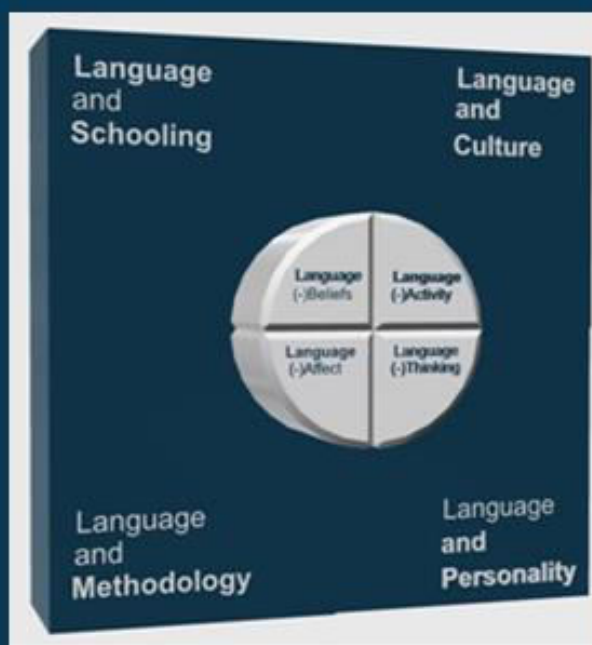


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THE EMOTIONAL DIMENSION of LANGUAGE and of LINGUISTIC EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Recognising interdisciplinary implications of the affective filter

Linguistic education, like practically any other form of education, **is strongly determined by affect**. Although the entire “story” is far more complex, we might summarise it by saying that if students and teachers find themselves in emotionally convenient circumstances, linguistic progress is easily noticeable, whereas in situations when either of them are experiencing negative feelings or emotions, linguistic efforts are likely to prove simply futile. As implied by the well-known concept of the affective filter, negative emotions – be it fear, anxiety, discomfort and such – act an invisible wall blocking cognition and disable linguistic education. Hence, the teachers’ and – predominantly – the students’ affect either aids or hinders education and it does so in a less or more concealed fashion. On the level of terminology, too, the presence and salience of affect is either explicit or implicit. The former is the case with the said notion of affective filter and others such as speech anxiety, emotional intelligence, willingness to communicate, everyday stressors, etc. The latter is even more extensive, although it tends to be overlooked or disregarded, which can be exemplified by such linguistic concepts as, for example, (a) fossilization, which is mostly defined in cognitive terms and relates to that part of language users’ competence which has become fixed and may fall subject to stagnation – but which results from our natural need of comfort and of social recognition; or even such a traditional term as (b) language performance, which is contrasted against language competence and also viewed through a predominantly cognitive prism – but which, too, is subject to our emotional stance and individual invariably-unstable and internally influential feelings.

Having entered Cycle 2 of ERLA’s trajectory this year, we continue our studies on the affective dimension, focusing – by definition – on the individual student and her/his experiencing of educational reality (in accordance with our Scope Minor), as any form of education remains primarily a personal experience. In Cycle 2 (scheduled for four subsequent years so as to cover four complementary domains) **we prioritise the affective domain owing to how it underlies humans’ learning processes and either opens or closes gates to successful education** (meaning, too, that our beliefs, actions, and thinking rest upon it). Following this logic, it pays to consider how ERLA’s fundamental premises (see the graphic below) can be read with the affect as the key educational driver: the way we feel about language shapes our entire identity and understanding of the world (we can simply feel like becoming acquainted with particular subject matter or not). Hence, all education rests on our affective stance, which imposes on teachers the need to skilfully manage their students’ linguistic affect (and prompt them to willingly listen, read, write, and speak), which causes the linguistic affect to merit a special position in education at all levels and in all disciplines.

Our joint discussion of these issues took place at the 6th International Pedagogical and Linguistic ERL Conference subtitled ‘On Emotions in Language Learning and Use’, hosted by the University of Ulm (Germany) on 13-14 June this year – which bore fruit also in the form of a number of papers also

included hereunder. Organised around 4 modules – **connections, systems, domains, and disciplines**, the conference addressed the **link between emotions and language** on the general level (pertaining to questions such as how emotions relate to language skills, what factors determine our emotional approach to language and its learning, etc.) as well as on more detailed strata (relating to specific theories and methodologies applicable for the link in question, how different educational systems across the globe take emotions into account, etc.). As the conference venue had been chosen owing the main discipline of study of the host (Department of Applied Emotion and Motivation Psychology), the key conference talks additionally concentrated on such affect-related themes as achievement emotions, bilingualism (as a lens to human brains), the role emotional content and psychological context (through the perspective of neuroscience studies), or holistic approaches to the studies of emotions and identity in language learning and use.

This volume of ERL Journal gathers texts (twelve papers, one review, and one report) falling into two sections: on the **emotional dimension of linguistic education** and on the **emotional dimension of language** per se – as the consideration of either of them should not be conducted without taking the other into account (otherwise we would end up having no idea what particular affective facets need to be attributed to). The papers present a high degree of diversity in terms of their educational settings, goals, theoretical foundations and methodologies applied. They substantially differ in what aspect they examine, be it the emotional dimension of propaganda in songs, the affective benefits of the impact exerted by literature, brain-based learning strategies, or the emotional intelligence of translators and interpreters. What they all have in common, though, is the far-reaching appreciation of affect and how it determines what is happening inside or outside the classroom. The total interdisciplinary picture to be drawn from all the texts included in the volume is quite straightforward: the greater the extent to which affect is implemented into all forms of language-oriented efforts, the more beneficial effects (among students, teachers, and all other language users) can be anticipated. This role of affect is practically impossible to overestimate and needs to be fostered across disciplines, in which the affective filter – typically and wrongly assigned to linguistic education only – matters a lot.

Michał Daszkiewicz

Educational Role of Language – 4 Fundamental Premises



Investigating the role of affects in additional language learning in the context of mobility through a multimodal autobiographical approach

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Abstract

This study focuses on the role of affects in additional language learning in the context of mobility. The starting point is the discovery of Francophone migrant literature by intermediate-level learners of French at an international university in Bulgaria. It concerns in particular the encounter with the Hungarian-Swiss writer Agota Kristof and her autobiographical text “L’Analphabète” [The Illiterate], which reveals a polarized attitude towards languages that have marked her life and career. Brought to reflect on the tension behind the way the author qualifies languages as “enemies” or “friends”, the learners share their own attitudes towards the languages of their repertoires through reflective drawings (language portraits), autobiographical narratives, and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative analysis of the collected data was conducted to examine in what ways students express their affects relating to languages with different status and how their attitudes are connected to the mobilities and other significant changes they have experienced. The results indicate that the participants express predominantly positive affects. All are attached to their initial languages, although this strong identification may be destabilizing in critical situations like mobilities abroad and significant life changes. English has an important place in the learners’ identity and is related to fluency, comfort, desire, and various opportunities. French is cherished mostly for its aesthetic values, although pleasure is often mixed with anxiety due to the lower levels of proficiency. Students feel attracted to additional languages, which they connect to cultural and leisure activities but have omitted other languages from their repertoires since they do not feel strongly attached to them. It appears that both teachers and learners can benefit from the multimodal autobiographical approach as it allows to explore the complexity of the learners’ plurilingual repertoires, the stories behind their construction, and the affects related to this process.

Keywords: *additional language, affects, language portrait, migrant literature, mobility, multimodality, plurilingualism*

Introduction

Research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has increasingly focused on emotions in the last decade, shifting the focus from anxiety to positive emotions, such as enjoyment and flow, among others (Dewaele & MacIntyre 2022, Dewaele 2023, MacIntyre & Wang 2023). These large-scale studies based on surveys or questionnaires examine the relationship of emotions with academic performance and the language learning process. Their implications are important for the field of language learning and teaching to better understand the learners’ needs, motivation, and behavior, as well as to adjust the teaching approaches aimed at reducing students’ anxiety and increasing language learning enjoyment. Nonetheless, most of the recent studies have focused on English as a target language, leaving a gap for research on the affective factors involved in the learning of other target languages (Dewaele & MacIntyre 2022: 157). Indeed, today’s multilinguals have diverse and complex language repertoires which are often connected to periods of mobility abroad. Research in language teaching and learning related to student mobilities has focused mostly on acquiring linguistic, social-interactive, pragmatic, and intercultural competences (Kinginger 2016, Dervin 2017, Bozhinova 2020, among others). However, the affective side of the encounters with new languages in such contexts also deserves attention, since language learners seek “physical, emotional, and social equilibrium” (Kramsch

2009: 75). Reflective teaching and learning practices seem necessary to raise students' awareness of their emotional responses to changes related to the expansion of their language repertoire, often connected to mobilities abroad.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, language autobiography has been studied in research and adopted in pedagogical interventions as a tool for promoting plurilingual/pluricultural education under the influence of the language policies developed by the Council of Europe in the last two decades (Molinié 2011: 145). It is a way to represent the language repertoire, which combines evolving "linguistic dispositions", including not only language varieties, but also emotions and desires related to the linguistic practices (Busch 2010: 284). Moreover, some experiences in foreign language classes focusing on literary texts by migrant authors have been carried out to encourage thorough reflection on the life trajectories of both writers and learners who may have gone through similar situations (Mathis & Tan 2019, Domp martin-Normand 2016, Deraîche & Maizonniaux 2018). It is an indirect and less intrusive way to engage in dialogue with the learners without forcing them to share thoughts that they are not ready to express. Indeed, according to Perregaux (2002: 93), it is important to use the "detour principle", which requires a subtle preparation and situational activities at an earlier stage. Students may be exposed first to external sources, such as autobiographical texts of migrant authors in the target language to identify episodes that are close to or in contrast with their personal stories (id.).

In this context, the starting point of the present study is the discovery of francophone migrant literature by French learners at an international university in Bulgaria. In particular, it concerns the encounter with the Hungarian writer Agota Kristof (1935-2011) who moved to Switzerland, and her autobiographical text "L'Analphabète" [The Illiterate] (2004), revealing a polarized attitude towards languages that have marked her life and career. Building upon previous research in SLA on emotions and multilingualism and qualitative studies based on the autobiographical approach in language education, this paper aims to study the role of affects in additional language (AL)¹ learning. More specifically, it examines how students express their affects relating to their language repertoire through the choice of colors and embodied images in their language portraits (LP), as well as their attitudes towards languages in connection with the mobilities they have experienced.

Affects and additional language learning

In today's globalized environment, multilinguals face complex demands and opportunities, their attitudes, behaviors, and language use being influenced by socioemotional, sociocultural, sociopolitical and other factors (Narcy-Combes et al. 2019: 36). In general, human behavior can be explained better if we try to understand the underlying feelings, emotions, and motivations (Narcy-Combes et al. 2019: 38, Damasio 2003: 140).

In Damasio's terms, affect functions as a parallel world to our representations of the surrounding reality or the objects and events recalled from memory (Damasio 2018: 99). Emotions defined as "a complex collection of chemical and neural responses forming a distinctive pattern" play a regulatory role which is crucial for the survival or well-being of the organism (Damasio 2003: 53, Reeve 2015: 340). Feelings emerge from emotions in the form of mental images of the body, usually connected to pleasure or pain as a reflection of the bodily states of stability or instability (Damasio 2003: 124, Kramsch 2009: 68).

Research has shown that affects play an important role in situations of encountering an additional language. Pavlenko (2012: 458) emphasizes that "[i]nstead of seeing emotions as beliefs (motivation) or as individual somatic states (anxiety), recent scholarship views language-related emotions as social and

¹For practical reasons and to avoid confusion or some connotations related to other notions, such as mother tongue, home language, L1 and foreign language, L2, L3 etc., IL(s) and AL(s) will be used for initial language(s) of socialization and additional languages (Narcy-Combes & al 2019: xii).

relational phenomena, embedded within identity narratives and experienced from particular subject positions". Kramersch (2009: 53-55) found that both the attitude of the teacher and some language properties can provoke pleasure and confidence or, on the contrary, tension, anger, disgust, or even create an identity breakdown and physical discomfort. Interestingly, many learners share that they have transitioned from frustration to pleasure, the latter resulting from the appreciation of their trajectory accompanied by emotional and physical tension (*ibid.*: 63). In fact, we can refer to enjoyment as a more complex emotion in such situations, which occurs "when people not only meet their needs but exceed them to accomplish something new or even unexpected" (Dewaele and MacIntyre 2022: 160). Enjoyment was found to be independent from anxiety, the latter being caused by learners' "distress at their inability to be themselves and to connect authentically with other people through the limitation of the new language" (Horwitz 2017: 41). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2022: 161) found that some of the factors which lead to higher levels of enjoyment and lower levels of anxiety concern the higher number of languages learnt, confidence about performance in the AL, and higher proficiency, especially for adults. In addition, research related to the implementation of cognitive language learning strategies, aimed at raising language awareness, confirms that such strategies successfully complement the affective ones while reducing student anxiety in learning English as a target language (Ruzhekova-Rogozherova 2023: 470).

In her research based on language learning memoirs, Kramersch (2009: 29) also points out the importance of perception for learners of an AL, who describe their experience related to "taste, sight, touch, sound, triggered by the material nature of the language itself". These perceptions generate feelings based on the body adjustments to a "life in a foreign language" (*id.*). Moreover, emotions, such as anger, anxiety, expectation, and pride have an impact on triggering or maintaining motivation, which is important for AL learning (Raby & Narcy-Combes 2009).

Migrant literature as a catalyst for autobiographical writing and self-analysis in the language class

In the field of language education, biography and autobiography have been explored recently as new avenues in research on didactic approaches for language teaching and learning. In her research on language (auto)biography used with both school children and university students, Perregaux (2002: 84) defines this term as "a story more or less long, more or less complete where a person tells him(her)self around a particular theme, the story of his/her relationship to languages, where he/she reports a particular experience, a memorable moment"². People create their current language autobiography based on a selection of facts or clues in the cognitive-affective domains. At the same time, they are free to decide what to say or omit. Biographical and language information are often mixed in the narratives and include personal stories related to migrations. Thus, the (auto)biography functions as a powerful tool that enables individuals to reflect, express their affects, reconstruct their identity, and prepare for gaining new insights (Perregaux 2002: 84-85, Coffey 2015: 501).

Biographical approaches to multilingualism and mobilities allow for the multilingual subjects who have experienced migration to describe their trajectories in narratives and other forms of storytelling (Deraîche & Maizonniaux 2018: 87). In fact, emotions become particularly salient in situations "related to migrations, a minority position, discrimination and marginalization" (Kusters & De Meulder 2019). For example, bilingual writers have reported "selecting a 'stepmother tongue' in order to distance themselves from the memories, taboos, anxieties, and a visceral emotionality of the L1 and to gain control over their words, stories, and plots" (Pavlenko 2012: 461).

²Author's translation from French: "un récit plus ou moins long, plus ou moins complet où une personne se raconte autour d'une thématique particulière, celle de son rapport aux langues, où elle fait état d'un vécu particulier, d'un moment mémorable."

In language education, autobiographical texts with a focus on multilingualism and experience with migration serve as a mediator to encourage the learners' reflection on their own experience, identity, mobility, and progress in language learning in general (Mathis & Tan 2019). Domp martin-Normand (2016) emphasizes that the discovery of such texts, which reveal the authors' distress and suffering due to situations of exile and need of adaptation, triggers students' ability to express contradictory emotions in their own writings and raise their awareness of the connections among the languages of their repertoires.

Mollinié (2011: 144) reminds that researchers-practitioners using the (auto)biographical approach can use three types of tools to generate data, namely autobiographical texts, interviews, and reflective drawings. This research represents a process of establishing a space of trust and empathy with the multilingual subjects and serves as a means of semiotic mediation for the latter.

Multimodal language autobiographies and affects

According to the connectionist perspective, subjects base their thinking on analogies and metaphors. Our past experiences shape our perceptions of the world, and the brain reactions are conditioned by the existing connections (Narcy-Combes et al. 2014: 155). For example, Kramersch observes that analogy plays an important role in meaning making for language learners in their language memoirs, where "the reality they construct, based on their perceptions of the foreign symbolic forms, is both imagined and real" (2009: 34). Paquin (1997: 197-198) also notes that although we all possess a similar psychobiological perception mechanism, our perception, for example, of an image is subjective because of the different sensory data stored in our memory, as well as our cognitive and emotional reference systems (quoted in Muller & Borgé 2020: 59).

Multimodality is an inherent aspect of multilingualism, i.e. « now speech and writing are intertwined with other modes of meaning such as images, diagrams, picture, icons, video and color », and thus contributes to better communication without relying exclusively on written texts (Narcy-Combes et al. 2019: 22). Indeed, due to the often unconscious nature of the processes that influence language, it is not easy to verbalize one's thoughts or feelings (Bush 2010: 286). Therefore, reflective drawings used in educational research represent a tool to facilitate the expression of the learners' complex experience with different languages. Researchers and practitioners have invited language learners to draw their LPs, which reflect the current representations of their language repertoire linked with the authors' affects and body (Busch 2010, Blouët 2014, Coffey 2015, Manconi 2019, Kusters & De Meulder 2019). According to Busch (2010: 286), "[t]he switch in mode of representation from word to image helps to deconstruct internalized categories, to reflect upon embodied practices and to generate narratives that are less bound to genre expectations." She has found that "[t]he LP reinforces the use of body metaphors in structuring narratives about linguistic practices and facilitates the expression of emotions linked to language." (*ibid.*: 288) Regarding the colors, it is important to note that the interpretations and feelings they can generate are dependent on languages, cultures, and time periods (Pastoureau & Simonnet 2014), which is reflected in the representations of the learners' language repertoires.

Methodology

The present study is based on the multimodal autobiographical approach and was conducted with 18 learners of French who were introduced to Francophone migrant literature in a university-level French literature course. Table 1 summarizes the languages, which were present in the repertoires of the participants and the mobilities they have experienced. To preserve anonymity, students' names in this paper have been replaced by alphanumeric codes (S1-S18).

Table 1: Profiles of the participants.

Nationalities	14 Bulgarians (S1, S3, S4, S5, S6, S8, S9, S10, S11, S13, S15, S16, S17 & S18), 1 Macedonian (S2), 1 Kazakh (S7), 1 Russian (S12), 1 Ukrainian (S14)
Early bilingualism	4 students: Macedonian & Italian (S2), Bulgarian & French (S3), Russian & Kazakh (S7), Ukrainian & Russian (S14)
English	Language of instruction, level C1-C2
French	Target language, level B1-B2 (French literature course)
Other ALs	0 to 5 other languages (average 1.28)
Mobilities	- at least one year: Italy (S2), Canada (S3), France (S9), Vietnam (S8), Bulgaria (4 international students: S2, S7, S12, S14), - shorter periods (S1, S4, S5, S11, S13, S15)

The pedagogical intervention started with the encounter with the autobiographical novel “L’Analphabète” [The Illiterate] by the Hungarian-Swiss writer Agota Kristof. The text reveals her hatred towards German and Russian as the languages of historical enemies in Hungary during her childhood in the 1940s and her struggle to conquer French, which became a “new enemy” she started using for writing later, when she moved to Switzerland. The discussion on the tension behind the author’s polarized attitude to these languages triggered students’ reflections on their own representations. To understand better the role of affects in AL learning through a multimodal autobiographical approach, this study attempts to find whether multilingual students share similar attitudes towards the languages in their repertoires. It examines in particular, in what ways they express their affects relating to languages with different status and how their attitudes are connected to the mobilities and other significant changes they have lived.

The experience followed five stages based on previous studies on language autobiographies involving multimodal tools and discovery of migrant literature. Reading of the excerpts from Agota Kristof’s novel was complemented with a discussion of interviews with the Canadian-born novelist Nancy Huston and the Afghan-born author Atiq Rahimi, both writing in French as non-native speakers. During the second stage, the students worked on their LPs: they were asked to choose a place (or places) and a color (or colors) to represent each language of their repertoire on a human silhouette drawing adopted from Manconi’s study (2019: 115). The third step consisted of the composition of an explanatory text in response to questions given to guide the students’ reflection concerning the importance of people, places, and moments that have shaped their repertoires. The fourth stage represented a small group and collective discussion of the LPs focusing mostly on the colors and body parts. Finally, four students with extended experience with mobility in their early childhood or later, agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews. The data collection for the purposes of this research obtained approval from the institutional Human Subjects Review Committee. All participants signed an informed consent to allow the researcher to use their works anonymously.

After the data transcription and coding, a qualitative analysis of all the LPs was conducted in parallel with student’s narratives to find out how positive or negative connotations were related to languages with different status based on the symbolic of colors, shapes, and body parts (Busch 2010, Blouet 2014, Coffey 2015, Manconi 2019, Kusters & De Meulder 2019). At the final stage, the results of this analysis were crossed with the statements of the interviewed students by focusing on affects, although the latter are often intertwined with other phenomena related to their identity and relationship to languages (Perregaux 2002: 88-90, Domp martin-Normand 2016, Mathis & Tan 2019).

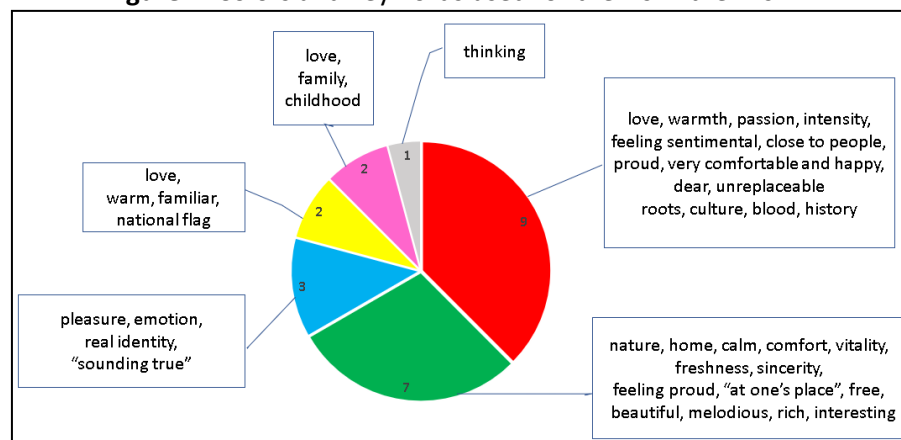
The next sections present the results of the analysis of the LPs in parallel with their interpretation in the students’ narratives and focus on the expression of affects through the choice of colors concerning the ILs, English as the strongest AL in this context, French as the target language, and other ALs. This analysis is followed by a discussion of the representation of these languages through the chosen places

and shapes in the LP. At the end, the impact of mobilities and other life changes on students' evolving attitudes to their language repertoires is examined.

LPs and embodied multilingual repertoires

To represent their ILs in the LPs, most of the French learners have chosen the red ($n = 9$) and green colors ($n = 7$). The others have selected blue ($n = 3$), yellow ($n = 2$), pink ($n = 2$) and grey ($n = 1$). Figure 2 represents the distribution of the colors, as well as keywords and phrases associated with each language, which appear in the narratives explaining the LPs. Some students have chosen two colors for the same language or for their two ILs.

Figure 1: Colors and keywords used for the ILs in the LPs.

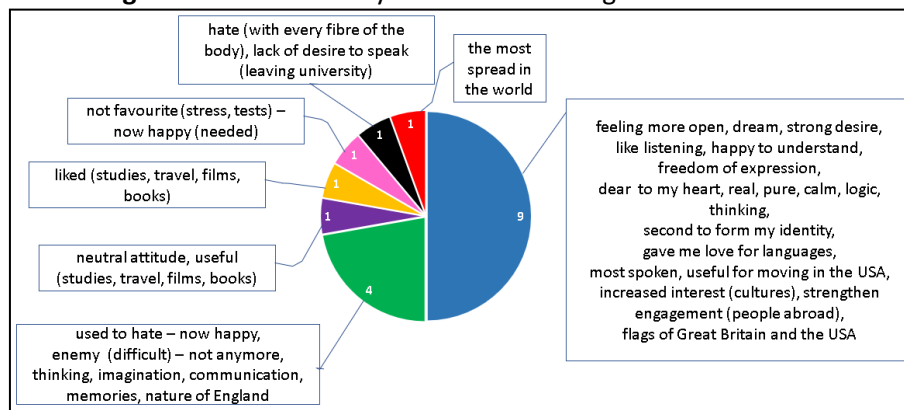


The colors are interpreted in various ways in the narratives. Those who have represented their IL(s) in red link them with love, warmth, passion, or intensity. Some feel emotional, proud, comfortable and happy when they use their language. Not surprisingly, green is associated with nature and represents the feelings or states of calm, comfort, freedom, pride, vitality, freshness, and sincerity. Students who have chosen this color qualify their language as beautiful, melodious, rich, or interesting. Those who have used blue, mention they feel pleasure and say that they can express their real identity or "sound true" only in this language. Yellow means love, warmth, or something familiar. Pink reminds of love, family, and childhood, while grey represents thinking.

The chosen colors actually depict a broader representation, which refers not only to affects ("love", "passion", "calm"), but also to perceptions ("warmth"), ideas ("reminds me about history"), or aesthetic judgements ("beautiful"). Similarly to Busch (2010: 288), we found that the initial languages are "emotionally important and closely linked with students' linguistic identity" as expressed by the keywords "roots", "culture", "blood", "history". The choice of most colors corresponds to their traditional Western interpretation (Pastoureau & Simonnet 2014) but not for all students. For example, love is represented mostly in red, which is the traditional color of passion, but some students have chosen pink and yellow for the same feeling, most probably because they connect it simultaneously to other close images, perceptions, and ideas, such as childhood (pink) and warmth (yellow).

The students have chosen mostly cold but bright colors to represent **English** (Figure 2).

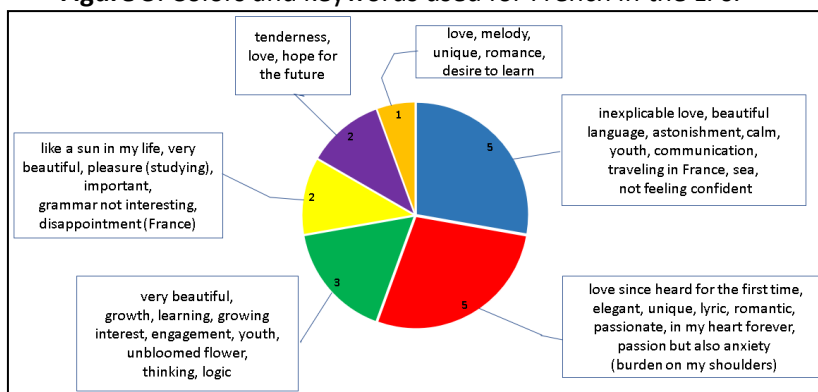
Figure 2: Colors and keywords used for English in the LPs.



Half of the participants have selected blue to express satisfaction of being fluent in this language and a strong desire to learn dating back to their childhood. Some even consider it as their second IL and describe it as real, pure, calm, and logic. Four students have represented English in green and associated it with a change in their attitude towards the language. In general, everyone insists on its role as a lingua franca for both educational and leisure activities, which is a source of satisfaction and motivation. The only exception is the Russian student who has used black and expressed strong negative feelings, which may be due to sociopolitical reasons because her life was affected by the war in Ukraine.

Interestingly, warm colors are almost absent from the representations related to English (only two students used red and orange), on the contrary, more students have chosen red, yellow and orange to represent **French** ($n = 8$).

Figure 3: Colors and keywords used for French in the LPs.



The idea about love at first “sound” is present in some LPs: students love how it sounds: “elegant”, “unique”, “lyric”, or “romantic”. The red color means that they are passionate, and some say it will “be in [their] heart forever”. The keywords and phrases used to explain the yellow and orange colors are for example: “like a sun in my life”, “pleasure” and “desire” to learn it, “melody”, “romance”, etc. However, for some students, the warm colors have negative connotations. For example, S1 has depicted French as a “burden on [her] shoulders” using red to express her anxiety. S12 has linked yellow to grammatical difficulties and her disappointment after she visited France.

The cool colors bear mostly positive connotations. French is linked to youth, communication, travels, the sea, hope for the future. At the same time, many mention they do not feel confident using the

language yet. The green color is related to growth, learning, and engagement. One student has used the metaphor of an unbloomed flower:

La couleur est verte car elle symbolise la jeunesse et me rappelle une fleur non mûre qui n'a pas encore poussé et fleuri, comme ma connaissance du français. (The color is green because it symbolizes youth and reminds me of an unripe flower that has not grown up and bloomed yet, like my knowledge of French.) (narrative, S13)

As seen in Table 2, many students speak **other ALs** and have represented them in different colors.

Table 2: Colors used for the ALs other than English and French.

ALs	colors	n. of students
Spanish	yellow	5
German	blue, green, and purple	3
Italian	blue and orange	3
Bulgarian	green and yellow	3
Greek	purple and turquoise	2
Korean	purple and pink	2
Serbian Chinese Portuguese	red	1
Russian Finnish	blue	1
Arabic	green	1
Czech	none	1

For example, Spanish is in yellow for all the five students who relate it to the sunny and warm country. German is in blue, green, or purple and the students relate it to logic, freshness, or hardship. Italian is in blue and orange and represents freedom. Greek, in turquoise and purple, is associated with the sea and freedom.

Korean is an interesting case for some students who started learning it on their own just because they were very intrigued by Korean pop music and consider the language as special and unique:

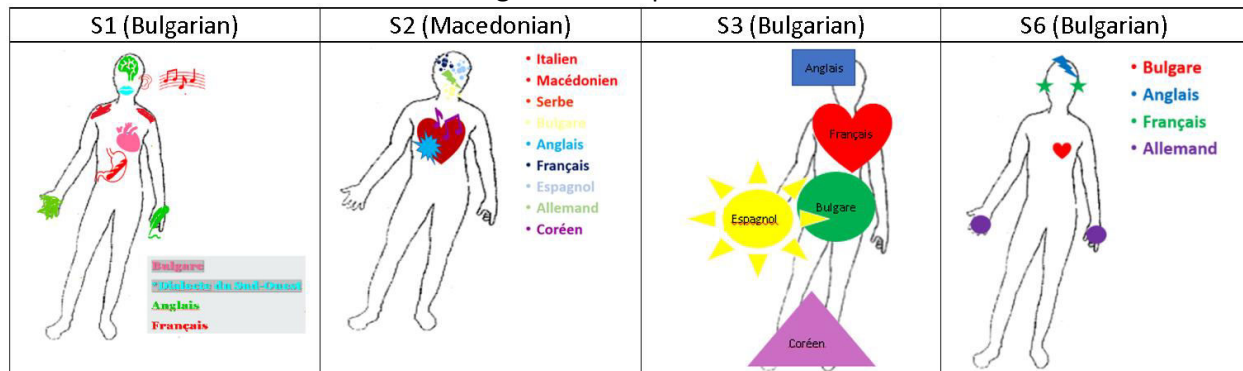
Grâce à la musique et à la langue coréennes, j'ai pu rencontrer des personnes partageant les mêmes intérêts et, à ce jour, j'ai de bonnes relations amicales. J'ai utilisé les notes violettes, car le violet est considéré comme une couleur unique, et grâce à la K-pop, apprendre le coréen était une expérience spéciale pour moi qui a une place importante dans mon cœur. (Thanks to Korean music and language, I was able to meet like-minded people and, to this day, have good friendships. I used the purple notes, as purple is considered a unique color, and thanks to K-pop, learning Korean was a special experience for me that has an important place in my heart.) (narrative, E2)

Sometimes, different nuances are used, the pale meaning that there is no strong connection with the language yet. It is interesting also that in the interviews, two students mention languages they had omitted in the LPs and narratives. These are mostly mandatory foreign languages at school which were not studied with enthusiasm.

Regarding **the place of ILs in the body silhouette**, the majority ($n = 15$) have chosen the heart and say that these are deeply engraved, have a special place, or are at the heart of their identity. In five LPs, this place is shared with English or French. Five students place their language in their head or brain as the highest position. The central body part or stomach is chosen to represent the core of their identity and also warmth, love, link with family and sometimes, gastronomy. Two students have chosen the

mouth for pleasant communication in a regional dialect and the hands. Examples of LPs are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Examples of LPs.



As regards the place of the ALs, **English and French** are represented in the central or upper body parts to symbolize love, passion, identity, youth, growth, pleasure, thinking, etc. **ALs other than English and French** occupy peripheral body parts in most LPs (hands, arms, shoulders, legs, feet, toes) and are linked to mobility, dances and music, gestures, but also difficulty or first steps in the language.

The examples below contain interpretations of the place of ALs referring to feet and hands:

Le grec marqué en violet, représente cependant une langue toujours bien inconnue, donc je la place sur le doigt de mon pied droit. (The purple for Greek, however, represents a language that is still quite unknown, so I place it on the toe of my right foot.) (S5)

Il [le portugais] se trouve sur mon cheville pour symboliser que j'y ai à peine mis le pied. (It [Portuguese] is on my ankle to symbolize that I've barely set foot on it.) (S16)

Pour moi, l'allemand est entre mes mains parce qu'il sonne très dur. J'associe les choses difficiles avec la force, donc c'est entre les mains. (For me, German is in my hands because it sounds very hard. I associate difficult things with strength, so it's in my hands.)(S6)

L'espagnol est une langue que j'aime et que je connais un peu, mais j'ai encore besoin de le pratiquer. C'est pourquoi je le mets sur la main qui fait le plus de mouvement dans le corps, ce qui signifie qu'il faut étudier plus. (Spanish is a language I love and know a bit about, but I still need to practice it. That's why I put it on the hand that makes the most movement in the body, which means I have to study more.)(S10)

Similarly to previous studies, it seems that the place in the body silhouette is often connected to widely spread metaphorical images, which can be found for example in idiomatic expressions and pictograms (Coffey 2015: 508, Manconi 2019: 117). Having used *MS PowerPoint* to complete their LP, many students have chosen shapes from the available tools and commented on their meaning. In addition to the heart, a cloud is used to represent unstable knowledge, freedom, or dreams. Lightning represents discovery. Sun is used for sunny, warm countries or people. Musical notes symbolize beautiful sounds, melody, and songs. Analogy with pictograms helps students formulate their ideas, perceptions, and feelings inspired by their experience with languages.

Mobility and other life changes affecting language use

Previous research has found that language repertoires are not static but represent “a bundle of linguistic dispositions subject to transformation or modification over time” (Bush 2010: 284). The two students who have lived abroad and started using an AL in preschool share some stressful situations from their childhood. In her narrative, S3 says about French she started learning in Canada that “*c’est une langue très passionnée qui restera toujours dans mon cœur*” (it’s a very passionate language that will always remain in my heart). However, in the interview, she mentions that “it was a bit stressful because it was my first time speaking French and when all of the people around me started talking to me and I constantly shifted speaking to English because I was feeling uncomfortable.” (S3, interview). In fact, she was trying to speak English in addition to Bulgarian (her IL) at home. The other student (S2) shared her difficulties with both speaking Macedonian (her IL) and learning Italian (her first AL). She recalls that she progressed in Italian by communicating in the kindergarten, with her landlords, and watching cartoons and culinary shows with her parents. She also struggled with Macedonian, which she learned to speak and write correctly in middle school later, when her family returned to her home country.

Furthermore, students who were not early bilinguals remember how they overcame their initial frustration and finally felt happy with their achievements. S9 recalls for example her difficulties with French at high school in Bulgaria and later, her progress thanks to the exchange year in France:

And we wanted to be like in the English class. But I wasn’t accepted, and then I was in French. It was really hard [...] and one of the teachers before going to the exchange, told me that I won’t learn any language with money. [...] Yeah, it was really hard for me because I was 15 years old. [...] But I had a good progression, and I was the first in class when I came back. I wasn’t like learning only street French, but I went to school there, so I wrote, spoke [...] I had the chance to be in a good family. From them I learned a lot. (interview, S9)

In this case, the transformation is triggered by strong emotions, the student trying to overcome her initial disappointment and to refute the opinion of her first French teacher in order to achieve internal harmony. Moreover, her experience with English also started with negative emotions as she did not have the chance to learn it well in her small hometown:

So I continued to hate English till 12th grade here in high school because it was my second language here and we don’t usually study enough the second language. [...] (id.)

This feeling was reinforced later, due to stress related to the exam needed for admission to university. She finally succeeded and now sees it in green, which she compares to a green tick box for a successfully completed test. In both cases, frustration is related to the school setting (bad language choice, teacher’s attitude, teaching conditions). Motivation, satisfaction, and pride are driven by opportunities related to mobility and educational goals but also the desire to overcome a past destabilizing experience, which may be connected for example with teachers’ negative feedback and attitudes.

Sociopolitical changes also influence the attitudes towards languages. For example, the Russian and Kazakh students reported how they started feeling embarrassed, scared, and ashamed speaking Russian abroad after the beginning of the war in Ukraine:

Mais ce n’est pas que des émotions positives que la langue russe me fait sentir: après le début de la guerre entre Russie et Ukraine j’ai commencé à éprouver honte et peur en parlant russe dans les pays européens, car c’est la langue qui est associée avec un État terroriste. (But it is not only positive emotions that the Russian language makes me feel: after the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine I began to experience shame and fear when speaking Russian in European countries, because this language is associated with a terrorist state.) (narrative, S12)

I mean, there is definitely some negative attitude towards Russia but over here it's not that bad, but in other places. [...]. Yeah, I have a friend who has been beaten just because he talked Russian [...] it was in Spain. (interview, S7)

These examples illustrate “how languages become imbued with negative values in the process of *misrecognition*”, the latter meaning that “languages and linguistic varieties become linked with character types and cultural traits, so that linguistic behaviors of others are seen as deriving from speakers’ political agendas, intellectual abilities, and social and moral character” (Pavlenko 2012: 463). In this way, a language may symbolize oppression, domination, or exploitation in some regions of the world. It seems that our students have experienced situations, which are close to what they read in the autobiographical texts by Francophone authors studied in the French literature class. However, the situations seem more complex in today’s globalized world. For example, although the Russian student shared her deep hatred towards English and even was planning to leave the university, she admitted that it was actually very helpful to know this language today.

Discussion and limitations

From this research, it becomes apparent that the emotional connection with the IL is very strong. The students represent it as the core of their identity, the majority using red and green colors in their LPs to express positive feelings such as love, happiness, or pride, best symbolized by the heart shape. This reflects the process of *identification*, in which “languages become symbolically linked to particular groups of people and emblematic of particular identities” (Pavlenko 2012: 463). However, for some students, a conflict with the process of *misrecognition* emerges, which concerns particularly Russian-speaking students whose internal stability was undermined in the context of the current war. This situation could also explain the mixed feelings one of them expressed towards English, probably associated with both enemy countries and, at the same time, bearing practical value.

As the strongest AL of the students, English has a special place between their ILs and the other ALs, shaping their identity and generating a state of flow³, sometimes after a stressful period at school. These results are in line with other qualitative studies based on language autobiographies and LPs, in which most of the participants report a very positive experience with English or feel attracted to this language, often connecting it to its prestige as a global language, travels abroad, educational, cultural, and leisure activities (Busch 2010: 289, Blouet 2014: 58, 62).

Studying French after English is a source of intense positive emotions and feelings mostly attributed to the aesthetic appreciation of the language properties and hope to use it fluently in the future. At the same time, anxiety is often expressed due to the perceived difficulties related to the learning process and in some cases, stressful situations encountered during extended periods of stay and travel in France and Canada. As an explanation for the higher level of enjoyment related to ALs other than English, Dewaele and Macintyre (2022: 172) suggest that since English is usually studied early as a part of the institutional curriculum, the learners do not feel involved in an extraordinary activity, while those studying another AL understand that they need to invest “their full emotional commitment to be successful”.

However, in our research, attitudes towards other ALs vary depending on the individual perceptions and experience with each language. They are represented in different colors in the LPs, the only recurrent image being yellow for Spanish linked with warm and sunny Spain. Despite their low proficiency, students feel attracted to these ALs, which they relate for example to freedom, freshness, or uniqueness. On the opposite, some ALs were excluded from the LPs, which seems to be a sign of

³ Defined as “an optimal state of intrinsic motivation, where the person is fully immersed in what they are doing” (Csíkszentmihályi 1990: 5, quoted in Dewaele & MacIntyre 2022: 159).

indifference, a lack of connection to the language, or bad memories. Indeed, for some students it is impossible to draw a language, if they cannot connect it with someone close or do not feel any personal relationship to it (Perregaux 2009: 37, Kusters & De Meulder 2019).

With regards to the embodied language representations, this study corroborates to some extent the core-to-periphery pattern found by Coffey (2015: 506), where the mother tongue (English) is represented by the head or body trunk due to “hierarchical perceptions of comfort, centrality, and proficiency”. However, it is important to consider the status of every language, as well as the learners’ “emotionally and bodily lived experience of language” (Kusters & De Meulder 2019). English and French as ALs with specific status in this educational context appear close to the core for different reasons: English relates to proficiency, comfort, and desire, while French, to intensive emotions and aesthetic perceptions. The peripheral place of ALs other than English and French relates not only to lower proficiency but also to the ideas of movements and efforts.

Comparing their experience with Agota Kristof’s attitude, the majority consider their languages as friends in the sense that they contribute to their personal development, open new opportunities, or find this polarization irrelevant today. Five students, who have agreed that sometimes languages can be enemies, refer to either difficulties related to the AL learning or hypothetical situations where a language is imposed by oppressors, as in the case with the writer’s experience.

A limitation of this study is that part of the data reflects a static view on languages, given that as a tool, the LP represents a snapshot image of the author’s language repertoire (Blouet 2014: 20, Kusters & De Meulder 2019: §59). The dynamic nature of affects is more evident in the narratives guided by specific questions and in the semi-structured interviews. While the narratives did not reveal rich reflections on changes due to mobility, the semi-structured interviews allowed for more substantial discussion of this aspect. Interviews with more students would be helpful to collect comprehensive data related to the research questions. Other tools could be for example, a creative writing task following the discussion of autobiographical texts by migrant writers (Deraïche & Maizonniaux 2018: 87), as well as asking the students to collect oral biographical accounts, which trigger reflection on their own attitudes to languages (Perregaux 2002: 86-87).

Conclusion

The research questions of this study were based on the reading of Agota Kristof’s autobiographical text revealing her polarized attitude towards languages due to her encounters with sociopolitical changes in her home country and migration. Through the LPs and narratives used as tools to help the multilingual participants share their emotions, we found that they express predominantly positive attitudes towards the languages in their repertoires. The ILs are clearly considered “at the heart” of their identity. English is an important AL, which shapes their linguistic identity and brings satisfaction, both in terms of efforts invested to construct their skills, and as a base for future development. Learning French, the target language in this context, is perceived as a source of pleasure and aesthetic appreciation mixed with anxiety attributed to the difficulties. Furthermore, many students feel attracted to other languages, which are usually not part of the institutional curriculum and relate their amazement to cultural and leisure activities.

Being aware that languages bring them opportunities, these multilingual students are eager to travel abroad and use their languages for various purposes. However, most of them have not faced or do not remember situations where others have demonstrated a contrasting attitude towards their languages. Indeed, such situations may be destabilizing, as in the case with the Russian-speaking students in the context of the war in Ukraine. Having in mind how important previous experience is for plurilingual education, the multimodal autobiographical approach has the advantage to put this experience at the center of the learning process through dialogue with the students. Clearly, this approach has the potential to empower the language learners: they can become better positioned with respect to the

diversity of their plurilingual repertoire, reassess their past struggles, failures, and achievements, as well as current and future engagement in language learning. Further research may explore how mediation based on autobiographical texts used in the language classroom, including through virtual exchange with others, can foster decentering and prepare learners for mobilities abroad and to face challenges in other complex situations.

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Brain-based learning strategies respecting pupil's emotions in language learning

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Abstract

The process of learning is about making connections. This paper presents brain-based learning as a starting point for teachers, which connects academic (content), and emotional level based on the brain research results. As we live in a stressful world, school classrooms can provide pleasure, emotional comfort, as well as knowledge. When teachers create a positive emotional environment pupils gain emotional resilience and learn more efficiently. The purpose of this paper is to focus on emotions through learning principles and emotionally “safe” school environmental factors which are inseparable part of teaching and learning process. This paper also presents strategies implementing theoretical knowledge into language learning and respecting students’ emotions. It can be concluded that emotions play an important role in how and why students learn. Brain-based learning is one of the innovative ways or attitudes to learning a language, but also learning itself. By respecting stated starting points, we can not only make our teaching different, but especially enjoy learning, be satisfied with our performance and experience positive emotions that support the students' development.

Keywords: brain-based learning, brain, emotions, positive environment

Introduction

The human brain is the control center organizing our biological functions, thoughts, memory, motor skills, emotions, and behavior. It is not only a matter for researchers, doctors, psychologists, etc. but it is also necessary for educators. The brain is divided into lobes. Each lobe has many functions, and it is interconnected with other lobes through nerve circuits or pathways. Teachers need basic knowledge and understanding of how the human brain works because it is closely connected with understanding student's behavior as well as student's learning-related activity (in educational process). Technology like MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), fMRI (Functional MRI), and PET (Positron-Emission Tomography) brought us imaging tools for brain visualization and analyzing brain functions.

All learning relates to the brain. Hence, neuroscience and classroom instruction are closely connected. Research results in educational sciences respecting brain and learning foundations show that we can obtain better results, become more effective in the way we teach or perform activities by respecting students' individual prerequisites.

Neuroeducation is according to D. Connel (2023) an emerging interdisciplinary field of study that attempts to apply findings in brain research to education. As he further states, the primary goal of this area is to enhance educational practices, improve student outcomes, and develop advanced understanding of how the brain affects learning. All the mentioned above means that it is a combination of several disciplines, including neuroscience, psychology, and education.

Brain-based pedagogical approaches are called by different names, such as “mind, brain and education” (Fischer et al. 2007, Schwartz & Gerlach 2011) and “educational neuroscience” (Campbell

2011, Geake 2009). T. Tokuhamma-Espinosa (2011) focuses on mind, brain education science interrelation and its possible implications in guide to brain-based learning. Educational neurosciences focus on how our understanding of the human brain can affect the curricular, instructional and assessment decisions that teachers make every day. According to A. Sousa (2014) also provides educators with an opportunity to reflect on research that can have an impact on their educational practices.

Neuroscience and education reveal how individual brains change when learning occurs. Neuroeducation is a 'bridge' between neuroscience and educational practice.

Theoretical background of the brain-based learning

Brain-based learning appeared as a new field in the 1980s and it is based on brain functions and information on how it might influence overall education process (2008, p. 3). Brain-based learning refers to teaching methods, lesson designs, and school programs that are based on the latest scientific research about how the brain learns, including such factors as cognitive development (how students learn differently by respecting factors as: age, grow, and mature socially, emotionally, and cognitively (Glossary of Education Reform).

According to E. Jensen (2008: 4), brain-based education is best understood by the letters E.S.P. meaning "engagement, strategies, and principles." This expresses the active engagement and implementation of purposeful strategies, which are based on principles obtained from a brain understanding (neuroscience). Brain-based learning is also defined as a multidisciplinary approach (including neurology, neurobiology, psychology, sociology, genetics, and biology) based on one simple question in our mind "What is good for the brain?". As E. Jensen (2008: 4) further says, brain-based learning (BBL) is the attitude and way of thinking about learning and teaching, as well as about teacher's work. It is not a recipe to follow, but it is a type of learning focusing on the brain in our mind.

