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Learning from teachers and pupils in literature: case-based aesthetic reading in EFL teacher education

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Abstract

Claims for the value of literature in EFL teaching and learning traditionally centre around three models: the cultural, language, and the personal growth model (Carter & Long, 1991). In the context of EFL teacher education, the core question is: can literature also contribute to the *professional* development of EFL trainee teachers and, if so, how? Based on the assumption that *school-related* English-language literature can be used for professional case-based work this paper reports a context-specific interdisciplinary model of literature in education which synthesizes case theory (Steiner, 2004) and the theory of dialogic aesthetic reading (Delanoy, 2002), thus providing an educational setting for both literary experience and professional learning in EFL teacher education.

Keywords

English-language literature, aesthetic reading, case-based work, EFL teacher education

Introduction

It is probably not possible to agree on the goals of teaching literary texts (Showalter, 2003, p. 22). And yet, in light of growing tendencies in EFL education towards output-orientation, standardization and the “marginalization of literature” (Bredella & Hallet, 2007, p. 1; my translation) which are visible in current debates on how to reform EFL teacher education curricula in Austria, it will be essential to reexamine the place of literature at teacher training colleges and schools of education.

With the cultural, the language, and the personal growth model, Carter & Long (1991) have already provided three main reasons for the teaching of literature in educational contexts. Each of these models, so they argue, “embraces a particular set of learning objectives for the student of literature” (p. 2) and “represents different tendencies in methodology and in classroom practice” (p. 10). Given the

fact that the primary objective in EFL teacher education is to prepare EFL trainee teachers for teaching English in the classroom, this raises an important question: what, in addition to the above mentioned models, can be the *added value* of teaching literature in EFL teacher education for the *professional* development of the students and what teaching methodology could help this potential unfold in EFL literature classes?

In order to answer this question, I carried out a dissertation project in which I developed a context-specific *professional growth model* for EFL trainee teachers at the University College of Education Upper Austria (Spann, 2014). The aim of this paper is to outline this model which, as will be discussed below, symbiotically combines professional case theory (Steiner, 2004) and the theory of dialogic aesthetic reading (Delanoy, 2002).

The paper is divided into three parts: First, the two reference systems (case-based work and aesthetic reading) are explained and their methodological compatibility is delineated. Building on this theoretical foundation, the second part deals with the question of how case-based aesthetic reading can be implemented in the practice of EFL teacher education. Here, an eight-phase model is introduced and some methodological key issues are discussed. Finally, drawing largely on empirical data gained from a 2-year action research project with 5 groups of EFL trainee teachers ($N=65$), the paper takes a critical look at the potential of this model for EFL teacher development.

Case-based work and aesthetic reading: a synthesis

There is wide agreement among educational researchers that a reflective attitude towards one's teaching can be considered as a characteristic feature of teachers who act professionally. Case-based work, the collective term for the various methodological-didactical applications of cases for achieving higher standards in professions such as teaching, can offer a theory-practice interface which can contribute to the development of trainee teachers' reflective competence (Combe & Kolbe, 2004; Kolbe & Combe, 2004; Steiner, 2004; Gruber & Rehrl, 2005; Reh, Geiling, & Heinzel, 2010; Reh & Schelle, 2010; Plaimauer, 2014). Apart from allowing trainee teachers to observe theory in practice, cases provide opportunities "to learn how to think like a teacher to develop the mindful habits that exemplify the skills, traits, and dispositions of professional practitioners" (Goldblatt & Smith, 2005, p. 4). In short, case-based work itself is a reflective process which is geared to deepening the trainee teachers' understanding of the complexity of the teaching profession.

But what is a case and how can literary texts be suitable for professional case-based work with EFL trainee teachers? A close review of existing literature in educational science shows that the definition of what a case is largely depends on the professional context it is needed for. According to Merseth (1991, p. 4), terms such as “cases”, “the case method”, or “case-based instruction” evoke widely divergent views with regard to definition, purpose, and use of terms in education. In addition, case-based methods in didactical contexts often lack theoretical foundations.

Against this background, the case definition suggested by Steiner (2004), providing a sound theoretical frame of reference for case-based teaching and learning, seems to be of high relevance. In his case theory, based on Charles Sanders Peirce’s epistemology, a case is defined as “a sequence of concrete events (...) of and with acting individuals (people or characters) in a specific situational-historical context. A case is characterized by the dimensions of process and time. A case consists of a series of events, mental states and incidents with individuals as agents. The facts of the case can either be real or imaginary. However, a sequence thus formally characterized only turns into a **case** when a perceiving subject reflects, talks, and writes about it and becomes aware of it” (Steiner, 2004, p. 14; emphasis in the original; my translation).

Hence, whether a person becomes aware of “a sequence of concrete events” depends on whether it has an effect on him or her. This only happens when it raises doubts, surprises, annoys, gives rise to controversy or disturbs this person’s daily routine – in other words, when it causes confusion or “irritation”.

According to Steiner, literary texts can also be used for case-based work. In his typology of case-based methods (Steiner, 2004, p. 173) he differentiates between two groups of cases that can be used in teacher education. The first group consists of cases which are directly related to the students themselves, i.e. cases in which they are encouraged to reflect on aspects of their own teaching practice (*real cases*). The second group consists of cases which the students are not personally involved in, which have been documented by someone else and which are now available for them in the form of written texts. These *paper cases* (or *text cases*) need not necessarily be based on real-life school incidents but can also be fictitious. Thus, *school-related* literary texts, i.e. texts which deal with school issues, classroom incidents, and various other professional aspects of teaching and education, can also be used here.

If “irritation” is a prerequisite for case-based work, we first need to choose school-related literary texts with a potential to confuse or “irritate” the readers, i.e. with something unexpected, strange or annoying in the text. Second, we also

need an approach to the teaching of literature which focuses on the effects that a text has on its readers and which therefore provides ample opportunities for this "irritation potential" to unfold. Here, the theory of dialogic aesthetic reading (Delanoy, 2002) offers a suitable conceptual framework, fully compatible with case-based work.

What is dialogic aesthetic reading? This model for the teaching of literature in EFL contexts draws largely on Rosenblatt's transactional theory of the literary work. Here, the term *aesthetic reading* refers to a particular stance the reader adopts in relation to the text. "In aesthetic reading", Rosenblatt holds, "the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that text" (1994, p. 25). Following Rosenblatt, Bredella (1996, p. 18) sums up the key aspects and features of aesthetic reading as follows:

- Aesthetic reading directs our attention to the interaction between text and reader and encourages us to explore how the text affects us. This implies that aesthetic reading includes a reflective element and is characterized by the dialectic between involvement and detachment.
- Aesthetic reading broadens the readers' horizons by encouraging them to put themselves into situations they have not yet experienced or may never experience.
- Aesthetic reading is less concerned with the conveying of information than with the creation of complex impressions within the reader.
- The anthropological significance of aesthetic reading is based on the insight that the full play of our cognitive and imaginative faculties gives us pleasure and that works of art are so organized that our efforts are rewarded. [...]
- Aesthetic reading is based on what readers bring to the text. Without their experiences, recollections, associations and speculations there would be no aesthetic experience. But the aesthetic experience also modifies what is brought to the text.
- Aesthetic reading promotes intercultural understanding because it encourages us to see the world from different perspectives and because it explores our images of foreigners and foreign cultures.

In light of the above, it becomes evident that, unlike formalist approaches to literature in education, aesthetic reading shares a number of characteristic features with case-based work, such as its focus on effect, interaction and dialogue. The latter is particularly true for Delanoy's (2002) theory of literary

teaching in EFL classrooms with its strong emphasis on dialogic processes. Based on a hermeneutic concept of aesthetic reading, Delanoy makes a case for an interaction-based, experience-oriented, and task-based approach to working with literary texts. This invites learners to adopt a holistic reader stance and to “become involved in secondary worlds as if these fictional worlds were their habitat” (Delanoy 2005, 56). From this it can be inferred that EFL trainee teachers who read potentially irritating school-related literary texts aesthetically can enter a *secondary world school*, which may cause profession-related irritations and, consequently, turn the literary text into a *literary text case*.

If a literary text case can be generated, multiple reflective processes will be initiated. Since in teacher educational contexts all students who read literary texts are prospective EFL teachers with more or less practical teaching experience, domain-specific theoretical knowledge and different sets of tacit beliefs and subjective theories about teaching, a literary text case study provides an opportunity for students to share and critically reflect on various aspects of their “professional identity” (Lohmann, 2007, p. 69; my translation) in the EFL literature classroom. With their peers and their teacher educator they can analyse problematic classroom situations, develop teaching strategies from the safe distance and deepen their professional understanding of the teacher/pupil characters in the secondary world school. In addition, professionally relevant “good theories” (Stein, 2005; my translation) are introduced and applied to the text case in order to gain further insight into and new perspectives on the case. It should be noted, however, that this literary text-based professional dialogue between students and teacher educator only becomes possible if both dialogue partners are prepared not only to accept divergent views but also to critically question and change their own.

Implementing case-based aesthetic reading: an eight-phase model

Having sketched out the theoretical foundation of case-based aesthetic reading, let us now turn to the question of how this approach can be implemented in the practice of EFL teacher education. Here I suggest the following *Eight-Phase Model for Case-based Aesthetic Reading* (see Figure 1) which provided the conceptual framework for the empirical part of the study, i.e. an action research project I carried out in order to develop a “practical theory” (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993) of case-based aesthetic reading for EFL teacher education at the University College of Education Upper Austria.

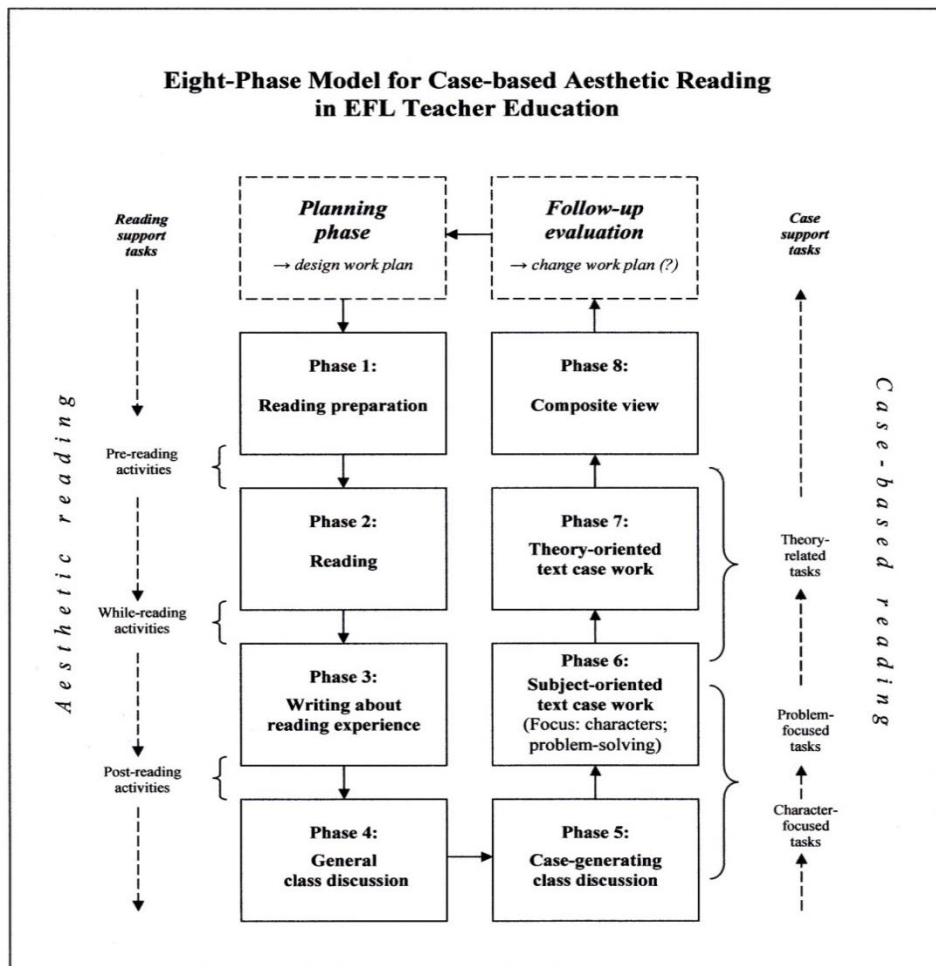


Figure 1: Eight-Phase Model for Case-based Aesthetic Reading

The model aims to depict the prototypical implementation procedure of a literary text case study in eight phases. This procedure represents the main methodological and didactical processes characteristic of case-based aesthetic reading. The eight phases do not rigidly follow a consecutive order but are rather fluid and frequently give rise to procedural loops. The model also includes the

teacher educator's planning phase and follow-up evaluation phase, thus completing a cycle. This circularity should indicate that, from the teacher educator's perspective, a literary text case study always initiates a literary text-based action research cycle in which the teacher educator, together with the students, systematically investigates his or her work in order to improve it (Altrichter & Posch, 2007). The graphic representation also includes two functionally different sets of tasks used in case-based aesthetic reading: reading support tasks and case support tasks.

In the following, the individual phases, their interplay and the various tasks which are used at different stages of the literary case study will be described in more detail.

