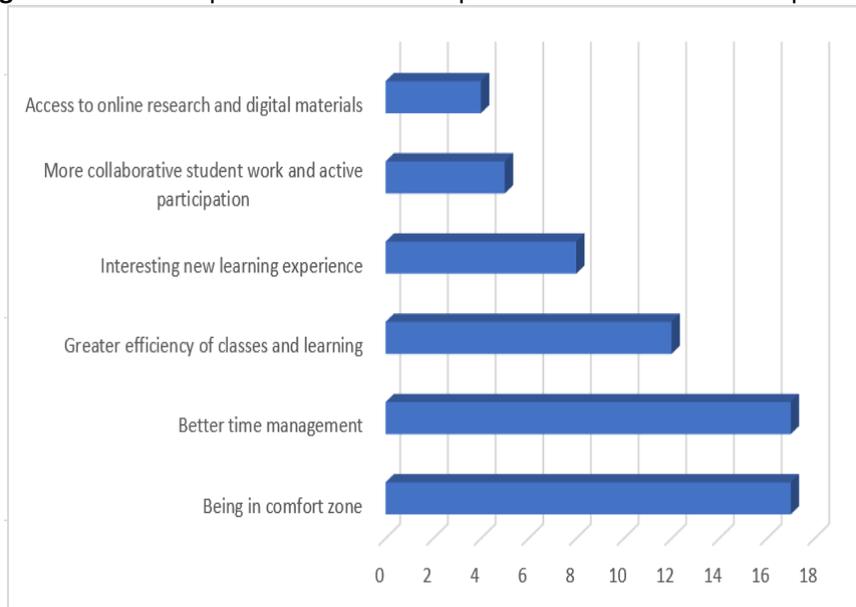


Figure 2 shows the main reasons for considering the new e-learning environment a positive experience: “being in one’s comfort zone” and the possibility for “better time management” after turning online as seen through having more time for research and exam preparation as well as friends and family time. Less commonly specified reasons by students are considering tele-education “an interesting new learning experience” or as being “more efficient” than the traditional educational environment. Several students explained that technology offered “more opportunities for collaborative student work and active participation” especially for shy and introvert students, as well as that technology provided “easier access to online research and digital books and materials”, which alleviated some of the stress of learning in the new e-learning environment (as explained by some students).

The themes presented on Figure 2 provide insight into contributing factors for a positive experience and reveal a pattern in students’ opinion and personal experiences. Namely, the dominant response showing that most students “prefer to be in their own comfort zones” is an emotional factor because it reveals a possible feeling of insecurity among students. These could be emotional insecurities about the new arisen situation, their future profession as translators/interpreters, personal weaknesses, low self-confidence, low motivation, etc. Emotional factors are related to a person’s emotions which induce certain behavior or emotional signs of stress. The analysis reveals other personal factors, which are related to personal growth and circumstances, such as “accomplishments” (greater efficiency of e-learning, interesting new learning experience). Other contributing factors for a positive experience include environmental ones related to “engagement” (opportunity for collaborative student work and active participation, better time management).

Furthermore, five preliminary codes were assigned by the author to data collected from the second question, as follows: socialization, collaboration, accomplishments, motivation and technical issues, on the basis of which negative themes were mapped. On the other hand, the results from the second question also reveal common patterns in students’ negative experiences, as presented on Figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Students’ personal reasons for negative online education experience

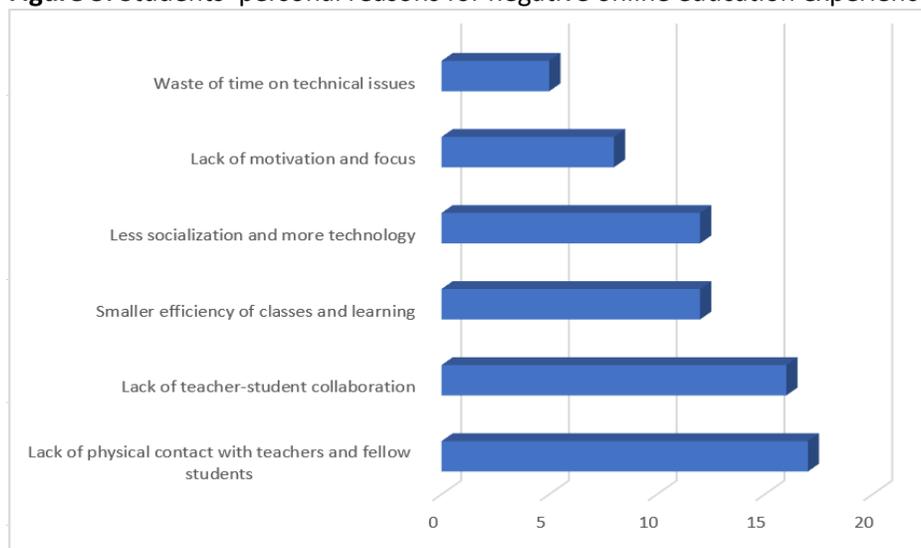


Figure 3 shows the main reasons for considering the new e-learning environment a negative experience, which include “social distancing”, “lack of collaboration” and “less socialization with peers” as main contributing factors. Less commonly specified reasons by students were “smaller efficiency of online education” than the traditional educational environment and “increased use of technology”. Motivation and focus are common contributing factors for some students who explained that they

struggled with “lack of motivation and focus” after shifting to online education or that technology implies “waste of time on technical issues”, which triggered stress of learning in an online environment (as indicated by some students).

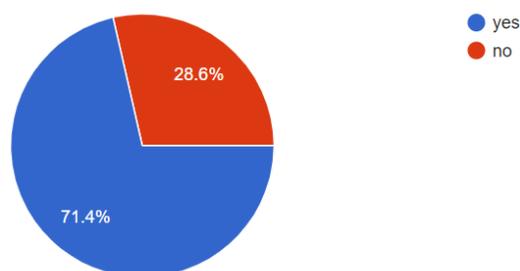
Subsequently, the common themes presented on Figure 3 provide insight into contributing factors for a negative experience and expose a pattern in students’ attitudes and personal experiences. Namely, students dominantly indicate social factors for a negative experience with “connectedness” (lack of physical contact with teacher and peers) and “relationships” (less socialization with peers) as overriding factors, which reveal a possible feeling of isolation. The thematic analysis reveals that environmental factors also influenced a negative experience, such as “engagement” (lack of collaboration during and after online class) as well as personal factors related to “accomplishments” (smaller efficiency of e-learning) and “motivation” (many of those surveyed struggled with diminished motivation or ability to focus or socialize online). To conclude, these preliminary results presented on Figure 2 and 3 lead to the conclusion that contributing factors for a positive or negative students’ experience with the new e-learning environment involve a combination of emotional, social and environmental factors.

The third question was open-ended and explored the possibility for establishing relationships during online education and the quality of student-student and student-teacher relationships. Relationships imply connections to others and are considered fundamental to well-being and central for adaptation, whereas they are enabled by one’s capacity for love, compassion, kindness, empathy, teamwork, cooperation, etc. (Seligman 2011). Students gave long descriptive answers to the sixth question, which are difficult to quantify, but help detect two problematic aspects of online education: lack of empathy and lack of interdependency among students. Empathy implies awareness of and understanding how others feel (Bar-On 2006: 21). Some students explicated that “teachers lacked empathy” by not considering whether students had sufficient time to complete overwhelming assignments and low understanding when students faced technical problems. Others stated that “teachers did not fully collaborate with students” as they often disregarded student opinion on the online course and focused on covering course material often without detailed explanations, which made students feel “anxious”, “insecure” or “scared”. These aspects in turn created “exam-related fear” and “anxiety” among students as well as “uncertainty about their professional competencies as future translators and interpreters”.

Nooijer, Schneider and Verstegen (2020) conclude that collaborative learning depends on course design, on the roles of teachers and students and requires interdependency. Interdependency implies student collaboration aimed at reaching a common goal, team process, facilitating autonomy, reflecting on collaboration, etc. (Nooijer, Schneider & Verstegen 2020: 1). Interdependency contributes to relatedness because it encourages interaction and provides an opportunity to connect with others (Martin, Kelly & Terry 2018 in Nooijer, Schneider & Verstegen 2020). In this question, as high as 45 surveyed students explained that more focus was put on course material than on student-student interactions as well as teacher-student collaboration, which often resulted in students feeling “bored” or “unmotivated”.

To conclude, student responses to the third question reveal two risk factors to establishing relationships in an online environment: empathy and interdependency among students. Empathy and interdependency can be considered interpersonal factors, whereas the experience of the surveyed students demonstrates that they have an impact on their well-being.

Another important form of relationship building is academic advising (Gordon-Starks, 2015). Hence, the fourth question focused on meaning, considering that a sense of meaning and purpose can be derived from a feeling of belonging (Seligman, 2011). In this dichotomous yes or no question students were asked whether they experienced a feeling of belonging to the educational institution or to their peer group, and thus whether they felt a need for psychological support concerning online education. Their responses are presented on Figure 4.

**Figure 4:** Student opinion on personal benefit from psychological support

As high as 71.4% of surveyed students responded that they felt a need for psychological support from teachers or even from fellow students concerning different aspects that could help them adjust to online education. Only 28.6% did not feel such a need. As for the reasons explaining such a strong need for psychological support, in the open-segment to this question the students explained that they would benefit from psychological support “during challenging times when students struggle with stress and different anxieties”. Moreover, in the open-segment many students described that they felt “isolated” and “disconnected”, with many describing emotional signs of stress, such as “fear of the unknown”, “health-related fear” and “anxiety” during online education. These responses indicate that many students did not experience a feeling of belonging to the educational institution, nor to their peer group. Bearing in mind that students respond to novelties and deal with challenges in various (emotional) ways, numerous international studies indicate that psychological support contributes to positive mental health during online education (Zapata-Ospina et al. 2021, Hassan et al. 2022).

In conclusion, student responses reveal two risk factors to a experiencing a sense of belonging: “connectedness” (lack of physical contact with teacher and peers) and “relationships” (less socialization with peers, and low student-teacher collaboration). This demonstrates a combination of social, emotional and environmental factors. In fact, the results from Figure 4 indicate that students need a sense of community and belonging, especially in such isolated and uncertain times and would benefit from emotional support networks, which is exactly what is currently missing at many universities, including the author’s institution. Students’ sense of belonging is a key protective factor in times of social isolation, anxiety and depression during the Covid-19 pandemic (Gopalan, Linden-Carmichael & Lanza 2022). According to O’Brien (2020), the “sense of social connection plays a key role in coping with stress”.<sup>6</sup> The universities in some countries have started to offer informal support to students from the very beginning of the pandemic, especially during lockdown, such as wellness resources (online yoga or meditation), entertainment (online karaoke, games, etc.) to make up for not being physically connected with peers, especially for first year students who have never attended traditional classes.

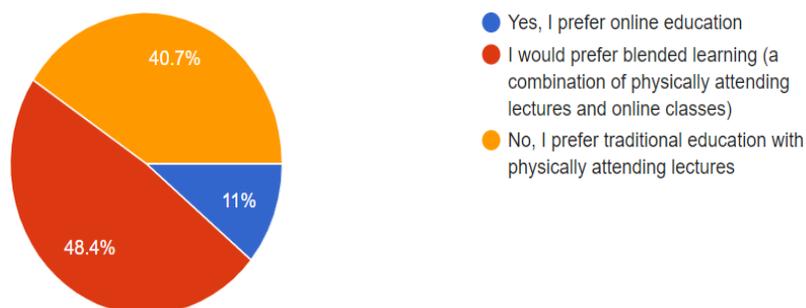
At the author’s institution, an initial attempt was made to offer psycho-social support to both teachers and students through a pilot project entitled “Psychosocial support for teachers and students at the Faculty of Philology during the global pandemic”. In additions to 15 teachers and interested students, a clinical psychologist was also included in the project to aid with self-care and student care, while at the same time promoting the quality of both personal and professional life during the Covid-19 crisis. A series of 9 online workshops were held, whereas the project activities, results and overall project results related to providing self-care and student support are available online, with special

<sup>6</sup> University of California website <https://thebottomline.as.ucsb.edu/2020/05/st-1-the-psychological-effects-of-covid-19-on-students>.

emphasis on mental health.<sup>7</sup> This specific experience demonstrated that support can come from external professionals, teachers as well as peers. Hence, the project is currently in second phase.

The fifth question explores whether students achieved accomplishments in the new educational model and thus whether they prefer to continue with that model in the future. Accomplishments means pursuing achievement, competence, success and mastery (Seligman 2011). Only 11% replied that they preferred online education to continue in the future, whereas 40.7% replied that they preferred traditional education with attending lectures physically. However, almost half of the respondents (48.4%) chose blended learning as a preferred educational form, which is a combination of physically attending lectures and online classes. Student responses are presented on Figure 5.

**Figure 5:** Student preference for future learning environment



The results show that since many students were aware that online education has both opportunities and limitations, they prefer to get the best of both worlds, which is blended learning through physical presence coupled with the advantages of technology and online work. As high as 40.7% said that they did not achieve sufficient accomplishments in the e-learning environment, which is a personal factor related to personal achievements. This means that if online education continues to be conducted to any extent (partial or full) in the future, it will require serious changes and improvements that extend beyond the learning environment and put students' well-being in the focus.

Figures 1 through 5 develop deeper insight into risk factors affecting translation and interpreting students' well-being. For the purpose of this study, contributing factors were divided in three groups: environmental factors related to the e-learning environment, personal factors related to personal growth and circumstances (that can be divided into intrapersonal and interpersonal), social factors related to various social aspects and connectedness, and emotional factors related to emotions and their effect on different behavior or emotional states such as stress, fear, anxiety, etc. It can be concluded that all of the previously described factors were encountered as reasons for students' experience with online education and that students' well-being is not only affected by the quality of online education. In fact, students' well-being is not only affected by environmental factors, such as organization of online classes, access to digital materials and e-learning platforms, but also by a number of other factors ranging from personal to social and emotional factors that contribute to dealing with emotional signs of stress, motivation, establishing peer groups, relationships, connectedness, etc. These are only initial results, so this hypothesis requires a larger-scale study with more in-depth investigation as to which of these risk factors prevail or more significantly affect students' well-being.

<sup>7</sup> Psychosocial Support Website [https://coda.io/d/\\_d-BpfE3Oinz/\\_supjT#\\_luWLR](https://coda.io/d/_d-BpfE3Oinz/_supjT#_luWLR).

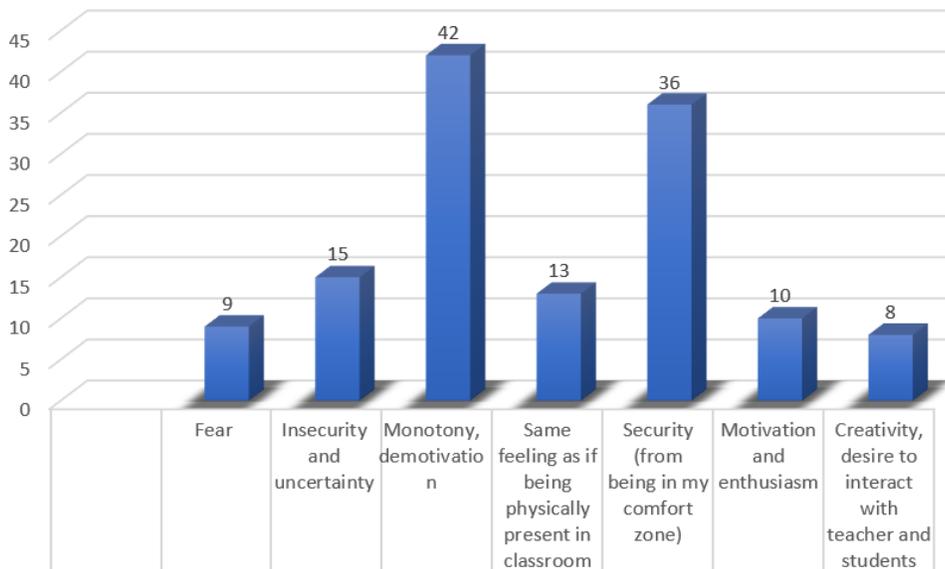
**Impact of online education on students’ emotional well-being**

Emotional well-being implies “the ability to be resilient, manage one’s emotions and generate emotions that lead to good feelings”.<sup>8</sup> Numerous studies indicate that emotions play a significant role in psychological well-being of students, thus directly affecting all aspects of their academic lives (Health, 2016), whereas emotion management and regulation positively contribute to academic performance (Fuente 2021 in Hassan et al. 2021). Emotions are psychological states with important social and evolutionary adaptive functions (Ekman et al. 1972, Izard 1977) and influence decision-making, creativity, teamwork, negotiation, leadership and job performance (Barsade & Gipson 2007).

Positive emotions (for example, enjoyment and interest) are associated with students’ attention, concentration, engagement and persistence in learning activities, which positively correlate with academic achievements (Eccles 2005, Moeller at all. 2020, Schiefele 1996 in Zuniga et al. 2021). Negative emotions (for example, boredom, burnout and anxiety) are known to diminish cognitive resources thus negatively affecting performance and academic achievements (Madigan & Curran 2020, Moeller at all. 2020, Samuel & Burger 2019 in Zuniga et al. 2021).

From sixth through eight question the respondents were asked to describe which emotions they experienced in the new e-learning environment by choosing one or several pre-determined options. These nominal questions also include an open-ended component categorized as “other”, which allowed respondents freedom to describe other emotions they experienced. Obtained responses from the sixth question on students’ emotions during online classes mainly ranged between “monotony and demotivation” (31%) as a dominant feeling among one student group and “safe” to be in one’s comfort zone (27%) as a dominant feeling among another student group. Some students experienced a feeling of “insecurity and uncertainty” (11%) during online classes and/or “fear” (7%), while others indicated “motivation and enthusiasm” (8%) and/or “creativity and desire to interact” with the students and teacher (6%). Only 10% of respondents replied indifferently of having the “same feeling as being physically present in the classroom”. Student responses on the sixth question are presented in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Student feelings during online classes**



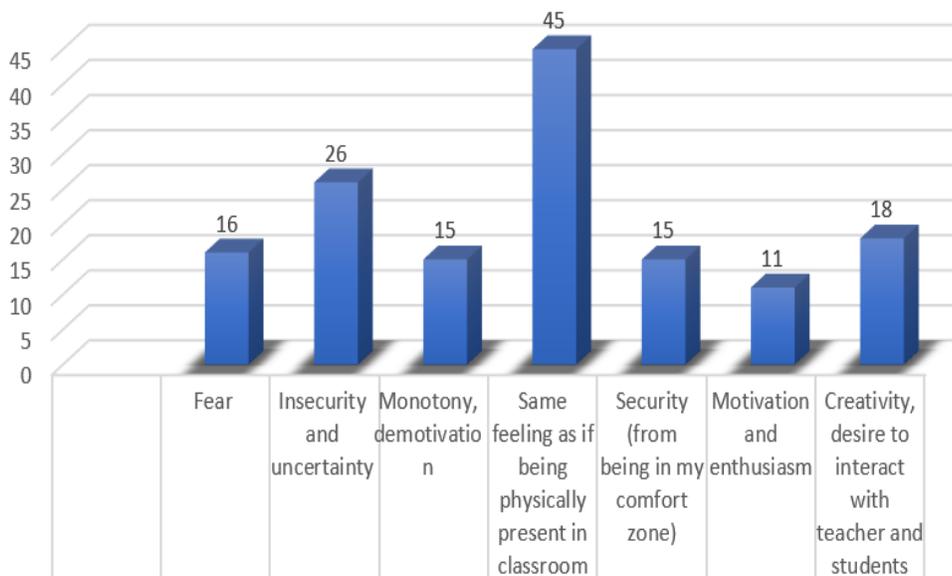
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/improving-well-being-at-school>.

Based on the responses in Figure 6, a conclusion can be made that the dominant feeling of monotony and demotivation results from a sedentary lifestyle involving countless hours in front of their computer screens as well as from under-engagement during and after class, which also leads to lack of focus and enthusiasm. These occurrences were experienced as a source of “stress and anxiety” as explained by respondents in the open-ended segment, and had a negative impact on their emotional well-being, whereas for some students it even impacted their physical well-being. Furthermore, the fact that most respondents explained that they felt in their comfort zone to work from home demonstrates that students need a sense of stability and that many experience emotional insecurities about the new arisen situation, their future profession as translators/interpreters, personal weaknesses, low self-confidence, low motivation, etc. Some students are already aware that Covid-19 has had a negative impact on the global demand for the translator and interpreter profession.

The results in Figure 6 reveal a variety of emotions experienced by respondents ranging from positive emotions (safe, motivated, enthusiastic, creative) to negative emotions (bored, demotivated, insecure, scared, stressed, anxious). These psychological states experienced by students could explain diminished creativity and teamwork during online education (in line with the findings of Barsade & Gipson 2007) as well as diminished students’ attention, concentration and engagement (in line with the findings of Eccles 2005, Moeller et al. 2020, Schiefele 1996 in Zuniga et al. 2021). Hence, the results in Figure 6 do not only reveal an insufficient level of student “engagement” after translation and interpreting education turned fully online, but also show that such psychological states have an impact on students’ emotional well-being.

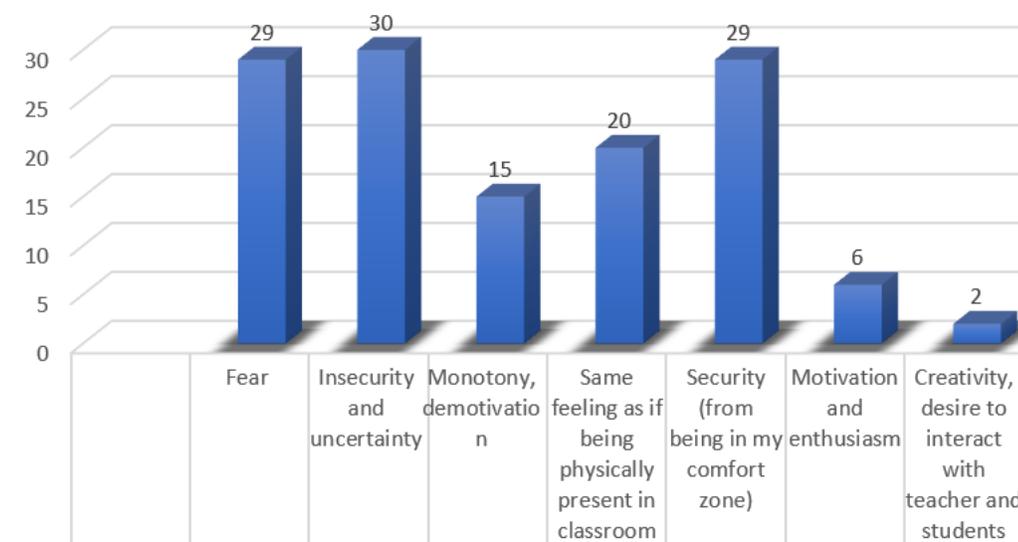
Additionally, when asked how students felt when giving online presentations or participated in online discussions, as high as 30% replied of having the “same feeling as being physically present in the classroom”, whereas 18% experienced “insecurity and uncertainty”. Some also faced “fear” (11%) and/or “monotony and demotivation” (11%), while others reported “creativity” during online presentations and discussion and “desire to interact” with the students and teacher (12%) and/or a feeling of “security” (10%) as well as “motivation and enthusiasm” (8%). Their responses are presented on Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Student feelings during online presentations and discussions**



Most respondents (30%) reported an indifferent feeling of whether presentations and discussion were online or given with physical presence in the classroom. However, more emotional signs were reported when students were asked how they felt during online exams in the past year as presented on Figure 8. Respondents mainly experienced “insecurity and uncertainty” during online exams (22.9%) as a dominant feeling in one student group, followed by “fear” (22.1%) and “security when taking exams from home” (22.1%). Certain students also faced “monotony and demotivation” to take online exams (11.4%), while others reported “motivation and enthusiasm” (4.7%) and/or “creativity and desire to interact” with the students and teacher (1.5%). Only 15.3% gave indifferent responses of not being affected by whether taking exams physically or online. Some respondents in the open-ended segment indicated experiencing “stress and anxiety” even during online exams. Their responses are presented on Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Student feelings during online exams**



By comparing results in Figures 7 and 8 it can be concluded that students are more affected by online exams and not very affected by online presentations or discussions. Several negative feelings were associated with online exams, such as fear and insecurity, with many admitting that they prefer to take exams from their homes (or comfort zones). This particularly indicates that online exams are a source of anxiety and low self-confidence and that teachers must address this issue in order to increase student motivation and self-confidence during online examination.

The results in Figures 6, 7 and 8 confirm that students exhibit emotional signs of stress, such as fear, anxiety, demotivation and low self-confidence. Stress is considered “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being” (Folkman & Lazarus 1984 in Thandavaraj; Gani & Nasir 2021). Fear is the most common feelings among surveyed students and it is an emotional response to stress or uncertainty. In the open-ended segment, fear was often associated with anxiety which is a psychological and physical response to treat a self-concept characterized by subjective, consciously perceived feeling of tension (Spielberger 1983). Considering that emotions play a significant role in psychological well-being of students (Health 2016), such psychological states of fear and anxiety experienced by surveyed students during online education have a great impact on students’ emotional

well-being. Namely, fear and anxiety affect mind and pose physical and psychological threats (Cassady 2001).

The responses presented in Figures 6, 7 and 8 show that many students experienced strong emotions, some of which are negative emotional responses. Students often used emotionally charged words in the open-ended questions or segments in order to describe their feelings. Students used more words describing negative emotion: demotivated, discouraged, uncomfortable, (over)burdened, scared, anxious, confused, isolated, unemphatic, exhausted, upset, unenthusiastic, drained, frustrated, uncompassionate, stressed, unsafe, tired, bored, uninterested, etc. and less words to describe positive emotion: motivated, encouraged, comfortable, safe, creative, focused, emphatic, enthusiastic, compassionate, relaxed, interested, etc. A much smaller percent of surveyed students used emotionally neutral words to explain their emotions experienced: positive, negative, indifferent, involved, uninvolved and similar words.

The myriad of emotional responses provided by students as well as the emotional signs of stress that were experienced by online students in the new e-learning environment confirm that the digital transformation of education has an impact on students' emotional well-being. Bearing in mind these results as well as the findings presented by Eccles (2005), Moeller et al. (2020) and Schiefele (1996), if positive emotions are experienced during online education, it is reasonable to expect improvement in students' attention, concentration and engagement. The transition to online education due to Covid-19 did not only have educational implications evident through new ways of learning, digital collaboration and materials, etc. It also had considerable emotional implications for students, such as, increased stress, personal insecurity, demotivation and lack of enthusiasm as well as emotional signs of stress, such as anxiety.

## Discussion

This paper aims to emphasize the importance of emotional well-being in order for students to achieve a positive experience in the educational process. It can be concluded that online education, which is likely to continue in 2022, must be taken to a different level. Informal skills and competencies, which are of key importance for a future career in translation and interpreting, are usually left out during online education because teachers mainly focus on organizational and digital issues and put student emotional well-being in the background. It is evident that teacher support is needed on generic competencies, such as, emotional intelligence-related activities that could help online students focus on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness or adeptness in relationships, motivation and empathy as generic competences (Bar-On 2006: 21).

The main purpose of introducing emotional intelligence in the translation and interpreting classroom at the author's institution was to provide a unique chance for students to work on self-awareness, managing emotions (such as recognizing their emotions, reflecting on how their emotions affected their work and behavior, reflecting on what triggered their negative emotions and whether they managed to control negative emotions during difficult professional situations while working on simulated translation projects), social skills (team work, empathy in a professional environment), adeptness in relationships (conflict resolution with other peers, role playing) and motivation (exercised activities that build self-confidence and self-motivation) (Sazdovska-Pigulovska 2020: 271-278). Such activities help students use their personal experience (positive or negative) in order to understand the connection between students' emotions, thinking and behavior and raise awareness that students must not only focus on professional development, but on personal development as well. This can be achieved through activities that focus on developing a sense of self-worth and self-knowledge, which help students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses (Sazdovska-Pigulovska 2020: 275). For instance, Carrington and Whitten suggest three activities to developing self-knowledge which contributes to building confidence

and emotional maturity: (1) building self-knowledge, (2) noticing your achievement, and (3) best self-visualization (Carrington & Whitten 2006: 11-17). Self-worth and self-knowledge are only one domain under the broader area of emotional intelligence (Goleman 2001).

The main discussion needs to be centered around methods for improving future (online) translation and interpreting education by taking into account students' emotions even after the global pandemic is over and how to empower translation and interpreting students who are online learners in the digital era by taking into account their emotions. However, support should not only come from the teacher in the form of educational or digital support, but also from peers in the form of moral or social support. Teachers must first help students build self-awareness, which implies becoming aware of their own emotions, developing self-knowledge and a sense of self-worth in order to maintain or build a positive image of themselves during isolation. Furthermore, students especially need help with self-motivation and self-regulation, whereas the latter focuses on how to manage personal emotions.

The online survey results based on thematic analysis as a qualitative research method can be used for determining future trends in online translation and interpreting education. Namely, one definite conclusion is that students would benefit from integrating emotional education within translation and interpreting curricula. The link between emotional learning and the future of education deserves attention and needs to be further investigated. If online education continues to be conducted to any extent (partial or full) in the future, it will require serious changes and improvements that extend beyond the learning environment and put students' well-being in the focus. Namely, online education must be taken to a different level that extends beyond the familiar or scheduled framework, for instance by enhancing student support and by focusing on informal skills and competencies, such as emotional skills and competences. The only way to empower students who are online learners in the digital era is by taking into account their emotional well-being in addition to their cognitive well-being.

The online survey results demonstrate that in addition to environmental factors, students' well-being is affected by personal factors, social factors and emotional factors, which contribute to dealing with emotional signs of stress, motivation, establishing peer groups, relationships, connectedness, etc. These are only initial results, so this hypothesis requires a larger-scale study with more in-depth investigation as to which of these risk factors prevail or more significantly affect students' well-being. As for emotional well-being, it can be improved by building on social and emotional skills, such as emotional awareness, emotion management, self-confidence, empathy, self-evaluation, etc. which are usually left out of the curriculum. Namely, in the current pandemic context both teachers and students are primarily focused on dealing with technology-related challenges in order to keep up with educational and digital novelties.

To conclude, support should not only come in the form of educational or digital support, but should also be in the form of moral or social support from peers and in the form of psychological support from teachers and other professional that could help online students focus on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness or adeptness in relationships, motivation and empathy as generic emotional skills and competences that are of key importance during isolated online education as well as for their future profession as translators and interpreters.

## References

- Bar-On, R. (2006). The Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence. *Psicothema*, 18, 13-25. [www.eiconsortium.org](http://www.eiconsortium.org)
- Barsade, S. G., Gibson, D. E. (2007). Why Does Affect Matter in Organizations?. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 36-59. DOI: 10.5465/AMP.2007.24286163
- Carrington, D., Whitten, H. (2006). *Future Directions*. Ashford Colour Press Ltd. Great Britain

- Cassady, J. C. (2001). The stability of undergraduate students' cognitive test anxiety levels. *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*, 7(20): 55-68. DOI: 10.1016/j.learninstruc.2004.09.002
- Choi, A. (2018). Emotional well-being of children and adolescents: recent trends and relevant factors. *OECD education working papers*, 169. OECD Publishing, Paris.
- Clabaugh, A., Duque, J. F., Fields, L. J. (2021). Academic Stress and Emotional Well-Being in United States College Students Following Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Front Psychol.* 12: 628-787. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.628787.
- Dubey, S., Biswas. P., Ghosh. R., Chatterjee, S., Dubey, M. J., Chatterjee, S., Lahiri, D., Lavie, C. J. (2020). Psychosocial impact of COVID-19. *Diabetes Metab Syndr.* 14(5): 779-788. doi:10.1016/j.dsx.2020.05.035.
- Ekman, P., Friesen, W., Ellsworth, P. (1972). *Emotion in the Human Face: Guidelines for Research and an Integration of Findings*. Oxford: Pergamon
- Elmer, T., Mepham, K., Stadtfeld, C. (2021). Students under lockdown: Comparisons of students' social networks and mental health before and during the COVID-19 crisis in Switzerland. *Journal PLoS ONE*, 15(7): 236-337. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0236337.
- Goleman D. (1998). *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. New York. Bantam Books
- Gopalan, M., Linden-Carmichael. A., Lanza S. (2021). College Students' Sense of Belonging and Mental Health Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Adolescence Health*, 70(2): 228-233. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.10.010.
- Gordon-Starks, D. (2015). Academic advising is relationship building. *Academic Advising Today*, 38(3). <https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Academic-Advising-is-Relationship-Building.aspx>
- Hassan, S.-u.-N., Algahtani, F.D., Atteya, M.R., Almishaal, A.A., Ahmed, A.A., Obeidat, S.T., Kamel, R.M., Mohamed, R.F. (2022). The Impact of Extended E-Learning on Emotional Well-Being of Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Saudi Arabia. *Children*, 9(13): 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children9010013>.
- Health, C. f. C. M. (2016). *2015 Annual Report* (publication No. STA 15-108). In: Pennsylvania State University. University Park, PA.
- Izard, C. E. (1977). *Human Emotions*. New York: Plenum
- Kern, M.L., Waters, L.E., Adler, A., White, M.A. (2015). A multidimensional approach to measuring well-being in students: Application of the PERMA framework. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 10(3): 262-271. doi:10.1080/17439760.2014.936962.
- Kerzič, D., Kalariparampil, J. A., Alvarado, R. P. B., da Silva Bezerra, D., Cheraghi, M., Dobrowolska, P., Fagbamigbe, A. F., Faris, M. E., Franca, T., Gonzales-Fernandez, B., Gonzales-Robledo, L., Inasius, F., Kar, S. K., Lazanyl, K., Lazar, F., Machin-Mastromatteo, J., Maroco, J., Aristovnik, A. (2021). Academic student satisfaction and perceived performance in the e-learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence across ten countries, *Journal PLoS ONE*, 16(10): 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0258807>.
- Kitanovska Kimovska, S., Cvetkoski, V. (2021). The Effect of Emotions on Translation Performance. *Research in Language*, 19(2): 169-186. DOI: 10.18778/1731-7533.19.2.05.
- Lambert, L., Pasha-Zaidi, N. (2016). Using the PERMA Model in the United Arab Emirates. *Social Indicators Research*, 125(3): 905-933. DOI: 10.1007/s11205-015-0866-0.
- Lischer, S., Safi, N., Dickson, C. (2021). Remote learning and students' mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic: A mixed-method enquiry. *Prospects*, 1-11. doi:10.1007/s11125-020-09530-w.
- Nooijer, J., Schneider, F., Versteegen, D. (2020). Optimizing collaborative learning in online courses. *The Clinical Teacher*, 18(4): 19-23. DOI: 10.1111/tct.13243.