It was previously mentioned that the teachers should understand how the brain learns new context. As E. Jensen (2008, p. 11) states that different type of learning take unique pathways in the brain and input is processed differently. Learning new context starts with input, which enters through the senses, or the input begins by thinking or memory. Initial processing of information starts in the thalamus. Simultaneously, the information is directed to the appropriate cortical structures (e.g., occipital lobe, temporal lobe) for further processing and immediately to subcortical areas (e.g., the amygdala). If the brain gets an emergency stimulus, the amygdala responds immediately and subsequently mobilizes other brain areas. Afterwards, the information is sent to the hippocampus for more accurate evaluation and additional held. The hippocampus organizes, distributes, and connects the created memories with the appropriate areas of the cortex for long-term storage (Jensen 2008: 10-11).

Learning causes growth of the brain cells (Willis 2006: 1). According to Jensen (2009: 5) new learning forms new synaptic connections. A neuron is a basic nervous system structural and processing unit. Information is stored in neurons and most of them are present in birth. Support and connecting cells enrich communication between neurons and they grow for a lifetime. These cells are called dendrites and sprout from the arms called axons or the neuron's cell body. Dendrites as a response to experiences, information, and learned skills increase in size and number as well (Willis 2006: 1). As further J. Willis (2006: 3) states "The more ways something is learned, the more memory pathways are built." Teachers need to be familiar with brain research discoveries because they need to understand what they should do for their students' brain. This leads to the conclusion that it is essential for teachers to stimulate the growth of more dendrites and thus create more synaptic connections.

It is very important to introduce and to review the learned material to the brain by many ways (using various methods and senses) because in that way more dendritic pathways will be created. This is valuable information for classroom teachers. It means that there will be more synaptic connections and they will be used more often, thus becoming stronger and remaining longer. For example, if we offer the information visually (connection with occipital lobes), and students subsequently hear it (temporal

lobes; important role in regulation of emotions and memory processing), this process will result in an opportunity to access the stored information (Willis 2006: 4).

The choice of teaching methods in the educational process should be sensitive to all changes concerning the student's life. At a younger learner age, the brain development is more generalised. The neural connections become well established in most areas when the student reaches adolescence. This means that primary teachers should focus on a more general, holistic approach to education helping to establish overall brain structure (Bartlett & Burton 2016: 272). They should also remember that a student's attention span is shorter than in adult age, while decision-making is more difficult and working memory is less efficient.

Research on brain functioning has also impacted education of students with specific learning disorders such as dyslexia, reading disorder, etc.

The sources for learning new topic, facts, vocabulary, etc. are endless. They may include lectures, discussions, explanations, visual materials and tools, environmental stimuli, experiences, role models, reading, videos, projects, etc. There is no one and single best way for students to learn something (Jensen 2009: 6).

Caine et al. developed the following 12 brain/mind learning principles (Caine et al. 2009: 21-254) generated in fields from psychology to biology and neuroscience:

1. *"All learning is physiological."* This means that brain changes because of our experiences. Learning engages body and brain as a whole organism. Sensory engagement, physical movement, verbal articulation and action are necessary to develop new skill or competence. Any skill changes the brain. Students need to be involved in experiences using their senses, movement, activity, and decision-making as well as problem solving (Caine et al. 2009: 146-162).
2. *"The brain/mind is social."* According to Caine et al. (2009: 56-73) we cannot ignore the impact of relationships and community on learning in and outside the school. We relate to others and how the others relate to us are influenced and affected by our language, state of mind, attitudes, and approach to higher-order learning. Teachers need to engage students' social nature and requirement for relationships.
3. *"The search for meaning is innate."* This means that the search for meaning organizes questions and encourages the use of executive functions and it is enhanced by relaxed alertness. Learning can become more effective when students' interests and ideas are engaged (Caine et al. 2009: 74-91).
4. *"The search for meaning occurs through patterning."* Patterning relates to the purposeful organization and arrangement of the information. The patterns that a person perceived, and the choices of focus are the basis for decision making. New patterns should be linked to already comprehend information, matter, or content (Caine et al. 2009: 163-176).
5. *"Emotions are critical to patterning."* Emotions are part of every thought, decision, and response. Teachers can facilitate relaxed alertness and accept the relationship between the roles or emotions and learning. Students need to experience appropriate emotions obtained by various experiences (Caine et al. 2009: 92-108).
6. *"The brain/mind processes parts and wholes simultaneously."* The brain/mind is designed to make sense of the world, which contains an infinite amount of information. According to Caine et al. (2009: 129-145) the teaching process needs to start with an experience that provides students exposure to the subject matter. All students can learn more effectively when they connect an experience from whole to the details (facts and information).
7. *"Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception."* Attention is an inherently natural phenomenon laid by meaning, novelty, interests and emotions. Attention is also critical to memory. According to Caine et al. (2009: 216-229) teacher's work is needed to engage students in exercises of executive functions necessary to attend and to make decisions. They

should understand how to teach context and how to use it to support explicit learning. Effective learning happens when students' attention is deepened, and multiple layers of context are used to support learning.

8. *"Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes."* Learning involves layers of consciousness. Successful learners can monitor themselves, so they know their own strengths and weaknesses, and take responsibility of the process and of the result of learning. Students need the time to reflect and to accept their own learning. (Caine et al. 2009: 230-242).
9. *"There are at least two approaches to memory. Archiving isolated facts and skills or making sense of experience."* According to Caine et al. (2009: 203-215) memory makes possible any type of performance. Teachers need to understand rote memorization (represents traditional approaches to teaching), and dynamic memory (engages in everyday experiences). This means that teachers should teach students through experiences that involve multiple approaches to remembering.
10. *"Learning is developmental."* According to Caine et al. (2009: 177-191) all learning is built on previous learning experiences encouraged by changes in the physiology as interaction with experiences. It is not the age or grade level, but performance that provides the best proof for further and following learning. It means that teachers need to take into consideration individual differences in maturation and development.
11. *"Complex learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat associated with helplessness."* The best mental state for higher-order functioning is relaxed alertness which requires healthy relationships. Relaxed alertness must be a primary goal for teachers. Their task is also to create a supportive, tolerant, demanding, and challenging environment (Caine et al. 2009: 36-55).
12. *"Each brain is uniquely organized."* Humans are both similar and different at the same time. Teacher needs to engage the uniqueness, individual talents, abilities, and capacities of the students in the teaching process (Caine et al. 2009: 241-254).

The above-mentioned principles were based on a view of human beings. As the authors states no principle is more important than another. The principles help teachers understand what it means to learn and teach. They are inspirational and point out on several processes involved, e.g. emotional, cognitive, behavioural, etc. It can be concluded that integration of different aspects of learning is the key to effective education.

Emotions and learning

Students' emotions are very important for learning to take place. The goal of education is to support learning or as E. Jensen (2005: 5) says to promote learning, however sometimes there are factors, which inhibit this process. One of the mentioned factors is stress. The reason is because stress is experienced as a threat. E. Jensen (1998) says that the threat impairs brain cells, namely "Threat also changes body chemistry and impacts learning." Stress chemicals affect hippocampus (the brain part which filters and helps store long-term factual memories) (Jensen 2008: 44).

Our brain is very sensitive to emotional states. Neuroscientists usually separate emotions and feelings. Emotions are seen as a result of biologically automated pathways (Jensen 2008: 84). We distinguish between six universal emotions: joy, surprise, disgust, fear, sadness, and anger. Culturally and environmentally advanced responses to factors and conditions are called feelings (e.g. worry, anticipation, frustration, cynicism, and optimism). Emotions and feelings move along separate biological pathways in the brain (Jensen 2008: 84). Emotions impact student behaviour by creating a distinct state. A state is a moment composed of specific posture, breathing rate, and chemical balance in the body (Tyng et al. 2017).

The amygdala and hippocampus are the brain parts, which encode and play an important role in emotions or emotional meaning of incoming input. Input with positive emotional connection is kept successfully. So, the best instructions during lessons and the learning process relate to interesting surprise and positive emotions like pleasure (social pleasure of work with peers or group), novelty, fun (physical movement), art, music, and various stimulation etc. (Jensen 2008: 85-86). The research results focused on neuroimaging showed that students experiencing positive emotional states are better focused, enhance their memory, increase decision making, problem solving, flexible thinking, and stimulate their creativity (Tyng et al. 2017). It has also an impact on their social skills such as patience, helpfulness, sociability, etc. it can be concluded that teachers should stimulate the level of stress in the classroom, so that it is at an appropriate level and so that it supports positive brain reactions by eliminating stressors.

Children’s feelings are affected by their language, communication, environment, as well as by the quality of relationships. Language is very important and necessary for every human being. It is also the key, which enables us to develop our potential, to obtain knowledge, to interpret our ideas, and it is a tool for learning and reaching our goals. Although language is acquired “naturally” from the brain’s point of view it is a difficult task. At least six areas need to be coordinated whenever we say a word or interpret text. It is a complex function at school and in life as well. For language development it is important to talk with the child, to spread vocabulary and sentences, to correct him/her without pointing out mistakes and to spend time on reading.

Students must feel emotionally safe as well as physically safe in the classroom. If the teacher respects this, learning can happen. A supportive, creative, and encouraging environment is the best way for students to learn. It is necessary for teachers to keep this fact in mind and respect it during their preparation and the teaching process. According to J. D. Connell (2005: 30-31), teachers and students can enhance the school environment to ensure optimal brain development and growth. Table 1 present contributing school environment factors.

Table 1: Brain-based school environmental factors (Connell 2005: 33).

Environmental factor	Reasons and descriptions
1. Safe classroom environment	Students need to feel safe to learn. This happens when teachers enforce agreed and respected rules by all students (irrespective of multicultural or learning differences). This all means that before a student’s part of the brain called neocortex will take in and learn new information, their limbic system must inform the neocortex that it is “safe” to learn.
2. Stimulating/challenging classroom environment	Changing the classroom environment during the school day (e.g. whole group, small group, one-on-one) is necessary because it will stimulate different parts of the brain.
3. Varied teaching methods	Different types of students’ learning styles require using different methods during the lesson or a day at school (this means implementing as many multiple intelligences as possible and using multisensory approaches). Implementation of different intelligences and activities stimulate different parts in the brain so new neural connections can be created.
4. Teacher’s tone of voice	Students process spoken, but unspoken messages as well. Expressing authentic stimulation and showing the teacher’s

	excitement create miracles on students’ limbic system. Limbic system gives the neocortex information that it is “time to learn”.
5. Teacher’s hand, facial, and other gestures	Gestures and nonverbal communication create more than 50 percent of communication and play a very important role in the teaching and learning process. The limbic system explains the message to conclude if the learning process is safe and can become and if the information and the content is relevant to learn or not.
6. Encouraging students to drink water	The human brain needs water (three to five glasses per day) to function properly. Headache because of dehydration decreases the learning potential. The brain needs water for production of protective cerebrospinal fluid.
7. Providing movement throughout the day	Movement and exercise enhance the blood supply and oxygen to the brain.
8. Nonfluorescent lighting	Cortisol levels in the blood can be raised by fluorescent light. Cortisol is the hormone that relates to negative emotions and released particularly when we are stressed.
9. Reduced stress	The brain is affected negatively by constant stress. It can be caused by many different situations, which are unpleasant. Teachers should create stress-free classroom as much as possible.
10. Time for reflection throughout the day	The brain needs time. Reflection time is necessary for searching, developing and creating stronger neural connections.

If we respect a student – learner, we support his/her individuality, learning and process of remembering. For supporting all the factors mentioned above we need to be respectful and plan teaching process precisely using various teaching and learning methods. Part of the success lies in the teacher himself, who, with his calm and natural tone of voice, creativity, way of communication, agreed rules, contributes to the support of the student and an environment that reduces possible stress. Physiological factors such as light, water, activity, and exercise are also required.

According to Tyng et al. (2017) and their research study entitled *The Influences of Emotion on Learning and Memory* it is necessary to integrate emotions into the process of learning.

A brain-based environment supports the expression of emotions in the following approaches such as creating brain-based learning climate, significance and cognition of feelings and emotions, providing more individually meaningful projects and individual preference, using productive rituals, ensuring that success is accessible to every learner, creating helpful learners group using peer review and feedback, self-assessment tools, assigning learning projects to learn and work with others approaches (Jensen 2009). I agree with this statement, which supports individuality, and also bring interesting ideas for its implementation.

Emotions have a specific role in learning. They help us to determine what is real, what we feel, and help us to make better decisions by engaging the values. Emotions affect and activate long-term memory on a chemical basis.

Language learning

Children living in a reasonably stimulating environment acquire their mother tongue fluently, naturally, and without targeted teaching. However, this process requires some effort and attention. Communication is present from birth, and in the first years of a child's life, language and speech develop rapidly.

Second language acquisition (SLA) is an unconscious process in which an individual learns a language that is different from the mother tongue. It is necessary to distinguish whether it is the second (official) language in the country or a foreign language. Both can be illuminated in the natural environment, adapted conditions or in the school environment (Mačajová et al. 2017: 45). We can compare the processes that take place in the mother tongue and the foreign language through various applied theories. It is not unusual for a child to acquire the mother tongue without problems, but at school he/she has "troubles" with learning a foreign language.

Behaviorists see these processes as very similar because imitation and repetition are their common features. Nativists were convinced that learning both languages require previous experience to structure the new experience. The child takes over the language he/she hears and uses it selectively based on what he knows. Cognitivists believe that there are significant differences between these processes. According to them, the learner of a foreign language is more intellectually developed. There are many prominent linguists who have devoted themselves in detail to theories of foreign language acquisition, e.g. S. Krashen with a nativist view through the input hypothesis model, McLaughlin - cognitive model of attention processing, implicit and explicit model by E. Bialystok, R. Ellis. N. Ellis and M. Long with the interaction hypothesis model. All the mentioned models emphasize different aspects of language acquisition and are based on different psychological directions, while it is important not only to know them, but also to perceive other factors that influence this process and its quality.

S. Krashen developed a theory of language acquisition and development including the hypothesis of the affective filter (Schütz 2019). He described the higher success rate of second language acquisition in learners with low stress and slower language acquisition for learners with high stress. He postulated that anxiety and low self-image created a mental block that filtered or blocked out new learning. The manifestation of the affective filter was demonstrated on fMRI scans of the amygdala ten years later. A state of anxiety occurs when students feel alienated from their academic experiences or anxious about their lack of understanding. Teachers recognize that this stressed state happens when a lesson is tedious, confusing, e.g. students do not know the meaning of the vocabulary words in a story, etc. In this situation information does not pass through the amygdala to the higher thinking and memory centers of the brain.

According to C. Hannaford (2005: 104) very important to speech is hand action, because hand area is the primary area for speaking. Talking while using hand gestures is essential to language development and to thinking. Hand gesturing appears to tap into different parts of the brain (Goldin-Meadow et al. 2001) dealing with visual and spatial subject matter, making demands on other memory stores that allows the speaker to free up cognitive resources and remember more.

Neuroscience is another important source of information in today's modern society and the field of education. Research on brain functions shows that the maturity and lateralization of the brain according to S. Grofčíková (In Mačajová et al. 2017: 53) also affect success in acquiring a foreign language. Success lies in the approximation of pronunciation to a native speaker, the fluency of speech production and the approximation of the grammar of a native speaker. It is therefore about the creation of functional competences. The relationship between laterality and the acquisition of a foreign language was pointed out, for example, by T. Scovel (1969), while it is necessary to distinguish between the onset of lateralization (around the 5th year of life) and the completion of lateralization (around puberty).

Our attention is focused on understanding the multiplicity of the brain processes affecting language acquisition. The description of the functions, which each hemisphere is responsible for, has been

developed by many authors. Language belongs to the left hemisphere in the brain. The right hemisphere process emotional components of the language. Grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation are processed by different areas and many of them must work together to process language.

The brain starts process of language in the thalamus, which diverts sensory input to appropriate areas for processing. The brain must recognize incoming data as sound and send it to the auditory cortex. The auditory cortex differentiates the sounds as environmental or language. If it is identified as language it is send to language areas for further processing in the brain including Broca's area (speech and language production) and Wernicke's area (speech and language comprehension). If it is going to be spoken or sounded out silently, the motor area should be activated as well (Zadina 2014). Learning the first, as well as second language creates a neural network. These networks can overlap in the brain.

Purpose and subject of research

The aim of my study was to implement brain-based learning principles mentioned above through brain-based teaching model in language classes and to focus on the emotional aspects in education. The implementation was focused on exercises, activities, and practical tasks into the lessons of the Slovak language and English. During the creation of brain-based teaching model we followed brain-based teaching principles that were specified in more details in the theoretical part of the paper. The goals of our teaching model were to prepare a collection of appropriate exercises for relaxation and comfort, to suggest and include the individual exercises and activities into an appropriate part of the lesson, to be properly prepared for teaching, to respect the curriculum, to respect and ensure the conditions for brain-based teaching, to prepare didactical materials and teaching aids necessary for the application and realization of the created model.

A research sample was composed of fourth-grade pupils at the first grade of primary school (in the Slovak school system, fourth-grade pupils are 10 – 11 years old children).

As main research method it was used pupil's diary. Diaries are a qualitative diagnostic method and a source of very interesting information about school processes and about individuality in the educational process. The events from a school and a class environment that are important or interesting for the pupil for some reasons according to the personal viewpoint are recorded in the natural time sequence. Thus, pupils' diaries are an instrument important for reviewing the created model respecting the brain-based teaching and learning.

Pupils' diaries were used as a way of an immediate record of the feelings and impressions from the lesson of a particular day. When we were distributing the diaries, we informed the pupils about the goal and way of writing to the diaries and their functions. Simultaneously, we reminded the pupils that the answers must be true, that they need not be afraid of anything, and that their answers will not be recorded under their names and will be used solely for our research. The introductory data about a pupil who was writing to their diary consisted of a text with their name, classroom, and school. The space under the data was dedicated to creating a self-portrait of the pupil instead of a photo that was used for supporting the pupil's creativity.

The pupils conclude that school is a safe and favourite place, but not for all of them and not for the same reason. The apprehensions and fear from the school attendance is, according to their responds, connected with written exams, tests, exercises, and other tasks that represent a threat for them because they are coming "hand in hand" with bad marks. They positively react to the brain-based teaching model, chosen methods, activities, brain workout, and exercises focused on improvement of their brain activity. A qualitative analysis of the pupils' diaries provides an irreplaceable source of information originally created by the participants.

We came into conclusion that if the teacher respects students' feelings it can be valuable for both sides – teacher as well as student. Diary can be simple way to encourage students to reflect on their

feelings during the day at school. If the teachers accept every learner and his/her individuality, they can expect a more positive outcome, and an effective teaching and learning process.

Brain-based learning strategies

We conclude that the teachers can implement several strategies to enhance brain-based learning and to develop students' potential and positive emotions in language learning. We derived them from our experience and the many materials we studied for the preparation of the study. We focused on students' individuality and develop positive attitude to the learning process:

- Provide opportunities for success;
- Encourage students;
- Support students in developing their own goals for learning;
- Support a sense of belonging;
- Establish new, positive rituals (positive greeting, etc.);
- Encourage participation rituals (applause, etc.), closing rituals (song, self-assessment, gesture, etc.), personal rituals to celebrate individual achievement;
- Use positive teacher tone;
- Apply visual elements to recall and absorb information by seeing;
- Break learning into chunks (understand and comprehend);
- Get moving to increase brain activity;
- Make/Create "success" list.
- Incorporate assignments that require discussion, reflection tasks, surveys, etc.

Given strategies are focused on engagement of the students, which is essential because it is the basis for successful learning and a lesson. They all are connected to motivation necessary to keep during the lesson as well as all throughout the school day. Activating prior knowledge, acquiring, and processing of new knowledge, as well as learning evaluation, are the further essential parts of language lesson design and organization.

Conclusion

Neuroscience and education link up to achieve the best possible practice based on the research findings. The implications for education from neuroscience research on learning language are immense. Learning more than one language improves the brain in many ways and contributes to school achievement. Research results point to invisible processes such as attention, memory, etc. and prove that language learning improves critical skills.

Our brain is changing every day by our everyday activities, experiences, and learning. Each student is unique and different from the others in many aspects as well as in the learning process. Hence, it is important to use different brain-based learning strategies in teaching and learning practice to incorporate a wide variety of learners and their needs. The reason is also to improve students' performance and to increase their chances of success.

Emotions have a specific role in language learning. They can help students if they are positive, but they can also inhibit the learning process in a negative way. The teachers should create an environment, which is supportive, positive, creative, etc. Students should feel acceptable, welcome, and somehow exceptional.

Incorporating brain-based learning and finding innovative strategies helps students to learn and helps teachers to teach effectively. Teachers need to understand the basis of brain functioning for better learning results. This is the way to innovate our education practices and to focus on our students.

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Unveiling the multifaceted impact of literature in the EFL classroom: a comparative study on cognitive and affective benefits

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Abstract

This article conducts a thorough comparative analysis of recent scholarly publications, authored by educators from diverse geographical origins, highlighting the advantages of incorporating literature into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Commencing with a concise historical survey of literature's role in EFL education, the paper systematically explores its multifaceted benefits, including language knowledge, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development. The analysis delves into the affective impact of literature on EFL students, emphasizing its role in fostering emotional resonance and a profound connection with language and culture. By scrutinizing the pedagogical activities employed in selected articles, the paper provides insights into practical implementations. The synthesized outcomes, presented in a nuanced discussion with geographic representation, offer clarity on diverse approaches and insights across regions. This comparative exploration contributes to understanding literature's transformative potential in EFL classrooms, emphasizing both pedagogical benefits and its profound affective impact on language learners within a concise framework.

Keywords: *literature, EFL classroom, language knowledge, cultural awareness, critical thinking development, affective impact*

Introduction

Immersing oneself in the realm of literature is akin to unlocking a portal to a new world, where the reader's perceptions blend harmoniously between the tapestry of personal imagination and the author's crafted narratives. The imperative lies in championing the cause of literature and advocating its inclusion in the pedagogical landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Within the domain of second language acquisition, literary texts emerge as multifaceted language models, not only expanding lexicons but also providing scaffolding for sentence structure, paragraph organization, and the nuanced application of stylistic devices.

Moreover, the affective impact of literature on EFL students is an essential facet that permeates every layer of the learning experience. Beyond the linguistic realm, literature stands as a venerated vehicle, revered for its capacity to widen individual horizons, nurture imaginative faculties, and offer profound insights into the diverse facets of the human condition. The emotional resonance of literary works plays a pivotal role in shaping the affective domain of language learners, fostering a connection that transcends mere linguistic competence.

Furthermore, the study of literature in a foreign language unfurls a unique window affording learners a panoramic view into different cultures. These merits underscore the compelling need for extensive reading, particularly of culturally authentic texts, within the EFL classroom, echoing the sentiment that *"the study of literature is a must as it exposes students to meaningful contexts rich in descriptive language and interesting characters"* (Bobkina & Domingues 2014: 248).

This article embarks on a comparative exploration by delving into recent research articles that scrutinize activities fostering the manifold benefits of integrating literature into EFL classrooms.

Authored by researchers from diverse countries, these articles collectively serve as a canvas depicting varied approaches. They span different age groups and intricately explore the cognitive and affective impact on students, adding rich dimensions to our understanding of the subject. Our primary focus is on dissecting selected activities to discern their influence on language knowledge, cultural awareness, and the development of critical thinking skills. Within the crucible of this comparative analysis, we aim to unravel the intricacies and nuances characterizing the pedagogical landscape. This contribution aims to enhance the ongoing discourse on the efficacies of incorporating literature into EFL education.

Historical background of using literature in EFL classroom

Tracing the historical trajectory of incorporating literature into EFL classrooms reveals a dynamic evolution marked by transformative shifts in methodologies and outcomes. In the early 20th century, the prevalent Grammar Translation Method employed literature merely as a conduit for illustrating grammatical rules, relegating its significance to a tool for mastering structures and vocabulary (Bobkina & Domingues 2014: 249). The inefficiency of this approach became apparent, leading to notable disappearance of literary texts from language curricula until the early 1960s.

The turning point materialized in 1963 at the King's College conference on education in Cambridge, where literature was acknowledged as an asset in second language learning. However, dissenting voices emerged, advocating for the exclusion of literature from the EFL curriculum due to perceived communicative shortcomings and structural complexities (Topping 1968: 97).

Subsequent changes were instigated by the dual imperative: introducing students to basic literary texts and equipping them with the necessary strategies for navigating the demanding reading requirements of tertiary-level courses, since Brumfit (1983: 27) claims that the need to introduce students to basic literary texts occurred as much as *"to teach the necessary strategies and study habits to enable them to undergo highly demanding reading requirements in most tertiary level courses."* This pivotal juncture established a clear demarcation between the study of literature and its utilization on EFL classrooms. In the EFL contexts, literature came to be perceived not merely as an academic pursuit but as an authentic cultural text, embodying language in practical use.

Moreover, the affective impact of literature on EFL students emerged as a crucial dimension during this evolutionary process. Presently, ongoing research endeavors aims to redefine the role of literature in EFL classrooms, systematically addressing the benefits and challenges associated with its integration. Scholars are actively engaged in delineating optimal activities, resulting in the evolution of diverse approaches.

This scholarly inquiry manifests not only in theoretical frameworks but also in tangible educational outcomes, including the development of innovative teaching materials, syllabi, and curricula. Furthermore, researchers delve into the nuanced *"affective nature of the interaction between the language learner and the literature of the target language"* (Bobkina & Domingues 2014: 249), unraveling the emotional and attitudinal dimensions that underscore the dynamic interplay between language learners and literary materials. This continuous exploration contributes to the ongoing narrative of refining the role and impact of literature in the dynamic landscape of EFL education.

The theoretical background of the benefits of using literature in EFL classroom

Exploring the theoretical foundations of integrating literature into EFL classrooms reveals diverse research approaches. This comparative study examines articles from various countries, emphasizing nuanced perspectives and methodologies. The focus is on categorizing benefits into language knowledge, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development. This systematic lens enables analysis and comparison, contributing to the discourse on global diversity in approaching literature integration's impact on EFL education.

Language knowledge

Within the realm of language knowledge acquisition, literature stands as an authentic conduit, encapsulating real language that not only enriches linguistic input but also offers diverse perspectives within the classroom setting. In the context of second language learning, literature serves as a pivotal material, not merely for linguistic proficiency but as a vehicle to enhance students' awareness of the learned language. This goes beyond the superficial acquisition of vocabulary and delves into a profound understanding of the underlying systems, norms, and intricate nuances of language, bolstering not only lexical but also grammatical knowledge.

The term "language systems," encompassing both lexical and grammatical dimensions, assumes paramount importance in the integration of literature into the EFL classroom. As students engage with literary texts, the acquired vocabulary becomes intricately entwined with emotions and feelings, fostering a natural and effortless progression in their passive vocabulary. Strategic involvement in communicative activities facilitates the seamless transition from passive to active vocabulary usage. Additionally, this emotional entanglement enhances the affective side of language learning, creating a deeper connection to the language and its cultural context.

Moreover, the contextual and meaningful nature of grammatical structures within literary texts contributes significantly to the acquisition of grammatical knowledge. Unlike rote learning, the application of grammar in a contextual and meaningful manner, as advocated by Chalikendy (2015), emphasizes the precedence of meaning over form. This approach, grounded in literary contexts, augments students' comprehension and application of grammatical structures within a broader communicative framework.

The integration of literature extends beyond the confines of linguistic proficiency, permeating into the realm of communication skills development. Meaningful and stimulating activities, as proponents like Povey (1967) argue, are integral components that heighten language skills. The interplay of information and linguistic structures intertwined with emotions and personal feelings in cultural contexts fortifies students' communicative competence. Povey (1967: 40) claims that the use of literature in EFL classroom *"will increase all the language skills because it will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, a complex and exact syntax."* Chalikendy (2015: 226) supports this statement with the idea that students *"learn discourse function of vocabulary and language structures occur in meaningful context, which helps them to develop communicative competence."* The encompassing term "communication skills" spans the domains of reading, listening, speaking, and writing, all of which find a nexus within the rich tapestry of literary texts.

McKay (2001) posits literature as an ideal reading context for EFL students, seamlessly integrating language skills and fostering close reading. Extensive reading, characterized by increased student engagement with literature, not only bolsters reading interest but also lays the foundation for enhanced critical reading skills. The inherent complexity of literary texts, within multiple layers of meaning, provides a fertile ground for the development of critical thinking abilities. Lazar's assertion (1993) that literature stimulates students' abilities to infer meaning encourages an active engagement in teasing out implicit implications and assumptions, fostering interactive discussions and genuine exchange of ideas. Lazar (1993: 19) claims that *"literature is a particularly good source for developing students' abilities to infer meaning, and demand that the reader/student is actively involved in 'teasing out' the unstated implications and assumptions of the text."*

The multifaceted nature of literary texts, spanning a spectrum of subjects, themes, and topics, amplifies their utility in developing diverse reading skills – predicting, skimming, scanning, in-depth reading, and critical reading. The introduction of varied dialects, registers, and idiolects within literary

texts not only broadens students' exposure but also provides ample opportunities to enhance listening and speaking skills. Literature's richness in multiple meanings augments students' awareness of communicative resources, paving the way for the development of different listening skills, including top-down, bottom-up, and analytic approaches. Widdowson (1975: 80) states that the use of literature in the EFL classroom promotes communication because it is rich in multiple meanings and develops "*a sharper awareness of the communicative resources of the language being learned.*"

Furthermore, literary texts become a versatile tool for designing diverse tasks aimed at honing speaking skills, such as role-play, real play, simulation, information gap activities, opinion gap activities, and class discussion. Their varied themes, encompassing all domains of life, contribute significantly to the development of writing skills. Collie and Slater (1987) highlight that literature, through its contextualized content, aids students in understanding written language characteristics, learning sentence structures, connectors, transitional words, and diverse types of academic writing.

In essence, the integration of literature into EFL classrooms transcends linguistic boundaries, fostering a holistic development encompassing vocabulary enrichment, grammatical understanding, communication skills, critical reading abilities, and proficiency in various aspects of writing. Through a nuanced engagement with literary texts, students embark on a comprehensive language learning journey that extends far beyond the traditional confines of language acquisition.

Cultural awareness

Delving into the intricate relationship between language and culture reveals a profound symbiosis where each language becomes a vessel carrying the rich tapestry of its corresponding culture. Kaplan's assertion (1986) that language serves as the bearer of a group's culture underscores the inseparability, independence, and interactive intertwinement of language and culture. This dynamic interaction manifests as a matrix or reflection, emphasizing their interconnected nature within the broader sociocultural context.

As the world undergoes unprecedented globalization, cultural boundaries blur, and diverse cultures meld into a mosaic of shared needs and wants, transcending individualistic pursuits. This era of interconnectedness accentuates the importance of cultivating communicative competence and refining teaching techniques within the realm of EFL instruction. In this context, educators are tasked with acquiring a thorough and profound grasp of both language and culture.

Within the pedagogical landscape, literature emerges as a potent tool, offering a culturally authentic lens through which students can explore and comprehend diverse cultural nuances. The utilization of literature in the EFL classroom becomes pivotal in fostering students' cultural and intercultural awareness. Meyer's (1991) notion of intercultural competence as an integral component of foreign language proficiency emphasizes the adaptability required when navigating actions, attitudes, and expectations within foreign cultural realms. He claims that "*intercultural competence, as part of a broader foreign speaker competence, identifies the ability of a person to behave adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures. Adequacy and flexibility imply an awareness of the cultural differences between one's own and the foreign culture and the ability to handle cross-cultural problems which result from these differences*" (Meyer 1991: 137).

The intrinsic connection between literature and cultural awareness becomes increasingly evident in the classroom. Literature serves as a conduit to universal concepts, transcending linguistic and cultural barriers. Globalization's call for collaboration extends beyond economic and political realms into language-related fields like EFL teaching. Literary texts, steeped in universal themes such as love, hatred, death, and nature, resonate across language and cultures, becoming bridges that facilitate a nuanced understanding of the world.

In the EFL classroom, literature serves as a dynamic vehicle for promoting cultural awareness among students. The richness of literary narratives lies in their ability to navigate the intricate tapestry of cultural nuances, providing insights into shared human experiences. By immersing students in universal concepts, literature becomes a catalyst for fostering empathy, understanding, and appreciation for the similarities and differences that define diverse cultures and languages. Moreover, the affective side of language learning comes to the forefront as students emotionally engage with characters, situations, and cultural perspectives presented in literary texts, creating a more profound connection to the content.

The incorporation of literature into EFL classrooms transcends linguistic boundaries, extending its influence into the realm of cultural awareness. As educators navigate the evolving landscape of language instruction, the culturally authentic nature of literature emerges as an indispensable tool in shaping students' holistic understanding of language and culture within the broader global context.

Critical thinking development

In the dynamic landscape of education, critical thinking emerges as an inseparable skill, especially in the current era of globalization. The ability to think critically is acknowledged as a fundamental goal of education, intimately linked with language learning. It becomes imperative to impart critical thinking skills to students, equipping them to navigate societal complexities, make informed judgments, and undertake decision in both personal and professional realms.

Within the framework of EFL classrooms and the incorporation of literature, scholars emphasize the pivotal role of literary texts as catalyst for stimulating critical thinking among students expressing themselves in a non-native language. Stefanova, Bobkina and Pérez (2017: 253) claim that a literary text is *"an effective stimulus for students to think critically and express their feelings and ideas in a non-native language."* Lazar's (1993: 3) assertion that literature, as an academic subject, *"can come closest to encompassing the full range of mental traits currently considered to comprise critical thinking."* Therefore, literature comes closest to encapsulating the array of mental traits integral to critical thinking, underscores the transformative potential.

Literary texts wield the power to engage students in questioning and exploring the multifaceted world around them, unlocking *"horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore"* (Langer 1997: 607). The transformative impact of literary texts extends to students' attitudes, fostering reflection on their lives, learning, and language. A meticulous reading of literary works facilitates the development of skills essential for critical thinking, enabling students to unravel hidden meanings, reconstruct images from details, distinguish facts from opinions, scrutinize phenomena from diverse perspectives, and apply acquired knowledge to various facets of their daily lives.

The process of close reading intrinsic to literary exploration integrates numerous skills integral to the critical thinking process, encompassing language use, reasoning, problem-solving, intercultural awareness, critical awareness, self-reflection, and the interpretation of the world. This holistic engagement with literary texts not only enhances language proficiency but also nurtures the higher-order cognitive abilities that are indispensable in fostering critical thinking.

Amidst the discourse on critical thinking, it is paramount to underscore the pivotal role of educators in cultivating these higher-order thinking skills. In contemporary education, critical thinking stands as a cornerstone, particularly in advanced levels of instruction. The teacher assumes a significant role in guiding students to question assumptions, unravel the subtleties of literary texts, and develop the intellectual acumen required to navigate the intricate layers of meaning embedded within the written word.

The interplay between cultural awareness and critical thinking development emerges as a symbiotic relationship within the realm of literature in EFL classrooms. As educators harness the transformative

potential of literary texts, they not only enhance language proficiency but also mold students into critical thinkers poised to navigate the complexities of the globalized world. The affective side of language learning becomes apparent as students emotionally engage with the complexities presented in literary texts, fostering a deeper connection to the content and enhancing their critical thinking skills.

Methodology

Our study is anchored in exploring the positive impact of integrating literature into EFL classrooms, with a specific focus on language knowledge, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development. To ensure a contemporary perspective, we meticulously selected seven recent articles published within the last 10 years. Geographical diversity was a paramount consideration, ensuring a global perspective on integration of literature in EFL education.

- **Data collection:** Our comprehensive data collection strategy involves a thorough review of selected articles, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Specifically, we employ a percentage scale to assess the alignment of activities outlined in each article with the identified benefits – language knowledge, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development. Additionally, we consider factors such as the age groups of students involved in the research to provide a nuanced understanding of the impacts.

This mixed-methods approach allows for a systematic evaluation of the extent to which the chosen studies address the multifaceted impacts of integrating literature into EFL classrooms. Findings derived from this analysis, including age-related considerations and other relevant factors, are visually presented in Figure 1 for ease of comprehension.

The graphical representation aims to offer a clear overview of the distribution of activities across the identified benefits while considering variations related to student age and other pertinent factors. This presentation provides insights into the emphasis placed on language knowledge, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development in each of the selected articles within the context of diverse student demographic.

- **Discussion:** In the discussion section, our analysis goes beyond numerical assessments. We delve into a qualitative exploration of the results, aiming to illuminate variations, identify commonalities, and highlight trends in methodologies employed across diverse geographical and cultural contexts. Specifically, we address the affective impact of literature on EFL students, considering emotional engagement, attitudes, and the nuanced interaction between language learners and literary materials.

By contextualizing and interpreting our findings, we contribute to a nuanced understanding of effective language education strategies. Our study goes beyond a mere comparison of activities and benefits, exploring the practical approaches used globally in integrating literature into EFL classrooms. The inclusion of the affective impact aspect enriches the discussion, offering insights into the emotional and attitudinal dimensions that underscore the dynamic interplay between language learners and literary materials. Ultimately, our research aims to inform and guide educators in adopting effective strategies that not only enhance language proficiency but also foster a holistic development of EFL students.

The practical implication of the benefits of using literature in EFL classroom

The incorporation of literature into EFL classrooms has been a subject of extensive research and exploration, with scholars investigating its multifaceted benefits. The presented studies offer a comprehensive overview of various approaches and models applied by educators to leverage literature as a pedagogical tool. As we delve into the analysis of the studies, it becomes evident that literature

serves as a dynamic and versatile resource, transcending traditional language instruction to encompass educational objectives.

1. **Chalikendy's pedagogical tapestry:**

Chalikendy, M. A. (2015). Literature: A Natural Source for Teaching English in ESL/EFL Classrooms. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 4(6): 224-234.

Chalikendy's (2015) study unfolds a rich tapestry of activities and tasks designed for B1 – C2 level students at a university in Oman. Grounded in Robert Frost's poem *Mending Wall*, which explores the ritualistic rebuilding of a stonewall between neighbors each spring, the activities span various language skills and systems.

The pedagogical journey begins with a warming-up activity fostering pair discussions, setting the stage for engagement. Subsequent reading activities (2-4) aim at developing predicting and skimming, scanning, and jigsaw reading skills. Vocabulary knowledge takes center stage in activities (5-7), challenging students to decipher meanings, guess word meanings, and complete diagrams associated with the word "farm".

Moving forward, group work (8) prompts students to transmute part of the poem into prose, enhancing collaborative learning. The subsequent speaking activity (9), a role-play in pairs, enriches oral proficiency. Grammatical knowledge takes precedence in activities (10-13), catering to a holistic language learning experience.

Transitioning to writing (14), students engage in individual work, composing a comparison essay about the characters, enhancing their writing skills. Speaking activities (15-17) follow, incorporating real play, discussion, and simulation to further stimulate critical thinking, with a notable focus on activity 16 – a discussion on the proverb 'Good fences make good neighbors.'

Chalikendy's research findings, as delineated in the conclusion, underscore the allure of literature in the EFL classroom. He contends that literature, with its imaginative power and emotional resonance, captivates students, making it invaluable tool for language teaching. Emphasizing that literature is a means, not an end, Chalikendy (2015: 233) positions it as a dynamic resource for English language teaching, fostering native-like competence and nurturing creative, critical, and analytical language learners. Literature, in his view, serves as a gateway to cultural familiarity, fostering personal involvement and enriching the EFL learning experience.

2. **Critical thinking in focus:**

Stefanova, S., Bobkina, J. (2016). Literature and Critical Literacy Pedagogy in the EFL Classroom: Towards a Model of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 6(4): 677-696.

Stefanova, S., Bobkina, J., Pérez, F. J. S.-V. (2017). The Effectiveness of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills through Literature in EFL Context: A Case Study in Spain. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 6(6): 252-266.

Stefanova, Bobkina, and Pérez (2017) undertook a comprehensive case study to delve into the perceptions of students and their teacher regarding the efficacy of a critical thinking skills teaching model in enhancing foreign language proficiency. The study, conducted at a bilingual state school in Spain with 21 Administration and Finance Degree students, aimed to explore the multifaceted dimensions of literature in the EFL classroom. Their choice of Caryl Phillips' novel, *The Lost Child*, as the basis for activities was meticulously justified based on its structural suitability and thematic relevance.

The novel's division into short fragments facilitated a structured approach to activities, allowing students to engage deeply with the narrative. The thematic exploration, anchored in the experiences of the older brother, Ben, witnessing his mother's struggle with depression and his younger brother's humiliation, added a layer of real-life connection to the literary text. This approach sought to transcend

the conventional boundaries of language learning, infusing critical thinking skills development into the curriculum.

The four-stage procedure, unfolding over four weeks, provided a systematic framework for students' engagement. In the initial week, the introduction of critical thinking skills set the stage for their importance, laying the groundwork for subsequent activities. Transitioning to the Situated Practice stage in the second week, students delved into the chapter *Childhood*, undertaking activities that not only enhanced language knowledge but also honed critical thinking skills. The third week, dedicated to Overt Instruction, showcased a nuanced approach as students not only answered comprehension questions but also analyzed language details and their impact on meaning construction. This focus on language intricacies aimed at fostering a holistic understanding of the text. Moving into the third week, the Critical Framing stage zeroed in on the core of critical thinking. Students critically analyzed the language used by the author, drawing connections with social contexts that touched on themes of exclusion, discrimination, and bullying. This stage aimed to instill a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural dimensions embedded in the narrative, enhancing both language and critical thinking competencies. The concluding week, divided into two sessions, shifted to Transformed Practice. Here, students applied their acquired knowledge by crafting two separate texts, demonstrating a practical application of the critical thinking skills cultivated throughout the study.

The culmination of the study involved administering questionnaires – the Critical Thinking Assessment Criteria Grid for students and the Teacher Assessment Checklist for teacher. These instruments not only gauged the students' critical thinking processes but also provided valuable insights into the teacher's assessment of each student. The systematic documentation of results in tables added a quantitative layer to the qualitative exploration.

In the conclusion, the authors underscored the need for further research in exploring this approach to literature in EFL classrooms. While acknowledging the intentional focus on critical thinking development, they emphasized the meticulous preparation and positive outcomes of the activities. The seamless integration of critical thinking into literature not only enriched language learning but also underscored the multifaceted benefits that literature can offer in terms of language knowledge, cultural awareness, and most importantly, critical thinking development.

Transitioning to their 2016 study, the same authors intentionally chose a different literary form – a poem by Rudyard Kipling titled *If*. The four-stage procedure mirrored the thematic progression of the case study, encompassing pre-reading and post-reading activities, understanding the poem's general message and language analysis, connecting language with social context, and culminating in diverse writing activities. This intentional choice allowed for a nuanced comparison, offering insights into the varied pedagogical approaches and outcomes across different literary forms. In both studies, the emphasis on critical thinking persisted, providing a robust foundation for students' interpretive skills, reflective learning styles, and the nuanced exploration of language, culture, and critical thinking development in an EFL context. The deliberate juxtaposition of these two studies adds depth to the exploration of literature's impact on language education, emphasizing the versatility of literary forms in fostering critical thinking skills in students.

3. Uddin's linguistic and cultural model

Uddin, M. (2019). Acquiring English in EFL Classroom: Role of Literature. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 9(1): 17-23.

In his insightful exploration, Uddin (2019) puts forth a compelling example of integrating literature into the EFL classroom, shedding light on the role of literary pieces in language acquisition. The focal point of his study is a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson titled *The Cow*, which served as the teaching material for 5th and 6th graders at an elementary school in Bangladesh. Uddin's deliberate choice of the

poem for young learners introduces an intriguing dimension to the intersection of literature and language acquisition.

The pedagogical approach employed by Uddin encompasses two distinct sets of activities, each tailored to specific educational objectives. The initial set is meticulously designed to enhance language knowledge, concentrating on the development of vocabulary. Uddin delineates three activities crafted to foster a nuanced understanding of lexical intricacies. This deliberate focus on vocabulary aligns with the broader discourse on the significance of language enrichment in the early stages of language learning.

The subsequent set of activities takes a fascinating turn, delving into the realm of cultural awareness. Uddin presents a list of questions strategically crafted to prompt students' reflections on cultural aspects embedded in the literary piece. This deliberate shift from language-specific exercises to culturally oriented inquiries adds a layer of depth to the pedagogical framework. By encouraging students to engage with cultural nuances, Uddin advocates for a holistic approach to language learning – one that transcends mere linguistic competence to encompass a richer understanding of the cultural contexts within which the language operates.

Uddin further bolsters his argument by introducing a linguistic and cultural model, underlining the dynamic interplay between literature and language acquisition. His intention is not only to facilitate language learning but also to provide students with a profound understanding of the socio-cultural semantic codes inherent in the language. By immersing students in literary pieces written in the target language, Uddin contends that learners can experience a sense of belonging among native speakers. This immersive exposure allows students to observe not only what native speakers say but also how they express themselves, fostering a more authentic and representative grasp of language use.

The inherent authenticity of literature is a cornerstone of Uddin's argument. He posits that literature serves as a repository of genuine language samples, enabling students to glean speech acts and communication nuances directly from these authentic sources. This authenticity, Uddin suggests, plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between language learners and native speakers, providing students with a valuable tool for acquiring language in a manner closely aligned with native language users.

Uddin's exploration unveils a nuanced and multifaceted role for literature in the EFL classroom. By strategically employing a poem in a structured set of activities, he not only addresses language knowledge development but also advocates for the integral role of cultural awareness in language acquisition. The linguistic and cultural model he proposes underscores the potential of literature to serve as a gateway to authentic language use, fostering a deeper connection between language learners and the socio-cultural contexts of the target language. Uddin's work adds a valuable perspective to the ongoing discourse on the pedagogical benefits of integrating literature into language education, emphasizing its potential to shape well-rounded and culturally attuned language learners.

4. **Armstrong's visual aid and short stories**

Armstrong, M. (2015). Using Literature in an EFL Context to Teach Language and Culture. *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*, 4(2): 7-24.

In his comprehensive exploration, Armstrong (2015) introduces a novel model for incorporating literature into the EFL classroom, drawing from his experiences at a university in Japan. His innovative approach revolves around the creation of a visual aid, meticulously designed to elucidate the course's structure and expectations for students. This model, as described by Armstrong, serves as an invaluable tool in navigating the intricate landscape of language and culture education within the EFL context.

Central to Armstrong's model is a deliberate emphasis on literary elements, encompassing critical facets such as setting, characterization, plot, theme, and narrator's point of view. Grounded in the use of short stories, the model is underpinned by a set of carefully curated criteria. These criteria, ranging from the authenticity of material to its creative use of language, from a realistic portrayal of cultural and

historical situations to a limited number of characters, converge to create a framework that aims to foster critical thinking, enhance communicative skills, and heighten language awareness.

The selection of short stories is a pivotal aspect of Armstrong's model, guided by a nuanced understanding of the genre's potential in an EFL setting. Each chosen narrative adheres to a set of criteria ensuring its suitability for pedagogical purposes. This strategic selection not only serves to make the material more accessible for students but also provides a solid foundation for delving into the intricacies of literary analysis. The criteria, spanning diverse aspects, collectively contribute to an immersive learning experience, ensuring that students engage with texts that not only enrich their language skills but also broaden their cultural horizons.