Planning phase

In the planning phase the teacher educator has to develop a work plan which is based on English-language literary texts or text extracts (and/or corresponding films or film clips) which can be expected to evoke profession-related irritations in his students. Which irritations the teacher educator anticipates here largely depends on his or her "personal theory of good teaching" (Meyer, 2011, p. 136; my translation). Inseparably linked with the irritation potential anticipated by the teacher educator is the choice of a professionally relevant theory or concept which should be dealt with in the case study. Here, "good theories" are particularly suited. They provide a frame of reference which not only helps to describe and explain complex situations but also offers approaches to possible solutions for specific problems (Stein, 2005, p. 19). As my action research findings suggest, this text-theory connectability is particularly pronounced, for example, when texts including aspects of problem situations in the *secondary world school* are used in combination with the "ecosystemic approach to school behavioural problems" (Cooper, Smith, & Upton, 1994). Central to this theoretical approach is the notion that "both pupils and teachers have a rational basis for behaving in the way they do but are often locked in a circular chain of increasingly negative interaction from which neither can readily escape" (Cooper, Smith, & Upton, 1994, p. 25). To illustrate this point, here is a short extract from Alexie (2011, p. 32-35) which I, in the course of a literary case study, discussed with students from an ecosystemic perspective:

Of course, I was suspended from school after I smashed Mr. P in the face, even though it was a complete accident.

Okay, so it wasn't exactly an accident.

After all, I wanted to hit something when I threw that ancient book. But I didn't want to hit somebody, and I certainly didn't plan on breaking the nose of a mafioso math teacher. [...]

I was ashamed. I'd never really been in trouble before.

A week into my suspension, I was sitting on our front porch, thinking about stuff, contemplating, when old Mr. P walked up our driveway. He had a big bandage on his face.

"I'm sorry about your face," I said.

"I'm sorry they suspended you," he said. "I hope you know that wasn't my idea." [...]

"Well, I want you to know that hitting me with that book was probably the worst thing you've ever done. It doesn't matter what you intended to do. What happens is what you really did. And you broke an old man's nose. That's almost unforgivable."

He was going to punish me now. He couldn't beat me up with his old man fists, but he could hurt me with his old man words.

"But I do forgive you," he said. "No matter how much I don't want to. I have to forgive you. It's the only thing that keeps me from smacking you with an ugly stick. When I first started teaching here, that's what we did to the rowdy ones, you know? We beat them. That's how we were taught to teach you. We were supposed to kill the Indian to save the child."

Finally, as case-based reading is a task driven model which conceives of tasks as "pivotal forms of action in an educational process" (Legutke & Thomas, 1991, p. 11), the teacher educator needs to design communicative tasks and activities which can trigger and support interactive processes between the readers and the literary texts in the aesthetic reading phase (*reading support tasks*) and between the readers and the (potential) literary text case in the case-based reading phase (*case support tasks*). The distinction between these two groups is not clear-cut. It is important to note, however, that in contrast to case-support tasks which are primarily geared towards unfolding the professional case potential, the reading support tasks also aim at facilitating the students' methodological learning on a meta-level: by trying out various pre-, while-, and post-reading activities themselves, the trainee teachers can become familiar with this classic 3-phase methodological concept of process-oriented literature teaching (Nünning & Surkamp, 2010) and learn how to put it into practice at secondary school level.

Implementation phase

Ideally, a literary text case study can be divided into an *aesthetic reading phase* and a *case-based reading phase*, which again can be subdivided into 4 phases each.

Aesthetic reading phase (phases 1-4)

In the aesthetic reading phase the main focus is on the interaction between the students and the literary text. Here, they are invited to enter the *secondary world*, live through it and share their reading experience with their peers and their teacher educator.

In *phase 1, reading preparation*, the necessary conditions need to be established in order to make the students feel like reading and, subsequently, enable them to get into the text (Delanoy, 2002, p. 71-72). Apart from creating an atmosphere of mutual appreciation among the dialogue partners, it is therefore vital that the students' interest in the text will be aroused. In support of this, pre-reading activities, e.g. in the form of a short dialogue exchange (see below), are used:

Read the following dialogue exchange:

(A): "It's my job, sir, to mold your son's character. [...]"

(B): "I'm sorry, young man, [...], but you will not mold him. I will mold him. You will merely teach him."

Work in groups (3 – 4 students) and create your own context, i.e. think of any possible explanations of

- who the characters (A) and (B) are (age, looks, clothes, etc.)
- where they are
- why they are there
- what happened / is happening / is going to happen

Report back to the class.

(I found this idea in Duff & Maley (1990, p. 32-35) and used it slightly modified with Ethan Canin's story *The Palace Thief*.)

As previously stated, pre-reading activities are designed to stimulate and support aesthetic text-reader interaction. At this stage of the literary case study it is therefore important not to use activities which due to their profession-related irritation potential may generate a case in their own right, thus leading the students away from rather than towards the literary text to be read.

In *phase 2, reading*, the students read the literary texts which the case study is based on in class. To do justice to the text itself, the while-reading activities used in this phase do not yet focus on professional issues but rather invite the students to enter an active dialogue with the text. By trying to avoid an efferent reader stance (Rosenblatt, 1994), these activities (see example below) aim to encourage the students to respond to the text holistically and, in the follow-up phase, to write about their reading experience in a journal (*phase 3*).

While reading the extract underline those parts in the text that you

- like / do not like

- find irritating or confusing.

When you have finished, comment on them in your journal. Your comments can be about the reasons why you have underlined those parts, questions they raise, feelings, associations, memories, etc. Feel free to write your comments in English or German. Please provide line numbers.

In *phase 3*, the students' commenting on their reading experience in a journal (or reading diary) has two main objectives. On the one hand this note-taking should intensify their dialogue with the text, and the notes they record should support in-depth reflection in later stages of the case study. On the other hand the students' journals yield important action research data which, in the *follow-up evaluation phase*, the teacher educator can use for evaluating the literary case study and, if necessary, for reconceptualizing and redesigning the original work plan.

Phase 4, the *general class discussion*, concludes the aesthetic reading phase in this model. In essence, here the students are expected to fulfil their "interpretive responsibility" (Blau, 2003, p. 20) and to share their reading experience in pair, group and/or plenary discussions with their peers and with their teacher educator. As the term *general* already implies, the aim of these discussions is to allow for a general and open discourse between the dialogue partners (texts, students, teacher educator) who can compare and contrast how the text has affected them and who can bring up any questions the text raises, including e.g. literary, linguistic or historical-cultural questions. The role of the teacher educator is primarily that of a facilitator who remains in the background and who lets the students "act openly" (Burwitz-Melzer, 2004, p. 248; my translation) in the discussion.

Case-based reading phase (phases 5-8)

Given the fact that in the general class discussion the students' interests already tend to centre around professional aspects and that even at this stage the first contours of a literary text case usually become visible, the boundaries between *phase 4* and *phase 5*, the *case-generating class discussion*, are necessarily blurred. However, it is not before this phase that the teacher educator begins to more strongly direct the students' attention towards those contributions to the discussion which show traces of the professional case potential which s/he has anticipated in the planning phase. Thereby, students are gradually guided towards the intended case study. As the students and the teacher educator often have different case interests which need to be reconciled, this phase resembles a difficult balancing act for the dialogue partners which eventually aims to consensually generate a *literary text case*. Generally speaking, this can be *one or more characters in secondary world school contexts who can be used for illustrating something, who represent something and/or who find themselves in school-related problem situations*. Depending on the primary focus of the intended case work (characters/problem-solving), profession-oriented tasks which support the case study can already be used in this phase.

In *phase 6* the students deal with the text case in a *subject-oriented* way (Goeze, 2010; my translation). This means that they try to gain deeper understanding of the characters and the situations they are in without explicit reference to professionally relevant theories or concepts. On the one hand they are encouraged to put themselves in the school-related characters' place and suggest individual interpretations of these characters' mindsets and their (professional) (inter)actions in the secondary world (focus: characters). In addition, if these characters find themselves in difficult classroom/school situations as teachers, the students are invited to develop alternative, and even creative action strategies for these situations and to discuss them with their peers.

In *phase 7*, the *theory-oriented text case work*, the students' findings from *phase 6*, i.e. their interpretations of the characters and/or the action strategies they have developed, are discussed in light of professionally relevant theoretical knowledge. Hence, it is at this stage of the case study, when a theory-practice interface is created. This interface provides an opportunity for interdisciplinary professional learning based on literary texts. As it is usually necessary that the students are introduced to this theoretical knowledge first, the teacher educator may need to provide a brief input covering the key aspects of this theory and, subsequently, enabling the students to carry out theory-related tasks, which are

characteristic of this phase. Here is an example of a task which, after drawing a mind-map in *phase 6* and after a short theoretical input on the “types of power in the classroom” (Olsen & Cooper, 2001) my students carried out in a case study based on extracts from E. R. Braithwaite’s autobiographical novel *To Sir With Love*.

- 1. Look at the mind-map on the board. Can you find any aspects that relate to the five different power bases?*
- 2. Compare Braithwaite’s power bases with yours as a student teacher in your practical training. Are there any similarities/differences?*

It is important to note that, from a didactical viewpoint, this shift towards a theoretical perspective on professional aspects is not entirely unproblematic. As my action research findings suggest, the balance between the students’ aesthetic-literary and professional-theoretical interests is particularly difficult to keep at this stage of the literary case study, thus rendering it a very delicate phase for both students and the teacher educator.

Finally, in *phase 8, composite view*, students and the teacher educator critically reflect on the completed literary case study in class. Unless there is a more comprehensive end-of-term evaluation (e.g. after a series of literary case studies), this phase also includes some shorter form of written feedback by the students. The data thus obtained are analysed by the teacher educator in the *follow-up evaluation phase* in which, depending on the outcome of this analysis, changes of the original work plan, e.g. adaptation or reconceptualization, may turn out to be necessary.

Case-based aesthetic reading in practice: an action research project

To find out how the above model works in the context of EFL teacher education, I carried out a two-year action research project with 5 groups ($N=65$) of EFL trainee teachers (4th semester) at the University College of Education Upper Austria. My research interests can be summed up in two questions: First, from a methodological-didactical viewpoint, what problems, phenomena and processes become apparent when implementing case-based aesthetic reading with EFL trainee teachers? Second, from a professional perspective, how would the students assess the significance of case-based aesthetic reading for their professional development as EFL teachers?

The action research project was divided into two phases. In phase 1 (summer semester 2012) I carried out 5 literary text case studies with 3 groups of students

in my literature classes. Based on the analysis of the qualitative data collected in this phase, I developed new action strategies to be tested in another series of 5 case studies with 2 groups of students in phase 2 (summer semester 2013). The data collection tools I employed in both phases of this empirical qualitative study included questionnaires, interviews, students' journals, audio recordings and my own research diary (see Table 1).

	Phase 1 (summer semester 2012)	Phase 2 (summer semester 2013)
Student groups	3 (36 students; 14/12/10)	2 (29 students; 14/15)
Case studies (per group)	5	5
<i>Data collection methods</i>		
Questionnaires	32	29
Interviews	9	5
Students' journals	35	27
Research diary (author)	1	1
Audio recordings	-	2

Table 1: Key parameters of the two phases of the action research project

The literary case studies, which lasted between three and six hours each, were based on a wide range of narrative text extracts from English-language literature which, following McRae's distinction, can be subsumed under both "Literature with a capital 'L'" and "literature with a small 'l'" (McRae, 1991). They included, for example, extracts from E. Waugh's classical novel *Decline and Fall*, contemporary novels (e.g. C. Sittenfeld's *Prep*, S. Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, K. Gray's *Malarkey*) or E. R. Braithwaite's autobiographical novel *To Sir, With Love*. In addition, I selected excerpts from novels which are based on popular films, e.g. N. H. Kleinbaum's *Dead Poets Society* and D. Chiel's *Mona Lisa Smile*, and used them with the corresponding film scenes for comparative literary case studies.

The profession-related theoretical concepts I used for the theory-oriented text case work included the ecosystemic approach to school behavioural problems (Cooper, Smith, & Upton, 1994), types of power in the classroom (Olsen & Cooper, 2001), professional antinomies (Helsper, 1999) and the "teacher skills checklist 1" (Stronge, 2007).

Key findings of the action research project: scope and limits

Both from a methodological-didactical and from a profession-oriented perspective my research interest concerned two complementary implementation levels of case-based aesthetic reading. At *single case level*, I investigated how each of the case studies I had planned would work in practice and, by gaining deeper knowledge and insight through action research, how each case study could be further developed. At *course level*, my research interest primarily focused on how a series of five literary case studies conducted in an EFL literature course would be assessed by the students. As an in-depth discussion of the single case studies would be beyond the scope of this paper, I will confine myself to some key findings of the action research concerning both levels. They can be summarised as follows:

Case selection and students' case preferences

Hoping for rough guidelines for the future planning of literary case studies, I was particularly interested in which cases the students preferred and what reasons they offered for their preferences. The results, however, were very ambivalent and only pointed towards a limited number of tendencies.

First, the students often preferred cases based on teachers and pupils interacting in difficult secondary world classroom situations. Such situations might invite the students to develop and reflect on possible action strategies and interventions for this concrete situation. Or, as one student put it, "[m]any of the cases we dealt with are also part of everyday school life. It is therefore beneficial to deal with them and to talk through possible reactions with other students/teacher (my translation)."

From the case study which among the students ranked first in terms of popularity (case study 2 based on *Mona Lisa Smile* and *Dead Poets Society*), some further indications can be deduced which may facilitate future case selection. The students' feedback on this case study, in which book extracts and film scenes were used, suggests that text arrangements in which the teacher protagonists show a high degree of comparability are particularly suited for case-based work. In addition, the comparative nature of a literary text case can be enhanced by viewing the corresponding film scenes, thus offering further insights into the personal and professional backgrounds of the teacher protagonists.