- Park, N. (2004). The role of subjective well-being in positive youth development. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 591(1): 25-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203260078>.
- Sazdovska-Pigulovska, M. (2020). Introducing Emotional Intelligence in the Translation Classroom. In Book of Proceedings: *Resources and Tools for T&I Education*. International Conference of Karl Franzens Universität (Austria), Graz (pp. 271-278). Frank & Timme GmbH Berlin
- Sazdovska-Pigulovska, M. (2021a). Organization of Online Language and Translation Teaching and Examination in Times of Covid-19. *Palimpsest*, 6(11): 261-272. e-ISSN 2545-3998
- Sazdovska-Pigulovska, M. (2021b). Integrating Experiential Learning in the Virtual Translation Classroom. In Book of Proceedings: *The Roles and Identities of Interpreters and Translators in an Ever-Changing World*. International Conference of the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (South Korea), Seoul (pp. 43-53).
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Free Press.
- Spielberger, C. (1983). *The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory*. Florida USA: Mind Garden.
- Thandavaraj E. J., Gani N. A. N., Nasir M. K. M. (2021). A Review of Psychological Impact on Student Online Learning during Covid-19 in Malaysia. *Creative Education*, 12(6): 1296-1306. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2021.126097>
- Trends Shaping Education. (2018). *In 2018 Spotlight*. OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/education/cei/Spotlight-14-Good-Vibrations-Students%27-Well-being.pdf>
- Zapata-Ospina, J.P, Patiño-Lugo, D.F., Vélez, C.M., Campos-Ortiz, S., Madrid-Martínez, P., Pemberthy-Quintero, S., Pérez-Gutiérrez AM, Ramírez-Pérez, P.A., Vélez-Marín, V.M. (2021). Mental health interventions for college and university students during the COVID-19 pandemic: a critical synthesis of the literature. *Revista Colombiana Psiquiatria*, 50(3): 199-213. doi: 10.1016/j.rcp.2021.04.007.
- Zuniga, C., Pego, L., Escamilla, J., Hosseini, S. (2021). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' feelings at high school, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels. *Heliyon*, 7(3): 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06465>.
- Umucu, E., Wu, J.-R., Sanchez, J., Brooks, J. M., Chiu, C.-Y., Tu, W.-M., Chan, F. (2020). Psychometric validation of the PERMA-profiler as a well-being measure for student veterans. *Journal of American College Health*, 68(3): 271–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2018.1546182>.

## Pedagogical uses of language focused on music to support linguistic wellbeing during emergency remote teaching

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.02>

Sladana Marić

University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy  
sladjana.maric@ff.uns.ac.rs

### **Abstract**

*The aim of this research was to particularly focus on the intersection of language and music education, specifically pedagogical uses of language focused on classical music to support the linguistic wellbeing of students in an online learning environment. The research was conducted during a six-week course period of English as a foreign language lessons online with 30 second-year students of Music Performance at the Secondary Music School in Serbia during the remote teaching and learning period in 2020. The research implemented a fully online learning model. The qualitative results obtained from the research and presented in this paper, suggest that the course had an impact on the learners in terms of their overall positive reactions towards their language learning and linguistic wellbeing. Therefore, in the following period, the aim is to further research the intersections of language, pedagogy and the role of music on linguistic wellbeing in different language education contexts.*

**Keywords:** digital resources, English in Professional Music Education (EPME), linguistic wellbeing, music-related vocabulary, teaching methodology.

### **Introduction**

Language practitioners and researchers have increasingly focused their attention on the importance of both teacher and student psychological health and wellbeing, offering insightful research findings on creating opportunities for more positive relationships in teaching (online) lessons, avoiding possible personal and contextual stressors which can threaten wellbeing (leading to worrying rates of stress and burnout), developing skills for managing emotions and behavior, maintaining healthy body and mind during the school year, developing and improving motivation, energy levels and concentration in learning (MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer 2020, Hessel et al. 2020, Mercer 2020, 2021, Shin et al. 2021, Resnik & Dewaele 2021). However, in this paper, we contribute to a less researched intersection of linguistic wellbeing, specifically student linguistic wellbeing, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) research and pedagogical research literature. Defining *wellbeing* has proven to be very challenging, as it is regarded as a multidimensional, dynamic, and context-dependent construct (Sulis et al. 2021). In this article, the term “linguistic wellbeing” is referred to as a complex and dynamic system of developing, perfecting and strengthening skills of caring and responsibility for linguistic knowledge and use of language(s) in learning, education and different interactions between one’s experiences across all life domains.” During the lockdown period, from March 2020, the proposed or mandated measures of physical distancing, travel restrictions, prohibitions of large gatherings of people, have especially affected sectors of the arts, such as music, opera, ballet, dance, theatre, cultural and creative industries (Flew & Kirkwood 2020). One of the main problems of forced lockdown restrictions was evident in the possible reduced emotional wellbeing of many worldwide. As noted by Sheppard & Broughton (2020: 14) “childhood and adulthood are critical periods of life in which to establish participation in activities that are going to assist people to maintain their wellbeing and health into old age”. According to

Martínez-Castilla et al. (2021: 4), “perceived wellbeing through music performance or music listening is also positively related to individuals’ ratings of music’s importance in their lives” where lower emotional stability may be related to an emotional use of music, while the “music’s importance is associated to perceived wellbeing through musical behavior”. In the context of Music Arts education, schools have worked intensely to develop different strategies for adapting to the mandated rules and restrictions, all with the aim of providing continuous and quality education in various teaching and learning environments.

### **Aims of research**

The aim of this research was to investigate the implementation of in practice specific language course materials focused on classical music, appropriate for the English in Professional Music Education (EPME) online course and how it contributes to (linguistic) well-being of students during the remote teaching and learning period in 2020.

### **Research methodology**

#### **Research method**

In this *action research*, a qualitative data analysis approach of discourse analysis was applied. The Action Research “mode of inquiry is increasingly employed in SLE-oriented studies (Second Language Education) enabling interested, committed scholars to be proactively involved in their studies” (King, Lai & May 2017: 22).

Action research is a teacher-designed and managed small-scale investigation, also known as “classroom-based action research”, “educational action research” (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller 2014, 103, 285), or “classroom research by a teacher” (McDonough, Shaw & Masuhara 2013). As defined by Brown and Coombe (2015: 99), it is “an approach grounded in practical action (the action component) while at the same time focused on generating, informing, and building theory (research component)”. Additionally, Wallace (1998: 16) states that it is very focused on individual or small-group professional practice, and can be defined as a “systematic collection and analysis of data relating to the improvement of some aspect of professional practice”. In other words, action research is enacted with the main function “to facilitate the ‘reflective cycle’, and in this way provide an effective method for improving professional action” (Wallace 1998: 18) or “to deepen teacher professionalism” (Burns 2010: 166).

Action and research as behaviors come together in action research (AR) “through cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection that problematize (in a positive sense) issues, dilemmas or gaps that concern us in our teaching situations” (Burns 2010: 19). It empowers teacher-researchers in acquiring deeper insights and understanding of their practices (Burns 2013: 90), as it “involves iterations or cycles of problem identification, action planning, implementation, evaluation and reflection” (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller 2014: 233), and not necessarily concerned with change (Nunan 1992: 18).

Based on the findings by Nunan (1992: 19) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018: 440), for the research procedure, the following stages were chosen and applied: problem identification, planning an intervention, implementing the intervention, data collection, evaluating the outcome, reflection and teacher professional development.

#### **Data collection**

The objective of this research study was to provide opportunities for support to linguistic well-being of students by using in practice specific language course materials focused on classical music, appropriate for the English in Professional Music Education (EPME) online course, all in correlation with the national curriculum, needs and preferences of learners. Data collected in this research included 1) the Google Classroom materials created for teaching and learning (links, online videos, texts, tests,

assignments, etc.), 2) online classroom posts and discussions, 3) audio recordings as homework activities by students, and 4) digital documents (written assignments, feedback, questionnaire/forms - test, quiz, surveys, posts, email messages, etc.) from the online class held in a Secondary Music education context (Vojvodina, the Republic of Serbia, Europe), during the remote teaching and learning period in 2020.

### **Participants and setting**

Before the pandemic, the learning environment included the physical presence of a small or large class of students in the school environment, using traditional learning and teaching materials (books, notebooks, printed materials, board/whiteboard, CD player or other audio-visual media) in class, and with the emergency transition to online teaching and learning, the fully online coursebook compatible learning management system (LMS) and other non-General English activities created and used in the online classrooms environments. It is important to note that the stage of a research study aimed at the analysis of students' needs (*necessities, lacks and wants*) in learning was not conducted before the start of the course, due to the many reasons connected to the duration of the pandemic measures and limited time. Consequently, the prepared course was designed to offer new learning opportunities with available technologies and resources to satisfy the basic "need to actually enjoy the process of acquisition" (Hutchinson & Waters 1987: 51), without any additional costs for the learning materials distribution or learning management system requirements, as students would require only an internet connection, google classroom and a device they feel comfortable working on (a tablet, phone or computer). Therefore, a need analysis is regarded as a continuing process, and the conclusions drawn will be constantly checked and re-assessed. Furthermore, the analysis of students' needs was eventually conducted "behind the scenes", during the course, by carefully monitoring student reactions during and after certain activities, in written comments and through shared ideas. In addition, at the end of the course through an "exit survey" students were given the opportunity to evaluate all the course materials as well as teacher preparedness, choice of materials and technology and performance in class. Students provided very open, sincere and positive feedback in this survey, commenting on all the aspects of the course: personal satisfaction with the course, teacher preparation, choice of materials, learning activities, tasks difficulty and technology used. To some researchers, the limitation of this survey might be that it was conducted in a specific setting, during the pandemic, and with a rather small group of students, to some, it may be a valuable insight in the context of research on linguistic wellbeing of students.

### **Design and implementation timeframes and teaching contexts**

The first draft plan of a syllabus for EPME classes was created and piloted with the total of 33 secondary school students of Year 2, of Music Theory and Music Performance, at a Music School in the northern province of Vojvodina in the Republic of Serbia (Europe), in the previous school year of 2019/2020. In the context of a physical classroom, the digital media used was 1) a personal portable computer and speakers for video presentations and 2) a "non-obligatory" Google Classroom, for sharing in class the additional learning materials with examples of music specific content in English, for self-guided learning and development using mobile devices or personal computers. The general English learning was accomplished with a commercial coursebook pack approved by the National Ministry of Education. The curriculum part dedicated to the "language of the profession" included the learning activities (e.g. music scores for singing, text analysis, creative writing, etc.), created with the aim to establish important cross-curricular connections between the level of learning English (as a foreign language) and the knowledge in music-specific subjects in a particular year of studies. However, after March 2020, all the in-class activities were moved to a learning management system (LMS) of the coursebook pack for General English, while the already pre-established online classroom served as a

bridge for offering additional activities, aimed at music content in particular, and offered a space for the main classroom communication and interaction.

### **Language focused on classical music and aimed towards linguistic wellbeing of students**

For the following school year in September 2020, according to the national recommendations plan, all the language classes were offered online, while subject-specific lessons, such as instrument lessons, and smaller group lectures were held in a blended or physical classroom environment. A new group of 30 second-year students of the Music Performance Class had participated in a fully online English language learning environment. Lesson plans and activities were redesigned to the “new normal” of emergency remote online or distance learning. The lessons were held in a period of the first six weeks of the school year and were later followed by the commercial full general English language coursebook with another appointed teacher, due to internal staff reorganization actions enacted within the school, in the pandemic period. In terms of technologies, for the time duration of the EPME course, students were asked to use only their digital devices with the internet connection.

The main teaching and learning environment was the online classroom in which only the content for the lessons was published each week on the day of the lesson. The main working languages were both English and Serbian, with all the guidelines provided in both English and Serbian. Activities focused on language listening, reading, writing and speaking skills.

As the lesson format and timeframe has changed (from two classes per week to one 90 minutes lesson), this opened the space for introducing “thematic lessons”. For the second grade of English for the students of Music Performance, the lessons in ESP Music were organized in the following order:

- Week 1: Introduction and obligatory initial test (in general English and basic music terminology, lessons 1&2),
- Week 2: Music Arts and Music School: Music Instruments (lessons 3 & 4),
- Week 3: Music Arts and Music School: Terminology in Music (Music Theory, Harmony, Music Analysis, (lessons 5 & 6),
- Week 4: Music Arts and Music School: Music Culture/History of Music/Music Appreciation (listening to music)(lessons 7 & 8),
- Week 5: Music Heritage and Institutions of Culture, Museums - “Listening to Music Today” (lessons 9 & 10),
- Week 6: Music Education and Institutions of Music Culture (lessons 11 & 12).

Even in the first obligatory initial test, taking place online (for the first time), the aim was not to stress students, having in mind the generally disturbing and uncertain times lived in 2020, and offer a completely unstandardized test with comprehension listening and writing tasks (basic language activities in general English with connection to the knowledge of basic music terminology). The understanding and application of the concept of *linguistic wellbeing* were mainly supported through the *language activities focused on music* in relation to:

- bringing satisfaction, joy or happiness to students learning in the online environments (“hedonic perspective” centered on the notion of *happiness*, conceptualizing wellbeing in terms of gaining pleasure and avoiding negative effects (Sulis et al. 2021: 2),
- strengthening confidence in foreign language use, specifically English focused on music (language for the profession),
- regulation of social anxiety (e.g. “reading aloud texts” as speaking activities with personalized in-depth feedback to every student focused on strategies for further growth and development), and
- sensitivity and emotional vulnerability of students, as they were facing a different communication and learning context after a decade of traditional schooling experiences.

## Findings

Listening, reading and writing skills were practiced through the activities designed in the format of the *Google Forms* with linked videos within the form (at the specific position) different types of tasks, such as filling in the gaps, single or multiple choice answers and writing the answer. Additionally, for an introductory part, *Padlet* was used as a type of media offering students the possibility to write a short text and attach media. In terms of speaking skills, as students were not in the position to use the synchronous platforms for videoconferencing (lack of equal access to technologies, different timetables, location, etc.), to be able to communicate and interact with their voices being heard, they were encouraged to instantly use the chat for any type of question, comment or a form of a reply, as they would normally do in *vocalized speech*.

*Why read-aloud longer texts?* Firstly, as in the physical classroom, in online lessons students may demonstrate different levels of willingness to participate and practice their language vocalized performance. The “reading aloud” as an activity in online synchronous lessons would require time for both the readers and listeners and can be replaced by shorter speaking and reading activities. In this asynchronous online learning context, the “audience” was only the teacher. The social anxiety of “reading aloud”, especially “sight-reading” a text, is therefore postponed to the moment of turning the record button “on”. This allowed students to read, or not to read, the text before making the recording, as it can be easily heard in their pronunciation, intonation, tone and changes of “speed” while reading, the background noise, etc. Through the feedback analysis on the recordings of reading aloud longer texts, students were able to further work on their speaking and specific pronunciation skills, without the “pressure of other students as the audience” in class. This was evident, as students continued to practice, re-submit the full recordings or recordings of certain parts, and recorded their following reading tasks with greater confidence and success. Although this was an extremely time-consuming activity for the teacher, having in mind the total number of students and amount of material for carefully listening, teacher note-taking and providing clear and usable feedback to every student, it helped in establishing personal contact and trust. Most importantly, it encouraged students to engage in this type of vocal linguistic practice through the sound of their voice, as usually, musicians engage in transferring messages through the sound of music played or sung. These activities additionally (and unintentionally) revealed other information about the health of students, as the vocal apparatus was the main medium for the completion of this task.

For the generation of student participants, now aged 14 to 16 years, the use of cartoons, especially the chosen episodes, was a positive and joyful experience. Students were open to sharing their excitement and thoughts. They reported that they highly enjoyed these cartoons, as they were familiar with the characters and this “brought up some childhood memories”, but rarely had seen these specific episodes, or vaguely remember some inserts (e.g. in most cases they have seen only the “The Cat Concerto”). Some of the chosen cartoons using themes or tunes from the music pieces from the Classical Music repertoire as the main narrator of the story, such as “Music Land” - *Silly Symphonies*, Disney (1935), and “Tom and Jerry: “Hollywood Bowl” (1950), “The Cat Above and the Mouse Below” (1964), “The Cat Concerto” (1947), were also used for practicing speaking skills, through retelling the plot of a story in a foreign language and presenting the roles of the characters (usually instruments or musicians - conductor, an opera singer, pianist, orchestra player). The cartoon with narration in English and themes or tunes from the music piece from the Classical Music repertoire, titled “Johann Mouse” (1952), was used for practicing language skills and strengthening confidence in foreign language use. Specifically English focused on Music were practiced by reading the story transcript (from the paper or within the following video) with musical accompaniment - “Tom and Jerry ‘Johann Mouse’ - Tomodachi

Tokyo piano” (YouTube video<sup>9</sup>). Most of the instruments in these cartoons are illustrated through animated images with their unique sounds (sound of “real” instruments playing) and these episodes, therefore, are adequate for developing skills in music appreciation knowledge as well.

**Figure 1:** Screenshot of the video example for reading with musical accompaniment from the cartoon *Tom and Jerry “Johann Mouse”*



Furthermore, in the cartoon titled *Tom and Jerry “Johann Mouse”* one particular scene - “How To Play The Waltz In Six Easy Lessons by Johann Strauss”, (duration less than a minute), offered different ideas for analysis, discussion and online debate (social interaction) in the English language as part of learning activities, connected to music education, music theory, music appreciation, music instruments presentations/illustrations, etc. In this scene, Tom teaches himself how to play the piano, following the guidebook, which consists of how to correctly play the first nine notes of “The Blue Danube” - instantaneously becoming an accomplished pianist. The discussion included: 1) the visual presentation of the melody through six pages (Lesson I - Lesson VI), starting from one note, and ending with all nine notes in the last lesson, 2) how the keyboard piano keys and keystrokes do not correspond to the proper keys on the piano while playing this tune (*not* “the exact notes” from the score), 3) the overall process of music learning and performance, and 4) the river Danube and its connections to different cultures, languages and places.

As music may impact the overall wellbeing of an individual, one of the language learning activities included a piece from the Classical Music repertoire by the English composer Gustav Holst, titled *The Planets*, Op. 32 (1914 -1917), a seven-movement orchestral suite, with a joined wordless female chorus (in “Neptune”), representing “the power of the human imagination to see and hear the unknown” and “each of the seven movements of this suite is meant to express the ideas and emotions associated with a planet’s effect on people and the world, as outlined in astrology” (Gale, Moore & Ruddy 2013: 15). The work is scored for a large orchestra<sup>10</sup>. For the context of language learning and teaching, the choice of recorded video materials included the London Philharmonic Orchestra inserts from the series “Listening Guide to Holt’s The Planets”, as in these audio-visual video materials main abstract ideas are accompanied by concrete visual presentations that can become more understandable to learners, as the audience. When watching and listening simultaneously to these audio-visual materials, students were able to test their understanding of certain video content presented (audio and visual capacities being

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RocSoOpMJao>

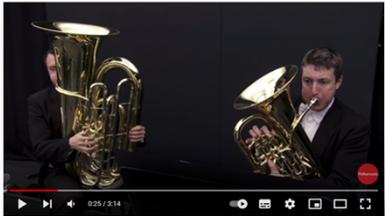
<sup>10</sup> (Music specific vocabulary in English) Score instrumentation - Woodwinds: four flutes (2 piccolos and 2 flutes), two oboes, one cor anglais, bass oboe, three clarinets in B $\flat$  and A, one bass clarinet in B $\flat$ , three bassoons, one contrabassoon, Brass: six horns in F, four trumpets in C, two trombones, one bass trombone, one tenor tuba in B $\flat$  (often played on a euphonium), one tuba; Percussion: six timpani (two players), bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, triangle, tam-tam, tambourine, glockenspiel, xylophone, tubular bells. Strings: two harps, violins, violas, cellos, double basses; Keyboards: celesta, organ; (Full Score [https://ia902803.us.archive.org/5/items/Holst\\_ThePlanets/Holst\\_ThePlanets.pdf](https://ia902803.us.archive.org/5/items/Holst_ThePlanets/Holst_ThePlanets.pdf))

stimulated at the same time), having an opportunity for *transferability* across cognitive tasks, as a major challenge in learning both languages (verbal memory tasks) and music (non-verbal, and combined with verbal memory tasks). Music students generally through their education develop skills in listening to music, music dictation, singing and playing in smaller or larger groups, and these video materials provided an opportunity for enhancing specific language comprehension skills and memory by listening and watching relying on the many paralinguistic features like mimicking, gestures, postures, or attitudes that can assist them in grasping the meaning of the foreign language study material, and English language focused on music content (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Listening, reading and quiz “Holst's *The Planets*”

Listening, reading, quiz in Google Forms - “Holst's <i>The Planets</i> ” (duration of all videos is about 30 minutes in total)	Answers
<p><i>Listening Guide Holst's The Planets - Mars, the Bringer of War.</i></p>  <p>...“Yet, musically ‘Mars’ is very straight-forward. It’s driven by a single repeating pattern or o _____ that dominates the entire movement.” ...</p> <p>“The music is scored in the less conventional five-four (5/4) time signature with five beats in each _____. As westerners, we seem genetically programmed to feel four beats in the bar as more natural, so five-four (5/4) immediately puts us on edge.” ...</p> <p>“It’s coloured by a rather mechanical sound in the strings section. Holst creates this by utilising the technique of ‘col legno’, which means ‘_____’ in Italian.” ...</p>	<p><i>ostinato, bar, with the wood</i></p>
<p><i>The Planets – Venus, the Bringer of Peace.</i></p>  <p>“One of Holst’s greatest skills as a _____ is in its use of contrast and nowhere is that more evident than in his music for ‘Venus’.</p> <p>“But the most surprising thing isn’t what Holst does, it’s what he doesn’t do. Look at how empty the score is...Holst has one hundred musicians at his disposal, yet, ‘Venus’ sounds more like intimate _____ music.</p> <p>“Much of the twinkling Holst refers to is created by the addition of two harps, a glockenspiel and celeste in the orchestra. Celeste was invented in France towards</p>	<p><i>composer, chamber, orchestration</i></p>

<p>the end of the nineteenth century, so it was still a fairly new and exotic sound when Holst included it in his _____.</p>																										
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;">Listening Guide: Holst's The Planets - Mercury, the Winged Messenger</p> </div> <p><i>Holst's The Planets - Mercury.</i> "If we look at the _____ score, notice that Holst incorporates some very unusual techniques, with some instruments scored at two flats, whilst others play with three sharps, and some have no key signature at all." ...</p> <p>"The music is fast-footed and lightly scored and feels similar to a _____ movement of a symphony. ...</p> <p>"The timing is clearly six-eight [6/8] with six _____ in each bar, like this. (Listening). Cutting against the six-eight scoring [6/8] we hear racing semiquavers grouped in fours which rise up through the orchestra. [Listening]. And then crochets tumble gently downwards more like a waltz in three-four time [3/4]. ...</p> <p>Note duration - match the name in British English with the name in American English.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%;">whole note</th> <th style="width: 20%;">half note</th> <th style="width: 20%;">quarter note</th> <th style="width: 20%;">eighth note</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>semibreve</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>minim</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>crotchet</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>quaver</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		whole note	half note	quarter note	eighth note	semibreve					minim					crotchet					quaver					<p><i>orchestral, scherzo, quavers</i></p> <p><i>semibreve = whole note</i></p> <p><i>minim = half note</i></p> <p><i>crotchet = quarter note</i></p> <p><i>quaver = eighth note</i></p>
	whole note	half note	quarter note	eighth note																						
semibreve																										
minim																										
crotchet																										
quaver																										
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;">Listening Guide: Holst's The Planets - Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity</p> </div> <p><i>The Planets – Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity.</i> "On top, the main theme is quirky and syncopated and it's sounded out by six _____ and the entire forces of the viola and cello sections. [Listening]." ...</p> <p>"So, the theme we just met out in the horns is also played by the timps. [Listening]. Notice how in order for the timps to play the entire theme, Holst has to share the music between _____ (<i>two/three/four</i>) players so they cover all the notes."</p>	<p><i>horns, two</i></p>																									

 <p>Listening Guide: Holst's The Planets - Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age</p> <p><i>The Planets – Saturn, the bringer of old age.</i> The opening bars of ‘Saturn’ have been described as a ticking clock with flutes and harps gently rocking back and forth between two _____. Underneath, Holst scores a slow and expansive main theme in the double basses and it brilliantly paints a picture of time slowly passing by. ...</p> <p>This is followed by a solemn procession, and I don’t think it’s specifically a funeral march, but it’s worth noting that the bass theme is taken out by the _____ (<i>trombones/pianos/drums</i>) who throughout history have had a very strong association with sacred music.</p>	<p><i>chords, trombones</i></p>
 <p>Listening Guide: Holst's The Planets - Uranus, the Magician</p> <p><i>The Planets – Uranus, the Magician.</i> Hello, my name is Paul Rissmann and I’m going to guide you through the _____ movement of ‘The Planets – Uranus, the Magician’ whose arrival is announced by a fanfare of trumpets, trombones and timpani. [Listening]. ...</p> <p>"The planet Uranus moves on a completely unique axis as it rotates on its side and perhaps the unconventional motion is represented here by this bombastic lolling _____ (<i>march/waltz/polka/tango</i>) tune."</p>	<p><i>sixth, march</i></p>
 <p>Listening Guide: Holst's The Planets - Neptune, the Mystic</p> <p><i>The Planets – Neptune: the mystique.</i></p> <p>"I think that Neptune’s orchestration is the most exquisite in the entire suite. Every _____ choice is carefully calculated and perfectly balanced, such as the bass flute casting a dark shadow underneath the regular concert flute or the magical shimmer that radiates from the harps. This adventurous orchestration produced music which today, almost one hundred years later, still feels futuristic. But I guess that connection is reinforced by the fact that Hollywood composers have clearly been influenced by Holst. It’s certainly not difficult to imagine this</p>	<p><i>instrument, audience, voice</i></p>

<p>music as a soundtrack to your favourite Sci-Fi movie. [Listening]. ...</p> <p>"In addition to the lavishly expanded orchestra on stage, Holst also requires that we have a ladies chorus cunningly concealed from the _____. The scoring of a ladies choir into the final bars of The Planets is one of the most extravagant but most brilliant moments in the history of music and you can't help to admire Holst to have been brave enough to do it. [Listening]." ...</p> <p>"Throughout the suite, he has explored the influence that planets have on our daily life, so what better way than to complete this extraordinary journey than with the sound of the human _____. [Listening]."</p>	
---	--

The music-related activities of singing, listening to music or performing music are considered especially useful and beneficial for emotional wellbeing, obtaining feelings of enjoyment, maintaining a good mood and getting distracted from the crisis (Martínez-Castilla et al. 2021), through the use of easily accessible digital media technologies (radio, TV, online media, mobile apps, etc.). Acknowledging the fact of fast distribution of information and content online, in this course, students were introduced to the idea of “the lesson gift-bag” that included additional readings and links to videos in English connected to performances or concert live streams, music scores, etc. For example, in week 4 (lessons 7&8) thematically focused on “Music Arts and Music School: Music Culture/History of Music/Music Appreciation (listening to music)”, it included a voluntary music activity of listening, playing, singing and sharing of a choral music piece (solo or in group online) titled “Sing Gently” by Eric Whitacre, created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Students were provided with the lyrics, a link to the video recording of the performance (“Virtual Choir 6”) and a copy of a music score as a pdf. During that particular period, students were daily exposed to hearing about the loss of many people in the world or local community, and the idea of including this particular choral piece in the course was intentionally offered as an additional activity, to provide students with “new” music, music that “might give some small measure of comfort for those who need it, and that might suggest a way of living with one another that is compassionate, gentle, and kind” (Whitacre, 2020). As it was a “gift” to which students replied with expressing thanks, usually using emoticons, the impact on wellbeing was not “measured”.

**The students’ voices**

In the following part, an example of a homework activity connected to the use of digital media is presented. Content and vocabulary from the lesson are approached but with a different task of writing a short text (5 to 10 sentences) commenting on an interesting or important topic or topics from the assigned video, e.g. Video documentary that goes behind the scenes at the Philharmonia Orchestra's “Universe of Sound” project. In the following part, the statements of students related to wellbeing in general and linguistic wellbeing were identified (emotions, individual reactions to music, musicians, performers, video content and technology used).

(Comment 1) This project was made back in 2013. I find it very interesting, especially the fact that they gave the audience an opportunity to experience how playing instruments actually feels like. There are standard instruments that they were using in “The Planets”, such as the violin, bass, flute, horn, trombone, and there are some unusual, such as the glockenspiel, snare drum, triangle, and double tubular bells. Each of these instruments has their own special sound, but all together they sound way much better and stronger. People in England are full of ideas and inspirations! This project surely was a big challenge for each of those hard-working people, but together they did a great thing!

(Comment 2) For me it is hard to say what is interesting in this video. The whole story about the

orchestra is amazing! Musicians and instruments are wonderful. This was completely new for me that there is such a great production of 37 cameras, 360d kw light, and little action cameras that people can use to record themselves while they are playing.

(Comment 3) I really liked the way they combined technology with the orchestra. People without education in music and who don't have the opportunity to be part of the orchestra can see the whole process. I think simulations in this project are really good and innovative, something I personally have not seen before. This is a tremendous project and I hope that future projects will build upon the existing, as far greater and better.

(Comment 4) This video presents many interesting things related to the Philharmonia Orchestra. It shows how music technology has advanced. It was interesting to see the Museum of Science, which has rooms with sections in which are shown the videos of the orchestra. I like the part with the women choir of eighteen singers singing in church. That church has good acoustics. Philharmonia Orchestra offers a unique interactive element for practicing conducting by following the patterns on the screen. I like this video because people who work in the Philharmonia Orchestra love their dynamic work.

(Comment 5) "The Making of Universe of Sound" - what a brilliant idea! I am fascinated! I would definitely recommend it. An outstandingly numerous team of artists decided to make a gigantic (enormous) installation by combining classical music and science. The performance attracted a lot of people who were experiencing video pictures that they could actually walk into and interact with. In my opinion, the most spectacular fact is the number of people who were engaged in such a colossal project. Musicians, including music players and singers, composers, music supervisors, GoPro operators, sound engineers, lead editors, interactive developers, office staff...and a lot more. I wonder how it was possible to organize them at all? It looks like a real jigsaw puzzle to me where each individual piece had to be perfectly arranged! It is the most stimulating show I have ever seen. Don't you agree that that's really inspiring for us, young musicians?

(Comment 6) They made a project with the help of music and technology. They combined music with science and the technical possibilities of recording. Using the latest technology and digital objects (cameras and sound systems) they tried to bring people closer to what it's like to play in an orchestra. They recorded the orchestra with 45 microphones and 37 cameras, which they divided into sections - strings, winds, percussion, choir, and finally combined and assembled everything that was recorded. The whole project seems very interesting to me and I wish I could visit it!

(Comment 7) I personally find the whole idea and the concept mind-blowing and brilliant! All participants were extremely dedicated and paid attention to every single detail, such as the audio and camera angle. I really liked how the digital posters were made to present the orchestra instruments and music in a completely unconventional way. This project has shown people who are not in the "musical world", how playing in an orchestra really feels like. It attracted people who usually wouldn't go to a classical music concert or a museum, and showed them how it really looks like, from the artistic point of view.

(Comment 8) The whole project is fascinating, it is so unusual and unreal. It is amazing how they used so much equipment. I like the dedication of all workers, as they look like a big family. It is a new way to help classical music "stay alive", to color it with new digital technology. I find it very interesting that anyone can try conducting and playing musical instruments, like playing video games.

In the course design, special emphasis was also put on the implementation of contemporary video materials, especially in the form of vlogs by young professional musicians, e.g. pianist Tiffany Poon (YouTube), offering learners quality input language that can be reused in creative ways and help students to improve their communication in speaking and writing. It is important to underline also the potential role of *creativity* in cultivating and supporting linguistic wellbeing. The aim of these activities was to empower personal creative expression in a foreign language using comments sections, as a space that offers the possibility to revisit, edit and receive feedback from others. For example, to the questions “What was your first experience with classical music?” and “What is classical music to you? What does it mean to you?”, students answers included comments such as:

(Q1) *“What was your first experience with classical music?”*

(Comment 1) My first experience with classical music was going to the theater with my family, where we listened to Emanuel Pahud, the best flute player in the world, where my desire for music was born.

(Comment 2) I do not remember my first experience, but I do know that I was very young because my grandmother used to bring me to the theater with her, but I don't really remember my encounters with classical music before music school.

(Comment 3) Probably when my older brother started primary musical school.

(Comment 4) My first touch with classical music was when I was really young, because that genre of music is a genre that my family is listening to, and it's kinda normal that I started to listen to it too.

(Comment 5) I first experienced classical music when my mum took me to a concert when I was 5 years old. My aunt played the violin there and my mum's intention was to get me to like the violin and perhaps start playing it in the future. I honestly didn't like the violin, but I fell in love with the flute and I have been playing it ever since.

(Q2) *What is classical music to you? What does it mean to you?*

(Comment 1) For me that's my passion and hopefully my future profession.

(Comment 2) It relaxes me and I like to play it on my instrument.

(Comment 3) Classical music plays a very important role in my life and it makes it a hundred times better. It's relaxing and, at the same time, it reduces tension or anxiety. When I'm sad or nervous, classical music is my escape from reality. In my opinion, people all around the world should listen to classical music because it offers a lot of inspiration and pleasure.

As the “achievement of communicative purposes increasingly relies on the employment of not only linguistic resources but also digital and multimodal resources” (Xia 2020: 156), the choice of assigned video materials was also (re)evaluated through commenting as a classroom activity. For example, for all the videos students presented in class, the reactions of students in the comments sections were very open and informative, as in the following section:

1. *“What is classical music to you and me? Tiffany Vlogs”*

“I like it a lot because it is about people's opinion on classical music which varies from person to person as we are all different and it means different things to us” (comment 1);

“In this video, Tiffany is talking about other people's first experiences with classical music. She is comparing their opinion with her own. I like her passion and enthusiasm. I totally agree with her that classical music, both playing and listening to it, is the way of life.” (comment 2);

“Tiffany wanted to show us classical music in her own way, to explain to us how classical music affects people” (comment 3),

“I really liked her way of thinking. Classical music is something special that awakens a lot of feelings in a person. Today, it is difficult to find such a good video on this topic”(comment 4).