A noteworthy feature of Armstrong's model is the incorporation of group presentations as a pedagogical tool. These presentations, a culmination of students' engagement with the selected short stories, serve as a tangible demonstration of their understanding of critical elements within the narratives. The group discussions, orchestrated through defined roles – moderator, summarizer, dictionary, collector, and connector – add a layer of collaborative learning, fostering an environment where students actively contribute to the exploration of literary themes.

The duration of the course, spanning 14 weeks, underscores the depth and deliberation embedded in Armstrong's approach. This extended timeframe allows for a sustained and immersive engagement with literary texts, affording students the opportunity for thorough comprehension and critical analysis.

Armstrong's research yields a compelling conclusion: the integration of literature into the EFL classroom is firmly grounded in pedagogical principles. It emerges as a potent tool for the development of language knowledge and the cultivation of critical thinking skills. However, Armstrong acknowledges the potential challenges posed by unmodified language texts, recognizing that they may be demanding for both students and teachers lacking familiarity with this genre or lacking the necessary background knowledge.

A key takeaway from Armstrong's research is the demonstrated ability of short stories to transcend mere language instruction. They emerge as dynamic instruments that facilitate language knowledge, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development simultaneously. This trifecta of educational outcomes emerges as a compelling argument for the pervasive inclusion of literature in EFL classrooms.

Moreover, Armstrong's findings challenge preconceived notions about students' interests, asserting that even those with limited interest in reading for pleasure can acquire basic literacy skills and actively engage in discussions. His research paints a picture of literature as more than a collection of characters and plots; it is a realm where profound meanings lie in wait, inviting exploration and uncovering. This realization, as Armstrong aptly puts it, emphasizes that *"stories are more than just characters and a plot, but rather a world where there is deep-seated meaning waiting to be uncovered"* (Armstrong, 2015, p.24). In essence, literature becomes a conduit for unlocking the rich tapestry of language, culture, and critical thought within the EFL classroom.

5. Students' perspectives

Blaemert, J., Paran, A., Jansen, E., Van De Grift, W. (2017). Students' Perspectives on the Benefits of EFL Literature Education. *The Language Learning Journal*, 4(3): 371-384.

In their comprehensive exploration, Blaemert, Paran, Jansen, and van de Grift (2017) delved into the valuable realm of students' perspectives on the advantages derived from literature education within the EFL classroom. Understanding the viewpoints of students is pivotal in assessing the true impact of literature on their language learning journey. This study, conducted in the Netherlands, sought to glean insights directly from the students, aiming to inform and enhance EFL literature teaching practices.

The primary objective of this research was to unravel the perceived benefits of EFL literature education according to Dutch secondary school students, with an intriguing additional layer – investigating potential variations in perspectives across different schools. The researchers posed a

single, fundamental question to students in the selected schools: “What do you think are the benefits of EFL literature lessons?” A nuanced analysis of the responses revealed a multifaceted tapestry of perceived benefits. At the forefront of student perceptions was language knowledge, cited by a substantial 74% of respondents. Following closely were cultural awareness, acknowledged by 56% of students, and critical thinking development, recognized by 33%. The divergence in their recognition of these benefits unveiled the varied lenses through which students approached the enriching landscape of EFL literature education.

Breaking down the categories further, language knowledge emerged as a comprehensive facet encompassing a spectrum of linguistic dimensions. This included a general language approach, English grammar and syntax, English vocabulary and idioms, as well as honing English language skills in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Additionally, an intriguing dimension surfaced – the historical development of the English language – highlighting the interconnectedness of language and its evolution over time.

Cultural awareness, as perceived by the students, manifested through a context approach. This encompassed a broad array of elements, including a general context approach, biographical information, historical, cultural, and social context, as well as exploration of English literary periods and history. The incorporation of a general reader approach underscored the holistic nature of cultural awareness, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive understanding of context.

The critical thinking development dimension, categorized under a reader approach, delved into the personal realm of students’ experiences. It encompassed personal reading experiences, the cultivation of literary tastes, the development of critical thinking skills, and, significantly, personal development – a testament to the transformative potential of literature on an individual level.

While the researchers included an additional category, text approach, focused on the knowledge of the literary piece (themes, plots, characters, etc.), this dimension was deemed irrelevant for the comparative analysis at hand.

In essence, Blaemert et al.’s research not only sheds light on the multifaceted benefits perceived by students but also unveils the diverse lenses through which they view the impact of literature on their language learning journey. By acknowledging the intricate interplay of language, culture, and critical thinking in their responses, students paint a vivid picture of the profound impact of EFL literature education on their cognitive and personal development.

6. Insight into teacher approaches

Parojenog, R. C. (2020). Approaches to Teaching Literature Employed by Senior High School Teachers. *IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 2(2): 52-58.

Finally, in an insightful exploration, Parojenog (2020) conducted a compelling study, delving into the perspectives of senior high school EFL teachers in the Philippines regarding their approaches to teaching literature. This research aimed to unravel the rich tapestry of techniques employed by educators, shedding light on different approaches, determining frequently utilized techniques reflective of these approaches, identifying the driving factors behind teacher’s choices, assessing the level of usage of these approaches, and, notably, designing a literature module aligned with a specific approach.

The study conducted against the backdrop of the vibrant educational landscape in the Philippines, sought to provide a nuanced understanding of the pedagogical strategies employed by EFL teachers. The overarching objective was not only to recognize the diverse techniques in play but also to glean insights into the intricacies of the decision-making process and factors influencing the selection of specific approaches.

Unveiling the results in six distinct categories, the study illuminated the prevalent utilization of language knowledge as the foremost technique, underscoring the paramount importance placed by EFL teachers on fostering linguistic proficiency. Following closely were cultural awareness and critical

thinking development, suggesting a multifaceted approach to literature education that extends beyond language acquisition.

The researcher’s astute analysis of these findings led to a compelling conclusion – the predominant focus of EFL teachers revolves around enhancing students’ language knowledge. However, the noteworthy inclusion of cultural awareness and critical thinking development in the frequently used techniques implies a broader pedagogical landscape where educators strive to instill a holistic understanding of literature.

Beyond a mere exploration of current practices, Parojenog’s study positioned itself as a catalyst for pedagogical innovation. By recognizing the potential of various approaches to stimulate critical thinking about literary texts, the study hinted at the untapped possibilities within the EFL classroom. In response to these findings, the researcher took a proactive step by designing a comprehensive literary module. This module, crafted with a keen understanding of the identified approaches, serves as a valuable resource for teachers, offering a structured framework to align their practices with the nuanced goals of language knowledge enrichment, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development.

Parojenog’s research, therefore, not only contributes to the ongoing dialogue on effective literature education but also provides tangible tools for educators to navigate the dynamic landscape of EFL teaching. By bridging the gap between theoretical insights and practical application, the study emerges as a beacon guiding teachers toward a more holistic and impactful approach to teaching literature in senior high school classrooms.

Collectively, these studies not only accentuate the pedagogical benefits of integrating literature into EFL classrooms but also shed light on its affective impact. Literature emerges as a catalyst for fostering language proficiency, cultural awareness, critical thinking, and, importantly, a deeper connection between learners and the rich socio-cultural contexts of the target language.

Results and discussion

The detailed examination of selected studies has cast a revealing spotlight on the multifaceted benefits of incorporating literature into EFL classroom, shedding light on the nuanced approaches undertaken by researchers and the activities employed to unlock these advantages. In this comparative study, the focal points were distinctly delineated: language knowledge, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development. A meticulous analysis of reach activity, set against the backdrop of these primary benefits, employed a percentage scale to qualify their impact. The cumulative percentages for activities within the purview of each researcher’s work were amalgamated to present a comprehensive overview, as encapsulated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The benefits of using literature in EFL classroom according to the researchers from different countries.

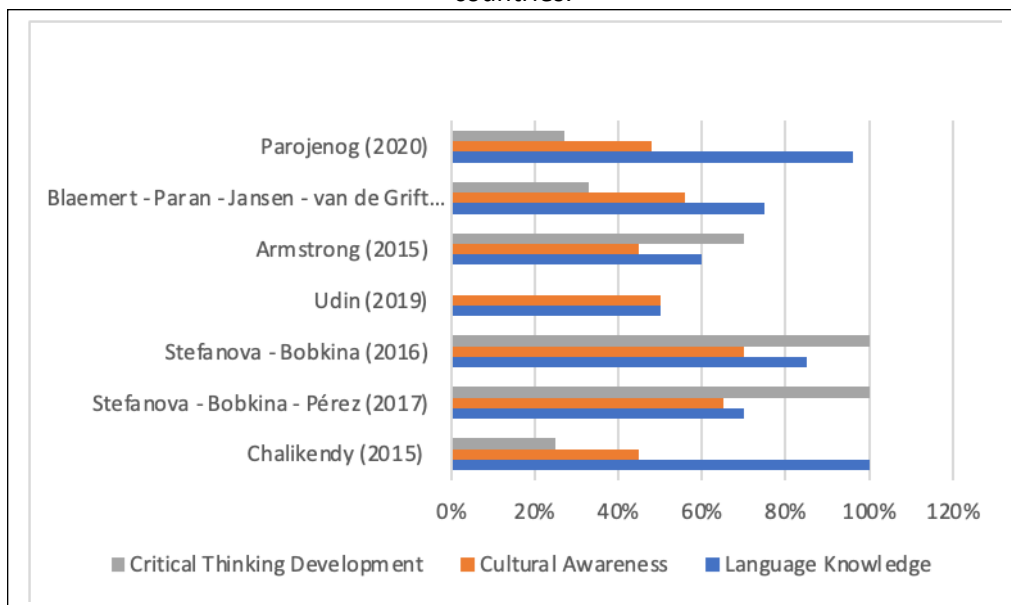


Figure 1 unveils the intricate tapestry of these studies, with particular emphasis on the comprehensive examinations conducted by Stefanova and Bobkina (2016) and Stefanova, Bobkina and Pérez (2017). Notably, their work developed deeply into critical thinking development, a facet that, while receiving less attention from other researchers, emerged as a central theme. Armstrong (2015) mirrored this emphasis on critical thinking in his activities, thereby contributing a unique perspective to the landscape of literature in the EFL classroom. Conversely, Uddin (2019) directed his activities toward elementary school students, tailoring his approach to their age and proficiency level, resulting in a discernible absence of critical thinking development focus.

The paucity of emphasis on critical thinking development across these studies underscores a compelling argument for increased research in this domain. In a society besieged by misinformation, the ability to discern truth from falsehood assumes unprecedented importance. As such, future inquiries into the EFL classroom should heed this call and lend greater attention to the cultivation of critical thinking skills.

Language knowledge, unsurprisingly, claimed a significant share of the spotlight, particularly in studies where literature was seamlessly woven into the EFL curriculum. Chalikendy (2015) spearheaded this emphasis, employing activities that, in their simplicity, epitomized effective strategies for developing language proficiency through literary engagement. This preoccupation with language knowledge underscores the researchers' commitment to showcasing how activities post-literary engagement can significantly bolster language acquisition.

Cultural awareness emerged as a pivotal thread woven into the fabric of each researcher's pursuits, with an average focus of 60%. Intriguingly, the means to foster cultural awareness often manifested through discussions – whether in pairs, groups, or the entire class. These discussions not only contributed to cultural awareness but invariably became conduits for the concurrent development of language knowledge.

An intriguing revelation surfaced during this exploration: activities centered on cultural awareness or critical thinking development inevitably intertwined with language knowledge. This symbiosis suggests that EFL educators venturing into the realm of literature could strategically leverage models that concurrently nurture cultural awareness or critical thinking, thereby amplifying the efficacy of their pedagogical endeavors.

The affective impact of literature on EFL students adds a distinctive layer to this discussion. Across the studies, literature consistently emerges not just as an academic tool but as a catalyst for emotional resonance and personal connection. Chalikendy (2015) contends that literature, with its imaginative power and emotional resonance, captivates students, making it an invaluable tool for language teaching. Uddin (2019) emphasizes the authenticity of literature as a cornerstone of his argument, positing that literature serves as a repository of genuine language samples, enabling students to glean speech acts and communication nuances directly from these authentic sources. The affective impact becomes a gateway to cultural familiarity, fostering personal involvement and enriching the EFL learning experience.

The academic landscape in this domain extends beyond the purview of researchers, encompassing the perceptions and priorities of both teachers and students. A more comprehensive understanding of the viewpoints of these pivotal actors could enrich the discourse, providing valuable insights into what aspects they deem significant and which benefits resonate most profoundly with their educational experiences. The congruence of these research findings with previous comparative analyses underscores the robustness and consistency of these emerging trends, creating a compelling narrative for the continued exploration of literature's role in EFL classrooms.

Conclusion

In the realm of EFL education, the triumph in language acquisition hinges on a confluence of factors, with student engagement, activity endurance, and sustained focus and enjoyment serving as pivotal determinants. For educators navigating this intricate landscape, the challenge lies in orchestrating an environment that cultivates student interest and enthusiasm. A potent ally in surmounting this challenge is the strategic integration of literature with tailored activities. The manifold benefits espoused by literature in EFL classrooms have been a focal point in contemporary research, with numerous studies extolling its virtues.

This paper delves into seven recently penned articles, embarking on a comparative journey that scrutinizes the varied activities employed by authors. The overarching aim is to elucidate how literature, when woven into the fabric of EFL classrooms, emerges as a catalyst for enhancing students' language knowledge, cultural awareness, and critical thinking development. The theoretical underpinning begins with a comprehensive exploration of these benefits, supported by poignant quotations from the chosen researchers, thereby encapsulating the theoretical panorama.

The subsequent traverse through the selected articles unveils a meticulous dissection of the activities curated by researchers to probe the chosen benefits. Each activity undergoes scrutiny, meticulously placed on a percentage scale to unravel the nuanced tapestry of benefits interwoven into the selected articles. As the intricate layers unfold, it becomes evident that the spotlight is primarily trained on language knowledge, with cultural awareness and critical thinking development following closely in its wake. Notably, articles with a primary focus on critical thinking emerge as the most detailed and elaborately articulated, offering a profound exploration into this essential facet of the EFL landscape.

In summation, the findings gleaned from this comparative odyssey underscore the predilection of researchers toward the augmentation of language knowledge, intertwined with commendable attention to cultural awareness and critical thinking. Despite this, a salient observation surfaces: articles primarily centered on critical thinking development exhibit unparalleled depth and intricacy.

The affective impact of literature on EFL students adds a distinctive layer to this discussion. Across the studies, literature consistently emerges not just as an academic tool but as a catalyst for emotional resonance and personal connection. Chalikendy (2015) contends that literature, with its imaginative power and emotional resonance, captivates students, making it an invaluable tool for language teaching. Uddin (2019) emphasizes the authenticity of literature as a cornerstone of his argument, positing that literature serves as a repository of genuine language samples, enabling students to glean speech acts and communication nuances directly from these authentic sources. The affective impact becomes a gateway to cultural familiarity, fostering personal involvement and enriching the EFL learning experience.

As the curtain descends on this discourse, a resounding declaration emerges – literature's pivotal role in the EFL classroom is indisputable, fostering language proficiency, cultural acumen, and critical thinking prowess. However, despite the compelling evidence presented by these research endeavors, the broader EFL teaching community is yet to fully appreciate the pedagogical potential of literature. These studies, and their ilk, stand as beacons illuminating the manifold benefits that literature unfurls for students, inviting EFL educators to recalibrate their teaching practices in acknowledgement of this rich instructional tapestry.

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Intra-cultural competence assessment: unveiling its influence on efl students' affect and on their intercultural competence development

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Abstract

Previous research on foreign language learners' intercultural competence has predominantly centered on their understanding and awareness of the target culture. While most research attribute learners' lack of intercultural competence to their inability to understand the target culture, there has been limited exploration into how students' awareness of their own culture influences their affect and the development of their intercultural competence. Given the significance of intracultural communication ability in intercultural encounters, this study aims to assess the intracultural competence of EFL students and its impact on their affective experiences and intercultural competence development. To achieve this goal, this study focuses on Algerian undergraduate EFL students. A cohort of 40 EFL students from Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret participated in the study. As a research method, the research employed quantitative and qualitative method. The quantitative method draws on Fantini's (2007) Intercultural Communicative Competence Inventory (ICCI) model, which was modified and constructed into a rating scale to assess the level of the participants' intracultural competence. The qualitative method aims to know students' perception on the role of intra-cultural competence in influencing their affective experiences in intercultural encounters. Based on the quantitative assessments, it was found that the participants exhibited a moderate level of intracultural competence. The qualitative results, on the other hand, indicated that the participants recognized of the pivotal role that intracultural competence would play in shaping their affective experiences when engaging with individuals from different international cultural backgrounds. This research contributes to our understanding of the importance of intracultural awareness for successful intercultural interactions and provides insights for educators and institutions aiming to enhance intercultural competence among students. The findings highlight the significance of fostering intracultural competence to create more positive and enriching intercultural experiences.

Keywords: *assessment, EFL students, intra-cultural competence, affect, intercultural competence development*

Introduction

Foreign language educators consider intercultural communicative competence (ICC) to be a key competence in contemporary foreign language education. Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate and interact effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures. Intercultural competence; however, is not only about knowing about other foreign cultures, but it is also about understanding one's own culture and how it shapes one's perceptions and behaviors (Byram 1997, Liddicoat 2004, Sercu 2004, Deardorff 2006, Fantini 2009, among others). Recognizing the utility of intercultural learning in today's globalized world, it is now a feature of many international educational contexts.

Assessing students' ICC is essential to determine whether ICC is implemented as an educational goal in foreign language teaching. Previous studies have focused on how students' understanding of the target culture affects their ICC, assuming that when learners know about the target culture, they can communicate appropriately in intercultural encounters. However, there has been less research on how students' understanding of their own culture affects the development of their ICC. To state differently,

given the necessity of foreign languages learners' local culture in communicating successfully in intercultural encounters, "if students fail to compare and relate to their own culture, is it because they do not know the target culture or that their inadequate awareness of their own culture is the reason their inappropriate response to the assessment task?"

The Algerian context provides an example of the importance of raising intracultural awareness. Suffice it to say that many Algerians view foreigners as racists, while they themselves are intolerant of their cultural diversity because they are unaware of their own regional differences and attitudes. This raises the question of whether it is possible to encourage people who are not tolerant of people within their national borders to be tolerant of people beyond.

Given this background, this study aims to demonstrate that assessing learners' ability to interact in intracultural encounters can provide valuable information about the impact of their intracultural competence on their affective experiences and the development of their ICC. The study focuses on Algerian undergraduate EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret.

The research questions, which were created in accordance with the research objectives, are as follows:

1. To what extent do Algerian EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret possess intracultural competence?
2. How do EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University perceive and acknowledge the role of intracultural competence in shaping their affective and psychological responses when interacting with people from international cultural backgrounds?

The following hypotheses are formulated:

1. Algerian EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret will exhibit moderate levels of intracultural competence.
2. EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University perceive and acknowledge that a higher level of intracultural competence positively correlates with more positive affective and psychological responses when interacting with individuals from international cultural backgrounds.

The significance of this study highlights the importance of recognizing the pivotal role that intracultural communication plays in developing foreign language learners' intercultural competence. By assessing our learners' understanding of their own culture, we can raise their awareness to skills and knowledge they need to interact with people from other cultures in a positive and productive way. Furthermore, it highlights the potential for educators and curriculum developers to integrate intracultural elements into EFL programs to promote a more positive and engaging intercultural learning environment.

The structure of this research is outlined as follows: it provides a brief overview of the differences between intracultural communication and intercultural communication. It then describes the elements of intercultural learning that constitute ICC, followed by the arguments for the gap related to teaching and assessing ICC. Following, it presents the rationale and benefits of students' intracultural communication, followed by a review of previous research on learners' self-awareness and intracultural communication. Finally, it describes the methodology employed in the study and the findings that emerged from it.

Literature review

Understanding the process of the intracultural interaction is the main objective of this paper. Our starting point was to assume that intercultural interaction is not fundamentally different from intracultural interaction and that the underlying processes are ultimately the same.

Intercultural communication and intracultural communication

Cultural differences may be experienced at two different levels, *national* and *international*. At national level, researchers use intracultural communication to refer to the type of communication that takes place between people who live in the same society, but have different values, and are in regular contact with each other (Samovar and Porter 2001), as well as to “interactions between members of a relatively definable L1 speech community” (Kecskes 2015: 175). For example, because Algeria has many regional differences, the Algerian population should be aware of these differences in order to effectively communicate and build relationships with people in their own culture. Furthermore, as Kecskes (2015) notes, within intracultural communication, there is hardly any language proficiency issue affecting the process of intracultural communication. Consequently, one would assume that members of Algeria society hardly misunderstand each other. Based on the provided ideas, intracultural competence can be defined as the complex abilities that individuals need to interact effectively within their national boundary, drawing on their awareness and knowledge of their national cultural differences. It involves the capacity to understand and navigate the diverse regional and local cultures within one's own society, to communicate effectively with individuals who have different values and beliefs, and to avoid misunderstandings in intracultural encounters. Developing intracultural competence is important for individuals to better understand their own identity and the cultural context in which they live. By developing intracultural competence, individuals can have a deeper understanding and appreciation for the diversity within their own community, communicate effectively within their own society, engage in mutually respectful interactions with members of their national speech community, and build a strong and healthy relationship. To develop intracultural competence, individuals can engage in activities such as learning about their cultural heritage, participating in cultural events and traditions, and having conversations with others about their cultural background and experiences.

At the international level, as Samovar and Porter (2001) stated, intercultural communication occurs between people of different nations who are not in regular contact with each other (i.e. between the Algerian and the British people). However, unlike intracultural communication, in intercultural communication, the mastery of foreign languages is the only possible way to communicate and cooperate with people from different international linguistic and ethnic societies. According to Fantini (2009), developing language proficiency in another language, even at a minimal level, allows us to expand our understanding of the world, while the lack of language proficiency, even at a minimal level, prevents us from experiencing a valuable aspect of intercultural contact as well as all the insights it entails. Similarly, Kecskes (2015) notes that second language proficiency promotes the development of skills that enable interlocutors to explore their partners' expectations in any given interaction and to apply this knowledge to avoid misunderstandings. In this sense, intercultural competence can refer to complex abilities that individuals need to interact effectively and appropriately with people across their national borders, using their second language competence.

In short, while self-awareness and knowledge are essential for one's intracultural competence, proficiency in a second language is essential to one's intercultural competence, and together, understanding the 'self' in relation to 'others' are essential for establishing intercultural relationships and communicating successfully.

Intercultural learning elements

As previously stated, communication during international or national encounters is incredibly diverse. In both situations, encountering individuals who are different from ourselves can lead us to interpret them as 'different' or 'strange'. To address this, the intercultural approach was developed to focus foreign language teaching on the issue of miscommunication that can arise from viewing others as 'strange'.

At this point, to avoid intercultural miscommunication and develop language skills, incorporating culture into foreign language instruction is the best approach (Liddicoat 2004). This is because, as Bennet, Bennet & Allen (2003: 237) have stated, “The person who learns a language without learning a culture risks becoming a fluent fool.” When culture is integrated into the classroom, learners develop cultural understanding, attitudes, and skills that allow them to communicate effectively with people of other cultures (Seelye 1994), ultimately leading to effective communication and the avoidance of misunderstandings.

For English language learners, in Algeria for instance, exposure to various cultural topics related to British culture, such as facts, historical figures, literary figures, customs, traditions, ways of life, and the like, can aid in developing the cultural components needed to avoid becoming a "fluent fool" and instead become an "intercultural speaker". It is assumed that English learners should apply their knowledge about such topics to interact effectively with native English speakers.

In considering the specific ICC elements that learners must acquire in order to interact successfully in intercultural interactions, there are numerous models specify the intercultural competence (ICC) elements that higher education students should aim to achieve after graduation. Despite the variety of models, researchers seem to agree on three learning dimensions: (i) knowledge and awareness of the self and of the others (facts, customs, social norms, values, stereotypes, beliefs, lifestyle, and taboos in everyday contexts, etc.), (ii) attitudes towards the target language people (willingness to learn about others, tolerance, curiosity, openness, showing acceptance, valuing differences and showing respect, and etc.), and (iii) skills that allow learners to operate and interact appropriately with people socialized in that culture (interacting effectively verbally and non-verbally, interpreting discoveries and misunderstandings, analyzing and relating, etc.) (Byram 1997, Deardorff 2006, Sercu 2004, Fantini 2007). The intercultural communication competence model of Chen and Young (2012) classified these three components into cognitive (knowledge/awareness), behavioral (skills), and affective (attitudes). According to them, developing intercultural competence involves honing these cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects.

Interculturalists like Byram and Deardorff view that attitudes (the affective aspect) is the foundation to ICC, as it enables individuals to move from self-awareness to sensitivity to others, valuing differences, and accepting and respecting other cultures (Lussier et al. 2007). According to Deardorff (2006) to gain competence in the various aspects of intercultural components, students must possess both respect and openness to what they learn and discover about other cultures, and without such intrinsic motivation, the impetus to explore and embrace something new will be absent. Fantini (2009), on the other hand, views awareness as a central and critical dimension to intercultural development. The reason, according to Fantini (2009), is that to avoid making judgment and assumptions about others, learners must be aware of their own cultural beliefs, values and biases and of others. This will, accordingly, help them to observe how their culture is similar to or different from others.

In short, according to Fantini (2009), these components - awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills – are crucial for foreign language learners to empathize with others on the international level and are also central to empathize with people of the same national culture to “develop positive and meaningful relationships right here at home—with classmates, friends, and neighbors who, in our diverse society, often represent diverse backgrounds” (Fantini & Garrett-Rucks 2016: 7) - developing intracultural competence.

Intercultural learning challenges: teaching and assessment realities

As previously mentioned, the goal of the model for intercultural competence in foreign language education is for students to achieve a certain level of competence upon graduation. Despite educational efforts to improve intercultural competence, it remains a challenge. This challenge is reflected in numerous studies on intercultural competence among university students (such as Liu & Xie 2013,

Cushner 2015, Bai 2016, Zhou 2020, Bin Towairesh 2021, Mehdaoui 2023, among others), including pre-service teachers (such as Bektaş-Çetinkaya & Çelik 2013, Echcharfy 2022, among others), which demonstrate students' lack of necessary intercultural competence. The primary reasons cited for such deficiencies include students' insufficient English proficiency, limited knowledge about the target culture, lack of consideration for culture integration in the EFL classroom, and teachers' inadequate training and limited knowledge about intercultural communication.

According to Fantini (2021), the absence of a comprehensive plan to provide intercultural education to all students and teachers' lack of experience in addressing intercultural components other than knowledge are the primary causes. Consequently, foreign language teachers often prioritize students' understanding of target culture knowledge without considering the impact of students' awareness of their own culture(s) on intercultural communication or incorporating it into their assessment, as observed by Fantini (2009). Additionally, Garrett-Rucks (2017) notes that the problem with teaching culture is that students' reflection on the different worldviews within their own culture is not taken into account.

In the Algerian context, for example, EFL teachers often rely on traditional teaching approaches that focus on developing knowledge without giving much importance to awareness, attitudes, or skills. In the majority of Algerian EFL classrooms, the primary focus is on reinforcing the four English skills (phonology, lexicon, grammar, and writing) and selected topics related to Anglophone cultures (such as civilization, historical events, customs, food, literature, and habits) to promote learners' communicative competence. However, students' awareness of their home culture, which is a fundamental component of ICC, is not given much consideration. Given the importance of English language learners' home culture in developing their intercultural competence, one may question the role of their native culture within the intercultural sphere.

Typically, intercultural competence refers to the ability “to cope with one’s own cultural background in interaction with others” (Beneke 2000: 108-109), and involves recognizing and reflecting on different cultural perspectives. This negotiation between cultures requires an awareness of oneself and others, and often involves a combination of communicative competencies (Liddicoat, 2004). In other words, as Fantini (2020, p. 53) explains in more detail, “When joining one’s native CC (or CC1) plus the addition of a second communicative competence (CC2), the combination leads clearly to “inter-cultural” CC wherein both CC1 and CC2 interact with each other.” This means, as Fantini (2021: 7) noted, education requires an “enhanced use of content derived from the participants’ own life experiences - derived with, from, and about each other.” Otherwise, it remains mere ‘enculturation’ when learners learn about others without referring to their own (Alpetkin 2002). Byram (1997) reminded that intercultural speakers are not supposed to abandon their own culture, but instead act as ambassadors of their own culture. In this sense, understanding the one’s culture serves as a benchmark for comparison with the culture of the target language, and the lack of thereof may result in incomplete knowledge and deficiencies in intercultural communication competence.

From this perspective, to develop learners ICC, educators and researchers must question whether they are teaching culture as “a place of struggle between learners' meanings and those of native speakers” (Kramsch 1993: 24). That is, they must ensure that intercultural exchange is reflected in the classroom, and that learners understand the cultural values that underpin behavior in different cultures. Newton et al. (2010: 39) reminded us that “We are often unaware of the cultural values which allow us to communicate within our own culture, let alone those that underpin behavior in another culture, with which we come in contact”. To some extent, this is true.

In some cases, people may be unaware of the existing differences within their own culture, leading to misunderstandings, offense, and the formation of stereotypes. For instance, with regard to taboos, there are many topics and expressions that are considered taboo in some Algerian regions, while in others they are not, and vice versa. However, because many Algerian people are unaware of these

differences, members of different groups or regions often offend each other for inappropriate behavior, which ultimately leads to formation of stereotype. Regional stereotypes formed within one's culture about another culture are common in Algeria.

This problem can be addressed by promoting an understanding of local culture and national diversity where learners learn to understand themselves as members of the same community with shared way of thinking, history, customs, and beliefs in order to overcome their prejudices and discrimination against each other.

In short, introducing local culture into foreign language teaching is crucial in developing learners' intercultural competence, as it allows them to become aware of existing cultural differences within their national culture, and to effectively navigate cultural differences in interactions with others.

Reasons for promoting students' intracultural communication

We are bound into a particular community with a set of characteristics that define our local identity. However, globalization, with intense contact between people and the rapid spread of technology and media, has fostered the clash of cultures that changes the way we understand our own reality and identity. For example, today we see how youth seem to adopt social practices learned through mass media that are not relevant in their particular context. Moreover, as Fantini (2020) stated, we must recognize that in today's diverse societies we face intercultural issues every day, every time we leave our homes and deal with neighbors and colleagues. This means that intercultural communication and diversity are interconnected. Furthermore, if we also recognize that English is a global language and that most interactional and linguistic aspects of intercultural communication occur between people from different cultural backgrounds in the world, exposing English students to British or American cultures will not meet their current communication needs in multilingual and multicultural environments (Baker 2015). To put it another way, considering the position of English as a global language, which denotes the necessity of connecting English instruction with a variety of cultural input that characterize today's communicative and multicultural situations, making the goal to make students achieve the native-like linguistic proficiency is unrealistic.

Therefore, foreign language education should be seen as a site of resistance where efforts should be made to strengthen local identities and challenge the idealization of the native English speaker, which can be realized through the cultural repertoire of the learners' home culture. As mentioned earlier, the intercultural approach emphasizes this - self-awareness and knowledge of foreign language learners are essential for successful intercultural communication. This is because, as Corbett (2003) stated, learners' awareness of their own culture and assumptions can influence their attitudes and communication with people from other cultural backgrounds. Dervin (2016) and Schwarzenhal et al. (2017) argue that it is beneficial to enhance learners' self-awareness to improve their understanding of others in an increasingly multicultural world. Along the same thought, Khanukaeva (2020) views that the more we know about our learners' experiences, the better we address their needs with appropriate teaching strategies.

Therefore, when we consider the interface between students' own culture and the target one, it is here where intracultural communication gains prominence. After all, how are we supposed to understand other cultures if we do not know ourselves? This point is illustrated by Valdes (1986, p. vii) as follows: "Once people . . . recognize that they are, truly, products of their own cultures, they are better prepared and more willing to look at the behavior of persons from other cultures and accept them non-judgmentally".

This means, as Hofstede et al. (2002) have pointed out, that before we judge the behavioral patterns of a particular culture, we must develop an awareness of our own patterns that might be insulting in certain cultures. In other words, when we understand our own culture, we are able to understand and analyze other cultures (Dzenowagis 2009). Learners who are aware of their own cultural identity, values,

beliefs, and knowledge are therefore able to compare, reflect, and thus develop acceptance of the cultures of others.

This is simply because negotiating experiences requires a strong understanding of one's own identity and background (Archambault 2015). When we understand the different aspects that make up our identity, we can acknowledge and understand others and, in the same sense, better relate across cultural boundaries. According to Fantini (2009: 11), this helps to "clarify what is most important in terms of one's values and identity." Guth & Helm (2010) point out that building knowledge about home culture is a fundamental component in the development of foreign language learners' intercultural communicative competence. In this process, as outlined by Yang and Yeh (2021), learners will not just understand their own culture; they will also discover the similarities and differences between their native culture and the one they are aiming to understand. This approach enhances their comprehension of the target language and its people while reducing misunderstanding about the respective cultures.

For these reasons, according to Dzenowagis (2009), intercultural competence begins with an adequate understanding of ourselves, and according to Guth & Helm (2010), intracultural learning is crucial for learners to develop intercultural competence. Accordingly, intercultural communication cannot be conceptualized outside of the intracultural communication system.

Previous research findings on self-awareness

Numerous studies have been conducted to explore the significance of self-awareness in the development of intercultural competence (ICC). Fantini's works on ICC emphasize the importance of self-awareness as a necessary condition for its development. However, the issue has not been studied in Algeria.

In a study by God & Zhang's (2019), which examined Chinese and Australian students' experience of intercultural communication at an Australian university showed that students who are constrained by intracultural practices and norms struggle to use communication techniques for intercultural communication. This study provides an insight on how communicating effectively in intracultural encounters is important for successful intercultural communication. Liu & Fang (2017) used questionnaires and interviews to investigate Chinese English language learners' perceptions and awareness of their home culture and its influence on the development of intercultural competence. They found that although most Chinese English language learners had a superficial understanding of their home culture, they viewed it as crucial to developing intercultural competence. Similarly, Zhang and Luetge (2023)'s study, which involved 200 Chinese international students at a liberal arts college in the UK, used questionnaires and interviews to examine the extent to which an understanding of home culture affects intercultural competence practices. Their results showed that even without a thorough understanding of their home culture, the majority of the participants still believed it played a significant role in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) communication. Based on these findings, Liu & Fang (2017) and Zhang & Luetge (2023) call for English students to work on their awareness of their own culture to develop their intercultural competence.

Other researchers used experimental studies (control/experiment groups) to reach similar findings. For example, Yeh et al. (2020) observed that intracultural education is not given importance in the English curricula in Taiwan. Therefore, they conducted a study to investigate how to enhance EFL students' intracultural learning through virtual reality. Their experimental research, which involved 60 advanced Taiwanese EFL university students, showed that participants developed better intracultural awareness through the use of virtual technology such as panorama, audio, interaction, and structuring. In another experimental study by Yang & Yeh (2021), which focused on the development of Taiwanese EFL college students' intracultural communication through making YouTube videos, it was found that students developed not only their intracultural understanding, but also their intercultural communicative competence. Ismailov's (2021) experimental study, which involved 112 Japanese

undergraduate students, showed that the experimental group, who was guided by explicit intra-cultural learning telecollaboration tasks, showed higher levels of engagement and confidence toward potential intercultural communication than the control group, who was not supported by intra-cultural telecollaboration tasks. Ismailov (2021) concluded that increasing students' intracultural understanding could improve the quality of their future intercultural exchanges.

In general, studies demonstrate that learners' self-awareness can predict their ICC development. In the context of these studies, the present study aims to contribute to the understanding of how EFL learners' self-awareness and their ability to interact in intracultural encounters can improve their communicative competence in intercultural situations.

Method

The present research is a case study designed to investigate the intra-cultural communication abilities among Algerian EFL students. The study employed a quantitative and qualitative method. For the quantitative analysis, SPSS was used to assess the participants' intracultural communication abilities: awareness, attitudes, skills and knowledge. For the qualitative analysis, two open questions addressed to the participants to know their opinions on the role of intracultural communication in intercultural communication.

Participants

This study was conducted at Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret, Algeria, focusing on a cohort of 40 undergraduate EFL students enrolled in the Department of English. The gender distribution within the sample was nearly balanced, with 46% males and 54% females. The participants' ages fell within the range of 22 to 25 years, representing a diverse yet specific demographic for the research.

Instruments

This study draws on Fantini (2007)'s Intercultural Communicative Competence Inventory (ICCI) model, which was modified and constructed into a rating scale to assess the participants' intracultural communication abilities. The choice fell on Fantini's model because, as Fantini (2009) explained, it applies to the target culture (LC2) in the same way that it applies to one's native culture (LC1). Therefore, the participants assessed their own intracultural communicative abilities in terms of awareness, attitudes, skills and knowledge.

As a method, the scale consists of 27 items with a 6-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 0= not at all to 6 = extremely high). The scale consists of four dimensions of ICC: Awareness (6 items), Attitude (6 items), Skills (7 items), and Knowledge (8 items).

The last items were two open-ended questions, which asked the students to share their thoughts and ideas regarding the role of their own culture in shaping their affective experiences and the development of ICC.

Procedure

As a procedure, the survey questionnaire was distributed to volunteer participants. First, they were placed in a classroom and were thanked for their participation and time devotion. The researcher informed them about the purpose of the data collection and that the data to be collected were to be used for academic research. The participants were then asked to answer the questionnaire in the classroom. After they finished, the researcher collected the data and thanked the participants again.

Reliability test

To assess the questionnaire reliability, Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used to determine the correlation and the Association between the items. As the questionnaire used in this study is made up of four sections (awareness, attitudes, skills, and knowledge), we first calculated the total mean and standard deviation of each section, and then we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient between the sections score and the total score. The result is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson correlation coefficient of the questionnaire.

		questionnaire	awareness	attitudes	skills	knowledge
all items	Pearson Correlation	1	.904**	.851**	.922**	.851**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	40	40	40	40	40
awareness	Pearson Correlation	.904**	1	.775**	.767**	.675**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	40	40	40	40	40
attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.851**	.775**	1	.678**	.533**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	40	40	40	40	40
skills	Pearson Correlation	.922**	.767**	.678**	1	.797**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	40	40	40	40	40
knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.851**	.675**	.533**	.797**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	40	40	40	40	40

The provided statistics shows that the internal consistency of the questionnaire is high. The Pearson correlation coefficients for all items and for each section (awareness, attitudes, skills, and knowledge) are all statistically significant, indicating a strong relationship between the items in each section and between all items overall. The highest correlation coefficient is between the section of skills and all items ($r = .922$), indicating that this section has the strongest internal consistency. Section of knowledge has the lowest correlation coefficient with the other sections ($r = .533$ with section of attitudes), but still has a high correlation coefficient with all items ($r = .851$). These results suggest that the questionnaire is reliable and consistent in measuring the constructs it was designed to measure.

Results

Research question 1: To what extent do Algerian EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret possess intracultural communicative competence?

Students' intracultural communication abilities were assessed using Fantini's (2007) model of intercultural competence. Responses were given on a six-point scale: not at all, slightly, somewhat, moderately, highly, and extremely highly.

The table 2 below shows some statistical information about students' intracultural communication abilities, including the weighted mean, hypothetical mean, and the standard deviation for each intracultural dimension: Awareness, Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for students’ intra-cultural communication abilities.

Dimension	Weighted mean	Hypothetical mean	SD	Percentile %
Awareness	15.95	17.5	1.55	53.16
Attitudes	21.15	17.5	3.65	70.5
Skills	18.02	20	1.98	51.5
Knowledge	16.72	20.5	3.78	41.81

Based on the findings presented in Table 2 above, the EFL students appear to have relatively high levels of intracultural attitudes (weighted mean of 21.15), followed by skills (weighted mean of 18.02), knowledge (weighted mean of 16.72), and awareness (weighted mean of 15.95). Apart from attitudes, the hypothetical means for each dimension (awareness/17.5, skills/20, and knowledge/20.5) are higher than the actual weighted means, indicating that the students may not have fully reached their potential in these areas.

The standard deviations for each dimension also provide some information about the spread of the data. The highest standard deviation is for attitudes (3.65), indicating that there may be a wider range of attitudes among the students compared to the other dimensions. Meanwhile, the lowest standard deviation is for skills (1.98), suggesting that the students may have relatively consistent levels of intracultural skills.

In brief, these findings suggest that the EFL students may have some strength in their intracultural attitudes and skills, but there may also be some areas for improvement, particularly in terms of awareness and knowledge.

Research question 2: How do EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University perceive and acknowledge the role of intracultural awareness in shaping their affective and psychological responses when interacting with people from international cultural backgrounds?

Students’ opinions on the effect of intra-cultural communication on the quality of their affect during intercultural interactions were assessed using two open-ended questions: “what role do you think self-awareness and self-reflection play in your intercultural interactions?”, and “in your opinion, what specific aspects of intracultural communication that can positively affect your experience and interaction with people from other international cultural backgrounds?”.

The participants’ responses to the two open-ended questions revealed that they believe in the importance of self-awareness in the development of their intercultural competence. To select few, one of the participants voiced that “how can I understand others if I don’t understand my own culture?”. Another one said “I think understanding cultural differences within my own country help me understand others better”.

For question two, one reported that it is important to recognize ‘my own cultural biases and values to avoid making assumptions about others’. Other cited sensitivity, as reported by one of the respondents, “when we respect and appreciate the cultures of our own people, we can respect others”. Another one said, “we need first to respect the different values exist in our country, then we can respect the values of other countries”. Likewise, another participant reported that “we should be aware of taboo and sensitive behavior so to avoid offending others, and be tolerant”. The participants also viewed stereotype and communicative style as essential for positive intercultural interactions, as stated by one, “one need to know how to communicate properly with foreign people”.

In short, students’ responses to the open-ended questions indicate that students’ intra-cultural communication abilities can influence their affect and the development of their intercultural competence.

Discussion

This study aims to investigate the relationship between intracultural communication and intercultural communication, examining the level of intracultural communication among the Algerian EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret and its influence on their affective experiences and their intercultural competence development.

In response to the first research question, one can say that it is difficult to make a definitive judgment about the level of the learners' intracultural competence. Yet, the weighted means for each dimension suggest that the participants may have moderate level of intracultural competence.

For instance, with weighted means of 15.95 out of a hypothetical mean of 17.5), for awareness and 16.72 out of a hypothetical mean of 20.5 for knowledge, the students intracultural awareness and intracultural knowledge is moderate. This implies that that they are aware and have some knowledge about behaviors, communicative style, taboos, values withing their own national cultures, but they may need more opportunities to discover more about their national cultures to fully understand and appreciate their own cultural diversity. This result reaffirms the assertions made by Newton et al. (2010), highlighting that individuals are often unaware of the cultural values facilitating communication within their own cultural context, let alone those invisible cultural values that underpin such communication. The intracultural skills is also moderate with 18.02 out of a hypothetical mean of 20, which implies that they are able to communicate with people from other cultures to some extent, but they may need more practice and support in this area. The students attitudes; however, is high with 21.15 out of a hypothetical mean of 17.5. This positive attitude means that the students, participating in this study, are open to know about and learn about people from other cultures. This situation may present an opportunity for enhancing their intracultural communication abilities. As suggested by scholars such as Byram (1997), Deardorff (2006), and Lussier et al. (2007), attitudes serve as a foundation for individuals to progress from self-awareness towards becoming more attuned to others, fostering acceptance of and respect for different cultural values, and this progression often lays the groundwork for the cultivation of various other intracultural components.

In response to the second research question, the results confirmed the related hypothesis that a higher level of intra-cultural competence positively correlates with more positive affective and psychological responses when interacting with individuals from international cultural backgrounds. As indicated by their response to the open-ended questions, the majority of the respondents indicate that it is important to understand one's own culture in order to have better intercultural experiences.

These findings confirm Lui & Fang's (2017) and Zhang & Luetge's (2023) studies of Chinese international students, which showed that despite their limited knowledge of their Chinese home culture, students considered it important to communicate in intercultural interactions.

Therefore, introducing home culture into the foreign language classroom does not negate the importance of the target language – culture, but it rather can improve the quality of intercultural communication. Most importantly, students' intra-cultural awareness serves as a means to strengthen their identity in the midst of today's global influence. Byram (1997) reminds us that the intercultural speaker should not abandon his or her own culture, but rather act as an ambassador of his or her own culture.

Finally, these findings can be used to inform interventions or instructional strategies aimed at enhancing EFL students' intra-cultural communicative competence. This could be achieved through targeted training and development programs that focus on building competencies in these areas.

Limitations

Although the results of this study provide insights into Algerian EFL intracultural communication competence, they also have their limitations. First, the small number of participants and the study location cannot be generalized. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these findings

are transferable to other university contexts in Algeria and other samples. Second, these findings only provide a snapshot of the learners' intra-cultural competence, further research with additional data and analysis may be needed to more accurately assess EFL students' level of intra-cultural competence. Finally, it is important to key-note that the interpretation of what constitutes a "moderate" level of intra-cultural competence may vary depending on the context and the specific criteria used for evaluation.

Conclusion

This paper attempt to examine the the effect of intracultural competence on EFL students' affect and intercultural competence development. The findings of the assessment reveal that the EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret have a moderate level of intracultural competence. Though they exhibit positive attitudes towards poeple of their own cultures, they still need to work on their intracultural awareness, skills, and knowledge for successful intracultural interactions. The findings also reveal that students' understanding and awareness of their own cultures and their ability to communicate effectively in intracultural encounters can affect their affect and the development of their intercultural competence.

This paper; however, does not claim that intracultural competence is a necessary condition for successful intercultural interactions. It, whereas, attempts to show that it is an important factor to consider, as it allows learners to be more aware of their own cultural values and how they differ from those of others. This awareness can help learners to better appreciate cultural differences and communicate more effectively in intercultural encounters.

One way to foster intracultural competence is to study the local culture in the foreign language classroom. This can help students to compare their own culture to that of the target culture and to develop a deeper understanding of their own cultural identity. This understanding can then be applied to intercultural interactions, helping students to be more respectful and understanding of other cultures. By understanding students' intracultural competence, educators can develop more effective teaching strategies to help students develop their intercultural competence.

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APPENDIX:

Please answer the following questions. Using a scale of 0 to 5 (0 = not at all, 1 = slightly, 2 = somewhat, 3 = moderately, 4 = highly, and 5 = extremely high), rate yourself on each characteristic listed below.