Significance of class discussions

Most students considered the class discussions (pairs, groups, plenum) as a highly relevant platform for sharing their reading experience and discussing their

profession-related views with their dialogue partners. As the following three student quotes illustrate, this sometimes helped them gain new perspectives on and a deeper understanding of the texts and their responses to them:

"The discussions were interesting because other people's thoughts made me reconsider mine. Often our thoughts were similar, but even more often I became aware of things that I had not noticed before" (my translation).

"I think it's very important to listen to other people's opinions and views and to accept them. That's what happened in the plenary discussions – sometimes I had an aha-moment – I could also see it exactly like that" (my translation).

"I found the plenary discussions very pleasant and informative, as it was possible (in connection with theory) to delve deeply into the character's behaviour" (my translation).

Apart from findings related to literature in the EFL classroom, the data also suggested a linguistic benefit. With regard to the class discussions some students positively commented on the L2 context of this course, as here, so they argued, they had ample opportunity to practice their EFL speaking skills. As this interactive language work mainly took place in the semantic field of school, classroom and education, it can be assumed that the students were also able to improve their domain-specific language competence in these phases.

In-class reading and journal writing

In-class reading and journal writing are both constitutive elements of the 8-phase-model. It was therefore important to find out how the students would assess these two phases. While their feedback did not point towards any major difficulties with reading the text extracts in class, the data obtained on the follow-up phase of journal writing is ambivalent. Although some students considered the commenting on their reading in a journal as an interesting phase supporting reflective processes, it was also regarded as quite a challenging task which takes some time to get used to. In addition, there are indications that some students experienced journal writing as increasingly monotonous, not least because of the repetitive character of the course which, for data collection purposes, included a series of five cases studies with almost identical while-reading activities.

Professional relevance of the model from the students' perspective

One of the primary goals of this model was to offer an EFL learning environment where trainee teachers were invited to engage interactively with school-related literary texts and to link this reader-text interaction with

professionally relevant theories. At this theory-practice interface the students were not only expected to engage in subject-oriented professional reflection but also to increase their domain-specific theoretical knowledge through actively working with existing knowledge of educational theory or other related fields of study.

The research findings suggest that this goal was not fully achieved. On the one hand the students' responses indicate that the case studies supported their professional development by initiating (self-)reflective processes relating to their personal "teacher's mind-set" (Bach, 2009, p. 304). A literary case study can therefore be conceived of as an opportunity for *secondary world classroom observation* which facilitates profession-related reflective learning. Or, as a student put it in an interview, "[w]ell, I found it totally interesting to meet so many different teacher personalities and to learn about different school types, simply in a kind of "trial run", just to observe in a stress-free atmosphere and to really ask myself how would I have reacted or how would I react or what would I expect here. Just thinking through it raises questions which you normally wouldn't think of because you are not confronted with it" (my translation).

On the other hand the degree of relevance the students assigned to the profession-related theoretical input was in general lower than I had expected. The following three quotes show declining degrees of the theoretical input's acceptance:

"In my opinion, the theory and the theoretical part presented with the extracts were suitable and adequate. It was also interesting to see how literary texts can be scientifically underpinned" (my translation).

"The theoretical input was good, but for my taste not substantial enough [...]" (my translation).

"[...] not that interesting because we have other courses dealing with it and that's why I already feel 'overloaded' as far as theory at PH is concerned" (my translation).

All this suggests that in case-based aesthetic reading it is of utmost importance to provide a theory-practice interface where the necessary balance between the students' literary interests and their professional-theoretical interests is maintained. As my action research has shown, this balance is very difficult to achieve. The theoretical input can easily be too short and thus lacking depth, or it can take too much time, keeping the students away from the text for too long.

On the positive side, it must finally be mentioned that there are indications in the data of literary text case studies supporting the students' methodological learning and reviving their interest in reading literary texts. Not least because of the "Peter Effect" in reading education does the latter seem to be of particular importance in EFL teacher education. According to Applegate & Applegate, this effect refers to "the condition characterizing those teachers who are charged with conveying to their students an enthusiasm for reading they do not have" (2004, p. 556).

Conclusion

In sum, the findings of my 2-year action research are encouraging. Despite some obvious limitations concerning the interface between aesthetic reading and case-based reading, the 8-phase model seems to have great potential: at best, it can contribute to the professional development of EFL trainee teachers by providing an educational environment which, apart from fostering literary and foreign language learning, stimulates and supports literature-based professional reflection. However, I initially developed this model as an action researcher in the context of a specific teacher education college. Therefore, all results are preliminary and it remains to be seen whether they prove relevant to other EFL teacher educational contexts.

As the model was developed to trace the *added value* of teaching literature in EFL teacher education, it can only aim to be considered as an *additional* offer to literature in education, i.e. one which, at curriculum level, may provide a high-quality complement to already existing approaches in tertiary literature programmes.

To further develop case-based aesthetic reading in theory and practice, more research will be necessary. Among others, three desiderata seem to be particularly important. Firstly, as the quality of a literary case study largely depends on the case potential of the selected literary texts, a comprehensive English-language literature search will be required in order to increase the pool of suitable school-related texts for case work. Secondly, it will also be of great importance to find new domain-specific theories in educational science or other profession-related fields which are likely to provide a well-balanced theory-practice interface, thus opening up new interpretive dimensions to the future teachers. Thirdly, it will be necessary to systematically combine both school-related literary texts and theory in a *literary text case matrix* which subsequently could serve as a basis for implementing a *literary text case archive* in an EFL teacher education institute.

Finally, in times of increasing student mobility it would also be interesting to carry out an *international literary text case project* in which language students and teacher educators from different countries share text cases taken from their respective literatures and carry out literary text case studies in an educational context with English as a second/foreign language.

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Library and school partnership on the move - a study of second language learners' early literacy development

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Abstract

A study of eight multicultural suburban Swedish classes forms the backdrop of an analysis of the role of the library in students' development towards becoming skilled readers. In-depth interviews with five teachers and one librarian involved in the classes provide empirical data, even though background information was collected with mixed research methods. The librarian's narrative is the primary source of data in this article. The children's educational trajectory from the preschool class to third grade is in focus. The present meta-analysis highlights the role of the library and the librarian, with respect to linkages made to the children's overall literacy development. As a tool for analysis critical literacy theory was used, thus extending the influence of the librarian's participation beyond the actual literacy practice, to the surrounding society. The results indicate that the library played a vital role in several ways, for teachers and students as well as for the parents. The collaboration between the librarian and the teachers started with the librarian having book talks with the children. However, she became a participant in the team's planning and follow-up activities, linking the worlds in and out of school.

Keywords

library, book flood, second language learners, elementary school, critical literacy.

Introduction

In today's society literacy skills are more or less a necessity for survival, both in the digital world and in the real world (Barton, 2012; Findahl, 2013). For decades we have been aware of the linkages between literacy skills, educational success and later work (Dockrell et al, 2011; Ricketts, Sperring & Nation, 2014).

However, test results such as PISA (as measurement of literacy achievement) may turn the focus on results instead of the learning processes. This type of evaluation may create instrumental educational policies, instead of discussions on how literacy education should be carried out and with what aims, as the

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Developments (OECD) has as its primary aim to promote marketization within the OECD where adjustment of national curricula to PISA standards would favour such competition (cf. Sjøberg, 2014; Uljens, 2007).

Broadfoot (1996) has in line with Bourdieu's (1995) theories discussed how test results may indicate the distribution of top rank positions in society to already privileged groups, whereas less attractive positions may be left to less privileged groups, as tests may transfer an illusion of being objective tools for the sorting. When assessment ends in advantages to students from homes with sustainable cultural capital, social reproduction may be the result. Against this background it is important to highlight the second language learners' literacy development from several angles and perspectives, in particular their engagement in reading, if life-long learning perspectives are to be paid respect to. Therefore, the emphasis in this article is on qualitative aspects of literacy practices in an elementary school context, and students' test results were primarily used as tools for selecting which classes to target.

For immigrant children, who learn in their second language, both language and literacy skills take on a shibboleth function as gate-keepers to higher education and integration into society (cf. Cummins, 2007). It is in this context that the potential function of the library will be discussed. The aim of this article is to highlight how libraries and librarians may take on the role of a link between the local community and the school. In a low-income, multicultural, linguistically diverse suburb of the Swedish capital, Stockholm, eight classes were studied over a three year period. Reading comprehension test results, survey data and in-depth interviews with teachers, librarian and preschool teachers provided the data to a former study (see Damber, 2010; 2012). The results revealed that these eight classes were performing at much higher levels than one could expect with respect to their parents' educational and income levels. In this meta-analysis the function of the library and the cooperation between the teachers and the librarian is highlighted to illustrate how the library may create a space for integration and become a contact area for both speakers of diverse mother tongues and the Swedish society.

Libraries as a Space for Literacy Learning

Much focus in research is spent on how teachers teach and students learn to read and write within the walls of the classroom. Many studies also investigate how teachers may assist cognitive obstacles delaying students' reading development. In this article, however, engagement in reading and identity are

given primary attention. Thus, the cognitive processes of learning to read will render less attention than engagement in reading and access to the literacy practices both in and out of school (cf. Janks, 2010). According to Hedemark (2011), the library may offer a space for reading, without the control and evaluation of teachers. Dressman formulates the potential of the library as "classrooms are fundamentally spaces devoted to literacy as work, and libraries are fundamentally spaces devoted to literacy as the pursuit of personal desire" (1997, p. 161). In the following account of a collaborative project between the school and the library the line between the arenas became blurred, where both pragmatic literacy learning and joyful reading took place alongside intercultural work with integrational aims (cf. Sandin, 2011). However, the library stands out as the literacy arena where individual purpose totally dominated as motivation for reading.

Literacy Learning – an Autonomous or an Ideological Enterprise?

As indicated above, the technical aspects of literacy learning are described and analyzed in numerous studies. Kamil, Afflerbach and Moje (2011) describe the situation during the 1990's as a situation characterized by antagonism between phonics and whole language advocates - the cognitive perspective advocating a bottom-up perspective on literacy learning starting with teaching children how to combine letters with sounds and proceeding with words and whole sentences, and the whole language perspective advocating meaning-making as the starting point from which the elaborations with sounds and letters then took off. In the multidisciplinary research field of New Literacy Studies reading and writing are described as situated, social practices which are influenced not only by students' cognitive abilities, but also by social relations, the individual's and society's literacy history, values, power structures etcetera (Barton, 2007; Schmidt and Gustavsson, 2011; Street, 1995, 2003). This view of reading also encompasses multimodal texts and digital tools (cf. New London Group, 1999).

Even though the technical aspects of literacy learning cannot be overlooked in a school context, the actual starting point of the development towards literacy begins when the child realizes that text represents meaning (Bialystok, 2007). A narrow view of literacy as acquiring the technical skills of reading seen as an autonomous activity increases the risk of a skills focus where the reading experiences are reduced to decontextualized drills without content (Street, 1995).

To optimize learning a context for learning should be created, so that the students may use and understand words in function (Hall, 2013). Both fact and fiction can provide the low-frequent, domain specific vocabulary that will enrich the students' understanding of the world, interpersonal relations and other people's conditions of living. With Street's (1995) terminology an ideological view of reading then dominates such learning contexts. The reading enterprise, thus, has a clear function in a child's understanding.

The act of reading and the content being read is, according to the ideological view of literacy, hard to separate. According to Gee (2008) the content has to be perceived as meaningful so that the reader may relate it to real-life dialogues, activities and decisions. Learning, thus, turns into a cultural process where it takes place embedded in a context. Furthermore, becoming a reader is more than acquiring skills, as the identity formation is closely connected to the enterprise where students see themselves as readers of certain texts. From a critical literacy perspective, purposeful reading experiences have the power to affect the reader's view of the world, so that the reading also turns into acting and transforming the "real world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Janks, 2010).

Parents Involvement as a Success Factor

How educational levels in the home, and how parental engagement in children's learning affect educational outcomes are well known facts (Baker, 2003; Hart & Risley, 1995; Phillips, 2011). When parents are engaged in their children's literacy learning from start, through the initial years of schooling, the achievement gap in average literacy performance between children in high-educated families and children in less educated families becomes almost non-existent (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins & Weiss, 2006). Such findings clearly point out that efforts to close opportunity gaps must go beyond learning that happens only in school and reach out to engage the family as well. In this context the library, as a space for parents and children to share interests and develop them together, has a lot of potential.

Method

Background

The present article originates, as earlier indicated, from a larger quantitative study encompassing 1,092 grade three classes (children aged from 9.17 to 10.17 years) in Stockholm, using teacher questionnaires, student questionnaires and reading comprehension tests. As the role of the teacher and the conditions in the classroom influencing students' reading results were to be the focus,

socioeconomic status (SES) and language factors were statistically controlled. However, significant differences in factors that could be influenced by teachers then, more or less, failed to appear, even though the use of authentic literature was indicated in the targeted classes, as well as activities linked to the reading of fiction. Thus, a qualitative follow-up study was carried out to explore the influence of the classroom practice on the students' reading development in more detail.

Eight classes in a low income, multicultural district (with a total of 68 classes) were selected for this follow-up study. These eight classes were identified as achieving at higher levels in reading comprehension tests than could be expected in regard to SES and language factors. Statistical analyses of variance were carried out between these eight high-achieving classes and a control group of 100 classes matched on SES and language. However, as the statistical tools in the foregoing study had given signals of being quite blunt when it came to building an understanding of the mechanisms at work in the literacy practices of the classrooms and vital questions about teachers' roles remained from the initial study, in-depth interviews were carried out with three teachers, one librarian, one administrator and one preschool teacher to shed further light on what was happening in the classrooms of the eight targeted classes (Damber, 2010). Personal contact with the schools in the statistical sample revealed that the targeted classes were all involved in literature-based programs (see, for example, Clay, 1998; Elley, 1991). Data also indicated frequent library visits in these classes.