2. *Insert from the movie “A Song to Remember” - Chopin & Liszt:*

- "I like Chopin's Polonaise op.53 in this video. The video is interesting." (comment 1);  
 "It is really an interesting clip because it shows Chopin's and Liszt's relationship, as Liszt is playing Chopin's unfinished piece but nobody in the room knows that he is the composer. It is a bit funny, too." (comment 2);  
 "In this video, I really love the music. It made the biggest impression on me. The most interesting moment was when two famous composers, Liszt and Chopin, met and played together. It was amazing!"(Comment 3),  
 "This video was very exciting to watch. (...)" (Comment 4).
3. *"The Cat Concerto" - Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 - Franz Liszt - piano - Canacana:*  
 "The video is very nice."(Comment 1);  
 "Inspiring."(Comment 2),  
 "I very much like the idea that this music is used in the cartoon Tom and Jerry. I have to say that I didn't know that and actually it brings back childhood memories..."(Comment 3);  
 "Playing the piano in the video is magnificent. I like her passion and the way she plays it. The idea of combining her playing with cartoon scenes is very interesting and inspiring. (Comment 4);  
 "Tom and Jerry are a very familiar cartoon to all of us. It's a very nice way to play through this cartoon." (Comment 5),  
 "Music is special precisely because it can be shown in any way we want, just like this one." (Comment 6).
4. *"Rick Steves - Salzburg and Surroundings":*  
 "This video explains about Salzburg and Mozart. Salzburg is a very beautiful town."(Comment 1);  
 "It is Mozart's birthplace and the presenter walks us through the great composer's life and even the dances of this historical period. Magnificent! (...) I would like to visit Salzburg one day."(Comment 2);  
 "Rick Steves is introducing Salzburg, the birthplace of Mozart. He is talking about some of the most important sights there, beautiful nature, people and entertainment. The funniest thing for me there would be trying the summer bobsledding." (Comment 3);  
 "This video was the most beautiful for me because Mozart is one of my favourite composers. At the beginning of the video, I really like the clothes that people are dressed in. The video tells us a lot of interesting things about Salzburg. It seems like a very beautiful city to live in. I am just thrilled with the video." (Comment 4).
5. *Inside Steinway's Vault: Most Exclusive (& Expensive) Piano Showroom, Tiffany Vlogs #90:*  
 "I'm surprised how beautiful pianos are."(Comment 1);  
 "I think that it is the best piano showroom I have ever seen, with all the colours and effects. It is in New York City. Tiffany is being given a tour and she likes what she hears about how it was established. She can even try the piano, so I envy her a bit! The pianos there are very special."(Comment 2);  
 "This is Tiffany's first visit to Steinway's New York factory. She was delighted. Everything there was so exclusive and, at the same time, expensive (pianos, candles, atmosphere...). There she played on all the really nice pianos and she was fascinated by them. Every piano was special because of something (paintings, crystals...)"(Comment 3);  
 "This video is very exciting. I really like the way she logs in. She showed us her playing and escorted us through one of her days in New York."(Comment 4);  
 "This kind of presentation of classical music is the closest to us young people."(Comment 5);  
 "I liked her addressing the people who follow her the most. These videos are very interesting."(Comment 6).

### Final remarks

As noted by Sheppard & Broughton (2020), “historically, the performing arts have been vitally important not only to individuals in ill-health, but also an important contributor to the wellbeing and health maintenance of individuals without preexisting health, behavioral, or social issues”. The aim of this research was to focus on the intersection of language and music education, specifically, pedagogical uses of language focused on classical music to support the linguistic wellbeing of students. The research was conducted during a six-week of English as a foreign language course online (12 lessons) with 30 second-year students of Music Performance at the Secondary Music School in Serbia during the remote teaching and learning period in 2020. The research implemented a fully online learning model (six 90-minute asynchronous lessons). The interconnected music and language activities appear to be highly engaging and enjoyable to students, indicating that they might be positively motivated to continue following and researching these channels and artists, and their future posts, to continue the ongoing language interaction and participation in the global online music community. The objective of publishing this research would be to share this unique teaching and learning experience, attempting at triggering the sensation of linguistic wellbeing in an EFL and partly ESP setting.

The qualitative results obtained from the research and presented in this paper, suggest that the course had a positive impact on the learners, in terms of their linguistic in class reactions and interactions in English (expressing the experience of pleasure, satisfaction and self-realization in learning the language, “hearing” students’ voices). Adopting the idea that “*linguistic wellbeing* as a fundamental pedagogical concept” was “awakened by the pandemic” (Daszkiewicz 2021), this research contributes to both the pedagogical and linguistic literature as it focused on the contribution of music and language (focused on classical music) to the linguistic wellbeing of students of Music Arts as future professional musicians, “currently underrepresented in research on wellbeing” in general (Kiernan, Davidson & Oades 2020: 4). Therefore, in the following period, the aim would be to further research the intersections of language, digital media technologies and pedagogy, specifically the role of music on linguistic wellbeing in different language education contexts.

### Acknowledgements

In 2020/2021 the research activity of Dr Sladjana Maric, Research Associate at the Faculty of Philosophy (University of Novi Sad) was funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

### References

- Brown, J. D. & Coombe, C. (2015). *The Cambridge Guide to Research in Language Teaching and Learning*, Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners*, Routledge.
- Burns, A. (2013). Innovation through action research and teacher-initiated change, in: K. Hyland & L.L.C. Wong (Eds.), *Innovation and change in English language education* (pp. 90-105). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203362716>
- Coghlan, D. & Brydon-Miller, M. (2014). *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research*, London SAGE Publications Ltd doi: 10.4135/9781446294406
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education*, 8th edition, Routledge.
- Daszkiewicz, M. (2021). 4th ERL Session – May 5-6, 2021 “Linguistic well-being (before, during, and after the pandemic)”, <http://educationalroleoflanguage.org/erl-events/erl-online-sessions-talks/>

- Flew, T., Kirkwood, K. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on cultural tourism: art, culture and communication in four regional sites of Queensland, Australia. *Media International Australia*, 178(1),16-20. doi:10.1177/1329878X20952529
- Gale, S., Moore, Z., Ruddy, S. (2013). *The Planets 2014 Youth Concert Teacher Resource Materials*. Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra.
- Hessel, G., Talbot, K. R., Gruber, M.-T., Mercer, S. (2020). The Well-being and Job Satisfaction of Secondary CLIL and Tertiary EMI Teachers in Austria. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 2(2), 73-91. Retrieved from <https://jpll.org/index.php/journal/article/view/33>
- Hutchinson, T., Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centred approach*, Cambridge University Press.
- Kiernan, F., Davidson, J.W., Oades, L.G. (2020). Researching creativity and wellbeing: Interdisciplinary perspective. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 10 (5), 1-5.
- King, K. A., Lai, Y-J., May, S. (Eds). (2017). *Encyclopedia of Language and Education: Research Methods in Language and Education*, Third Edition, Springer.
- MacIntyre, P.D., Gregersen, T., Mercer, S. (2020). Language teachers' coping strategies during the Covid-19 conversion to online teaching: Correlations with stress, wellbeing and negative emotions, *System*, 94, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102352>.
- Martínez-Castilla, P., Gutiérrez-Blasco, I. M, Spitz, D. H., Granot, R. (2021). The Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Lockdown in Spain: An Analysis of Personal and Context-Related Variables. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, (Article Number) 647837, p. 1-15. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.647837
- McDonough, J., Shaw, C., Masuhara, H. (2013). *Materials and Methods in ELT: A Teacher's Guide*, Third Edition, A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication.
- Mercer, S. (2020). The wellbeing of language teachers in the private sector: An ecological perspective. *Language Teaching Research*, 1-24. doi: 10.1177/1362168820973510.
- Mercer, S. (2021). An agenda for well-being in ELT: An ecological perspective. *ELT Journal*, 75(1), 14-21.
- Resnik, P., Dewaele, J.M. (2021). Learner emotions, autonomy and trait emotional intelligence in 'in-person' versus emergency remote English foreign language teaching in Europe. *Applied Linguistics Review*, (Article Number) 000010151520200096. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2020-0096>.
- Sheppard, A., Broughton, M. C. (2020). Promoting wellbeing and health through active participation in music and dance: a systematic review, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 15(1): 1-19. doi: 10.1080/17482631.2020.1732526
- Shin, S., Mercer, S., Babic, S., Sulis, G., Mairitsch, A., Jin, J., King, J. (2021). Riding the happiness curve: The wellbeing of mid-career-stage language teachers. *The Language Learning Journal*. 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1979632>
- Sulis, G., Mercer, S., Mairitsch, A., Babic, S., Shin, S. (2021). Pre-service language teacher wellbeing as a complex dynamic system, *System*, Vol. 103, (Article Number) 102642 p. 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102642>
- Wallace, M. J. (1998). *Action research for language teachers*. Cambridge teacher training and development. Cambridge University Press.
- Whitacre, E. (2020). "Sing Gently" (Music score - Notes of the composer) <https://www.jwpepper.com/Sing-Gently/11219607.item#.YZFdVGDMLIV>
- Xia, S. A. (2020). Genre Analysis in The Digital Era: Developments and Challenges, *ESP Today*, 8(1): 141-159, <https://doi.org/10.18485/esptoday.2020.8.1.7>.

## **EFL students' reluctance to speak in the classroom — a lesson not learned?**

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.03>

Thoralf Tews  
Leibniz University of Hannover  
[thoralf.tews@gmail.com](mailto:thoralf.tews@gmail.com)

### **A recapitulation of speaker reluctance before and during the pandemic**

It would be far from true to say the global Covid-19 pandemic is over. Looking at secondary education, however, a number of English teachers must feel that they went full circle: From the 'usual' teaching in a classroom to online-lessons, distance learning, some hybrid models and back to the classroom. Looking back at the time before the outbreak of Coronavirus, teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) included various difficulties, students' reluctance to speak being one of the omnipresent ones.

As a ubiquitous problem, teachers invest great amounts of energy into convincing their students to vocally take part in class — rightly so, given the importance of speaking for the students' development of speaking competence. To build and foster speaking competence, also phrased as communicative ability, verbal student interaction is required in every phase of learning the language. This again relies on positive attitudes towards speaking activities that allow for practice of oral production and reproduction (Szpotowicz 2012, Savaşçı 2013).

Despite all efforts, too little student participation appeared to be a recurring problem already before the pandemic (Savaşçı 2013). But when the virus outbreak became a global pandemic and schools switched to online lessons, different studies showed the same pattern: Participation decreased in general and feelings of restraint regarding oral participation grew (Meşe & Sevilen 2021, Bray et al. 2021, Unger et al. 2020).

Being in a learning situation themselves, teachers had to sort out various difficulties of the online organization of learning, leaving less attention, energy, time and means to work on speaking reluctance — both previously existing or newly developed. It is safe to say that the switch to online education must have been perceived as a setback for the majority of teachers and students in terms of positive learning outcomes. With a more experienced government and society, test schemes, vaccinations and other safety measures, classrooms are now becoming the place of education and physical interaction again. Despite the uncertain outlook on future pandemic developments, the move back into schools has constituted an improvement for many.

Compared to the recent difficulties of online sessions, being physically present in a classroom is a positive development. Unfortunately, this can take away attention from the still prevailing problem of speaker reluctance in EFL classes. Research findings about increased unwillingness to orally participate during the pandemic, as well as the social aftermath of isolation, uncertainty and economical hardships, hint at similar or even increased reluctance of speakers when compared with pre-Covid times (Meşe & Sevilen 2021, Bray et al. 2021, Unger et al. 2020). Not actively tackling this problem would be a lesson not learned.

But if teachers acknowledge speaker reluctance in EFL classes, then a speaker-friendly environment must be established. This article aims at beginning a list and discussion of methods to create such an environment. Due to the scale of this publication, the list is limited, but open for every person experienced in teaching to extend. First, however, reasons for speaker reluctance need to be identified.

### **Factors contributing to speaker reluctance**

The EFL classroom deals with a unique context, since it involves a language that most students only speak in this exact setting and are less exposed to than their mother tongue outside of class. Due to this situation, reasons for speaker reluctance can vary between EFL classes and other subjects. Littlewood (2004) defined six factors that impede oral production in EFL settings. The list consists of “tiredness, [...] fear of being wrong, [...] insufficient interest in the class, [...] insufficient knowledge in the subject, [...] shyness” and “insufficient time to formulate ideas” (Savaşçı 2013: 2683). Reluctance is then increased by “fear of public failure, fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, low English proficiency, inability to keep up with native speakers, incompetence in the rules and norms of English conversation” (ibid., p. 2683). Savaşçı adds cultural specifics to the reasons for reluctance, as some cultures give a more passive role to the educated (2013).

### **A toolbox of methods to create speaker-friendly environments**

To establish a speaker-friendly environment, different measures can be taken, each addressing one factor of reluctance more than the other. The following methods focus most on shyness.

Since reluctance is gradually established and reluctant speakers still do participate at times, the fear of being incorrect should not be fed by discouraging feedback. One method to correct students in a respectful and encouraging manner is passively correcting. When a student answers a question correct in terms of content, but not in style, the teacher can reply to it, using the right grammar, but confirming the student’s utterance content-wise. Such a passive correction, leads by example. Frequent speaker mistakes regarding the same domain, however, hint at an error in the learner’s language competence. Such a wrong/missing concept should be divided from mistakes, which are wrong realizations of correct intentions. Errors should be explicitly addressed, but in an encouraging manner. Students rely on such “satisfying teacher feedback”, as it has a motivating effect (Meşe & Sevilen 2021: 19).

Shyness, a hindering factor, constrains oral contributions in the full class collective. While a student might shy away from participating with the attention of all, they would possibly work with a smaller group. The smallest imaginable group would be the shy student, paired with a friend of his/her choice, to ensure an intimate environment for speaking and making mistakes.

Group or single work, preparation time generates “time to formulate ideas”, thereby diminishing fears of being wrong (Savaşçı 2013: 2683). Access to dictionaries — especially online ones with a reading function — can add to confidence in the prepared answers.

If the students’ fears are not too severe, more forceful methods can be put to test. From the teacher selecting the next speaker to the students selecting themselves by throwing a ball, there are different realizations of the idea of choosing students rather than having them volunteer. While this holds the chance of introducing spontaneity to the classroom and leaving less room for thoughts of reluctance, it also includes a negative experience to those unable to cope with the sudden pressure. These methods call for a reflective teacher, aware of his or her individual students.

### **Conclusion and outlook**

The toolbox was a personal introduction to a list of methods that can be extended continuously. Each technique comes with possible advantages and disadvantages, and should therefore always be put in a relation with the individual class group, before applying it. As they are tackling different factors of reluctance, a speaker-friendly environment is best created by mixing different methods throughout the lessons.

Going through the online and offline shifts of teaching in the pandemic did demand a lot from teachers. But no matter how positive the return to the classroom feels, it should not put shade on the omnipresent problem of speaker reluctance in foreign language classes. The improvement of reluctance from distance learning to the present is only small and leaves a responsibility to the teachers to reflect

on their students, their own classroom management and use of methods. At best, Covid-19 turned the focus on an old problem of EFL teaching, while triggering a new confrontation with it.

### References

- Bray, A., Banks, J., Devitt, A. & Chorcora, E. (2021). Connection before content: Using multiple perspectives to examine student engagement during Covid-19 school closures in Ireland, *Irish Educational Studies*, 40(2): 431-441, Retrieved on November 20, 2021, DOI: 10.1080/03323315.2021.1917444.
- Littlewood, W. (2004). Students' perspectives on interactive learning, in: O. Kwo, T. Moore & J. Jones (Eds). *Developing Environments in higher education* (pp. 229-245). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Meşe, E., Sevilen, Ç. (2021). Factors influencing EFL students' motivation in online learning: A qualitative case study. *Journal of Educational Technology & Online Learning*, 4, 11-22. Retrieved on November 20, 2021, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1286748.pdf>.
- Savaşçı, M. (2013). Why are Some Students Reluctant to Use L2 in EFL Speaking Classes? An Action Research at Tertiary Level. *Procedia — Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 2682-2686. Retrieved on November 20, 2021, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.635>.
- Szpotowicz, M. (2012). Researching oral production skills of young learners. *CEPS Journal*, 2(3): 141-166. Retrieved on November 20, 2021, DOI: 10.25656/01:6791.
- Unger, V., Krämer, Y., Wacker, A. (2020). Unterricht während der Corona-Pandemie: Ein Vergleich von Schülereinschätzungen aus Baden-Württemberg und Nordrhein-Westfalen im Kontext sozialer Heterogenität. *Zeitschrift für Schul- und Professionsentwicklung*, 2(6): 84-99. Retrieved on November 20, 2021, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4119/pflb-3907>.

## Let us talk: shaping linguistic well-being through differentiated tasks and conversation - report

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.04>

Luisito M. Nanquil  
Bulacan State University  
luisito.nanquil@bulsu.edu.ph

### **Abstract**

*In the new setting filled with anxiety and stress as encountered by many learners, it is but necessary that language teachers and other specialisms should recognize and respect the health, emotions, and well-being of learners by using conversation and differentiated tasks to help and assist them feel care, respect, and inclusion even on the flexible learning climate and environment. Language instruction faces a lot of challenges nowadays, especially, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century education. It is not easy to hold the attention of our learners. The teacher has to experiment a lot of approaches and strategies to make the class attentive and receptive. But these efforts are futile if the teacher fails to meet basic needs of learners such as classroom conditions, instructional design, and linguistic wellbeing. Having a thought of these situations, this article aims to provide insights in the form of strategies and techniques that could be used by the language teachers to provide effective and engaging classroom environments in language teaching that will consider and shape linguistic wellbeing.*

**Key words:** *linguistic wellbeing, conversation, differentiated instruction, language teaching*

### **Linguistic wellbeing and social-emotional aspect**

If learners have stable social and emotional well-being, then their language and linguistic well-being can be stable and secured as well. But this is only possible if all efforts and strategies to apply will be observed by the language teacher.

In the new setting filled with anxiety and stress as encountered by many learners, it is but necessary that language teachers and other specialisms should recognize and respect the health, emotions, and well-being of learners by using conversation and differentiated tasks to help and assist them feel care, respect, and inclusion even on the flexible learning climate and environment.

Up to now, we are not yet sure when this pandemic reaches its end. We, however, should cope with the effects, impact, and realities that distract and disrupt the linguistic and social well-being of our students. Our learners are evidently struggling to  
More often, there are teachers who do not notice or are unmindful of the conditions of their students. They should be sensitive and reasonable when it comes to the varying needs of learners affecting their linguistic wellness and communicative reactions and responses.

### **Learning and learner situation during uncertain time**

For every word and utterance, we give there is a message. Even our students, when they speak, we can feel and analyze their emotions and feelings. On the new setting brought about by pandemic, it is hard to tell whether or not learners are physically and emotionally okay except if we provide clear dialogue with them. Perhaps the biggest query here is “How could we examine and feel the current well-being of our students when we are in the virtual environment”? This question fuels a lot of realities and challenges because each of our students has his own anxiety, stress, predicament, and other learning

issues. Despite disruption of physical interaction, language and linguistics professors are trying their best to maximize learning opportunities to ensure that their students are developing their language skills. Will that be feasible and possible? How about when learners do not have access to internet?

Using conversations, the researcher accepts and acknowledges the opinions, styles, cultures, interests, and personalities of his online classes. In this way, students who are mostly experiencing internal issues can be motivated to participate and share their voices and feelings. Conversely, some do not want to speak up but they get the chance to listen. In some ways or the other, when students feel they are welcome, their linguistic well-being is respected and protected. They reach the stage of enlightenment, realization, and mindfulness where they realize the beauty of communication and expression with the kind support of the teacher.

The thoughts and reflections of our learners are rich however, if there is interruption of their language well-being and their social aspect definitely they will not share and express themselves. The primary goal of this paper is to analyze and describe the linguistic well-being of some learners in the Philippines and suggest strategies such as conversation and differentiated instruction to address the issues and concerns.

As students join the online classes, language teachers can provide a wide-array of activities and (pedagogical) tasks that can amuse, engage, and stimulate their minds. Furthermore, there are varied activities that can protect and consider the language well-being of the learners.

As language teachers present new lessons and as learners participate in the virtual classes, the teacher can give “sharing period” in which the learners are asked “How are you?”. Later, the language teacher offers free and exclusive consultation periods so that he can identify the concerns or problems of the student. In this way, learners will feel they are respected, accepted, and protected.

Among the conversations, when we ask comforting questions such as “How are you?” “How is everybody?” we can elicit responses from members of the class. Their words and responses can help us determine if they are doing well and good. This is the extent when the responses of the students as a form of linguistic data can inform us that they are or not in good shape. Our role then is to spend a moment helping the learners cope with predicaments and problems by giving them pieces of advice which can uplift and motivate them to stand and face the situation. This is the very reason why it is imperative for us to listen to the words of learners because from that angle, we can examine the situation and we can look for possible intervention.

The use of differentiated tasks is appropriate in the online class, even with home schooled learners.

What varied and multifarious strategies can the language teacher apply to engage and build the social, emotional, and linguistic well-being of ESL students? There are many but we will only list and share the most applicable and appropriate ones. We say appropriate because there is no one-size fitting all. Based on the needs and issues, we can redesign the learning climate and address all the problems and needs of the students.

I basically begin the class checking the attendance using a tool. I am trying to reach to students by telling them how are they and many times we open with solemn prayer. I am trying to make them feel that there is always hope and light despite the health crisis that all of us are experiencing.

Graphic organizers can serve as motivator and tool for collection of ideas among learners. there are plenty of designs found on the web. Portfolio is both an assessment tool and a project that can showcase the skills and talents of students. On the actual virtual classes, learners can be grouped by the teacher using break out rooms where they can connect and share their ideas and feelings. Indeed, there are many tasks and activities that can be performed either online and offline but the language teacher should be flexible and reflective in providing clear and comprehensible directions. The teacher should guide and motivate learners to be engaged and feel well so that they can be linguistically prepared and will do their best to be active and dynamic.

Often times, some language teachers do not see the stage fright and butterflies in tummy of many learners. If this scenario is hard to detect and identify in traditional classroom setting, how much more when learners are on virtual platform.

### **Literature review**

Movitz and Holmes (2007) share their experiences in teaching high school where they incorporated learning stations while handling a medieval unit. One key point on their reflection is that learners don't outgrow their love of learning through hands-on and multisensory tasks. They witnessed increased student participation and more meaningful experiences through stations.

Cooperative learning, on the other hand, can be an effective mixture together and simply asking students to work together lacks the organization and same goals of effective cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is not just working in groups; rather, it is purposive, tactical, and structured instructional strategy that can promote healthy learning environment.

Fielder and Brent (2007) provide logical reasons as to why cooperative learning is attainable and effective. Students can learn better by performing something active, rather than simply sitting and listening. They also believe that cooperative learning benefits smarter students, who are put in the position of having to explain and summarize concepts to team members who contribute to success of the team.

Macmillan (2021) online course (cited by Spencer) offers insight that says building relationships that are meaningful and not just transactional. The teacher has to allocate time in each lesson to learn about the lives of his students. The teacher should find out what inspires students and what they feel passionate about. They can also talk about themselves and value communication practice. With the chance provided by the teacher to understand his students and understand one another, this situation forges stronger bonds among members of the class leading to creating a more supportive and inclusive classroom environment.

It also suggests teachers to be transparent by offering full disclosure on why the teacher presents the lesson and how tasks and materials are designed to help students achieve progress. Explaining the purpose of the tasks, activities, and approaches to students provide them a roadmap for completion and motivation.

### **Experiences and reflections**

In our everyday interaction in school, we are able to observe events, changes, phenomena, and realities. If teachers are aware of what is happening around and inside the class, they could practically and wisely improve themselves. Opportunities are boundless. They are around us and they could also be within us. Through reflective teaching practices, language teachers can review and examine their experiences, interactions with others, lessons, devices, and thoughts. If we keep our thoughts and have them examined, we could definitely pick the best strategies, perspectives, and practices which we could apply in our future sessions in the class. The reflective teacher is someone who is willing to undergo changes as long as these changes and innovations could make him/her become better. Another advantage of reflections is being inclined with professional advancement. The reflective teacher has the desire to achieve excellence through exposure to seminars, graduate courses, forums, consultations, self-analysis, classroom observations, and research.

These suggestions are like tools for the improvement of instructional design in the class. In the globalized learning environment, everything in the classroom is managed and controlled by the reflective language teacher. Is it possible for the teacher to create an engaging learning environment? Yes, of course! It only takes a lot of willingness, patience, and critical thinking for the teacher to provide the best intellectual atmosphere for his/her students. Although, a conducive learning atmosphere may

not be achieved in split of seconds, the language teacher can gradually upgrade and enhance the conditions of the classroom. It is also essential that the language teacher continuously reads books and studies that are aligned with his/her specialization so that his/her knowledge and insights will be honed and shaped.

It is recommended that in any curriculum, inclusion of social emotional learning and linguistic well-being are integrated or imbedded because we do not know how our students feel and think behind those cameras during online sessions. As language educators, we must check and consider the wellbeing of learners. We can detect and verify their emotions through conversations and reactions.

### **Conclusion and implications**

This paper aims to share insights from the experiences and testimonials of language teachers who have been trying to become effective and productive in ESL online instruction despite the effects of pandemic. It tries to examine the causes of linguistic problems caused by the phenomenon and how it affects and influences the well-being of students.

The researcher narrates professional experiences during the time of health crisis in which learners and teachers meet and communicate through virtual platforms. Furthermore, he connects observations and experiences with related studies and literature for validation of facts and data.

Many students could hardly recite and participate. Their tone and voices denote struggle in learning the language due to anxiety and stress. They get worried how they can survive the financial crises since their parents are laid off due to bankruptcy and cease of company operations.

In the Philippine setting, there were reports and narrations on learners who do not want to participate in online classes for some unavoidable circumstances. Language teachers with the aid of stakeholders continue to analyze the situation and devise alternatives in order to accommodate and address the diverse needs of the learners.

Using varied strategies, teachers can offer students alternative routes through the learning jungle that will increase their chances of reaching their temples at the same time, allowing them pick up gold along the way.

In a positive learning environment, learners are engaged, safe, connected, and supported. Healthy and safety issues and efficient communication with both parents and teachers are also highly emphasized for a successful learning outcome. In this aspect, the role of collaboration plays a significant role. By incorporating collaborative and learner-centered strategies, teachers can make a difference in the lives of students hence, preparing them for the real world and the workplace.

### **References**

- Fielder, R.M., Brent, R. (2007). *Cooperative learning*, in: P.A. Mabrouk (Ed.), *Active learning: Modules from the analytical sciences* (pp. 34-53). Washington, D.C. American Chemical Society.
- Movitz, A.P., Holmes, K.P. (2007). Finding center: How learning centers evolved in a secondary, student-centered classroom. *English Journal*, 96(3): 68-73.
- Spencer, D. *Social and emotional learning (SEL) in the secondary classroom* (2021). <https://www.macmillanenglish.com/us/training-events/events-webinars/event/dave-spencer-social-and-emotional-learning-sel-in-the-secondary-classroom>

**Examining teachers' well-being during the pandemic:  
a mixed methods study on teachers' psychological, emotional and identity responses to  
online education**

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.05>

Adrienn Fekete  
University of Pécs  
fekete.adrienn@pte.hu

**Abstract**

*This mixed methods study investigates teachers' well-being in online education by looking at their linguistic and professional identity construction in the context of offline and online education. Teachers' identity construction in online education sheds light on their virtual identities (Kramsch 2009) as well as their emotional and psychological responses (Fekete 2020a, 2020b) to online education. The paper seeks to prove that identity construction is shaped by the language spoken by the person, the context of the person, and other individual differences of the person. Therefore, the author proposes that identity construction should be envisaged as a complex dynamic system of the person's individual differences that responds to changes in the levels of the system as well as environmental stimuli. Twenty-six teachers from eight countries participated in the research by completing a sentence completion task administered online. The large textual datasets were analyzed using qualitative content analysis that pointed out emerging themes. Then, descriptive statistics was employed to detect trends and frequencies, shining light on changes in the participants' emotions and identity construction in the various contexts. The findings point out that offline and online education shape teachers' identity construction as well as their psychological and emotional responses very differently. The results also pinpoint the difficulties teachers were faced with in online education and how these difficulties shaped their psychological, emotional and identity responses to the novel circumstances of their profession.*

**Key words:** *linguistic identity, professional identity, virtual identity, online education, teachers, emotions, complex dynamic systems, individual differences*

**Introduction**

With the introduction of online instruction at all levels of education, teaching and learning processes drastically changed during the pandemic. Students and teachers alike were faced with the challenges of a novel learning environment, in which communication, interactions, instruction, evaluation and the provision of assistance took alternative forms by means of online platforms and electronic devices equipped with microphones and cameras. Traditional in-class learning and teaching became virtual and computerized, face-to-face interactions were replaced by virtual interactions, and people became virtual entities in the form of little squares or black dots on the computer screen. The technological and organizational changes resulting in online instruction led to uncharted psychological changes and emotional responses in the individuals participating in virtual education. The complexities of teachers' and learners' identities were further complicated by the cyber space, resulting in a new sense of self, the Virtual Self (Kramsch 2009) shining light on a person's virtual identity (Fekete 2019, Kramsch 2009).

The study employing a holistic look at identity seeks to fill three gaps in education research and applied linguistics research. First, the paper stresses the significance of understanding the subtleties of linguistic identity in education, which has been a marginally researched area. Second, the paper makes a contribution to the smaller expanse of research on teachers compared to the vastness of research

involving learners. Since there is no education without teachers, their needs, desires, difficulties, and their complex features as individuals and as educators must be taken into consideration. Third, the investigation of virtual identities is a fully uncharted territory; thus, this mixed methods inquiry provides insights into teachers' linguistic as well as professional offline and online identities in an international context. The participating teachers' identities are mapped in terms of how they perceive themselves as English speakers and as English-speaking professionals (e.g. language teachers, professors, and researchers) and how they speak, write, think, and behave in online and offline classes. The rationale for employing mixed methods lies in the effort to offset the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research and to provide more comprehensive results. Descriptive statistics pinpoint trends and changes in teachers' identities when the participants switch to online instruction from face-to-face education, whereas the qualitative data shed light on the subtleties of these changes by explaining why and how these phenomena are happening.

### **Theoretical overview**

#### **Identity in second language acquisition**

A person's identity may be understood in two ways: as a sense of Self that is distinct and different from others and as a sense of Self that makes the person similar to others (Rummens 2003). The former marks the person's individual identity, while the latter shines light on the person's social identity. Identity can be understood on various levels such as national, collective, social, communal, professional, and individual identity, while different types of identity such as cultural, gender, ethnic, and linguistic identity may be distinguished (Rummens 2003). Since the focus of this investigation is teachers' identity construction, the paper scrutinizes teachers' linguistic and professional identities in two contexts: offline and online education. The online manifestation of a person identity is called virtual identity (Kramsch 2009) which is also scrutinized in the paper.

The individual's identity has become understood as an entity that is not coherent, unchanging, constant, and homogeneous but rather diverse, heterogeneous, constantly changing and often contradictory (Block 2007, Butler 1997, Fekete 2020a, Pavlenko 2003). Kramsch (2009) labels the person's constantly changing identity construction as "subjectivity-in-process" that responds to environmental stimuli and the moment-by-moment interactions with other people. Being inherently linked to the individual, identity is connected to identification that links the individual to other people or groups. Identification indexing relationships of difference and similarity is important because people live in groups such as family, school, or professional organizations; therefore, identification is linked to collectivity and history. For this reason, identity is not independent of context and situation; rather, it emerges and is constructed and shaped in and via social interactions; therefore, identity may be perceived as social behavior characteristics of an individual or a group (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 156-159).

Kramsch (2009: 6-15) explains second language acquisition (SLA) in terms of symbolic language use and desire. SLA is symbolic, because language is made up of a set of symbols conceived by a speech community to describe the world. Thus, by conforming to the linguistic and cultural norms of a speech community speaking the language as their native language (NL), the language learner can gain access to or become a member in this community. However, the foreignness of the new language enables language learners to create their own subjective meanings, associations, emotions, feelings, fears, or anxieties associated with the new language (L2) that are unconventional for native speakers (NS). These unconventional meaning-making processes denote the second type of symbolic language use by learners. Furthermore, Kramsch adopted Kristeva's (1980) concept of desire in SLA to point out learners' desire for self-fulfillment in and via SLA. This desire reflects their inwardly generated identity drawing on their symbolic language use. On the one hand, desire pinpoints how SLA equips learners with a new

mode of self-expression that can be a liberating experience, because learners can rid themselves of the linguistic and cultural constraints of their NL. On the other hand, learners may refuse the transformative potential of SLA and rather opt for their NL linguistic and cultural meaning-making processes, because the new language poses a threat to their existing identity associated with their NL and culture. Desire and symbolic language use pinpoint the transformative potential of SLA that learners may or may not embrace in the process of L2 learning.

Based on the findings of her previous research (Fekete 2016, 2019, 2020a, 2020b), Fekete proposes that teachers' and learners' identity construction is inseparable from (1) the language they are learning or teaching, (2) from the learners and teachers themselves, and from (3) their other individual differences (IDs) (i.e., psychological characteristics such as motivation, anxiety, perfectionism etc.). Fekete (2019) takes a holistic stance in her research into linguistic and cultural identity and proposes that identity is inseparable from the person and their other characteristics. Identity shapes and is shaped by the person's emotions and other psychological characteristics and it responds to environmental stimuli. These processes are best envisaged as a complex dynamic system of IDs in which the person's identity construction is seen as the system-level behavior of a system made up of the person's IDs representing the levels of this complex and dynamic system.

### **Virtual identity in computer mediated communication**

In principle, identity and the Self are the same but in cultural theory identity refers to the consciousness of the Self found in the individual (Longhurst et al. 2008: 141). In cultural studies the term Self is capitalized as it refers to and focuses on the individual. In the field of psychology, Neisser identifies five types of self-knowledge that he dubs the Ecological Self, the Interpersonal Self, the Extended Self, the Private Self, and the Conceptual Self. Kramersch (2009) adopts these types of self-knowledge in the field of applied linguistics to make sense of language learners' identity responses to SLA. In the process of learning a new language, Kramersch replaces the Private Self with the Reflective Self that reflects on the process of SLA. Furthermore, she adds two other types of self-knowledge: the Narrational Self and the Virtual Self. Therefore, virtual identity is understood as a type of identity that is activated when the person, who is referred to as the Virtual Self, goes online and engages in online communication. The virtual identity of the individual engaged in virtual communication is constructed and co-constructed in and via interactions with other online communicators.

In computer mediated communication (CMC) writing becomes a social-virtual activity in which the number of intended readers along with the speed of transmission increase, the text along with the Self become open to evaluation by others, and the Self is co-constructed in dialogue with others, thus creating the Virtual Self (Kramersch 2009: 155-185). In virtual communication historical time is suspended and time becomes reversible with the click of the mouse. Furthermore, the genre boundaries as well as the boundaries of space and time become blurred, and reality becomes hyper reality. In CMC, space is bent or high jacked in a way one can reach anyone in any corner of the world, and by hacking the computer one can pretend to be at a place where one is not. Time is also bent or high jacked, as it is relative and ahistorical, because CMC is disconnected from time and place. Furthermore, one can erase utterances from the past like they never happened by clicking the undo button and one can repeat history and bring past to the future by repeating old texts in the present or making additions to them in the present. Kramersch (2009: 173) calls this phenomenon time reversibility.

The Virtual Self enhances the ability of the individual to see without being seen and become a trickster of language (Fekete 2020b) who uses language in a way that others cannot. Identity construction online renders individuals agency and control as well as freedom to present themselves the way they wish to with the possibility to constantly reinterpret and change their self-representation. Yearning for control, agency, and freedom may lead to addiction to community sites, a so called cyber

dependency (Kramersch 2009: 183) if one exclusively resorts to online communication to get feedback on the Self and to co-construct the Self at will.

CMC is often described as liberation for the shy and the under-confident, and it can be a great tool for tricksters, as well. CMC blurs the distinction between what is real and what is not or what is real communication and what is display communication. Kramersch (2009: 175) explains that “in the absence of embodied contact, virtual signifiers take on a life of their own, they become a reality in their own right – a hyper reality”. For reality is high jacked by CMC and replaced by hyper reality the rules of genres or those of communication along with the real intentions of interactants are blurred or they simply disappear. In such a chaotic world, the agency and control gained by CMC are lost, making online communicators feel weak and vulnerable to other people online. Misunderstandings are more likely to happen as there are no rules for communication. Kramersch (2009) stresses that precisely because of this freedom computer users need to find and define the boundaries for communication if they are to have real understanding in a real interaction.