AWARENESS: I demonstrate awareness of:	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. My social identity (race, class, culture, etc.)						
2. The regional language and cultural differences within the context of my country (cultures, custom, traditions, values, etc.)						
3. My regional culture and other regional cultures are not alike, yet I may adapt or adopt depending on my personal beliefs.						
4. All the verbal and non-verbal taboos in other regional cultures.						
5. How I am viewed by members of other ethnicity/cultures						
6. Factors, which help my own intracultural development and ways to overcome them.						
ATTITUDE: I demonstrate a willingness to	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Interact with members from a different ethnicity/region than mine (I don't avoid them or judge them).						
8. Show interest and motivation to understand the values, traditions, etc, of other ethnicity/regional cultures						
9. Try to understand differences in behavior, values, and attitude between my own regional culture and others' regional cultures						

10. Be open minded and respect the values of other regional cultures and respect the ways they behave.						
11. Reveal tolerance and flexibility towards cultural disparities.						
12. Avoid judgmental attitudes and appreciate the complexities of intracultural communication and interaction .						
SKILLS: I am able to:	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. Compare and contrast the culture of other ethnicity/regions with the culture of my own regional culture.						
14. Use appropriate strategies when communicating with people of other ethnicity/region and able to not offending them with my behavior, etc.						
15. Describe and demonstrate non-verbal communication behavior in greetings, gifts giving, etc. in other regional cultures.						
16. Avoid gestures that are inappropriate in other regional cultures.						
17. Interpret facial expressions that may cause communication failure.						
18. Choose topics and words carefully when communicating with other regional/ethnic groups						
19. Help resolve intracultural conflicts and misunderstandings.						
KNOWLEDGE	0	1	2	3	4	5
20. I can articulate the general history and some sociopolitical factors which have shaped my own culture						
21. I am knowledgeable about the historical figures who shaped my country						
22. I can cite various historical events, including the oldest ones, that shaped my country						
23. I can cite various publications produced by my own country's authors.						
24. I know various literary figures of my own country.						
25. I can compare and contrast aspects of cultures of other ethnicity/regions with my own region.						
26. I know the essential norms and taboos (words, behaviors, assumptions, etc.) of culture of other ethnicity/regions (within my country).						
27. I can describe and explain the culturally behavior of my own region and that of other ethnicity/ regions in various domains (e.g., social interaction, celebration, food habits, wedding traditions, etc.)						

Holistic approaches to the study of emotions and identity in language learning and use: Complex dynamic systems theory, language ecology, and post-structuralism

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Abstract

In the field of English applied linguistics, learners and their learning processes including their psychological and emotional responses to second language acquisition (SLA) were traditionally researched in isolation following the psychometric tradition. By contrast, learners' idiosyncratic, and often life-changing experiences that shape their identities are usually examined holistically drawing on interviews and case studies. In this paper, I discuss how I brought under the same roof these two seemingly incompatible research traditions to shed light on language learners' multilingual and multicultural identity construction. The paper draws on the basic tenets that language and culture are inherently intertwined in SLA (Kramsch 1998) and that language learning is embodied (Damasio 1994) generating powerful emotional responses to language learning and use. In the paper, I delineate three holistic approaches to the study of emotions and identity in SLA including complex dynamic systems theory (CDST), language ecology, and post-structuralism. These approaches have three important principles in common. (1) They look at learners holistically in their complexity and entirety. (2) They perceive learner-intrinsic and contextual factors as interconnected, dynamic, and changing over time. (3) They examine learners and their learning processes in response to environmental stimuli in the form of interactions with others, learning materials, the learning environment, languages spoken by the individual, as well as the educational and sociocultural context. Following the introduction of the three theories, I present my latest research results drawing on these theoretical underpinnings. I explain how I conceptualized learners' identity construction as a complex dynamic system of individual differences and how I detected novel patterns of psychological behavior using CDST in online education. Then, I discuss the impact of language socialization on language learning and use drawing on case studies. Finally, I present examples of powerful emotional and identity responses to language learning and use, the transformative potential of SLA, and the language learner's imagined L2 habitus (Fekete 2018) pinpointing how learners speak, think, feel, and behave differently when they switch to different languages.

Keywords: *emotions, identity, language learning, the psychology of learners, complex dynamic systems theory, language ecology, post-structuralism, holistic approaches, online education, language socialization, the learner's imagined L2 habitus, online education*

Introduction

I have given many thoughts over the years as to how and why I feel, think, speak, and behave differently when speaking my various languages, which are Hungarian, English, Spanish, and German. Although my mother tongue is Hungarian, I have used English extensively in my professional and private life for over two decades. Early on as an English learner, I often caught myself embracing the

transformation I experienced via English. Learning English felt like a *tabula rasa* – a clean slate – to reconstruct myself and my life centering around the new language. I felt like I was gradually becoming a different person and there was a point when I could not imagine my life only speaking a single language – my mother tongue. I could not quite explain why I was having these troubling yet liberating feelings and thoughts, but I could not help getting them. Therefore, my life choices were shaped by this train of thought – I chose English-medium instruction in my university studies and professions requiring English knowledge, I have traveled to and lived in English-speaking contexts, made English-speaking friends all over the world, consumed hundreds of books and movies in the English language, and have experienced a range of – mostly positive – emotions and states of mind via English. Then, came Spanish as another transformative life experience – only to perturb my complex, dynamic yet stable linguistic, cultural, emotional, social, and psychological systems of English and Hungarian before finding its place in my multilingual and multicultural Self. Soon, I came to realize how learning and speaking English had shaped my trajectory in life as well as my identities. Intrigued by my own experiences, I started to pay heed to other people’s experiences and narratives to shed light on how languages had shaped their lives and thus their identities. While conducting my PhD research, I found the theoretical and methodological tools to make sense of these interesting life experiences that many multilingual speakers reported.

In this paper, first, I present three major challenges that the researcher is likely to encounter in researching identity and emotions in second language acquisition (SLA) including 1) research methodology, 2) terminology, and 3) the reconciliation of the holistic and the psychometric approach in this endeavor. Then, I delineate three holistic approaches applicable to the study of emotions and identity in SLA research including 1) complex dynamic systems theory (CDST), 2) language ecology, and 3) post-structuralism. The concise theoretical overview of the three approaches is followed by a brief discussion of the author’s own research in the three fields to point out how the three challenges may be overcome in empirical research and how the three holistic approaches may be used to examine individuals with various identities, emotions, and individual differences (IDs). Although it is an academic paper, the author shares her personal and academic journey to demonstrate the transformative potential of SLA and suggest methods addressing these experiences in research. The theoretical and methodological tools along with the findings of the author’s research presented in the paper can help researchers, educators, and, in general, multilingual individuals to understand their experiences better and find resources to conduct their own research in the field. Due to the wide scope of the paper tackling three problem areas and three research approaches, the discussion of empirical research is confined to the author’s own studies in the three fields.

Background to the problem: Challenges in researching emotions and identity in SLA

Research methodology

The first challenge that the researcher is likely to face when researching emotions and identity in SLA is **research methodology**. When the constructs of psychology research were adopted in English applied linguistics before the second millennium, the psychometric research tradition was also integrated into SLA research (Dörnyei & Ryan 2015). A prominent example of this effort is the integration of Deci and Ryan’s (1985) concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the field. Similarly, Dörnyei’s (2005) motivational self-system draws on Markus and Nurius’s possible selves theory (1986) and Higgins’ self-discrepancy theory (1987). This was a big shift from understanding motivation as a socio-cultural construct to perceiving it as a psychological-cognitive and situated factor describing what the learner can and wants to do with language at a given point in time. At that point, I realized that studies in applied linguistics examining individual differences such as motivation, language anxiety, or willingness to communicate (WTC) usually drew on the psychometric research tradition. They worked with large sample sizes, generated numerical results, and performed statistical analyses to arrive at generalizable results. Thus, the use of a more rigorous and systematic design that draws on numbers and variables

rather than cases made such research valid and reliable and thus linked applied linguistics research to already established sciences such as statistics, mathematics, and psychology. These generalizable results prove or disprove hypotheses and point out what is going on in general, and what the state of things is (Dörnyei 2007). Due to the scientific approach, quantitative research has always enjoyed great prestige in English applied linguistics.

However, the individuals are lost in these generalized results, as idiosyncrasies and subtle details remain undisclosed in this research tradition. While quantitative research answers the question of what is going on, it does not uncover why and how the results have emerged and what characterizes the individuals participating in the research. By contrast, a major benefit of qualitative research lies in its capacity to shed light on rich details including emerging patterns as well as idiosyncratic phenomena characterizing special cases rather than averages or variables (Dörnyei 2007). The use of multiple data sources and research instruments conducive to inductive data analysis allows for a more holistic look at phenomena under scrutiny (Creswell 2003: 38-39). This research method is highly interpretive, as researchers make sense of the data relying on the traditions of their discipline, and their cultural background, views, and beliefs. Until the new millennium qualitative research did not enjoy high prestige in applied linguistics, since it was criticized for its interpretive and labor-intensive nature, the use of small sample sizes, the lack of a rigorous scientific design, and for producing non-generalizable results. However, in the past two decades, the individual has come to the forefront of research, and case study research has gained momentum, giving more recognition to qualitative research.

Being interested in individuals and their idiosyncratic experiences and narratives, I was going to conduct qualitative case study research, but I thought I was expected to perform quantitative research if my results were to be taken seriously. As a researcher, I do not deem these two research traditions incompatible or exclusive – placed at the very ends of a continuum; instead, I regard them as reconcilable and complementary research approaches, yielding a more profound and reliable understanding of the constructs under study. Therefore, I decided to include some quantitative research in my research project to complement the qualitative research design. Applying mixed methods is profitable, as such a research design fuses the advantages of quantitative and qualitative research while offsetting their downsides by generating insights in areas where the other research method cannot.

Terminology

The second problem that the researcher encounters when examining identity is related to terminology concerning the terms **'self' vs 'Self'**, **'identity' vs 'identities'**, and the various meanings of the word **'subjective'**. The term 'self' is understood as one factor among other variables; therefore, it is not capitalized. It is associated with the five types of self-knowledge identified by Neisser (1988: 37-53) including the ecological self, the interpersonal self, the extended self, the private self, and the conceptual self. In applied linguistics, the word 'self' is also associated with self-perception, self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. In contrast, post-structuralist researchers and cultural theoreticians capitalize the word 'Self' to refer to the individual in their entirety and their idiosyncratic experiences. So, when Kramsch (2009) reinterpreted Neisser's five self-concepts in the field of SLA, she capitalized the terms.

The term identity can be used as a singular or as a plural noun. In the past, it was thought of as a singular concept referring to a coherent, homogeneous, constant, and unchanging entity. However, post-structuralist scholars pointed out that the individual and their identities are constantly changing over time due to internal and external stimuli. Therefore, identity is a heterogeneous, often fragmented, or incomplete entity that has different types and can be understood on different levels. Consequently, the plural form better captures the multi-layered and diverse nature of identity. Individuals have different identities including individual and collective identities such as linguistic, cultural, ethnic, racial, professional, gender, or national identities. Furthermore, identities are constructed, co-constructed, and

reconstructed in social interactions pointing out “a process never completed – always-in process” (Hall 1996: 2) or as Kramsch (2009: 18) put it a “subjectivity-in-process”.

The third problem area in terminology addressed words such as ‘subjective’ or ‘subjectivity’. The meanings associated with these words denote the lack of objectivity and the presence of bias – often associated with qualitative research as a major weakness. By contrast, the post-structuralist interpretation of the word is value-neutral referring to the multilingual individual’s idiosyncratic meaning-making practices associated with the second language (L2) that involve the learner’s brain, mind, and body (Kramsch 2009), generating emotional responses to SLA that are conducive to transforming the individual’s life. This interpretation of the word – I realized – resonated very much with my experiences as a multilingual speaker and as a language learner. Kramsch defined ‘subjectivity’ as the multilingual individual’s “conscious or unconscious sense of Self mediated through language/s guiding their perceptions, reactions, and thoughts that orient their relationship to others” (p. 18). Therefore, the learner’s subjectivity is “constituted and shaped in interaction with the environment through the discourse of others” and it involves “both the conscious mind and the unconscious body’s (i.e., emotional) memories and fantasies, identifications, and projections” (Kramsch 2009: 18).

Tackling the above challenges led to four observations:

1. Identity construction is inseparable from imagination. Imagination shapes thoughts, emotions, utterances, and actions associated with language use. This is how imagination becomes reality.
2. Consequently, identity is inseparable from emotions. The individual’s emotions feed into their identities and their identities generate emotional responses.
3. Therefore, L2 learning and use construct and shape the multilingual speaker’s identities (e.g., their linguistic, cultural, social, and professional identities).
4. Consequently, SLA generates emotional responses in learners, pinpointing that language learning and use is embodied engaging learners’ brain, mind, and body (Kramsch 2009).

Reconciling two research traditions

As a result of the two main problems delineated above, the researcher is faced with a third challenge as to **how to reconcile these two seemingly irreconcilable approaches**:

1. how traditional individual differences (IDs) research looks at the self and other IDs, examining learners and their learning experiences in isolation focusing on only one or two constructs and a couple of variables, and
2. how other fields perceive the Self with various identities looking at learners and their learning processes holistically in their complexity and entirety on a smaller scale.

In what follows I discuss three holistic approaches to the study of identity and emotions in language learning and use that can reconcile the seemingly incompatible views and methods of traditional individual differences research and identity research. These approaches include 1) complex dynamic systems theory (CDST), 2) language ecology, and 3) post-structuralism.

Complex dynamic systems theory in the study of individual differences and identity in SLA

Complex dynamic systems theory and SLA

Complex dynamic systems theory originates in natural sciences: on the one hand, in biology endeavoring to explicate how unexpected and novel processes emerge from a set of pre-determined variables, and on the other hand, in mathematics studying non-linear dynamics utilizing computer modeling (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008: 2-4). By now, complexity science has come to be applied in additional domains such as business management, economics, epidemiology, and social sciences, as well as in developmental and social psychology (Nowak, Winkovska-Nowak & Brée 2013) and SLA (Larsen-Freeman 1997, 2017). The terms complexity theory (CT) and complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) may be used interchangeably; however, in this paper, I will be using the latter to avert bafflement.

A complex dynamic system (CDS) is envisaged as “a system of interacting lower-level elements” leading to a higher level or system-level behavior. The task of the researcher is, therefore, “to identify the rules of interaction among elements and to investigate how these rules promote the emergence of macro-level phenomena” (Nowak, Winkovska-Nowak & Brée 2013: 2). Consequently, the theory can be applied to investigate both social and individual processes including interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomena in the field of education and applied linguistics alike. CDST was introduced in applied linguistics by Larsen-Freeman (1997) in her seminal paper discussing how complexity theory may be employed in SLA. Later, Ellis and Larsen-Freeman pointed out the emergent nature of language and language learning (2006) and explained how language is a complex, dynamic, and adaptive system (2009).

There are three seemingly irreconcilable contradictions in individual differences research in the field of SLA. The first one concerns the **universal vs uniqueness of individuals and their functioning including SLA**. All humans are based on a universal genetic design but there are infinite variations on this design. People display variation and diversity in every attribute they possess and in every way of their functioning from brain mechanisms to skin tone. They also differ in their response to the environment, stimuli, experience, and learning. Humans can master any mother tongue as a child unless some extreme circumstances frustrate first language mastery. However, the statement is far from being true for SLA. Not all language learners attain high proficiency in the L2 despite their prolonged effort and learners attaining the same proficiency level in the L2 often report completely different emotional and psychological responses to SLA, resulting in a diversity of learning backgrounds and trajectories. CDST, however, resolves this contradiction by pointing out that humans like everything else in the universe are fractals, as they permit infinite variation in the system that is self-similar based on a universal design (Larsen-Freeman 1997). Galaxies, suns, trees, plants, animals, humans, languages, and language learning are fractals as they display endless variations while retaining characteristics that make them recognizable as belonging to a distinct category or group.

The second contradiction concerns the **stable yet dynamic (i.e., changing) nature of individual differences, emotions, and identities** in SLA. All humans are prone to changes over time, yet they also show stability; otherwise, they would not exist. Similarly, L2 learning is prone to changes but must also be stable to be maintained over time. This contradiction can be reconciled by CDST, which regards natural phenomena as a complex dynamic system composed of interacting subsets that function as the levels of the system. Such a system is characterized by the following key properties (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008):

- complete interconnectedness of levels within the system;
- the system changes in response to environmental stimuli;
- the system sustains its stability over time by continuous adaptation to change;
- the system alternates between attractor and repeller states;
- emergent behavior of macro-level phenomena;
- reciprocal behavior between the subsets of the system and the system; and
- two or more systems co-adapt and co-evolve.

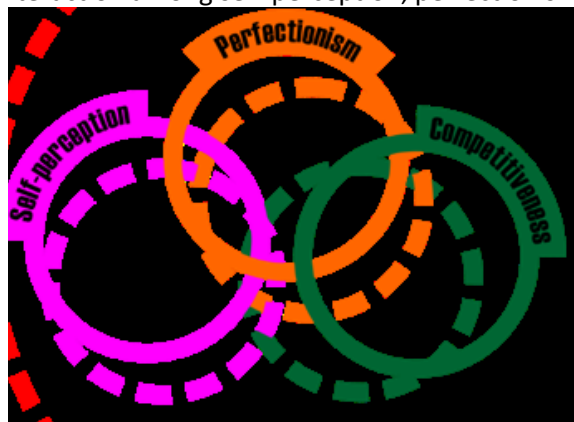
A complex dynamic system is also a chaotic system characterized by **non-linear dynamics** constituting the third contradiction **in SLA and IDs research**. SLA is oftentimes characterized by a disparate relationship between stimuli and outcomes. For instance, prolonged learning efforts may result in little progress while little effort, at other times, may lead to much progress. From a teaching perspective, teachers often invest much time and energy in teaching a certain topic to their learners; yet learners seem to struggle to make progress, while at other times, little effort may lead to great progress. This contradiction is explained by the butterfly effect, which relies on non-linear dynamics and points out how small and often seemingly unrelated phenomena can cause great changes in a complex dynamic system.

Identity construction as a complex dynamic system of individual differences

In my Ph.D. dissertation research, I sought to combine traditional IDs research and post-structuralist research into identity by examining multilingual speakers’ identities along with their various IDs. As I was studying the different categorizations of individual differences and the different numbers of individual differences conceived by researchers, I was surprised to see that identity was not included in any of the lists.

My interdisciplinary research approach, however, allowed me to **reconcile traditional individual differences research and holistic identity research**. The participants of the study were 38 multilingual university students speaking at least two languages or more. I examined their identity construction in their various languages as well as their individual differences including their motivation, language anxiety, willingness to communicate, competitiveness, perfectionism, and self-perception. The results pointed out that individual differences constantly interact with one another in dynamic and complex ways in response to stimuli coming from the subsets of the system and from the environment. My findings confirmed Bailey’s (1983) results that self-perception, perfectionism, and competitiveness continuously interact with and feed into one another, forming a cyclic relationship at one level of the system.

Figure 1: A dynamic interaction among self-perception, perfectionism, and competitiveness



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.

Figure 2: Changes in the level of self-perception, perfectionism, and competitiveness feed into the learner’s language anxiety and motivation at the next level.

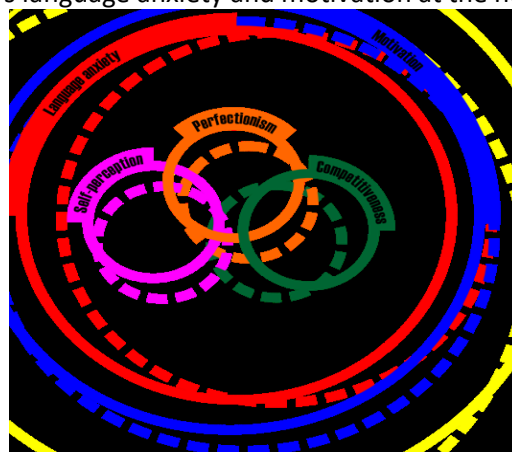


Figure 3: Changes in the level of motivation and language anxiety resulting from interactions at lower levels feed into the learner's WTC in the L2.

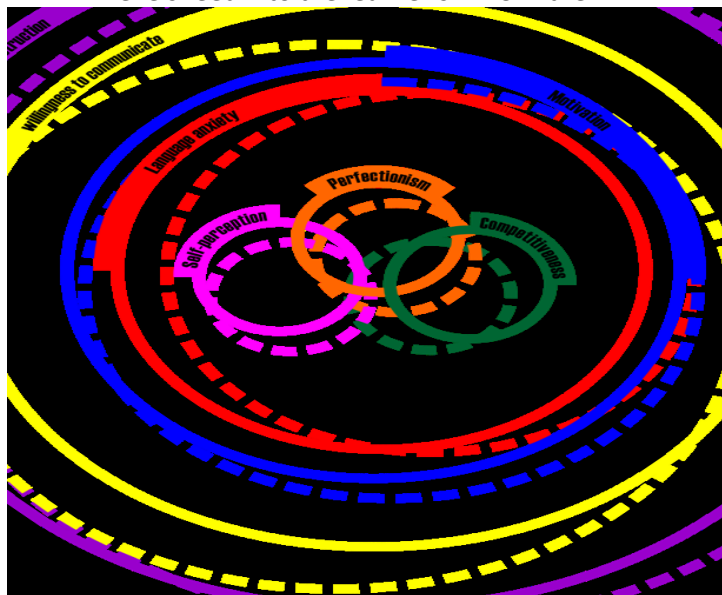
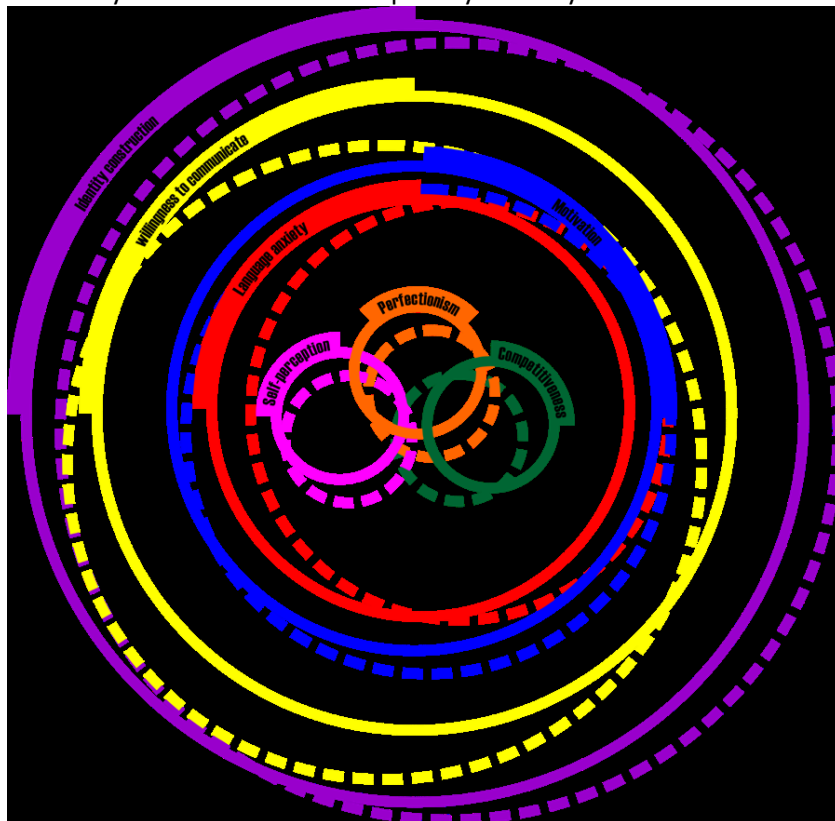


Figure 4: Identity construction as a complex dynamic system of individual differences



Based on the results I proposed that **individual differences should be envisaged as vertically and horizontally interacting subsets (i.e., levels) of a system that construct and shape the learner's identity as system-level behavior.** The interactions between the system and its subsets are bidirectional since the system reacts to changes in the lower subsets of the system as well as to stimuli originating from the environment in the form of interactions with other L2 speakers (e.g., peers, teachers, native and non-native L2 speakers) and due to contextual factors. Tasks, teaching and learning methods, requirements, curricula, and the school environment constitute the micro-environment of L2 learning, while the educational, social, and cultural context becomes the macro-environment of SLA. Therefore, I view identity construction as a complex dynamic system in which individual learner characteristics make up the subsets of the system that horizontally and vertically act upon the behavior of the system. This system-level behavior is construed as learners' identity construction in and through the second language. The intermittent lines index potential trajectories of the subsets producing diverse behavioral patterns. The many potential trajectories of IDs are idiosyncratic and prone to changes over time. Despite the potentially infinite number of system-level behaviors over time, patterns of learner behavior may be detected, ensuring the stability of the system that can be observed by researchers and teachers alike. Therefore, the task of the researcher(-teacher) is to find patterns conducive to successful SLA as macro-level phenomena in an effort to enhance learners' learning experience and their language attainment while averting patterns hampering the success of SLA.

The impact of the learning environment on the psychology of teachers and learners in online and offline education

The micro- and the macro-environment have a great impact on the individual differences and identities of learners and teachers as complex dynamic systems. Therefore, **I expected the sudden switch to online education from offline teaching and learning in 2020 to result in major changes in teachers' and learners' psychological, emotional, and identity responses to L2 use.** To prove this ratiocination, I conducted a study (Fekete 2021) in which I examined teachers' emotional and psychological responses to online education along with their identity as English speakers and as English teachers in offline and online education. The participants were 26 teachers of English teaching either in secondary school or at university from eight countries who voluntarily performed a sentence completion task online describing situations, emotional and cognitive states, and behaviors in offline and online education. The qualitative research design was complemented by descriptive statistics pointing out trends and frequencies characterizing the emerging patterns. While the numerical data showed what was going on with the teachers, qualitative content analysis shed light on the subtle details of the emerging phenomena.

The teachers' linguistic identities associated with English use were characterized by mostly positive emotions, self-fulfillment, and a desire for subjective meaning-making processes in and via English. However, their professional identity construction showed a more heterogeneous picture. While traditional, offline teaching generated positive self-images, self-enhancement, and self-confidence in them, online education triggered negative emotions, negative self-perceptions, anxiety, low self-confidence, and a loss of self-awareness in teachers. The results pinpointed how the change in the educational context as a novel macro-context and the many challenges that teachers faced daily in their online classes as a novel micro-context had an immense impact on their emotional, psychological, and identity responses to their teaching activities in English.

After learning about the psychology of teachers in online education, I embarked on a new project to find out more about **learner behaviors in online classes drawing on CDST** (Fekete in press). Since the previous study (Fekete 2021) pointed out how drastically environmental changes can affect the individual differences and identities of teachers, I endeavored to examine the changes in learner behavior in the two contexts. This research project involved 27 English teacher trainees who completed

a qualitative questionnaire on their motivation, language anxiety, and willingness to communicate in English in offline and online education. Although the questions were open-ended collecting textual data from students, trends and frequencies were calculated using descriptive statistics.

The results showed significant changes in the students' psychology in the two environments. In offline education, they reported lower levels of anxiety and higher levels of motivation and WTC indicating a psychological state more conducive to successful learning. This state may be perceived as an attractor state of successful learning. By contrast, in online learning, they indicated increased anxiety levels coupled with decreased motivation, and WTC, pointing out a repeller state that is usually inconducive to successful learning. Students' motivation, anxiety, and WTC were fully interconnected and showed stability over time by continuously adapting to change. The results pinpointed a distinction between **display and real communication and WTC** and pointed out **new types of anxiety** that did not emerge in offline education such as **technology anxiety, camera and microphone anxiety, fatigue anxiety, personal interaction deprivation, invasion of privacy, lack of feedback from peers, and lack of communicative success**. The three studies above drawing on CDST revealed how detecting key properties of complex dynamic systems can help educators and researchers understand the psychology of learners and teachers in more profound ways.

Language ecology

Language ecology and SLA

The second holistic approach suitable to examine learners and teachers in their entirety is language ecology. The ecological approach in SLA is inherently linked to socialization denoting a process that enables young individuals and novices to become accepted members of a community by conforming to social and cultural conventions and behaviors agreed upon and expected by a specific community (Ochs & Schieffelin 2017). The ecological perspective has come to be utilized in additional academic fields such as psychology and anthropology, as well as in L1 socialization and SLA research.

Language ecology in SLA utilizes a holistic look at learners and their learning environments pointing out that the language, the learner/speaker of the language, and the environment cannot be separated from one another. Consequently, they should be considered and studied as a dynamic and interacting relationship (Steffensen & Kramsch 2017). Language and language use, therefore, are construed as naturally emerging from interactions between individuals and the individual and their environments. (Steffensen & Kramsch 2017: 1). Ecological linguists scrutinize how natural and social processes impact linguistic patterns and how these patterns, in turn, influence natural and social phenomena.

SLA researchers drawing on language ecology examine how adolescent and adult L2 learners socialized in their L1 culture perceive second language socialization. The ecological view of SLA is dynamic, making it prone to changes over time. Its multiscale view considers not only the individuals learning/speaking the language but also the educational, social, and historical context in which they learn and use their languages. In addition, the learner's biographical timescales are also taken into account drawing attention to how past experiences shape present and future events, activities, and goals, as well as how future goals affect the learner in the present (Steffensen & Kramsch 2017). Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the versatile processes embedded in language socialization construct and shape the person's individual and collective identities (Ochs & Schieffelin 2017: 6). In summary, from an ecological perspective, a holistic view is applied to learners, their languages, and their contexts alike.

The impact of language socialization on the linguacultural and motivational profiles of multilingual speakers

To point out the processes outlined above, I outline two of my studies addressing the interacting relationship between language socialization and SLA. The results of this research project are published in

two papers. The first study (Fekete 2023b) addresses how different language socialization processes impact the linguistic and cultural profiles and language learning motivation of 14 multilingual speakers in an English instruction university course. The participants came from five countries and spoke different mother tongues, but they all drew on English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Jenkins 2007) and as an intercultural language (Byram 2008, Fekete 2022) in the classroom. While eight students were Hungarian, six were international students from Indonesia, Spain, Ukraine, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. To collect data for the research, students were invited to write their linguistic autobiography, which is an unstructured essay about their life journey shaped by languages. This also served as a course requirement integrated into the course with pedagogical goals.

The textual datasets revealed two distinct trends characterizing the participants' linguistic and cultural profiles. Students who had been socialized in multilingual environments spoke 4-5 languages while students who had been socialized in a monolingual environment spoke only 3 languages resulting from a secondary school regulation requiring Hungarian learners to learn two foreign languages in secondary school in addition to their mother tongue. Students having been socialized in a multicultural or multiethnic environment reported having been exposed to 2 or 3 cultures and 1 or 2 sojourns. By contrast, students having been socialized in a single linguacultural environment reported having been exposed to only their home culture and only one student in this cohort had experienced sojourn.

The results pointed out that **exposure to more languages and cultures results in the attainment of more languages**. In addition to heritage, ethnic, and foreign languages, these learners wanted to learn additional languages in their free time, as SLA seemed to have become a natural part of their lives, and they experienced intrinsic, integrative, and instrumental motivation when learning languages. By contrast, students who had only been exposed to their mother tongue and culture only learned as many foreign languages as was compulsory in their formal education. They perceived formal SLA as a struggle and reported many negative experiences associated with L2 learning and only succeeded in attaining high proficiency in English but not in their other foreign language. Their SLA was mostly characterized by extrinsic and instrumental factors, and they rarely experienced joy and intrinsic motivation in their language classes. Therefore, they were not motivated to learn additional languages in their free time; rather, they reported being satisfied with their English knowledge. The results of the study highlighted **the profound impact of language socialization on learners' linguacultural profiles and language learning motivation**.

The impact of language socialization on psychological, emotional, and identity responses to SLA

The second study (Fekete 2023a) featuring special cases from the same research project calls attention to **how different socialization processes result in different psychological, emotional, and identity responses to SLA**. Two special cases emerged in the data collected via the linguistic autobiographies.

Tamara was raised in a Hungarian family by a Hungarian-speaking mother and a father who had achieved a pseudo-native proficiency level in German. Therefore, to raise a bilingual child, the father decided to talk with Tamara using only German while other family members and the outside world interacted with her in Hungarian. This unique socialization process immensely impacted the psychology of the child triggering short-term and long-term emotional and psychological responses in her. Later, Tamara's language socialization, turned out to be incompatible with the socialization practices of the elementary school she attended, generating further negative emotions and experiences in her associated with German learning and use. The many negative socialization experiences and emotions led to Tamara's giving up on learning and using German despite her achieving a high proficiency level in the language.

*From the moment I was born my mom talked to me in Hungarian and my dad in German. I have to be honest, I did not always enjoy the situation. Though I never had any real problems with being bilingual, **I did refuse to answer in German to my dad** (most of the time) because I was naive and stubborn as a child. It did not bother him that much, the point was that I was able to speak German whenever I felt like it and I understood everything I had to. ... It was **very difficult for me to enjoy German classes since I already knew everything**... So, she [the teacher] gave us a simple task, which was to write a sentence in German, containing the vocabulary we were learning at the time. When everyone was ready, it was time to read out loud a couple of them and I was asked to read mine as well. I did, and after I finished, my teacher sighed. Then she proceeded to scold me in front of the whole group for “using a sentence structure we will be learning next year”. I was really surprised and honestly, **it mademe feel guilty and bad**. I am being one hundred percent honest when I say I did not want to brag or show off how good I am in German. ... Most of the time I was teased for being “a nerd” when it comes to languages, so I would rather stay quiet unless I was asked. ... **I haven’t spoken any German in years. I am kind of ashamed of this** and haven’t really talked about it to anyone, but my German got really rusty in the past three years. ... I hope to have children in the future, and I most definitely want them to be bilingual, just like me and my little brother. Unfortunately, **I doubt I will be able to use German like my dad did, but I think English will work perfectly** as well. (bold by author)*

Tamara's problems with SLA stemmed from unique socialization processes first in the family and then in education. In her case, German learning became a family affair and so family dynamics became part and parcel of her SLA. Therefore, Tamara's unwillingness to speak German with her father did not originate from linguistic difficulties but from a unique socialization process that made her different from the rest of her Hungarian-speaking family and the rest of the Hungarian-speaking children and adults around her, possibly resulting in a sense of social isolation or alienation. In the educational context, despite being proficient in German, she encountered negative emotions and experiences associated with German learning in the classroom. Hungarian schools, especially smaller elementary schools, are mostly unprepared to teach more advanced language learners in a beginner group. Therefore, yet again she experienced alienation for being more proficient than her peers and her teacher did not handle the situation professionally. Unfavorable teaching methods and bullying resulted in Tamara's high anxiety level and demotivation in the classroom. Despite the family's efforts to raise bilingual children, Tamara gave up learning and using German, which generated guilt and frustration in her, poisoning her relationship with the language. Feeling frustrated and guilt-ridden, she embraced English learning instead, which generated positive psychological, emotional, and identity responses in her and thus completely transformed her life and her identities in a way that German could not.

Sarah had learned English and German as a foreign language in formal education because secondary schoolers are required to learn two foreign languages in Hungary. She perceived formal SLA as a struggle and a highly anxiety-producing situation. However, unlike other Hungarian students, she experienced a sojourn while working as an au pair in Sweden where she also learned the local language and had a Swedish boyfriend. The experience was transformative for her: upon returning home, she decided to pursue a BA program in English Studies and later she took up learning Russian to complete a minor in the language.

*I was tested whether I had memorized the vocabulary at home or not and received a bad grade if I took a grammatical mistake or misspelled a word. **Language learning started to look like other classes I was generally tired of, such as Math, which made me dislike English.***

*... [Later in high school] I can recall **feeling incredibly anxious** to make a grammatical mistake not only in front of the native speakers but the English teacher too. In that period of my language-learning journey, I started to connect the English language with the anxiety of performing well, of*

*not making any grammatical errors. ... I moved to **Sweden** to become an au pair. ... not only the level of my English proficiency started to enhance significantly, as I could only use English to express myself, but I also started to **'think in English'**. ... **Influenced by the culture and the people**, I had spent time with, this other self was imbued with ideas of feminism, the importance of community, and positivity. What is more, while in Hungary I used to remain in my comfort zone by preferring to communicate with the circle of my friends and family, **in the foreign environment** by encountering people from various ethnicities and countries with diverse ideas and beliefs, **I noticed that I was acting like an extrovert when I used English.** (bold by author)*

Moving to Sweden and thus abandoning the old socialization context (i.e., Hungarian formal education) replete with negative social and psychological experiences was a liberating experience for Sarah because in the new socialization context, English learning and use centered around successful communication, meeting people from diverse linguacultural contexts using ELF as intercultural communication, and seeing the world from new perspectives, which enhanced her international posture (Yashima 2009) as an English speaker, shaped her identities, and impacted her life choices. This transformative experience reduced her language anxiety and boosted her linguistic confidence, ultimately motivating her to learn more languages. The transformation she went through in Sweden was linguistic, psychological, social, and cultural, shaping her various identities and generating positive psychological and emotional responses in her. Motivated by the experience, she decided to enroll in the BA in English Studies Program and learn Russian. After graduation, she landed a job in which she could utilize the various languages she spoke.

To experience positive transformation along with positive emotional, psychological, and identity responses to SLA, Tamara left behind the world of German and embraced the favorable emotional, psychological, and social transformative potential and identities afforded by English while Sarah left Hungary to experience SLA as a liberating and eye-opening experience in Sweden that later transformed her identities and her life. The two studies delineated above pinpoint how early and late language socialization has a transformative impact on the L2 learning and life trajectories of multilingual speakers and how changing language socialization contexts interwoven with novel experiences and processes can be a liberating experience for language learners.

The post-structuralist view of identity and emotions in SLA

The post-structuralist view of successful L2 learning is not related to proficiency levels and test results; rather, it is construed in terms of how **meaningful and transformative SLA** is for learners, generating emotional responses to SLA in learners (Fekete 2020, Kramsch 2009). This points out **the embodied nature of language learning** involving learners' brain, mind, and body (Damasio 1994). Kramsch (2009) put forth two interpretations of L2 learning and use as symbolic activities.

On the one hand, **language use is symbolic** because language consists of a set of symbols that represent the social and psychological reality of a speech community agreed upon by social convention. When language learners use the L2 to conform to linguistic and cultural conventions, they are granted symbolic power to enter a historical speech community. However, conforming to such conventions confines SLA by language learners to conventional L2 use. On the other hand, being non-native speakers of the L2, language learners may have ideas and thoughts they have never had before, and oftentimes these subjective meaning-making processes do not follow the conventions agreed upon by the L2 community, providing learners with symbolic space and freedom to subvert conventions and create their subjective ideas, dreams, fears, and projections associated with the L2, the L2 culture or the L2-speaking community. The two types of symbolic language use point out that language and culture are intertwined in SLA and that SLA is embodied triggering a range of emotions in multilingual speakers.

L2 learners heavily draw on their **imagination** to enter new communities using the L2 when they conform to rules or when they create their subjective associations, meanings, ideas, fears, desires, and aspirations related to the L2 or the L2-speaking community, thus utilizing both types of symbolic language use (Kramersch 2009, Norton 2013). This resonates with Anderson's (1983: p. 48) idea that people live in an imagined community. In the same vein, Wenger (2000) proposed the concept of the community of practice that individuals seek to be part of. Both concepts point out that individuals draw on their imagination to belong to certain social, cultural, professional, and linguistic communities.

Language learners invest in their identities when they decide to learn and use a new language, pointing out their **desire for self-fulfillment in and through languages** (Kramersch 2009, Kristeva 1980). Some learners embrace the linguistic, emotional, and psychological transformation afforded by the new language along with the sociocultural dimensions encoded in it. Learners displaying a desire to fulfill themselves and their lives via languages draw on the transformative capacity of the new language that enables them to become a "different" person when speaking the L2 while freeing them from the linguacultural limitations implanted in their L1 and L1 culture.

Fekete (2018, 2020, 2023c) coined the term **the language learner's imagined L2 habitus** to point out how some learners speak, think, feel, and behave differently in the L2 compared to how they would do so in their L1.

*Sometimes when I use English... I feel that I am **a different person**. It is like **play-acting**. When you speak in a foreign language, you **want to sound as native as possible** and in order to do so, you **act differently** because you act. And that's like **another version of you**. When I use English, I feel like I'm **thinking differently**. I think I can express myself in English better. I can **talk more freely**, which gives me **more confidence**. When I am abroad and use English..., it feels like **a fresh start**.*

*I am **louder in English, my Korean voice is higher, I act more feminine**, and I am not so loud. **My English voice is a lot higher pitched**; my Hungarian, I think, is a lot deeper. Because of that **I always feel it is a lot friendlier and warmer** if you see what I mean, more welcoming. (bold by author)*

These learner statements point out how imagined and real-life experiences shape multilingual speakers' identities that act upon the way they speak, think, feel, or behave when switching to their L2 (Fekete 2020). Multilingual speakers embracing the transformative potential of the L2 act upon their desire to fulfill themselves and reconstruct their lives and identities via the new language on which they draw as a novel way of self-expression (Kramersch 2009). For example, Tamara embraced the psychological, sociocultural, emotional, and professional transformation that English provided her with resulting in her abandoning the realm of German. Similarly, Sarah cherished the transformation she underwent in Sweden, and she acted upon these processes when returning to Hungary.

However, some multilingual individuals firmly deny or reject any transformation (to be) experienced in and via SLA. Instead, they embrace the familiar meaning-making processes embedded in their mother tongue and culture. The linguistic, social, or cultural identities of multilingual speakers are threatened by the transformative capacity of the new language in which L2 sociocultural and ideological perspectives are encoded. Their refusal to embrace any L2-related transformation only indexes the magnitude of the transformative potential of SLA potentially impacting the multilingual individual's various identities (Kramersch 2009). The following excerpt from a student's linguistic autobiography pinpoints the learner's desire to fulfill himself via his mother tongue and mother culture.

*I cannot think about any other country, which I would call "home." This is the place where I grew up. **I laugh, cry, love, grieve, and think about everything in Hungarian**. I love our culture, including gastronomy, folklore, literature, and all that. I cannot imagine establishing a family abroad. I know that if I do that, then my children might not, but my grandchildren would eventually lose their*

*Hungarian identity. I do not want this. **I am a proud Magyar [Hungarian]**, even my mother's last name is 'Magyar', and so **I will be a Magyar until I die.** (bold by author)*

Researchers (Fekete 2020, Kramsch 2009, Ótott 2023) confirmed that (type 1 or 2) **desire** is an important and inherent emotional response to SLA. Related to desire, a sense of **freedom** was reported to be another significant emotional response resulting from a desire to achieve self-fulfillment via language.

*I often feel that it is **more comfortable** to use it [English] than Hungarian.
Well, sometimes I feel that **I can express myself much more accurately in English than in my mother tongue.***

These learners utilize **conceptual blending** (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) to draw on the English meaning of freedom instead of the Hungarian meaning of the word. The historical-cultural connotation of freedom in Hungarian is freedom from restraint and freedom from domination while the English meaning of the word is associated with the freedom to act, do something, and become a person one desires (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/freedom>). In this case, conceptual blending facilitates the multilingual speaker's desire to feel, think, speak, and act differently in the L2 in a way that is liberating for the individual. Therefore, the feeling of freedom experienced by these English learners does not stem from their proficiency level being at the upper B2 level but from the cultural connotation of the words in English.

Pain is yet another emotional response reported by L2 learners, since with a new language always comes a new consciousness (Lacan 1977), which may be a painful experience for learners. This emotional response results from the first type of symbolic language use requiring learners to conform to linguistic, social, and cultural conventions when using the L2. The following testimony is like a religious confession imbued with powerful emotions.

*The other activity when I prefer my second language is writing my diary or just putting my thoughts and ideas on a piece of paper. Sometimes it is painful to recognize your mistakes, but if you admit them in a different language: they are not your **sins** anymore. You confess them and do not at the same time, and it gives you relief. (bold in original)*

Related to pain, L2 identities are often a place of **struggle** as described by Sarah when she returned to her home environment being a 'different' person.

*I was **struggling to identify myself with either the Hungarian or the English self**: I could neither entirely associate myself with my former Hungarian self, constrained both linguistically and culturally... **My English self was different from the Swedish people** because it adopted ideas and beliefs from various cultures. At that time, I also managed to learn Swedish on an elementary level and dated a Swedish boy, thus I was constantly struggling to identify myself. **I was not satisfied with my Hungarian self or my English (or multilingual) self.** (bold by author)*

Sarah's testimony sheds light on the heterogeneous, fragmented, incomplete, and contradictory nature of identity, especially due to intense linguacultural stimuli. The above-presented excerpts from different studies (Fekete 2018, 2020, 2023c) point out that SLA is embodied and that it acts upon learners' various identities resulting in different emotional, psychological, and identity responses. Researchers (Fekete 2020, Kramsch, 2009; Ótott, 2023) revealed that **desire, freedom, pain, and struggle are recurring emotional and identity responses to SLA.**

Conclusions

My interdisciplinary research approach allowed me to combine and thus reconcile two seemingly contradictory research approaches: traditional IDs research focusing on a select of factors and holistic research into individuals and their identities examining special cases. By involving a relatively high number of participants (between 14 and 38) in my case studies, I could reveal patterns, calculate trends and frequencies, and thus draw some general conclusions from the emerging patterns. On the other hand, the collected qualitative datasets shed light on the whys and hows of the trends explaining subtle details and idiosyncrasies.

Drawing on CDST, I integrated identity with other individual differences research, which is a major development in the classification and interpretation of individual differences. I construe **identity construction as a complex dynamic system of perpetually interacting individual differences that respond to learner-internal changes as well as to environmental stimuli**. In addition, I detected **different behavioral patterns in offline and online education** and pointed out how key properties of complex dynamic systems emerge in the psychology of learners and teachers.

Language ecology focuses on how past and present socialization experiences and processes as macro- and micro-contextual stimuli impact the individual. In the field of SLA, ecological linguists examine the impact of the language learner's past L1 and L2 socialization processes on SLA and the interaction between past experiences, present processes, and future goals. Drawing on the ecological perspective in SLA, my studies pointed out **how past formal and informal L1 and L2 socialization processes shape multilingual learners' language learning trajectories, motivation, and linguacultural profiles, as well as their emotional, psychological, and identity responses to the various languages they speak**.

Post-structuralist research into SLA looks at how multilingual individuals construct consciously or unconsciously and drawing on their imagination and real-life experiences their various identities in the different languages they speak in response to their symbolic language use and their desire to fulfill themselves in and via languages as well as in response to social interactions. Such transformative experiences trigger emotional responses in learners pointing out the fact that SLA is embodied. My research showed that **desire, pain, struggle, and freedom are recurring, powerful, and transformative emotional and identity responses to SLA**. Consequently, **the language learner's imagined L2 habitus** points out how multilingual individuals speak, think, feel, and behave differently using different languages.

In conclusion, the three approaches presented in the paper originating in different disciplines have the following important principles in common. They take a holistic look at multilingual individuals in their entirety and complexity. They regard learner-internal factors and environmental stimuli including the languages spoken by the individual as a dynamic and perpetually interacting relationship that has a major impact on SLA.

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The role of everyday stressors on primary students' language learning

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Abstract

Paper deals with the role of stress in the process of learning of pupils, younger students at primary school. It is based on literature review, and the term stress is discussed in general, as a condition in the environment as well as an internal condition leading to specific responses of an individual. It is a complex topic described from neuroscientific, biological, pedagogical and psychological point of view. The main goal is to describe stress and identify different resources of students' stress and to refer how various levels of everyday negative pressure and anxiety can affect individual's cognitive processes, his emotional state and well-being, as well as behaviour in school environment. In this review, following issues are examined: what stress is, how it functions and what kinds of stressors are experienced in primary students, what kinds of symptoms are associated with it, how a reduced ability to regulate negative emotions as stress and anxiety impacts foreign language learning, and what coping methods and techniques can be applied for reducing foreign language anxiety in school environment.