In-depth Interviews

The data generated by an in-depth interview with the librarian provide material for this meta-analysis, with the statistical results and the teacher interviews used as a backdrop. An interview guide was structured thematically in terms of such matters as collaborative aspects, parental contact and use of methods for literacy teaching. The interview guide was used to check that all themes were covered. In order to make sure that answers were interpreted according to the interviewees' intentions, follow-up questions were subsequently asked (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). The interviews (on average 1.5 hour long) were recorded, transcribed and translated into English by the author. The teachers' and the librarians' narratives provided data for the analyses carried out for the purpose of the meta-analysis. The informants were informed of the purpose of the study, and knew that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. They were guaranteed anonymity.

Results

In the following excerpts from the interview with the librarian (L) she gives her account of how the collaborative project started.

Shifting Views of Literacy

Several of the teacher interviews revealed that in the semester the project started signals from the school district administration had shown that the students' reading levels were alarmingly low in this particular area, thus indicating that the students' reading acquisition was far from satisfactory. Therefore the decision to start working with literacy in the preschool class was made. An administrator interested in Reading Recovery (see Clay, 1998), arranged an in-service course for preschool teachers and these teachers decided to try out the ideas they encountered. The teachers asked the librarian to carry out book talks, where she presented books to the children and talked with them about the books. She describes how she, at this initial stage, was somewhat reluctant to having book talks with preschool class children: "... six-year-olds... I mean... they can't even read!" Nevertheless she decided to do what she was asked to do: "So, I knew about them [the teachers and the preschool teacher], that they were really engaged teachers and preschool teachers. And that they have introduced a new model [for literacy learning]. The elementary teachers went down to... went down? Well, to the preschool class once a week and then when they [the children] had finished preschool class as six-year-olds, in grade one, then the teacher accompanied them and took that class."

Soon she realized that the children really appreciated her book talks, and she joined the course Reading Recovery that the teachers were taking. The librarian experienced 'hands-on' the potential in the children's engagement with print. In the way the librarian formulates her first experiences of the project a remnant of her initial perception of the nature of literacy is indicated. The teachers "went down" to the preschool class, and the librarian hesitates when she realizes the implications of what she just said. Learning takes place in school, not in the preschool class. She also recalls how she first thought that you can't introduce literature to children who "can't even read". Thus, literacy equalled the skill of decoding. But a shift in the view of literacy took place. The perception of learning to read as a strictly linear process was transformed and the children were stimulated to engage in meaning-making, no matter what their language or literacy levels were: "(...) when they [the children] read, or dramatized or made art or crafted objects, they were to take on the role... the role of what they were to illustrate!"

Apparently, making meaning was no longer exclusively about combining letters with sounds (cf. Barton, 2007; Street, 1995). The teachers also gave account of this shift in viewing literacy and how the teachers' ways of working with print awareness was changed, when decoding drills were exchanged into experiencing print in the real world, which the following excerpt from a teacher interview illustrates: "We went to the shopping centre and copied the signs. They [the children] could write exactly what they wanted. Just to write a word. . . no matter if you could read or not. To make them aware of the fact that those letters form a word that means something . . . When they were lying there on the ground writing words . . . they were approached by people who asked them what they were doing. And they told them that they were writing words. 'Well, that's good work' and things like that were the responses. They were acknowledged."

The excerpts above illustrate how these teachers, as well as the librarian, no longer solely focused on the technical skills involved in learning to read. Reading was no longer seen as an autonomous skill. Instead, the young students were encouraged to participate in this social practice, which was situated, encompassing social relations, placing the children's meaning-making, also with multi-modal expressions in the first room (Barton, 2007). With Street's (1995) words a turn towards an ideological view of literacy had taken place.

A Common Denominator in a Diverse Group of Students

The adults let the children's experiences form the point of departure for literacy learning. Both the librarian and the teachers read aloud on a daily basis as there were such discrepancies between the children's reading skills, partly depending on how much time the students had spent in Sweden. Therefore, multimodality was used to create access to the communicative arena and oral interaction was given priority (cf. Janks, 2010).

As the librarian was included in planning, execution and follow-up of common projects, she introduced the idea of exploring a common denominator to engage the diverse group of children in a common learning project. The idea originated from an in-service course on diversity that she had attended: "About angels (...) what they mean to us in our every-day lives. I mean... we are surrounded by them. 'Oh, that looks like an angel!' There are flowers named after angels, texts, paintings... We actually are surrounded by them, even if we don't think about it. (...) We realized that some angels are the same in Islam, Christianity and Judaism. (...) It was all about a common denominator."

The exploration of what angels are in different cultures started with the children asking at home what “angels” their parents knew about. The children returned with numerous tales of different angels. The idea of reinforcing teacher competence with competence from other professional groups was sustained by inviting art educators to the school. In addition, the class was taken to museums to look at sculptures and paintings depicting angels. The librarian gathered books about angels in the library. The children were also interviewed by the teachers, one by one about their individual perceptions of what an angel was. Finally the workshops were carried out in which the children were given the opportunity to create an angel, and write about it, if the child could master writing. These angels, partly reflecting the children’s background (Vietnamese, Kurdish, Iranian, Eritrean, etc.), were all given their individual touch to resemble each child’s conception of an angel.

Firstly, the learning project reveals an experience-based approach to learning and literacy, in line with the ideological view of literacy (Barton, 2007; Street, 1995). Secondly, the meaning-making and the aim of the activities were generated by genuine interest, both regarding the students and the adults. None of the involved individuals actually knew anything about the conceptions of angels in other parts of the world. Thirdly, the project was not culturally biased, as no certain “norm” for how an angel should be perceived was advocated. In this respect the project demonstrates ‘give-and-take’ in an authentic way. This authenticity is reflected in several ways in the literacy practice, not only by the use of authentic books, but also reflects a vision of learning for real purposes (cf. Janks, 2010). Furthermore, books were used, but the students work also reflects a multimodal approach to literacy (cf. New London Group, 1999). In using aesthetic expressions, both literate and still struggling readers could contribute to the outcome of the project on similar terms, when the results were presented at the library: “The parents were assigned a task. To come and look at their children’s art work at the exhibition here at the library. To visit the exhibition... and the library (...) That the parents... that they were part of...I believe that was part of the success of the project...that we managed to engage all of the parents.”

Engaging Parents

The collaboration with parents served several purposes in these classes. On the one hand the teachers were engaged in their children’s learning of literacy, as they were instructed by teachers to listen to their children’s reading at home, even if the parents were illiterate or were not fluent in Swedish. But they could listen, and these children, developing their interim language, at the same time as

they were learning to read, had to devote a lot of time to reading in order to catch up with their native peers. The pedagogical staff nevertheless managed to convey the idea of reading as an interactive enterprise, and the parents could support their children by discussing texts with them in the mother tongue (cf. Baker, 2003; Dearing et. al., 2006; Pillips, 2011). During parent meetings both the teachers and the librarian asked (or rather ordered) the parents to take their children to the library, also during vacations, so that the children would gain favourable conditions for keeping up reading levels out of school as well.

Perhaps of even larger importance, the library had also a function for the parents (cf. Sandin, 2011). The exhibition of the children's art work, mentioned above, was the first invitation to the parents to visit the library, with many more visits to follow. The library offered newspapers and books in different languages and the librarian took the opportunity to introduce reading resources in the parents' mother tongues. In the long run it turned out that the library became a place where both grown-up children and parents turned to in order to attain support with navigating Swedish bureaucracy (filling in forms, making applications for work etc.). For an immigrant, perhaps a refugee, institutions may be perceived with some scepticism. However, when the parents perceived their children's trust in the librarian, the parents felt that the librarian was someone to trust, someone who did not have any obligation to evaluate them.

Conclusion

The library turned out to be a major component in the process of opening up the school for parents and the local community, thus creating a foundation for cooperative work between parents, local community and teachers, to enrich each other and enhance children's development into bilingual, capable students.

The close relationship between the parents, the library and the school turned the library into an arena for literacy learning where the students could find books and read with the aim to voluntarily develop their interests and identity. The overlapping professional roles of being librarian or teacher may be seen as an injection for viewing the practice from different perspectives in times of transformation.

Access emerges as a key-word in this context. Access to reading materials, but also access to the identity of an individual included in a Swedish context, a library visitor who is familiar with the resources and expected behaviours in this institution (cf. Bourdieu, 1995). These students learned to view themselves as readers. To the students the library offered a sanctuary, a resting place, which supplied joyful experiences where no one had the intention to control or evaluate

the reading experience (cf. Hedemark, 2011). In addition, the habitual visits to the library introduced the children to a “reading discourse” quite different from the discourse anchored in the educational system (Broadfoot, 1996). As young students, they learnt to read for life, not only experiencing reading as an instrumental skill necessary in the competition within the realms of educational system, even though reading skills were one of the outcomes of their socialization into readers.

For both students and parents the library became a link between Swedish society and the local community. Using Freire’s wording (Freire & Macedo, 1987), the library offered possibilities for both reading the word and the world.

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Understanding language awareness in the first language teaching in Slovenia as a “traditional monocultural” society

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Abstract

In the didactics of the Slovenian language as the first language the term *language awareness* is related primarily to the identity function of standard language as the most important element of the national and cultural awareness, while the conception of language awareness, based on the functional linguistics, has been put forward only in the last decade. Therefore, the main issue is how to understand language and linguistic cultural awareness in a society which is traditionally considered “culturally monolithic”, and how they should be dealt with in the first language teaching. In attempt to find the answer, first main features of both the language and linguistic cultural awareness are presented: their levels, components and emphasized language functions. It is evident that a person’s linguistic activity and his/her linguistic identification are inseparable. Because of this, the development of language and cultural awareness in the context of two models of first language teaching is discussed later on. In the model aimed at the development of functional communicative competence they are developed optionally and unrelated to each other. Only the model which aims at critical communicative competence allows developing them closely related to each other and to critical thinking.

Keywords

language awareness, cultural awareness, first language teaching, communicative competence, critical thinking

Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, the developed communicative competence has been set up as the fundamental goal in teaching the first language in Slovenia. This goal, however, as said by Grosman (2010, p. 16), “requires well-developed language awareness and the ability to reflect the choice of language forms”. Nevertheless, in understanding the concept of language awareness in Slovenia, it is possible to

see significant differences between didactics of foreign languages and didactics of Slovenian as the first language.

During recent decades, the central issue of debates related to teaching foreign languages has become language awareness, which is understood, according to established definitions, as a conscious use of language in a variety of speech situations, being therefore mostly related to the communication function of language.¹ Along with that, the development of intercultural awareness, which is the basis for intercultural competence, has been emphasised increasingly. With this aim, culture is defined as the broadest context, in which a person exists, thinks, values, assesses the relevance and reality, feels and has relationships with others.² On the one hand, cultural awareness means to understand how a person's culture shapes his/her values, attitudes, beliefs and basic assumptions. On the other hand, when interlocutors from different cultures meet, it means also to understand the differences between themselves and people from other countries or from a different cultural or social environment, especially differences in their viewpoints and values. In this context, the role of language is limited to language as a means which we use to present our culture to others and to learn about their culture, or a means which we use to communicate with members of other cultures.

In teaching Slovenian as the first language, however, the understanding of language awareness is characterised mainly by a preoccupation with the identification function of language, which is associated with the nation or culture. It refers to the knowledge of one's own culture, especially literature, to understanding the role of the Slovenian language as a fundamental component of cultural and national identity, to the meaning of turning points in the language history, the role of language in a modern society, etc., and also to shaping cultural values and a positive attitude towards one's own culture and language. The

¹ The National Council for Language in Education, for instance, defines it as follows: "Language awareness is a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life" (Garrett & James, 2000, as cited in Byram, 2012, p. 6); Association for Language Awareness defines it as explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use.

² It comprises motifs, values, beliefs, identities, interpretations of important events, which originate from a collective experience of members of a certain collective and have been handed over through generations (e.g. House et al, as cited in Osula & Irvin, 2009, p. 37), but also (frequently unspoken) standards and (mostly unrecorded) rules. Craves (as cited in Saniei, 2012, p. 10) and Brown (as cited in Saniei, 2012, p. 11).

different conception of language awareness, based on functional linguistics, has been put forward only in the last decade.

Consequently, the most important issue which the didactics of the Slovenian language as the first language is facing at present is: how to understand language awareness in the society which is traditionally considered culturally monolithic, and what sort of relationship should exist between language and cultural awareness?

Language awareness and linguistic cultural awareness

In an attempt to find the answer, we will try to present main features of both language awareness and linguistic cultural awareness:³ the level of awareness, its components, and emphasized language functions.

Levels of language awareness and linguistic cultural awareness

When defining the level of language awareness, researchers frequently refer to the Schmidt's paper on the four meanings of the concept of *consciousness* (e.g. Ellis, as cited in Al-Hejin, 2004, p. 14, Pertic Soons, 2008, p. 12). In the paper, Schmidt first explains the concept of *consciousness* as an *intention* and *attention*, where, in his opinion, both processes form a basic condition for a person to start a mental processing of the linguistic content. According to Schmidt (cf. Pertic Soons, 2008, p. 13), this processing takes place at two levels. At a lower level, awareness appears in the form of *controlling*: at this level, solving of the language use tasks mostly takes place in an automated manner and without major linguistic efforts; and attention is focused on the communication code only when problems arise. *Consciousness* at a higher level Schmidt (1995, p. 29) calls *awareness*, and sees it as the understanding or recognition of more general rules, principles or patterns, which is not related only to the current control function.