With the introduction of online education, teachers’ and learners’ virtual identity is activated when they synchronously or asynchronously interact with each other in speaking or in writing using online platforms and electronic devices that are equipped with cameras and microphones. Teachers’ and students’ linguistic identities have been examined before in the context of offline education (Fekete 2016, 2020a, 2020b, Kramersch 2009, Williams 2020), but mapping their virtual identity is an utterly unexplored area in education research.

### **Empirical research on identity in education**

Related to the study of identity and SLA, holistic research approaches have gained momentum in the past two decades including post-structuralism, language ecology, and complex dynamic systems theory (CDST). These three holistic approaches have come to the fore, because they examine learners and their learning processes along with the learning environment in their complexity and entirety. The post-structuralist understanding of identity being changing, temporal, heterogeneous, socially constructed, and inseparable from the user of the language takes a holistic look at language learners and their identity construction (Fekete 2019, 2020b, Kramersch 2009, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012). Kramersch (2009) and Fekete (2019, 2020b) studied how transformative L2 learning is in learners’ lives and how meaningfully it is lived by them, which, in turn, triggers powerful emotional and identity responses in them. Kramersch (2009) analyzed language learning metaphors associated with speaking and learning different languages in addition to analyzing language learners’ linguistic autobiographies to cast light on major themes and processes shaping learners’ linguistic, cultural, and ethnic identity construction in the U.S. Fekete (2020b) scrutinized Hungarian English majors’ emotional responses to SLA, which, in turn, shone light on the participants’ linguistic identity responses that were captured with the help of metaphors (desire, freedom, and pain) associated with SLA.

Language ecology considering the language, the learner, and the environment altogether with a regard for temporal changes and different timescales is another holistic approach in identity and SLA research. Fekete (2020a) studying multilingual English learners’ linguistic and cultural identities drawing on the ecological perspective in a multiple case-study found that learners’ different past language socialization and enculturation processes resulted in different linguistic and cultural identity patterns and responses, thus establishing a link between past, present, and future processes. A similar link was established in a case study by Williams (2020) who explored the narrative and identity construction of an ethnic Hungarian student born in Serbia but studying in Hungary at the time of the research. In a multiple case study, Cao (2011) explored the dynamic and situated nature of willingness to communicate (WTC) in English in the language classroom from an ecological perspective. Dragoescu Urlica and Stefanovic (2018) approached teaching English for specific purposes from the language

ecological perspective. Daszkiewicz (2017) scrutinized the inherent and inseparable link between the language learner, the language, and the context of education by highlighting the educational role of language.

The third holistic approach that has become popular in SLA and education research involves complex dynamic systems theory (Larsen-Freeman 1997, 2017). Kramsch (2012) who draws on post-structuralism stresses the applicability and validity of CDST in the study of identity. In their book on the psychology of the language learner, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) put forth a complex and dynamic approach to studying these learner characteristics and place the language learner’s narrative identity in the focus of study. In the same vein, researchers have begun to adopt CDST in their empirical research into various IDs (e. g. motivation: Jiang and Dewaele 2015, language anxiety: Kasbi & Shirvan 2017, WTC in English: MacIntyre & Legatto 2011, self-concept: Mercer 2011, 2014). Fekete (2019) connected traditional IDs research and identity research drawing on CDST. She proposes the view of the language learner’s identity construction as the system level behavior of a complex dynamic system in which individual learner characteristics constitute the levels of the system that horizontally and vertically shape the system’s behavior, that is, the identity construction of learners through and in the L2 they learn. This system is also shaped by environmental stimuli in the form of interactions with other L2 speakers as well as the socio-cultural context. Figure 1 shows the interconnectedness of the language learner’s various IDs and their identity construction.

**Figure 1:** Identity construction as a complex dynamic system of individual differences adopted from Fekete (2019: 230)



The intermittent lines stand for potential trajectories of the levels and the system, and these potential trajectories of IDs are idiosyncratic and subject to change over time. Despite the versatility of such a complex system, patterns of system behavior may be detected, making the system stable and changeable at the same time. The findings pinpointed that self-perception with respect to perceived language proficiency level and perceived aptitude, along with perfectionism, and competitiveness form a cyclic relationship, feeding into one another at one level within the learner. Changes at this level then feed into the learner’s language anxiety at the next level up which affects their motivation to learn the language at the next level, which, then, shapes the learner’s WTC in English. These IDs are envisaged as vertically and horizontally interacting levels of a system, which construct and shape the learner’s identity as system-level behavior. Therefore, research into identity construction cannot be separated from research into IDs, as the two are inherently linked. Consequently, the present study is expected to shine some light on the participating teachers’ IDs, as well.

**Methodology**

**Aim and context of study**

The aim of the study is to map English speaking teachers’ linguistic, and professional offline and online/virtual identity construction to shed light on their psychological, emotional, and identity responses to offline and online education. The research was conducted in an international context with participants coming from eight countries. However, the distribution of teachers from these countries is unequal; therefore, conclusions from the different cultural backgrounds of the participants cannot be drawn.

**Research questions**

Table 1 presents the research questions answered in the inquiry.

**Table 1:** Research questions on teachers’ linguistic, and professional offline and virtual identity

Linguistic identity	Professional offline identity	Professional online/virtual identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the participants perceive themselves as English speakers?</li> <li>• How do they speak, write, and think as English speakers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do they perceive themselves as teachers in the classroom?</li> <li>• How do they think students see them in the classroom?</li> <li>• How do they speak, write, think, and behave in the classroom?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do they perceive themselves as teachers in online classes?</li> <li>• How do they think students see them in online classes?</li> <li>• How do they speak, write, think, and behave in online classes?</li> </ul>

**Participants**

Twenty-six teachers from eight countries participated in the research. The criteria for participation in the research involved 1) experience in teaching lessons/classes in English and 2) teaching experience in both offline and online education. Convenience and snowball sampling methods (Dörnyei 2007) were applied to find participants for the research. I contacted professors and teachers from different countries and invited them to participate in the research. I also asked them to forward the invitation letter to their colleagues at their workplace to recruit more respondents. Despite the sentence

completion task being anonymous and easily accessible via Google Form, the response rate, being about 8-10 percent, was low. This may have been caused by three factors. First, the task required respondents to write sentences instead of answering simpler question types such as multiple-choice or Likert-scale items usually applied in questionnaires. This made the task longer and more time consuming. Second, teachers' various professional engagements may have prevented them from finding time to complete the task. Third, no reward was offered to respondents for their contribution, so participation was entirely voluntary.

Regarding the participants' professional background, twenty-three of them are university professors who teach courses in English and three of them are secondary school teachers of English. Table 2 shows the distribution of the participants coming from different countries.

**Table 2:** The distribution of the participants coming from different countries

Hungary	Croatia	Poland	Slovenia	Slovakia	U.S.	Japan	Ethiopia	Total
15	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	26

Twelve of the fifteen Hungarian respondents are university professors from four Hungarian universities, the three Hungarian teachers of English work at three different secondary schools in Pécs (Hungary), and the Croatian participants come from two Croatian universities. Twenty-one participants (81%) are females and five (19%) are males. Their age ranges from 23 to 64 years, with the average age being 47 years.

As for their positions at work, eight participants are assistant professors, six are associate professors, two are lecturers, one is a full professor, three are language teachers, and six work at a university but did not specify their position. The length of their employment in their current workplace ranges between 6 months and 30 years, with the average length of employment being 12 years. Regarding qualifications, nineteen respondents hold a PhD degree, six a master's degree, and one participant did not specify. Nineteen teachers are non-native speakers (NNS) of English, four of them are native speakers (NSs), and three consider themselves bilingual. The nineteen NNS teachers have learnt English for 30 years on average. The NNS participants perceive their English language proficiency level between C1 and C2 level, some of them mentioning the near-native proficiency level. Their responses indicate they have achieved the highest English language proficiency level a NNS can hope to attain. Save one respondent, all of them have learnt at least one other language in addition to English, so 25 of them are multilingual speakers irrespective of where they were born and in what context they have learnt their languages.

Their positions at work, the length of their employment, the length of English learning, and their reported proficiency level suggest that they are proficient English speakers as well as experienced English-speaking professionals being teachers, professors, and researchers. Regarding their experience in online education, eleven teachers reported to have had no experience in online teaching prior to the pandemic, while thirteen of them claimed to have had a little experience in using online tools and platforms (e. g. webinars, online meetings, and online applications such as Kahoot, Google Form, Google Drive, Drop Box, Padlet, Moodle, online one-on-one teaching), and only one reported to have designed online courses before the pandemic.

**Data collection instrument**

The instrument designed to collect data for the research was a sentence completion task administered anonymously online using Google Forms. The task was divided into sections inquiring after the participants' 1) linguistic identity in general, 2) their professional identity in offline classes, 3) their

professional and virtual identity in online classes, 4) their camera use habits in online classes, 5) their classroom management in online classes, and 6) the participants' preferences for offline and online classes. In addition to these data sets, demographic information about the participants was collected, providing the professional and sociocultural context of the research. For the purposes of this study, the participants' answers to sections 1, 2, and 3 were analyzed. The items analyzed in this study are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Items Included in Sections 1, 2, and 3

<b>Section 1: The participants' linguistic identity</b>	<b>Section 2: The participants' professional offline identity</b>	<b>Section 3: The participants' professional virtual identity</b>
When I speak in English (in general), I...	In an English class at university, I...	In an online English class, I ...
When I write in English (in general), I ...	In an English class at university, I am...	In an online English class, I am...
When I think in English (in general), I...	In an English class at university, I speak (like)...	In an online English class, I speak (like)...
	In an English class at university, I write (like)...	In an online English class, I write (like) ...
	In an English class at university, I think (like)...	In an online English class, I think (like) ...
	In an English class at university, I behave (like)...	In an online English class, I behave (like)...
	In an English class at university, I see myself ...	In an online English class, I see myself ...
	In an English class at university, students see me...	In an online English class, students see me ...

The reason why fewer items were included in section 1 is that the major foci of the study were to compare online and offline education and to shed light on the details of online teaching. Since the task included many items about online and offline education, Section 1 was cut shorter to prevent the respondents from finding the items too repetitive and the task too long and monotonous.

The rationale for opting for this research instrument was twofold. On the one hand, the sentence-completion task granted the participants freedom to finish the sentences without any pressure or any implication of what the desired answer might be, resulting in free associations and ideas. Furthermore, there was no requirement regarding the length of answers, so the respondents could write as much as they liked. Therefore, some answers were rather brief, while there were lengthy and detailed responses painting the full picture of the participants' point of view. On the other hand, the instrument was fully structured, so the sentences and thus the answers were comparable in the three contexts.

### Procedures

The research idea with a tentative research design was presented to a group of approximately 30 international academics in the ERL Online Session held in March 2021. Based on their feedback and the positive reception of the research idea, the research instrument items were designed. Once the items were finalized, the task was piloted by a professor at the University of Pécs who has experience in teaching classes in English as well as in offline and online education. Drawing on her feedback, some items were clarified, and online administration was chosen for the purpose of ensuring anonymity and

easy access. Data were collected in April 2021. Then, the answers to the items collected via Google Forms were copied to a word document where they were analyzed using qualitative content analysis and descriptive statistics.

Following the steps described in Saldana's (2013) coding manual, themes were color coded. Then, three cycles of coding were carried out to find recurring themes and patterns and to establish the hierarchical and horizontal relationship between the codes and the themes. When this process was finalized, frequencies were counted to point out trends and changes in the three contexts. Finally, qualitative data were used to complement the numerical results and to shed light on the subtle details of the phenomena indicated by descriptive statistics.

### Research methods

This is a mixed methods inquiry incorporating quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research is normally applied to shine light on how things are in the sample examined (Dörnyei 2007). This type of research usually allows for the generalization of the findings if the sample size is large enough; however, in this paper, due to the small sample size, generalizations cannot be made. Based on the limited numerical data available, descriptive statistics was carried out to pinpoint trends and frequencies in the datasets. By contrast, qualitative research typically involving a small number of participants is normally used to explain subtle, often idiosyncratic, details shedding light on why and how certain phenomena have arisen (Dörnyei 2007). Nonetheless, the number of participants in the research is relatively large (N26), which allows the researcher to make some cautious and tentative conclusions based on the large qualitative data sets supported by some numerical data. Therefore, the study being mixed methods seeks to offset the weaknesses of both quantitative research and qualitative research and to provide more in-depth results and thus a more profound understanding of teachers' linguistic, professional, and virtual identities.

### Results and discussion

#### Teachers' linguistic identities

In this section, I discuss how the teachers in the research perceive themselves as English speakers in three areas: 1) speaking in English, 2) writing in English, and 3) thinking in English, shedding some light on their linguistic identities in general. Table 4 presents the recurring themes in the three areas, numbers in bold signal significant changes across the three areas.

**Table 4:** Recurring themes across three areas of linguistic identity

Themes	Speaking in English	Writing in English	Thinking in English
Feeling at ease	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>
Feeling uncomfortable	2	-	-
Avoiding this situation	-	-	2
Self-monitoring	5	<b>10</b>	1
Fear of interacting with NSs	2	0	0
Identity response: Desire for self-fulfillment (type 1 desire)	2	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
Linguistic and professional identity merged	3	1	-
Experiencing loss	0	1	-

The frequency of feeling at ease in speaking, writing, and thinking in English is high; however, the increasing trend across areas shows that the more private the context is, the more at ease the

participants feel in English. The least private context is speaking since the speaker is exposed to the environment and is surrounded by people. The most private context is thinking, as it is only accessible to the person engaged in thinking. The participants reported to feel “confident”, “comfortable”, and “natural” using English in the three contexts. The NNSs’ proficient use of English in these areas was compared to the ease with which they use their mother tongue, which is a result corroborated by the participants’ perceived high (near-native) proficiency level in English. Feeling uncomfortable was only noted in speaking, because speaking is the only irreversible and spontaneous act of language use. The respondents’ self-monitoring is most active in speaking and in writing. In speaking, the participants tend to “think carefully before speaking” and try to “find the appropriate words” and “avoid making any mistakes”. In addition to monitoring, the fear of interacting with NSs was mentioned by two participants.

T1: I feel really relaxed unless I speak with a native speaker. In that case, my level of anxiety in terms of finding obscure and scholarly words increases.

T2: I tend to change my pronunciation and style depending on the other speaker, especially if the other is a native speaker.

These statements are related to anxiety caused by the fear of making mistakes and the effort to maintain a positive linguistic identity (i. e. self-image) suggesting to the NS interactant that the teacher is native-like or at least highly proficient in English even when their English utterances are scrutinized by NSs (Medgyes 2017). NNS teachers of English are in a contradictory situation: they are both experts of the language (especially compared to students with limited proficiency levels) and learners of the language being NNSs. Their learner identity is more pronounced when they interact with NSs who can easily detect non-native-like phrases, structures, or pronunciation. These statements clearly demonstrate that the participants’ identity construction corresponds to their “subjectivity-in-process” that is co-constructed in interactions with other people (Kramsch 2009).

Despite being a private activity in which the person is not exposed to other people or a public environment, writing in English entails the most monitoring by the participants. Notwithstanding the ample time they have to think over their thoughts, the reversibility of the act can make writing a long, and often, pain-staking process, especially for NNSs.

T1: I spend a lot of time finding the right formal language and vocabulary to use.

T2: It may also be a painstaking process in English, as I always double check my writing for mistakes and typos. I think much faster than I write, so I don’t always write what I have in mind, resulting in typos or missing words, so it is annoying that I have to check my writing all the time. I don’t want other people to think that these typos are more than lapses in concentration and focus, or clumsy typing skills.

These testimonies shine light on different aspects of the participants’ identities. In speaking, one’s pronunciation (if nothing else) can give away the person’s non-native background; however, in writing using the appropriate words in the appropriate context (i. e. pragmatics) can make a positive impression as an English speaker/learner and as an English-speaking scholar on the reader, thus co-constructing the person’s linguistic and professional identity favorably. These statements also point out two dimensions of perfectionism that the participants experience: high expectations of the Self by the individual and high expectations of the Self by other people (Flett, Hewitt, & De Rosa 1996), even if the latter may only be a feeling of rather than a fact of pressure. Perfectionism has been found to be linked to self-perception, competitiveness, and anxiety (Gregerson & Horwitz 2002, Tóth 2007), which is corroborated by the four excerpts above. The fourth testimony clearly points out the teacher’s effort to sustain a positive English learner and professional identity driven by the fear of the reader associating potential typos and mistakes with the person’s NNS background or inadequate language skills. Despite the, often, lengthy writing process, two participants associate the ease of writing in English with the academic discourse due to the professional requirement of having to write scholarly papers on a regular basis.

The participants' identity responses to using English emerged in all three contexts; however, in the more private contexts of writing and thinking, it became more salient. Speaking in English was associated with self-fulfillment: "When I speak in English, I feel fulfilled." Writing in English was associated with pleasure: "I only write what I am pleased about", "I enjoy it", or "I find it more pleasurable to write for my own understanding". The most powerful identity response was associated with the desire (type 1) (Kramsch 2009) to become a different person in and via the L2 that is not limited by the linguistic, social, and cultural constraints of the NL. These participants embraced the transformative potential of L2 learning.

T1: When I speak in English, I feel free, happy, native-like and exhilarated like becoming a different person who is better and different than the native-tongue me.

T1: When I write in English, it is invigorating... and I love daydreaming in English. Perhaps because I prefer my English self over my mother-tongue self in those scenarios. English me is an improved, happy, confident, and successful person. It's much harder to live up to these standards in my mother tongue among my compatriots.

T2: When I write in English, I aim to be creative and unique.

T3: When I write in English, I have the feeling that I understand myself better.

The quotation by Teacher 2 indicates self-enhancement (MacIntyre, Noels & Clément 1997), the need to be outstanding and unique in the ocean of English speakers. Teacher 3 points out how the essence of the Self is related to the use of English. Teacher 1 embraces the transformative potential of English learning to become the enhanced version of themselves in and via English. This is demonstrated by comparing the Self using English with the Self speaking the NL. These testimonies undoubtedly show how the use of the L2 permits the speaker to get rid of unfavorable linguistic, cultural, and social limitations and negative emotions imposed on the Self by the mother tongue as well as the culture and the people associated with it.

By contrast, the feeling of loss was noted by only one participant: "When I write in English, I tend to lose my sense of humor". Whether this loss is caused by humor being a very culture-specific discourse that may require vocabulary that NNSs rarely encounter or by linguacultural limitations or differences embedded in English compared to the mother tongue is hard to tell from such a concise statement.

Furthermore, the data point out that it is often impossible to separate the individual's linguistic identity from the person's professional identity when the job requires the use of English every day. Speaking in English was associated with the teaching component of being an academic, while writing in English was linked to the research requirement of the job. Interestingly, speaking was not associated with research (e. g. giving conference presentations), and the administration tier of the job was also ignored.

### **Teachers' professional offline and virtual identities**

This section presents the findings related to teachers' professional offline and virtual identities exploring 1) what they do and how they feel in offline and online classes (Table 5), 2) how they speak, write, think, and behave as teachers (Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9), 3) how they see themselves (Table 10), and 4) how they think students see them in the two contexts (Table 11). Themes presented in Table 5 emerged in the data related to the following four items:

- In an English class at university/In an online English class, I...
- In an English class at university/In an online English class, I am...

**Table 5:** Teachers’ professional offline and online identities: what they do, how they feel, and what roles they assume in class

In offline classes	Themes	In online classes
	<b>How they feel</b>	
7	Feeling at ease	5
-	Feeling uncomfortable	7
	<b>What they do</b>	
18	Teaching	-
5	Helping students	8
-	Facing challenges	12
2	Doing their best	2
-	using technology/gadgets	4
1	Smiling at students	-
	<b>The roles they assume</b>	
4	Facilitator	-
1	Expert	-
1	Authority figure	-
1	Participant	-
1	Entertainer	-

Both the numerical and the textual data point out that in offline classes the teachers feel “extremely relaxed”, “satisfied”, “fine” and “more comfortable because of the face-to-face communication with the students”. Feeling at ease comes from two sources: 1) being experienced teachers and 2) being able to interact with students in the classroom. They report no discomfort whatsoever in this context. In addition to their feeling of comfort, they exhibit self-awareness as teachers being aware of the various roles (e. g. facilitator, expert, authority figure, participant, entertainer) they assume in offline classes. Being untroubled in the classroom, they can focus on teaching (N18), interacting with students (e. g. talking with them or smiling at them) and helping them.

T1: I try to create the best possible learning experience for my students.

T2: I talk with my students a lot, I smile a lot, walk around, and become an active facilitator/teacher/participant/expert.

T3: I think I am serving a purpose which I also generally find satisfying – though I always feel I might have done more.

All three excerpts center around satisfying students’ needs in the classroom. The second statement points out the various roles a teacher can assume; these roles correspond to the activities this teacher (T2) carries out in the classroom. The above roles and activities point to a student-centered teaching approach (Medgyes 2017). Student-centered teaching seems to be preferred by the respondents to teacher-centered teaching (e. g. frontal teaching with the teacher being the single authority figure in the classroom), because roles (such as facilitator, entertainer, participant: N: 6) suggesting the student-centered approach outnumber the roles (expert, authority figure: N2) implying the teacher-centered approach. This result is corroborated by the focus placed by teachers on interacting with and helping students. In the third statement (T3), the teacher regards teaching as a personally and professionally satisfying activity indicating that one’s linguistic identity may be inseparable from the person’s professional identity when the profession entails speaking the language.

By contrast, online teaching shows a mixed picture. The number of teachers feeling uncomfortable in online education is higher than the number of teachers being at ease in online classes. Some reported to

feel “relaxed”, “confident”, “comfortable”, or “fine”, whereas others noted negative feelings such as feeling “lonely”, “more reserved”, “frustrated”, too “occupied”, or “nervous” about technology. In addition to experiencing discomfort, they seem to lose their self-awareness, because the focus in online education seems to shift entirely from the teachers to the students. Their professional identity seems to be in search of the new roles they are supposed to adopt in online education. Their primary focus on teaching seems to be lost at first sight. This may be explained by the great number of difficulties and novel challenges they are supposed to overcome. The difficulties the respondents reported are as follows:

- limited communication due to online tools,
- limited teaching methods and techniques,
- limited movements and the lack of body-language,
- technological problems and failures,
- preparing for classes is more-time consuming and labor intensive,
- learners’ reticence to participate in online classes,
- lack of control over what students are doing at the end of the line, and
- being cut off from students (and often looking at a “blank screen”).

Such problems can greatly hamper successful communication and teaching. Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers’ verbal communication changed in online education (see Table 6).

**Table 6:** How teachers speak in offline and online classes

In offline classes	Themes	In online classes
	<b>How teachers speak</b>	
6	Speech modification	7
5	Speaking naturally	6
4	Speaking a lot	4
0	Speaking little	3
3	Speaking in English	1
-	Speaking in the mother tongue (not English)	1
	<b>The roles teachers adopt</b>	
2	Speaking like a teacher	1
1	Speaking like an entertainer/actor	1
	<b>What they do</b>	
6	Facilitating students’ understanding & learning	-
0	Making sure students can hear the teacher	5

The data show that the number of teachers modifying and not modifying their speech in offline and online classes is almost identical. The speech modifications teachers make include, in both contexts, speaking more slowly and more clearly, in offline classes, speaking more formally and more briefly, and in online classes, speaking with pauses, speaking with more purposeful enunciation, and asking for confirmation by students. Research into classroom discourse (Walsh 2011) shows that teachers tend to speak more than students in the classroom, which is a finding confirmed by teacher data in this research. However, this trend changes in online education, indicating that some teachers tend to speak less in online classes. Speaking in English in classes is noted by the participants in both contexts; however, the use of the shared mother tongue may be justified due to the difficulties online education imposes on the participants. The roles teachers adopt do not emerge as a significant theme in the datasets; however, the role of actor/entertainer prevails in both contexts (e. g. giving a TED Talk in the

classroom or being in a movie watched by students on their computers). Regarding the purpose of teacher talk, in offline classes the goal is to facilitate students’ understanding and learning assuming that communication is unimpeded, while in offline classes the main objective is to make sure students can hear the teacher. Because in online classes the participants focus more on hearing and understanding of what is being said than on learning or teaching, teachers’ primary focus is to resolve problems hindering communication. Successful communication is essential for successful and effective teaching and learning in education.

Regarding how teachers write in offline and online education, important changes can be observed in the two modes of instruction (see Table 7).

**Table 7:** Teachers’ writing in offline and online classes

<b>In offline classes</b>	<b>How teachers write</b>	<b>In online classes</b>
	<b>The amount of writing</b>	
1	Writing a lot	3
4	Writing little	7
	<b>The place of writing</b>	
3	Writing on the board	1
4	Writing using a computer/device	10
-	Making hand-written notes	2
5	<b>Specifying the manner of writing</b>	-
	<b>The purpose of writing</b>	
5	Writing for teaching purposes	-
2	Writing as signposts for students	-
-	Writing for social purposes	3

Concerning the amount of writing done by teachers, about every fourth teacher reports to write little in online classes, while this ratio is only about one in eight teachers in offline classes. The reason for it was mentioned by two teachers. Due to the high demands of online teaching, teachers have to concentrate on multiple things in the classroom and writing would be an additional demand; therefore, they prepare the teaching materials (notes, ppt slides) in advance to avoid writing in their classes. They fear their slow writing/typing might further hinder communication. Four teachers noted that technological devices had been used in education before the pandemic, but online education made these devices the predominant means of instruction. In offline classes, teachers are aware of how they write: for example, “in an academic way”, “with attention to detail”, “in accordance with English logic”, “clearly and unambiguously”, or “impatiently”. This aspect of their writing, however, becomes fully unimportant in online classes due to the complex nature of online communication. Moreover, the purpose of writing differs in the two modes of education. In offline classes, teachers’ writing centers around teaching related issues such as “writing definitions”, “setting a good example”, or “providing feedback”. By contrast, writing online becomes a social activity in which the participants write short messages and comments in chat windows. Teaching related writing by teachers in online classes takes the form of ppt slides and shared documents.

Examining how teachers think and what they think about provides insights into the respondents’ cognition in offline and online education (see Table 8).

**Table 8:** Teachers’ cognition in offline and online education

In offline classes	Themes	In online classes
	<b>What teachers think about</b>	
7	Thinking about students’ needs	3
3	Thinking about classroom issues	-
-	Thinking about what students are doing	2
-	Thinking about how to make classes more enjoyable	4
-	Thinking about difficulties	5
-	Thinking about their own environment	2
1	Keeping up a role	-
1	Making changes in classes	-
-	Working harder	5
	<b>How teachers think</b>	
-	Thinking “normally”	2
2	Thinking in English	1
7	Specifying how they think	2

Two dimensions of teachers’ cognition surfaced in the data shining light on what teachers think about and how they think. Significant differences can be observed in the two domains in the two teaching contexts. The most salient aspects of teachers’ cognition in offline classes are thinking about students’ needs and how to motivate them as well as classroom related issues.

T1: I think like a student... and try to think from both students’ and professors’ perspectives.

T2: I think in very creative ways keeping in mind students’ needs and problems. I improvise a lot in classes depending how students are behaving or feeling that day, what problems they may be having, so I am very open to making changes if I can better meet their needs that way.

T3: I think about my students.

The statements above suggest a general concern about students and teachers’ efforts to satisfy their various needs. This effort is highlighted by the second teacher’s readiness and willingness to improvise and change the lesson plan to adapt to the changing dynamics of the classroom. However, satisfying students’ needs may take the form of role-playing by the teacher.

I have a meta-script running in my thoughts while teaching. I might be explaining/saying one think, while I might be thinking or feeling another. For example, I might feel a bit bored or frustrated with a certain topic or student, but I work to keep my outward appearance very focused on the topic at hand. Being emotionally stable and impartial with students despite what the teacher may be thinking, or feeling is associated with maintaining a positive professional identity as well as living up to professional expectations set by the teacher and other people. Meeting such expectations reflects the teacher’s perfectionism related to the teaching profession.

By contrast, in online classes, teachers are faced with new challenges, for example, overcoming difficulties resulting from the online environment, not seeing what students are doing, and making the lessons less monotonous. These problems become intensified when students do not (or cannot) turn on their camera enabling teachers to see students’ reactions. Furthermore, teachers are more aware of their own environment – being their home and workplace at the same time. In summary, in offline classes teachers’ thoughts center around positive teaching related issues, whereas in online classes thinking about solving problems comes before teaching. Regarding how they think in the two contexts, problems experienced in online classes do not allow teachers to reflect on how they think related to their teaching practice, as their primary concern is problem solving. Therefore, an important change is

detected: while in offline classes, they can focus on the class, the students, and themselves, in online classes, they are pre-occupied with problems.

Similarly, teachers’ behavior drastically changes in online education (Table 9).

**Table 9: Teachers’ behavior in offline and online education**

In offline classes	Themes	In online classes
	<b>How teachers behave</b>	
4	Behaving in a culturally appropriate way	-
5	Behaving in a student-centered way	4
8	Perceiving their own behavior positively	2
-	Perceiving their own behavior negatively	9
4	Behaving “normally”	9
2	Behaving differently	-
	<b>The roles teachers assume</b>	
2	Behaving like a leader	-
1	Behaving like an expert	-
1	Behaving like a facilitator	-
1	Behaving like a counselor	-

A sharp contrast may be observed in teachers’ behavior in the two contexts. In offline classes, teachers prioritize students’ needs and seek to behave linguistically and culturally appropriate ways. Although in online classes they continue to keep up their student-centered behavior, behaving in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner becomes secondary. Instead, they work to act in a way that may be perceived as “normal” by students at a time that is far from normal and is replete with problems. This finding is evidenced by the sharp contrast in teachers’ self-perception in the two contexts. In offline classes, their self-perception is entirely positive, and they are aware of the roles they assume as teachers. However, in online classes, their self-perception is overwhelmingly negative, and they ignore the roles they assume. This contrast may be explained by the increased demands of online education.

Finally, how teachers see themselves and how they think students see them are compared in Tables 10 and 11.

**Table 10: Teachers’ self-perception in offline and online education**

In offline classes	Themes	In online classes
	<b>How teachers see themselves</b>	
7	Positive self-perception	4
-	Negative self-perception	2
4	Identity co-constructed by students	4
1	Identity co-constructed by other teachers	2
1	Becoming a different a person	-
	<b>The roles teachers assume</b>	
4	Teacher	10
6	Facilitator	8
-	Counselor	4
3	Expert	1
2	Entertainer	-
1	Authority figure	1

1	Partner	-
-	Person	1
1	Proficient English speaker	-

**Table 11:** How teachers think students see them in offline and online education

In offline classes	Themes	In online classes
	<b>How teachers assume students see them</b>	
10	Positive self-perception	5
-	Negative self-perception	-
-	As a disembodied entity on the screen	4
	<b>The roles teachers adopt</b>	
10	Teacher	9
-	Counselor	4
3	Facilitator	1
2	Expert	-
1	Authority figure	2
1	Person	-
1	Foreigner	-

Teachers' self-perception in offline classes is entirely positive and mostly positive in online classes (Table 10). Interestingly, they assume students perceive them more favorably than how they see themselves in the two contexts (Table 11). However, this picture is more subtle than that in online classes. Teachers fear they become disembodied entities for students in online education instead of flash-and-blood people. Another notable change concerns how teachers see their teacher roles and how students perceive these roles. While teachers tend to see themselves as teachers, facilitators, and counselors in online classes, they assume students rather see them as teachers and counselors. Consequently, teachers assume a new role: they become counselors in online education. This finding suggests that teachers' most important function in online education, besides teaching, is to help students to overcome the myriad of difficulties online education imposes on them.

### Summary of findings

Regarding teachers' linguistic identity construction, it is largely characterized by positive emotions, self-fulfillment, and the desire for a new mode of self-expression in and via English. They feel at ease when speaking, writing, and thinking in English. The more private the context is, the more comfortable they feel. On the other hand, conversing with NSs can pose a threat to the positive linguistic identity construction of the participants by pointing out their learner identity and their NNS background. Writing in English may also pose a threat to their positive linguistic identities; therefore, most NNS teachers painstakingly monitor their writing to find the appropriate phrases and to avoid erring in their writing. The findings of the study confirm that identity construction is linked to IDs. The participants' linguistic and professional identity construction shapes and is shaped by their other IDs such as their anxiety, self-perception, and perfectionism. These results are in line with the author's previous findings on the interrelatedness of IDs and identity construction in the context of SLA (Fekete 2019).

Sharp differences can be detected in the participants' professional identity construction in offline and online education. While their self-perception, self-confidence, and self-awareness underlying their professional identities in the classroom are entirely positive, their identity construction in online classes shows a rather mixed picture. Their self-perception is mostly negative, their self-confidence is low, and

they tend to lose their self-awareness and the various roles they usually assume in offline classes. In the classroom, they can focus on themselves (e. g. how they think, speak, and write, who they are, and what roles they assume), the students, and teaching. However, in online classes, they can only concentrate on the myriad of problems they are expected to overcome. While in offline classes, they assume various roles (expert, teacher, facilitator, entertainer etc.), in online classes, teachers mostly become counselors whose most important duties involve solving problems and helping students. In offline classes, they focus on teaching and satisfying students' needs because they experience no problems whatsoever. By contrast, in online classes, their priorities drastically change. First, they need to solve (technical) problems and make communication successful – two things that are prerequisites of successful teaching and learning processes. The lack of problems and their high self-confidence level result in low levels of anxiety in offline classes; however, in online classes the myriad of problems, impeded communication, and low levels of self-confidence lead to high levels of anxiety experienced by teachers. This anxiety, however, does not stem from language use but from the novel challenges of online education.

### Conclusions

There are salient differences in teachers' linguistic, and professional offline and online identities. Their professional offline identities are perceived as most positive and successful. Their self-perception is overwhelmingly positive, they report no problems in the classroom where they regard themselves as successful and motivating teachers. However, in the classroom they do not concentrate on themselves; rather, they prioritize students and other classroom related issues. Their linguistic identity in and via English is mostly positive and is characterized by a sense of success, achievement, and self-fulfillment. They largely focus on themselves, they perceive their English-speaking Self as mostly positive, and they embrace the transformative potential of English that shapes their linguistic identities. However, they may experience high levels of anxiety related to using English as NNSs. The least positive and the least successful teacher identity construction emerges in the context of online education. The teachers' professional virtual identity is characterized by struggle, anxiety, and the lack of self-confidence. Their self-perception ranges from mixed to negative and they experience a multitude of losses in online education.

The losses teachers experience are associated with their individual, professional, and virtual identities. As a person they lose their physical body in the cyberspace, and they lose their sense of Self by becoming disembodied entities on computer screens. As a teacher, unforeseen problems in the virtual environment force them to abandon their usual teacher roles, and they often lose control over what is happening in the online classroom owing to these problems. Furthermore, they lose their sense of the students' Selves and their physical bodies. Students also become disembodied entities on teachers' computer screens. Going online, teachers' Virtual Self has little or no knowledge of the rules of communication in online classes and they may be unaware of what is real communication and what is display communication in the online classroom. For example, they may wonder if students' verbal comments or notes in chat boxes are real communication or display communication. In display communication students may only be pretending to follow the class while, in the real world, they may be doing something else. Teachers may also wonder about what students really mean in verbal and written interactions. They may be deceived by student tricksters engaged in display communication. Communication breakdowns may occur when NNS teachers and students mean different things when saying or writing something drawing on their subjective and unconventional meaning-making processes that are further complicated by the lack of communication rules and boundaries in CMC. This situation makes teachers feel weak and vulnerable in online education. This finding is substantiated by the frustration, anxiety, and discomfort that the teachers in the study reported to experience in online education.