Keywords: *emotions and stress, younger students, school environment, foreign language learning, coping methods*

Introduction

Teachers are responsible for creating school environment, either positive or negative and affect the process of learning in schools. Student's feelings about education has significant impact on the cognitive reactions. Emotions and learning generate unique entity working together (Walker Tileston 2005).

It is a proven fact that emotions play an important role in individual's motivation and learning. We often listen to the complaints of teachers that students are not motivated to learn. There arises a question why it is so but much more important is what we as teachers can do with it. The student's decision whether to engage in the learning is mostly inner conscious process, however teachers can influence that decision by their approach to teaching and learning, by creating supportive environment. Goleman (1995) emphasizes responsibility of the teachers who have to provide conditions for care and learning.

Emotion can be explained as physiological activity increasing or decreasing in intensity that is demonstrated by feelings, characteristic behaviour, or expressions of face. It consists of feeling, arousal, purposive and expressive components coordinating together. Coming out of these definitions, we can distinguish physiological, neurological, or cognitive theories. According to Singer's cognitive theory, identity of the emotion depends on cognitive judgement of the situation, while physiological excitement contributes only to emotion's intensity. Psychological arousal refers to degree of alertness and awareness to the outside world. Neuroscience operates with terms primary emotions, they are preorganized, automatic, arising from sensorial experience, and secondary emotions which require higher order processing and are acquired through learning and experience (Kamenická & Kráľová 2021,

Garrett 2009, Zillmer, Spiers & Culbertson 2008, Lefrancois 1997). Sousa (2001) and Jensen (2008) emphasize impact of emotions on the brain. Reduced brain's ability to process cognitive information depends on emotional responses. Neuroscience also confirmed impact of stress on an individual's ability to take advantage of learning opportunities. Expectations of negative possibility of failure affect cognitive processes as memory, retrieval, attention, perception, thinking, speech, creativity. When students feel threatened, they operate in mode where learning can take place with much difficulty. Goleman (1995) said that stress make us stupid because an individual under the stress cannot learn, make decisions clearly, or remember. What stress is and how affects students at primary school is going to be discussed next.

Anxiety and stress

When a student does not feel secure and comfortable in the school environment, full advantage of learning cannot be expected. Stress will inhibit the urge to explore and interact with others, thereby the process of learning and development of skills is inhibited. In general, it is a pressure person feels from something happening around him or to him.

It has to be taken in consideration that there is a difference between acute stress which arises from factors that have a clear start and end (e.g, a pupil is afraid of test) and chronic stress, based on factors which are long lasting without clear end (e.g., learning disorders, neglect). Each brain and body respond to the stressors differently (Whiting et al. 2021).

Neuroscience emphasizes significant role of the brain concerning emotions, especially limbic system, amygdala, and hippocampus. Limbic system is a very complex structure of nerve pathways and networks which governs several processes in the body directed to self-preservation, the expression of fear, anger, and pleasure. In educational context, it is linked to establish memories. The amygdala is a small formation of grey matter inside each cerebral hemispheres involved in emotions, mood, has affective value and plays a crucial role in emotional processing. It may involve responding to emotionally significant stimuli in general but most research has been focused on its role in fear and anxiety. Hippocampus concerns behaviour governed by emotions, is connected to amygdala and associated with memories. Fear is a well-researched primary emotion, which is conditioned through loud noise, shock, or trauma. The first-order emotions trigger rapid and automatic action with minimal cognitive effort in perceiving and imaging and are often connected to early development. They include interest, happiness, enjoyment, sadness, anger, disgust, fear etc. Social emotions depend on learning, they interact with individual's cognitive perception of the social setting, for example, shame, embarrassment, pride could be experienced in social interaction. Complex emotion schemas involve interaction among feelings and higher cognitive processes such as thoughts, strategies, goals responding to complex combination of emotions. Emotionally experienced feeling is still linked through the limbic system. However, second-order emotions are processed at higher cognitive levels and arrive to limbic system via different cortical pathways than primary emotions, which come through sensory experience (Zillmer, Spiers & Culbertson 2008, Izard 2011, Conkbayir & Pascal 2018, Kamenická & Králová 2021). Garrett (2009) distinguishes between fear as an emotional reaction to a specific imminent threat and anxiety as a concern about future uncertainty, it is a feeling characterized by varying degrees of worry. The aim of the paper is not to look for differences in terms anxiety and stress, both terms work with negative stream of emotions and in literature are often used as synonyms.

Jensen (2008) describes stress as a body reaction to a perception, not to reality. It occurs when person realizes reactions coming out of experience on unfavourable situation or person. Individual also realizes his emotions are out of control or loses control in the situation and goals can be compromised. If person changes perception, changes a level of own stress. Level of stress can be influenced by outer situations and individual's view of them, for someone it can be stimulating, for other disturbing

(Brobeck et al. 2007, Whiting et al. 2021). For emergence of stress is enough to expect negative possibility and imagination of failure.

Baqutayan (2015), coming out of scientific literature, distinguishes different meanings of stress. First, stress is an external condition coming out of any environmental stimuli that causes unpleasant feelings, arousal, or tension in a person. Second, it is the inner mental state of tension, which is associated with subjective response of an individual. These processes can support individual's growth, but on the other hand, also produce mental strain. Finally, stress as a reaction to negative events impacts the body as well. These physical reactions can function as a support of psychological or behavioural effort at coping.

We can conclude that stress is a condition in the environment which has unusual requirements on the organism as well as internal condition when the individual responds to a stressful circumstance. Whether it is negative pressure to the person depends on individual differences in perception of the event or in physiological reactions (Garrett 2009, Whiting et al. 2021).

Neuroscientists look at the stress from the point of brain functioning. Joëls and Baram (2009) describe stressor as any potential or actual disruption of an individual's environment perceived by specific regions in brain. Stress mediators are bind to receptor target and act on specific neuronal populations resulting in unique effects, they form the stress response which let an individual to adjust to the changing setting. Stress demands immediate changes in behaviour and modifies future behaviour. It is reached by the modulation of neuronal functioning at several levels of the CNS, which is responsible for learning, decision-making, memory as well as hormonal and emotional responses. Different responses are result of different types of stressors, for example psychological ones such as school exam, shyness, embarrassment, involve stress mediators in regions of the brain that subserve learning and memory (the hippocampus), decision making (the prefrontal cortex) and emotion (the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex). Authors emphasize that multiple influences as stress duration, genes, context, sex, age affect response through multiple mediators such as noradrenaline, cortisol, serotonin, dopamine, vasopressin etc.

As mentioned above, the human body is individually responsive to the situations through neurotransmitters, stress hormones change the way how person thinks, feels, and acts. Stress is a known inhibitor to learning due to a cortisol hormone, which is released in the moment of threat. High level of cortisol can destroy brain cells and weaken connections, result is in reduced capacity to learn, especially interfered with perception, weaken memory and retrieval. In students, frequently exposed to stressful experiences cortisol level remains raised higher and longer and has significant impact on immune system and the whole body (e.g., often is reported a cold sore in students, Whiting et al. 2021). Chronic stress weakens ability to decide what is important and what is not. The connection between various cells depends on how the young student is treated (Conkbayir & Pascal 2018, Zajacová 2009). Another stress hormone, adrenaline, affects blood circulation by increasing heart rate, rate of breathing, sugar metabolism and metabolic rate in general and prepares the body to fight-or-flee responding. In stressful situation the release of adrenaline might result in modulation of memory proportional to its importance and contributes to encode the emotionally arousing events. Level of noradrenaline affects sensory stimulation, attention, formation, and retrieval from working to long-term memory (Kamenická & Kráľová 2021).

Individuals are sensitive to environmental influences in different ways and genetic inheritance play a role as well in some degree of resilience or vulnerability (Whiting et al. 2021). In literature, we can meet the terms orchid children and dandelion ones in connection with adjusting to the stress in early years. Orchid children are defined as highly sensitive, more liable to the environmental stressors and dandelion ones are able to survive just about any set of circumstances. Most children are generally tolerant to the stresses of childhood, but we can find the group of children who are too sensitive and anxious, and they are unable to cope with it even later in the school environment (Featherstone 2017). Boyce (2019) explains that epigenetic processes in which environmental cues regulate the expression of genetic

differences are likely regulators of individuals' susceptibility to environmental influences. Science also suggests that genes and environment contribute to the emergence of above-mentioned types of students differing in temperaments and stress sensitivity interactively, but there was no real idea until recently how this interaction happens.

Stress can be categorised on the scale from positive, good stress (eustress), that is essential part of healthy development and beneficial for students. A rise of stress hormones like cortisol, adrenaline and noradrenaline helps students to practise stress management in the safe situations and enhance learning. Then there is tolerable stress, which is not easy to manage but, students can cope with it if they have supportive relationships and stable environment.

Negative stress (distress) occurs when students feel danger, fear, rejection, or failure. They are confronted with a problem which do not want to solve, don't perceive problem solution, do not have enough resources for problem solving, have little or no control over the situation, experience repeating stress. Finally, toxic stress is dangerous and damaging type of stress, particularly if the student has little or no adult support. For younger children it can include physical and mental abuse, extreme poverty, neglect. Development of the brain can be affected by level of neglect and can cause the change in the whole mechanism of responding (Featherstone 2017, Jensen 2008). When brain activates defensive mechanisms, it is important for survival but not for learning and it causes inability to solve problem situation. Identification of the nature of the stress can help to cope with it. Whiting et al. (2021) emphasize that student's level of stress response in each educational situation influences his learning capacities in complex ways.

Displays of anxiety and stress in primary students

Children are affected by stress as well as adults. However, students at primary school experience different factors causing stress, and it affects how they respond to new stressors emerging in educational context (Whiting et al. 2021). At the beginning of compulsory school attendance, they need to take a new role and adapt to new situation, which generate stress. Change of daily routine, new teachers, rules, and duties are all challenges they have to face to. Flores-Buils and Andrés-Roqueta (2023) found out that level of stress is higher in the first years of primary school and school adaptation is stressful to all students equally doesn't matter what's their sex. There was no significant difference in level of stress perceived by boys and girls even later in higher grades. Brobeck et al. (2007), Leung et al (2010) support findings that stress from schoolwork increases with age as in boys so in girls, and they experience a strong pressure to attain good academic achievement.

The individual perceives the same situation differently, evaluates it and reacts in various ways. In general, stressors may come from environment as well from student's nature and depends on individual sensitivity to stressful situations. Brobeck et al. (2007) point to the fact that pupils usually express the symptoms of stress openly, but there are also pupils exhibiting no symptoms. Müller de Morais (2019) considers anxiety or stress as a reaction reflected relatively independently in 3 systems, in motoric behaviour, verbal cognitive reactions, and physiological reactions. These systems can be described by particular symptoms:

Motoric behaviour is displayed in unpleasant and stressful situations, in which anxious students tend to avoid them, escape, postpone difficult tasks; ask for help, ask somebody to solve the problem instead of them; express aggressive, harmful behaviour including shouting, swearing, accusing others, mocking, threatening oneself or others till physical attacking, fighting; or freeze from fear, be unable to move; express nervous behaviour like biting the nails, inability to sit calmly, avoiding direct eye contact, laughing, crying etc.

Verbal-cognitive reactions express anxiety in thinking, they are based on worries arising in mind and usually aimed at future; negative thoughts come to the mind as negative statements which come automatically without conscious control and lead to giving up, resignation, feelings of helplessness,

catastrophic imaginations or to complaining. Worrying increases inner tension and purposeless of activity (what if), negative thoughts and imagination lead to regret and resignation (I am not..., I cannot..., I will not...).

Physiological reactions are represented by unpleasant physical symptoms like tension, shaking, irregular breathing, sweating, fast heart rate, dry mouth, tightened muscles, pale or red/hot skin etc. In psychology is well-known term "fight or flight" response, which points to an automatic physiological reaction of a body to the dangerous, threatening, or frightening situations (Whiting et al. 2021). Tiredness is the most common psychosomatic symptom in pupils, also stomach-ache in 6-7-year-olds, and headache is increasing with age as well. Younger students often express physical reactions, but with getting older reactions become more of psychological origin (Brobeck et al. 2007). In fact, thoughts, emotions, physical reactions, and behaviour affect each other mutually.

Russell (2000, in Zajacová 2009) describes various symptoms of distress, which has been divided into the following categories. Physical symptoms are headache, back pain, tiredness teeth grinding, exhaustion, stomach-ache, cold, sleeplessness, increased temperature, rashes, facial redness. Emotional symptoms are manifested by crying, fear, anxiety, nervousness, depression, suffering, tension, mood changes, irritability. Mental symptoms are lack of interest/motivation, negative attitude, forgetfulness, lack of concentration/low attention, confusion, indifference, disgust, lack of creativity. Social symptoms are lack of care of yourself, lack of social contacts, isolation, loneliness. These symptoms are result of various stressors as reported in research findings presented in the paper of Brobeck et al. (2007). Students from 8 to 13 years have seen stressful that parents don't spend enough time with them, they have nothing to do, they need to get good achievement. Among the stressors that affect primary student were affirmed a feeling of loss, as well as fear of conflicts in relation to parents and friends.

Students differ from each other in their ability to cope with different degrees of stress and symptoms. On one side there are calm and controlled students who show little response to stress and are able to manage it. They recover immediately and show no after-effects. On the other side, there are students who respond badly to even very low-level of stress. They can display highly externalised behaviour mentioned above. The psychologists and neuroscientists exploring the effects of early stress, such as violence and neglect, are finding some evidence that sensitivity to cortisol is built into our individual genome, giving each of us a personal stress response level. Students with naturally higher level of cortisol and less effective way of managing it can pose problems for teachers. They often suffer from such difficulties or conditions as anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), heightened risk-taking and antisocial, or violent behaviour. They may need support and extra time to prepare for and recover from stressful situations and events (Featherstone 2017). There are also findings that children who show the biggest response to new stressors are those who have either the highest, or the lowest levels of life-long stress exposure. Children who show the lowest response to new stressors are those who have experienced intermediate levels of life-long stress (Ellis & Boyce, 2008). In 5-year-old interviewed Swedish children, the stress was associated with fear of being late for school; feeling of not having enough time for schoolwork, fear of being unable to produce satisfactory results. Particular mental symptoms described by pupils were sadness, nervousness, anger, lack of concentration, forgetfulness, and carelessness. It also needs to be emphasized that due to the age of children, they had perceived acute, not chronic stress connected to specific situation. However, everyday problems may have a great impact on individual's well-being and health (Brobeck et al. 2007).

Benjamir and Walz (1990, in Baqutayan 2015) see stress as interaction among the nature of the stressor (manageable everyday pressures or life-threatening situations), the environment (the school climate, interpersonal relationships), and the individual's sensitivity to stress (health, support, resilience). Individual differences cause that what is positive challenge for one student can be under or over stimulated for another one and it causes reducing effective learning. Individual's response may vary from day to day, even hour to hour depending on his appraisal of the situation and available coping

strategies. During exposed to high stress, students are more distracted by the environment, and it is difficult to be involved in planning and attentional control, they are more likely engaged in habitual behaviour due to reduced executive functions (Whiting et al. 2021). However, teacher support plays a key role in the well-being of the students in the educational context.

Impact of anxiety on foreign language learning and coping methods

Acquisition of mother tongue is relatively natural process. From the very beginning, a child is exposed to language, uses language for communicative purposes in everyday life, learns to differentiate all the elements and levels of language gradually due to cognitive speech development. However, situation is changing when new language, different from mother tongue, comes to the play. Foreign language learning can cause problems and be a source of stress when student comes into the contact with foreign language mostly or only in the school during the instruction.

Level of stress and anxiety may have negative impact on student's language learning and performance (Russell 2020, Leung et al 2010). Kráľová (2019) describes predictors of successful foreign language learning which relate to individual characteristics. She distinguishes cognitive factors like language capabilities and learning aptitude, learning styles. Affective factors, for example motivation, attitudes, self-esteem, inhibition, anxiety. Then metacognitive and finally demographic factors. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 128) conceive foreign language anxiety "as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process".

The term language anxiety is more often used in context of language learning instead of the term stress and is recognized as a mental block against foreign language learning related to the student's negative emotional responses towards language acquisition (Kráľová 2019) and can be defined as a situation specific anxiety developed from negative language experience and difficulties which leads to anticipation of further ones. Consequently, students have difficulties in processing linguistic material, have lower academic success, have disrupted social-communicative process, or lower willingness to communicate (Kamenická & Kráľová 2021). Negative emotions in foreign language context have various effects in worsen cognition and achievement, negative attitudes towards language, decreased willingness to communicate and decreased self-confidence.

When anxiety is limited to a specific situation such as using foreign language, the term specific anxiety is used. General anxiety means that student feels insecure, or tense in various situations, not specific ones and we can also use the term stress. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) found that feelings, psychological and physiological symptoms, behaviour of the anxious foreign language students are the same as for any specific anxiety (discussed and supported by literature review in previous part). They feel worried, even feared and it leads to limitation in cognitive abilities as thinking, memory, attention. They have difficulty to concentrate, have palpitations, are forgetful, freezing, trembling, sweat. They manifest avoiding behaviour such as postponing homework, tasks, even missing classes. Main domains causing problems and interfering language learning are listening and speaking. Anxious students have difficulty to discriminate the sounds, structures of the message, to grasp the content of the message, to get meaning or idea what the teacher says. They are often afraid of speaking because of inadequate speaking ability, and they also believe that only correct speaking is good speaking, it causes tension or frustration.

Fear of negative evaluation of language performance, fear of failure come into the count in anxious students as well and may occur in any social, evaluative situations where student's self-confidence is missing (Leung et al 2010). Whiting et al. (2021) point to that the degree of student's displayed stress in a particular situation can be influenced by whether a student knows that will be judged by the teacher or by schoolmates (social threat) and whether he knows how to complete a task (feeling of fear). This

may potentially affect his perception of learning. Hembree (1988, in Lefrancois, 1997) summarized 562 studies that have investigated test anxiety (not specifically oriented on language learning). He came to conclusion that test anxiety causes poor test performance, is related to lower self-esteem, and has harmful effect on learning.

It is crucial to point up that the goals of the teaching the foreign language to primary students at the age of 5 to 8 years are to get positive attitude towards language and to build up individual's language ego as a confident foreign language user. A young learner has to recognize and come to the experience that foreign language is a natural part of everyday life. A load of language content at this age is less important, foreign language should be acquired through playful activities.

Managing stressful situations lead to survival and involves processes such as detecting, appraising, or dealing with them. Students face to threats and challenges in education all the time, they usually try to make any effort to eliminate or prevent all these stressors, based on individual characteristics, they do better or worse. Researchers have identified variety in coping responses to stress, explain how coping can help individuals and why stressors result in bad health, illnesses, mental disorders or resilience and satisfaction (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner 2023, Baqutayan 2015). Coping with stress is a basic adaptive process of everyone.

The role of a teacher is to detect stressful situations in the class and to develop methods which create, improve pupils coping skills because they are not able to find out appropriate ones themselves due to their age. According to Flores-Buils and Andrés-Roqueta (2023), resilience depends on student's individual variables such as self-esteem, empathy, introspection, and problem-solving capacity; and contextual variables such as supportive relationships with peers, security, and protection of adults (parents, teachers) who exhibit affection, openness, support, positive models, and should ensure the absence of stressors.

In general, parents (Leung et al 2010) and teachers can help students learn how to manage the existing stressful or anxious situations and make the learning process less stressful (Russell 2020). They can see many of the negative effects mentioned above in their students. Therefore, teachers should consider whether stress or anxiety generate student's behaviour or poor student's achievement is a result of low language abilities, weak motivation, and inadequate background. Teachers may use various specific techniques and apply effective language learning strategies for inhibiting and eliminating anxious manifestation (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986). Lefrancois (1997) emphasizes a teacher's role in reducing pressure and preventing student's failure by changing his attitudes to the language, motivating him, and focusing attention on the task, not at negative feelings about language learning.

There is importance to create inclusive, secure, and supportive environment where students are allowed to express the range of emotions also those negative and can communicate them in the class. Talking about insecure situations can help to decrease challenging situations and reduce stress. Resilience as the ability or capacity to recover from and adapt to the stress, to the difficult conditions (Whiting et al. 2021, Flores-Buils & Andrés-Roqueta, 2023) can be built up through promoting close bonds, using warm style of interaction, expressing realistic expectations of success, setting clear rules and norms, providing decision-making, giving students the feedback. Also, classroom environment like reduced noise, heat, set the appropriate light, seating etc. are important conditions. Brobeck et al. (2007) support the idea that high sound level at school cause stress in students. Appropriate way is to give some time to cope with fear and anxiety though useful techniques such as stop, think, take a breath; or counting, singing, allowing a student to watch situation from a safe distance, not pushing him into the response etc. There are coping methods which help to control physical, and physiological reactions through relaxation procedure such as easy exercises, activities for eliminating mental tension and worries, physical relaxation reducing tiredness, using soft balls for pressing in the hands, playing with breathing by using balloons, calming counting, calming breath, exposure to fresh air etc. (Müller de Morais 2019). Breathing exercises can be performed anywhere, anytime, and easily included during

teaching and learning. Bothe, Grignon, & Olness (2014, in Whiting et al. 2021) found out significant improvement of 8-years-old students in coping with everyday stressors after practicing deep breathing for 4 months only 10 minutes daily. Khng (2017) came to conclusion that taking deep breath before a math test significantly reduced self-reported feelings of anxiety and improved test performance in 10-year-old students. Deep breathing reduces anxiety in test-like situations, creating a better state-of-mind by enhancing the regulation of adaptive-maladaptive thoughts during the test, allowing for better performance. According to these studies, deep breathing may help primary school students to be more resilient to stress.

We can reduce negative thoughts through techniques such as the stop, box of worries, switch of the tape, throw it away, play in groups etc. Finally, in primary school, we can involve art activities, where students can express and deal with not only negative feelings through painting, drawing, music, dancing, using poems and stories (Zajacová 2009, Walker Tileston 2005). Russell (2020) offers suggestions and techniques useful also for primary students who experience any level of foreign language anxiety. Teachers can work with students' fear by let them express anxiety not only orally (verbalized), but also by movements, various music forms, fine art, role-plays, hands-on activities, watching short videos and other attractive formats in the target language. Today, students follow youtubers, influencers and that's the way how to involve students in language learning with elimination of negative feelings.

Conclusion

Stress and language anxiety in young students were discussed in the paper. It is a very complex issue involving neuroscientific, biological, and psychological theories explaining what is going on in the brain and body when student is exposed to negative emotions and how it affects his thinking, emotional state, and behaviour, especially in connection with foreign language learning. Stress refers to the external stimuli from the environment as well as to the internal condition and individual's perception, his responses to the emotional events. Therefore, it is hard, even impossible to define all the stressors, which interfere in the learning process and are displayed through various symptoms in individual's behaviour. However, there was an attempt to describe the most significant of them through literature review. Finally, stress and anxiety coping methods and techniques which are applicable in primary school in foreign language learning were presented.

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Linguistic effect of focus projection in the ESP classroom: some pedagogical implications

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Abstract

Placing emphasis on words, which in turn spread this emphasis to the preceding word, is a phenomenon typical of English. This is technically known as focus projection, or projection. Since projection as defined above is realised in and through speaking, the relation between projection and speaking is studied in the context of ESP. Due to the lack of enough practice, speaking appears to constitute a challenge for most ESP students. Although practice remains the best solution, the question is how to practice, or how to encourage students, in an artificial environment. I define artificial environment as an environment where learners of English are not surrounded by native speakers, so the former do not have the opportunity to practice, i.e. to speak, English on a regular everyday basis. Hence, a research question emerges naturally, namely can projection be used to facilitate speaking? This paper studies the relevance of focus projection in the ESP classroom. The introductory section exemplifies the concept of projection, sets the objectives of the study, and briefly describes the methods that are used. The main objective is to study if awareness of focus projection on the part of the teacher can serve as a tool to facilitate learning, especially speaking, in an ESP context. The second section deals with theoretical and practical, including pedagogical, implications, and is followed by empirical data on the basis of which these implications are further discussed. The concluding section continues the discussion by lending weight to the constraints the teacher faces if they apply the above presented ideas but also reinforces the practical benefit of encouraging students to attach emphasis to particular words in the sentence.

Keywords: *linguistic affect, emphasis, focus projection, ESP, pedagogical implications*

Introduction

Two of the phrases in the headline of this article are in need of further clarification: *focus projection* and *ESP*. It is clear that in the context of teaching foreign languages, more precisely English, at the University of National and World Economy (UNWE), ESP is definitely much more familiar of the two; it stands for *English for Specific Purposes*, and in the context specified above it relates to teaching a particular type of English, as it were, especially with respect to terminology, style, register, etc., to students of International Relations, Economics, Tourism, and Law. Focus projection could be, on the other hand, completely unfamiliar, therefore a working definition of this phenomenon is in order.

In the oral medium of language, we place *emphasis* on particular words but we do not treat all words so. This is fairly obvious, but let us explore what follows as a result of emphasising certain words when we speak. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that in the sentence *He won the elections*. the word *elections* is emphasised. This means that the word in question is somehow important for the speaker: for example, it could represent new information or the most informative part of new information. There

could well be other reasons behind emphasising this particular word, but the ones mentioned suffice to illustrate focus projection.

Further, we assume that the speaker uses the sentence above in response to *Why is he celebrating?*. In terms of old and new information, in *He won the elections*. Both *won* and *elections* constitute new information. Thus, the speaker can place emphasis on both words but he decides to emphasise *elections* only.

The word *elections* projects, as it were, its emphasis to the preceding non-function word, i.e. *won*. This is known as *focus projection*. As a result, *won* is also part of the new information despite the lack of emphasis on it. Technically speaking, *focus projection* refers to accenting a particular word, usually the *object* in a *subject-verb-object clause*, which projects the meaning of the accent – newness, informativeness, importance, etc. – to the preceding (transitive) verb. Thus, the whole extended verb phrase, i.e. the verb and the object, signals newness, informativeness, importance, etc. This intonation pattern is also described in intonation textbooks, for example Wells (2006: 12-13).

Having clarified the most important concepts in this paper, we proceed with the objectives. The main objective is to study the relation between projection and speaking, or more precisely, to study if the teacher's awareness of projection can be used to enhance students' speaking skills in the context of teaching ESP.

To gather empirical data, I used the gaps from gapped listening comprehension exercises. At UNWE, ESP students have a state exam where one of the components is listening comprehension. The students have a gapped version of the recording they listen to, and their task is to fill in the gaps with the missing words which are usually up to four. This is a perception exercise, which actually combines listening comprehension and dictation.

I studied all listening comprehension exercises in Bratanova (2021), focusing on the gaps and the surrounding context of each gap. My motivation behind choosing this source is that since I teach ESP mostly to students of International Relations and European Studies, I am most familiar with this particular ESP field, and Bratanova's (ibid.) textbook is specifically designed for students of these majors. This does not mean that if I had chosen a different ESP textbook, for instance one for students of economics, the empirical results would have been markedly different. Other textbooks with similar listening comprehension exercises include, but are not limited to, Bozoukova et al. (2012) and Boycheva (2016).

Theoretical background

It is clear that focus projection in the sense specified above is part of the intonation of the sentence. Since intonation is, unfortunately, barely paid attention to in foreign language teaching in general and in ESP classes in particular, this also applies to focus projection. This article studies particularly the idea of applying the concept of focus projection in the ESP classroom.

By applying the concept of focus projection in the ESP classroom I do not mean explaining to students what focus projection is or expecting of them to identify the phenomenon. It will be difficult to familiarise ESP students with focus projection but more importantly it is unnecessary. Needless to say, focus projection is a specific phenomenon occurring in specific syntactic contexts, and students need a linguistic background in order to grasp the idea behind it.

Still, it is my firm conviction that awareness of focus projection on the part of the teacher can facilitate the teaching process. First, and this is obvious, the more the teacher knows, the greater the confidence he exudes; hence, it is easier for them to apply their teaching methods in the classroom. Second, and this is specifically related to the line of reasoning developed in this article, the idea of focus projection can be used in speaking exercises.

As discussed above, focus projection is a particular intonation pattern occurring with particular syntactic structures. This means, in turn, that focus projection appears in speaking. And in this day and

age it seems to me that students find speaking especially in a foreign language difficult not only due to the abundance of social media but also to a lack of practice outside the classroom. For instance, students may listen to songs in English, watch movies in English, etc. on a regular basis, but when they go shopping, they hardly use any English. This means that in most cases students are exposed to enough perception exercises at the expense of very few production exercises such as speaking.

Then, the following question arises: given the discussion above, how exactly is focus projection applicable in the ESP classroom? We can safely claim that the SVO word order is one of the most frequently used syntactic structures in English, as discussed, for example, in Dryer (2013). This syntactic structure in particular constitutes the context of focus projection. This means that students will inevitably use SVO sentences when they speak irrespective of whether they identify the sentences as such. What follows is that students will create many focus projection contexts while doing speaking exercises.

Basically, focus projection is one of the manifestations of the lack of a one-to-one correspondence between form and meaning in language. As far as English is concerned, projection has been studied extensively both theoretically and empirically.

Theoretically, projection is the notion on which the *focus-to-accent approach* is based. As can be expected, there are different versions of the model, such as Gussenhoven's (1983a) and Selkirk's (1984, 1995) This approach narrows the gap between the *normal stress view* and the *highlighting view*, to use Ladd's (2008: 215-216) parlance, by incorporating the insights of the two views. According to the normal stress view, e.g. Chomsky and Halle (1968), each sentence has one pattern of accenting; on the other hand, proponents of the highlighting view, e.g. Bolinger (1972) among others, claim that any word can be accented to indicate informativeness, newness, and contrast. The highlighting view also assumes that accent carries meaning. Thus, roughly speaking, the focus-to-accent approach, a term introduced by Gussenhoven (1985: 125), reinterprets normal stress as broad focus, which more or less corresponds to focus projection, and preserves the idea of the highlighting view that accents are meaningful.

Empirically, existence of the phenomenon is demonstrated fairly conclusively by independently conducted experiments by Gussenhoven (1983b), Birch and Clifton (1995), Welby (2003), and Bishop (2011), among others. These studies show that focus projection, though not an obligatory phenomenon, is found in sentences similar in syntactic structure to *He won the elections*. This means that the structure of the sentences used in their experiments consists of, in most cases, apart from the obligatory subject, a transitive verb and a direct object. This is the canonical Subject – Verb – Object (SVO) word order in English. Also, focus projection could be one of the features transferred in language contact situations as demonstrated by Dimitrov (2020).

To conclude this section, I touch upon projection at the textual level. The following passage is taken from Bratanova's (2021: 71, emphasis mine) textbook:

Most of us have heard about United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. But the many other ways the United Nations **affects our lives** are not so well known. The United Nations is central to global efforts to **solve problems** that **challenge humanity**. Cooperating in this effort are more than 30 affiliated organizations, known together as the UN system. Day in day out, the UN and its family of organizations work to **promote respect** for human rights, **protect the environment**, **fight disease** and **reduce poverty**. UN agencies **define the standards** for safe and efficient air travel and help **improve telecommunications** and **enhance consumer protection**. The UN **leads the international campaigns** against drug trafficking and terrorism. Throughout the world, the UN and its agencies **assist refugees**, **set up programs** to **clear landmines**, help **expand food production** and **lead the fight** against AIDS.

The phrases in bold indicate contexts in which focus projection may be realised. Let us assume that the task the students have is to provide an oral summary of the passage. Below I simulate a potential summary given by a student. I also simulate some mistakes that a teacher could expect to find. Again, the phrases in bold indicate focus projection contexts.

United Nations **changes out lives**. Many organizations help the United Nations to **solve different challenges**. These organizations want to **defend human rights, make the standards** for air travel, **fight poverty**. United Nations also is active in other activities, for example refugees, food production, terrorism and others.

I do not claim that the summary I provided above is the optimal example of a student’s summary in terms of grammatical mistakes, content and register. Still, I believe that the simulated example adequately serves the purposes of this paper. The point of the example is not to emphasise possible students’ mistakes but to account for a realistic number of expected focus projection contexts, i.e. instances of (S)VO word order.

As can be seen, neither the original, nor the simulated example lacks focus projection contexts. Other original texts and summaries thereof may vary in the number of focus projection contexts; nevertheless, the point remains: one can hardly produce a text without focus projection contexts.

Methodology

I studied all gapped tasks, the gaps in particular, of all listening comprehension exercises in Bratanova (ibid.). The gaps were analysed with respect to how they relate to projection. That is, my aim was to find out whether the missing words illustrate projection or part of projection, how many of the gaps are part of projection contexts, etc. The results are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of projection contexts among the gaps.

Total number of gaps	Total number of projection contexts	(Part of) verb missing	(Part of) object missing	Both verb and object missing
311	64 (20.57%)	25	29	11

Before we continue with the discussion of the results, two caveats are in order. Since this study focuses on the awareness of the teacher as far as projection is concerned, I did not take the recordings into account. The second caveat can be seen to a certain extent as a corollary of the first: I did not exclude narrow focus contexts, in which projection cannot occur by definition. I did so simply because as for the teacher designing the gapped tasks, what matters is the syntactic structure of the sentences; broad and narrow focus are, on the other hand, indicated contextually (and intonationally). Thus, the definition of projection offered above is not strictly followed, but this is immaterial with regard to the awareness the teacher demonstrates of projection.

Results and discussion

Table 1 shows that the total number of the gaps is 311 of which 64, or 20.57%, are (part of) projection contexts. The distribution of missing verbs and objects, or parts thereof, within the 64 contexts is as follows: 25 of the gaps have (part of) the verb missing, 29 of the gaps have (part of) the object missing, and in 11 cases both the verb and the object are missing. It should be noted that the sum total of the distribution of missing verbs and objects is 65 and the total number of contexts is 64. This is so because one of the gaps is subject to two interpretations.

One fifth of the gaps (20.57%) are (part of) projection contexts. I am of the opinion that this figure can be interpreted as indicative of teacher's implicit awareness of projection, or at least indicative of him/her viewing the extended verb phrase, i.e. the verb plus the object, as a unit. On the face of it, one fifth does not sound conclusive, but it has to be examined by taking into consideration other factors.

One such factor is that not all sentences have a subject-verb-object structure. When we say that English is an SVO language, we mean that the verb usually follows the subject and precedes the object; however, the last slot may be reserved for an adjunct, or a subject complement, etc. in which case we do not have a projection context in the sense defined above. Another factor is that not all gaps constitute, partially or entirely, projection contexts: the missing words/phrases may function as a subject and a verb, a sentence modifier, a prepositional phrase, etc.

One might also suspect that when preparing the gapped tasks, the teacher's idea has been to omit complete phrases in most of the cases. But complete phrases in the broad sense of the term have different realisations: a complex verb phrase, an appositive phrase, an adjective phrase, or an extended verb phrase consisting of a verb and an object, to mention just a few. The point worth making here is that a focus projection context, i.e. a specific type of extended verb phrase, is simply one kind of a complete phrase that may have been deliberately omitted by the teacher. Following this line of reasoning, we find it easier to claim that a fifth of all the gaps indicates that the teacher tends to perceive the verb and the object as a unit, hence at least implicit awareness of projection. By implicit awareness I mean that the teacher may have intuitively identified the phenomenon without being able to verbalise it.

Then, we go back to the question raised above: how does focus projection serve the teacher? In my opinion, what the teacher can do from a purely pedagogical point of view is to encourage the students to emphasise the final word before they make a pause. This would presumably mean in most cases a pause either after a clause or after a short sentence. However, the approach of telling the students to highlight the final word before a pause has both advantages and disadvantages. We deal with the disadvantages first.

It goes without saying that not each and every word preceding a pause is part of a focus projection context. This could potentially mean that students may acquire a '(contextually) wrong' intonation pattern. Yet, it is often the case that students have never been taught intonation and they have acquired other 'wrong' or inappropriate intonation patterns, for instance due to language contact that has been occurring in their minds.

The advantages, I think, outweigh the disadvantages. In *most* cases in English, it is safe to emphasise the final word (before a pause) if it is a lexical item. I can hardly imagine that a student will produce – often and especially in speaking – a sentence ending with a preposition.

There is another, more important advantage. When students are encouraged to emphasise the final word before a pause, they are expected to pronounce the preceding words (before the final one) faster, and to de-emphasise them. This scenario comes with two further advantages. The first is that a greater contrast is achieved between emphasised and de-emphasised material. The second advantage is fluency. Students will focus on the final word; since this word is the focus of their attention, their goal will be to reach this word. Thus, they will pay less attention to the preceding words, de-emphasise them, and increase speech tempo. This will lead to greater fluency. Greater fluency, in turn, leads to more confidence to be gained on the part of the students.

When practicing a skill, especially speaking in the above-described situation, confidence is a necessary component whose level needs to be increased. One of the sources of confidence is clarity, that is when one knows what, when and how to do something. There are cases in which a student knows how to start a sentence but they do not know how to finish it. Being told to emphasise the final word, the student has more clarity as to how to finish their sentence. When one is clear about the start and the end of a sentence, though in some cases partially clear, it is easier to engage in practicing

because the level of confidence is higher. This type of confidence can, in turn, be viewed as a realisation of some of the aspects of the linguistic affect that projection carries. I use 'some of the aspects' because projection as an intonational phenomenon necessarily has an emotive component which could comprise more than one aspect.

Conclusion

The teacher inevitably faces certain constraints when applying the concept of focus projection in the ESP classroom. These constraints stem from the fact that a) ESP is a practical subject and b) ESP students are not by definition students of linguistics. I divide the constraints into two groups. Group one concerns terminology. The teacher should not introduce any terminology simply because it is not necessary. Students will find it difficult to grasp the meaning of terms such as projection, accent, transitive verb, etc. Group two comprises the following piece of advice: if the students overdo the task, i.e. emphasising the last word when inappropriate (e.g. the word is a pronoun or a preposition), let them overdo; it is better to be on the path to fluency with inappropriate intonation than to never put an effort into improving one's speaking skills.

Finally, I conclude the paper by claiming that it revolves around five concepts: *ESP*, *focus projection*, *emphasis*, *fluency*, and *confidence*. What all these five have in common is that they can be used as tools for improving the speaking skills of the students. Focus projection is a tool at the disposal of the teacher belonging to their pedagogical arsenal, ESP is the context, emphasis is what the students are told to do, and fluency and confidence stem from the application of emphasis on the part of the students.

In this scenario, confidence seems to be the final and most important by-product along with the improved speaking skills of the students. Confidence is also a sign of the emotive side and could be seen as a partial realisation of linguistic affect. But another important by-product is the direction the students are given as a result of applying emphasis and becoming fluent and confident. The direction is given by the end of the sentence: the students are encouraged to imagine, to anticipate, and to reach the last word and contrast it with the preceding material.

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The emotional dimension of language propaganda in Polish children's songs

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to show the results of the pedagogical qualitative research on the emotional dimension of language propaganda in Polish children's songs. As a text of culture, children's songs are both carriers and transmitters of the linguistic image of the world, and for this reason they can possibly serve as a tool for linguistic and ideological manipulation. By applying the method of a qualitative discourse analysis, the author has studied 136 contemporary music pieces, paying attention both on their text and melodic layers. The gathered data revealed that many of the analysed songs contain words, phrases and other linguistic means typical for propaganda text. The characteristic of such texts developed by various researchers was used to distinguish the features of language and melody that could indicate the manipulative nature of the message transmitted by the songs.

Keywords: children's songs, linguistic worldview, language propaganda

Introduction

The value of the children's songs in the education of the youngest children is undebatable, as such pieces are a universal didactic and therapeutic tool (Przychodzińska 1989, Suświłło 2001, Campbell, Wiggins 2013, Walton 2014). They are used, among others, as the basis of early music education, as a form of integration and activation of a group or as a means of supporting the linguistic development of a child, also while teaching the foreign language.

The offer of children's songs available in various sources is very rich. On the market one may obtain numerous thematic songbooks for children, CDs and digital collections of the children's music. The children often sing the songs in nursery schools, in kindergartens and at school, during the summer camps and at the scout gatherings. Such pieces are also an important element of movie and theatrical soundtracks for children. It can therefore be said that a children's song is a relatively constant element of childhood.

However, it should be noted that a children's song, like any other text of culture, is also a carrier of specific meanings and, as such, of **the linguistic worldview**, meant as "a set of judgments recorded in language" (Bartmiński 1999: 103). Created and selected for children by the adult intermediaries, children's songs reflect and, at the same time, propagate certain ways of thinking about the world. It can even be said that by teaching children the lyrics of a song by heart, adults literally "put in the children's mouth" specific words, sentences, statements and assessments. In this sense, a children's song can become a tool of ideological or/and political manipulation, or even propaganda. Some researchers even pay attention to the fact that children's songs were actually used to support the totalitarian regimes of the XX century, such as the Nazi Germany (Meyer 1993, Peterson 2014), the Soviet Union (Kelly 2004), Japan (Manabe 2013) or North Korea (Myers 2011). Therefore, it is worth remarking, what type of content reaches young audiences through such pieces.

Theoretical background

In order to state, whether a particular children's song belongs to the category of propaganda, one should firstly recognise the definitions of this term and the scientific attitudes towards it. *Propaganda* as a scientific concept occurs in various disciplines, such as: sociology, social psychology, political studies, marketing, history or linguistics. It is generally meant as *spreading some ideas*, however many researchers maintain that propaganda itself is never a neutral action – they associate it with such terms as: *manipulation, brainwash* or *falsification of the facts* (Ellul 1972, Pratkanis & Aronson 2003, Patrick 2015). It is also worth mentioning that the negative connotations of *propaganda* are rather common in a public discourse, which may be explained by the fact that propaganda actions played a crucial role in justifying the terror of the European totalitarian regimes in the XX century, such as the Soviet Union, the Nazi Germany or the Fascist Italy (Thomson 2001, Żyromski 2015). For the Polish nation the painful experiences surrounding propaganda refer not only to the distant past events of Holocaust, Nazi concentration camps or the ghettos, but also to the newer history of the Polish People's Republic, the so called PRL (1945-1989), when almost every aspect of life used to be influenced by political propaganda and censorship.

Taking all these arguments into account, a Polish author Irena Kamińska-Szmaj offers the dual meaning of the term *propaganda*: a wider and a narrower one. The wider definition identifies propaganda with **propagating** the ideas, which is directed to shape someone's opinions, attitudes and behaviours. However, in its narrower sense propaganda should be understood as **an intentional (political or ideological) manipulation** (Kamińska-Szmaj 2004: 17-18).

Promoting the ideas demands the effective communication between the sender and the receiver of the message. That is why the main tool of propaganda is undoubtedly the **language**, both in its verbal and textual aspect. The researchers dealing with the matter of propaganda noticed that the propaganda texts have a special structure and contain particular words and phrases. For this reason they may be easily distinguished among others texts. Jerzy Bralczyk underlines that the language of propaganda tends to be highly conventional or even "fossilized", which means that certain linguistic means repeat constantly in various propaganda texts (Bralczyk 2007: 30). In order to fulfil its persuasive function, the propaganda message has to be clear, unequivocal and excluding the possibility of any discussions or negotiations. This clarity of the text, however – as Piotr Dela emphasises – refers not only to using rather simple, uncomplicated words and phrases, but also to the common experience of the receivers and to the (socio-political-cultural-economic) context they live in (Dela 2019: 84).

What is more, the authors agreeably claim that the **emotional component** is crucial for the propaganda to succeed. It reveals itself above all in the used vocabulary and grammar structures, but also in the so called *propaganda tricks* – the linguistic techniques intended to manipulate the listeners.

For instance, J. Bralczyk names various linguistic means, which – if included into a propaganda text – may strongly influence the emotions of the receivers. Among them one may distinguish, e.g. (1) the generalisations and the universalisation (*everybody, always, never*), (2) the diminutives, (3) the euphemisms, and (4) the superlatives (*the best, the richest*) (Bralczyk 2007: 187). He also emphasises the major role of the constant connection between the sender and the receiver of the propaganda text, which may be either physical (such as eye-contact, close distance, physical touch), or verbal, signaled by introducing the speaking subject in the 1st person. Singular (I) or by a so called *inclusivus* – a specific form of a subject *we*, covering both the propagandist and the listeners of the message, e. g. *we all think, we are going to, our major plan is* etc. (Bralczyk 2007: 55).

Another linguistic means typical for the propaganda texts are slogans and clichés. Slogans might be defined as emphatic, short, stylistically expressive phrases that are intended to persuade someone to do something or to promote a specific opinion and attitude (Reboul 1980: 307). The German word for *slogan* is *Schlagwort*, which literally means: "a word that hits" (Reboul 1980: 310). The slogans are usually constructed by modal verbs: as imperatives (*you must, we have to*), or as calls (*let's go, let's do*

it). They also contain the words and phrases that are meant to evoke strong feelings in the receivers – the so called *key-words*, such as: *nation, family, freedom, solidarity* etc. (Bralczyk 2007: 158-159).

Another linguistic means typical for propaganda text is a **cliché**. As Josef P. Stern explains, it is a “masking simplification of the description features” (Stern 1980: 282). The major role of it is to present a selective (and, for this reason, to some extent falsified) image of someone or something. The clichés have their sources in the stereotypes functioning in the particular group of people, and therefore, they are emotionally charged. The clichés successfully help to present the world as simple, sensible and well-organised, and such a vision – as Hanna Arendt stresses – is very attractive for the audience, as the real world appears to be a complete opposite of it (Arendt 1986: 25).

The researchers of the propaganda text notice its tendency to infantilisation and/or to an exaggerated pathos, that reveal themselves in some **propaganda tricks**:

- *Glittering generality*: drawing the people’s attention to the similarities and simultaneously ignoring the differences between the presented items or ideas.
- *Plain folks*: using the vocabulary and the way of speaking typical for the group of the potential recipients in order to create a deep emotional bond between the propagandist and the audience.
- *Name-calling*: giving blunt nicknames to different people (or groups of people) in order to divide the society into opposing groups of the *fellows* and the *strangers*.
- *Transfer*: using authority or transferring prestige from one case to another, even if there is a marginal connection between them (Magnuson-Martinson 1998: 609-613).

To conclude, the propaganda text contains specific words, phrases and word combinations that are intended to influence the opinions, attitudes and/or behaviours of its receivers. The aspect that connects together all of the above-mentioned linguistic means is their **high emotional charge**. Combined together, they create **astory**: one-sided, black-and-white, yet internally consistent, believable and highly attractive narrative about world (Pisarek 2014: 22-25). It is also not free from pathos, which is intended to charm or even “seduce” the recipient (Arendt 1986: 25). Through such vision, the propagandist strives for evoking strong feelings in the audience, such as: rage, mobilisation, agitation or reflection.

Because of the fact that a children song is both a textual, and a musical piece, one should notice that the melody may increase the propaganda potential of its contents (Velasco-Pufleau 2014: 3). According to Olivier Thomson, the most effective are these melodies that provoke the deepest emotions in the listeners, such as: mobilisation, agitation or reflection (Thomson 2001: 39). Among them, one may name, e.g. march, anthem or religious or patriotic canto, as they all base on pathos and, therefore, might have an immense impact on the receivers’ emotions.