If Schmidt's findings are taken into account, we could consider the two levels also in the context of language awareness. At the first level, awareness is activated when speakers encounter problems in communication, which are associated with language elements or forms. They try to solve such problems with the help of meta-cognition based on their own communication experience, but also with the help of fragments of linguistic knowledge. They base their reflection on a direct (external) context and are oriented towards achieving instant results. At the second, higher level, we speak of permanent, continuous

³ In the article we discuss the linguistic component of broader cultural awareness, which we call the linguistic cultural awareness.

awareness, which is an integral part of a person's communicative competence, and includes reflection of language activity based on a more comprehensive knowledge about language and communication. At this level, "traditional" awareness is often enhanced by taking into account a wider social/cultural context, while in achieving the communication objective, a speaker takes into account the principle of social responsibility, in addition to the principle of effectiveness.

Within linguistic cultural awareness, which is understood as a person's conscious identification with a particular cultural or social community in a specific language activity, and as a conscious use of its language version, there are also two general levels.⁴ At the first level, a person becomes aware of the language identity or the impact of culture on the language activity especially when problems or misunderstandings arise, whereby the person acts from an egocentric view that values the events, opinions, etc. on the basis of his/her own stereotypical criteria, and does not feel the need to consider a wider context (cf. Quappe & Cantatore 2005, p. 2). At the second, critical level, however, awareness is not related only to the perception of cultural features when meeting members of other cultures, but the person is aware of cultural identity in all (his/her own) language activities. He/she is motivated to analyse the relationship between language and culture at various levels, and has the ability of empathy developed, which allows one a view from different perspectives. Such awareness is based on critically adopted knowledge, beliefs, and on directly or indirectly gained experience, through which a person is able to reflect his/her behaviour, emotional experience and acting, and to change it – where necessary.

Components of language awareness and linguistic cultural awareness

Another feature of awareness, which is also important for language didactics, is its complexity. For example, Mikolič (1999/2000, p. 176) says that from a psychological point of view awareness appears as a distinctively multi-faceted phenomenon that has cognitive, emotional-evaluative and activity dimension, which is divided into the motivational and the ethical. Svalberg (2009, p. 242) finds a similar feature in *engagement* for language, as it can be intellectual, emotional, social and political, or it integrates all these aspects.

The cognitive component of language awareness refers to all the elements that answer the question of what we can do with language, how we use it, and

⁴ cf. Bennett (1986, in Osula & Irvin, 2003, p. 38), Barnett (1997, p. 65) and Byram (2012, p. 10–11).

what we know about language and its system. And cognitive component of linguistic cultural awareness can be defined as the way we use language as a means of identification, and as knowledge, thoughts, ideas, judgments and estimates of a specific (micro)culture, its linguistic expression, and the identity dimension of language. Therefore, it concerns not only skills and strategies, but also the metaknowledge. At metalinguistic level, a cognitive component is closely related to the understanding of linguistic and social principles, organisation of language elements and variations into the system or to their systemic relationship to other resources (of the same or different type).

The emotional or evaluative aspect means a general feeling of and a general attitude towards language, its use and its symbolic role, and towards a person's own membership in a particular linguistic community, and it may be positive or negative (e.g. affection, loyalty, respect, pride, resistance, rejection, disdain, shame) (Ule, 2000, p. 116). In the context of language awareness, it refers primarily to language as a communication tool, and in the context of critical language awareness, it also refers to language as a holder of social power.⁵ The emotional component of a "traditional" linguistic cultural awareness relates primarily to a positive attitude towards one's own national group and the language as its key attribute, and to the importance of the standard language. In the context of critical cultural linguistic awareness, it is also extended to intra-cultural language versions (registers), and in addition to a fair attitude towards different groups or languages, it also includes the willingness to accept diversity. The shaped relationship is closely associated with a person's experience and knowledge of the language.

The third component is social and activity-related. Ule (2000, p. 117) defines it as the willingness of a person to act in a specific way depending on the object of positions. In terms of language awareness a person is striving to implement, in his/her own language activity, those aspects and features of which he/she has a positive opinion (e.g. assessment on the basis of clear criteria and reasoning of judgments, the use of the highest form of standard language in public monologue communication), and trying to prevent those aspects and features of which one has negative opinion (e.g. expressing unreasoned value judgments; the use of standard language in private informal situations where it is used to create a hierarchical relationship); as for the critical language awareness, a person seeks

⁵ At the same time, a person develops attitude toward certain linguistic elements and their realisations in a speech activity. As for Slovenian speakers, emotional relationship is expressed, for example, also through sensitivity to the proper use of the dual, etc.

to implement desired language practices at social/cultural level, in order to change established undesirable practices.

In this context, the activity is essentially determined by both dimensions of the activity component, i.e. motivational and moral (Mikolič 1999/2000, p. 178). The motivational dimension means that a person is willing to act in terms of language in a certain way, either for his/her current communicative needs or for more permanent tendencies and aspirations, while moral dimension means that one is prepared to act in a responsible and fair way, not only in accordance with one's current (communicative) needs, but also in accordance with ethical, social, cultural and personal standards (ibid.).

Most of the authors who explore language and cultural awareness agree that adequate linguistic activity is only provided by all the components of language awareness that act interrelated and depend on each other. However, emphases within the concept of "traditional" and critical language and cultural awareness are different.

In the concept of "traditional" language and cultural awareness, the cognitive component is most emphasised, as it is the starting point for a description of an actual act of language use and a socio-linguistic situation on the one hand, and for a reflection on the correctness and appropriateness of selected language elements or variants on the other hand. These items form the basic content of functionally oriented language teaching. On the contrary, in the concept of critical language and cultural awareness, the activity component in its motivational and moral dimension is in the focus. The activity component is closely related to a reflection on socio-cultural context and its linguistic expression; therefore, we have to see also language awareness and linguistic cultural awareness as interrelated components of communicative competence. However, a reflection and language activity in the concept of critical language awareness are, at the same time, mostly focused on the roles that we accept as the members of wider social communities (nations, civilisations); consequently, observation and awareness raising of an emotional dimension of communication often remain focused only on general cultural assumptions, values, viewpoints, prejudices, and not on individual ones.

Functions of language in the concept of language awareness and linguistic cultural awareness

The concept of the so-called traditional language awareness was influenced particularly by functional and pragmatic linguistics. Functional linguistics emphasised the communication function of language and different purposes

which can be realised through language during communication. Such a view was reflected also in language teaching, which resulted from the semantic rather than syntactical approach. Discourse became the starting point of teaching, and teaching focused on systematic meeting with patterns of interaction specific to particular set of circumstances (cf. Christie, 1989). Pragmatic linguistics, dealing mainly with an everyday discourse, drew attention to external context, which should influence the speaker's choice of words, forms and style as much as the listener's interpretation. Understanding the role of linguistic elements in specific circumstances is therefore a key content of traditional language awareness.

By contrast, traditional cultural awareness refers primarily to the symbolic or identity function of language.⁶ In the Central European region, this item was for a long time associated only with collective identities, especially with national identity, or with language as a fundamental symbol of national community.⁷ In this context, its dichotomous relationship with the communication function was pointed out (cf. Bergoč, 2010; Škiljan, 1999). Due to this division, the identification function of language was not included in the concept of traditional language awareness, but developed separately; in teaching Slovenian as the first language it was understood and developed as an essential element of cultural or even national awareness.

A critical analysis of reducing language awareness only to communication function, and cultural awareness only to the identification function of language, however, has shown that such an understanding is too narrow. Changes in the concept of language awareness are closely related to a different understanding of the context and contextual determinants:⁸ Traditionally, the context was

⁶ Among the researchers who were specifically engaged in the identity function of language, there were, for example, Edwards, Halliday, Škiljan and Bergoč. It is worth to mention Škiljan (1999, p. 22 and further) who refers to Edwards (1984, as cited in Škiljan, 1999, p. 29–30), while having also reservations to him, because the former explains the whole linguistic activity as functional dichotomous, either in terms of communication or symbolic dimension. He also reproaches him with considering only collective orientation in the understanding of the symbolic function, with a justification that linguistic interactions are individual facts at the same time (Bergoč, 2010, p. 18–19).

⁷ Čok (2009, p. 14) believes that language is the most important item among the means that allow the transfer of mental operations, and thus has the greatest impact on the formation of cultural experience. Mikolič (1999/2000, p. 174) refers to Fishman, who “in the first place points out language as a natural and necessary component of physical and cultural collective traditions, which as such is an important indicator of ethnic authenticity”.

⁸ Kramsch (2003, p. 3–4) thus states: “Context was always at the core of the communicative language learning (e.g. Ellis, 1987), (...) but it was reduced in the 1970s and 1980s to its

understood statically and objectively, while psycho-linguistics and cognitive linguistics define it as a mental structure, as we are always placing the world around us and ourselves into various categories that are socially and culturally determined (cf. Bergoč, 2010, p. 15–16). Therefore, in teaching languages, previously predominant cognitive and individual perspectives on language use and learning are upgraded by a more socially-oriented view (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 33), while language awareness includes, in addition to the awareness of the communicative dimension of language, the awareness of its identity dimension.

Attention to critical linguistic cultural awareness has spread under the recognition that a person's identity is complex and cannot be related only to the national-identification function of the most prestigious language version.⁹ Although the standard language, due to its symbolic role, retains an important place in the development of linguistic cultural awareness, it is also necessary to take into account the identity dimensions of other language versions (registers). Which one of the person's identities will prevail in a specific situation, and what will be a linguistic image of the speaker's statement, i.e. within which language versions will they select patterns of interaction (mental schemes, scenarios), depends on a number of contextual factors. In teaching, therefore, the identification function of language cannot be considered only a de-contextualised, abstract national category, but it is reasonable to observe it and raise awareness about it through language use in a given set of circumstances.

Therefore, identity is understood as a dynamic cognitive category formed and expressed through the relationship between a person, culture and community, in specific speech act.¹⁰ Thus perceived identification function of language is directly related to the communication one and together with the latter it is an inherent component of language awareness, which should be a basis for critical communicative competence.

minimalist social dimensions in one-to-one verbal interactions. The 1990s brought back the importance of context on a much larger cultural scale and, with it, a need to rethink the relation of language and other meaning-making practices in everyday life."

⁹ cf. Bergoč, 2010, p. 24-27; and Lemke, 2003, p. 74.

¹⁰ A person's identity, therefore, is not a stable category but is shaped through a discourse that takes place in specific historical, social and institutional circumstances and in relation to the subject-specific discursive practices (Hall, 1996, p. 4-5, in Bergoč, p. 27).

Relationship between language and culture

If we want to develop critical communication competence as regards the first language teaching, we must be aware that a person's linguistic activity and his/her linguistic identification are inseparable. In order to efficiently link the development of both activities, it is necessary first to consider the relationship between language and culture. We will base our considerations on the three aspects of this relationship, which were identified from the aspect of foreign language didactics by Risager (as cited in Byram, 2012, p. 6): sociological, psychological and linguistic.

The role of the sociological aspect was summarised by Lemke (2003, p. 71), who states that a person in an eco-social community acquires, among other things, also organisational patterns of interaction with others through the use of language. In each speech act we indicate, by choosing a language version and a discursive pattern, which cultural/social role we have assumed, and which position, in our opinion, we hold in the system of social classification.

Traditionally, in teaching the first language, social relationship between language and culture was taken into account only within an abstracted description of social, geographical and interest-related language versions, and typical social contexts, in which they can or have to be used. In doing so, other language versions were put into a hierarchical relationship with standard language, which was understood as the highest, neutral and desirable language version. Consequently, it was the standard language and its speaker that acted also as the starting point for the development of cultural or national identity. However, a person – especially within his/her own language community – usually does not act as a member of the Slovenian nation or as a speaker of homogeneous standard language. Therefore, when teaching the first language, reflection about the role of words and forms, their relevance, effectiveness and, last but not least, their ethics, should also consider the culture-related social role and associated identities, assumptions, values and attitudes, which the speaker has assumed.

The sociological aspect alone, however, cannot explain numerous questions, for example, why a person chooses to violate them despite having the knowledge of conventions. These questions can be answered only when considering the psychological aspect of the relationship between language and culture. As found out by Ule (2005, p. 74), among others, only a mental processing or interpretation of messages allows us to make sense of interactions and communication. Interpretation results from mental representations of messages, which are further processed by our cognitive processes. The most important one

among them is the categorisation or classification of messages in our mental system into different categories, which takes place under the principle of contiguity, similarity, proximity, and significantly depends on our previous expectations (Ule, 2005, p. 55).¹¹

However, as pointed out by Ule, despite the fact that cognitive processes of message processing take place “within” each person, their dynamics results from wider processes of social organisation of meanings and messages. Namely, each social and historical context frames cognitive processes of people in its own specific way (Ule, 2005, p. 74). Thus, for example, previous expectations that significantly influence the categorisation were formed in specifically given social circumstances; also cognitive schemes and scenarios are culturally defined and, last but not least, stereotypes, prejudices and attitudes are an expression of culture. Consequently, social or cultural nature can be attributed to the whole cognitive process, not only to the linguistic expression of thoughts.