In addition to teachers' identity construction in various contexts, the paper shines light on the kind of difficulties teachers face in online education and their emotional and identity responses to these novel challenges. Since there is no offline or online education without teachers, it is important to examine their needs and struggles, which became an even more salient issue in online education. The success of online education hinges – to an even greater extent – on the teacher's ability to solve the additional problems caused by CMC and to juggle the novel demands of online teaching. The findings of the study highlight teachers' search for their new roles in online education. It seems that the numerous problems related to online education along with students' expectations of teachers all point to the emergence of a new teacher role: the counselor teacher. This new role raises questions about the teaching profession and teachers' role in education, for instance, whether it is a realistic expectation of teachers to become counselors all of a sudden, or whether teachers are qualified (or experienced enough) to become counselors, or how this new role can or should be incorporated in teacher education, or who will counsel teachers when they need help. These questions need to be considered carefully by educators and decision makers when the processes and the consequences of online education are examined.

Finally, the study confirms that the individual's identity construction cannot be separated from the context of the person. The findings show that offline and online education shape teachers' identity construction very differently, resulting in different professional identities in the two contexts. This result pinpoints that identity is constructed and co-constructed in interactions with other people and is greatly affected by the environment. The results also point out that identity shapes and is shaped by other IDs; therefore, identity construction should be seen as a complex dynamic system of the person's IDs. In this complex system, the levels of the system horizontally and vertically interact with one another as well as the environment. The paper also corroborates that language cannot be separated from the person using the language, and in the case of teachers (teaching in the L2), their linguistic and professional identities are inherently linked, since their job involves interactions in the L2.

## References

- Block, D. (2007). *Second language identities*. London: Continuum.
- Butler, J. (1997). *Excitable speech: The political promise of the performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Cao, Y. (2011). Investigating situational willingness to communicate within second language classrooms from an ecological perspective. *System*, 39(4), 468-479.
- Daszkiewicz, M. (2017). Educational role of language – its multifaceted scope and its social complexity, in: M. Daszkiewicz, E. Filipiak, A. Wasilewska, R. Wenzel (Eds.). *Educational Role of Language* (pp. 47-62). Gdansk Publishing House "Harmonia".
- De Fina, A., Georgakopoulou, A. (2012). *Analyzing narrative: Discourse and sociolinguistic perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z., Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learner revisited*. New York: Routledge.
- Dragoescu Urlica, A. A., Stefanovic, S. (2018). Ecolinguistic qualities of the optimal English language learning experience. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 12(2), 537-646.
- Fekete, A. (2016). Multilingual speakers' reflections on multilingualism, multiculturalism and identity construction, in: M. Lehmann, R. Lugossy, & J. Horváth (Eds.), *UPRT 2015: Empirical studies in English applied linguistics* (pp. 74-90). Pécs: Lingua Franca Csoport.
- Fekete, A. (2019). *Exploring advanced English learners' multilingual identity construction from multiple perspectives*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pécs). <http://nydi.btk.pte.hu/content/exploring-advanced-english-learners-multilingual-identity-construction-multiple-perspectives?language=en> Accessed on 31 October 2020.

- Fekete, A. (2020a). A case study on advanced English learners' different second language socialization and enculturation experiences from the perspective of language ecology, in: A. Fekete, M. Lehmann, K. Simon (Eds.). *UPRT 2019: Empirical Studies in English Applied Linguistics* (pp. 143-161). Pécs: Lingua Franca Csoport.
- Fekete, A. (2020b). Desire, freedom, and pain in English learners' emotional responses to SLA: A holistic look at English learners' multilingual identity construction. *ERL Journal*, 2(4), 84-99.
- Flett, G. L., Hewitt, P. L., De Rosa, T. (1996). Dimensions of perfectionism, psychosocial adjustment, and social skills. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 20(2), 143-150.
- Gregersen, T., Horwitz, E. K. (2002). Language learning and perfectionism: Anxious and non-anxious language learners' reactions to their own oral performance. *Modern Language Journal*, 6(4), 562-570.
- Jiang, Y., Dewaele, J. M. (2015). What lies beneath the surface? A longitudinal perspective on fluctuations of ideal and ought-to L2 self among Chinese learners of English. *IRAL*, 53(3), 331-354.
- Kasbi, S., Shirvan, M. E. (2017). Ecological understanding of foreign language speaking anxiety: emerging patterns and dynamic systems. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 2(2).
- Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2012). Why is everyone so excited about complexity theory in applied linguistics? *Mélanges CRAPEL*, 33, 9-24.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1997). Chaos/complexity science in second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 18(2), 141-165.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2017). Complexity theory: The lessons continue, in: L. Ortega & Z. H. Han (Eds.), *Complexity theory and language development: In celebration of Diane Larsen-Freeman* (pp. 51-58). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Longhurst, B., Smith, G., Bagnall, G., Crawford, G., Ogborn, M., Baldwin, E., McCracken, S. (2008). *Introducing cultural studies*. London & New York: Pearson Longman.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Legatto, J. J. (2011). A dynamic system approach to willingness to communicate: Developing an idiodynamic method to capture rapidly changing affect. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(2), 149-171.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Noels, K. A., Clément, R. (1997). Biases in self-ratings of second language proficiency: The role of language anxiety. *Language Learning*, 4(2), 265-287.
- Medgyes, P. (2017). *The non-native teacher* (2nd ed.). Callander: Swan Communication.
- Mercer, S. (2011). Language learner self-concept: Complexity, continuity and change. *System*, 39(3), 335-346.
- Mercer, S. (2014). The self from a complexity perspective, in: S. Mercer & M. Williams (Eds.), *Multiple perspectives on the self in SLA* (pp. 160-176). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Pavlenko, A. (2003). "I never knew I was bilingual": Reimagining teacher identities in TESOL. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 2(4), 251-268.
- Rummens, (2003). J. A. Conceptualising identity and diversity: Overlaps, intersections, and processes. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 35(3), 10-25.
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, & Washington DC: Sage.
- Tóth, Z. (2007). Predictors of foreign language anxiety: Examining the relationship between anxiety and other individual learner variables, in: J. Horváth & M. Nikolov (Eds.), *UPRT 2007: Empirical studies in English applied linguistics* (pp. 123-148). Pécs: Lingua Franca Csoport.
- Walsh, J. (2011). *Exploring classroom discourse: Language in action*. Routledge.
- Williams, T. A. (2020). On the border bus: Narrative and identity construction in an English major from Vajdaság/Vojvodina, in: A. Fekete, M. Lehmann, & K. Simon (Eds.). *UPRT 2019: Empirical Studies in English Applied Linguistics* (pp. 331-347). Pécs: Lingua Franca Csoport.

## **Systems fail, technology disappoints, and relying on optimism is not enough: A short analysis of teacher wellbeing and digital learning solutions**

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.06>

Ervin Kovačević

International University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
ekovacevic@ius.edu.ba

### **Abstract**

*This is a call for support that teachers, students, and a large number of education systems need in order to prevent teacher attrition, improve learning experiences, and invest in the future of schooling. The call is based on a brief review of recent studies and reports, which reveal teachers' dissatisfaction with their working conditions, the negative results generated by online teaching solutions during COVID-19, and the limitations which characterize our education systems. The conclusions recommend taking immediate actions which would improve teacher wellbeing and job satisfaction, lead to the massive preparations that digital teaching solutions require, and offer quality schooling opportunities to all schoolchildren worldwide. The humility of this call lies in the recognition that it cannot achieve much on its own. However, by arguing that decreasing in trends in the levels of motivation among both students and teachers be evaluated as outgrowths of systematic flaws in education rather than of the characteristics of individual students and teachers, the paper encourages broader engagement with the potential to lead to meaningful reform.*

**Keywords:** *education systems, online education, teacher attrition, wellbeing, COVID-19*

### **Introduction**

I was eleven years old when the last war broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At that time, I was a fifth-grader in the small but moderately developed city of Tuzla, located in the northeastern region of my country. Having evaluated the risks of living in a city that was periodically bombed by heavy artillery, my parents moved my sister and me to the village where my grandparents lived, twenty-five kilometers away from Tuzla. This meant that I had to finish the fifth grade in a new school. Although it was challenging, I managed to fit in. At the beginning of my sixth-grade year, many of the teachers I had just met left the school. Their substitutes had varying and, in many cases, limited levels of training and experience, but it seemed that my and my peers' education was not at risk. I graduated with honors. When I began attending a high school in Istanbul together with other Bosnian peers from different cities and scholastic backgrounds, I did not struggle at first. For example, I learned English and Turkish fairly quickly. However, at some point, I began to struggle with some of my science courses—particularly with Physics and Chemistry, the two courses in which I had almost no foundational knowledge. The school had a demanding schedule with intense testing, and unlike some of my schoolmates, I never excelled in those two subjects. By my junior year, I had lost my enthusiasm for natural sciences and decided that I would stick to the disciplines with which I was most comfortable, such as foreign languages, history, and geography.

I sometimes wonder whether proper training in primary school science courses would have made a difference in my later academic success and professional orientation. Today, as a teacher trainer, I find myself deeply concerned by the potentially negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on early, primary, secondary, and higher education. Prior to COVID-19, the education system in Bosnia and

Herzegovina had not been fully restored to its pre-war quality. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked my country sixty-fourth out of seventy-eight countries on average scores in mathematics, science, and reading in 2018 (Facts Maps: 2018). The highest-ranking country, China, scored 578.7 points, while the lowest-ranking country, the Dominican Republic, scored 334.3 points. Bosnia and Herzegovina scored 402.3 points. Between the lingering social consequences of war and numerous economic challenges, the road ahead is strewn with obstacles. What is more, the arrival of COVID-19 has delayed our academic renaissance even further.

If this renaissance is to happen at any point in the near or distant future, it cannot be achieved so long as we rely solely on teachers' enthusiasm and conscientiousness, which they are expected to maintain on their own and in spite of myriad challenges. Their personal and emotional wellbeing, working conditions, and professional development need to be continuously and effectively facilitated. This article presents a review of some alarming trends regarding teachers' dissatisfaction with their jobs and suggests that the leading authors in all fields of education start pointing more vigorously to the challenges that teachers face on a regular basis. The article also highlights a few findings, which show that our current digital technology cannot substitute authentic and context-dependent personal teaching methodologies, and that the research on digital teaching solutions has a long way to go.

### Systems fail

The flaws plaguing school systems can be understood in the rates and reasons of teacher attrition, going back to before the advent of COVID-19. For example, a recent report on the U.S. teacher labor market (García & Weiss 2019: 1-5) reveals the following:

1. The percentage of public-school teachers who either leave their schools or completely quit teaching is 13.8.
2. A large share of schools struggle to fill vacancies. For instance, in 2016, 9.4% of schools could not fill a vacancy, and 36.2% of schools found it very challenging.
3. Certified and experienced teachers leave prematurely, and the percentage of newly hired, inexperienced teachers is increasing.
4. It was estimated that the schools needed 110,000 new teachers in the 2017-2018 school year.
5. From 2008 to 2016, the number of students enrolled in teacher programs dropped by 37.8%, and the number of graduates from such programs dropped by 27.4%.

García and Weiss (2019: 1) note that high-poverty schools are under more pressure to retain and hire teachers, and that they identify "low pay, a challenging school environment, and weak professional development support and recognition" as the main factors that need to be addressed. A more recent article (Joseph 2021) illuminates some of the reasons teachers quit teaching based on the personal accounts of former teachers. The following examples reveal that teachers' tolerance for low pay, heavy workloads, and poor working conditions has its breaking point:

*My sister was a teacher; during the pandemic they asked her to double up and teach both English and math. For the upcoming fall, they said "teach English, math, science, and history or you can return to teaching music like you were hired for half pay." She promptly quit 😞 (A tweet by @LordFenrir)*

*Quit teaching English, got a job in recruiting making 20k more per year (was making master's degree salary as a teacher), now I can WFH, and I bank a lot of time off due to schedule flex. Also was paid for my 4 months of maternity leave. And no more admin to judge my pedagogy. (A tweet by @TheLJWay85)*

*A quarter of the teachers in my school left after this draining year, and many of us who are left are strategizing our way out. I love my students and want to do everything possible for them, but I'm just so tired. Teaching takes years off lives. (A tweet by @Maty0707).*

The article (Joseph 2021) ends by emphasizing the overall lack of support for teachers, remarking that a profession characterized by a lack of support and limited professional development opportunities cannot be attractive to young students.

These trends are not unique to the U.S. For example, the Netherlands is another developed country, which struggles with teacher attrition (den Brok et al. 2017). Although the rates of teachers leaving the profession in the Netherlands are lower than in U.S., den Brok et al. (2017: 887) find that their reasons for leaving are quite similar. Their review of available reports shows that 12% of primary and 13% of secondary school teachers leave the profession within five years. The review also shows that between 12 and 32% of education-program graduates never enter the teaching profession. The number of working hours, working tempo, emotional exhaustion, negative student behavior, lack of feedback and support, unclear institutional expectations, low salary, and personal problems were some of the reasons why teachers quit.

Thirty-five European countries have recently reported a shortage of teachers (Eurydice Report 2021). Eight of those countries have also reported an oversupply of teachers in some fields, which can be explained by varying and inadequate planning of initial teacher education and teacher recruitment rates. The shortage is evident in subjects such as the sciences, mathematics, and foreign languages (Eurydice Report 2021: 30). Nineteen European countries also have problems attracting students to teacher education programs as well as preventing students from dropping out of these programs (Eurydice Report 2021: 34).

Pljevljak (2021) researched the wellbeing and experiences of primary and secondary school English teachers in Sarajevo Canton (Bosnia and Herzegovina) during COVID-19. Sixty-two teachers were surveyed. Thirty-eight of them taught in primary schools, and twenty-four taught in secondary schools. Seven had more than twenty years of teaching experience, twenty-nine had between ten and twenty years of teaching experience, fourteen had between five and ten years of teaching experience, and twelve of the teacher respondents were in their first five years of teaching. The study gives valuable insight into the respondents' personal experiences and perceptions of the profession, including the following:

1. When the teacher respondents were asked whether they see themselves doing their job until their retirement, 23% did not and 18% were not sure.
2. Only 28% of the respondents agreed that their job gave them purpose in life and enabled personal empowerment during the pandemic.
3. The majority (67%) agreed that the amount of administrative work increased during the pandemic, and 46% identified parents as an additional source of stress.
4. The majority (74%) agreed that lesson planning was more time consuming and found testing and getting reliable results difficult (71%) during the pandemic.
5. Only 18% agreed that the relevant ministry provided timely and adequate guidelines to make English language teaching easier.

These findings show that the current state of the teaching profession in some of our education systems is far from perfect. It is disappointing to note that despite the calls to improve the teaching profession, which date back to 1987 (e.g. Burke et al. who reported that 50% of U.S. teachers leave the profession after seven years), not much has changed. Teachers, as the foundational elements of our education systems, are underappreciated; their contributions to world cultures are undercompensated, and their profession is less popular than ever. It could be argued that this is not always the case. Finland, a country that has been known for the quality of its education system, encourages teachers' autonomy, non-standardized testing, and taking care of their health and wellbeing (McGowan 2018). However, it needs to be noted that very developed countries where job opportunities are abundant allow for career changes, which is not true for countries with very high rates of unemployment. In these places

therefore, a teacher may remain in the teaching profession for the sake of maintaining a regular paycheck rather than because she or he is happy with the profession. Overall, it seems that education systems fail their teachers, and thus both their own and world cultures. In order to reverse these trends, teachers should receive more attention (not control), support (including, but by no means limited to the financial) and better working opportunities (with which teachers can be motivated).

### **Technology disappoints**

Modern technologies have their benefits but also their drawbacks. For example, utilizing fossil fuels makes our lives easier, but it also negatively affects global warming. In a similar fashion, the advantages of contemporary educational technology are numerous, but there are also some limitations. Learning tasks are easily enhanced, rich learning resources can instantly be made available, word prediction and translation software can assist in various activities, lessons can be recorded, and both teaching and learning can be done from the coziness of your home (Soffar 2019)—that is, of course, if your home is cozy. A report (UNICEF COVID-19 2020) shows that 58% of countries did not provide a digital solution for pre-primary education, 26% of countries did not do it for primary education, and 23% did not do it for upper secondary education. The report estimates that 49% of students from pre-primary to upper secondary levels were not engaged in Eastern and Southern Africa while 9% were neglected in Latin America and the Caribbean. Overall, it concludes that 463 million schoolchildren worldwide were not engaged in this transition.

Until September 2021, COVID-19 had prevented 1.8 trillion hours of traditional in-class meetings and made 131 million of students miss approximately 75% of their in-person schooling (UNICEF Education Disrupted 2021). To substitute for the lack of in-person contact, almost all countries adopted remote schooling channels, which primarily utilized either the internet or TV/radio broadcasting. However, 31% of schoolchildren around the world could not be reached through these methods (UNICEF COVID-19: 2020). The most commonly employed means were online platforms; however, these were only accessible to roughly one quarter of children worldwide. Only 25% of schoolchildren who live in rural areas and poor households had access to remote methods (UNICEF Education and COVID-19: 2020). It should be noted that these statistics only show the percentages of children who did and did not have access to remote learning during the pandemic. Even if a significant number were reached by these methods, it does not mean that the instructional processes were effective. Pre-COVID-19 PISA results show that although class meetings do provide opportunities for formative assessment, immediate feedback, and equal opportunities, not all class meetings produce the same results. The effects of discrepancies generated by COVID-19 are yet to be analyzed. One can reasonably estimate, however, that the impact of these discrepancies will not be positive.

Digital education solutions have also been utilized in Kosovo, Albania, Nigeria, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The following review of four studies which have addressed some of their national online learning solutions during COVID-19 show that education systems—including its policy makers, researchers, designers, and implementers—have many issues to tackle before we can fully embrace online education solutions.

Beka (2021) explores online teaching experiences with one hundred and two teachers and ten principals working for sixty-eight primary and secondary schools in Kosovo. The following findings are worth noting:

1. The majority of teacher respondents (54.9%) reported having felt stressed before their online lessons.
2. Three of four teachers agreed that one of the biggest challenges was their inability to supervise their students' participation and learning behaviors. More than a half of respondents (54.9%) were concerned with whether their students were focused on the lesson content.

3. The majority (60.8%) was constantly concerned about whether their students understood what was taught.
4. The principals reported being aware that not all of their students had the necessary electronic devices and internet access.
5. The principals described the relevant ministry as too slow in providing guidelines and regulations about online learning and suggested reversing the decision-making mechanism; the initial school-based initiatives worked, and there is significant evidence that their autonomy should be enhanced.

Beka (2021) concludes that the switch to online teaching solutions brought teachers, parents, and other relevant institutions together and proved that education systems can be transformed. It should be recognized that this conclusion refers to the shared willingness to provide educational services during COVID-19 lockdowns; to what extent the researched education system has indeed been transformed is too early to estimate.

Taraj (2021: 82) investigates “synchronous e-learning during the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year” with a survey administered to one hundred and sixty-eight undergraduate students in Albania. The following findings are highlighted in the report:

1. The majority of respondents (54.8%) used smartphones to join their online sessions, 42.8% used computers, and 2.4% stated not having any digital device.
2. One hundred and ten respondents think that they could benefit from additional training about online learning.
3. Approximately one quarter of respondents liked new educational technology and enjoyed self-paced learning.
4. Approximately 40% of respondents identified lack of motivation, poor internet connection, and lack of immediate feedback as disadvantages of online learning.
5. Three of four respondents found face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers easier than virtual interaction.
6. Only 16.1% of student respondents agreed that they would like to have online courses in the future.
7. The majority (60.7%) preferred face-to-face learning.

Taraj (2021: 92) attributes some of the negative experiences with online learning to poor internet connection, lack of digital devices, and levels of computer literacy. The author argues that the government needs to address the first two factors and believes that the issues of computer literacy can be addressed through modifications in mandatory curricula. One of the recommendations for college instructors is to “respond to the students more frequently by giving instant feedback which can increase their intrinsic motivation and participation in the e-classes” (Taraj 2021: 92). It can be argued that the recommendation would be more easily embraced if it was accompanied with the recommendation that the instructors’ teaching workloads get decreased.

Aduba and Mayowa-Adebara (2021) surveyed one hundred and eighty-seven sophomore undergraduate students and interviewed three lecturers at Delta State University in Nigeria about their experiences with online platforms. Some of the reported findings are as follows:

1. A large majority of student respondents (94.6%) found that online learning is eye straining.
2. The majority of student respondents (52.4%) reported not having a smartphone.
3. Three quarters of student respondents reported network problems.
4. Almost half agreed that they lack skills necessary for using online learning applications.
5. The interviewed lecturers identified “cost of paying for data, network failure, laxity of students, ... [being] unable to conduct exams, and nonchalant attitude of students toward lectures” as barriers in delivering online lessons (Aduba & Mayowa-Adebara 2021: 12).

The researchers recommend that the university management provide its instructors with Wi-Fi, support alternative ways for conducting exams, and encourage utilizing different online platforms for different educational purposes (Aduba & Mayowa-Adebara 2021: 12).

Lagumdžija and Eminović-Ljevo (2021) explore to what extent online solutions integrate traditional teaching techniques. Some of the findings based on the interviews with four English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors working for the International University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) can be summarized as follows:

1. Pair and group work is not usually conducted in online meetings.
2. Some EFL instructors speak more during online meetings than they do during traditional classroom meetings. One of the reasons is their not being sure whether students are present and engaged.
3. Students seem to prefer in-person instruction, find online lessons less important, and miss socializing with their peers.

The researchers conclude that the interviewed instructors were aware of occasional shifting towards more traditional solutions. However, they explained the shift by technical difficulties and students' lack of motivation.

It is not uncommon for online learning solutions to rely on traditional material delivery techniques such as lectures (whether pre-recorded or synchronous), short or long topic presenting texts, and follow-up multiple choice comprehension tests. For example, QEDEx, an online learning platform designed to deliver "the quality of teaching and learning in all education sectors across the world" (QEDEx) heavily relies on such techniques. It should be noted that significant efforts, which can be traced back to the first half of twentieth century, have been cultivated so that learners could benefit from cognitivist, constructivist, social constructivist, or experientialist (not to mention recently embraced neuronalist) teaching agendas which rest on moving away from treating learners and their minds as containers that need to be filled with information (cf. Kovačević 2021: 5-45). It is truly disappointing that some contemporary online education practices are nullifying the major (but unfortunately inconclusive) progress in general education theory.

It should be emphasized that experiences with online/remote education during the COVID-19 pandemic depend on national standards. The Online Education Trends Report (Venable, 2021), which is based on a survey answered by 1,800 students and 366 school administrators in the U.S., lists positive findings such as the following:

1. Three quarters of student respondents found online learning better than or at least as good as on-campus learning.
2. Half of the remote learner respondents expect to enroll in online courses after educational processes mainly return to campus sites.
3. Half of the administrators believe that more investment in instructional design solutions is not necessary.

Different and more pessimistic findings are presented in a report on online and remote education experiences in Afghanistan, Brazil, Cambodia, Estonia, Haiti, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Uruguay (Barron Rodriguez et al. 2020):

1. Multimodal delivery systems were more effective in urban than in rural areas. This is true for each of the five modes: paper-based, mobile learning, online platforms, TV, and radio.
2. Only Estonia and Uruguay, the two highest-income countries included in the study, relied on high-tech solutions alone.
3. Low and middle income countries do not have the infrastructure and internet connectivity necessary to make use of online education solutions. For example, only 40,000 schools in Brazil, out of 141,000, are connected to the internet; although all of the 270,000 schools in the Edo-BEST

system in Nigeria had some experience with advanced technology-based teaching solutions before COVID-19, their remote learning program reached only 29% of their student population during the pandemic.

These contrasted findings highlight the disparities that characterize education systems across the globe. While our local educational truths may be more or less encouraging, somewhere in the world a student, teacher, parent, or school administrator is faced with different realities, which can be much better or much worse than our own. Having the best of intentions to offer viable global solutions, researchers and authors sometimes produce solutions, which are more valid for their immediate environments than other educational contexts. Therefore, as we explore digital teaching solutions, we must remember that some of us are deprived of basic communication technologies.

### **Relying on optimism is not enough**

Moving towards an uncertain future for worldwide education should be rooted in optimism. The existing systems can and must be improved. The findings reviewed so far in this paper show that significant numbers of teachers and students appear to be dissatisfied with the ways in which schools are run and education is being delivered. Just giving up or acquiescing to negative trends should definitely not be seen as an option. Yet, for those interested in improving any education system, simply criticizing or suggesting reforms for current teaching practices yields few results. This is because in order to achieve meaningful and lasting results, there are several foundational stones, which must be laid, or re-laid, as the case may be. These stones include quality working conditions and environments, teaching contracts, wages and pace of wage progression, the amount of public appreciation for teachers' work, and teaching workload demands (cf. Eurydice Report 2021: 141).

Data obtained by the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (Eurydice Report 2021: 143), which was answered by 260 000 teachers and 15 000 school leaders, reveals the following as the top five sources of teachers' work-related stress:

1. Having too much administrative work to do (53.2%)
2. Having too much grading (48.6%)
3. Being held responsible for students' achievement (47.3%)
4. Keeping up with changing requirements from authorities (45.6%)
5. Maintaining classroom discipline (41.7%).

The data analysis reveals that well-behaved classes, higher levels of teacher collaboration, and higher levels of teacher autonomy are associated with lower levels of stress for teachers (Eurydice Report 2021: 147). However, these three factors are only related to the working climate and culture. Factors such as working time, experience, contract type, and perceptions of self-efficacy are also worth considering as they may elevate or ease work-related stress and increase or decrease job satisfaction (see Eurydice Report 2021: 148).

By denying teachers adequate wages, favorable contracts, and working conditions conducive to their well-being, we deprive our children of their educators' full potential. In doing so, we impede the growth of our societies, cultures, economies, and overall quality of life. We need to dismiss the myth that teachers are idealistically driven martyrs, who do not require the same level of comfort in life afforded by other professions. Like anyone else, teachers deserve to be able to lead lives of comfort, security, and enjoyment, with the assurance that they will also be able to live out their senior years in dignity after retirement. Two out of five teachers in the EU are not satisfied with their salaries, and one out of five are on a temporary contract (Eurydice Report 2021). The dissatisfaction is higher in countries with lower GDP per capita. In other words, the countries, which need to increase the overall quality of lifestyles, have less satisfied teachers. Our profession cannot systematically attract the brightest minds so long as education offers less to its employees than other industries. Governments around the world must invest

more in quality education systems if they expect future generations to be both willing and able to give back to their societies.

Teacher training programs need to regain some of their lost appeal. This is only possible if the teaching profession is more effectively valued and associated with an attractive and comfortable lifestyle. Unfortunately, attempts to do so, such as annually rewarding best teachers, have the potential to mislead. While rewarding those with the most outstanding achievements may sound reasonable, it sends the message that the onus of excellence falls on individual teachers, in the circumstances where serious government intervention is needed to address underlying obstacles. For example, the altruistic and extraordinary deeds of Peter Tabichi, the Kenyan Math and Physics teacher who won the Global Teacher Prize in 2019, can inspire all teachers to do more for their students. Yet Peter's challenges actually speak about Kenya, and what it does and does not do for its people, students, and teachers. While teaching heroes like Peter or Andria Zafirakou, the recipient of 2018 Global Teacher Prize, can of course be a focal point for education interest and research, this should not distract from the focus on teaching systems and the agents who run them, which must be intensified. A top-down approach based on informed decision making, field data, and strategic investment can be an alternative starting point. The studies reviewed in this article (García & Weiss 2019, den Brok et al. 2017, Eurydice Report 2021, Pljevljak 2021) demonstrate widespread dissatisfaction among teachers with their working conditions. Government and non-governmental actors with the ability to influence schooling systems can start there.

Significant investments are especially needed in the transition to digital schooling. If there are any global efforts to abandon traditional schooling frameworks and replace them with computer-assisted/online learning solutions, every education stakeholder will need some time before they start dwelling and excelling in the new reality. Many parts of the world have weak economies, underdeveloped internet infrastructure, schoolchildren living in poverty, undertrained instructors, and poor digital teaching solutions. While COVID-19 introduced almost all of us to some remote teaching alternatives, the experience has been partly disappointing for many teachers, students, and parents, with questionable outcomes for society at large. Many lessons have been learned, many platforms have been mastered, new solutions have been proposed; but the general consensus remains that the old-fashioned classroom environment has hard-to-beat advantages.

If digital teaching solutions have partly failed the COVID-19 test, there are several reasons. One recent analysis identifies an inclusive approach to digital solutions, curricula planning, teacher training and development policies, sustained monitoring and evaluation policies, and national strategies as factors that have potential to elevate our digital teaching performances (cf. Barron Rodriguez et al., 2020). While the analysis derives from large-scale research that has included experts from at least fifteen countries, the conclusions sound familiar: education systems require more attention and investment. This can come from governments, non-governmental bodies, philanthropists, or any conscientious individual who is willing to actively join forces to provide every student with an effective learning environment. We need to stop pretending that mediocre solutions are sufficient to address the dire obstacles to education, which are hindering learning outcomes worldwide. We cannot continue to allow economic disparities to dictate the educational outcomes of our children, leading us towards a dystopian future where children from prosperous areas thrive, while children from underdeveloped areas must accept limited visions of their potential. Different parts of the world and specific scholastic contexts have different challenges to address in order to maximize the effectiveness of their school systems. The studies reviewed in the previous section (Beka 2021, Taraj 2021, Aduba & Mayowa-Adebara 2021, Lagumdžija & Eminović-Ljevo 2021, Venable 2021, Barron Rodriguez et al. 2020) reveal that experiences with online education vary. All of them report various challenges that need to be addressed, such as internet infrastructure, lack of electronic devices, underexplored potentials of digital

education, the power of social and interactive contact, or a lack of collective awareness about pitfalls of digital education. Alongside obstacles, many also report positive experiences.

### Conclusion

It may be argued that this call to action is too modest and lacks the potential to reach the policy makers who are empowered to set new courses in education history. However, it can reach other researchers and authors who may use alternative channels to disseminate some of the facts about contemporary education. These are the facts that speak of larger flaws in our education systems such as the following:

1. Interest in teaching careers is declining.
2. The weaker interest in teaching careers can be explained by public appraisal and self-perception of the teaching career.
3. Stronger economies provide better working conditions for their teachers. However, this is not always true.
4. Education systems across the world significantly differ in their capacities to modernize their practices and benefit from digital solutions.
5. Covid-19 has emphasized the disparities not only between different countries but also between urban and rural areas serviced by one education system.

This article has proposed that all education stakeholders take immediate action. These actions will vary according to the particularities of education systems and their growth capacities. The recommendations are based on the review of very recent studies and the author's humble understanding of ongoing education practices and their potential to foster the progress of human civilization. It is recognized that further research is necessary to validate some of the presented recommendations. The task of validation may require longitudinal studies which are not easy to conduct, but whose findings could inform new policies in education. If we wait for another pandemic to make serious changes to our educational systems, these will no doubt once again be rooted in a naive optimism that things will turn out for the best, rather than any critical evaluation of the current systems' impediments and shortcoming. We must reflect on the lessons that the present period has taught us, continue to collect data, and enhance our readiness to enact digital education solutions.

### References

- Aduba, D. E., Mayowa-Adebara, O. (2021). Online platforms used for teaching and learning during the COVID-19 era: The case of LIS students in Delta State University, Abraka. *International Information & Library Review*, 1-36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572317.2020.1869903>.
- Barron Rodriguez, M., Cobo, C., Muñoz-Najar, A., Sánchez Ciarrusta, I. (2021). *Remote learning during the global school lockdown: multi-country lessons*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.
- Beka, A. (2021). Transformative school initiatives through the use of digital technologies in Kosovo during Covid-19. *Ilkogretim Online - Elementary Education Online*, 20(1), 851-860. <http://ilkogretim-online.org>.
- Burke, P. J., Christensen, J. C., Fessler, R., McDonnell, J. H., Price, J. R. (1987). The teacher career cycle: Model development and research report. *Annual meeting of the American educational research association*. Washington.
- den Brok, P., Wubbels, T., van Tartwijk, J. (2017). Exploring beginning teachers' attrition in the Netherlands. *Teachers and Teaching*, 23(8), 881-895, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1360859>.
- Eurydice Report (2021). *Teachers in Europe: Careers, Development and Well-being*. Eurydice report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

- Facts Maps (2018). *PISA 2018 Worldwide Ranking – average score of mathematics, science and reading*. FactsMaps.com. <https://factsmaps.com/pisa-2018-worldwide-ranking-average-score-of-mathematics-science-reading/>. Accessed on 22 December 2021.
- García, E., Weiss, E. (2019). *The teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought: The first report in 'The Perfect Storm in the Teacher Labor Market' series*. Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-teacher-shortage-is-real-large-and-growing-and-worse-than-we-thought-the-first-report-in-the-perfect-storm-in-the-teacher-labor-market-series/>. Accessed on 3 December 2021.
- Joseph, J. (2021). *Former teachers reveal what made them quit and it explains why there are teacher shortages*. Good & Upworthy. <https://scoop.upworthy.com/former-teachers-reveal-why-quit-explains-teacher-shortages?> Accessed on 21 December 2021.
- Kovačević, E. (2021). *Teaching Adult English Language Learners: Enhancing Personal Methodologies*. International University of Sarajevo.
- Lagumdžija, E., Eminović-Ljevo, A. (2021). Is COVID-19 forcing ESL instructors to return to more traditional teaching in the second language acquisition methodology? *Educational Role of Language Journal*, 1(5), 18-29. <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.01.02>
- McGowan, M. (2018). *'Too much control': Pasi Sahlberg on what Finland can teach Australian schools*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jan/07/pasi-sahlberg-finland-teach-australian-schools-education> Accessed on 21 December 2021.
- Pljevljak, S. (2021). Canton Sarajevo primary and secondary schoolteacher wellbeing and experience during the COVID-19 pandemic [Master's Thesis International University of Sarajevo].
- QEDEX. *The Global Community for Higher Education Professionals to Continue Lifelong Learning*. <https://www.qedex.org/>. Accessed on 23 December, 2021.
- Soffar, H. (2019). Pros and cons of technology in education & Can technology replace teachers? <https://www.online-sciences.com/technology/pros-and-cons-of-technology-in-education-can-technology-replace-teacher>. Accessed on 23 December 2021.
- Taraj, G. (2021). What do college learners think of synchronous learning? *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 20(4), 82-98. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.20.4.5>
- UNICEF COVID-19 (2020). *COVID-19: Are children able to continue learning during school closures?: A global analysis of the potential reach of remote learning policies*. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/remote-learning-reachability-factsheet/>. Accessed on 21 December 2021.
- UNICEF Education and COVID-19. (2020). *Education and COVID-19*. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/covid-19/>. Accessed on 21 December 2021.
- UNICEF Education Disrupted. (2021). *Education disrupted: The second year of the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures*. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/education-disrupted/>. Accessed on 21 December 2021.
- Venable, M. A. (2021). *Online education trends report. Best Colleges*. <https://www.bestcolleges.com/research/annual-trends-in-online-education/>. Accessed on 8 February 2022.