Methodology

The presented results are an extract from a broader pedagogical research project basing on the following subject matter: **What is the characteristics of the social world presented by the Polish children’s songs?** In order to receive an answer for the main research problem, the author formulated three supporting questions: (1) **What** people, places, behaviours, relationships and values are presented in the studied songs? (2) **How** are they presented? (By what linguistic and musical means?) (3) **What for** are they presented? (What is the aim of their authors? What emotions, attitudes and behaviours are they going to provoke in the receivers?). In this article the author focuses only on the second research question, which is: *How (by what means) are various parts of the social world presented in the children’s songs?* Above all, it has been studied, whether the gathered songs contain any means typical for the propaganda texts.

The author conducted a qualitative and interpretative study of 136 contemporary Polish songs for pre-schoolers and early education students, using the method of a **discourse analysis** (Miles & Huberman 2000, Silverman 2008). The selection of the sample was purposeful, taking into account the

following criteria: (1) the broadly understood social theme of the songs (the lyrics concerning various aspects of the social world, such as: people, places, behaviours, relationships and values), and (2) the time of their creation – from the so-called political breakthrough in Poland, to 2021, with the year 1985 as the demarcation line. Such a time range has been set because the concept of "propaganda" is often associated with a totalitarian or authoritarian political system, in Poland especially with the period of the Polish People's Republic (1945-1989). However, so far, there have been few studies on the manifestations of propaganda in recent cultural texts for children, created and distributed in systems constructed in accordance with the liberal-democratic values. For this reason, this issue seems to be worth being examined.

The analysis included primarily the textual layer of the pieces due to the main subject of the research, which was the linguistic worldview (of the social world). In order to gather and to organize the data, the author used some qualitative data analysis techniques, characterised by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman (Miles & Huberman 2000: 253–260), such as: (1) noticing patterns and schemes, (2) grouping the meanings and (3) creating metaphors. Subsequently, bearing in mind that the song is "a text and musical piece" (Lipiec 2017: 11), the author focused to some extent on the musical layer, treating this issue, however, as supplementary.

Results and discussion

The research has shown that many of the contemporary Polish children's songs contain various means typical for a propaganda text. As Jolanta Sławek claims, "propaganda texts are characterized by both an emotional impact (impressive and expressive function) and an intellectual impact (communicative function), although the impressive function (aimed at influencing the recipient) dominates here" (Sławek 2007: 66). All of these aspects reflect in the linguistic means used in propaganda texts. Within the analysed songs, one may recognise the following means typical for the **propagandatexts**:

- **Introducing the speaking subject in the 1st person. singular (I):**

In many examined pieces this grammar form determines the child's perspective, blurring the boundary between the sender and the recipient of the message. If the content of the song is consistent with the recipient's authentic experiences and feelings, then the first-person narrative creates conditions for the child's free expression. However, if certain emotions, attitudes or behaviours are imposed on the recipient (e.g. *I like school – P108⁴*), then it can be perceived as propaganda means.

- **Introducing the speaking subject in the 1st person. plural (we):**

This verb form highlights the integrative and expressive function of the song, especially when it is used in a playful way, e.g. *we sing, jump, play*. The *we*-perspective often helps to build a positive atmosphere in the group and encourages the recipients to identify with it. However, just like the use of the speaking subject in the 1st person (singular), it may also have propaganda purposes, if it involves "putting words into the mouths" of children, e.g. *Miss, Miss [the teacher], we like you so much that when you're not with us, even a lollipop loses its taste (P104)*. The form of the speaking subject in the 1st pers. plural is also crucial in presenting the *us-them* opposition, which is discussed below.

- **Introducing a clear distinction between *us* and *them*:**

⁴The designations of the individual songs and quotations coming from them (P1, P33, P104 etc.) correspond to the numbering used in the 136-element catalogue of the analyzed songs (research data). The list of the songs quoted in this article has been attached to the bibliography.

This linguistic trick involves attributing positive traits to representatives of one group (our own, native: *us*), and the negative ones – to another (*them*). In the collection of propaganda techniques, this trick is called "name calling" (Magnuson-Martinson 1998: 609-613). The result of such action is to identify the recipient of the message with the category *we*, as well as showing specific social groups as opposed to one another. This type of action refers to the well-known war strategy *divide et impera* (*divide and rule*), because the quarrelling, polarized groups are vulnerable to the outside influence. In several of the examined children's songs, one may find a number of examples of this means, e.g.: *The clear kids have no drawbacks, / they don't care for the dirty ones* (P123); *The cry-babies are not suitable for us!* (P20).

- **Using the means typical for the children's language or considered as such:**

The condition for the effective persuasion is the communication between the sender and the recipient of the message. Taking into account that the authors of the studied songs are adults, building understanding here is based on "sharing" the linguistic code between the adult sender and the young recipient. In the collected research material, one may notice two tendencies of the songs' authors: (1) to reproduce the original children's style of speaking and (2) to oversimplify (infantilize) the language used in the song.

Reproducing the original children's language includes using the funny nicknames, phrases typical for the common language, exclamations or onomatopoeias. In some pieces there are also some words and phrases coming from the teenagers' style of speaking. The use of such linguistic means may prove that the author understands the specificity of the children's language and shows deep acceptance of their way of communicating. However, there is a risk that phrases from children's or youth's colloquial language used in the lyrics will quickly become outdated and incomprehensible for the audience, or even cause a sense of embarrassment among the recipients.

Linguistic infantilisation does not mean using the real children's language, but a language considered by songwriters to be childish. The clearest manifestation of this is the accumulation of diminutives, sometimes even at the expense of linguistic correctness. Such a linguistic approach could be considered adequate in contact with the youngest recipients of songs, because, similarly to the so-called "baby talk", it is intended to express tenderness towards the child. However, the overuse of diminutives may result in the (not necessarily conscious) patronizing attitude of the authors towards the young recipient. In this sense, infantilizing the audience can be considered as a means of propaganda, as they are treated as a "plain folks" (Magnuson-Martinson 1998: 609-613).

- **Using the modal verbs:**

In the songs containing various types of rules, tips or instructions (concerning, for example, good manners or the principles of healthy eating), one can find many fragments in which the persuasive nature of modal verbs is used, both in the personal form (*you* – singular and plural), as well as impersonal, e.g. *When the red [light] turns on (...) / you have to wait, you can't rush here* (P59); *you must always listen to your mother* (P19); *You have to wash yourself!* (P63). The propaganda potential of this linguistic structure depends on the context in which it appears, as well as whether the suggestions (*you can*), orders (*you must, have to, should*) and prohibitions (*you mustn't*) occurring in the songs are justified in any way. If the song promotes health and safety of a child, and the author of the song refers to rational arguments, we can talk about the use of modal verbs to **propagate** (not: spreading propaganda) specific attitudes and behaviours, e.g.: *Who wants to enjoy a good health / and to have a lot of strength, / they must eat vegetables and fruits / apart from sweets* (P65).

- **Using the slogans:**

In the collected research material, several types of slogan expressions can be identified. Some of them resemble a moral, e.g. *You should always listen to your mother (P19); Be obliging and loving, / and you will always be liked (P13)*. The others bring to mind the advertisements, e.g. *We have such a beautiful smile / Because we take care of our teeth! (P62)*. There are also such phrases that use the persuasive power of the so-called "keywords", e.g. *Poland is our homeland (P128); kindergarten is the second home (P43)*. However, it is worth mentioning that the slogans used in the examined songs often transmit the clear propaganda message, but they can also become a tool of promoting positive attitudes and behaviours (e.g. songs motivating the children to take care of their health). In such cases, it is rather *propagating* than propaganda.

- **Using the clichés:**

The *clichés* base on the stereotypes, which means that the recipient receives only a fragmentary, and therefore false, description of reality. In the research material, one can observe the use of such phrases, especially in the portraits of particular characters, e.g. the mothers (*Mother has been busy in the kitchen since the morning - P29; [mother] cleans the kitchen and cooks dinner - P132*). Ignoring the individuality of the mothers, using attributes (e.g. *apron, kitchen*), as well as the strong emotional content of the message – all this contributes to the *cliché*. It should be emphasized, however, that not all elements of the social world presented in the research material are *cliché*. For example, the image of a grandmother shimmers with various shades of meaning: from the model of a traditional grandmother (*she cooks my pudding and (...) feeds me with a spoon - P1*) to the figure of a modern, "emancipated" grandmother (*She swims and roller skates, / better than many boys. / Our modern grandmother / exercises aerobics with us – P26*).

- **Using the hyperboles:**

In many of the examined songs one may find hyperboles (exaggerations), whose main purpose is to trigger strong – positive or negative emotions in the audience. Hyperbolization manifests itself in: (1) overusing the superlatives and (2) exaggerated combinations of words.

In various pieces some elements of the social world are characterised by the superlatives, e.g. *the nicest, the best, the most beautiful*. While they do not concern objective issues - facts (e.g. *The Great Wall is the longest structure in the world - P134*), they have a strong propaganda potential, because they express a clear value judgment that imposes a deep emotional attitude towards objects, characters, behaviours or phenomena. Statements of this type leave no room for discussion. At the same time, they harmonize with the *us-them* divisions, because if someone or something is the best, it means that the others must be worse than them, e.g. *My country is the best! (P124)*.

In many of the studied songs there are combinations of words that individually have a completely different meaning, but when put into one phrase they create a new quality. Sometimes this action even resembles a propaganda technique called "transfer", which involves identifying two completely different issues in order to manipulate the recipient's emotions (Magnuson-Martinson 1998: 609-613). Examples include the following quotations from songs: *Instead of mom, I have a teacher here (P43)* - identifying the teacher with the person closest to the child (parent); *Kindergarten is the second home (P43)* - identifying an educational institution with a child's family home.

- **Using the universalizing expressions (generalisations):**

In the collected research material, this linguistic means occurs very often, e.g. *And Sunday, you know, all children love / just like our teacher, they all love her (P14); My grandma is never bored at home (P1); Every child knows this (P123)*. According to the definition of a song as such, the lyrics may present a generalized vision of the world, which results primarily in the brief form of

these songs, as well as in the universality of the message. However, the accumulation of universalizing expressions in songs clearly resembles a propaganda technique called "glittering generality", which refers to groundlessly considering something as a universally applicable rule (Magnuson-Martinson 1998: 609-613).

Both groups of linguistic means – basing on impressive and expressive function of language – play a major role in constructing the propaganda sense of the studied songs. In the centre of the propaganda message there is content presenting **a selective, fragmentary, stereotypical and strongly emotionally charged image of the social world**. It does not mean, however, that every children's song counts among the propaganda texts. Many of them contain only the selected means typical for the propaganda texts, or such means are used in them in non-manipulative context.

Propaganda potential of melodic layer

The melody of a song fulfils an important task: by influencing the emotions and musical sensitivity of the recipient, it creates the mood of the song, and thus can strengthen or weaken its verbal meaning. This role is particularly important in the case of songs belonging to the group of propaganda texts.

Among those songs, which are considered by the author as resembling propaganda texts, there are, above all, pieces basing on the aesthetics of **military and/or patriotic canto**. They are characterized by: (1) a marching rhythm, the aim of which is to evoke enthusiasm and motivate the singers to action, and (2) a relatively simple and repeatable, single-voice melody line, which allows to be quickly learned and sung by a group of people (children).

But not only marching melodies may increase the propaganda potential of the children's songs. **Musical pathos** is equally often used, manifesting itself in the solemnity of the melody. The tempo of these songs is much slower than that of marching pieces, which gives them a dignified character. Their musical aesthetics resemble religious songs or some slower patriotic songs (such as anthem).

In both cases – march-based melody and pathetic melody – the melodic layer undoubtedly **strengthens** the (propaganda) message contained in the songs. A melody aimed at evoking specific emotional states may facilitate the recipient's identification with the content of the song, which is crucial for propaganda to be successful.

Nevertheless, the musical layer might also **weaken** its propaganda verbal sense, if it bases on popular and/or dance music, because the rhythmic and dynamic melody effectively distracts the recipients' attention from the lyrics. It may be said that if the melody lowers the pathos of the verbal content and awakes in the receivers the emotions like joy, fun or relaxation, it may even "knock the gun out of propaganda's hand". This comparison appears justified, as O. Reboul identifies applying the propaganda techniques with using a weapon (Reboul 1980).

In the catalogue of the studied songs the author found both the pieces that represent exemplary propaganda texts, in which both layers – verbal and melodic – are intended to have a strong effect on the recipients, as well as the songs that contain only selected propaganda means or even do not contain them at all.

Conclusions

The collected research material included numerous children's songs that contain the means typical for a propaganda text, both in their linguistic and musical layers. The majority of them stimulate the **emotions** of the receivers, as they provoke particular feelings and attitudes towards the presented people, places, behaviours, relationships and values.

However, the mere fact of the appearance of the propaganda means and tricks in the studied pieces does not determine the propaganda nature of these songs. To describe a given song as propaganda text, one should look at the content it contains: at the linguistic and musical means, by which the message is constructed, but also – or perhaps above all – whether the certain vision of the world repeats in various

songs. The propaganda nature of the linguistic image of the social world will be expressed through the repetition of the same (or similar): biased, selective and unified – and for this reason **falsified** (Stern 1980) – vision of the world in a larger number of pieces.

Taking into account, that the studied songs are directed mostly to children – to young, immature people, who do not yet have the tools to defend themselves from propaganda, imposing such a vision may be perceived as ethically questionable.

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The quoted children's songs

- P1 – *Budyń [The Pudding]*, lyrics and music by D. & K. Jagiełło (2019)
- P13 – *Czarodziejskie słowa [The magical words]*, lyrics and music by T. Wywrocki (2006)
- P14 – *Dzień Nauczyciela [The Teacher's Day]*, lyrics and music by T. Wywrocki (2006)
- P19 – *Była sobie żabka mała [There was once a little frog]*, lyrics by A. Grabowski, music by K. Kwiatkowska (2019)
- P20 – *Jestem sobie przedszkolaczek [I'm a little preschooler]*, lyrics and music by M. Terlikowska (2015)
- P26 – *Naszanowoczesna babcia [Our modern grandma]*, lyrics by A. Grabowski, music by K. Marzec (2000)
- P29 – *Mama zadumana [The thoughtful mother]*, lyrics by E. Zawistowska, music by S. Marciniak (2020)
- P43 – *Przedszkole – drugi dom [Preschool – the second home]*, the song belongs to the collection entitled “Hity Maluszka” (2011)
- P59 – *Światła drogowe [Traffic lights]*, lyrics by J. Delwo, music by S. Szudrowicz (2021)
- P62 – *Łazienkowa gimnastyka [The bathroom gymnastics]*, the song belongs to the collection entitled “Czyściochowe Piosenki” (2021)
- P63 – *Piosenka kąpielowa [The bathing song]*, the song belongs to the collection entitled “Dziecięce przeboje” (2013)
- P65 – *Cukierki, cukierki [Candy, Candy]*, lyrics and music by K. Klich (2016)
- P104 – *Nasza Pani jest kochana [Our dear teacher]*, lyrics by B. Lewandowska, music by F. Leszczyńska (2008)
- P108 – *Piosenka o szkole [The school song]*, lyrics and music by J. Kobyliński (2014)
- P123 – *Świnki trzy [The three pigs]*, the song belongs to the collection entitled “Hity Przedszkolaka 1” (2010)
- P124 – *Mój kraj jest naj! [My country is the best!]*, lyrics and music by A. Kopacz (2019)
- P128 – *Piosenka o Unii Europejskiej [The UE song]*, lyrics and music by J. Kucharczyk (2020)
- P132 – *Kocham moją mamę [I love my mum]*, the song belongs to the collection entitled “Hity Przedszkolaka 1” (2010)
- P134 – *W wielkich Chinach [In the great China]*, the song belongs to the collection entitled “Bawimy, Uczymy, Śpiewamy – Poznajemy Świat” (2013)

**Fear, isolation, anxiety: complex and universal emotions
in *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*⁵**

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Abstract

The paper explores the recently published Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows (Koenig 2021) as a corpus of neologisms coined to express different emotions that are usually (and universally) experienced but not easily expressed by words. Created from different languages in contact, the newly-coined words will be used to further explore theoretical frameworks on linguistic creativity and the concept of the dictionary as the definitions of the words are given in English. The aim of the paper is to focus on the words proposed to express different emotions related to specific kinds of fear, isolation and anxiety. In relation to the words' manifestation in letter or sound, the paper will also address mentalese (Pinker 1994) as a framework and a concept proposing that lexicons need to co-operate in this unique kind of a dictionary that does not call for an active usage of the words coined but rather presents a dictionary that is a container of new emotions.

Keywords: *mentalese, new emotions, languages in contact, multilingual dictionary, contemporary English*

Introduction

When Henry W. Fowler published the *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* in 1926, it was one of the most celebrated reference books in the twentieth century according to the preface to the revised third edition of *Fowler's Modern English Usage* (Burchfield 1996). The dictionary was the result of work of a scholar who worked in virtual seclusion in the island of Guernsey. Similarly, the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* (2021) by John Koenig was completed in seclusion—that caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike the *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* that was aimed at a domestic audience, the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, written almost one hundred years later (available both in print and online), which started as a blog in 2009, is aimed at the international audience and the contemporary multilinguals. Another comparison can be made here: while Fowler often consulted the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the newspapers at the time, Koenig consulted different world languages and created a dictionary of contemporary English in the way that does not reflect on language usage *per se* but rather on language to-be-used in search for adequate expressions denoting states and emotions that the English language, according to the author, has had no words for.

It is for this reason that the focus in this paper is on the English language, or the language in which the definitions of the newly-coined words are given in the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, within the context of not only contemporary English but also in terms of word-formation processes. One may

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propose that new blends, resulting from blending and compounding as frequent word-formation processes in English, will in time enter official English language dictionaries as blends slowly become institutionalized and may, at one point, no longer serve the purpose of individual creativity that has the potential to surpass one language. In addition, blending may be rather predictable. For instance, following the creation of e.g., “to mansplain” (2009), numerous other “X-plain” coinages followed (*whitesplaining, straightsplaining, sizesplaining, ablesplaining*) (Kalajdžisalihović 2018).

On the other hand, according to Ferrante (2021), the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* is a book that by “virtue of its definitions, defies its own definition” (para 1). Unlike a traditional print dictionary, in which words are organized alphabetically and contain parts of speech, synonyms and phonology, in the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, different topics, i.e., different emotions and emotional states are given as separate entries of various length.

Ferrante (ibid.), in terms of the potential of individual creativity, compares the dictionary to poetry even, as its “closest relative in genre” and “a guidebook or a self-help book” for the complicated internal landscape that may also be related to theories on *mentalese*, i.e., an internal landscape of thoughts expressed through (a) language (Pinker 1994).

The newly-created words had not been previously used in any other dictionary accompanied by the definitions provided; they, as such, represent newly-formed words from different languages that are presented through a systematic organization of new emotions that are, according to the author, known to human beings but have not been expressed by means of (English) single words. As such, the dictionary makes the reader pay more attention to the contemporary world and examines abstract or rarely defined emotions by introducing a compendium of invented words in a multimodal fashion to enrich the English language and to give names and linguistic manifestations to human experience and emotions founded on contemporary circumstances of the 21st century.

In relation to the linguistic landscape of the 21st century, the reader needs to be reminded that “the majority of modern linguistics is born out of the spirit of monolingualism and has, as a reduction of complexity, brought about many assumptions. Confronted with multilingualism, the values seem to be turning around. The basic competence of a speaker is open toward *multilingualism* if he or she can experience it over the course of his or her life. Assuming the naturally occurring potential within multilingualism, one cannot help analysing some of the basic assumptions of linguistics, both whether language ability is primarily seen as being a cognitive competence or a social practice. Multilingualism, in our definition, includes both, and therefore also *multicompetence*” (Franceschini 2011: 352). Therefore, this paper also aims to present a new type of a dictionary that is striving to rise above the level of a particular language.

Taking the above-given context into account, the aim of the paper is to explore the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* as a corpus of newly-coined words or refashioned words and expressions minted to express different emotions that are usually and universally experienced. It is also proposed that this dictionary, blending different languages, living or rarely used, does not call for an active usage, but rather presents a dictionary that is a container of different “present-day emotions”—fears, anxieties, doubts, contemplations, etc.

One type of word-formation processes, apart from prefixation, suffixation, conversion, blending and compounding occurs in the context of the so-called “nonce formations”, i.e., words coined and used on a particular occasion (Quirk 1985: 1520). Such words are usually not adopted into general use and literary works are known for nonce formations of their authors. It may be suggested that all the examples in the corpus belong to the category of “nonce formations” due to the genre and individual creativity of one author, regardless of the word-formation processes within. The neologisms are coined to describe a (universal) emotional state and to capture it. As such, they do not need to be used on a regular basis in any given language. Overall, the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* may be classified as a

dictionary of neologisms coined owing to different word-formation processes (such as prefixation, suffixation and blending) surpassing but not excluding one language.

The motivation for the research was founded on exploring different dictionaries and new concepts arising from our changing reality, especially when it comes to, for instance, new words describing modern relationships terms such as *bread crumbing*, *orbiting*, *ghosting*, *submarining*, etc. (Swanner 2021). Another global cause, which sparked the interest in this topic, is the COVID-19 pandemic and numerous other words entering the English language dictionaries, while changing or expanding their meaning. As for the theoretical frameworks, the ways and approaches to explore a multilingual dictionary are multiple: starting from mentalese, semantic primes, theories on the structure of the mental lexicon, etc. These theories will be briefly mentioned in further text.

In terms of the research questions, the paper aims to explore whether the dictionary comprises a majority of nouns describing states and emotions and, also, whether these nouns pertain to different emotions in the sphere/scope of fear, isolation, and anxiety given the title (*Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, *lacrimae rerum*, or “tears of things”) (Schwenger 2006).

The methodological framework used for the purposes of the analysis in the present paper comprises qualitative and quantitative content analysis in an attempt to seek responses to the considerations discussed in the introduction.

Theoretical background - linguistic and pedagogical implications

There are several approaches in linguistic theory that may be referred to in support of the motivation behind studying a dictionary such as the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* and in terms of its appearance as a publication, its content and the fact that one individual decided to compile such a dictionary. Unlike other monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, or dictionaries on language usage, for instance, such as the *Fowler’s Modern English Usage*, the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* is a new type of legacy in the digital era. It applies a holistic (focus-on-multilingualism) or even *translanguaging* approach since translanguaging may be used to refer to “multilingual practices that use languages as a resource without establishing clear-cut boundaries between the languages” or “combining two or more languages in a systematic way within the same learning activity” (Cenoz & Gorter 2011: 359).

In terms of different types of models of the mental lexicon, to add to the theoretical part of the paper, it is necessary to mention three models discussed in theoretical approaches to the mental lexicon (Erdeljac 2009). According to the *hierarchical network model*, the concepts in the mental lexicon are organized as a pyramid and the most general concepts are found at the top of the pyramid. Specific instances of each concept are found one level below. Each node is directly connected to the more general concept on the level above (for instance, the word ‘cat’ would be found under the more general concept ‘mammal’ and ‘mammal’ would be found under the node labelled as ‘animal’). This model may have affected the motivation behind creating new words to denote different types of fear (*+_phobia*).

When it comes to *the semantic feature model*, this model of the mental lexicon views the *meanings* of words as sets of semantic features or attributes (Smith et al. 1974). In this model, defining features are essential when distinguishing one concept from another. The often-cited example is that of a ‘robin’, its defining feature being that it is ‘red-breasted’, while its characteristic feature is that it is ‘small’ (ibid.). What is clear in this model is that the closer the concepts are in the mental lexicon, the more defining features they share. In the case of the present corpus, regardless of the ‘surface’ form of the word, the concepts revolving around e.g., ‘fear’, ‘isolation’ and ‘anxiety’ would be placed closer together in the mental lexicon. Since not all emotions and concepts in the dictionary are universal (e.g., what with different environments in which there are no cars or traffic lights, for instance), knowledge about a concept would or might be restricted in a few cases.

According to the *morphological or rule-based approach*, the morphological root organizes different words around itself but the results are not conclusive. However, this model may be discussed in relation

to the newly-created words in the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* to assess parts of speech and how they are derived, i.e., to expand the dictionary by word derivation (nouns from verbs, verbs from nouns, etc.).

Another important pillar for the theoretical framework that may accompany the argument for the selection of this corpus for partial analysis is *metalanguage* and the concept of emotions in different languages analysed thoroughly by Wierzbicka since 1960s. Wierzbicka's works are motivated by her interest in the concepts behind the creation of dictionaries as well. Her investigation of semantic primes and natural semantic metalanguage is beyond the scope of this paper but may be a useful reference in search for (universal) answers across languages.

In one of the interviews for *Lingvazin*, a Bosnian-Herzegovinian magazine for linguists and scholars, Wierzbicka (2021) refers to frequency of words and words that dominate as frequent in proverbs, for instance, which gives an insight into different concepts in different cultures. A question arises whether proverbs can be used in the contemporary world to explain or refer to different experiences and emotions or whether they might be perceived as outdated. This is another reason why the corpus of the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* has been taken into consideration for preliminary analysis in this paper.

Although beyond the scope of this paper, works written or edited by Wierzbicka (*Semantics, Culture and Cognition* (1992)) and Goddard (e.g., *Minimal English for a Global World* (2018), *Minimal Languages in Action* (2021)) can support giving priority to *meaning* rather than to *syntactic structure* and giving priority to understanding cultures through their key words.

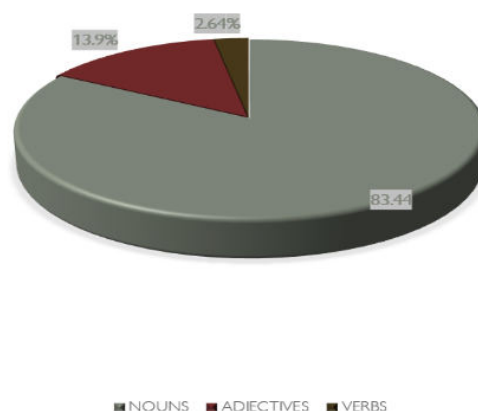
Research framework

The methodology used for the purpose of the analysis in the present paper comprises qualitative and quantitative content and corpus analysis in an attempt to seek responses to the considerations discussed in the introduction. For that purpose, selected parts of the e-version (Kindle Edition) of the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* are analysed as corpus together with the concept of the dictionary and its linguistic landscape. The words selected were noted down manually in separate entries during the reading and word count process. In this process, the words (entries) were observed when it comes to parts of speech, pronunciation and the descriptions provided in all the definitions pertaining to fear, isolation and anxiety. Other words and expressions were not taken into consideration in this paper to a great detail.

Description of the corpus

The title of the dictionary (*Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*), i.e., the multimodal and multilingual corpus analysed that comprises 317 entries, refers to the Latin phrase *lacriame rerum* ('tears of things') although the translation of the Latin phrase may be ambiguous. The expression was used in different literary and non-literary works, from Virgil's *Aeneid*, *Cloud Atlas*, Franz Liszt's *Years of Pilgrimage*, and finally *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* as a recent reference.

In the corpus, the nouns are presented in (regular -s) plural (e.g., *giltwrights*) or singular (e.g., *hubilance*). It is sometimes not clear how the adjectives may be used or some nouns pronounced (e.g., *chthosis*). What is also clear is that this dictionary cannot have a translation equivalent for its words, only for its definitions. The corpus also comprises nouns that need to be checked for their usage in other languages as well, e.g., *lutalica* (see Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Montenegrin) and *poggled* (see Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Montenegrin for 'pogled').

Figure 1: Parts of speech in *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*.

The *semantic feature model* is proposed to be the closest model for the description of how the dictionary was created from external resources (i.e., different languages) and using encyclopaedic knowledge. Furthermore, the words are created using salient *semantic features* of different words from different languages. Taking into consideration the prefixes and the suffixes, the *morphological (rule-based) approach* should not be discarded in the analysis as the parts of speech provided are provided for the English language and might be expanded through derivation. What may also be concluded is that in the dictionary analysed, the entries are not organized alphabetically. They do not always contain the word's part of speech but etymology is provided; pronunciation is also taken into consideration or provided.

When it comes to the word count and the corpus, the results indicate that *nouns* comprise 83% of the corpus whereas adjectives comprise 13.9% of the corpus. As expected, verbs are found rarely, i.e., they comprise 2.64% of the corpus (see Fig. 1). These results, therefore, indicate that the corpus comprises definitions of emotional states and conditions expressed by nouns and that these classes may cross-linguistically be identified on the basis of their common semantic core. What is relevant for the analysis is the observation by Wierzbicka when she suggests that “human characteristics tend to be designated by nouns rather than adjectives [or verbs] if they are seen as permanent and/or conspicuous and/or important” (Wierzbicka 1986: 357) and that nouns designate “a kind of X” endowed with certain properties rather than a single property.

The notion of ‘fear’, ‘isolation’ and ‘anxiety’ in *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*

In the lines that follow, examples will be provided to offer a better insight into the form of the lexical entries from the corpus analysed focusing only on nouns denoting ‘fear’, ‘isolation’ and ‘anxiety’ as these concepts may be discussed in relation to the affective component.

The productivity of words denoting different kinds of ‘fear’ may be ascribed to the productivity of the word ‘phobia’ that is blended with words truncated from different languages. The most frequently found derivations are nouns derived from a Greek root + *phobia* that are used to denote new emotions for fear, illustrated by the following examples:

Noun	Suggested pronunciation	Definitions in English
(1) <i>antiophobia</i>	/an-tee-uh-foh-bee-uh/	<p>a fear you sometimes experience while leaving a loved one, wondering if this will turn out to be the last time you'll ever see them, and whatever slapdash goodbye you toss their way might have to serve as your final farewell</p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:<i>antío</i> (farewell)+ <i>phobia</i> (fear) (p. 116)</p>
(2) <i>momophobia</i>	/moh-muh-foh-bee-uh/	<p>the fear of speaking off the cuff or from the heart; the terror of saying the wrong thing and having to watch someone's smile fade as they realize you're not who they thought you were</p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: Ancient Greek <i>momos</i> (blemish, disgrace) + <i>phobia</i> (fear) (p. 136)</p>
(3) <i>fygophobia</i>	/fahy-goh-foh-bee-uh/	<p>the fear that your connections with people will keep dwindling as you get older; that one by one, you'll all go flying off the merry-go-round in wildly different directions, sailing through various classes and jobs and interests, ultimately landing in far-flung neighbourhoods where you'll hunker down with your families plus a handful of confidants you see a few times a year, perpetually reassuring each other, "We should keep in touch"</p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: Greek <i>fýgo</i> (I leave) + <i>phobia</i> (p. 144)</p>
(4) <i>koinophobia</i>	/key-noh-foh-bee-uh/	<p>the fear that you've lived an ordinary life</p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: Ancient Greek for "common, ordinary, stripped of specialness" + <i>phobia</i> (p. 49)</p>
(5) <i>naclophobia</i>	/nok-luh-foh-bee-uh/	<p>the fear that your deepest connections with people are ultimately pretty shallow, that although your relationships feel congenial in the moment, an audit of your life would reveal a smattering of low-interest holdings and uninvested windfall profits, which will indicate you were never really at risk of joy, sacrifice, or loss</p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: Greek <i>anachlós</i> (loosely held together) + <i>phobia</i> (p. 91)</p>
(6) <i>nodrophobia</i>	/noh-droh-foh-bee-uh/	<p>the fear of irrevocable actions and irreversible processes—knowing that a colorful shirt will fade a little</p>

more with every wash, that your tooth enamel is wearing away molecule by molecule, never to grow back

Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:Greek *monódromos* (one-way street) + *phobia* (p. 241)

Other nouns found in the corpus that may be used as an illustration, not only when it comes to linguistic creativity but style as well, and that denote new emotions for fear are:

Noun	Suggested pronunciation	Definitions in English
(7) <i>anaphasia</i>	/an-uh-fey-zhah/	<p><i>the fear your society is breaking apart into fractions nothing left in common with each other – each defending their own set of values, referring to their own cult figures, speaking in their own untranslatable language</i></p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:derived from <i>anaphase</i> (the stage in cell division when sister chromatids are pulled apart to opposite sides of the cell) + <i>aphasia</i> (the inability to comprehend or formulate language due to brain dysfunction) (p. 138)</p>
(8) <i>indosentia</i>	/in-duh-sen-shah/ or /in-do-sen-thyah/	<p><i>the fear that your emotions might feel profound but are crudely biological, less to do with meaning and philosophy than with hormones, endorphins, sleep cycles and blood sugar—any if which might be easily tweaked to induced unfalsifiable feelings of joy, depression, bloodlust, or kinship, or even a spiritual transcendence of your physical body</i></p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:acronym of the supposed happy chemicals Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin and Endorphins + <i>in absentia</i> (p.71)</p>
(9) <i>feresy</i>	/fer-uh-see/	<p><i>the fear your partner is changing in ways you don't understand, even though they might be changes for the better, because it forces you to wonder whether your relationship needs a few careful nudges to fall back into balance, or is perhaps as stable as ever, but involves a person who no longer exists</i></p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:derived from Middle English <i>fer</i> (partner, companion) + <i>heresy</i> (deviation from established practices or belief) (p. 89)</p>
(10) <i>ochisia</i>	/oh-kee-zee-uh/	<p><i>the fear that the role you once occupied in someone's life could be refilled without a second thought, which makes you wish that every breakup would include a severance package, a non-compete clause, and some sort of romantic placement program</i></p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the</p>

(11) <i>hubilance</i>	/hyoo-buh-luhns/	<p>Dictionary:derived from Greek <i>óchi pia</i> (not anymore) (p. 89)</p> <p><i>the quiet poignance of your responsibility for someone, with a mix of pride and fear and love and humility – feeling a baby fall asleep on your chest, or driving at night surrounded by loved ones fast asleep, who trust you implicitly with their lives – a responsibility that wasn’t talked about or assigned to you, it was assumed to be yours without question</i></p>
(12) <i>elosy</i>	/ehl-uh-see/	<p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:derived from <i>hub</i> (the central part of the wheel that bears the weight) + <i>jubilance</i> (p. 114)</p> <p><i>the fear of major life changes, even ones you’ve been anticipating for years; the dread of leaving behind the bright and ordinary world you know, stepping out into that liminal space before the next stage of life begins, like the dark and rattling void between adjoining metro cars</i></p>
(13) <i>kadot</i>	/kuh-doh/	<p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:derived from Malagasy language; <i>lelosy</i>, snail, which is a creature that carries many twists and turns wherever it goes, trying in vain to outrun them (p. 215)</p> <p><i>fear of the prospect of not existing one day, feeling like a student about to graduate from the universe, on the cusp of a transition you don’t feel ready for</i></p>
(14) <i>aimonomia</i>	/eym-uh-nohm-ee-uh/	<p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:derived from Finnish <i>kadotus</i> (perdition), which once meant ‘loss’ but now means ‘eternal damnation’ (p. 218)</p> <p><i>the fear that learning the name of something—a bird, a constellation, an attractive stranger—will somehow ruin it, inadvertently transforming a lucky discovery into a conceptual husk pinned in a glass cave, leaving one less mystery fluttering around in the universe</i></p>
(15) <i>nemotia</i>	/nih-moh-shah/	<p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:derived from French <i>aimer</i> (to love) + <i>nom</i> (name) (p. 217)</p> <p><i>the fear that you are utterly powerless to change the world around you, looking on helplessly at so many intractable problems out there- slums that sprawl from horizon to horizon, daily headlines of an unstoppable civil war, a slick of air pollution blanketing the skyline – which makes the act of trying to live your own life feel grotesque and self-indulgent, as if you are rubbernecking through the world</i></p> <p>Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary:derived from Slovenian <i>nemočen</i> (powerless)</p>

(16) <i>evertheless</i>	/ev-er-thuh-les/	(p. 222) <i>the fear that this is ultimately as good as your life is ever going to get – that the ebb and flow of your fortunes is actually just now hitting its high-water mark, and soon enough, you’ll sense the tide of life slowly begin to recede</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: from <i>ever</i> + <i>nevertheless</i> (p. 241)
(17) <i>vaucasy</i>	/vaw-kuh-see/	<i>the fear that you are little more than a product of your circumstances, that for all the thought you put into shaping your beliefs and behaviours and relationships, you are essentially a dog being trained by whatever stimuli you happen to encounter—reflexively drawn to whoever gives you reliable hints of pleasure, skeptical of ideas that make you feel powerless</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: in the case of this noun, the etymology is derived from a personal name (Jacques de Vaucanson) (p. 45)
(18) <i>vemödalen</i>	/	<i>fear that originality is no longer possible</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: melancholy + Vemdalen, the name of a Swedish town (p. 7)
(19) <i>lyssamania</i>	/lis-uh-mey-nee-uh/	<i>the irrational fear that someone you know is angry at you, that as soon as you wander into the room, you’ll be faced with a barrage of questions that gradually escalates into a frenzy of outrage, for reasons that you don’t understand</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: / (p. 52)
(20) <i>ALAZIA</i>	/uh-ley-zee-uh/	<i>the fear that you’re no longer able to change</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: derived from Greek <i>allázo</i> (to change) + <i>dysplasia</i> (abnormal development of tissue) (p. 63)
(21) <i>foreclearing</i>	/	<i>the act of deliberately refusing to learn the scientific explanations of things out of fear that it’ll ruin the magic—turning flower petals into tacky billboards, decoding birdsong into trash talk, defracting the rainbow back inside its tiny prism</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: derived from Danish <i>forklaring</i> (explanation) (p. 28)

The sense or feeling of anxiety is mentioned in several other definitions of the nouns denoting anxiety or a sense of weariness, such as:

Word	Suggested pronunciation	Definitions in English
(22) <i>altschmerz</i>	/altshmerTs/	<i>a sense of weariness with the same old problems that you've always had, the same boring issues and anxieties you've been gnawing on for decades which makes you want to spit them out and dig up some fresher pain you might have buried in your mental background</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: derived from German <i>alt</i> (old) + <i>Schmerz</i> (pain) (p. 52)
(23) <i>anoscetia</i>	/an-oh-see-sha/ or /an-oh-say-thay/	<i>the anxiety of not knowing "the real you"</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: derived from an- (not) + Latin <i>Nosce te ipsum</i> (p. 69)
(24) <i>ioche</i>	/ahy-uh-kee/	<i>the anxiety of being an individual</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: derived from Italian <i>io che</i> (p. 147)
(25) <i>tichloch</i>	/tik-lok/	<i>the anxiety of never knowing how much time you have left</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: reference to <i>The Insatiable Crocodile Hunts (What's Left of Captain Hook</i> (p. 192)

As for nouns denoting isolation, the following examples were extracted from the corpus:

Word	Suggested pronunciation	Definitions in English
(26) <i>merrennes</i>	/mair-uhn-nis/	<i>the lulling isolation of driving late at night - floating through the void in an otherworldly hum, trailing red jewels in the darkness, your high beams sweeping back and forth like a lighthouse</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: derived from Hungarian <i>mere</i> (where? in which direction?) (p. 23)
(27) <i>pax latrina</i>	/paks luh-tree-nah/	<i>the meditative atmosphere of being alone in the bathroom, sequestered inside your own little isolation booth, enjoying a moment backstage from the razzle-dazzle of public life</i> Etymology and derivation as given in the Dictionary: Latin <i>pax</i> (a period of peace) + <i>latrina</i> (toilet) (p. 128)

Following the discussion and the results presented above, it may be concluded that it is *nouns* denoting and embodying different states and emotions that comprise the vast majority of the corpus analysed (83%) and, therefore, deserve special attention. Among them, 6.3% denote emotions

pertaining to fear, followed by emotions and states pertaining to anxiety (1.26%) and isolation (0.6%). In total, all nouns denoting fear, isolation, and anxiety have been taken into consideration and comprise 8.5% of the corpus. The number of nouns denoting different kinds of 'fear' and their presence in the dictionary is significant in comparison to nouns denoting 'isolation' and 'anxiety'.

Concluding remarks and suggestions for further research

The aim of the paper was to explore the recently published *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* (Koenig 2021) as a multilingual corpus of new words (neologisms) created from different languages, including rare blends from the English language (e.g., *evertheless*, *hubilance*), orthographically and semantically in contact in the linguistic landscape of the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* and coined to express different emotions that are usually (and universally) *experienced* but not easily *expressed by words*. In the paper, focus was given to the words proposed to express emotions related to specific kinds of 'fear', 'isolation' and 'anxiety' taking into consideration that this dictionary (just like Fowler's *Modern English Usage*) was completed in a specific kind of seclusion as well. The analysis conducted also shows that the words denoting 'fear', 'isolation' and 'anxiety' are all nouns derived from Greek, Danish, German, Finnish, Hungarian, Italian and (Middle) English, Greek being the most productive due to the blends with the noun 'phobia'. The explanation on why nouns dominate such a corpus was found in observations proposed by Wierzbicka (1986).

The paper also introduced theoretical frameworks and models of the mental lexicon applicable for further analysis on how the dictionary entries were coined, proposing that lexicons need to cooperate in this unique kind of a dictionary that *translanguages*, using all languages at its disposal while not expecting or offering sentence examples for an active usage of the words coined. Rather, it presents a dictionary that is a container of nonce words and new emotions and may, therefore, serve for further linguistic analysis or play an educational role as a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic tool for language instructors, proficient users of different languages, students of linguistics or curious readers.

In terms of the affective component, the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* may spark interest in the readers both as an intergenerational bridge and/or a therapeutic reading material. As for language instructors and students of linguistics, its linguistic landscape may be used for discussing different multicompetences in terms of metalinguistic awareness and (receptive) multilingualism since focus-on-multilingualism approaches have moved away from the idea of considering one language at a time.

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Literacy assessment - a case study in diagnosing and building a struggling reader's profile

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Abstract

Poor language and literacy abilities negatively impact students emotionally, causing low self-esteem, anxiety, and frustration. This affects their attitudes towards learning, reduces motivation, and limits opportunities. Thus, addressing early language and literacy challenges through intervention and accurate assessment is vital for not only positive emotional development but for all round academic growth. In a single-case study, the reading skills of a struggling third grade reader were assessed using tools such as QRI (Qualitative Reading Inventory) and visual-discrimination assessments to create a diagnostic profile. The study aimed to identify the student's reading level, and factors that affect language and literacy abilities. Results showed that the student's instructional reading level was at a low average range for expository texts but at a much higher level (fourth) for narrative texts. Strong word recognition skills were observed, but difficulty in comprehending expository, informational texts was evident. Recommendations include using targeted strategies to improve comprehension skills at all levels (literal, inferential, evaluative) for expository texts, while also addressing the emotional and social development of learners.

Keywords: *literacy assessment, struggling reader, language and literacy, case study, elementary education*

Introduction

Limited language and literacy abilities can negatively impact students in the affective domain, leading to low self-esteem, frustration, anxiety, negative attitudes towards learning, social isolation, reduced motivation, limited opportunities, impaired emotional expression, increased stress during assessments, and hindered critical thinking skills. Students who struggle with reading, writing, and comprehension often experience low self-esteem (Ramin et al. 2023, Shanahan & Shanahan 2023, Cregan & Rutter 2022, Moats 2001). Difficulty in understanding written texts can lead to frustration and anxiety in students. This emotional response may further hinder their learning progress and negatively impact their motivation to engage with academic tasks. Poor language and literacy abilities can create negative attitudes towards learning in general (Rautenbach et al. 2019). Students may develop a dislike for reading or writing tasks, perceiving them as challenging or unenjoyable activities. Students who struggle with language and literacy skills may avoid participating in classroom discussions, group activities, or extracurricular events that involve reading or writing. This social withdrawal can lead to feelings of isolation and alienation from their peers (Rahman et al. 2019). Lacking proficient literacy skills can lead to reduced motivation for academic excellence, potentially resulting in disinterest in pursuing higher education and a lack of motivation to set and achieve academic goals. Persistent struggles with literacy can lead to cycles of underachievement, where students continually fall behind in various subjects due to the interconnected nature of reading and learning (Gay 2018). They may feel inadequate compared to their peers, leading to feelings of frustration, embarrassment, and a lack of confidence in their

academic abilities. Addressing these challenges early on through targeted interventions and support is essential for promoting positive emotional and attitudinal development in students.

Many struggling readers often face challenges in receiving the necessary support and intervention, and in the process, they fall through the cracks in the education system. To address this issue, it is essential for every school to have a high-quality assessment program as a crucial component of an effective curriculum. Such an assessment program can identify struggling readers early, provide targeted interventions, and ensure that their individual needs are met, thus improving their overall academic outcomes. Assessment techniques must be theoretically sound in accurately depicting the skills and knowledge that children are learning and be cognizant of the developmental and individual characteristics of young students. For instance, when a student struggles with phonemic awareness, teachers can provide extra guidance on recognizing word sounds and patterns. Alternatively, if a student finds it challenging to comprehend a text, a teacher could teach them using reading strategies such as summarizing, retelling, or drawing conclusions. Effective interventions, when applied in a timely manner, can prevent reading difficulties from becoming more severe and pervasive (NICHD 2022, Foorman et al. 2016). The ability to read and comprehend the material successfully is ultimately the most effective measure of a student's reading proficiency.

A critical procedure, which assists teachers, determine students' individual reading strengths and shortcomings is the diagnostic assessment in reading. It makes use of a range of assessments and evaluations to gather data on students' proficiency in skills like word recognition, fluency, comprehension, and phonemic awareness. One of the most important advantages of diagnostic reading assessment in early grades is that it enables teachers to identify areas of challenges for students early on and offer focused support. In order to identify students who may be at risk of falling behind in their reading development, the National Reading Panel (2000) suggests that teachers evaluate students' reading abilities in the early grades. Using diagnostic tests, teachers can identify children who have difficulties with specific reading abilities and provide them targeted instruction to help them catch up.

This article is centered around a rising third grader, Nancy (pseudonym), who was eight years old at the time of the assessment during summer. Her parents were concerned about her poor comprehension skills in reading. A range of assessment tools were used to determine Nancy's specific struggles, her instructional reading level, her reading potential, and any impediments to her reading abilities. The process of diagnosis will be discussed along with implications and recommendations for Nancy.

Theoretical background

According to the Science of Reading (SOR), reading is not a natural or intuitive process, but one that must be explicitly taught (Seidenberg 2017). This approach of literacy instruction places a high emphasis on the development of basic abilities, including phonological awareness, decoding, and fluency (Kilpatrick 2015). One key aspect of the SOR is the use of diagnostic assessment to identify students' specific reading strengths and weaknesses (Foorman et al. 2016). Diagnostic assessment allows teachers to provide targeted interventions and instructional strategies that are tailored to students' needs. It helps teachers to understand how a student's reading skills develop over time and identify any areas that need additional support.

The "robust and socially just science of reading" framework suggested by Aukerman & Schuldt (2020) emphasizes the need for reading education to focus on linguistic, cultural, and individual variation by acknowledging and utilizing the diverse strengths and perspectives that students from nondominant cultures bring to their learning and take away from it. The Science of Reading is an evidence-based approach to teaching reading that emphasizes the importance of phonics, phonological awareness, and other foundational skills in early grades (Moats 2020).