The third aspect of the relationship between language and culture is the linguistic aspect, which analyses and describes linguistic principles, and observes any systematic relationship between language elements, forms, text types or genres and the roles and statuses defined by culture.¹² Thus, for instance, already Whorf points out that cultural standards and discursive patterns evolve simultaneously, where a certain limit is presented by language as a system, and not just a random set of standards (Whorf; Sapir, Whorf, as cited in Južnič, 1983, p. 160). Attention to the systemic regulation of both discursive patterns and language versions as individual language elements is drawn also by e.g. Škiljan (1999, p. 165–209), who speaks about a triple standard: linguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic. During the last decades, the relationship between the language code and social practices has been systematically dealt with by social semiotics. The latter observes and structures semiotic resources into a system, and explores the use of the resources in the creation and interpretation of

¹¹ The method we use to categorise the world affects the fact of how we understand the message, how to respond to it, and how we act in a communication situation (Ule, 2005, p. 54).

¹² Some authors, e.g. Byram (2012, p. 6), believe that only the first and the second aspects matter for the debate on the relationship between language and cultural awareness. However, these authors mostly focus on teaching foreign language, which means that they observe the relationship between language and culture in the context of multi-culturalism (at macro level), while associating the linguistic aspect mainly with the grammar, i.e. with the system-defined role of specific language elements within one of the used languages.

messages in specific historical, cultural and institutional contexts (Leeuwen, 2005, p. 3–6).

Therefore, the choice of linguistic elements and forms in communication is not random, and we do not select it again and again on the basis of a detailed analysis of a wider or narrower context. An assessment of linguistic or discursive adequacy depends on mutual, systemically regulated relationships between synonymous or identical types of discourse, words and language forms. These relationships reflect cultural values, viewpoints and standards related to language. Or in the words of Ochs (2003, p. 108): “Vital to competent participation in social groups is the ability to understand how people use language and other symbolic tools to construct social situations. In every community, members draw upon communicative forms to sign social information; indeed, one of the important functions of grammar and lexicon is to key interlocutors into what kind of social situation is taking place.”

On the basis of the relationship between language and culture defined in such way, we can conclude that a language-minded person has to be also made culturally aware. In addition to understanding the role and importance of language elements in a specific speech situation, and in relation to other systemically defined options, one must also understand how culture co-shapes the language and one’s own linguistic behaviour, beliefs, evaluation and basic assumptions.¹³

Development of language and cultural awareness in first language teaching

The fact of how we understand the role and importance of language and linguistic cultural awareness in teaching first language largely depends on the fact whether we set up functional or critical communicative competence as our principle objective.¹⁴

If the principle objective of first language teaching is to develop functional communicative competence, language is considered primarily as a tool for communication and achieving the desired effect. The main objective of such teaching is to train students to understand texts in a typical speech situation, to use data from texts, and to create comprehensible texts of the same type.

¹³ c.f. www.culturaldiversity.com.au.

¹⁴ Different models of literacy or communicative competence, as understood in the Slovenian educational area, are defined in Vendramin, 2005; Rupnik Vec & Kompare, 2006; and Hrženjak, 2004.

Consequently, students mostly analyse non-fiction texts in terms of semantic, pragmatic and linguistic aspect and observe the role of language elements in a specific set of circumstances (they learn language by fragments, using the principle of direct applicability). Better achievement of this objective could be facilitated by traditional language awareness, which allows focusing attention on language problems in a particular communication situation, a reflection on the role and importance of "problematic" language elements or forms, and on replacing them with another, more effective ones. Such model of first language teaching was established in Slovenia through the curriculum of 1998, but it does not explicitly highlight language awareness.

In such model of first language teaching cultural linguistic awareness is being systematically developed only within the areas of learning about the history of standard language and describing the socio-linguistic situation; and it is based on the assumption that language is inseparably linked to the national culture. Therefore, the condition for a proper linguistic activity is the knowledge of one's own culture, understanding of what individual concepts, persons, events, happenings mean within culture, ... as well as a positive attitude towards it. According to the 1998 curriculum, students develop awareness of the fact that the mother tongue is the most natural socialisation context of a person, and that for a majority of students, Slovenian language is a fundamental component of personal, national and civic awareness and, together with literature, also the most important part of the Slovenian cultural heritage; and they learn about the position and role of Slovenian language in the Republic of Slovenia and beyond its borders.

This model, therefore, treats communicative competence within narrow, external contextual determinants, while treating cultural awareness as abstract category, not associated with the specific act of language use in current circumstances. Consequently, language and cultural awareness in teaching the first language are developed separately.

If the principle objective of first language teaching is to develop critical communicative competence, language use and learning is closely related to critical thinking and placed not only into external circumstances, but also into wider social, political and cultural context (Graff, 1995, as cited in Vendramin, 2005, p. 76). Communication is no longer considered just a cognitive skill and ability, but a cultural and social practice, which deals with ideologies, identities and values at least as much as with the code and skills (cf. Vendramin, 2005, p. 76). Therefore, one of the main assumptions in language teaching should be the fact that each communication is also a social and cultural act, which means that it

is not equally accessible to everyone. Differences appear already at a cognitive level, for example, as a result of culture-defined concepts, which a member of a specific culture associates with a specific, maybe seemingly quite unequivocal expression,¹⁵ due to culture-specific patterns of behaviour and communication.

These findings are important in teaching the first language not only for the development of critical cultural awareness at the national level, but also at least as much since the national culture and national language consist of numerous micro cultures and their language versions. This means that when communicating in the first language, we are actually constantly facing so-called internal multiculturalism or internal or discursive multilingualism.¹⁶ Appropriate language activity in the first language – similarly as in intercultural dialogue at national level – requires, in addition to understanding the text in actual circumstances and the knowledge of one's own culture, a commitment to critical and intercultural communication, sensitivity to a wider context, taking into account the different dimensions of communication, assessing on the basis of clear criteria, ability of metacognition, and ethical responsibility (Rupnik Vec & Kompare, 2006).

These findings are partly followed by the updated curriculum for Slovenian language as the first language, which was adopted in 2008, because it sets up as a principle objective a critical communicative competence, which comprises, in addition to the ability of accepting and creating the texts of certain text types, also metalinguistic and partially metacognitive competence and cultural awareness. However, even the new syllabus has not overcome certain restrictions of functionally oriented communication teaching and traditional understanding of language awareness. Thus, for example, metacognition refers

¹⁵ For instance, the word Protestantism, which elsewhere marks one of religious reform movements, is in the Slovenian area rather than with religious movement associated with cultural activity of Protestants that developed Slovenian literary language and wrote the first books in Slovenian language. Consequently, the word *Protestantism* has mostly positive connotations and is associated with progress, cultural development, national awareness, and as such, it is often used as an argument.

¹⁶ "Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw" (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, 2001, p. 168).

only to the student's reflection on the usefulness of the newly acquired knowledge; metalinguistic knowledge is still learned by fragments, according to the principle of applicability in current circumstances and not also in terms of systemically regulated relationships between the synonymous language elements or forms; and, finally, the identification function of language is related mainly to abstract standard language and its national symbolic role, being therefore actually developed in a traditional way.

Conclusion

The discussion has shown that one of the fundamental guides in modern teaching of the first language should be a critical language awareness, which could be defined as a person's motivated and ethical language activity, based on positive attitude towards language, on the understanding and reflection of language use in the wider socio-cultural context with respect to different dimensions of language, and on the ability to evaluate it on the basis of knowledge about the functions, rules, principles, forms of language, even in their system organisation. Only language awareness, which includes both, awareness of communication and identification function of language, ensures the development of critical speakers and thinkers. It was also shown that in the didactics of Slovenian language as the first language, despite the changes, we have not yet found the answer to the question how to overcome an unrelated development of the language and linguistic cultural awareness.

So it seems that it would be first necessary to rethink the understanding of some basic principles of first language teaching. These are, for instance, the principle of contextualisation, which should also encourage the students to empathize with the socially/culturally determined roles; the principle of metacognition and evaluation on the basis of arguments, which should also include a reflection on socio-cultural determination and emotional dimension of selected language forms; the principle of systemization, which should be oriented to learning about both linguistic, pragmatic and socio-linguistic standards; the principle of motivation, which would, in addition to direct motivation to participate in a specific speech act, also encourage more general engagement for critical communication; and above all, the principle of complexity, which should result from the comprehension that language and language activities in teaching the first language cannot be related only to cognitive dimension of language use and to communication function in a particular set of external circumstances, but should also include the awareness of the identification function of language and its emotional dimensions.

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A comparative self-assessment of difficulty in learning English and German among Sudanese students

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Abstract

It is generally assumed that self-assessment plays a profound role in autonomous language learning and, accordingly, leads to learner independency. It encourages learners to prospect their own language learning processes and provides them with feedback of their learning progress. Self-assessment also raises the awareness of learners' individual needs among both students and teachers alike and will therefore contribute to the development of the whole learning process.

The purpose of the current study is to explore and compare – through self-assessment – the level of perceived difficulty of the overall foreign language learning and language skills among Sudanese students enrolled at the English and German language departments respectively, at the University of Khartoum in Sudan. A representative sample composed of 221 students from the two departments have been asked to self-evaluate and rate the overall language difficulty and areas of difficulty in language skills, as well as their own language proficiency.

The results indicate that German language is relatively rated as a difficult language in comparison to the English language and that German grammar was also rated as more difficult. However, students rated the pronunciation and spelling of German language as easier than in English language. Concerning the language skills, reading and speaking skills were reported as more difficult in German, whereas writing and listening tend to be easier than in English. Finally, students' academic achievements have been self-reported.

Keywords

self-assessment, learning difficulties, English language, German language

Introduction

Self-assessment as defined by Boud and Falchikov (1989) refers to the involvement of learners in making judgments about their own learning,

particularly about their achievements and the outcomes of their learning. The term self-assessment is used interchangeably along with related terms such as self-rating, self-evaluation, self-testing, and self-appraisal. As Chen (2008) pointed out, the inadequacies of traditional assessment attracted the attention of scholars and triggered a shift toward alternative assessment. These alternative self-assessment methods include performance assessment, portfolio assessment, students' self-assessment, peer assessment, and so forth. Self-assessment could generally be contextualized within the progressive shift from the traditional, structural, teacher-centered approach to the humanistic learner-centered approach in learning in general, and second language learning more specifically. This reflects the substantial attention directed over the past two decades towards self-assessment in various educational contexts, including foreign and second language education and the growing interest in self-regulated learning, which is a major component of learner-centered instruction (Boud, 1995; Huba & Fred, 2000; Dann, 2002; Dickinson, 1987).

Self-assessment can be used for a variety of purposes such as placement, diagnosis, evaluation, and feedback within the foreign and second language learning process. There are practically different instruments used for self-assessment. Harrington (1995) for example used three different self-assessments. One is simply a listing of abilities with definitions and directions to indicate those areas learners feel are their best or strongest. The second approach is to apply a Likert scale to a group of designated abilities (in comparison to others of the same age, my art ability is excellent, above average, average, below average, or poor). Another approach is to provide different examples of the ability's applications on which individuals rate their performance level from high to low, and subsequently these are summed to obtain a total score.

Self-assessment as a learning tool

Assessment is currently represented as a tool for learning (Arter, 1996; Dochy & McDowell, 1997). Self-assessment is therefore considered as a diagnostic and learning tool at the same time, it could be used to evaluate and diagnose areas of difficulties in language learning as well as a learning strategy. It is assumed that human beings are naturally capable of self-reflection and introspection about their behavior and they actually practice it regularly in different daily domains, which could not easily be assessed by external assessors. Moreover, self-assessment plays a crucial role in self-regulated learning, which is central to the way students become independent learners (Wenden, 2001). Self-regulated

learners monitor their own performance and evaluate their progress and accomplishments (O'Malley & Valdez, 1996). In this regard, Chamot and O'Malley (1994) point out that self-rating requires the student to exercise a variety of learning strategies and higher order thinking skills that not only provide feedback to the student but also stimulate revision strategies and provide direction for future learning. Moreover, since self-assessment involves both reflection and evaluation of one's own performance, it is intended to give students an opportunity to feel a sense of control over their own actions and to develop positive attitudes towards learning, thus increasing motivation (Paris & Paris, 2001). Additionally, self-assessment - which requires critical reflection and introspection - leads learners to develop critical, analytical skills, and a better self-awareness. Ushioda (1996) asserts that by being treated as equal partners in the learning and assessment processes, their self-esteem and self-respect are enhanced and they develop a positive self-concept since their opinions are valued. This has, in turn, a positive impact on their motivation which constitutes a key feature of successful learners.

Furthermore, self-assessment has many advantages such as learner involvement in the learning process, learner autonomy, increased motivation, development of study skills, and a lifelong learning (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Wenden, 2001; Geeslin, 2003). However, Saito (2005) postulated that the empirical studies on the effectiveness of self-assessment have produced varying results which have made test administrators and teachers sceptical about implementing self-assessment in the assessment of second language ability. This has in turn raised issues of reliability and validity of self-assessment. In this regard, there are a number of factors that might be responsible for the variability in self-assessment results. These factors can be related to the domain or skills being assessed, students' individual characteristics, and the formulation of the items and questions posed. Regarding the first factor which implies variation on self-evaluation accuracy according to the assessed domain or skill, Ross (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of validation studies on self-assessment and found that self-assessing one's receptive skills, such as listening and reading, has been found to be more accurate than for productive skills such as speaking and writing. This implies that language domains are distinct and thus performance in the four domains is strongly correlated. However, Liu and Costanzo (2013) pointed out that this is not to the degree that a measure of one can adequately substitute for a measure of another. Although studies have found a conflicting set of results, recent research has generally concluded that language skill entails multiple components - a prominent general ability common to all domains, as

well as specific abilities that are unique to each language skill. Moreover, studies in the field of self-assessment in foreign language learning have mainly investigated the correlation between teacher assessment and students' self-assessment, to investigate to which extent self-rating matches the final assessment conducted by teachers.