## Preparedness of future English teachers as a prerequisite of their professional well-being

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.07>

Elena Kovacikova\*, Jana Hartanska\*\*

\*Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia; [ekovacikova@ukf.sk](mailto:ekovacikova@ukf.sk)

\*\*Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia; [jhartanska@ukf.sk](mailto:jhartanska@ukf.sk)

### Abstract

*Qualified English teachers in Slovakia need to earn a master degree in teaching. Their university study in bachelor and master years contain theoretical courses in English linguistics, culture, literature, and English teaching methodology accompanied with compulsory teaching practice. Practicum or teaching practice performed at local training schools are supervised by teacher trainers who cooperate with university methodology teachers. The preparedness of university graduates for their real professions has been recently questioned and criticized by educational authorities and public blaming insufficient or prevailing theoretical university preparation. This paper sheds light on the teaching practice of the future English teachers in Slovakia in order to establish their professional well-being. In particular, it discusses the views of the English teacher trainers collected from interviews on the preparedness of university students (pre-service English teachers) for their teaching professions. The qualitative type of the research, a case study with participants – the interviewed teacher trainers on performance of university students was carried out in 2019. The results displayed in a SWOT analysis reveal the gaps that are to be filled by the university preparation. Moreover, the interpretations are based on the linguistic, intercultural and methodological aspects of preparedness that can mirror the challenges in the university preparation of future English teachers in Slovakia. The results and interpretations might contribute towards building professional well-being within European standards of English teachers and their university preparation and the balance between theory and practice.*

**Key words:** *English teacher university preparation, teaching practice, practicum, case study*

### Introduction

Professional terms such as teaching practice and practicum are used in scientific papers interchangeably. Language teacher preparation is holistically discussed in the *European Profile for Language Teacher Education - A Frame of Reference*<sup>11</sup> (Kelly et al. 2004) as an outcome of case studies with articulated 40 principles of a quality language teacher preparation. It presents results of a study carried out at 11 European educational institutions that provide language teacher training programs. This *Profile* has been taken as a model document for measuring the preparedness of future English language teachers in Slovakia. The principles of the quality language teacher education can be divided according to the development of certain competences that are necessary for language teaching career: linguistic, intercultural, and methodological (Kovacikova & Pechociak 2021).

The topic of the pre-service teachers in connection with their teaching practice has been a focus of the studies carried out by Johnson (2006, 2009) focusing on understanding and clarifying the ways they teach. Also, Kabilan and Izzaham (2008) worked with Malaysian pre-service English teachers that reflected on their challenges related to the use of their mother tongue, teacher centered approach and mix-ability teaching. Gang's (2013) study talks about the difficulties of the pre-service English teachers

---

<sup>11</sup>*European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference (2004)*. Final Report to the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture.

to experiment with pedagogical practices that they had learnt during their methodological courses at the faculty. The study from Turkey carried out by Mutlu (2015: 42) searched for the challenges during the practicum in order to find the challenges. The aim was to look for the improvements that can be applied in further teacher preparation. Focus group interviews with the teacher trainers and pre-service teachers were conducted. All the pre-service teachers agreed that teaching practice provided them *“effective understanding of the real teaching”*.

Another recent Turkish study on the pre-service English teachers' practicum expectations and attainments carried out by Ulum (2020) aimed at finding what pre-service teachers expect from the practicum process and what they attain. After reviewing the papers discussing practicum of English teachers the results show that there are only a limited number of studies dealing with its quality and effectiveness.

### **Methodology and research design**

The qualitative research in a form of a case study, described in this paper is a partial research of the bigger picture of English language teacher education in Slovakia, especially at the Faculty of Education, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. For the purposes of this case study 7 teacher trainers (5 from secondary schools and 2 from elementary schools) were interviewed in order to find out the level of preparedness of the pre-service teachers in linguistic, intercultural and methodological aspects. The interviews were carried out from January 2019 until January 2020. All teacher trainers employed in this research are fully qualified English teachers with more than 5 years of teaching practice who train the university students in their master degree. The task of a teacher trainer is to guide pre-service teachers in pedagogical reality, explain administration, teaching process, evaluation and legal regulations applied in elementary and secondary schools. The tasks of a pre-service teacher are to get acquainted with learners, teaching materials, content, forms and methods applied in teaching. Before being involved in teaching it is common to observe a teacher trainer in order to get an idea how to plan, conduct and evaluate the teaching process. Then, the teacher trainer checks the lesson plan before the teaching happens, observes the teaching process of a pre-service teacher, and gives critical and constructive comments on a teaching performance. In the end of the practicum, the teacher trainer writes evaluation on a trainee based on the previous observation of a teaching process. The researcher was also an interviewer in this qualitative research. Her position at the university is to lead ELT methodology courses in bachelor and master levels and she is also responsible for the practicum at training schools and communication with teacher trainers. Therefore, she is acquainted with teacher trainees as university students carrying out the practicum and teacher trainers who supervise them in the training facilities. Thus, the motivation to find out the opportunities and challenges in order to enhance the professional well-being of future graduates is high.

### **Data collection**

The data collected from evaluations and interviews were processed qualitatively, categorized into SWOT analyses and interpreted afterwards. The methods chosen for data collection were semi-structured interviews with teacher trainers and self-reflections written by the pre-service teachers grounded in the research methodology by Cohen (2007) following also ethical principles. All the research subjects were primarily informed and asked about their willingness to participate in the research, with their right to be withdrawn any time during the research. At the same time, the names of the participants were not publicized and thus, they remained anonymous. The data were collected from January 2018 until December 2019. The answers provided orally (by teacher trainers) or in writing (in evaluations) were further categorized in the three categories:

- Linguistic (concerning foreign language competence of the pre-service teachers),

- Intercultural (intercultural competence of the pre-service teachers),
- Methodological (classroom management, lesson planning, instruction, discipline, use of mother tongue, evaluation, managing, SEN learners, etc.).

The fourth category of answers consisted of the answers that did not fit in any of the previously mentioned categories. Thus, it is labelled in the SWOT analysis as not applicable N/A.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out with 7 teacher trainers as the available sample. Interviews were conducted in a mother tongue in order to enhance authenticity and natural flow of thoughts and speech. The questions were focused on the following categories:

1. What was a linguistic performance of the pre-service teachers (aim at fluency, accuracy, level of vocabulary adjusted to the level of learners, the mistakes or errors, etc.) – **a linguistic category (L)**
2. What was their methodological/didactic preparedness? (logical sequencing of activities, variety of forms of work, clear instructions, demonstrations, solving unpredictable situations, classroom management, time management, didactic approaches in teaching vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation or development of language skills, relevant use of mother tongue) – **a methodological category (M)**
3. What was their intercultural competence? (socio-cultural knowledge (day to day living, history, values, beliefs, taboos), intercultural awareness, intercultural skills (to see contrast between own and target cultures, ability to overcome stereotypes, cultural differences), attitudes, values, sociolinguistic competences, pragmatic competences, non-verbal communication, presenting cultural values, differences, by explanation or actions such as small talk, polite phrases, explanations of intercultural specific situations or events) –**an intercultural category (I)**
4. Are there any other relevant comments focusing on performances of the pre-service teachers during their teaching practice that are not covered by items 1-3? **(n/a)**

**Findings**

The answers from the interviews were coded, analyzed and summarized in the following SWOT analysis. In order to validate the results the peer-debriefing technique was used. Thus the trustworthiness of the findings was assured when the answers were categorized into the strong, weak qualities, opportunities or threats.

**Table 1: SWOT analysis**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <p><i>Enthusiasm (N/A), New activities (M), Authentic materials(I, M), English language competence (L), Clear instructions (M,L), Interesting interactive materials (M) Positive approach towards students (M,L), Friendly approach (n/a), Appealing warm-ups (M), Small talk (I), First name addressing (M), Positive classroom rapport (M).</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p><i>Weak language competence (L), basic grammar mistakes (L), No small talk (I), little personal involvement (M), bad time-management (M), SEN learners (M), little feedback (M,L), stress, anxiety (n/a), teacher centeredness (M), constant use of the textbook (M,L), less sensitive error correction (M,L).</i></p>
<p><b>SWOT</b></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p><i>More flexibility (L,M), Smaller dependence on textbooks (L,M), More linguistic control in instructions (L), Less self-control in explanations (n/a), More student centeredness (M), Personalization of the content (M,I), Use of learning opportunities (M), Building linguistic and professional self-confidence (L,M), Effective work with SEN learners (M), Less direct use of language when correcting students (L,M), More intercultural personal involvement (I).</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <p><i>Lots of grammar mistakes (L), No smile (n/a), Impolite behavior towards teacher trainers, students (n/a), Lack of pair and group work (M), Complicated instructions (M,L), Inefficient use of mother tongue (M,L).</i></p>

### Results and interpretations

The results shown in the SWOT analysis above in the text are taken from the responses of the teacher trainers, 5 from secondary schools and 2 from elementary schools who trained pre-service teachers. The common procedure is to have 3-5 pre-service teachers within one teaching practice (i.e., for two weeks) and the interview was carried out immediately after the teaching practice was finished. They were also asked to provide an authentic example from the teaching practice if they could recall any in order to enhance more precise categorization. Also, the precise number representing an item in SWOT analysis is not available as the teacher trainers had their notes and comments mainly on a group of students. The results attempted to give an overall perception on inquired issues focusing on preparedness of the pre-service teachers for their teaching profession. The answers were divided into the linguistic, intercultural and methodological categories.

As for the linguistic competence, most of the pre-service teachers were evaluated as good, very good and excellent in their language proficiency, however, three teacher trainers complained that there is always one or two pre-service teachers in a group who make basic mistakes in grammar, mix a word order mainly in questions, do not have enough vocabulary and thus their linguistic competence is poorer. These facts were mostly observed in a bilingual section (English-Slovak) of a secondary grammar school where the discrepancy between the foreign language proficiency of learners and pre-service teachers was more than obvious. A bilingual secondary school in Nitra belongs to training schools for pre-service English language teachers. Thus, pre-service teachers during their teaching practice in winter semesters teach bilingual students – teenagers who are enrolled according to their English language level from the whole country. Therefore, their language competences are very high when they start studying at the secondary school. As stated by Daszkiewicz et al. (2018: 23) *“a constant necessity to consider and choose wisely between the correctness and fluency”* brings uncertainties in performances of teacher trainees who control their speech production and sometimes it results unreasonably in less confident outcomes. Most of the pre-service teachers who realize their teaching practice are stressed from not being linguistically competent because sometimes it is their first time teaching real students and mostly, they are surprised with students’ high level of English. What is more worrying is the fact that more than a third of the pre-service teachers are likely to feel anxious and stressed when teaching students, especially in this bilingual section. On the contrary, they feel more confident linguistically in teaching at elementary schools and their linguistic performance is more self-assured. These findings open the space for working with foreign language anxiety during university preparation of future teachers (Cf. Kráľová, 2016).

The methodological category revealed that some students strictly follow the textbook as they do not feel safe to try some other additional activities. At the same time, time management as a typical drawback of novice teachers was observed. Language lessons are about language production and the most effective techniques for producing the language with all the students at the same time can be enhanced through pair or group work. There were two complaints of not using any other forms of work apart from a teacher and classroom. The ineffective use of mother tongue especially with those pre-service teachers who do not feel confident enough in English was also observed. Another evidently initial negative was seen in insufficient direction towards learners stemming out of the extreme self-control (personal and linguistic). Thus, in one specific case, a pre-service teacher who is normally very sociable and open-minded acted during her teaching as if she never smiled. On the contrary, pre-service teachers were positively evaluated for building positive rapport, friendly approach to the students, bringing authentic materials to the classroom, addressing students with their first names, supporting and positively approaching their learners.

Intercultural competence covered involvement of culturally bound situations in conversations, such as small talk, politeness, addressing, and if applicable also comparisons when teaching particular topics

such as festivals, housing, food, clothing, school, etc. Mostly, pre-service teachers were praised for introductory small talk when they started teaching as well as for being polite. There were only two teachers who mentioned three students that used very direct language, did not explain the story behind the festivals such as Thanksgiving and skipped the small talk before checking homework. The use of the authentic material is in this case categorized in intercultural field, as it was mainly bound to the sample from the TV series, advertisements connected to the topic they were teaching. This use was directly asking for comparison or explanation of cultural differences.

SWOT analysis is divided into four categories. On the one hand, strengths summarize the positive aspects that were gathered from all the interviews with teacher trainers. Weaknesses, on the other hand, were commented as negative aspects in teaching performances of the pre-service teachers. The categories named threats and opportunities are from the point of view of improvements seen as the most important ones. Threats cover critical comments such as being late for the lesson, not behaving polite towards teacher trainers or students (alleged mocking the students, arguing with a teacher trainer).

The opportunities that were articulated out of all the interviews summarized in the SWOT analysis suggest possible improvements that could be implemented in further preparation. From the linguistic point of view, it is more than necessary to build and develop linguistic competences and boost the confidence in expression and correct and precise spoken production in English. Reid (2014: 122) comments on the intercultural competences of the English teachers pointing out that they cannot identify intercultural competences and thus they *'include socio-cultural knowledge (visible parts of the cultural iceberg) in their lessons and the invisible aspects (sociolinguistic, pragmatic and paralinguistic) they neglect or do not realize their importance.* From the intercultural point of view, small talk that was praised in some of the pre-service teachers, lacked in the others as well as not enough contextualized tasks when the cultural issues were discussed. Some of the pre-service teachers do not have enough personalized intercultural experience and therefore they are not able to transfer them to the learners. They use very direct language mainly when correcting the learners that is probably Slovak interference, i.e., *no please, thank you, could you, would you,* etc. From the methodological point of view, the pre-service teachers should improve in redirecting their focus from themselves towards students, from a teacher-centered approach towards a learner-centered one. At the same time, following the textbook only without any contextual or personalized connection causes only a shallow coverage of the topic. The pre-service teachers often do not make use of learning "opportunities" that occur in the classroom. As for example, when students are introduced a new tense and one of them 'complains' about the number of tenses that exist in English, a teacher can use the complaint as a motivational moment for discussion and further positive and supportive development. In the unpredictable situations such as failure of technology or lack of time for running the activities, odd number of students during pair work pre-service teachers need flexible reactions. SEN learners also represent difficulties for the pre-service teachers who usually know their impairments only from theories.

## Conclusion

This qualitative research was carried out with the aim to find out the level of preparedness of the future English teachers for teaching as a prerequisite for their professional well-being. Through interviewing seven teacher trainers as an available sample, two of them from elementary school and five of them from secondary schools, the data were gathered from the comments on the trainees' performances. Three of them justified their comments also in their evaluations. Four of them did not have evaluations of individual students but the groups of students, so they summarized their comments on the group of students with particular examples. All the data were categorized into the linguistic, intercultural and methodological aspects. Later on, they were analyzed in a SWOT analysis showing the

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the trainees' teaching performances. The aim was to categorize the answers and find out the improvements for more effective preparedness of the pre-service education in linguistic, intercultural and methodological categories and these qualitative data were gathered and interpreted. Generally speaking, the findings showed the gaps that can be focused on more in the English language teacher university education particularly in the content of the university linguistic courses that should build up linguistic competences and thus contribute towards professional well-being of future teachers. The research findings highlight the importance of bridging theories and realities in intercultural courses that should develop cultural awareness and teach students how to transfer it to learners. Last but not least, methodological courses should deal with the principles of authentic and effective teaching and learning.

In order to follow objective principles of research conduct it is necessary to mention the limits of this study. The first limitation of this qualitative part is the fact that these data were collected after the first type of teaching practice at secondary school (during the winter term) and elementary school (during the summer term) of the pre-service teachers in their first grade of master degree. In their bachelor degree they had completed their observation practice thus this was their first-time teaching during their pre-service preparation. Lots of their methodological failures could have been caused by their first real experience in teaching at schools. Secondly, some of the negative comments might have been caused by the stress of the trainees and not by the lack of knowledge or other circumstances that can occur in educational realms. All in all, more insights into the quality of the teaching practice in forms of the scientific and professional papers are necessary in order to build up a bigger and more objective picture.

**Acknowledgements:** The paper was published under the research KEGA 002UKF-4/2020.

## References

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge. Available in pdf at <https://gtu.ge/Agro-Lib/RESEARCH%20METHOD%20COHEN%20ok.pdf>.
- Council of Europe (2007). *Guide for the Development of Language Policies in Europe*. <https://rm.coe.int>.
- Council of Europe (2007). *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages. A reflection tool for Language Teacher Education*. Available at: [http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/fte/pdf/c3\\_epostl\\_e.pdf](http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/fte/pdf/c3_epostl_e.pdf)
- Daszkiewicz, M., Kusiak, M., Wenzel, R. (2018). *Educational Role of Language Skills*. Poland: Gdansk University Press
- Gadušová, Z., Harťanská, J. (2002). Teaching English in Slovakia – Past, Present and Future. *CAUCE Revista de filologia y didáctica*, 25: 225-280.
- Gan, Z. (2013). Learning to teach English language in the practicum: what challenges do non-native ESL student-teachers face? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3): 92-108.
- Johnson, K.E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 235-237. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40264518>.
- Johnson, K.E. (2009). *Second Language Teacher Education: A sociocultural perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Kabilan, M.K., Izzaham, R.I.R. (2008). Challenges faced and the strategies adopted by a Malaysian English language teacher during teacher practice. *English Language Teaching*, 1(1): 87-95.
- Kováčiková, E., Pechočiak, T. (2021). English teacher education in Slovakia. *Slavonic Pedagogical Studies Journal*, (10). doi: 10.18355/PG.2021.10.2.3.
- Kováčiková, E. Prokeínová, R. (2012). Focus Groups in Educational Research, in: S. Pokrivčáková *Research in Language Pedagogy* (pp. 62-87). Brno: MSD.
- Kráľová, Z. (2016). *Foreign Language Anxiety*. Nitra: UKF.

- Mutlu, G. (2015). Challenges in Practicum: Two Sides of the Coin. *International journal of Learning and Teaching*, 7(1): 38-48.
- Reid, E. (2014). *Intercultural aspects in teaching English at primary schools*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition.
- Ulum, Ö. G. (2020). Pre-service English Teachers' Practicum Expectations and Attainments. *Turkish studies – Education*, 15(2): 1287-1297, available at: <https://dx.doi.org/10.29228/TurkishStudies.41629>.

## Greek preschool teacher's views about language activities in early childhood education during Covid-19. A chance for change?

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.08>

Zoi Apostolou\*, Konstantinos Lavidas\*\*

\*University of Patras; apostolo@upatras.gr

\*\*University of Patras; lavidas@upatras.gr

### Abstract

*The aim of this research is to investigate the views of preschool teachers about their "readiness" for e-learning, the barriers they had faced while using it in early childhood education, the teaching practices during distance learning of language, and the transformations that had to be done in these, their effectiveness, and finally the utilization of the digital tools in the teaching of language after their return to the real classes. Views from ten Greek preschool teachers were collected with semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic content analysis. The results showed that teachers had no "readiness" for distance education and some students have fewer opportunities than others to learn and conquer some skills at home during distance learning. Furthermore, during distance learning the oral language was cultivated naturally and effortlessly, while the cultivation of the written language encountered significant difficulties due to the mediation of the digital tools, according to teachers. But as they seem to acknowledge the power of digital tools, they overcome their initial embarrassment and set aside the difficulties they encountered. Indeed, teachers seem to acknowledge this e-learning teaching experience supplied them with technological skills that could be utilized in similar situations. However, they highlight the need for training in distance learning and mainly how they could effectively integrate the technology in class.*

**Keywords:** *teaching of language, preschool education, teachers' opinions, pandemic, distance learning, online learning*

### Introduction

The pandemic of the new coronavirus Covid-19 had an impact on the entire planet transforming it significantly. The field of education, facing conditions of urgent teaching with Information and Communications Technology (ICT) taking over and producing the guarantees in education, created the necessary conditions for the utilization of distance education at the school level (Samuelsson et al. 2020). Although school distance learning can work as compensatory, complementary or self-sufficient (Keegan 2001) of formal education, for preschool education concerns arise regarding the role of the use of forms of distance education by preschool teachers (Pyun 2021).

### Theoretical background

Concerns about distance education and its applicability to the preschool setting are mainly related to the "readiness" of preschool teachers to adapt to the new educational conditions, the willingness of students to attend the new educational reality, the parental involvement, and of course the lack of equipment (Musthofiyah et al. 2021, Pyun 2021). Furthermore, preschool teachers should consider more issues when providing digital tools to children (Apostolou 2019, Muhdi 2021), as they get bored easily if what is provided is not interesting and innovative for them. However, during the pandemic, preschool teachers were forced to use ICT in the educational process, some only through communication with students and others by incorporating it into their teaching interventions, to a lesser

or greater extent, proposals made by the curriculum and facilitated by various ICT utilization scenarios (Pyun 2021, Samuelsson et al. 2020). In fact, many of them, at the same time, participated in training programs for this purpose.

Taking into account the criteria regarding the suitability of the content, the age and the developmental needs of the children (Ke et al. 2019, Foti 2020), preschool teachers should be consistent in application and the provision of material in the classroom preparing learning scenarios that will mobilize the student and maintain his undiminished interest during the distance learning. Within this framework of considering the learning process in kindergarten, the variety of educational media, the ease of use of technological tools and the multiple principles of learning and teaching gives a qualitative dimension to the distance learning. For language learning in particular, the pedagogical approach of literacy in pre-school education is determined by the current Curriculum for Kindergarten (MoE/PI 2003) which refers to the development of oral and written speech within a theoretical framework based on the theory of emerging literacy and the constructivism according to the approaches of Ferreiro & Teberosky (1982). In this context, emphasis is placed on early language stimulation, which has great importance for reading development and children's literacy learning because learning occurs through actions that have meaning for them and a clear purpose (Apostolou & Stellakis 2019). Preschool teachers, adopting a broad definition of the concept of literacy and its practices, invent and experiment with various practices that lead to the development of the learning process and the cultivation of oral and written language (Dafermou et al. 2006).

In the new Curriculum for Preschool Education (IEP 2021) the thematic units "*Language*" and "*Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)*" have a key role and are the basis for all didactic fields. Communication has an important place in the preschool setting curriculum with the Thematic Unit of Language adopting the approach of multiplication and in particular of critical literacy, in which emphasis is placed on multimodal texts and the integration of various semiotic systems for the production of meaning and effective communication. In the context of everyday situations and authentic experiences (IEP 2021).

According to the Curriculum for Preschool Education, "*Language*" focuses on the development of basic skills for oral, written, and multilingual communication, which are evaluated as very important for the effective participation of children in the school and wider socio-cultural environment (IEP 2021). In the same context of approaching the teaching practice and the learning process, the "*Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)*" moves in the Curriculum for Preschool Education, emphasizing the development of skills related to the familiarity of children with the digital environment and the development of information management skills to meet different communication needs and helping children to develop critical thinking and to transfer their learning experiences beyond the boundaries of the classroom (IEP 2021).

In recent years, more and more preschool teachers use digital devices, but also have been trained to use them in the educational process (Eleftheriadi et al. 2021, Kolovou et al. 2021, Nikolopoulou 2020). However, pre-pandemic research suggests a non-systematic use of ICT by a small group of preschool teachers (Eleftheriadi et al. 2021, Nikolopoulou 2020) while highlighting many barriers to their use (Eleftheriadi et al. 2021, Nikolopoulou 2020). In view of the Curriculum according to which the goal of education today is to create learning environments that familiarize children with a variety of tools for processing and exchanging information in order to meet the challenges of modern social reality and to decode the world around them, the question that arises concerns the "*readiness*" of preschool teachers. Furthermore, it concerns the willingness of preschool teachers to willingness to train, to collaborate and then to make the necessary and appropriate transformations to adapt to the emerging new conditions of teaching practice which seems to signal and include the greater or lesser use of digital tools and distance learning.

**Research objective**

In this study we focused on preschool teachers' views about teaching practices for the cultivation of oral and written language before and after the pandemic trying to answer the question whether and how the experience gained by preschool teachers from the language's teaching in distance learning during the pandemic indicates their teaching practices in the period after the pandemic.

**Methodology****Research procedure**

This research was carried out in October 2021, and it followed a qualitative methodology, which allows researchers to analyze facts holistically and in depth. Semi-structured interviews with preschool teachers were carried out to identify their practices (Creswell 2016). The interviews were conducted individually, and the interview protocol (see table 1) was based on the objective of the research. The interview protocol was tested on two individuals before the main research to review the interview and make possible corrections. The analysis of the interviews did not indicate possible difficulties and ambiguities in interpreting of the questions, so, the interview protocol was not revised. Moreover, preschool teachers were excluded from the main research. Table 1 presents the final interview questions.

The interviews consisted of two parts and 9 questions in total. The first part was about the preschool teachers' and the children's' "readiness" for e-learning, the barriers they encountered in its implementation, the contribution/attitude of parents during distance learning, the teaching practices they used during distance learning and the transformations in these practices, their effectiveness and finally the utilization of the digital tools in the teaching practice after their return to the real classes. The second part was the demographic profile, including their gender, their studies, their teaching experience and their previous relevant training in ICT and in teaching language, and the number of children in their classes.

**Table 1:** Interview protocol

**First part**

- How "ready" do you think you were for distance education and how "ready" were your students?
- Are there any barriers while using distance education in early childhood education?
- What is the contribution/attitude of parents of preschool students during distance learning?
- Which are your teaching practices for language approach during distance education?
- Do you need to have any transformations in your teaching practices for language approach during distance education?
- Have you noticed any benefits to the students from the use of digital tools for your teaching language practices during distance education?
- Do you utilize any digital tools (from distance education) in your teaching practice after the return to the real classes?

**Second part**

- Preschool teacher's gender, studies and number of children in their classes.
- How many years of work experience do you have in early childhood education?
- Have you received any training on ICTs in the teaching and learning process in preschool or in teaching language?

**Participants**

The purposive sample consisted of 10 Greek female preschool teachers from the Western Greece Region. The interviewees were chosen with the criterion of participating in both periods when the pandemic forced the closure of schools and distance learning. Table 2 presents the demographic information of the participants. In particular, one of the teachers teaches in a private school, and the rest are in public kindergartens, only 4 of them hold a postgraduate degree, only 3 of them have been trained in ICT and only 2 of them have been trained in teaching language.

**Table 2:** Demographic characteristics of the sample and characteristics of settings

Teacher code	Studies	ICT training	Training in teaching language	Years of teaching experience	Number of children in class
PT1	Graduate	No	No	11-15	19
PT2	Post graduate	No	Yes	11-15	12
PT3	Post graduate	Yes	No	1-5	22
PT 4	Post graduate	No	No	11-15	15
PT 5	Graduate	Yes	No	6-10	9
PT 6	Graduate	No	No	16-20	16
PT 7	Graduate	No	No	1-5	23
PT 8	Graduate	No	No	31-35	14
PT 9	Graduate	No	No	16-20	18
PT 10	Post graduate	Yes	Yes	16-20	9

## Results

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic content analysis to develop relevant codes, categories, and topics (Bryman 2016). All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The analysis of the results revealed themes such as: the preschool teachers' "readiness" for e-learning and barriers they had faced while using it in early childhood education, the teaching practices during distance learning of language and the transformations that had to be done in these, their effectiveness and finally the utilization of the digital tools in the teaching practice of language after their return to the real classes.

### Teachers' "readiness" for e-learning and barriers to the use of digital tools and platforms during the period of mandatory e-learning in early childhood education

All the interviewees had already participated in both periods of e-learning during pandemic in the kindergarten and stated that they had no "readiness" (limited access to technology to manage online classes) for distance education. Even those who said they were familiar with distance education did not know the platforms (e.g., WebEx, e-me, E-class) proposed and provided by the Ministry of Education. Interviewees seemed to use WebEx mainly, while many of them referred to the use of alternative digital tools ("Padlet", "Wakletet", "Wordwall", "Sway", etc.) that they themselves knew from their personal uses and evaluated them as "easier". Also, help and mutual support between them is a common opinion amongst the teachers, while they reported with more frustration on the lack or insufficient training by the Ministry of Education, highlighting significantly the need for its existence. Specifically, one teacher stated that:

PT 1: "No teacher or student was ready for distance education. Personally, I did not know about the WebEx, e-me, E-class platforms. However, I used WebEx and Padlet, because I had to, because somehow the process had to be done."

The teachers also referred to the barriers usually exist while using e-learning in early childhood education: the lack of equipment or internet connection in schools and for students too (weak, slow or no Internet access at home, simultaneous use of fewer tools by older siblings for their own educational

requirements), inability to use digital tools by the students of the kindergarten, the presence and the supporting role of the parents was necessary, continually reduced interest of the students as they prefer the direct contact and communication with their teacher and their classmates were referred as the most critical factors. More specific, a teacher stated that:

PT 4: "At first, most of our students were wary and very surprised. There was no familiarity. The difficulties they faced were mainly related to the lack of tools, they had difficult access to them as their older brothers (elementary school) used them simultaneously for their lessons. Although the children participated in the educational process actively, showing a keen interest as they seemed to miss school and their friends, they used the tools of distance education themselves to a lesser extent, as they didn't know how to use them. Almost all the parents helped them by explaining or by using themselves the digital tools during the process."

### **Teaching language practices during e- learning in kindergarten and their transformations**

Almost all the interviewees stated that during distance learning they tried to do several literacy activities, through online tools (e.g., WebEx, e-me, E-class). Specifically, one teacher stated that:

PT 2: "I did a lot of literacy activities through WebEx during e-learning."

In particular, according to the preschool teachers, they used digital tools mainly for the cultivation of oral language and less for written speech, especially especially those who mentioned previous education and training in language teaching. More specifically, these teachers stated that:

PT 2: "We read many fairy tales, painted and "created" many stories, put pictures in order, matched pictures and words etc., mainly emphasizing the enrichment of oral speech."

PT 10: "Indicative language activities with the use of digital tools are the description of images, the watching of fairy tales, the narration, the writing or copying of words related to the subject or everyday life, e.g., date, season, words along with their painting, name spelling. Also, search for words with the same syllables or letters at the beginning, separate syllables with claps."

Furthermore, as the preschool teachers mentioned the oral language was cultivated naturally and effortlessly with the communication through the screen by using the camera and the microphone, while the cultivation of the written language encountered significant difficulties due to the mediation of the digital tools. One teacher stated that:

PT 7: "During the pandemic I tried to cultivate mainly the oral speech. I spoke orally anyway from the moment we communicated even through screens and microphones. I used WebEx, E-class, Padlet and Whiteboard for the cultivation of written language. It was a bit fun at first, they turned on the microphone and said several things. Then, they used the digital tools and their capabilities and they found some digital activities more interesting than the ones we do in our real classrooms. They loved the «wheels», the «hangers», the «picture puzzles», and various such language games that were adapted with digital tools."

Many teachers noticed the barriers they had faced during pandemic at their activities for oral language and more specifically for written language and the transformations they had been done in order to adapt those activities to the needs and conditions of distance education. The difficulties of adapting several language activities to the conditions of the distance learning and the needs of the individualized teaching that arose but they were difficult to deal with were the critical factors. Teachers stated that:

PT 3: "I adapted all language activities to distance education because I had previous training with these digital tools. In real classroom we could change what arises and needs transformation immediately, as we have the experience and of course the time to do it, but

in distance education you cannot easily adapt and transform an activity as you have neither the time nor the familiarity with digital tools and of course you are exposed to the presence of parents. However, I had to make many changes even in the «classroom routines» activities. And the children were asking *why do we change this, why don't we do it like in our classroom?* In the course of distance education, of course, they themselves understood the need to transform many things in order to be functional and efficient."

PT 4: "Since there was no possibility of proximity, I had to simplify the material and the requirements that arose during its use, as when something arose during the distance training it was very difficult to solve. So, I had to anticipate all the possible changes and modifications that I might need to have made. This was extremely time consuming and extremely demanding for us preschool teachers who have not learned to work like this, but what we do in our classrooms is to modify and handle our material with the students according to their wishes, interests and requirements of the didactic act."

In particular, for the written language and its activities, the preschool teachers reported that there were many changes and transformations that needed to be made. One teacher stated that:

PT 2: "The children were asked to write each letter first on the screen and then with different materials they had at home to write it in other ways. The difference in this case in relation to direct teaching was the use of the screen. In general, the use of digital tools signaled change, goals and activities remained more or less the same."

More specifically teachers with previous training in distance learning stated that:

PT 5: "I adapted the activities to the possibilities given to me through technology and distance. I used a lot of digital material (platforms, software, internet activities), which I would not use in lifelong teaching."

PT 10: "From the beginning I adapted my lesson to the new data, I made sure to work well with the parents, I used a lot of digital material (platforms, software, internet activities) which I would not use in my real classroom and I chose those language activities that I thought would be of interest to the children, as they would be «different» and more «attractive» from what we did in real classrooms."

Regarding the effectiveness of the language activities carried out during the distance learning, the preschool teachers referred to the initial enthusiasm and gradually reduced interest of the children. More specific, teachers stated that:

PT 3: "One big difference I find between face-to-face schooling and distance education is the different rhythms of understanding and consolidation that each child has. In life the preschool teacher is always by his side to explain, help, describe and understand. In distance learning, distance on the one hand and the technical difficulties that often arose greatly hampered this way of managing the process of consolidation and understanding."

PT 4: "The activities of distance education were effective. The participation and interest of the children was constantly increasing. Not so much in oral activities, e.g., description of images, storytelling, watching a story/fairy tale as the majority of these activities were usual for our students, but mainly in activities new to them (e.g., wheel, hangers, crossword puzzles, etc.). Such language activities developed by colleagues and were ubiquitous on the internet aroused the children's interest and kept their participation active."

### **The utilization of the digital tools in the teaching practice of language after their return to the real classes**

Regarding the utilization of the digital tools and the material they used during distance learning in their teaching practice of language after the return to the real classes' preschool teachers reported

occasional and focused use of some activities mainly for the cultivation of the written language that seemed to excite the children. Parallely, some teachers declared readiness to utilize their experience in distance learning for a similar situation. More specific, teachers with no previous training at distance learning tools or at language teaching, but with a great deal of teaching experience in general, stated that:

PT 6: "Although I had a hard time with distance learning mainly due to technical difficulties and my unfamiliarity with the computer and digital tools (I also have a fear of them) I now use some activities that I used exclusively in distance learning. I do it mainly to mobilize the interest of children, as I saw from them great acceptance and interest in distance education. Moreover, the current experience helped me to think of teaching approaches more suitable for future similar situations."

PT 8: "I have included in my teaching some activities that I used in distance education. I use «Wordwall», as well as a corresponding whiteboard on the tablet I have in my class. My children also ask for them, they remember them from last year and often they often mention them to me and ask for them. I try as much as I can to adapt them to the teaching practice and to integrate them to the extent that I see that the children are interested and mobilize their interest as something innovative and pioneering but also as a different way of approaching knowledge and teaching."

One kindergarten teacher characteristically stated that children even today, during face-to-face learning, seek out activities that piqued their interest during distance learning. She, also, stated that she does not choose them, as she prefers activities related to the cultivation of oral speech and the familiarization of children with the written word through direct and more experiential activities.

PT 9: "The truth is that our students now in the classroom, still ask for some activities which we did during the distance education, but I do not choose them as I consider that in the face-to-face teaching of the language the cultivation of the spoken word and the acquaintance of the child with the written word are paramount (e.g., name writing, copying words, writing stories, etc.), so I choose more direct and more experiential activities".

## Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate preschool teachers' views about teaching practices for the cultivation of oral and written language before and after the pandemic.