An interactive model of literacy development and instruction recognizes that code-related skills (e.g., phonological awareness, decoding, spelling) and language-related skills (e.g., vocabulary,

comprehension, writing) are interconnected and mutually reinforcing (Adams 1990). In other words, these skills are not seen as mutually exclusive, but rather as part of a complex and dynamic system of literacy development (NRP 2000). Informal inventories were used for assessment, which are a widely accepted type of formative assessment in the field of literacy. One key aspect of the evaluation involves the use of miscue analysis, which is an effective method for identifying the ways in which readers deviate from text when reading. The cornerstone of miscue analysis is the notion that reading is a cognitive psycholinguistic activity and that, in order to identify words and understand text, readers need a variety of cues, including grapho-phonetic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic information. By examining the category of miscues made by readers, valuable insights can be gained into the coding system used for word recognition and the impact of miscues on reading comprehension. This makes miscue analysis an important tool for assessing and supporting readers' development of reading skills. The effectiveness of miscue analysis in this context has been demonstrated by researchers (Miller & Smith 2023, Goodman 1969, Goodman & Goodman 1977) who have contributed significantly to the understanding of reading development and instruction.

In general, teachers find that performance samples and observational approaches provide them with the greatest information regarding a young child's reading and writing abilities. Learning to read and write is a cultural and developmental process, just like learning to speak orally. However, reading and writing are complex tasks that integrate several processes and can change from context to context based on the resources a child has access to and the background knowledge they bring to a given task (Teale 1988). To avoid making unwarranted generalizations about a child's ability, it is best to examine a young child's literacy development in a range of contexts. To accurately depict a child's strengths and limitations, significant utilization of samples and observations is required.

Methodology

The research methodology for this study is a single-case study design. The study selected one struggling third-grade reader as the participant. Various tools, such as QRI (Qualitative Reading Inventory) and visual-discrimination assessments, were used to assess the participant's reading skills. QRI, a widely used reading assessment tool, was employed to measure the student's reading level and comprehension abilities. Visual-discrimination assessments were utilized to identify any visual processing issues that might affect reading. Data were collected on the participant's reading skills, including word recognition skills and comprehension abilities for both expository and narrative texts. The collected data from the assessments were analyzed to create a diagnostic profile of the participant's reading skills. The researchers likely compared the participant's instructional reading level for expository and narrative texts and identified factors that affected the participant's language and literacy abilities.

Purpose statement

The major goal of the diagnostic session was to determine Nancy's present reading level focusing on what is needed across a broad range of literacy skills (word recognition, decoding, reading accuracy, reading fluency, reading comprehension) in different situations with varied texts, such as, narrative texts and expository texts. By conducting a comprehensive assessment of the learner's reading abilities, specific areas that require improvement can be identified, and targeted instruction can be provided to address these needs, based on a complete reading profile of the learner. This study adopted a single case study approach (Stake 1995) to achieve its objectives, which were guided by three questions.

1. What is Nancy's present level of reading, and what is her reading potential?
2. What are the factors, if any, that obstruct her reading abilities and potential?
3. What measures can be taken to assist the learner in achieving her full reading potential?

Background Information

Nancy was brought for literacy evaluation after her parents expressed their concern regarding her limited ability to comprehend text. They reported that although she enjoys reading and has reasonably good decoding skills, she struggles with processing and retaining information. Her parents worried that as she entered third grade, the focus would shift from learning to read towards reading to learn, exacerbating her difficulties. They informed the school and requested an evaluation, but the child study team concluded that Nancy did not qualify for special education, and no IEP (Individualized Education Program) or 504 plan was proposed, both the programs are legally binding documents in USA. An IEP is a working document that provides accommodations for special education services for students with significant difficulties that affects their ability to access general education curriculum, while a 504 plan ensures that students with disabilities are not discriminated against and can access educational opportunities easily. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes specific educational goals, specialized instruction, and related services. IEPs are legally binding and are based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A 504 Plan, on the other hand, is designed for students with disabilities that limit major life activities, such as learning, walking, seeing. It provides accommodations and modifications to help students access the general education curriculum. 504 Plans are based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (USA) and aim to ensure equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Exhausting all options available at the school, Nancy's parents sought an independent evaluation. Despite not qualifying for either service, Nancy's parents remained concerned about her ability to succeed academically and plan to seek further support. They also reported that Nancy had significant astigmatism in her right eye (5 diopters) and moderate astigmatism in her left eye (4 diopters), which can impair reading skills. She wore prescription glasses (Right eye RX=-3.75 +5 98 and Left eye RX=-2.5 +4 80) to correct her vision. Astigmatism has been linked to decreased performance on low-level visual tasks such as distinguishing between small details and reading skills (American Optometric Association (AOA) 2016)).

Nancy and her younger sister, lived with her parents, who were both college graduates and employed. She was generally in good health and was accompanied by her grandfather and father to the testing center. Nancy was initially quiet but opened up when her family left, showing eagerness to read. She responded appropriately during testing. To ensure optimal on-task behavior, both the evaluator and the student took necessary brain breaks from the assessment tasks.

A range of assessment tools were selected to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the learner's abilities, which included assessing her decoding skills, comprehension, fluency, as well as her self-monitoring skills during reading. To ensure accurate comprehension assessments, both silent and oral reading tasks were administered, since some students perform better with read aloud, while others demonstrate better comprehension through silent reading (Vidal-Abarca Gilabert & Martínez 2003, Rasinski & Padak 1994). As word identification and decoding become automated in intermediate grades (3-5) and the texts grow linguistically more complex and lengthier in information, issues with comprehension could become more pronounced (Perfetti & Hart 2002, Ehri 2005), as was beginning to be the case with Nancy.

Assessments administered

The following assessments were given to Nancy:

- Informal Oral Reading Inventory (Qualitative Reading Inventory – QRI-5)
- Listening Comprehension Test
- Cloze Silent Reading Comprehension Test
- Visual Discrimination Test

Typically, teachers use Informal Reading Inventory (IRI), a procedure for analyzing student's reading level as well as their reading behaviors. Students read word lists and running texts through which, several literacy skills and behaviors can be assessed, such as word recognition (sight words), word identification, comprehension in narrative and expository texts, reading accuracy, fluency, decoding skills, vocabulary knowledge, as well as affective factors such as self-esteem, motivation, confidence. The designation 'informal' for this measure is somewhat misleading because the procedures, process, measures, and standards for using these inventories have been based on multitude of observations and data-driven analysis (Leslie and Caldwell 1994, Betts 1946, Johns 1997). The IRIs have been used and revised in clinics and schools for more than 50 years, which makes it slightly misleading (Johns 1997). Thorough field testing, study, discussion, and use have all been applied to criterion-referenced performance levels used in reading inventories (Johnston & Allington 1983, Powell 1984, Johns 1997, Leslie & Caldwell 2006, Betts 1946).

Informal Reading Inventories are effective tools in reading assessment for a variety of reasons. Firstly, they provide a comprehensive evaluation of a student's reading performance, including their accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. This information assists teachers in creating a customized instructional plan that addresses the specific needs of a student. Based on IRIs teachers can determine the instructional level for learners. IRIs offer texts that are suitable for various age groups, covering both narrative and expository genres. IRIs can be easily administered by a reading specialist, giving teachers the chance to periodically evaluate student progress and modify their course of instruction as necessary. IRIs are acceptable for use with children of various ages and reading levels because they have been developed to be age-appropriate and cover a range of reading levels. A Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5, Leslie and Caldwell, 2016) was chosen as one of these IRIs for assessment purposes.

Rationale for selecting QRI (Qualitative Reading Inventory)

QRI provides a variety of different opportunities to observe a student's reading behavior. For example, passages with pictures for pre-primers, passages designed to assess oral and silent reading, texts with narrative and expository passages at each readability level, passages for listening comprehension, as well as assessment of students' prior knowledge of passage content. When a reader possesses background knowledge about a topic, they find it easier to comprehend text. Conversely, readers have more difficulty with unfamiliar topics. This can influence instructional levels for familiar or unfamiliar texts (Leslie & Caldwell 2016). QRI addresses this issue by assessing prior knowledge of the learner on a given topic. It also provides a measure for word-identification speed – rate of reading for fluency purposes. It allows for teacher's awareness of the child's dialect variations while interpreting the language patterns of the learners. Several researchers use the QRI as a diagnostic assessment tool due to its usefulness and dependability (Sitthitikul 2018).

Results and discussion

Word recognition in isolation (word list)

Nancy was administered word lists as a starting point. Word lists can help the teacher decide which level of passage to administer to the student first. They provide a quick estimate of the students' word recognition ability, particularly when the student is new, and teacher has little information on the student. It helps in determining the appropriate starting point for administering the narrative and expository reading passages. One limitation of using a word list is that the words are presented without context, which can make decoding more difficult. Each word list in the word identification component of the QRI has 20 words. In order to avoid any potential student discomfort, the teacher often begins the assessment with a word list that is two or more years below the student's chronological grade placement. It is preferable to start low than to put the student in an uncomfortable situation of putting the reader at a possible frustration level, particularly if the tester is not familiar with the student. Initial

experience of success puts the learner at ease. Since Nancy was a rising third grader, she was given level 1 word list. She was able to read the words in the first-grade list, followed by level 2 and 3 lists, scoring at instructional level (70-85%). Since she scored at the lower end of instructional level for Grade 3 and looking at the declining trend of scores, in order to prevent learner from experiencing failure, word list assessment was stopped. Table 1 shows scores obtained in word list assessment.

Table 1:Diagnostic result of isolated word recognition assessment.

Grade level of word list	Score obtained	Reading level
First grade	20/20 = 100%	Independent
Second grade	17/20 = 85%	Instructional
Third grade	14/20 = 70%	Instructional (borderline)

Word recognition in context and comprehension assessments

Word recognition demonstrates the ability of a learner to instantly and automatically recognize words based on their visual appearance or prior encounter with the word. This procedure depends on the reader's proficiency with phonics and sight words. Because word recognition enables readers to assimilate text rapidly and effectively, it is a crucial skill for fluent reading. The phrase "word identification," on the other hand, has a wider definition and refers to both word recognition and additional aspects of reading comprehension, such as decoding strategies, in terms of how a reader identifies words. Readers can use multiple strategies for word identification, such as, context cues, structural or morphemic analysis. Word identification is a necessary component of reading, but it also entails comprehension of the words' meanings and their placement within a sentence or paragraph.

The QRI measures three reading levels: independent, instructional and frustrational levels. Students read each passage aloud, and then retell what they remember from the text. As the student reads aloud, the evaluator listens and records the student's miscues (deviations from text, Goodman, 1969). After the passage is read, the student provides a retelling of the passage and answers comprehension questions. The assessment also informs about child's reading behaviors in decoding, comprehension, and fluency. Nancy was administered levels 1, 2, 3 and 4. Table 2 shows results for Word Recognition and Comprehension Questions Scores for Oral Reading.

Table 2:Word recognition and comprehension questions scores for oral reading.

Levels for passages	Total miscues	WR level	Comprehension level	Questions missed
1 Narrative	0	Independent	Independent	0/6
1 Expository	0	Independent	Frustration	3/6 (missed 2 fact, 1 inference)
2 Narrative	1	Independent	Independent Instructional	2/10 (missed 1 fact, 1 inference Q)
2 Expository	2	Independent	Frustration	6/10 (fact, inference)
3 Narrative	1	Independent	Independent	1/10 (1 fact)
3 Expository	2	Independent	Frustration	7/10 (fact, inference, evaluation)
4 Narrative	4 (self-corrected)	Independent	Instructional	3/10 (fact Qs)

Nancy read aloud the given passages with ease, making minimal miscues and self-corrected some miscues. She read the given passages with almost hundred percent accuracy. However, in response to comprehension questions, she needed prompting and referred to text (lookbacks) to recall information and details for some questions. In response to retelling for the narrative text at level 2, she captured the main idea well without any prompting, providing specific details without referring to text. She missed one fact and one inference question for level 2 narrative passage but missed 6 questions for expository text. With respect to word recognition for level 3, she made one semantically unacceptable miscue [spot] /sport/which was not self-corrected. Since the miscue [spot] did not fit within the context of the sentence and the student continued reading, it indicated that she was not effectively monitoring her comprehension. Similarly, on a different narrative passage she made two semantically unacceptable miscues [cot] /coat/ and [fright] /front/ without self-corrections.

Nancy read aloud level 3 & 4 passages with moderate ease, and when she encountered some difficult words, sometimes she paused and figured out (e.g. microscope). Even though Nancy's oral reading skills were excellent for all the narrative passages, her comprehension started to dwindle at level four for the narrative passages. However, when given an expository passage for level 3, despite high accuracy rate in word recognition, her comprehension dropped down to frustration as she missed seven out of ten questions. She consistently missed facts, inference-based and evaluative questions. Additionally, there was no response to a related affective question, like, 'what might you do to keep the bear away?' She kept silent. There is no definite right answer to affective questions, as the correctness is determined subjectively based on the possibility of the proposed answer. The intent of these questions is to stimulate imaginative, creative thought to learn how a reader connects with the text.

Listening comprehension

In addition to oral reading levels, it is important to get a rough estimate of the student's listening level or potential for substantial growth in reading in order to learn whether a student can comprehend apart from reading, listening assessments are conducted (Ur 1984, Field 2008). Listening comprehension is often regarded as a representative of a child's comprehension potential in the absence of decoding problems (Gough & Juel 1991, Stanovich 1991). Assessing listening comprehension is important to determine a learner's reading potential because listening and reading comprehension are closely related skills. Both involve understanding and processing information from written or oral text. Listening comprehension can provide valuable information about a student's ability to understand spoken language, including vocabulary, sentence structure, and discourse organization. This information can then be used to inform instruction and support the development of reading skills.

Students' performances can differ depending on their individual strengths and limitations, the specific task and assessment setting, as well as other factors. While some students might be better at decoding and reading aloud text with ease, others might excel at comprehending spoken language and taking in information through listening comprehension. To fully grasp a student's overall language proficiency in early grades, it is crucial to evaluate both reading aloud and listening comprehension level. Teachers generally read aloud a text passage to a student to determine the highest level of material that the student can understand. One is cautioned that working memory and attention can impact listening comprehension, thus, it is sometimes discouraged to use this procedure with students in the primary grades.

The examiner begins the reading aloud of a passage at student's highest instructional level. The examiner then continues reading more difficulty passages until the student reaches frustration level based on comprehension questions. The highest passage at which students miss three or fewer questions becomes their listening level (Leslie & Caldwell 2016). For listening comprehension, Nancy went up to level 3 as instructional for narrative passage but showed frustration at level 2 with expository

passage. Narrative passages typically tell a story, fictional or non-fictional and research shows that students show a higher comprehension score for narrative texts compared to expository texts, which are informational passages (Joshi et al. 2020). Students need to be able to read both types of texts. In the upper grades, the content areas become more important as students get more exposed to informational texts. Since Nancy was a rising third grader, the examiner decided to evaluate Nancy's comprehension level for expository texts.

Nancy demonstrated a higher level of comprehension for narrative texts compared to expository texts. Her scores were in the low ranges at frustration level in expository texts. Nancy's diagnostic results were typical of learners, as readers generally score higher for comprehension with narrative texts than expository texts, because narrative texts follow a predictable and familiar structural pattern with descriptive language and tend to be more engaging. Conversely, expository texts tend to be more complex with unfamiliar vocabulary and informational concepts with deeper meaning (McNamara & Magliano 2009).

The results of the reading diagnosis indicated that she was currently performing at a low average level in reading. According to the QRI-5 assessment, Nancy's reading level was below average for a rising third grader (level 1 for expository texts). Nancy struggled with comprehending expository/informational texts for below her age group, but she showed effective word recognition skills.

Results indicated that Nancy encountered difficulties with comprehending informational texts, making inferences, remembering details, and making connections with the text. The difficulty she experienced with comprehending expository texts in particular highlights a need for targeted instruction and support in this area. While Nancy appeared to have a relatively stronger grasp of narrative texts, it was important for her to develop skills and strategies for comprehending different types of texts, especially as she progresses through the upper grades and encounters more informational texts in content areas.

Cloze silent reading comprehension test

The purpose of the Cloze Silent Reading Comprehension test is to evaluate the student's ability to comprehend content materials using context clues to determine missing vocabulary. Cloze reading is a widely used reading comprehension technique in which students are given a text passage with missing words, where they fill in the blanks with the appropriate words. The purpose of cloze reading is to assess if students can monitor their reading. It helps to improve reading comprehension by engaging students in active reading and developing their ability to use context clues to infer meaning (Davis & Stephens 2011). To fill in the missing gaps in cloze assessments, students must be able to recognize the semantically acceptable words by using their knowledge of the context and vocabulary. Cloze reading has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of reading comprehension for both native English speakers and English language learners in research by Hudson and Pearson in 2004. Furthermore, cloze reading has been found to be a valuable tool for assessing reading comprehension. Nancy was given passages for various levels:

Pre-primer Level = Instructional (9/10)

Primer Level = Independent (10/10)

Level 1 = Independent (10/10)

Level 2 = Instructional (9/10)

Level 2 = Independent (10/10)

Level 3 = Frustrational (2/10)

The results of the Cloze Silent Reading Comprehension Test indicated that Nancy's silent reading instructional level was two. Nancy's performance on the Cloze Silent Reading Comprehension Test was

at the instructional level for the Pre-primer Level and Level 2, at the independent level for the Primer Levels 1 and 2, and at the frustrational level for Level 3. It is important to note that a student's instructional level may vary depending on other factors such as type of text, prior knowledge, and interest.

Visual discrimination test

The purpose of the visual discrimination test is to assess the student’s ability to distinguish likenesses and differences between letters or words. Since Nancy had astigmatism, the task was conducted to evaluate any deficits in visual perception using an assessment incorporating a match-to-target paradigm that is commonly used to measure visual perception and visual spatial skills.

- Test A = 10/10 (Acceptable Level)
- Test B = 12/14 (Acceptable Level)
- Test C = 18/18 (Acceptable Level)
- Test D = 17/20 (18 or above is acceptable)

The results of the Visual Discrimination Test showed Nancy’s visual discrimination skills to be at borderline acceptable level.

It is important to note that standardized tests or informal tests, while they can provide valuable information about a student's reading skills and abilities, should not be considered as the sole factor in determining the suitability of reading materials for a student. A single test should not be used to make definitive conclusions about an individual's abilities. Other factors such as testing conditions, motivation, and other individual differences also affect academic performance. A comprehensive assessment that takes into account multiple sources of information, including standardized tests, informal tests results, observations, and interviews with the individual and those who know them well, would be necessary to accurately evaluate an individual’s reading performance.

Based on the Informal Reading Assessment, Nancy demonstrated strong word recognition skills in context and a good sight vocabulary during oral reading. She was able to decode text at level 4 with ease. She could read and comprehend narrative texts at level 4 (instructional level). She used the strategy of ‘lookbacks’ effectively to respond to comprehension questions. However, she had a significantly restricted understanding of informational texts. Nancy's low comprehension level was concerning, and without timely intervention, it is likely to deteriorate further. The IRI assessment revealed that she required explicit instruction on inference-based, summary-based, and evaluation-based questioning techniques for informational texts, these questions may overlap (Table 3).

Table 3:Types of comprehension questions.

Types of comprehension questions	Description and examples
Fact-based	These questions ask for specific information that is directly stated in the text, such as "What color was the car?"
Inference-based	These questions ask the reader to draw conclusions based on information that is implied or hinted at in the text, such as "Why do you think the character acted that way?"
Vocabulary-based	These questions test the reader's understanding of the meanings of specific words or phrases used in the text, such as "What does the word 'obstinate' mean in this sentence?"
Summary-based	These questions ask the reader to provide a brief overview of the main ideas or events in the text, such as "What was the story about?"

Evaluation-based	These questions ask the reader to form an opinion or make a judgment about the text, such as "Do you think the author effectively conveyed their message in this story?"
Affective	An affective question is designed to elicit an emotional or personal response from the reader. "How did the story make you feel?" "Did this character's actions make you feel angry or sympathetic?"

Students who have been excessively trained in phonics and decoding techniques may tend to approach the reading process as a straightforward decoding task, rather than actively seeking to extract meaning from the text. This can result in difficulties with comprehension, as they may not fully understand or engage with the content they are reading. Research shows that over-emphasizing phonics and decoding can lead to surface-level reading that does not fully engage with the content and may hinder the development of higher-level comprehension skills (Ehri 2005, NRP 2000).

Ultimately, the best test of a student's reading skill is their ability to successfully read and comprehend the material. By using a combination of formal and informal tests, as well as considering individual student factors such as interests and prior knowledge, teachers can make more informed decisions about the best reading materials and strategies for each student's unique needs.

Assessment results showed that Nancy needed diverse instructional approaches to improve her comprehension skills, particularly with expository texts at all levels (literal, inferential, evaluative). She would gain from focusing on self-monitoring strategies on meaning during the reading process. She would benefit from a variety of instructional tools and strategies, such as pre-reading strategies, prior knowledge activities, anticipation guides, graphic organizers, summarization of chunks of texts, vocabulary review, questioning during reading, and practice with cloze passages. The intervention in school and/or during individualized tutoring by a professional educator should benefit from the following strategies:

1. Building background knowledge and activating student’s prior knowledge using anticipation guides or KWL ("What I Know, What I Want to Know, and What I Learned") can significantly improve comprehension.
2. Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) – This comprehension strategy teaches students how to ask key questions about their reading, and how to find answers to their questions – whether related to a specific fact, drawing an inference, or connecting the reading to their own experiences. It categorizes questions into four types: Right there, Think and Search, Author and You, On My Own questions that guide students in developing effective comprehension skills (see Figure 1).
3. Cloze passages (expository and narrative): A cloze passage is a reading comprehension exercise in which words are removed (usually every fifth or seventh word or a content word) from a text, and the reader is asked to fill in the missing words. This activity assesses the reader's understanding of the context and their ability to predict the missing words, making it a valuable tool for assessing reading comprehension and vocabulary (see Figure 2).
4. SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review): SQ3R is a study and reading comprehension strategy that stands for "Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review." It involves a five-step process:
 - Survey: Skim the text to get an overview.
 - Question: Formulate questions about the content.
 - Read: Actively read the material while looking for answers.
 - Recite: Summarize or recite what you've learned.
 - Review: Review the material to reinforce understanding.

SQ3R is designed to enhance comprehension and retention of information when studying textbooks or other written materials (see Figure 3).

5. **Guided Reading:** Guided Reading is an instructional strategy used in literacy education, particularly in elementary school settings. In Guided Reading, a teacher works with a small group of students, typically at similar reading levels, to provide targeted support and instruction. The teacher selects appropriate reading materials, introduces the text, guides students in reading and discussing the text, and helps them develop reading strategies and skills. This approach aims to improve students' reading comprehension, fluency, and word recognition in a personalized and focused manner.
6. **Summarizing:** Summarizing involves identifying the most significant information and presenting it in one's own words. Readers condense the main ideas, key details, and important points of a text into a shorter, coherent version. This helps readers grasp the text's central message, improve retention, and demonstrate comprehension.
7. **Herringbone Technique:** Herringbone technique is a structured outlining procedure to get the important information in a text by using six basic comprehension questions (who, what, when, where, how, and why (see Figure 4).
8. **Context Clues:** Context clues are a reading comprehension strategy where readers use not only the surrounding words and phrases in a text to infer the meaning of an unfamiliar word or phrase, but also the reading environment and the context of reading. By analyzing the context in which the unknown word is used, readers can make educated guesses about its definition, which helps them better understand the overall content. This strategy encourages self-sufficiency in vocabulary development and enhances comprehension (see Figure 5).
9. **Making Connections** (For instance, This reminds me of ...; I know about this topic because...; This book / story reminds me of ...)
10. **Diagramming paragraph into main idea and details:** Diagramming helps readers visualize the structure of a paragraph or passage, making it easier to identify key information and relationships between ideas. It is a valuable strategy for studying, summarizing, and extracting essential content from texts. To enhance clarity, use colors or highlighting to mark the main idea and details. For instance, a reader might use a specific color for the main idea and another for supporting details.
11. **Using a graphic organizer like a word web with main idea in the center bubble and the rest of the supporting details in the surrounding bubbles.**
12. **Ask Questions and Visualize**
 - What did I just read? Let me rephrase in my own words.
 - If I have to teach this to a younger student or sibling what and how will I tell the student about it?
 - This does not make sense, let me go back and re-read.
 - I have read a lot of information; now, let me stop and think about this for a minute.

Key factors to consider for support at home:

- **Motivation and Engagement:** Positive reinforcement for strengths in other areas can motivate students to continue pursuing their interests and passions. When they receive recognition for their accomplishments, it can spark enthusiasm and engagement in those areas.
- **Emphasizing Progress and Growth:** Struggling readers may be on a journey of improvement, and it's essential to acknowledge their progress in all aspects of their development. Recognizing

achievements beyond reading shows that growth can happen in various domains, helping students understand that they can overcome challenges with dedication and effort.

- Creating a Supportive Environment: Commending students for their strengths fosters a supportive and nurturing learning environment. When educators focus on positive attributes, students feel valued and encouraged, which, in turn, can enhance their overall learning experience and willingness to participate actively in class.
- Ensuring that a struggling student does not feel pressured to read better is crucial for their overall progress and well-being. While the intention behind encouraging improvement may be positive, excessive pressure can lead to added stress and hinder the student's reading development.
- Encourage the student to read for pleasure, particularly non-fiction books about their interests. Regular visits to the library can be beneficial for finding new material.
- Have students retell what was read, can improve their listening and comprehension skills. Provide prompts if needed and ask questions that they can answer to build their confidence.
- Students in the earlier stages of reading development should read both orally and silently, while higher-level students can read silently before answering questions. Encourage the student to read silently.
- Congratulating and commending students on their strengths in other areas is essential for fostering self-esteem, motivation, and a positive learning environment. By recognizing their talents and accomplishments beyond reading difficulties, educators and parents can assist students develop a more comprehensive and optimistic view of themselves, supporting their overall growth and academic progress.

Conclusion

Early intervention is critical for addressing reading difficulties, as it can prevent the gap in reading ability from widening over time. Addressing reading difficulties early on can improve the reader's overall academic performance, increase their engagement and motivation, and promote lifelong learning. Identifying struggling readers' strengths and weaknesses is essential in optimizing instruction and maximizing their potential. The findings of this study can be used to inform assessment and guide the development of individualized goals for a student. Accurately determining a learner's reading comprehension level is crucial in understanding their abilities and tailoring instructional materials to their level. In summary, the study's findings highlight the importance of using a variety of tools and assessments to understand a student's reading abilities and requirements. By creating a personalized plan for instruction based on assessment results, teachers can help struggling readers to achieve their full reading potential.

Limitations and significance of the study

The author would like to acknowledge that single case studies are limited in terms of generalizability and have constraints. In this study, the researcher's primary focus is to provide a rich and detailed understanding of a specific in-depth case. These findings are context-specific and not intended for broad generalization. Future research might build on these findings or replicate the study in different contexts to enhance generalizability. The researcher would like to emphasize that single case studies are valuable for exploring complex, unique cases in-depth. This single case study is valuable as it offers several contributions to a deeper understanding of the subject of addressing language and literacy difficulties in students, particularly focusing on reading in early grades. Here are the key ways in which this study adds value:

In-depth analysis: The study provides a detailed and in-depth analysis of a struggling third-grade reader's reading abilities. It goes beyond mere quantitative assessment and delves into qualitative aspects, such as comprehension skills and emotional impacts.

Tailored intervention: By identifying the specific strengths and weaknesses of the student, the study offers the potential for tailored interventions. It recognizes that reading abilities can vary, even within a single student, as seen in the contrast between narrative and expository texts. This insight can guide educators in developing personalized strategies to improve the student's reading skills.

Emotional and social development: The study recognizes the emotional impact of poor language and literacy abilities, emphasizing the importance of addressing not just academic challenges but also the emotional and social development of learners. This holistic approach is crucial in ensuring the well-rounded development of students.

Early intervention: The study underscores the significance of early intervention in addressing reading difficulties. It emphasizes that identifying and addressing these challenges in the third grade can prevent the gap in reading ability from widening, which can have long-term implications on academic performance and motivation. It emphasizes the critical need for early intervention to prevent the gap in reading ability from widening over time.

Informing assessment and instruction: The findings have practical applications in informing assessment practices and guiding the development of individualized instructional goals. It stresses the importance of using various tools and assessments to understand a student's reading abilities, thereby helping educators make informed decisions about instructional materials and strategies.

Optimizing academic performance: Ultimately, the study's value lies in its potential to optimize a student's academic performance, increase engagement, and promote lifelong learning. It aligns with the goal of helping struggling readers reach their full reading potential, thereby improving their overall educational journey.

In summary, this single case study offers a holistic perspective on addressing language and literacy difficulties in students, highlighting the emotional, academic, and social aspects. By providing insights into individualized assessment and intervention, it contributes to a deeper understanding of how to support struggling readers effectively, potentially benefitting both educators and students in the process.

Figure 1: Sample QAR (question-answer relationship task for second graders)

Figure 1
Sample QAR (Question-Answer Relationship) task for second graders

Instructions:

1. Read the following passage: "My favorite animal is the dolphin. Dolphins live in the ocean and are known for their intelligence and playfulness. They are also great swimmers and can jump really high out of the water. Dolphins like to travel in groups called pods. They communicate with each other by making clicking and whistling sounds."
2. Answer the following questions:
 - Right There Question: Where do dolphins live?
 - Think and Search Question: What are some characteristics of dolphins?
 - Author and You Question: Why do you think the author likes dolphins?
 - On My Own Question: Have you ever seen a dolphin before? If so, where and when?

Note: The QAR strategy helps students understand the relationship between the question and the text and encourages them to use their prior knowledge and experience to make connections with the text.

Figure 2: Sample Cloze Passage for Second Graders

Figure 2
Sample Cloze Passage for Second Graders

Summer is my favorite season. I love to go to the ____ (beach) and play in the sand. I also like to go swimming in the ____ (pool) with my friends. Sometimes we have ____ (barbecues) and eat hot dogs and hamburgers. One time, my family went on a ____ (picnic) and we saw a beautiful ____ (butterfly) with orange and black wings. I can't wait for ____ (summer) to come again so I can have more fun!

Figure 3: SQ3R

Figure 3 SQ3R		
Letter	Word	Meaning
S	Survey	Scan through to get an overview, headings, pictures, first sentence of paragraphs
Q	Question	Ask questions about the text, purpose
R	Read	Read for key ideas, supporting details, new words, highlight
R	Retell	Summarize main points in your own words
R	Review	Go back over the text for clarification, understanding

Figure 4: Herringbone Technique

Figure 4
Herringbone Technique

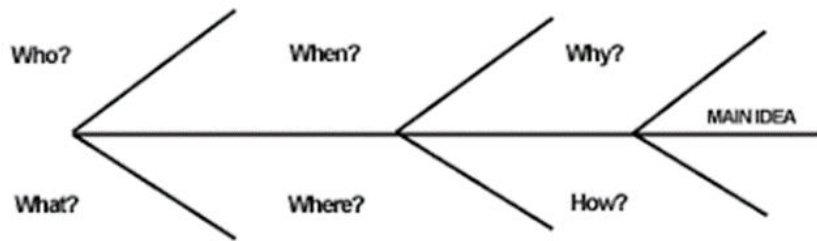


Figure 5: Context Clues

Context Clues

When strong readers come to an unfamiliar word, they can use context clues to help them determine the meaning of the unknown word.

There are different types of context clues.

I	Inference – the meaning is not given so you must use text clues	<i>Don't want to work with Ricardo, unless you want to hear him talk about himself. He is so arrogant.</i>
D	Definition – the meaning of the word is explained in the sentence	<i>Ricardo is so arrogant. He thinks he is more important than everyone else.</i>
E	Example – an example of the word is in the sentence or nearby sentences	<i>Ricardo is so arrogant. He is always bragging about how great he is at sports.</i>
A	Antonym – a word with opposite meaning is used in the sentence or near by sentences	<i>Ricardo is so arrogant. He needs to learn to be humble like his little brother Jose.</i>
S	Synonym – words with similar meaning are used in or near the sentence	<i>Ricardo is so arrogant, proud, self-centered, and over-bearing.</i>

Strong readers will always read the sentences surrounding the unknown word to look for clues.

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Prosody expression in prelingually- and postlingually- implanted deaf adults

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Abstract

Speech prosody - its melody, accent, and quantity - plays a significant role in language communication, including the expression of emotions. Limited prosodic skills in individuals with profound hearing disabilities affect their communicative functioning. Modern hearing prostheses, such as cochlear implants, enable deaf people to develop and utilize auditory and oral language abilities, although not always prosodic ones. The presented results of our own research indicate the importance of the period of hearing loss and the duration of implant use for prosodic effectiveness in cochlear implant users. They also emphasize the need for rehabilitation activities that focus on early prosodic stimulation in prelingually deaf children and prosodic training in prelingually deaf adults.

Keywords: *speech prosody, prelingual and postlingual deafness, cochlear implant*

Introduction

Speech prosody: its melody, accent, and quantity are essential elements of language communication (see Crystal 2010). These factors, which have a musical background, significantly contribute to the reception and expression of speech. This also applies to the realm of emotions in oral communication, which are largely conveyed through prosody. The use of prosody is an intuitive skill acquired through the natural process of language development based on auditory perception. Therefore, in individuals with hearing impairments, both the development of prosodic patterns and their reflection in speech exhibit deficits due to the auditory barrier in their acquisition. An obvious example of this situation is seen in individuals with prelingual deafness, where the hearing impairment occurred during an early stage of language development, causing difficulties in acquiring prosodic patterns and later utilizing them in language interactions. Conversely, individuals who become deaf after the speech development period have a different prosodic background. In this case, prosodic patterns can be preserved, allowing for their reproduction in language communication.

Therefore, there is no doubt that in order to activate or re-activate prosodic skills in both pre- and post-lingually deaf individuals, it is necessary to effectively support their auditory abilities. Currently used hearing prosthetics technologies, such as cochlear implants, together with rehabilitation activities aimed at stimulating auditory and language functions, have significant effects, for the majority of individuals with profound hearing loss (Hand et al. 2021, Geers et al. 2003). This applies to the development of these functions in prelingually deaf children as well as their restoration in postlingually deaf individuals.

Considering the benefits of the implantation procedure, it is worth considering its effects on the prosodic abilities of deaf individuals. This reflection should particularly concern those who are prelingually deaf and implanted in adulthood. Early hearing loss and the lack of effective auditory support resulting from less advanced hearing aids at that time limited their prosodic abilities (see

Osberger and McGarr 1982, Kowalska 1989, La Bruna et al. 1990, Maniecka-Aleksandrowicz et al. 1998: 128). Despite the use of cochlear implants, it is challenging to overcome this deficit, as evidenced by the results of our own research presented in the article. These findings also serve as a contribution to reflecting on post-implantation rehabilitation efforts, their current effectiveness, and future modifications.

The article is an extension of my own text published in 2019 in the journal *Disability. Discourses of Special Education*, referring to the prosodic aspect of functioning in adults who are deaf.

The communicative and emotional dimension of prosody

Language plays a significant role in the development and subsequent cognitive, emotional, and social functioning of individuals (see Prillwitz 1996, Perier 1992). Experiencing the world from an intra- and intersubjective perspective is based on linguistic symbols. Through them, it becomes possible to acquire and process knowledge about the surrounding reality, as well as express subjective experiences and establish interpersonal relationships. Therefore, language enables individuals to navigate the "conversational reality" (Kvale 2004) that accompanies them throughout their lives.

This extremely important communicative aspect of language is manifested in its prosodic dimension, associated with the following elements of speech: accent, melody, and quantity (Crystal 2010, Dłuska 1976, Jadacka 2010, Ostaszewska and Tambor 2000). The first of these elements, accent, distinguishes a specific part of speech through changes in its loudness, length, or pitch. The next element, speech melody, is related to its pitch and dynamics, taking on characteristic intonation patterns specific to each language. These patterns allow for the interpretation of speech as different modes of communication: questions, statements, or commands. The final prosodic factor is quantity, which corresponds to the length of time the speech elements are pronounced and is primarily related to their rhythm and tempo, as well as intensity and pitch. It is also important to consider that in the process of communication, the various prosodic factors correlate with each other, creating what Adam Weinsberg describes as a "prosodic contour" (1983) or what Maria Dłuska refers to as "prosodic semantic units" (1976).

The emotional aspect of human language functioning mentioned earlier is nonetheless important. Emotions are one of the factors that shape and represent language (cf. Liwo 2023). Their significance can be observed already in the early stages of speech development. Behaviors that emerge during this period are primarily saturated with non-verbal, emotional meaning. Infants express them in the form of various melodic vocalizations, combining them with non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and touch. In doing so, they imitate the adult environment, which communicates with the child through emotional "exaggerations" carried out through pronounced intonation, pace, accentuation, and intensity of individual sounds or entire utterances, constituting their prosodic aspect. The emotional factor is also present in the diminutives and short forms that typically appear in parentese, exemplified by diminutive verbs (Milewski 2011: 30-33).

The emotional dimension of language significantly exposes the prosody of speech. It allows for the recognition and communication of emotions, which is manifested through changes in the acoustic characteristics of the voice (Śmiecińska 2020: 316-317). The melodic line of speech is the factor that has the greatest impact on the emotional message. For instance, the melodic line of speech expressing joy begins with a rising character and ends with a falling one. Similarly, speech expressing anger has a similar contour: it starts with an increase and ends with a sudden decrease. On the other hand, speech conveying sadness is characterized by a descending line. This particular type of melodic line is best recognized in natural speech, whereas the recognition of anger-related speech is weaker, and the recognition of joy-related speech is the weakest. Specific melodic contours allow the listener to intuitively interpret the emotions conveyed in the speech without prior learning or memorization. Similarly, the prosodic sender of emotions does so unconsciously, relying solely on prosodic intuition (see Waryszak 2020: 225-253).

In conclusion, prosody is an important factor that determines the emotional saturation of speech and makes it interesting for the recipient. It seems necessary in the process of communication to establish and maintain the relationship between the sender and the receiver. However, is the ability to use prosody in communication available to everyone, or are there limitations in this area related to biological or cognitive deficits in language skills? One of them is profound hearing impairment, which blocks the acquisition of prosodic patterns and their activation in communication. The issue of prosodic skills in deaf individuals and their support is addressed in the following part of the article.

Prosodic skills of deaf individuals and their support in the implantation procedure

The auditory organ serves as a natural pathway for the acquisition of a spoken language (comp. Domagała and Mirecka 2015: 88). Hearing is essential for mastering the individual elements of the language system: its phonology, grammatical and semantic rules, used for effective communication. It also serves as a foundation for acquiring prosodic patterns of speech. Hearing impairments can therefore be a significant cause of prosodic difficulties. A particularly striking example of this is profound prelingual hearing loss. This is an early, acquired damage to the receptive part of the auditory organ, occurring before the development of speech. In this case, a lowered threshold of hearing results in limited perception and understanding of sounds, including those crucial for language communication. The consequences of prelingual hearing impairment are difficulties in activating linguistic and communicative competencies necessary for the development and use of language, manifested as global and/or partial speech disorders, including its prosodic layer (see Osberger and McGarr 1982, Kowalska 1989, La Bruna et al. 1990, Szkiełkowska 2005: 635-637, Krakowiak 2012: 131-139, Lorenc 2015: 205-208). They are characterized by significant anomalies in terms of accenting, melody, and pace of speech, as well as distinct phonetic disorders related to voice adjustment and intensity during speech. The range of pitch is small, with a tendency for it to decrease. The duration of syllables, on the other hand, is generally prolonged, due to frequent breath pauses. There is also an observed dependence between the direction of speech melody and its intensity, as manifested by an increase in the intensity of melody at its higher registers (see Obrębowski 1992: 360-361, Obrębowski and Wika 2019: 295-297, Krakowiak 2012: 131-139, Lorenc 2015: 205-208). Currently, the problems mentioned are more discreet due to the possibility of quick implantation and hearing and speech rehabilitation. However, the prosodic quality of prelingually deaf individuals' speech thus exhibits deficits, which, combined with poor language and communication skills, often hinder their satisfactory participation in language interactions (see Liwo 2018).

On the other hand, individuals with postlingual deafness possess better prosodic skills. In this case, the hearing impairment occurs after the period of speech development, often in adulthood, which provides an opportunity to acquire prosodic patterns, consolidate them in auditory memory, and later utilize them in communicative situations.

However, auditory, habilitative and rehabilitative support is essential for effective use of prosody in individuals with hearing deficits. Modern hearing prosthetic technologies, such as cochlear implants, along with interventions targeting auditory and language functions, offer the possibility of both developing prosodic patterns in prelingually deaf children and rebuilding them in individuals with postlingual deafness.

The cochlear implant is a microprosthesis of the internal part of the hearing organ, replacing inactive auditory cells. In this case, the perception of acoustic stimuli and their transfer to the auditory centers in the central nervous system occurs through direct electrical stimulation of the auditory nerve. As a result, a profoundly deaf person has the ability to perceive varied auditory sensations. To effectively recognize and identify them, targeted habilitative and rehabilitative actions are necessary, which vary depending on the age and auditory skills of the deaf person (see Liwo 2018 and 2020). For prelingually deaf children, these actions take the form of auditory and language education, aiming to stimulate their

auditory and verbal abilities. In the case of postlingually or prelingually deaf adults, the rehabilitation procedure takes the form of auditory training based on previously acquired auditory and linguistic skills (compare Löwe 1995, Ling et al. 2000, Szuchnik 2005: 653-675). Considering linguistic skills, including prosodic ones, post-implant rehabilitation mainly focuses on auditory speech perception, involving differentiation and identification of the phonological sources of language and its intonational patterns.

The available data from the subject literature emphasize significant effects on improving listening and language skills in the majority of implanted and (re)habilitated children and adults. These data mainly concern the syntactic and semantic layers of language, both in terms of their effective development and their use in communication. To a lesser extent, they relate to the prosodic layer of speech, primarily analyzing groups of postlingually implanted adults (see Wojewódzka 2012) and prelingually deaf implanted children (see Osberger et al. 1991, Cleary et al. 2002, Chin et al. 2003, Dillon et al. 2004, Most and Peled 2007, Lenden and Flipsen 2007, Snow and Ertmer 2009, Binos et al. 2013, Holt 2013, Van de Velde et al. 2019, Liwo 2020).

To a limited extent, prosodic skills of prelingually deaf implanted adults have been analyzed. Such studies have been conducted by N. Jiam, A. Catalano, M. van Zyl (Catalano et al. 2017, van Zyl 2014, Jiam et al. 2017, Cosentiono et al. 2016, Pak and Katz 2019, Christensen et al. 2019, Amichetti et al. 2021, Arias-Vergara et al. 2022, Karimi-Boroujeni et al. 2023), and the author of the presented article (see Liwo 2019). Due to the need for more extensive data in this area, I have undertaken my own research.

Methodology

Considering the aforementioned research limitations regarding the analysis of prosodic skills in deaf, specifically prelingually deaf adults with implants, I conducted a preliminary study aimed at evaluating prosodic elements in the speech of these individuals. The study has been carried out in a Specialized Diagnosis and Rehabilitation Center PZG in Gdańsk in the period from 2017 to 2023. The study included the following groups of implant users:

- 21 prelingually deaf individuals aged 19-63 years old (14 women and 7 men);
- 25 postlingually deaf individuals aged 25-79 years old (19 women and 6 men).

The causes of hearing loss in the group of postlingually deaf people were diverse (sudden deafness in 2 individuals, Menier's disease in 1 individual, progressing hearing loss in 11 individuals, unknown causes in 11 individuals). In the group of prelingually deaf people the majority of causes were unknown.

Both groups were diverse in terms of the duration of hearing loss. In the case of prelingually deaf people, this period depended on their biological age (shorter in younger people than in older people). It is also worth noting that prelingually deaf individuals had used a traditional hearing aid prior to implantation. In the group of postlingually deaf people, the duration of hearing loss differed significantly: in the case of persons who became suddenly deaf, it was about 1 year, in the case of persons with progressive hearing loss even a dozen or so years.

In both groups, the auditory analysis method was used to assess speech utterances in two periods:

- after approximately six months of implant use and auditory training;
- after approximately two years of implant use and auditory training.

The auditory training was based on exercises in differentiating the characteristics of sound (their discrimination and identification) in the field of ambient sounds, music and speech. In particular, it concerned the stimulation of auditory speech perception (phoneme and prosodic hearing).

The conducted auditory analysis was based on subjective auditory impressions elicited by the speech of the participants from prelingually and postlingually groups. The set of speeches used in the study consisted of sentences that varied in terms of length and intonational contour (interrogative, declarative, and imperative). The participants were asked to read different types of sentences, and their statements were recorded on a dictaphone. The prosodic indicators (rhythm, accent, and melody) were evaluated in the listened statements by researcher on a scale of 0-5 in uttered speech. Undertaking this

type of analysis was related to the author's previous research on the evaluation of prosody in deaf infants (Liwo, 2020). Based on previous experience, it was recognized that audit analysis can determine the actual measure of changes in the prosodic area of speech. In comparison, individual prosodic factors in the speech of 23 individuals with normal hearing were subjected to auditory analysis evaluation.

The analysis of the collected data involved comparing the initial and final values of the prosodic indicators (rhythm, accent, and melody) in the examined groups and relating them to the prosodic norm presented in the speech of individuals with normal hearing. Taking into account different numbers in each of the groups, the average values of individual indicators per person in the group were assumed. The gathered data allowed for the assessment of speech prosody quality in implanted adults differentiated in terms of the period of hearing loss.

Results

The conducted analysis indicated significant disparities in the prosodic quality of utterances produced by pre- and postlingually deaf individuals. Additionally, both groups displayed deviations in this aspect compared to the hearing group (see Fig. 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Comparison of prosodic features (rhythm, accent, melody) in groups of prelingually and postlingually implanted persons at equivalent time intervals, with reference to the norm represented by hearing individuals. The height of the histograms corresponds to the average value of prosody indicators per person in the group.