Contrastive analysis and language learning difficulties

Contrastive Analysis (CA) as a discipline in the field of second language acquisition and applied linguistics is associated with the English-Spanish bilingual linguist Lado (1957), who has tried to explain why some features or elements of a target language are more difficult to acquire than others. Contrastive analysis has been initiated under the umbrella of structural linguistics and behaviourism, which is a general theory of learning that views learning in general and language learning consequently as a habit formation, which could be reinforced through stimulus-response.

Contrastive Analysis hypothesized that the structure of the first language (L1) affects the acquisition of the second language (L2). Lado (1957) explained in his book *Linguistics across Cultures* that "the plan of the book rests on the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and the culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student" (p. vii). Thus, difficulty in learning and mastering certain structures in a second language depends on the differences between the learner's mother tongue and the target language intended to be learned. On the other hand, similar elements were assumed to be easy to learn.

In terms of predictability, Contrastive Analysis Hypotheses (CAH) can be classified into three hypotheses, namely strong, weak and moderate version. In its strongest version, Lado (1957) claimed that individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture. It was further claimed that all errors made in the second language could be attributed to interference by the first language. The notion of "transfer" means carrying over the habits of the learner's mother-tongue into the second language (Corder, 1971). Therefore, similarities between the first and second language are assumed to facilitate the process of second language acquisition. By contrast, differences are supposed to cause learning difficulties and represent as the main source of errors. Hence, the more a foreign language differs from a learner's mother-tongue, the harder it is predicted to be acquired.

In the weak version, the emphasis has switched from the predictive power of relative difficulty to a kind of explanation for observable errors (Byung-gon, 1992). In this version, errors are examined and explained after they have been produced by second language learners. It further hypothesized that errors come from lack of enough knowledge in the second language.

The moderate version as proposed by Oller and Ziahosseiny (1970), based on their study of spelling errors in English as a second language, stated that “the categorization of abstract and concrete patterns according to their perceived similarities and differences is the basis for learning; therefore, wherever patterns are minimally distinct in form or meaning in one or more system confusion may result”. Similarly, Brown (1987) explained that interference causes learning problem when the two learned items are similar, whereas a little interference occurs if the two items are distinct.

Methodology

The sample of the study composed of 221 Sudanese undergraduate students studying English and German in the Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum. 148 participants out of 273 were drawn from the department of English language, and 73 students out of 79 from the department of German language have participated in the survey, which was a highly representative sample concerning the total available population, especially in the department of German language. The sample size of the German department was considerably smaller than the sample size drawn from the English department, and this was due to the actual smaller number of students majoring in German language.

The mother tongue of almost all participants was Sudanese Arabic and they were majoring in either German or English along with another discipline such as: French, Chinese, Russian, Arabic and Linguistics. The data collection was carried out in June – July 2013 at the department of English language and department of German language respectively, at the Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum. Participants were asked to indicate the level of overall language difficulty in general and for each language skill separately, as well as self-rating their language achievement. The obtained quantitative data have been tabulated, coded and statistically analyzed.

Results and discussion

Before presenting the findings of the current study, it will be meaningful to firstly present one of the ranking lists in the literature, to give a general background on ranking learning difficulties of foreign languages. The Foreign

Service Institute (FSI) of the US Department of State has created an approximate difficulty ranking list for a number of foreign languages for an English native speaker, based on the length of class hours it takes to achieve a professional proficiency level. As shown in the ranking below (Table 1), languages in the first category are closely related to English. Although German and English belong to the same language family, German in the second category is still considered as a relatively difficult language for an English speaking learner, which requires extra 150 class hours more than French or Spanish, for example, to reach the same proficiency level. Languages in the third category are linguistically or culturally different from English, while languages in the fourth category significantly differ from English in terms of linguistic or cultural aspects. Finally, languages which are totally different from English and exceptionally difficult for English native speakers are incorporated in the fifth category.

Table 1: Classification of languages learning difficulty by The Foreign Service Institute (FSI)

Categories	Category I: 600 hours	Category II: 750 hours	Category III: 900 hours	Category IV: 1100 hours	Category V: 2200 hours
Examples	Afrikaans, Dutch, French, Italian	German	Indonesian, Malaysian, Swahili	Amharic, Czech, Greek, Turkish	Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean

The findings of the study can be summarized and presented as follows:

Table 2: Overall language learning difficulty

Level of Difficulty Language	Very difficult	Difficult	Moderately difficult	Easy	Very easy	Total
English	0.7%	4.7%	49.3%	31.8%	13.5%	100%
German	4.1%	21.9%	65.8%	8.2%	0.0%	100%

As for the results concerning the overall level of language learning difficulty (Table 2), it is clear that students of the German department have rated German language as more difficult than the students of the English department. None of the students has considered German as a very easy language, while 13.5% have rated English as a very easy language. However, there were many students who

rated German as a moderately difficult language than English. This result might be attributed to the fact that most students just started to study at the university without any previous background, whereas English is a compulsory subject at Sudanese schools from the fifth class, and thus this previous background and long exposure to the English language makes it easier than the newly introduced German. Additionally, German language is classified as a relatively difficult language even for an English native speaker, more than French or Italian which only take 600 class hours to reach a proficiency level, while achieving the same level in German requires about 750 class hours.

Table 3: Difficulty of language domain

Domain of Difficulty	Grammar	Pronunciation	Spelling	All equal	Total
Language					
English	37.8%	27.7%	14.2%	20.3%	100%
German	64.4%	19.2%	4.1%	12.3%	100%

Regarding the difficulty of language domain, the results above (Table 3) show that German grammar is more difficult than English grammar, which might be explained as Rogers (1987) stated that “in the acquisition of German as a foreign language, grammatical gender has often been viewed as a problem for both learners and teachers alike”. There are three grammatical genders in German for masculine, feminine and neutral, these genders change according to grammatical case and number, compared to only one fixed gender in English or in Arabic, which is the mother language of the participants. As Durrell (1977) points out, German determiners and adjectives have sixteen possible slots in their full matrix (four grammatical cases, three genders in the singular, and additionally the plural). Additionally, German has difficult syntactical features, with its four cases, namely nominative, accusative, dative and genitive for all nouns, pronouns and adjectives, thus it is considered as a highly inflectional and derivational language compared to English.

Table 4: Difficulty of language skill

Difficulty of Skill	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening	Total
Language					
English	4.0%	25.7%	44.6%	25.7%	100%
German	8.2%	9.6%	68.5%	13.7%	100%

Concerning the language skills as shown above in Table 4, speaking or communication skill is considered as the most difficult skill in both English and German, which indicate communication difficulties among students, due to lack of communication opportunities in an Arabic speaking community. However, the students of German language have relatively more communication problems than their counterparts at the English department; this might also be attributed to the grammatical and syntactical complexity of the German language, which might impede the fluency of speaking. As shown in the table, students have twice more difficulties in reading German than reading in English, which could also be attributed to the early exposure and familiarity with the English language during previous schooling, while reading in German is relatively recently introduced at the university level without any previous background. Additionally, German language has a lot of long and compound words, which require much effort to analytically decipher and grasp the meaning of the phrases.

However, listening and writing in German have been equally rated as easier than listening and writing in English. This result could be explained in terms of the simplicity of the German orthography, which is more consistent, logical and rule-governed than in English. This will in turn facilitate the writing process and the listening comprehension, because the way the words are written in German is mostly identical to their pronunciation. English orthography, on the other hand, is quite non-systematic with many silent letters and exceptions. This may result in more writing errors in writing English than in German, and be also responsible for a greater listening comprehension difficulty in English than in German, which is relatively clearly pronounced exactly as it is written.

Table 5: Self-assessment of language achievement

Self-rating Department	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Pass	Total
English	13.5%	37.2%	45.3%	4.1%	100%
German	11.0%	50.7%	37.0%	1.4%	100%

Regarding the self-rating, the students have been asked to estimate their own language achievement. As shown above (Table 5), most students have rated their language achievements as very good or good in both departments, with more students of German having very good achievements than their counterparts of English language. Self-assessments may not exactly reflect their actual language proficiency, because students might tend to overestimate or underestimate their

proficiency level as a result of many factors that might question the reliability of such self-assessment.

Conclusions

The skill of self-assessment is very important in the development of lifelong learning and the development into autonomous individuals. Accordingly, the current study attempted to explore the learning difficulties among Sudanese university students studying English and German language respectively, in order to identify which language have the most linguistic features and therefore relatively more difficult to learn. Based on the students' self-assessment of the overall learning difficulty as well as domain and language skill relative difficulty in the target foreign language, one might conclude that learning German is tend to be more difficult than learning English. However, there are some differences between the two languages in term of relative learning difficulty according to the assessed language domain and skill.

The self-assessment of foreign language learning difficulty in this study is considered from the aspect of Arabic-speaking students. Thus, the comparison between the two languages is not comprehensive and therefore the findings might not be generally extended into other learning contexts. This indicates that one criterion of difficulty in learning a foreign language is the degree to which the language differs from the students' native language. On the other hand, language learning is too complex to be generally described as easy or difficult to learn, because each language comprises many linguistic features and domains, where some of them are easy and other elements are quite difficult. Accordingly, the current study might be useful in setting a preliminary general framework for relative difficulty of foreign language learning, and pave the way for more in-depth further studies and investigations that assess different aspects and factors involved in assessing the relative difficulty in foreign language learning.

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Causative *get*-constructions in the dialogued passages in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Tender Is the Night* as gender-conditioned structures

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Abstract

It goes without saying that in modern sociolinguistics there is a consensus with regard to the fact that the language of males and females differs. The initial sections of the article briefly address the peculiarities of gendered speech as to provide a theoretical background for checking whether the causative *get* is used similarly or differently by men and women in the two of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels: *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Tender Is the Night*. The basic expectation formed is that the motifs for triggering the use of causative *get* are of social rather than structural nature. Before the analysis is carried out, the group of the English periphrastic causatives are sketchily characterized. Generally, what has been found is that there is a clear, socially-motivated pattern of how F. Scott Fitzgerald uses the causative *get* in the dialogued occurrences in his two novels. *Get* is a characteristic of men's talk, but it is also the expected form while female characters address male ones - hence the verb is labelled as "masculine" *get*. Moreover, it has been discovered that there does not seem to be any particular pattern in either the speaker's mood or the speaker's attitude expressed that would trigger the use of the causative verb in question. Yet, what seems to be a well-defined tendency, when it comes to the speaker-hearer power relation, is that the speaker usually assumes a more superior position than the hearer when he or she uses the causative verb. The superiority in most cases is strongly associated with masculinity. Hence, what is postulated is that the causative *get* is labelled not only as "masculine" but also as "superior".

Keywords

sociolinguistics, language and gender, periphrastic causative verbs, causative *get*, F. Scott Fitzgerald, power-relation, masculinity and superiority

Introduction

A major topic that has recently been in the focus of the sociolinguistic analysis is the mutual relations between the ways in which particular languages are used

and the social roles performed by men and women who use those languages. It has been universally recognized that men and women speaking a given language use it differently. The question is about the source and the nature of those differences. Do the differences in the gendered speech derive from the language structure? Or, alternatively, do those differences simply reflect the manner in which the two sexes interact socially with each other? As Włodarczyk-Stachurska (2011a, p. 486) claims, the positive answer to the first question would basically confirm Whorfian hypothesis (1929), “acknowledging the close relationship between language and culture, maintaining that they were inextricably related so that you could not understand one without a knowledge of the other”. In turn, as Włodarczyk-Stachurska claims, the affirmative answer to the latter question would undoubtedly emphasise the role of social dependencies as the factors playing the most significant role in shaping the language of men and women (ibid). Whatever the source of those differences is, we might be tempted to investigate whether in English one can find variation in use, between men and women, in the periphrastic causative verbs such as *cause*, *get*, *have*, *let* and *make*. To this end, we shall first briefly present and discuss some views on the mutual bonds between language and gender and subsequently examine the occurrences of the causative *get* as found in the dialogued passages of the two novels by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Tender Is the Night*.

Language and gender¹⁷

Before we analyse the *get*-occurrences in the two above-mentioned novels with regard to the gender of the actors involved in communication, we shall briefly discuss the peculiarities of male and female speech. This will serve as a background to our subsequent analysis. It has been noted by numerous scholars that women’s speech differs from the speech of men (for details see, for example, Baron, 1986; Arliss, 1991; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003; Wardhaugh, 2006 or Włodarczyk-Stachurska, 2011a and 2011b). Moreover, as Wardhaugh says, there is some kind of bias as far as the language of men and speech of women are concerned. In the words of Wardhaugh (2006, p. 317), “men’s speech usually provides the norm against which women’s speech is judged. We could just as well

¹⁷ As Wardhaugh (2006, p. 315) holds, “the current vogue is to use *gender* rather than *sex*” as the latter term “is to a very large extent biologically determined whereas gender is a social construct (but still one heavily grounded in sex)”. Similar opinions are voiced by other contemporary linguists. Also in this paper, the term *gender* will be used rather than *sex*.

ask how men's speech differs from that of women, but investigators have not usually gone about the task of looking at differences in that way."