Concerning their practices during the pandemic, preschool teachers stated clearly that they had no "readiness" for distance education (Musthofiyah et al. 2021). Furthermore, previous research indicates that socio-economically disadvantaged students have fewer opportunities than their more advantaged peers to learn and conquer some skills at home (Hoskins & Janmaat 2019) during distance learning. Many studies stated as the most important barriers for distance learning «not having the same digital access» for all students and of course the lack of digital tools at home learning environment (Andrew et al. 2020; Hanushek & Woessmann 2020). In our study, at the same way, because of this lack of digital tools, preschool teachers seemed to be trying to help their students by providing tablets to many of the most disadvantaged families and by communicating with them to pursue them to participate in the new learning experience. As with face-to-face schooling, the pandemic also seems to have amplified inequalities in education. However, as the statements of some interviewees showed, technology can introduce flexible ways of providing educational services, so that we do not leave anyone behind and use the resources effectively. That is why it is critical to engage partners as success can only be achieved when governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders work towards a common goal.

Regarding the practices of preschool teachers for teaching language during distance learning, the oral language was cultivated naturally and effortlessly, while the cultivation of the written language encountered significant difficulties due to the mediation of the digital tools. The lack of relevant research makes it difficult to interpret this result. Although, the teachers once again highlighted the importance of language in their teaching verifying the fact that "*Language*" having a key role in the Curriculum focuses on the development of basic skills for oral, written and multilingual communication, which are considered very important for the effective participation of children in the school and wider socio-political environment (IEP 2021, UNESCO 2017). In this context, teachers, pointing out the difficulties they encountered, referred to the transformations of the activities in general and more specifically at language activities that had to be done in order to adapt to the particular circumstances and the didactic requirements (EACEA 2011, Westerveld et al. 2015) of distance education.

Furthermore, regarding the currently period, after the return to face-to-face schooling, some preschool teachers seemed to occasionally utilize the digital tools for teaching of language focusing mainly for the cultivation of the written language. Teachers seem to acknowledge the power of digital tools to motivate the children and to encourage them to participate more in learning procedures (Eleftheriadi et al. 2021). Finally, teachers seem to acknowledge this distance learning experience supplied them with technological skills that could be utilized in similar situations (Gomes 2021, Samuelsson et al. 2020). In this frame, more research is required to determine the technological benefits for the preschool teachers and the pupils from this emergency situation during the pandemic. Moreover, stakeholders could formulate policies that support teachers to acquire technological and pedagogical skills that could lead them to be adapted to a new era. An era in which teachers should be ready to use digital tools in teaching various subject matters in-person or/and online (Short et al. 2021). Therefore, now more than ever, the educational policy should organize training programs focused on teaching using specific technologies in specific ways (Lavidas et al. 2021, Theodoropoulou et al 2021).

## Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic and the changes it has brought about in education, at all levels, is an experience and a "springboard" for a possible change that may involve new teaching practices, the use of new digital tools, but also some new, more targeted, training courses, etc. In this new educational framework, teachers and students, based on the experience gained during the COVID-19 pandemic, seem to have the will and the need to be more "ready", to be more educated on new practices and tools of distance education, as they realized their usefulness and their necessity.

In particular, in pre-school education, preschool teachers as they were "forced" to use digital tools and for which, as it seemed, they were not "ready", today, and according to the results of our research, seem to overcome their initial embarrassment and set aside the difficulties they encountered. Preschool teachers seem to try to organize themselves more systematically, to pursue learning by utilizing technology in many dimensions of the educational process. Preschool teachers seem to try to organize themselves more systematically, to pursue learning by utilizing technology in many dimensions of the educational process. As they seem to acknowledge the power of digital tools, they also seem to overcome their initial embarrassment and set aside the difficulties they encountered. Indeed, teachers seem to acknowledge this e-learning teaching experience supplied them with technological skills that could be utilized in similar situations. However, they highlight the need for training in distance learning and mainly how they could effectively integrate the technology in class (Lavidas et al. 2021). The urgent need for training in both distance education and especially in language teaching during distance education was significantly stated by most of the interviewees. In general, in Greece many researches concerning the perceptions of preschool teachers referred to the need they propose for training on

language teaching issues (Apostolou & Stellakis 2019, Apostolou et al. 2020), to be more effective themselves but also the teaching process to have the expected results.

In this context, “blended teaching” (Short et al. 2021) seems to be for preschool teachers’ an important part of the ongoing teaching practices that they choose today in their effort to transform and integrate digital learning activities into front-line teaching activities. The process of transforming and adapting new teaching practices is a broader process based on the ability to find, access and use information, and on interacting with other users and navigating the Internet and ICT environment safely and responsibly, starting mainly from respecting the rights of students to provide them with many, different and essential learning experiences (UNESCO 2021).

The main limitation of this research is the small sample size and therefore the weakness of generalizing the research findings. Furthermore, the fact that teachers who participated in our study were requested to declare their views is an issue that could lead to response bias (Lavidas & Gialamas 2019). Further research should be carried out with a greater sample in Greece as well as other similar studies worldwide to confirm these findings.

## References

- Andrew, A., Cattan, S., Costa Dias, M., Farquharson, C., Kraftman, L., Krutikova, S., Phimister, A., Sevilla, A. (2020). Inequalities in Children’s Experiences of Home Learning during the COVID-19 Lockdown in England. *Fiscal Studies*, 41(3), 653-683.
- Apostolou, Z., Stellakis, N., Koustourakis, G. (2020). Pre-primary and first grade primary school teacher’s perceptions on the integration of pre-primary and first grade primary school curricula in Greece. *L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 20, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.17239/L1ESLL-2020.20.01.14>.
- Apostolou, Z. (2019). ICT as good practices for students with intellectual disabilities at Greek public schools, in: P. Tadeu & C. Brigas (Eds). *TELESEICT. Guide of Good Practices* (pp. 73-83). ISBN: 978-84-15651-83-3.
- Apostolou, Z., Stellakis, N. (2019). Preschool and first grade teachers' perceptions on working together to enhance literacy. *Educational Role of Language*, 2(2), 101-112. <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2019.02.09>.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2016). *Research in education: planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Athens: Ion.
- Dafermou, C., Koulouri, P., Basagiannis, E. (2006). *Οδηγός Νηπιαγωγού [Preschool teacher guide]*. Athens, Greece: YPEPTH/P.I. [in Greek].
- Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) (2011). *Teaching reading in Europe: contexts, policies and practices*. P9 Eurydice. <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>.
- Eleftheriadi, A., Lavidas, K., Komis, V. (2021). Teaching Mathematics in Early Childhood Education with ICT: The Views of Two Contrasting Teachers’ Groups. *Journal of Digital Educational Technology*, 1(1), ep2103. <https://doi.org/10.21601/jdet/11117>.
- Gomes, J., Christine, S., Kaveri, A. G., Mannan, F. (2021). Early Childhood Educators as COVID Warriors: Adaptations and Responsiveness to the Pandemic Across Five Countries. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 53, 345-366. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13158-021-00305-8>.
- Hanushek, E. A., Woessmann, L. (2020). *The Economic Impacts of Learning Losses*. Paris: OECD. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/education/The-economic-impacts-of-coronavirus-covid-19-learning-losses.pdf>

- Hoskins, B., Janmaat, J.G. (2019). *Education, Democracy and Inequality: Political Engagement and Citizenship Education in Europe*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://www.springer.com/gb/book/9781137489753>. Accessed on 21 November 2021.
- Kolovou, S., Koutsolabrou, I., Lavidas, K., Komis, V., Voulgari, I. (2021). Digital games in early childhood education: Greek preschool teachers' views. *Mediterranean Journal of Education*, 1(2), 30-36. <https://doi.org/10.26220/mje.3764>.
- Lavidas, K., Gialamas, V. (2019). Adaption and psychometric properties of the short forms Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale with a sample of Greek university students. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 6(8), 230-239, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3552531>.
- Lavidas, K., Katsidima, A., Theodoratou, S., Komis, V., Nikolopoulou, K. (2021). Preschool teachers' perceptions about TPACK in Greek educational context. *Journal of computer in education*, 8(3), 395-410. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40692-021-00184-x>.
- Ministry of Education (2003). *Διαθεματικό Ενιαίο Πλαίσιο Προγραμμάτων Σπουδών για το Νηπιαγωγείο [A cross thematic curriculum framework for compulsory education for kindergarten]*. Athens, Greece: YPEPTH/P.I. [in Greek].
- Musthofiyah, L., Sopia, S., Adinugraha, H. (2021). The Implementation of Distance Learning on Early Childhood Education During New Normal Era of Covid-19. *Journal Educative: Journal of Educational Studies*, 6(1), 32-47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30983/educative.v6i1.4112>.
- Nikolopoulou, K. (2020). Preschool teachers' practices of ICT-supported early language and mathematics. *Creative Education*, 11(10), 2038-2052. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2020.1110149>.
- Pyun, Y. (2021). A Study on the Actual Condition of Kindergarten Distance Education. *Review of International Geographical Education (RIGEO)*, 11(2), 291-301. <https://doi:10.48047/rigeo.11.02.26>.
- Samuelsson, I. P., Wagner, J. T., Ødegaard, E. E. (2020). The coronavirus pandemic and lessons learned in preschools in Norway, Sweden and the United States: OMEP Policy forum. *International journal of early childhood*, 52(2), 129-144. 3.
- Short, C. R., Graham, C. R., Holmes, T., Oviatt, L., Bateman, H. (2021). Preparing Teachers to Teach in K-12 Blended Environments: A Systematic Mapping Review of Research Trends, Impact, and Themes. *Techtrends*, 65(6), 993-1009. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-021-00626-4>.
- Theodoropoulou, I., Lavidas, K., Komis, V., (2021). Results and prospects from the utilization of Educational Robotics in Greek Schools. *Technology, Knowledge and Learning*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-021-09555-w>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Council of Europe (2021). *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student voice. Findings and recommendations*. Paris, France: UNESCO. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/> . Accessed on 21 November 2021.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2017). *Reading the past, writing the future. Fifty years of promoting literacy*. Paris, France: UNESCO. <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/unescopromoting-literacy-over-five-decades-en.pdf> . Accessed on 21 November 2021.
- Westerveld, M. F., Gillon, G. T., Van Bysterveldt, A. K., Boyd, L. (2015). The emergent literacy skills of four-year-old children receiving free kindergarten early childhood education in New Zealand. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 23, 339-351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2015.1033617>.

**“Why are you here?”  
A hearing instructor’s journey into a deaf community of practice  
and discussions of family language policies**

ISSN 2657-9774; <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2021.02.09>

Tijana Hirsch\*, Orly Kayam\*\*

\*Wingate Academic College; [tijana-h@wincol.ac.il](mailto:tijana-h@wincol.ac.il)

\*\*Wingate Academic College; [orlyka@wincol.ac.il](mailto:orlyka@wincol.ac.il)

**Abstract**

*Informed by the sociocultural theory on learning and approached as an ethnographic logic of inquiry, the aim of this telling case study is to explore and share the experiences of a hearing educator’s socialization into a deaf community of practice within Gallaudet - the only institution of higher learning in the world for the deaf and the hard of hearing students, her consequent teaching beliefs, her family language policies (FLPs)<sup>12</sup> and what she has learned about FLPs of the families she worked with. By drawing on different disciplines the purpose of our explorations is to contribute to the inclusion of 1) sign languages in the discussions on bilingualism, language learning and teaching, linguistic diversity, and 2) FLPs within deaf communities in the study of FLP. Following the presentation of the participant’s journey into and within the deaf community, we turn to her FLP and the knowledge she has acquired regarding FLPs of families with deaf family members. We conclude with discussions on access and inclusivity within the mainstream institutions of higher learning and include some questions for further inquiry and suggestions for supporting inclusivity. It is important to note here, that this study focuses on a hearing instructor and not on deaf individuals. This is important as we support the about us-with us orientations in studying deaf experiences and communities.*

**Keywords:** *language socialization; deaf culture; sign language teaching; family language policy; language in institutions of higher learning; linguistic diversity; linguistic inclusivity; visual language teaching and learning*

**Introduction**

“Why are you here?” How can you benefit Deaf children if you aren’t Deaf yourself?” Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky 1993) views learning as a form of socialization into a community of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991). It postulates learning as inherently social and not necessarily dependent on explicit instruction (Forman & McCormick 1995). Individuals are socialized and enculturated into communities of practice through authentic participation (Heath 1983, Lave & Wenger 1991, Forman & McCormick 1995) within different social settings and groups, such as the home and the family, school and peers, and the community and neighbors, to name just a few. For language acquisition, maintenance, transmission, or loss the family context is found to be the most influential (Toman 1993) and critical (Spolsky 2012). The field of family language policy (FLP) focuses on the participants – namely the family members and their individual and collective ideologies, experiences, and influences in continuous (re)negotiations of management and use of languages in the family’s repertoire. However, the family milieu does not exist

---

<sup>12</sup> Family language policy (FLP) is a sociolinguistic field of study interested in processes that affect ideologies, management, practices, and the associated outcomes of language vitality, use, practices, fluency, etc. between the family members and within the family domain where more than one language present through one or more individuals and/or through past settlements, current linguistic environment, and/or any other experience past or present.

in a vacuum and is very much affected by the external forces- such as through the presence or the absence of a supportive community. Communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991) are groups of people that share a common interest or need and who often are, but do not have to be co-located, as with online communities for example. At the same time, where formal instruction is part of the learning process, such as in educational settings, teachers' beliefs and practices are found to affect the students profoundly (see Ladsen-Billings 1995, Chang 2003, Liu 2006, Menard-Warwick 2008, Osborne 1996, Siegel 2006). In the American educational context, bilingualism is by and large treated as a problem (Ruiz 1984, Lee & Oxelson 2006) and monolingualism as the norm (Wiley 2007). Teachers who share the problem-oriented beliefs towards additional languages in a student's linguistic repertoire have students who struggle at school (Chang 2003, Liu 2006, Menard-Warwick 2008) while the opposite is true for those who view it as a resource, their students are thriving at school (Ladsen-Billings 1995, Osborne 1996, Siegel 2006). Spoken languages, as opposed to sign languages, are the norm and are a globally dominant form of communication. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) over 5% of the global population has disabling hearing loss, and in the US 1 out of 20 people is deaf or hard of hearing (Mitchell 2006). Sign languages, in most spaces and situations are minoritized in relation to the societally spoken language(s). However, in the very few situations and settings where sign and spoken languages are in contact and dominant-minority statuses are reversed, such as within the sign language classrooms, the role of teacher beliefs and practices is further amplified, particularly with hearing educators who have access to both spoken and signed languages.

In this work, our aim is to stimulate the inclusion of signed languages in FLP explorations in general. To date, the field of FLP has primarily focused on different combinations of spoken languages present within the family milieu. Here, we focus on the socialization of a hearing American Sign Language (ASL) educator into a deaf community of practice through both authentic participations as postulated by the sociocultural theory and her experiences with(in) formal education. We explore her FLP and what she has learned about the FLPs of the families that she has been active in supporting over the years, both of which include ASL. As an ASL educator, she is an important participant in the management component of the FLP of each family and individual she supports at the very least. Her involvement likely influences all aspects of FLP, including beliefs and practices as well. Thus, by examining the educator's longitudinal, experiential trajectory into the support role for these families, including her FLPs, we gain an insight into the FLP management component from a different vantage point.

#### **d/Deaf identity through languaculture and language variation**

Languaculture (Agar 1994) refers to the inseparable relationship between language and culture with *meaning* tying the two together as Whorf postulated, so much so that studying language is the same as studying culture. Furthermore, since languaculture "shapes *consciousness*, shapes ways of seeing and acting, ways of thinking and feeling...[w]hen one realizes this truth, when one's own way comes to consciousness and alternatives become possible, then the concept of culture as something that happens to a person, instead of something "those people" have, starts to make sense (Agar 1994: 71-72)." Different languacultures can be connected by comparing or organizing the differences against the similarities, according to Agar. Learning from the surprising "rich-points" or languacultural clashes, eventually lead to new and additional culture to "happen" to the individual who has put in the time and effort.

Individual identity within deaf communities is deeply rooted in their languacultures, with different definitions of belonging resting precisely on this merger of language and culture. Individuals who are physiologically deaf may or may not also be socioculturally Deaf. The upper-case D (though some scholars are beginning to abandon the d/D distinctions) communicates belonging to the ethnically Deaf identity that is in opposition to the physiological deafness and hearing identity (Padden & Markowicz

1975) discussed below. Concurrent physiological and sociocultural deafness is communicated by the d/Deaf term. The most inclusive definition of deaf communities, according to LeMaster and Monaghan (2004) is Padden's (1980: 92) definition:

A deaf community is a group of people who live in a particular location, share the common goals of its members, and in various ways, work toward achieving these goals. A deaf community may include persons who are not themselves Deaf, but who actively support the goals of the community and work with Deaf people to achieve them.

Thus, being part of a deaf community, according to this, most inclusive definition does not require one to be physiologically deaf. It depends on the effort and the time invested by the individual. For example, Deaf cultures include deaf and hearing individuals who put in the effort to learn to behave in appropriate ways and to use the sign language appropriately – learning the culture and investing the time and effort for the culture to happen to them, as Agar put it. They may or may not be ethnically Deaf. To be ethnically Deaf, individuals can be hearing or physiologically deaf, and had to have either been born deaf, or born hearing to deaf parents, and whose first language is sign language (Johnson & Erting 1989). Thus, in the most exclusive definition of deaf communities, the ethnically deaf community, birthright and first language (or languaculture) serve as determinants of belonging. Beyond this, as mentioned above, belonging depends on effort, ideologies, knowledge, and actions. Therefore, exploring beliefs and practices of those who put in the time and the effort is important in understanding their place within (deaf) communities and their impact on those communities - such as with hearing, sign language educators and their deaf communities.

### **Language ideologies and teacher beliefs**

Language ideologies are reproduced through everyday practices (Blommaert 1999) and often reflect religious or political stances or conflicts (Gal 1998). They are the larger, overarching shared value(s) of a given group and a way of organizing responses to language(s) in social contexts (Errington 2001) that are normalized over time. Language beliefs on the other hand are more personal and individual and may or may not reflect socially dominant ideologies and discourses. Teaching practices are based on the intersection between personal beliefs and ideologies at large (Helmer 2013, Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein 2012, Razfar & Rumenapp 2011), with educators' positionality between their beliefs and larger ideologies impacting student outcomes (Meador 2005). In bilingual situations of spoken languages<sup>13</sup>, problem-oriented beliefs were found to be linked to students who struggled more at school (Chang 2003, Liu 2006, Menard-Warick 2008) and resource-oriented beliefs were linked to students who were thriving at school (Ladsen-Billings 1995, Osborne 1996, Siegel 2006). Given this link for students who are hearing, it is important to explore the process and the experiences of entry into deaf communities of practice by hearing individuals whose goal is to teach future generations of those who are deaf, hard of hearing or who are prepared to put in the time and effort to support deaf communities.

### **Family language policy and language contact**

Family is the most influential context of a person's life (Toman 1993) and a critical domain (Spolsky 2012) for language maintenance, transmission, or loss. Family language policies (FLPs) are what families do with language(s) in their lives, which languages they use, which they abandon, who decides, when, and how. Different family members can have different languages in their repertoires and different languages can be of different importance to different family members. FLP as a study can be viewed as an analysis of social interaction patterns or "... the rights and obligations of participants with respect to

---

<sup>13</sup> Situations in which all the languages are spoken and not signed.

who can say what, when, and to whom” (Cazden 1986: 437) and in what language. It is a complex interplay of beliefs and ideologies, management approaches, and practices (Spolsky 2012) that is continuously (re)negotiated between the participants, namely family members. FLPs can be overt (Schiffman 1996) and explicit (Shohamy 2006) or they can be implicit, and both conscious and unconscious (Neustupny & Nekvapil 2003). They are dynamic, with each participant or family member exerting influence over language choice, use, maintenance or loss within the family domain. Each individual’s experiences with the outside world are brought into the (re)negotiation, whether it is conscious or not, explicit and overt or not. FLP research has focused on familial spoken language contact situations and bilingualism due to translocations, migrations, exogenous coupledness, adoptions, choice, etc. It has not, to date examined FLPs that include spoken and signed languages – in hearing families with deaf family members.

Language contact situations are complex, and they produce complicated responses (with)in individuals through bilinguality (Hamers & Blanc 1982) and with(in) communities and societies at large. Spoken and signed language contact is perhaps even more complicated, although not as readily apparent due to the dominant position of the spoken language in communities and societies at large. Firstly, although glossing is available to sign language users, deaf communities are largely expected to use the written form of the community’s spoken language. For example, American Sign Language (ASL) users who are literate use English as their written language. Thus, most deaf individuals who are literate are also bilingual. Secondly, majority of deaf children are born into hearing families with no history of deafness (Schein & Delk 1974; Mitchell & Karchmer 2004). Beginnings with infants are always challenging, with adjustments and time needed to settle into life. In hearing families with a deaf infant, that adjustment period is more complex. Most hearing families do not sign, and have had no exposure to sign languages, thus most deaf infants are not exposed to sign language and are instead immersed in the world of spoken language during the period of first language acquisition (LeMaster & Monaghan 2004). With the arrival of a deaf child into the family, different beliefs, ideologies, management approaches, practices and outcomes are instigated by different FLP participants namely family members. Each family member will experience and react differently to the need for the new and signed language. Those who choose to learn the sign language will have different aptitudes and attitudes towards it, but part of their FLP management approach is to put in the effort (to learn, to communicate, etc.) and to invest the time into it. Once signing enters the linguistic repertoire of the family, contact between spoken and signed languages produces contact varieties, and different outcomes for different family members. The role of the sign-language educator and their beliefs and practices is key in supporting or hindering learner outcomes – as evidenced in studies with spoken languages discussed above. Sign language educators can have lasting effects on not only the individual’s bilinguality, defined as individual’s experiences with(in) the language contact situation (Hamers & Blanc 1982), FLP and family relationships, but also on deaf communities in general.

Although spoken and signed languages of a specific region are inherently unrelated with separate grammars and historical origins (LeMaster & Monaghan 2004; Perlmutter 2011), their relationship is intense and intertwined. Minority status of sign languages vis-à-vis spoken languages produces borrowings and pidginization within sign languages. Again, deaf individuals who are literate and/or enrolled in formal educational settings use the written form of the spoken language of their larger communities. Individuals and groups immersed in both languages have in some cases begun signing words through finger-spellings using the alphabetic letters and air-spelling rather than signing the words as entire concepts (LeMaster & Monaghan 2004). Languages are alive and changing, and language contact is bound to produce changes. In language contact situations between the minority sign and the majority spoken languages, however, with deaf identity deeply rooted in and resting on its languaculture as discussed above, these changes can have potentially detrimental psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and

sociocultural effects and outcomes on signers and deaf/Deaf communities and their languacultures at large. As researchers, turning our attention to language contact situations that include sign languages, sign language teacher socialization into a deaf community through authentic participation within a community of practice, their beliefs and their practices in formal educational settings, as well as FLP processes where language contact first occurs, is the first step in becoming an ally to deaf communities and supporting deaf languaculture(s).

In this work, we explore the trajectory of a hearing individual's socialization and entry into a deaf community of practice in the past, her beliefs and practices as an American Sign Language (ASL) instructor and early childhood deaf/hard-of-hearing educator today, and what she has learned about family language policies of families with deaf children over time. Thus, (1) we discuss participant, Molly's<sup>14</sup> recollections and experiences of entry into the deaf community of practice and languaculture (Agar 1994) through her time at Gallaudet University. (2) We then turn to her beliefs and teaching practices as an experienced American Sign Language Instructor (ASL) and (3) lastly, we explore both, Molly's family language policies and how she understands FLPs of families with deaf children. Overall, this is an ethnographically informed logic of inquiry that aims to merge several related but often separate fields of deaf studies, teacher beliefs, and FLP in order to gain better understandings of the socialization processes into and within deaf languaculture(s) (Agar 1994). We end with a brief discussion on the position of sign languages in today's mainstream education and the importance of inclusion of visual languages in all discussions about language and linguistic diversity.

## The study

### Method

The logic of inquiry (Green, Dixon & Zaharlick 2005) of this study is ethnographic in nature and relies on the telling case analysis (Mitchell 1984). Specifically, we apply the ethnographic logic of inquiry in exploring the discursively (de/re)constructed experiences our participant, the telling case (Mitchell 1984), communicates with us within and across times and ways. This allows us to trace her development of knowledge that guides her entry into a community of practice, eventually serving as a lens through which she views and experiences family language policies. Mitchell explains: "[e]thnographic reportage tends to be general in form: the analyst makes statements about the overall pattern of behavior or belief derived from extensive observation" (p. 237) while the telling case is that "...in which the particular circumstances surrounding a case...serve to make previously obscure theoretical relationships suddenly apparent. It follows from this that the particularity of the circumstances surrounding any case or situation (or set of situations) must always be located within some wider setting or context. Any general statement which links theoretically relevant events or phenomena must always assume that 'other things are equal' Case studies allow analysts to show how general regularities exist precisely when specific contextual circumstances are taken account of. When it is difficult to do this, then it is likely that the theoretical formulations of *the regularities* underlying the regularities needs some revisions (Mitchell 1984: 239). "Furthermore, this study is rooted in the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky 1993) which views learning as a form of socialization into a community of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991) through authentic participation (Heath 1983, Lave & Wenger 1991, Forman & McCormick 1995). Thus, we place particular importance on the authentic and longitudinal experiences that contributed to the socialization of our participant into her d/Deaf community of practice at first, and later influenced her positionality as an educator involved in supporting individuals and families into a community of practice whose FLPs include ASL.

---

<sup>14</sup> The name of the participant was changed in order to ensure her anonymity.

We learned about Molly's experiences through many informal, in-person conversations, over a period of 4 years, as well as formal interviews, questionnaires, and e-mail exchanges more recently. Our understanding of her experiences reported here is rooted not only in her responses to our questions, but rather in our emic engagement with the topic, with Molly, over an extended period of time. We had no predetermined checklists and questions while engaging with Molly, and we later triangulated, clarified and verified her positions on our observations and conversations through questionnaires and e-mail exchanges. Our study is ethnographic in nature as Green, Dixon, and Zeharlick (2005: 148) propose it to be: "[An] observer who enters with a predefined checklist, predefined questions or hypotheses, or an observation scheme that defines, in an a priori manner, all behaviors or events that will be recorded is not engaging in ethnography, regardless of the length of observation or the reliability of the observation system. Further, if the observer does not draw on theories of culture to guide the choices of what is relevant to observe and record or overlays his or her personal interpretation of the activity observed, they are not engaging in an ethnographic approach from an anthropological point of view." In addition to the emic perspective guiding this ethnographic study, we remained aware of our positionality<sup>15</sup> and our receptiveness to Molly's lived experiences as rooted in our very own engagement and interest with the study of language learning and teaching, language contact situations, bilingualism, and family language policy. The topics presented here emerged through a combination and an interaction of what mattered to Molly primarily with our drawing on theories of languaculture (Agar 1994), communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991); teacher beliefs and the study of FLP to guide our observations, questions we posed, and what we zoomed in on. All the conversations, e-mails, and discussions were conducted in English.

### **Molly**

Molly is one of three ASL instructors at her institution and the only instructor who is also hearing. Although all three instructors were invited to participate in the larger, ASL FLP study, Molly's journey into the d/Deaf community of practice through authentic participation was of particular interest for the current work.

Molly is a mother to two boys, a wife, a daughter, and an experienced higher education instructor of the ASL and an educator<sup>16</sup> of deaf and hard-of-hearing children in her county through daycares and home visits. Her qualifications include advanced degrees from Gallaudet University and 13 years of experience in the field. In her community college classes she teaches hard of hearing and hearing students, with hearing students making up most of her student population over the years. According to Molly, the fact that most of her adult students are hearing is not surprising as majority of deaf individuals do not formally study ASL (discussed below). Although her professional plan did not include teaching college level ASL, she has been a college ASL instructor for 13 years: "I actually never anticipated this being my field. My goal was to teach families who have DHH (deaf and hard-of-hearing) children how to sign. Teaching ASL in the college level fell into my lap." Molly is one of three instructors and the only hearing instructor in her department. Her interest into ASL and deaf cultures was not fueled by having deaf family members or friends, instead it was sparked by an inspiring student teacher when she was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade: "I did not have any D/deaf friends or family members in my childhood. My first exposure to ASL was a student teacher I had in 6<sup>th</sup> grade who taught us a song in ASL for a winter

---

<sup>15</sup> Positionality: we recognize that we are outsiders, though allies of deaf communities and individuals, and insiders of the community of educators focusing on language and social justice that Molly is engaged in. We firmly believe in the *about us - with us* sentiment. The focus of this work is on the hearing educator's journey into the deaf community of practice and not about deaf individuals, communities, or cultures.

<sup>16</sup> Molly's title is Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Infant/Toddler Specialist. She is employed through her county's education office.

concert. I loved it and apparently was pretty good at it because she had me lead the group out in front. I didn't really have any further exposure to ASL until college when I wanted to take the course." At university, Molly took ASL classes for a year and continued on to earn her Associate of Arts degree in ASL interpreting at a local community college. Molly was interested in attending Gallaudet as it was one of the only two universities that offered an advanced degree in her area and population of interest. Furthermore, her desire was to support families with deaf children through ASL, rather than a spoken language, an option that only Gallaudet offered. Molly explains: "I chose Gallaudet because there were only two universities at the time that offered a Master's degree in the very specific field of Early Childhood Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (birth-3). I thought being on an all-Deaf campus would really be the best way for me to get the education I needed to really be effective in this field. Additionally, I chose Gallaudet because they did focus on using sign language as one of the main options for families who had a child with a hearing loss. I believe the other option was a university that focused more on oral education for students who are Deaf. "Molly enjoys teaching adults, but her passion has always been engagement with younger children and their families.

### **Entry into deaf languaculture and community of practice**

Although Molly's entry into Deaf languaculture and community of practice took place within the formal educational context of Gallaudet, which included explicit instruction, we were particularly interested in her experiences outside of the classroom and within her community of peers. Molly explains:

In my small cohort of students (there were 5 of us) there was definitely judging of the hearing students by the Deaf students. Hearing students had to prove themselves to the Deaf community. There were questions of "Why are you here?" How can you benefit Deaf children if you aren't Deaf yourself?" There was also a feeling that the hearing students at the school were there to "help" the Deaf children (as if we had pity on them and felt we needed to "save" them). Deaf students did not like the thought of hearing students being helpers. I really had to prove myself to the Deaf community on campus that I was a guest on their campus and wanted to learn about their language and their culture. Any hearing students who thought of themselves as "better than" were not looked upon highly. Also, students on campus who did not use ASL were also not looked upon well. Lastly, if you were on campus and talking without signing, you were really looked down upon. That was like telling a secret right in front of someone's face. The expectation was that everyone had equal access to language, and that was a visual language (sign).

Here we asked Molly to elaborate. We mentioned that on a hearing campus, asking foreign language speakers to refrain from using their language would be considered problematic and discriminatory, and asked her to elaborate on how and why the two acts would be different.

I do think that speaking on the Deaf campus is rude and would be offensive to students there. I think that it is different than another language being spoken on a US hearing/mainstream campus. The reason is twofold: 1. There is only one Deaf university in the world. A hearing student has thousands of options in choosing their higher level of education. A Deaf student who uses ASL as their primary language only has one option. I believe that this university for the Deaf is special and unique in that it is the only place in the world that ASL is the primary language of the majority. Everywhere else in the country a Deaf person is in the minority. At this school they can be free to interact using their native language and not having to struggle to communicate through amplification or reading lips or an interpreter. I felt privileged to be accepted into the university as a hearing student. For undergrad students the population of hearing students is something like less than 1%. For graduate school it was closer to 50/50. I felt like a guest on that campus, and I felt I should be respectful of its language and culture. It was a

privilege for me to be there. However, I know that other hearing students did not feel the same way. Many hearing students didn't care or even try to sign while they were talking, and it didn't bother them in the least. 2. The second part of my reason for believing it is different is because if a person is speaking another language on a U.S. campus, I still have the ability to have access to that language. I may not understand it, but if I chose to, I could learn that language. A Deaf person may not have access to spoken language, due to not being able to hear it. They don't have the same opportunity that I would have to learn a foreign spoken language. With all that said, I still sometimes feel offended when I hear people using a foreign language in front of me, because I feel like they are excluding me from the conversation on purpose. I believe that is rude. However, if a group of students are talking amongst themselves in another language on campus and I just happen to be walking past them, that does not bother me.

Molly's divergent perceptions toward foreign language use in social settings capture the complicated dynamic of bilingualism that includes languages with different modalities. The associated languaculture, status and accessibility are inseparable from the language itself.

### **The classroom context: teacher beliefs and practices**

During her studies Molly felt that there was favoritism: "In my program I felt that Deaf instructors favored Deaf students. I would venture to say that hearing instructors favored hearing students too (but I don't know that for sure)." Molly is a hearing instructor of ASL and has been for the past 13 years. As most of her students are hearing Molly thought that they felt more comfortable with a hearing teacher, "even though I do not allow them to speak to me for any reason. I think they are more intimidated by a Deaf professor. However, once they get to know the Deaf instructors, they truly love them." At the same time, she still perceives the deaf community as not entirely accepting of her position as a hearing educator teaching ASL, her initial, educational experiences continuing, though not in her immediate work environment(s): "I would say that Deaf ASL instructors (not in San Miguel) but in other areas frown upon hearing teachers teaching ASL. It is not my first language, and they believe (and I agree) that a Deaf teacher can often be a better teacher of their native language". Considering the native/non-native spoken language teacher debate and the research on the topic within the academic community, such as those pertaining to English language educators (Inbar-Lourie 1999, Inbar-Lourie 2005, Nayar 2002) and their associated access to resources and capital (Bourdieu 1991), we were interested in her perceptions and experiences as a non-native ASL educator. She shared with us her positionality, which included deep awareness of her lack of authentic experience with ASL due to her access to spoken language and hearing status. At the same time, she is aware that her training may have prepared her, perhaps even better in some cases and for some students to teach the languages she herself learned as a second language:

I think a Deaf teacher who is a native ASL user has more to offer both Deaf and hearing students learning ASL. The language comes naturally to them. They use and have used it every day for most of their lives. But more than just the language aspect is the cultural component. Deaf culture and Deaf history play a huge role in the Deaf community and in ASL. I cannot pass on personal experiences with Deaf culture. I can share my knowledge that I have observed or read in books, but I have not experienced it first-hand. Only a person who has lived that can share that. The only thing that I do feel I have that some native users don't have is formal education in the linguistics of ASL. I have taken over 20 ASL language classes and classes in the study of linguistic features of ASL. Most native Deaf ASL users have not taken any ASL classes or any linguistics classes about ASL. It is crazy to me that as a native English speaker I have taken

English classes from kindergarten through university level and native ASL user has likely never taken an ASL class in their life.

Regardless, Molly works hard on safeguarding the practices of her deaf colleagues and those without access to spoken language through her own teaching philosophy and practices:

My philosophy is the same as the other professors at my college (the other two are Deaf). We strongly adhere to a voice-off policy. This means that students may not talk in the classroom at all (to each other or to the professor). I am often asked if they can speak to me during office hours or at break and the answer is always “no”. The expectation is that they have the same experience as the student who has a Deaf professor. I work really hard at not having my philosophy be influenced by my hearing status.