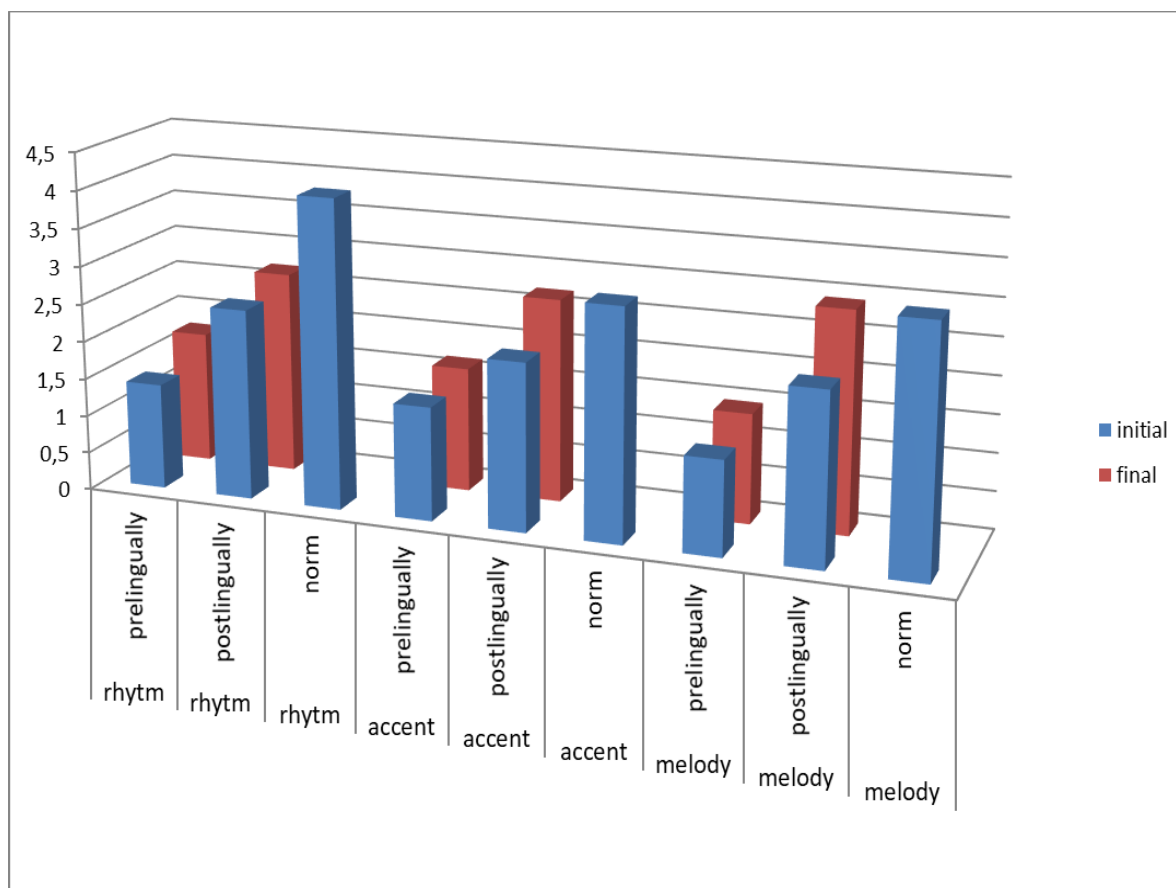
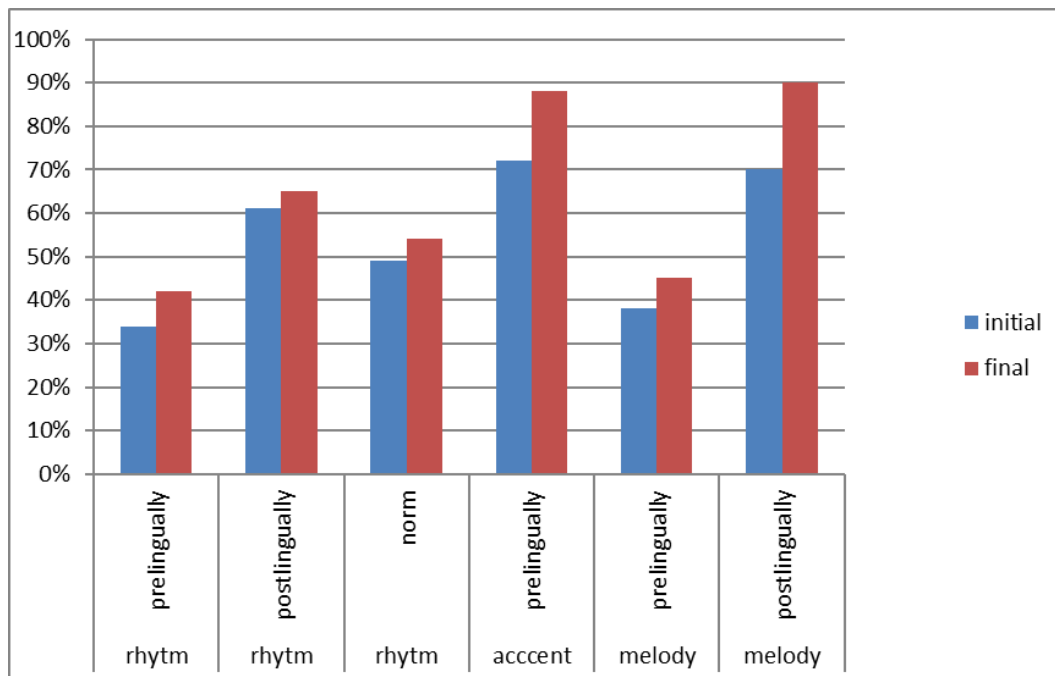


Figure 2: % of prosody (rhythm, accent, melody) achieved by persons from the prelingual and postlingual groups in the initial and final assessments.



The rhythm indicator in both groups of implanted deaf individuals showed a slight increase between the initial and final assessments, as well as a significant discrepancy in comparison to its value in the hearing group. In the prelingually deaf group, the accent indicator exhibited a slight increase relative to its initial and final values, along with a large deviation from the hearing group. Conversely, in the postlingually deaf group, the accent indicator significantly increased in the final assessment, approaching the norm presented in the hearing group. The melody indicator in the prelingually deaf group showed significant deviations from the norm, as well as minimal growth compared to its value in the final assessment. On the other hand, in the postlingually deaf group, this indicator considerably increased throughout the study, and its presented value in the final assessment slightly differed from the hearing group.

Taking into account the presented research results, it can be stated that the period of hearing loss plays a significant role in prosody acquisition in adult cochlear implant users. Prosodic expression in implanted deaf individuals, due to preserved prosodic patterns, does not significantly differ from the norm presented in the speech of hearing individuals. In this case, cochlear implantation and auditory training provide the opportunity to rebuild prosodic patterns and enhance the chances of effective prosody use in communication. On the other hand, for prelingually deaf individuals, difficulties in using prosody stem from insufficiently developed and consolidated prosodic patterns, which probably may be related to poor auditory stimulation during the period of speech development. Implantation combined with auditory training in adulthood thus does not significantly impact the prosodic quality in this group of deaf adults.

It can also be stated that the effectiveness of cochlear implantation and auditory training in relation to the production of specific prosodic factors varies: it is greatest in relation to rhythm in prelingually deaf individuals and melody in postlingually deaf individuals.

Discussion

The presented research results can imply a discussion focused on several areas. The first one is related to the significance of prosody in human communicative functioning. This aspect was addressed in the first part of the article, emphasizing the importance of prosody in the linguistic trajectory of human life, both in terms of its production and perception. The significance of prosody in communication is also highlighted by situations involving its disorders, which consequently hinder effective communication with their surroundings. A particularly vivid example of prosodic difficulties is the speech of individuals with profound hearing impairment, characterized by impairments in rhythm, melody, and accent, which was highlighted earlier in the article.

Therefore, a crucial aspect is working on supporting prosodic skills in deaf individuals, including activities in the field of hearing and speech rehabilitation supported by modern hearing prosthesis such as implants. As our own research shows, in the case of prelingually deaf adults, such actions are not always effective. This is due to the lack of effective auditory support using an implant during the critical period for prosodic pattern development. This is different for postlingually deaf individuals who often reactivate previously acquired prosodic skills during post-implant rehabilitation.

An important context of the presented research is therefore the focus on medical-rehabilitative actions aimed at achieving optimal prosody quality in individuals who are deaf. Firstly, this involves early auditory and language stimulation of prelingually deaf children with implants. This is made possible through widespread newborn hearing screening tests, which serve as the basis for prosthetic-rehabilitative actions in the early stages of a deaf child's life, and consequently, the swift stabilization of prosodic speech patterns.

Another course of action pertains to prelingually deaf individuals who receive implants after the period of speech development, particularly in adulthood. In this case, intensive auditory training is necessary in terms of speech perception, including prosodic training, as well as exercises enhancing musical abilities. Due to phonation disorders and respiratory tract issues in this deaf group, phonation and breathing exercises should be incorporated into the rehabilitation program. It is also important to control the settings of the speech processor in the implant towards optimal values for prosodic contours.

In conclusion, the perspective of prosodic skills in individuals with profound hearing dysfunction should be the subject of greater research interest. This applies both to assessing the quality of this speech element in relation to the larger population of the deaf, as well as to analyzing emotional prosody, which conditions the communication of the emotions of deaf individuals.

From the standpoint of therapeutic practice, on the other hand, activities aimed at supporting prosodic skills should become one of the priorities in the rehabilitation of the deaf.

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Emotional intelligence for translation and interpreting students

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Abstract

Inter and intra personal competencies have been recognized as important generic competencies included in the standards for translation and interpreting professions, issued by the national authorities worldwide. These competencies actually comprise the so-called emotional intelligence skills. This is the reason why the authors of this paper, who have been teaching at the Translation and Interpreting Department from Skopje at the "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University for more than a decade, have recognized the possibility to use language learning to enhance the awareness of the importance of emotional intelligence both for students' professional and personal development. In addition, students also need positive emotions in the classroom because the future translators and interpreters have stressful experiences on a daily basis as the rate of development of the most relevant competencies for their future professions is continuously assessed by their teachers. This paper presents the results of the implementation of activities that affect emotional intelligence with the subject content activities of an academic course in Cultural Studies, thus fostering both subject and generic competencies relevant for translation and interpreting students. We shall discuss the students' results of the pre course and post course Leadership Toolkit: Emotional Intelligence questionnaire on their EI skills as well as the results from two relevant questionnaires prepared for the purpose of this paper research, on the effects of the emotional activities implemented at the translation and interpreting courses and answered anonymously by the fourth-year students who attended the Course in the summer semester 2023. In order to check the relevance of the implemented EI activities in the Cultural Studies we use the Six Seconds EI Model.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, translation and interpreting, pedagogical aspects, emotion, language

Introduction

Standards for translation and interpreting professions, issued by the national authorities worldwide (e.g. Directorate General for Translation in the EU and the National Centre for Languages in UK - CILT), include inter- and intrapersonal competencies, which in turn require high coefficient of emotional intelligence (EI). Consequently, developing and fostering these competencies should be part of the university curriculum of translation and interpreting studies. Hence, at the "Blaze Koneski" Faculty of Philology in Skopje, we have made a synthesis of the activities that affect emotional intelligence with the contents, i.e. competencies relevant for the specific field of the translation and interpreting syllabi. This has been done on the basis of the results and the experience we have had with a bilateral project on possibilities of fostering EI in TP students (Popovska et al. 2020), and the two-year workshop for Psychological and social support for teachers and students of the "Blaze Koneski" Faculty of Philology in Skopje (Kitanovska-Kimovska et al. 2022).

Subject of research and aim of the paper

In this paper we shall check to what extent the emotional intelligence activities implemented in the Cultural Studies course correspond with the “Six Seconds Three-Part Model” (Freedman 2010) which in turn aligns with the work, models and EQ tests accepted worldwide (the work of Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer (1997) and of Daniel Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence (1998) and aligns with the Reuven Bar-On’s 15 EQ test competences (2006)).

In addition, the aim of this paper is to dwell on the results of the questionnaires that were specially prepared for the purpose of this research in order to check the effects of the emotional activities implemented in the translation and interpreting course. They were anonymously answered by the fourth-year students who attended the Culture Studies course in the summer semester 2023. These hands-on activities, some of which are informal and foster contemplative skills, whereas others are a combination of EI-related activities and a language/content-based environment, are used in our translation and interpreting courses that aim at fostering one of the four domains of EI: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management or social skills.

Concept of emotional education

Broadly speaking, social and emotional learning (SEL) refers to the process through which individuals learn and apply a set of social, emotional, and related skills, attitudes, behaviors, and values that in our case is expected to also help direct our students. This includes thoughts, feelings, and actions in ways that enable them to succeed in school. However, SEL has been defined in a variety of ways (Humphrey et al., 2009). SEL is beneficial for increasing self-awareness, academic achievement, and positive behaviors both in and out of the classroom. From an academic standpoint, students who participated in SEL programs saw an increase in their overall grades and better attendance, while on a more individual level, the skills learned within an SEL program have been shown to help students better cope with emotional stress and solve problems (Morgan 2025, Mohiuddin 2023, Palmer & Zajonc 2010, Zajonc 2006, Zajonc 2013, Elias 2006).

Effects of implementing EI-related activities in the cultural studies course

As a result of the successful effects of the bilateral project “Possibilities of fostering EI in Translation and Interpreting Students” (2016-2018), implementation of the EI-related activities in the Cultural Studies 4 course (Comparison of the Anglophonic and the Macedonian culture) at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at the “Blaze Koneski” Faculty of Philology in Skopje, has been taking place since 2019 with continual modifications. Last year the course was attended by 20 students in their final semester, however only 12 of them took part in the final assessment of the results represented in our research.

Aims of the research

This research aims at three particular aspects of the effects of the implemented EI-related activities, namely:

- checking the relevance of the EI-related activities implemented in this course as compared to the established Six Seconds EI model;
- finding out if the course has fostered the respective EI domains in this group of translation students; and
- finding out how students assess the importance of the implementation of the EI-related activities for the improvement of the Cultural Studies 4 course competences as well on their personal development.

Methodology

The research conducted was combined, including both quantitative and qualitative type and the instruments were the EI Test (Leadership Toolkit) and a questionnaire. In addition, we used the “Six Seconds EI Model”⁶ to check to what extent the implemented activities fit in with this well-established EI Model (which serves as an action plan for developing emotional intelligence competencies both in children and in adults). We have chosen this particular model, which was created in the 1990’s, because it is an action-oriented tool that helps put skills of emotional intelligence into practice for both professional and personal success and it has also been successfully used in higher education classrooms. Furthermore, this model is based on the work of Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer and on Daniel Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence and aligns with the Reuven Bar-On’s 15 EQ test competences.

The pre-course and post-course EI Test results (Leadership Toolkit) of the students attending the Cultural Studies course reveal whether there is any progress in the EI competencies of the students. The results from a self-reported questionnaire should disclose the effect of the EI-related activities on the subject competences and on the generic competences of the Cultural Studies course we teach.

Importance of the culture studies 4 course

Translating and interpreting are as intrinsically connected to language as they are to culture. Cultural competency is crucial for fostering intercultural awareness since there are always at least two different cultures interwoven in these communication processes. Hence the students’ need for gaining knowledge about the foreign culture components such as customs, beliefs, values and attitudes. However, in order to be able to apply this knowledge in practice, translators and interpreters must be able to assess and reassess their own value system, beliefs and attitudes, and compare these with those of the foreign culture. In this respect emotional intelligence techniques can be most beneficial as they focus on improving interaction and communication across cultures, cultural exchange, cross-cultural adjustment, cultural awareness and sensitivity, etc. (Neong et al. 2023).

Description of the course

The activities in the Cultural Studies 4 course (comparison of the Anglophonic and Macedonian culture) combine content-related activities with activities for fostering both interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies. By supporting higher order thinking skills, students are encouraged to reflect, practice, discuss and gain awareness of their emotional intelligence skills in order to be able to cope successfully with the personal and professional challenges they may face in the future. This means that special attention is paid to the language of emotions and since the course is taught in English, the students simultaneously foster their foreign language and their emotion intelligence skills.

Methodologically, the course combines project-based learning (PBL) with basic EI-related activities. The PBL topics refer to different aspects of the Anglophonic and Macedonian culture, and the students choose or suggest a topic that allows comparison of different cultural aspects, thus practicing several relevant rhetorical functions including: description, narration, classification, comparison and cause and effect relationship. The topics include historical, political, social issues as well as literature, art, music, fashion, subculture, education, religion etc., highlighting the most important periods, events and figures of the respective cultures.

⁶“Six Seconds” is an international non-profit organization founded in California in 1997. It is said to be the first and the largest organization committed to developing emotional intelligence worldwide by working in areas as business and education.

While working on their projects, during the classes, students practice activities for fostering both the relevant rhetorical functions use and several emotional intelligence competences (such as, raising self-confidence, motivation, social skills). In addition, there are some activities that are completely informal and are used to contribute to a more relaxing atmosphere, but also to give students insight in the possible exercises that can foster their concentration, self-confidence or problem-solving abilities.

The following are examples of some broader topics that the students choose to research, to write a seminar paper on or to give a presentation on:

1. Invaders that comprise the present nations: Slavs and Anglo-Saxons – a historical outline;
2. Mythological and pagan remains in the Christian tradition of the Macedonians and the British;
3. Heretic movements in Britain, USA and in Macedonia;
4. The place of the woman during the Middle Ages in Britain and in Macedonia;
5. Medieval literature: comparison of King Arthur's and Krale Marko's legendary cycles;
6. Comparison of the Romanticism (British and American) and the Beat generation principles;
7. Comparison of the British and Macedonian modernism;
8. 1960-1970 period:
 - Political VS social movements (USA and Macedonia);
 - Effects in the culture: music, art, film, literature.
9. 1970s period:
 - Founding and influence of the American Transcendentalism on the modern Western culture;
 - Subculture: music, film, fashion (comparison USA, Britain, Macedonia).

The students attending this course can also suggest other relevant topics for their presentations. The EI-related activities incorporated in the course are of the following two types:

- Course related activities:
 - Meditation and texts about meditation benefits (used for practicing notetaking and paraphrasing);
 - Self-confidence exercises: description of people related to the project, determining whether they look self-confident and why; roleplaying: interview for a job as translator, acting both confident and non-confident;
 - Defining stress, stressors and ranking them including the one related to their research project;
 - Values and classification;
 - Helpful coaching regarding a problem connected to students' studies: pair-work;
 - Cause and effect chain: a) procrastination, b) cause and effect chain related to their topic of presentation, c) thought-emotion relationship as a causal chain, d) the TCP model (explain).
- Informalactivities:
 - Deep breathing;
 - Problem-solving visualization;
 - Diary of positive comments;
 - 5 things I like about me;
 - Communication skills: pair work including describing picture/drawing picture.

Compliance of the curriculum with the Six Seconds Three-Part Model

Table 1 shows which EI-related activities implemented in the Cultural Studies 4 course correspond with the relevant Six Seconds EI model core skills.

Table 1: Compliance of the curriculum with the Six Seconds Three-Part model

Pursuit⁷	Core skills⁸	EI-related activities⁹
<p>WHAT Know yourself refers to enhancing the emotional awareness of how one functions</p>	<p><i>Enhance Emotional Literacy</i> involves the ability to accurately identify and interpret one’s own feelings as well as the feelings of other people</p>	<p>SELF CONFIDENCE Three part activity (remembering a)self-confidence, b)unconfidence and how to turn b) into a)) STRESS Recognizing stressors and their effect on one’s own life THOUGHT EMOTION RELATION Thought emotion relationship video Thought emotion relationship grid: situation and failed expectations TCP model¹⁰</p>
	<p><i>Recognize Patterns</i> supports the ability to realize the reactions and behaviors that recur commonly</p>	<p>SELF CONFIDENCE Three-part activity (self-confidence) STRESS Recognizing stressors and their effect on one’s own life THOUGHT EMOTION RELATIONSHIP Thought emotion relationship video Thought emotion relationship grid: situation and failed expectations TCP model</p>
<p>HOW Choose yourself refers to strengthening the self-management and concentrates on how to take action in order to affect ourselves and others</p>	<p><i>Apply Consequential Thinking</i> refers to the ability to assess the gains and losses of the choices made</p>	<p>SELF CONFIDENCE Job interview pair work (acting both self-confident and unconfident) Unleashing one’s potential THOUGHT EMOTION RELATION Thought emotion relationship grid: situation and failed expectations TCP model</p>
	<p><i>Navigate Emotions</i> indicates the ability to consciously slow down the reactions motivated by certain emotions so that there is time to reach</p>	<p>SELF CONFIDENCE Job interview pair work (acting both self-confident and unconfident) Unleashing one’s potential STRESS Recognizing stressors and their effect on</p>

⁷ Pursuit column information is taken over from the Six Seconds Three-Part Model of Emotional Intelligence.

⁸ Core skills are taken over from the Six Seconds Three-Part Model of Emotional Intelligence.

⁹ EI-related activities are activities used during the Cultural Studies 4 course.

¹⁰The TCP Model is applied so that students can prepare themselves for a presentation, and note down how to change negative thoughts (T) into positive ones; how to choose the most suitable circumstances (C) for feeling confident and being successful; how to change one’s physiology (P) (e.g. relax, smile, take deep breath etc.).

	the most efficient and effective decision.	one's own life THOUGHT MOTION RELATION Thought emotion relationship grid: situation and failed expectations TCP model
	<i>Engage Intrinsic Motivation</i> sustains the ability to act motivated by personal values and dedications rather than by external forces	SELF CONFIDENCE 1.Remembering positive comments received lately; 2.Two weeks Diary of positive comments; 3. Unleashing one's potential. THOUGHT EMOTION RELATION 1.Thought emotion relationship grid: situation and failed expectations 2. TCP model Visualizing a problem in a pleasant/comfortable landscape
	<i>Exercise Optimism</i> comprises the ability to accept a viewpoint full of hope and confidence in one's own potential to make change and difference in one's own life.	SELF CONFIDENCE Remembering positive comments received lately Two weeks Diary of positive comments Unleashing one's potential THOUGHT EMOTION RELATION Thought emotion relationship grid: situation and failed expectations TCP model Visualizing a problem in a pleasant/comfortable landscape
WHY Give yourself leads to self-direction and to understanding the reason for taking that direction	<i>Increase Empathy</i> supports the ability to recognize, connect with and adequately respond to emotions in order to build healthy bonds with other people.	VALUES Recognizing one's own value system COMMUNICATION SKILLS The RASA model and use HELPful Coaching (Give yourself: Increase empathy)
	<i>Pursue Noble Goals</i> means to be able to dedicate oneself to universal values and activities that will be beneficial for the wider community or even worldwide.	VALUES Recognizing one's own value system

Table 1 reveals that the EI-related activities included in the course cover all the so-called pursuits of *what, how and why* of the *Six Seconds Three-Part Model*.

Results of the questionnaires

Here we shall discuss the results from the questionnaires on the effects of the emotional activities implemented at the translation and interpreting courses and answered by last year’s students (in the academic year 2022-2023).

EI questionnaire (leadership toolkit) scores

The Leadership Toolkit: Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire reveals the strength of each EI competency: self-awareness, managing emotions, motivation, empathy, social skills, grading it from a strong skill, to one that needs attention and finally to one that should be given urgent developmental priority.

Table 2: Pre-course EI toolkit results

Strength	Self awareness	Managing emotions	Motivation	Empathy	Social skills
Strong	27.3%	27.3%	18.2%	72.7%	27.3%
Giving attention	63.6%	45.5%	36.4%	27.3%	72.7%
Development priority	9.1%	27.3%	45.5%	0%	0%

Table 3: Post-course EI toolkit results

Strength	Self awareness	Managing emotions	Motivation	Empathy	Social skills
Strong	81.8%	36.4	27.3%	81.8%	63.6%
Giving attention	18.2%	54.5%	63.6%	18.2%	36.4%
Development priority	0%	9.1%	9.1%	0%	0%

The results shown in Table 2 and Table 3 show a big improvement of pre- and post EI Toolkit results regarding the **self-awareness** skill: not only the skill is recognized as strong for 81.1% of the students in the post course EI Toolkit test results (table 3). However, there is also no percentage in the development priority. **Managing emotions** shows slight increase as a strong skill in the post course results, yet it remained to be one that needs to be given attention with 54%, but the decrease of the percentage in the development priority from 27.3% in the pre-test EI Toolkit results to 9.1% in the post test results can be considered significant. The situation with motivation is similar, only development priority percentage decreased even more. It is interesting that students showed biggest pre and post course percentage in **empathy** as a strong skill, and they also noticed further improvement. **The social skills** scores have also been improved to a great extent similarly to the self-awareness results.

First questionnaire results

In addition to the questions that refer to expressing emotions adequately, this questionnaire contains questions on the effects of the course to students’ professional and personal development. The following questions were included:

1. Did you have any problems during the course because you were unable to express your emotions adequately? Never 58.3%, sometimes 41.7%, always 0%;

2. 0 explanations about the occasions that caused problems in expressing emotions adequately.

These results show that most of the students usually do not have a problem with adequately expressing their emotions. However, 41.7% face that problem occasionally and it is unfortunate that they did not give examples of those occasions.

3. In your opinion, which of the following skills did you improve with this course:

- a. Reading with understanding (50%);
- b. Writing and paraphrasing (66.7%);
- c. Information mining (researching) (66.7%);
- d. Presentation preparation (50%);
- e. Giving presentation (58.3%);
- f. Problem solving (41.7%).

Considering the effect of the course on students' academic skills and their professional development, the results show that the all of the mentioned skills have been improved for 50% or more of the students, with an exception of the problem solving one which has been improved for 41.5% of the participants.

4. In your opinion, which of the following EI competencies did you improve with this course:

- a. Self-awareness:
 - emotional literacy (58.3%);
 - recognized patterns (50%).
- b. Managing emotions:
 - consequential thinking (58.3%);
 - navigate emotions (58.3%);
 - intrinsic motivation (0%);
 - exercise optimism (50%).
- c. Social awareness:
 - increase empathy (41.7%).
- d. Adeptness in relationships:
 - pursue noble goals (8.3%).

The competences checked by this question correspond with the terminology used in the Six Seconds EI Model and refer to the personal development of the participants. The students reported considerable improvement of their emotional literacy, consequential thinking and ability to navigate emotions skills (58.3%), and of recognizing patterns and exercising optimism (50%). These skills belong to the areas of self-awareness and managing skills. Empathy is reported to have been fostered by 41.7% of the participants. Yet, the result for the intrinsic motivation is 0 %. It is not clear why no improvement is reported since the Leadership Toolkit EI test shows slight improvement of this skill, as previously shown in the results of this EI Test.

Second questionnaire results

This questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part reveals how students assess the importance of implementation of EI-related activities for the improvement of the course competencies as well for their personal development. The second part consists of two questions referring to students' ability to recognize the emotions they have experienced generally during the classes and particularly during giving a presentation.

Table 4: Assessment of importance of EI-related activities implemented

Activity	Helped in achieving better course results (number of participants/percentage)	Student's intention to implement the activity in future (number of participants/percentage)
Three-part activity (situation when one felt confident, unconfident and what to do next time based on the positive experience)	2 (16.7%)	4 (33.3%)
Job interview pair work (acting both self- confident and unconfident)	2 (16.7%)	1(8.3%)
Remembering positive comments received lately and A two weeks diary of positive comments	3 (25%)	3 (25%)
Unleashing one's potential	3 (25.5%)	5 (41.7%)
Visualization of the problem in a relaxing landscape	7 (58.3%)	5 (41.7%)
Recognizing stressors and their effect on one's own life	9 (75%)	8 (66.7%)
Recognizing one's own value system	4 (33.3%)	6 (50%)
Thought emotion relationship grid: situation and failed expectations (Group work)	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)
The TCP model (Thought, Circumstances, Physiology articulation)	1 (8.3%)	3 (25%)
The RASA model for communication skills	5 (41.7%)	4 (33.3%)
HELPrful Coaching (pair work: act as a coach and as being coached)	4 (33.3%)	1 (8.3%)
Cause and effect chain: a) procrastination, b) cause and effect chain related to their topic of presentation	5 (41.7%)	7 (58.3%)
Deep breathing	8 (66.7%)	9 (75%)
5 things I like about me	3 (25%)	5 (41.7%)
Meditation	5 (41.7%)	6 (50%)

EI-related activities that are recognized as most important for both areas are: recognizing stressors and their effect on ones' life (75%/66%), deep breathing (66%/75%) and visualization of the problem in a relaxing landscape (58%/ 41.7%).

The following two questions are the last two questions comprising the second part of this questionnaire refer to students' ability to recognize emotions.

1. Use up to five words to describe how you felt during the classes:

The students felt motivated (3 responses), willing to learn/ able to learn, accepted/understood (2 responses), heard, calm (3 responses), relaxed (4 responses), (sometimes) emotional, joyful, safe (2 responses), confident (2 responses), curious (2 responses), interested (3 responses), inspired, attentive, introspective, comfortable, tired, fed up, impatient, stressed (at times).

2. Use up to five words to describe how you felt when giving your presentation:

The students felt confident (5 responses), good, motivated, respected, eager (to talk about it), heard, excited (2 responses), happy, satisfied, calm, attentive, self-aware, positive, organized, a little bit nervous (5 responses), impatient, uneasy, unconfident (1 response).

The aim of these questions is not only to reveal the most frequent feelings that students experienced during the course in general and during giving their presentation particularly, but also to find out whether they can recognize their emotions and express their feelings. The most frequently mentioned positive feelings experienced in the classroom are as follows: relaxed (4 times); motivated, willing to learn, understood, heard, interested (3 times); safe, confident, curious (2 times). (Sometimes) emotional, joyful, attentive, introspective and comfortable were mentioned once.

The negative feelings mentioned once are the following ones: tired, fed up, impatient, stressed (at times).

The most frequently mentioned positive feelings experienced during giving ones' own presentation are as follows: confident (5 times), excited (2 times). The other positive feelings mentioned only once are: good, motivated, respected, eager (to talk about it), heard, happy, satisfied, calm attentive, self-aware, positive, organized. Among the negative feelings being a little bit nervous was mentioned 5 times, and the impatient, uneasy and un-confident are mentioned once.

Discussion

The discussion in this paper is centered around three key issues involving compliance with the applied EI model at the Cultural Studies course and the results obtained through the Leadership Toolkit and after-class questionnaires, which are elaborated below.

Compliance with the Six Seconds Three-Part Model

The compliance of the EI-related activities implemented in the CulturalStudies 4 course with the Six Seconds Three-Part Model showed that the third part referring to the **Why – pursuit:give yourself** comprises quite less activities as compared to the other two pursuits (What, and How), which may emphasize the need to include more activities that will support the core skills that refer to increasing empathy and pursuing noble goals in life. Hence, the results of the questionnaire reveal that only 8.3% of the participants recognized fostering of the pursuing of noble goal.

On the other hand, as far as empathy is concerned, studying and comparing cultures implicitly increases compassion not only towards one's own people, but towards certain representatives of the other one. In addition, students empathize with their colleagues who give presentations especially when they are asked to assess the other students' presentations and performance. This is so because they themselves have already been or are about to be in the same position, but also because collegiality increases as the student's make stronger bonds during the course. The EI test also shows good results and considerable fostering of empathy.

Leadership toolkit EI test results

The pre-course results show that the students did not have high percentage of development priority skills (skills that need urgent attention) except in the motivation competency. And, although motivation did not get high score in gaining the strength level (shown in the post course test results), it has got a considerable improvement as the percentage of the priority one 45.5% changed into 9.1% and the 36% moved in the middle level, the giving attention one.

The best results are achieved in the self-awareness (27.3%-81.8%) and the social skills competences (27.3% - 63.6%). This is in line with the already mentioned conclusion by other experts, that people with strong self-awareness competencies have also strong social skills. Yet, what one should appreciate the most is that the empathy competency showed the highest strength percentage both in the pre and in the post test results (72.7% - 81.8%).

Questionnaire results

The questionnaire results are self-reported answers of the participants on: the effect of the course on their academic skills, on their EI competencies, the importance of implementing the EI-related activities for the improvement of the course competencies as well on their personal development, participants' ability to recognize and express experienced feelings.

The results from the effect of the course on the academic skills show that the combined subject content and EI-related activities can improve the academic skills as most of them (Reading with understanding Writing and paraphrasing Information mining (researching), Presentation preparation and Giving presentation) are assessed to be improved by 50% and more of the participants.

The results on the relevance of the course on fostering the main EI competences show that the participants recognize improvement in most of the competences with an exception of the intrinsic motivation. This result needs further investigation, as it is not clear how comprehensive the term has been. This emphasizes the importance of understanding of the precise meaning of the terms and concepts. In fact, the motivation competence in the EI test post results did not reveal great improvement. Although there is a slight progress, it is also possible that the participants did not consider it as improvement at all. The students' assessment of the importance of implementation of EI-related activities for the improvement of the course competences as well on their personal development show the relevance of these activities for both areas.

The difference in the percentage for the same activity results from the type of the activity and some are recognized as more effective in the classroom environment, whereas the others are appropriate for continuous self- development.

The fact that deep breathing, visualization and meditation are assessed as most relevant both for their professional and personal development, is in line with the world-wide tendencies to implement contemplative techniques in the higher education curriculum (Johannes, 2012).

The feelings the students experienced are positive mostly, and some of them are more frequently experienced, relaxed, motivated, heard and confident. This shows that the atmosphere in the classroom was friendly and pleasant. These results can be used for further research in respect of the choice of vocabulary used: why one word/ expression is used and not another one? Are the students familiar with the synonyms and are they able to distinguish between the nuances of the synonyms that refer to emotions.

Conclusion

This research has shown that the implementation of EI-related activities in the translation and interpreting classroom is both possible and beneficial for the students.

Considering the aims of the research we can conclude that:

- there is relevance of our implemented EI activities in the already existing curriculum of the Culture Studies 4 course as compared to the Six Seconds EI Model: namely our EI activities refer to and foster most of the core skills recognized by this Model. As there is only one activity that refers to the final core skill of this Model, the so called *Pursue Noble Goals*, we may consider implementing more relevant activities, or broaden the existing one (**recognizing one's own value system**) because this skill may raise students' awareness of their abilities to become changing agents for the benefit of their wider community, provided they dedicate themselves to universal values;
- most of the students confirmed the positive effects of the course on their academic skills such as reading, writing, researching, preparing and giving presentation;
- most of the students reported considerable improvement of most of the EI skills that belong the self-awareness and managing emotions domains, but the EI activities that can foster intrinsic motivation should be additionally reconsidered and improved;
- the students would continue to use EI activities such as *recognizing stressors, deep breathing and visualization of the problem in a relaxing landscape* to improve both their private and professional development;
- the students revealed that they can recognize their emotions and express their feelings. In addition, they reported that most of the time they experienced positive feelings during the classes, but there were also situations when they experienced negative feelings. The information on the experience of the negative feelings should be beneficially used both by the students and the teachers: the former can realize which negative emotions they should try to find a way to cope with in the future, whereas the teachers can pay more attention to the way their students feel during the class! Actually, teachers can start the class by asking the students to express how they feel at the beginning of the class by using one word, or to rate their mood from 1-10. Thus, they can get insight into the real state of the body/mind or emotion of the students present in the classroom that may affect the complete atmosphere in the classroom and can navigate the class in a direction to achieve more advantageous and efficient classroom conditions.

This research has shown that the implementation of EI-related activities in an existing course (Cultural Studies 4) requires constant needs analysis, teachers' enthusiasm and skills to adjust the types of EI-related activities for any particular group of students.

However, in order to gather more relevant results, it is necessary to design and carry out a longitudinal study that will include assessment of the effects of a continuous implementation of EI-related activities at least in one course per semester during the four-year studies of the translation and interpreting students at the Department of Translation and Interpreting.

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Body: between sacrum and profanum – a report

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Body: between sacrum and profanum is an international conference organized in the Department of Modern Languages and the Department of German Studies at the University of Zielona Góra, Poland on November 28-29, 2023. The conference was organized within the ninth edition of Foreign Languages Days (known in Polish as Dni Języków Obcych - DJO) held annually since 2015 in the Department of Modern Languages and the Department of German Studies at the Faculty of Humanities. The conference had the honorary patronage of the Rector of the University of Zielona Góra, Professor Wojciech Strzyżewski.

The idea of the Foreign Languages Days is to bring together scholars working in different fields of science and different languages. Presentations can be delivered in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Polish. The funding idea is to communicate beyond typical boundaries to widen scientific perspectives and see the interrelationship between various disciplines and arts. In this way, the participants of the conference have an opportunity to look at their research from a new perspective and share their findings with experts in other fields. All the nine editions of the conference have brought over 230 presentations. While some of the participants took part in DJO only once, many scholars come back to the event every year. Thanks to the participation of foreign researchers, the conference has now the status of an international conference. Not only renowned specialists but also BA, MA and PhD students are welcome to deliver a speech in a friendly, homelike atmosphere the conference is known for.

This year, 25 scholars representing 13 universities shared their knowledge and experience related to the body studied from the point of view of humanities and social studies, including literary studies, linguistics, cultural studies as well as pedagogy and psychology. The speakers represented six Polish universities (University of Zielona Góra, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, University of Wrocław, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, University of Silesia in Katowice and Silesian University of Technology), five Italian universities (University of Genoa, University of Verona, University of Florence, Salesian University Institute of Venice, The Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum) as well as the University of Potsdam, Germany and Rutgers University in the USA.

As the theme of the current edition of the conference was the body between sacrum and profanum, the organizers invited speeches related to, among others, the canons of beauty throughout history, modifications of the body, body in different stages of human life, diseases and disabilities, burial rituals and the Passion. The vast range of topics and fields of research translated into a diverse methodology applied by the speakers, but the prevailing ERL strand within the Scope Major seems to be Language and Culture. In this edition the cultural background was dominant if culture is understood in a broad sense, comprising literature, religion and art. When it comes to the Scope Minor, all four dimensions coexisted, i.e. beliefs, activity, thinking and affect.

Among the 23 speeches delivered (one of the presentations was prepared by a team of three researchers), most, if not all, put emotions in the foreground of their considerations even if these were

not always expressed openly. Among the topics presented, some speeches focused on naturalism, if not obscenity, in which the human body and its functions are presented in the art and literature of various countries. Other presentations addressed the tragic fate of the disabled, the cultural dimension of mutilation, and various aspects of death and burial rituals (in Colombia). Several presentations discussed the ageing process from the medical and social point of view and its implications for the current society. One presentation focused on nightmares and all the sensations it brings.

Two talks presented the body from the point of pedagogy, i.e. non-verbal communication between teachers and students and the importance of physical education in schools from a historical perspective. Another three presentations connected the body with linguistics: one showed the relatedness of the names of body parts in various European languages, another one showed the wide range of synonyms for the adjective lethal in American English and their use in English-Polish medical translation while the third one analyzed how taste sensations are verbalized in Polish and Russian.

As the topics mentioned show, the discussion on the (human) body is strongly related to various emotions, in this case, mainly negative ones, caused by the approach to the topic which the presenters chose. Focusing on death, medical issues, disability or mutilation is strongly related to fear, horror, disgust, but also sympathy and empathy. As various experiences with the body are of common interest, a high level of emotional involvement in the discussion was observed.

For all those interested in taking part in the next year's edition of the Foreign Languages Days, please contact us by the e-mail address dnijezykowobcychuz@gmail.com or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010829776091> (Dni Języków Obcych UZ). While the exact date is not yet indicated, the topic is meant to be related to memory.

**Review of FOHLC Europe 2023 conference:
“Harvesting support for heritage language education: How to seek and maximize resources”**

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The Forum of Heritage Language Coalitions in Europe (FOHLC Europe) aims to provide opportunities for those involved with heritage language (HL) education – programs otherwise known as mother tongue lessons or weekend schools – to come together to exchange ideas. The 3rd annual FOHLC Europe conference took place online on Friday, November 10, and Saturday, November 11, 2022, free of charge. There were over 200 registrations for the conference, from over 40 countries around the world, supporting more than 50 heritage languages.

FOHLC Europe offers professional development and networking opportunities to professionals in the field of HL education. It is a collaboration between several groups involved with heritage language education with the purpose of organizing an annual conference and other regular online gatherings for the teachers and managers of HL programs in Europe, as well as for the leaders of coalitions and networks of HL programs. The goal is to provide a European platform for the exchange of ideas about how to promote HL education, improve the quality and professionalism of HL education, and map the situation of HL programs in Europe.

FOHLC Europe 2023 was organized by Móðurmál – the Association on Bilingualism (Iceland), Heritage Language Education Network (Netherlands), Association pour la Promotion et l'Avancement du Multilinguisme - A.P.A.M (Multilingual Café) (France), the Czech and Slovak School Okénko in London (Great Britain), Agnieszka Pędrak, an independent researcher at Trinity College in Dublin (Ireland), and Sabine Little, a researcher at the University of Sheffield (Great Britain).

The theme of the 2023 conference was “Harvesting support for HL education: How to seek and maximize resources.” Over two days, attendees received practical tips and examples of how to find funding, lesson materials, partners, volunteers, and other means of sustaining HL educational programs. The conference program included structured networking opportunities designed for professionals in the field of HL education: teachers, coordinators, and volunteers at HL programs as well as for leaders of HL umbrella associations, coalitions, and networks. Parents, academics, or policymakers interested in the topic of HL education were also welcome. Thirteen presenters were given a voice during the conference. Topics were all devoted to identifying and utilizing various resources, ranging from drama techniques in the class to grant writing to the benefits of joining a coalition. The full conference program and slides can be found on the event description page.

Keynote speakers were Prof. Yongcan Liu, Professor of Applied Linguistics and Language Education at the University of Cambridge and convener of Cambridge Research in Community Language Education (CRICLE) Network, and Lucie Slavíková-Boucher, M.D., chairwoman of the civic association Czech School Without Borders. Two parallel professional development workshops were run for HL teachers and for program managers. For HL teachers, we organized a workshop that showed how drama techniques can be an interesting and effective resource in the classroom. For HL program managers, we offered a workshop to help de-mystify grant writing. A pecha kucha presentation included examples from nine different individuals from across Europe who are active in the field of HL education, to demonstrate a

range of possibilities when it comes to tapping into resources within local and international communities.

Yongcan Liu started his talk “Partnerships as a resource: Enabling heritage language maintenance through home-community-school-university partnerships” by discussing multiple dimensions of HL schools, language maintenance, educational opportunities, cultural inheritance, social integration, and emotional wellbeing (Liu and Hoare, in press), and then he focused on partnerships of academia, HL communities, homes and schools in Cambridge. He introduced the IDENTITY partnership framework. The letters in the acronym stand for (I) identifying HL resources, (D) developing small targeted plans for action, (E) evaluating practicalities with sensitivity, (N) networking with partners with a shared vision, (T) taking initiative to make a difference, (I) inspiring individuals and talents to participate, (T) transforming systems to drive change, and (Y) yielding benefits for sustainable HL maintenance. Partnerships as described by Professor Liu aim at the integration of communities of practice (Wenger 1998), yet to convene such partnerships, “system conveners” (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trainer 2021) need to be both visionary and pragmatic, and they need to “think, do, connect, and sustain”. The keynote lectures and the pecha kucha session can be watched on FOHLC Europe’s YouTube channel.

Lucie Slavíková-Boucher is the founder and chairwoman of the Czech Schools without Borders (CSWB) organization. She co-created CSWB’s educational program and initiated a number of legislative changes to gain official recognition for education provided by community language schools, which were successfully incorporated into the Education Act in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic. She reported on the creation of Czech HL schools in several European countries and the process towards their funding and recognition by the Czech authorities. The coalition connects certified and associated schools, offers Czech HL teachers professional development opportunities, and organizes joined projects for Czech-speaking children abroad, such as writing and translating competitions, a maths competition, summer camps in the Czech Republic, participation in creative history projects, and much more. Furthermore, the CSWB advises new schools on how to start and run the HL schools.

Ólafur Guðmundsson ran the workshop “How can you tap into theater techniques when teaching? Theater and drama in language learning”. He is an Icelandic actor and drama teacher with experience in primary and secondary education as well as in community contexts. As an Icelandic as a second language teacher, he has developed drama methods in language teaching and taught Icelandic through theatre. The workshop aimed to provide HL teachers with a basic structure and theory to facilitate incorporating drama into their work, i.e. through establishing connections of the body, the space, the voice, and each other, improvisation, storytelling, and process drama. To that end, participants had to leave their comfort zones and enter the “brave space”.

Sabine Little offered the workshop “How do you write an effective grant application?”. Dr. Sabine Little is a Senior Lecturer in Languages Education at the University of Sheffield and has collaborated on projects across six continents, attracting funding - big and small - from a wide variety of sources. In her workshop, she discussed the many opportunities for funding and the principles of an effective grant application. Through the theory of change, she discussed how grant applications may be phrased for maximum success.

Pecha Kucha is a series of 3-minute presentations. Nine presenters touched upon various resources that the HL schools can explore, student interns, networks of contacts, financial resources, cooperations with other institutions, such as universities and educational organizations, utilizing skills from various fields in HL teaching (theater, science and literature, technology) and internet tools available for free, such as Canva, for marketing HL programs. The presenters and their talks were as follows:

Rósa Björg Jónsdóttir - Shuffling resources (book trade)
 Gisi Cannizzaro - Canva as a free resource for non-profits
 Ania Kijak - Erasmus+ student interns as temporary personnel

Andréa Menescal Heath - Mala de Herança, Portuguese language in Germany
Maja Skender-Lizatovic and Indu Vibha Meddegama - Volunteers' funds of knowledge as a resource
Beata Jedryka - Academia as a source of expertise (teaching materials)
Lenka Kanellia - Grants and other financial resources
Bibiam M. Gonzalez Rodriguez - Global Goals as a resource for curriculum development
Jarmila Bůchová - International competitions as a source of motivation for students

The organizers are proud to report that there was an overwhelmingly positive response to the conference. Because people working in this field are often on the margins, they cherish the chance to connect with others with similar experiences, across countries and languages, to stay motivated and get expert advice. There was enthusiasm about the warm and supportive atmosphere of the conference and the usefulness of the information shared. All of the respondents to our conference feedback survey plan to share with their colleagues the ideas sparked during the event.

"The atmosphere of high-level professionalism combined with the spirit of collaboration and learning is very energizing."

"I liked the networking in breakout rooms as well as the wealth and depth of information shared by the workshop leaders and participants."

"I learned a lot to keep me motivated and enthusiastic to continue creating more projects for our multilingual communities!"

"I liked the warm welcome to all, professional delivery, kept on time, had an opportunity to explore, made materials available quickly, encouraged collaboration related to the topic."

"The conference was absolutely amazing."

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ERL Journal – Scope Major

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



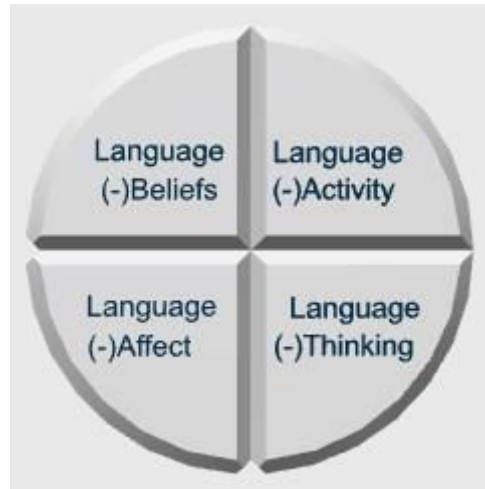
General rationale. Language lies at the heart of schooling, culture, (learning and teaching) methods, and personality – thus underlying education on the individual and on the social level. Its social existence determines its experiencing by an individual person and vice versa. Both these levels matter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

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

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

ERL Journal – Scope Minor

Key premise. A person’s education is determined by how language operates on four levels – beliefs, activity, affect and thinking. To be maximally educational, the experiencing of language by a person comprises these four dimensions, which implies a need for their comprehensive studies.



General rationale. How language affects a person’s education depends on multiple axiological, psychomotor, affective, and cognitive factors. For instance, what a person thinks of language (e.g. on whether it is worth speaking or not) and how much a person speaks determines that person’s mental faculties. Conversely, how a person understands a given issue (as well as how s/he feels about it) impacts on how interesting utterances s/he produces. Hence, there exist relationships between language and all the aforementioned educational domains.

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

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

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

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

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

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