Although she internalizes her otherness from deaf, native ASL instructors due to her hearing status as discussed in her positionality above, some of her sentiments echo desires for recognition:

I wish they realized that although ASL is not my first language, I studied very hard to become proficient in the language. I took several courses that educated me on how to teach the language. This is something that a lot of native users may have intrinsically but were not taught specifically. I think that I can really relate to my ASL students in a way because I was once like them (learning ASL for the first time).

We were interested in whether Molly’s voice-off teaching philosophy was truly hers, or whether her entry into the deaf community and culture as a hearing person imposed it. Through our discussions we learned that it is the combination of her experiences within the community as well as her experiences as a student of foreign languages, ASL and Spanish. She explained that she had first learned from a deaf instructor, and that although her later experiences of learning with hearing instructors left her less frustrated, she felt that she did not have the same kind of quality of experience as with her deaf instructor. She had learned more. She reflected on her experiences with learning Spanish: “All of my teachers used both English and Spanish in the class and I never really felt like I learned the language. I truly believe in a full immersion kind of experience for second-language learners. So, I think my philosophy would be the same had I not undergone the experience at Gallaudet of proving myself. I truly believe that is the best way to learn another language.” For Molly, her beliefs rooted in personal learning experiences, and internalized ideologies of the deaf community of practice she had joined are the bases of her teaching philosophy and practices.

### **Defining bilingualism**

We argued elsewhere (Hirsch & Kayam 2020) that any study of bilingualism, bilinguality, or the bilingual individual should begin with the question that clarifies how the participant defines bilingualism itself. This practice will ensure that the researchers are clear on what they are studying, contextualizing the responses and discussions with the participant(s) within the parameters tailored for and by the participants themselves. Thus, we wanted to know how Molly – a hearing instructor of ASL – defines bilingualism. Through her answer we see that once again, both, her experiences and education guide her understanding of it:

Being bilingual is the ability to use two languages fluently. Both languages do not need to be in the same form. One could be spoken and the other signed. Or one could be signed and the other written/read. Or both could signed or both could be spoken. For example, a Deaf person who is bilingual doesn’t necessarily mean they speak English and sign ASL. It could be they sign ASL and can read/write English. I would consider that bilingual.

Molly explained that most deaf people she knows are bilingual in English and ASL. She explains: “Both (English and ASL) are very different languages with very different grammatical structures.” She

continued by stating that she didn't know too many Deaf people who are trilingual, but she proceeded to share with us the experiences of one Trilingual Deaf person she did meet:

One of my colleagues is trilingual. English, Spanish, and ASL. His first language was Spanish, and he learned English and ASL at the same time. I remember that he told me that his English teachers expected not be able to learn English because he was Deaf. They prejudged his abilities for English based on his hearing. They were shocked when he was exceeding his hearing peers' mastery of the English language.

As the written form of sign languages is not represented in societies and education systems at large, including the ASL glossing, many deaf individuals develop literacy skills in the spoken language of their surroundings. Thus, in the United States ASL signers use written English. Molly explains:

ASL signers use English as their written language. There is not a written equivalent in ASL. However, there is GLOSSING that is used for linguistic studies and for teaching the language. It does not have a written form that can be used for reading and writing. It is used only for teaching and studying and documenting the language.

She considers herself as bilingual because of her command of ASL, and interestingly not based on her knowledge or learning of Spanish. Molly's definitions of bilingualism seem to include a certain and high level of fluency she has not reached in Spanish.

### **Family language policy of ethnically deaf: deaf child – hearing families**

Communication between parents and children is of utmost importance in linguistic and social development of children. However, with over 90% of deaf children born to hearing parents who are not proficient in effectively communicating with their deaf child (Vaccari & Marschark 1997), the role of community educators such as Molly, is of paramount importance in bridging that gap and providing a successful path to a community of practice and communication within the family.

As a community of practice member who works closely with families of deaf and hard-of-hearing infants and toddlers, entering their homes and daycares during the period of adjustment to parenthood, early childhood education, and most importantly a new language in an entirely new modality, we were interested in how Molly experienced and what she had learned regarding the FLPs of those families.

In my experience in this small town, most family members do not learn ASL. Most want their children to learn to speak and do not take the time to learn ASL. Of those that do learn ASL, usually only the mother learns. The extended family almost never learns (at least not in my experience). I did have one family that wanted all of their friends, neighbors, and extended family to learn so they hired me to teach them all in a night class. It was great!

Most of my Deaf friends either had family who didn't sign at all or just the mom signed. Most kids were left out of family conversations at the dinner table, or the mom acted as an interpreter. Most of my Deaf friends said their family could communicate with them basics, such as "I love you," and other simple phrases. Deaf people are often left out of conversations in their own families. This is true of hearing families with a Deaf child. However, a Deaf family with a Deaf child is a totally different story. The whole family communicates in ASL and therefore no one is left out. In my current work with Deaf children, it is rare that a family member learns ASL. Again, if someone learns it is the mom. Most of the time the child is expected to learn to speak English and use their technology or read lips to communicate with their family.

What she shares is jarring, though not unexpected. In her experience, mothers are by and large the language socializers, supporters, interpreters, and advocates of/for their children. They put in the invisible work (Okita 2002) of supporting and nurturing bilingualism.

### **Molly's FLP**

As someone so immersed in deaf languaculture, with so many experiences rooted in her time spent learning within and from deaf communities, teaching ASL, and allowing deaf culture to happen to her, we were interested in whether ASL entered her own FLP.

Before I had children I had hoped my children would be fluent in ASL. I used ASL with them when they were babies and they picked it up quickly and used it way before they learned to speak. My first son's first sign was at 10 months and my second son's first sign was at 6 months. They each had over 50 signs by the time they were 18-months old. They developed spoken language and I started to drop using the signs with them. As they have gotten older we have picked up signing again here and there but I don't use it with them enough. I wish they were fluent and I wish I was more consistent with them. I hope one day they will have an interest in it again.

Molly's FLP initially included ASL, with time however, her (and her husband's) FLP practices and management allowed for English to take over. As a parent of two hearing children, their developing abilities in English led to a renegotiation of their FLP. Whether conscious or subconscious, explicit or implicit, the new FLP did not include ASL practices. Although Molly clearly values ASL, the routine of daily life and the convenience of communication with her children in their developing spoken language prevailed. This is often the case even with heritage languages in host language settings, where even those families who speak a common heritage language consciously or not, explicitly or not, allow for the host language to take over in their practices – or communications – with their children (Fishman 2006).

### **Discussion and conclusions**

Molly is an active member and an ally of the deaf community of practice and languaculture. We refer to Molly as an ally as she is committed to upholding and supporting sociolinguistic justice of linguistically marginalized individuals and communities through her actions and positionality. Sociolinguistic justice is defined as “self-determination for linguistically subordinated individuals and groups in sociopolitical struggles over language...most immediately rooted in practice rather than policy (Bucholtz et al. 2014: 145).” Thus, although she is not physiologically deaf, ethnically Deaf (Padden & Markowicz 1975), or socioculturally d/Deaf, she has undergone the socialization process through authentic participation at Gallaudet University and beyond and continues to support the linguistically subordinated individuals and groups through her practices, such as for example – her “voice off policy” at all times in the context of her ASL instruction. Research on the efficacy of the voice off approach are inconclusive with some studies showing increased efficacy for the voice off approach (Rosen, DeLouise, Boyle, & Daley 2014), while others showing no significant differences between the voice on and the voice off approaches (Traxler & Nakatsukasa 2018). Molly's stance on the voice off policy is informed by her experiential trajectory into the d/Deaf community of practice and continued awareness of her hearing status within it. She has and continues to put in the time and effort in supporting the community. Through her studies, fluency in ASL, authentic participation, as well as involvement with the Deaf community over the years Deaf culture “happened to her” as Agar (1994) puts it. She became part of the community by “actively support[ing] the goals of the community and work[ing] with Deaf people to achieve them (Padden 1980: 92).” At the same time, Molly treads carefully when alluding to belonging with(in) the deaf community, due to her hearing status and her privilege of access to the spoken language. Although clearly extremely educated and knowledgeable on the topic of deaf culture (See Appendix A for her definitions and explanations), her definitions are more rigid than those of academics studying deaf/Deaf culture (discussed above). This stringency coupled with her communicated uncertainty about her ability

to adequately teach courses on Deaf culture because her knowledge is not rooted in her very own lived experiences as it is for Deaf instructors, show her struggle with her membership. The, what seems to be constant and concurrent struggle between her confidence in her skills and qualifications and her questioning of those abilities due to her non-native and hearing status seems to be the perfect combination in creating an ally to and a member of a community who is truly supportive of the languaculture.

Although Molly teaches and supports deaf and hard-of-hearing infants and toddlers and their families, much of her career has also been devoted to teaching hearing and heard of hearing adult students, with hearing adult students making up a large majority of the students she has taught over the past 13 years. This and her accounts of the demographics of her cohorts at Gallaudet point to two observations that need to be explored further: 1) community colleges attract hearing students to their ASL classes, yet at Gallaudet only 1% of the students at an undergraduate level are hearing and 2) at the only deaf university in the world, the majority of undergraduates are deaf, while the graduate ASL studies are populated by both hearing and deaf students approximately equally. These observations lead to questions of access – an important point Molly has brought up in the context of differences in physiological access to languages between deaf and hearing individuals, but here it points to institutional access as well. Is it indeed true that most ASL students nationally, at community colleges, are hearing and not deaf? If so, why are deaf students not enrolling in arguably more accessible option of community college – financially and geographically? What can be done to increase deaf enrollment in ASL studies outside of Gallaudet? At the same time, space was offered to hearing individuals at Gallaudet who, according to the perceptions of their peer, had questionable degree of respect for their surroundings – as communicated through their use of spoken language only while on campus where majority of the population relies on visual communication. Fifty per cent of the graduate students according to Molly were hearing at Gallaudet. Why don't more deaf undergraduate students continue onto graduate studies in ASL? How are deaf individuals supported in public institutions of higher learning? Evidence shows that supporting heritage language and culture has lasting positive effects in several aspects – healthy identity development and academic performance among children, for example (Lee & Suarez 2009). Although this evidence is based on work done with individuals with heritage languages that are spoken, it can be inferred that such responses would be observed among the population of individuals and groups who use visual languages as well. Strong social and cultural embedding were found to be of higher relevance in children's perceived quality of life than their hearing status (Hintermair 2011). Community access matters. Families with deaf children who have access to deaf communities of practice support their deaf child more successfully and feel more positively regarding their parenting overall. Families with deaf children whose parents "...frequently meet with other parents show evidence of a warm, accepting, trusting relationship with their child. Parents who have many contacts with hearing-impaired adults show evidence of a strong sense of competence in regard to their child's upbringing (Hintermair 2000). Without guidance by educators such as Molly, for most hearing parents with deaf or hard-of-hearing children, the path to the community, as well as FLP that includes ASL is difficult. Thus, the experiences of educators who are in key roles of supporting and guiding deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their parent's trajectories into social and cultural embeddings of deaf communities are important areas of investigations theoretically and practically.

The minority status of sign languages is unmistakable. Sign languages are often overlooked entirely, both by policy makers and educators. In our previous work with academic mothers, a category Molly falls into, we asked 46 highly educated women who work or have worked in an academic institution of higher learning, many as teaching professors and/or instructors to define bilingualism (Hirsch & Kayam 2020). All the women focused on spoken languages, most on oral skills, with only a few of the women incorporating literacy into their definitions. When asked to define bilingualism, not surprisingly, Molly

actively includes sign languages in her definition (see above). When asked about her FLP, she discusses teaching her children ASL when they were younger and mentions having no preference over whether they learn a spoken or a signed language later in life. Though Spanish is Molly's children's heritage language (through their father) and arguably a language that is easier to capitalize on with its more central position in the global economy (de Swaan 2013), to Molly, ASL is as important and as valuable as Spanish. A beginning to making mainstream public institutions of higher learning more attractive and welcoming to sign language users could begin by including sign languages in discussions about language – in academic circles through research but also in teacher education programs. In addition to the necessary discussions on spoken languacultural diversity, the value of additional languages and cultures and how heritage, communal, familial, languacultural knowledge or what Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (2005) referred to as the *funds of knowledge* can be drawn on in order to promote success amongst students, sign languages should be included in all discourses about language(s) and linguistic diversity. Normalizing the visual language presence among the spoken languages may be the beginning of normalizing the presence of sign language users on mainstream campuses.

Molly's path to membership in the only community and space dedicated to deaf and hard-of-hearing higher education students was initially met with mistrust. This is not surprising, given the experiences of those who are physiologically deaf with even those who are closest to them. The majority of deaf children are born to hearing parents (Schein & Delk 1974, Mitchell & Karchmer 2004), and in our discussions with Molly on FLPs of families with deaf children we confirm that most hearing parents and family members do not learn to sign (see Rawlings 1973, Harvey 1984, Mayers & Bartee 1992) to accommodate and open the lines of communication with their deaf child or family member – mothers most often being the exceptions, serving as the only links and language brokers (Orellana 2009) between the deaf child and the rest of the family. This is in line with research on spoken language socialization within the family: language socialization falls on the mother (Okita 2006) during the "second shift" at home (Hochschild & Machung 2012), even in dual-career couples. Hence, and not surprisingly, outsiders who are interested and willing to learn to sign and display the desire to enter the community are met with suspicion. This is compounded by the behavior of some hearing "guests," as Molly referred to the hearing students at Gallaudet, in one of very few spaces where linguistic dominance is reversed. Here too, we would argue that normalizing the presence of sign languages in all discussions of linguistic diversity would empower those who use visual languages and possibly encourage spoken language users to be more sensitive and aware of their communication patterns.

Many physiologically deaf individuals do not formally study sign language, according to Molly – therefore those who do, and those who attended Gallaudet University – may have viewed Molly and other hearing students as a threat to their future employment. This, too, is in line with previous research on spoken, native/non-native language teacher relationships, where native speakers are found to be reluctant to share the wealth or the capital (Bourdieu 1991) with the non-native-language teachers (Inbar-Lourie 1999). Non-native speakers, in this case the hearing teachers, are aware of the d/Deaf instructor's ability to relate to physiologically deaf individuals and impart Deaf culture as rooted in their personal and lived experiences in a way that hearing teachers cannot. Native, or in this case Deaf teachers are aware of the non-native teachers' advantage in terms of familiarity with the local dominant language and culture [of the spoken language], their access to spoken language and ability of hearing instructors to support literacy and bilingual development in societally dominant spoken language in a way that deaf instructors have no access to. In addition, hearing teacher's familiarity with the process of learning the sign language (Seidlhofer & Widdowson 1998) may be viewed as a benefit to non-deaf individuals interested in learning the sign language- regardless of the teacher's teaching philosophy – which may, as in Molly's case include the "Voice off "policy. But even with all the advantages available to hearing teachers of sign languages through their physiological access to both societally dominant

spoken language and the sign language – Molly’s comment about her qualifications echoes those of the non-native spoken language teachers – and their struggle with their place as teachers of someone else’s native language. Should they do it? Do multiple courses in instruction and linguistics matter more or at least as much as lived experience?

According to Molly’s recollections some of her hearing peers at Gallaudet did not see the importance of upholding and honoring the cultural and communicative norms of the deaf-majority campus. It makes us wonder how they approach their work, their time with the families with deaf children, and their deaf community of practice and if they indeed remain involved in deaf cultures through their professional and personal activities. It is likely that they are not part of the community as outlined by even the most inclusive of definitions, regardless of the time they put into it. Perhaps the key here is not only the time but also the type and quality of effort invested. Individuals who do not foreground their privilege and do not examine their ableist stances are likely to bring beliefs and attitudes into their classrooms that may impact deaf individuals and families adversely. It is important to continue to explore sign language socialization in order to better understand the processes that support positive cultural preservation and transmission amongst deaf, Deaf, d/Deaf and hearing individuals who are part of their deaf communities. A good start to that would be the inclusion of signed, visual languages in all discussions of language-related experiences– from the most influential domain of the family, as we have initiated here to the education domain and beyond. Although findings of this study are not generalizable, it makes visible an area of study that has largely been unexplored. The inclusion of sign languages and experiences of families with differently abled individuals in the study of FLP may prove to deepen our understanding of the interactions between individual ideologies, family internal experiences, management approaches, and practices within the family domain, within the communities of practice, and beyond in a way that is distinct and instrumental from situations where two or more spoken languages are involved.

### References:

- Agar, M. (1994). *Language Shock. Understanding the Culture of Conversation*. NY: William Morrow & Co.
- Archer-Banks, D. A., Behar-Horenstein, L. S. (2012). Ogbu Revisited: Unpacking High-Achieving African American Girls’ High School Experiences, *Urban Education*, 47(1), 198-223.
- Blommaert, J. (1999). The debate is open, in: J. Blommaert (ed.), *Language Ideological Debates*, (pp. 1-38). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bucholtz, M., Lopez, A., Mojarro, A., Skapoulli, E., VanderStouwe, C., Warner-Garcia, S. (2014). Sociolinguistic justice in the schools: Student researchers as linguistic experts. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 8(4), 144-157.
- Cazden, C. B. (1986). Classroom discourse, in: M. C. Wittrock (ed.) *Handbook of research on teaching*. 3rd ed. (pp. 432-463). New York: Macmillan.
- Chang, L. (2003). Variable Effects of Children’s Aggression, Social Withdrawal, and Prosocial Leadership as Functions of Teacher Beliefs and Behaviors. *Child Development*, 74(2), 535-548.
- De Swaan, A. (2013). *Words of the World: The Global Language System*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Errington, E. P. (2001). *The Influence of Teacher Beliefs on Flexible Learning Innovation in Traditional University Settings*. London: Kogan Page.
- Fishman, J. A. (2006). *Language loyalty, language planning, and language revitalization: Recent writings and reflections from Joshua A. Fishman*, 59, *Multilingual Matters*.
- Forman, E. A. & McCormick, D. E. (1995). Discourse Analysis: A Sociocultural Perspective. *Remedial and Special Education*, 16(3), 150-158.

- Gal, S. (1998). Multiplicity and Contention among Language Ideologies: A Commentary. *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, 317-331.
- Green, J. L., Dixon, C. N., Zaharlick, A. (2005). Ethnography as a Logic of Inquiry. *Methods of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts*, 155-204. Routledge.
- Hamers J.F., Blanc M. (1982). Towards a social-psychological model of bilingual development. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 1(1), 29-49.
- Harvey, M. A. (1984). Family therapy with deaf persons: The systemic utilization of an interpreter. *Family Process*, 23(2), 205-213.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Helmer, K. A. (2013). A Twice-told Tale: Voices of Resistance in a Borderlands Spanish Heritage Language Class. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 44(3), 269-285.
- Hintermair M. (2000). Hearing impairment, social networks, and coping: The need for families with hearing impaired children to relate to other parents and to hearing-impaired adults. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 145(1), 41-53.
- Hintermair, M. (2011) Health-related quality of life and classroom participation of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in general schools. *Journal of deaf studies and deaf education*, 16(2), 254-271.
- Hirsch, T., Kayam, O. (2020). Academic mothers' definitions of bilingualism, bilinguality, and family language policies. *Psychology of Language and Communication*, 24(1), 22-43.
- Hochschild, A., Machung, A. (2012). *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home*. London: Penguin.
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (1999). The Native Speaker Construct: Investigation by Perceptions. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel*.
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2005). Mind the gap: Self and perceived native speaker identities of EFL teachers, in: E. Llorca (ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession* (pp. 265-281). Boston, MA: Springer.
- Johnson, R.E., Erting, C. (1989). Ethnicity and socialization in a classroom for deaf children, in: C. Lucas (ed.). *The sociolinguistics of the Deaf community* (pp. 41-83). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.
- Lave, J., Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee J.S., Oxelson E. (2006). It's not my job: K-12 teacher attitudes toward students' heritage language maintenance. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 30(2), 453-477.
- Lee, J. S., Suarez, D. (2009). A synthesis of the roles of heritage languages in the lives of children of immigrants: What educators need to know. *The education of language minority immigrants in the United States*, 136-171.
- LeMaster, B., Monaghan, L. (2004). Variation in Sign Language, in: A. Duranti (ed.), *Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. (pp. 141-165). Malden, MA: Blackwell
- Liu, S. H. (2011). Factors related to pedagogical beliefs of teachers and technology integration. *Computers & Education*, 56(4), 1012-1022.
- Meyers, J., Bartee, J. (1992). Improvements in the Signing Skills of Hearing Parents of Deaf Children. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 137(3), 257-260.
- Meador, E. (2005). The Making of Marginality. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 36(2), 149-164.

- Menard-Warwick, J. (2008). The Cultural and Intercultural Identities of Transnational English Teachers: Two Case Studies from the Americas. *TESOL Quarterly: A Journal for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages and of Standard English as a Second Dialect*, 42(4), 617-640.
- Mitchell, C. J. (1984) Case Studies, in: R. F. Ellen (ed.) *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct* (pp. 41-83). London: Academic Press.
- Mitchell, R. E. (2005). How many deaf people are there in the United States? Estimates from the Survey of Income and Program Participation. *Journal of deaf studies and deaf education*, 11(1), 112-119.
- Mitchell, R., Karchmer, M. (2004). Chasing the Mythical Ten Percent: Parental Hearing Status of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in the United States. *Sign Language Studies*, 4(2), 138-163.
- Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., Gonzalez, N. (2005). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*, 71-87.
- Nayar, B. (2002). Ideological Binarism in the Identities of Native and Non-native English Speakers. *Pragmatics and Beyond New Series*, 463-480.
- Neustupný, J. V., Nekvapil, J. (2003). *Language Management in the Czech Republic, Abingdon-on-Thames*. UK: Taylor & Francis, 181-366.
- Okita, T. (2002). *Invisible work: Bilingualism, language choice and childrearing in Intermarried families* (Vol. 12). John Benjamins Publishing.
- Okita, T. (2002). Invisible work: Bilingualism, language choice and childrearing in Intermarried families. *IMPACT: Studies in Language and Society*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Orellana, M. F. (2009). *Translating childhoods: Immigrant youth, language, and culture*. Rutgers University Press.
- Osborne, J. F. (1996). Beyond Constructivism. *Science Education*, 80(1), 53-82.
- Padden, C. (1980). The Deaf Community and the Culture of Deaf People *Sign Language and the Deaf Community*, 89-103.
- Padden, C., Markowicz, H. (1975). Culture Conflicts Between Hearing and Deaf Communities, in: F. B. Crammatte and A. B. Crammatte (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf* (pp. 407-411). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf.
- Perlmutter, D. (1992). Sonority and syllable structure in American Sign Language. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 23: 407-442.
- Rawlings, B. (1973). Characteristics of Hearing Impaired Students by Hearing Status. United States: 1970-71.
- Razfar, A., Rumenapp, J. C. (2011). Developmental Context(s): Mediating Learning through Language Ideologies. *Human Development*, 54(4), 241-269.
- Rosen, R. S., DeLouise, M., Boyle, A. T., Daley, K. (2014). Native language, target language, and the teaching and learning of American sign language vocabulary, in: D. McKee, R. S. Rosen, R. McKee (Eds.), *Teaching and learning signed languages: International perspectives and practices* (pp. 145-174). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in Language Planning. *NABE Journal*, 8(2), 15-34.
- Schein, J. D., Delk, M. T., Jr. (1974). *The deaf population of the United States*. Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf.
- Schiffman, H. F. (1996). *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Seidlhofer, B., Widdowson, H. G. (1998). Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics, and Language Pedagogy, in: Beaugrande, R., Grosman, M. and Seidelhofer, B. (eds.), *Language Policy and Language Education in Emerging Nations*. (pp. 3-14). Stamford, CT: Ablex.
- Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language Policy: Hidden Agendas and New Approaches*. London: Routledge.

- Siegel, J. (2006). Language Ideologies and the Education of Speakers of Marginalized Language Varieties: Adopting a Critical Awareness Approach. *Linguistics and Education*, 17(2), 157-174.
- Spolsky, B. (2012). Family Language Policy – The Critical Domain. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 33(1), 3-11.
- Toman, W. (1993). *Family Constellation: Its Effects on Personality and Social Behavior*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.
- Traxler, R. E., Nakatsukasa, K. (2018). The effectiveness of voice-on and voice-off instruction on ASL vocabulary acquisition. *Language Teaching Research*, 24: 1-14.
- Vaccari, C., Marschark, M. (1997). Communication between parents and deaf children: Implications for social emotional development. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38(7), 793-801.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1993). Introduction: The Fundamental Problems of Defectology. *The Collected Works of LS Vygotsky*, 2, 29-51.
- World Health Organization (WHO). <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss>
- Wiley, T. G. (2014). Diversity, Super-diversity, and Monolingual Language Ideology in the United States: Tolerance or Intolerance? *Review of Research in Education*, 38(1), 1-32.

## Appendix

### A quick lesson on terminology – by Molly

We asked our participant, a hearing instructor of ASL who has been teaching ASL at a community college for the past 13 years, to educate us on appropriate terminology and their differences. This is what she taught us:

Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf are completely separate terms. There are so many different terms that often get used interchangeably but are not often correct.

Deaf (with a capital D) refers to the Deaf community, people who are proud of their culture and their language (ASL in America), and do not consider themselves disabled. This term is used for any kind of hearing loss (profoundly deaf all the way to a very mild hearing loss). It doesn't really have anything to do with the amount of hearing someone has or doesn't have – it has to do with identity. However, even though I am fluent in ASL and very familiar with Deaf culture, I cannot be Deaf because I don't have any hearing loss. Just because someone identifies themselves as Deaf doesn't mean they can't speak.

deaf (with a lowercase d) – refers to the medical term that a doctor might use. This only signifies that a person has a severe or profound hearing loss and cannot hear. It does not tell us anything about their identity, or culture, or if they choose to use ASL or spoken language. Some profoundly deaf people can access speech through technology (hearing aids or cochlear implant), so they may not use sign language.

Hard-of-Hearing – this term is mostly used as a medical term too. It signifies a person with a mild to moderate or even moderate/severe hearing loss. Many people who are hard-of-hearing are still able to access speech through technology (hearing aid or cochlear implant). Some people who are hard-of-hearing in the medical term identify themselves as Deaf in the cultural term.

Hearing Impaired – what the government and other agencies think is the PC way to address a person who has a hearing loss. The Deaf (cultural and linguistic) community finds this term offensive, as they do not think they are "impaired".

### Volume 2021-1(6) Authors

**Zoi Apostolou** [orcid.org/0000-0003-4359-397X](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4359-397X): GREECE, University of Patras, Department of Educational Science and Early Childhood Education. Zoi has a PhD in Pedagogy of Literacy at the University of Patras. She is currently a kindergarten teacher and a researcher who holds a Master of Science degree in Educational Theories and Practices from the University in Patras and a second one in Models of design and development of educational units from the University of Aegean. Her research interests include literacy, educational programs, educational practices, language and methodology. [apostolo@upatras.gr](mailto:apostolo@upatras.gr)

**Adrienn Fekete** [orcid.org/0000-0003-1805-2426](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1805-2426): HUNGARY, University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Institute of English Studies. Dr. Fekete is an assistant professor at the University of Pécs and holds a PhD degree in English Applied Linguistics and Teaching TESOL/TEFL. Her research interests include linguistic and cultural identity construction in SLA, the language learner's individual differences, and the study of complex dynamic systems theory in SLA and education. Her courses focus on teaching methodology, intercultural communication, individual differences in SLA, research methodology, educational drama, and translation studies. [fekete.adrienn@pte.hu](mailto:fekete.adrienn@pte.hu)

**Jana Hartanska** [orcid.org/0000-0003-3335-1096](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3335-1096): SLOVAKIA, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Education. She is a teacher trainer and researcher at the Department of English Language and Culture with long experience in training English teachers. She is an author and co-author with a number of scientific papers and publications focusing on teaching and learning English as a foreign language, English language methodology and teaching practice. [jhartanska@ukf.sk](mailto:jhartanska@ukf.sk)

**Tijana Hirsch** [orcid.org/0000-0003-3492-778X](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3492-778X): ISRAEL, Wingate Academic College. Tijana works in the Language and Literacy Department and focuses on family language policy and development of knowledge across online spaces. Her work is interdisciplinary in nature, bridging sociolinguistics and internet studies through online ethnographic work. She is particularly interested in transnational family language experiences and the aspect of temporality in language planning, management, and practices within the family. She is involved in numerous transnational projects focusing on language within the family domain, language education, and language socialization as traced within different online, usually communal spaces. [tijana-h@wincol.ac.il](mailto:tijana-h@wincol.ac.il)

**Orly Kayam** [orcid.org/0000-0001-6422-0773](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6422-0773): ISRAEL, Wingate Academic College. Orly works at the Language and Literacy department as a senior lecturer (Ph.D.) and an expert in language and rhetoric. Her primary research focuses on the rhetoric of contemporary world leaders, family language policy, and language use in social media networks. Her main goals are to reveal new trends in political and persuasive rhetoric, to examine the changes in contemporary political rhetoric and to explore the influence of social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. [orly-ka@wincol.ac.il](mailto:orly-ka@wincol.ac.il)

**Elena Kovacikova** [orcid.org/0000-0002-3302-7141](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3302-7141): SLOVAKIA, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Education. She is a teacher trainer and researcher at the Department of English Language and Culture. She has been dealing with TEFL methodology, CLIL, mindfulness and creativity in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. She is an author and co-author of nine books, including the textbook *Cool English School* used at Slovak primary schools. [ekovacikova@ukf.sk](mailto:ekovacikova@ukf.sk)

**Ervin Kovačević** [orcid.org/0000-0003-1262-071X](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1262-071X): BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, International University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Ervin is a professor of applied linguistics in the English Language and Literature Program at the International University of Sarajevo. His major publications explore the relationships between language learning beliefs, strategies, and measures of linguistic complexity. His current research focuses on the principles, which underlie personal foreign language teaching models. He is the author of *Teaching Adult Language Learners: Enhancing Personal Methodologies* available at Amazon.com. [ekovacevic@ius.edu.ba](mailto:ekovacevic@ius.edu.ba)

**Konstantinos Lavidas** [orcid.org/0000-0003-2225-1137](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2225-1137): GREECE, University of Patras, Research and Laboratory Teaching Staff at the Department of Educational Science and Early Childhood Education. He holds a PhD in mathematics education and teaches methodology educational research and statistics. His research interests focus on methodology in educational research, statistics education, ICT use in the teaching and learning of mathematics, and STEM education. [lavidas@upatras.gr](mailto:lavidas@upatras.gr)

**Slađana Marić** [orcid.org/0000-0002-9270-7016](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9270-7016): SERBIA, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy. Slađana graduated in Music Pedagogy and English Language Philology and completed her doctoral studies in Teaching Methodology. She has working experience in music subjects and English language teaching in professional music and ballet educational settings. Her main research interests are teaching methodology, second language teaching and learning, English in Professional Music Education (EPME), multilingualism, educational technology, and specialized translation of texts in music and opera. She presented research in international conferences in Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Malta, Poland, and Serbia and published more than twenty articles in peer-reviewed journals and international publications. She contributed with research within the national project entitled “Digital Media Technologies and Socio-economical Changes” (III47020, 2014 - 2019) funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia. Slađana speaks Serbian, English, Italian and Greek language. She is an editorial board member of the *Educational Role of Language Journal* (2019-2021) and a member of *EDEN Digital Learning Europe: Europe* (2021). [sladjana.maric@ff.uns.ac.rs](mailto:sladjana.maric@ff.uns.ac.rs)

**Luisito Nanquil** [orcid.org/0000-0001-8501-0731](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8501-0731): THE PHILIPPINES, Bulacan State University. Dr. Nanquil is an associate professor who has been teaching language and literature for many years. His research interests are TESOL, educational leadership, language and culture, curriculum and instructional design, and educational linguistics. He holds doctorate degrees in Educational Leadership and English Language Studies. Furthermore, he obtained TESOL Diplomas from London Teacher Training College and Concordia International College. [luisito.nanquil@bulsu.edu.ph](mailto:luisito.nanquil@bulsu.edu.ph)

**Milena Sazdovska Pigulovska** [orcid.org/0000-0001-9227-4815](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9227-4815): NORTH MACEDONIA, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philology. Milena works at the Department of Translation and Interpreting as an associate professor. She holds a Ph.D. degree in Translatology. Her key interests involve translation and interpreting, contrastive linguistics, terminology, English for specific purposes, emotional intelligence for translators and interpreters, translation tools and experiential learning. Her key projects involve *“Possibilities for Fostering Emotional Intelligence as a Generic Competence for Translation and Interpreting Students”* (2016-2018) in cooperation with “Karl Franzens Universität” - Graz, Austria, *“Modernization of Teaching Methods and Techniques for Terminology Courses at Interdisciplinary Translation and Interpreting Studies”* (2020-2021) supported by UKIM. [milena.sazdovska@ff.ukim.edu.mk](mailto:milena.sazdovska@ff.ukim.edu.mk)

**Thoralf Tews** [orcid.org/0000-0002-3921-187](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3921-187): GERMANY, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz University of Hannover. After obtaining his Bachelor of Arts in English and Political Science, Thoralf is currently working on his Master of Education in English and Politics-Economics. He is looking forward to a career in secondary education and is mostly interested in educational studies, especially practical didactics, socio-economic influences on educational outcomes and philosophy on the organization of education. In 2020, he volunteered in the German project #LernenVernetzt, hosting an introduction to a web conferencing system for primary school teachers. [thoralf.tews@gmail.com](mailto:thoralf.tews@gmail.com)

### **Volume 2021-1(6) Reviewers**

Amir Begić (Croatia, University of Osijek)

Luka Bonetti (Croatia, University of Zagreb)

Irem Comoglu (Turkey, Dokuz Eylul University)

Anita Dremel (Croatia, University of Osijek)

Rebecca Giles (USA, University of South Alabama)

Daiva Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė (Lithuania, Vytautas Magnus University Education Academy)

Marina Olujic Tomazin (Croatia, University of Zagreb)

Zeljko Pavic (Croatia, University of Osijek)

Danica PirsI (Serbia, University of Nis)

Sanja Simel Pranjić (Croatia, University of Osijek)

Agnieszka Szplit (Poland, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce)

Gertrud Tarp (Denmark, Aalborg University)

Alina Tenesceu (Romania, University of Craiova)

Senka Žižanović (Croatia, University of Osijek)

**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.



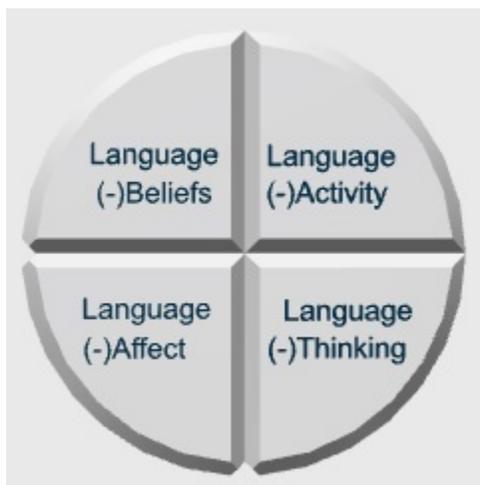
*General rationale.* Language lies at the heart of schooling, culture, (learning and teaching) methods, and personality – thus underlying education on the individual and on the social level. Its social existence determines its experiencing by an individual person and vice versa. Both these levels matter 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.*

<http://educationalroleoflanguage.org/erl-journal/>