Tannen (1990, p. 24-25) stresses that in general men tend to be more concerned with power whereas women with solidarity. For men, conversations are negotiations "*in which people try to achieve and maintain the upper hand if they can, and protect themselves from others' attempts to put them down and push them around*. Life, then, is a contest, a struggle to preserve independence and avoid failure".

In other words, as Grishaver (1997, p. 31) says, "men's major perceptions, as reflected in their language patterns, essentially involve the making of boundaries, the conquest and defence of territory and the maintenance of a pecking order". Therefore, the key concept in men's actions is independence. In contrast for women, as Tannen (1990, p. 25) says, "conversations are negotiations *for closeness in which people try to seek and give confirmation and support, and to reach consensus*. They try to protect themselves from others' attempts to push them away. Life, then, is a community, a struggle to preserve intimacy and avoid isolation. Though there are hierarchies in this world too, they are hierarchies more of friendship than of power and accomplishment."

What this means is that women's main motivations include bringing people closer and establishing and developing bonds with them. Following Tannen's way of reasoning, an important concept for women would be that of intimacy.

One might ask which other aspects make men's and women's speech different. Definitely, there seems to be a lot of stereotypes and false beliefs concerning the female speech. Romaine (1999, p. 167-168) says that "women's conversations are routinely trivialized with the labels *gossip, girl talk, bitching*, and so on, whereas similar conversation among men are called *shop talk*". Therefore female talk is often looked down on whereas men's speech is often stereotypically assigned some qualities of a specialized jargon which may pertain to occupational or other specialized issues. Romaine adds that such judgments tend to reflect the different social values of men and women that are present in our societies. According to those judgments, what men do is often more important than what females do. Furthermore, she mentions that we often associate men's talk with being serious whereas women's talk is often stereotypically found to be trivial (ibid.). Yet, as Romaine says (1999, p. 168), Kipers (1987) found that women did not actually talk more than men about topics evaluated as trivial. What is interesting is that Kippers found out that nearly half of all the discussions undertaken entirely by men, entirely by women, and mixed-sex groups regarded topics that had been independently rated as trivial. Romaine adds that Coates

(1996) found that some women were aware of some of the negative stereotypes associated with female speech and therefore often stressed the fact that they did not talk about “domesticky” or “girly” matters.

What is more, Wardhaugh (2006, p. 317) denies that women’s speech is “gossip-laden, corrupt, illogical, idle, euphemistic, or deficient (...); nor is it necessarily more precise, cultivated, or stylish – or even less profane” than the speech of males. Nor do women gossip more than men do. Apparently, men gossip just as much as females do (for details see Pilkington, 1998), but as Wardhaugh (2006, p. 317) advocates, men’s gossip is different. In his words, male gossip is “a kind of phatic small talk that involves insults, challenges, and various kinds of negative behavior to do exactly what women do by their use of nurturing, polite, feedback-laden, cooperative talk. In doing this, they achieve the kind of solidarity they prize. It is the norms of behavior that are different.” This seems to be in accordance with what Litosseliti (2013, p. 39) claims. She believes that “whereas women may treat gossips as co-operative work that requires a lot of positive feedback and prompting, and avoid indirect disagreement, talk among men tends to contain little feedback and lot of open disagreement or criticism” (for details see also Coates, 1996; and Pilkington, 1998). Furthermore, according to Litosseliti, what the above means is that women prefer to pursue a conversation style based on solidarity, whereas men tend to engage in conversations in which competitiveness plays an important role (ibid.).

Additionally, male speech and female speech definitely differ with respect to vocabulary. Lakoff (1973) claims that women tend to use colour words such as, *inter alia*, *aquamarine*, *lavender*, *magenta* and *mauve* but most men do not. She also holds that adjectives such as *adorable*, *charming*, *divine*, *lovely*, or *sweet* are also frequently used by females, but are very rarely found in men’s active vocabulary repertoire. Females are also found to have their own lexicon that is used in order to emphasize certain effects on them. Such words and expressions would include, for example, *so good*, *such fun*, *lovely*, *divine*, *adorable*, *darling*, and *fantastic*. Also Crystal (1987, p. 21) reports that women use intensifiers such as *so* or *such* (e.g. *It was so busy*) more often than men. Moreover, according to Crystal, women are said to use “exclamations such as *Goodness me* and *Oh dear*” with a higher frequency than men. The above seems to be confirmed in the words of Salzmänn (1993, p. 184), who also claims that certain words in American English are used much more frequently by women than by men. Among such words, he lists “expressive adjectives that convey approval of admiration” such as, *inter alia*, *charming*, *cute* or *sweet*. Salzmänn presents the view that “men are much more likely to phrase their approval or liking for something by using a

neutral adjective such as fine, good, or great and reinforcing it, if necessary, with such an adverb as *damn*” as in „you were damn lucky not to have been killed!” (ibid.).

We have already referred to certain gender-based differentiations found in English. Let us now add some more characteristics of the male and female speech. According to Ritti (1973) girls are said to use expressions such as *oh* and *wow* more often than boys. Brend (1975) maintains that the intonation of men and women vary to some extent, claiming that women, more often than men, tend to use patterns normally associated with surprise and politeness. Lakoff (1973, 1975) characterizes at great length the speech of women. Among numerous peculiarities of women’s speech, the linguist mentions so called “hedges”, that is, lexemes such as *well*, *y’know*, *kinda*. She believes that such hedges are more often used by women than men. He says that “women’s speech seems in general to contain more instances of “well”, “you know”, “kind” and so forth: words that convey the sense that the speaker is uncertain about what he (or she) is saying, or cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement (...)” (Lakoff, 1975, p. 53-54).

Lakoff adds that these words are used “as an apology for making an assertion at all”. Therefore, according to her, women use hedges because they avoid making direct statements. Lakoff also argues that women use “hypercorrect grammar” and more “super polite forms”, (e.g. *Would you mind...*). Females also speak in “italics”, that is, they emphasize certain words in order to stress the importance of what they are saying. Italics convey doubt about women’s self-expressions and their fears “that words are apt to have no effect” (Lakoff 1975, p. 56).

Let us add that, as Wardhaugh (2006, p. 324) reports, many researchers agree that in conversations in which both men and women interact, men tend to speak more than women do. In addition, when men talk to men, their discussion often revolves around such topics as competition, sports, aggression, and doing things. In contrast, females talking to females focus mostly on such categories as the self, feelings, relations with others, family and home. What Wardhaugh says seems to be in line with the view of other researches presented above (cf. Tannen, 1990). Moreover, similarly to other researchers, Wardhaugh also reports that women “use more polite forms and more compliments than men. In doing so, they are said to be seeking to develop solidarity with others in order to maintain social relationships. On the other hand, men are likely to use talk to get things done” (ibid., cf. Lakoff, 1973, 1975). However, Wardhaugh adds a cautionary note. The

above-mentioned claims are only general tendencies. One should not forget that “men also try to bond and women also try to move others to action” (ibid.).

Another trait of women’s speech reported by Lakoff is that they sometimes answer a question with a statement that has a rising terminal which reaches a level higher than the initial parts of the utterance. Such intonation is usually associated with questions rather than the falling intonation which is normally linked with making statements. She claims that women are more likely than men to use what she calls an “inappropriate question intonation”, as in the frequently quoted example in which a husband asks: “When will dinner be ready?”, and the wife replies with a rising intonation: “Oh ... around six o’clock...?” Lakoff says that the effect of such intonation is “as though one was seeking confirmation, though at the same time the speaker may be the only one who has the requisite information” (1975, p. 17). According to Lakoff, such intonation patterns signal uncertainty or lack of self-assertiveness of the women who use them.

For the same reason, she says that women often add a “tag question” to statements in sentences, such as, “I did lock the door, didn’t I?” Lakoff (1975, p. 15) asserts that question tags are used “when the speaker is stating a claim, but lacks full confidence in the truth of that claim.” The above seems to be in line with Włodarczyk-Stachurska (2011b, p. 116) who claims in a similar vein that “talking of language as used by women it seems that there is a great deal in women’s speech in English that reflects extra politeness, one aspect of which is leaving a decision open, not imposing your mind, views or claims on the interlocutor. Note that two patterns seem to reveal this decisively; namely the abundant use of question tags (“The price of mincemeat is terrible, isn’t it?”), and the high frequency of a rising intonation on utterances that are not syntactically questions.”

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned claims about women’s use of tag questions and the lack of confidence have been tested by other linguists (e.g. Dubois & Crouch, 1975; Cameron et al., 1989; and Brower et al., 1979) who do not necessarily confirm those findings. However, as Wardhaugh (2006, p. 321) says, some “investigators did find, however, that the gender of the addressee was an important variable in determining how a speaker phrased a particular question”.

Other researchers (e.g. Hartman, 1976; Poole, 1979) found that women more often than men use uncertainty verb phrases. This is especially true if the first person singular pronoun is combined with verbs of perception or cognition (e.g. *I wonder if*). What is more, Mulac et al. (2001) report that men use more words which refer to quantity, more directives (e.g. *Write this down*), more adjectives of

judgmental character (e.g., *good, dumb*) and more *I* references than women. In contrast, according to the scholars, women make a greater use of more intensive adverbs (e.g., *really, so*), uncertainty verbs (e.g. *seems to, maybe*), and negations (e.g., *not, never*) than men. In their speech, they also refer to emotions more often than men. However, Mulac *et al.* did not find gender differences in the use of tag questions.

Crystal (1987, p. 21) pays attention to the strategies adopted by the men and women in cross-gender conversation. Crystal observes that “women have been found to ask more questions, make more use of positive and encouraging “noises” (such as *mhm*), use a wider intonational range and more marked rhythmical stress, and make greater use of the pronouns *you* and *we* By contrast, men are much likely to interrupt (more than three times as much, in some studies), to dispute what has been said, to introduce more new topics into the conversation, and to make more declarations of fact or opinion.” (ibid.)

As can be seen, some of Crystal’s observations are in line with findings by some of the aforementioned researchers. Definitely, Crystal recognizes that there are conversational differences in the speech of males and that of females.

Let us also address the issue of swear words in the speech of the two genders. In the words of Włodarczyk-Stachurska (2011a, p. 491), “almost universally, today men feel freer to use swear words, while women were – until quite recently – merely limited to such exclamations as *sugar* and *shoot*”. What this means is that men nowadays swear much more often than in the past. It is also observed that there is a trend in women to use taboo language which was not the case some time ago. Włodarczyk-Stachurska (2011a) also quotes Mulac and Lundell (1986) as well as Mehl and Pennebaker (2003) who observe that men tend to use longer words, use more articles and make more references to locations.

Above we have briefly presented the most prominent differences between the language of men and women in English. This outline of gendered speech will serve as a background to our subsequent analysis. Since there appears to be a consensus with regard to the fact that the speech of males and females differs, we will check whether the causative *get* is used similarly or differently by men and women in the two of Fitzgerald’s novels. This will be done by examining the dialogued occurrences found in the novels. Before we do that, the group of English periphrastic causatives will be sketchily addressed.

Periphrastic causative verbs in English

Causativity is one of the most controversial and often discussed issues in philosophy, philosophy of language and linguistics. Discussion over the analysis of English causative constructions has occupied a prominent space in modern linguistic theory. Lakoff (1970), Babcock (1972), Cruse (1972), Baron (1974), Shibatani (1976), Olszewska (1986), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1994) and Stalmaszczyk (1997) include causation as a basic notion in syntactic and semantic analysis. In English, the causative relation can be realised in a number of surface structure expressions, which are typically divided into two groups: lexical causatives (causative verbs) and syntactic structures. In the latter group, one finds periphrastic constructions with causative verbs: causative *cause*, *have*, *get*, *let* and *make*.

Baron (1974, p. 308) says that seven different types of complements occur with periphrastic causative verbs in Modern English, that is, the infinitive, present participle, finite clause, noun, adjective, past participle and locative. However, not every periphrastic may be used with every complement. Periphrastic causatives fall into two groups as far as their infinitival complementation is concerned: verbs taking *to*-infinitive and verbs occurring with bare infinitives as their complements. Because of its permissive/causative meaning, *let* occupies a special position among English periphrastic causatives. The most prominent causative verbs taking bare infinitive complements are *make* and *let*. Both of them have near-paraphrases taking full infinitives (for a detailed discussion over the periphrastic causative *cause*, *make*, *have*, *get* and *let* see Baron (1974, p. 308) and Olszewska (1986, p. 63)).

Social motivation in the use of causative *get*

Now, we seem to be prepared to start our material investigation of how *get*-related causative constructions happen to be distributed in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Tender Is the Night*. Our basic expectation is that we can find some motivation for the *get*-constructions, motivation being extra-linguistic in its nature. What we mean is that our research question goes beyond structural and formal considerations. In other words, we believe that the motifs for triggering the use of causative *get* are of social, rather than structural, nature. Generally, we opt for the kind of sociolinguistics which presents language not as system of arbitrary systemic relations, but as a record of human conceptualization and experience. What this means in practice results in justifying (motivating) linguistic forms and structures (here: periphrastic

causative *get*) not by a purely linguistic syntagmatic relations, but by extra-linguistic considerations, such as gender of the interlocutors.

The two aforesaid novels will serve as our material basis. Our analysis will focus only on the dialogued passages occurring in the novels, as this will ensure that the causative constructions are produced by one of the two genders and will be directed to representatives of one or two genders. By using the two novels as our material basis, the aim of our research is not to analyse the actual utterances produced by men and women, as those found in various corpora, but to see how the causative *get* is operated by Fitzgerald and whether his characters, males and females use the verb differently. Our major goal is to investigate whether the gender of the interlocutors influence in any way the occurrence of the causative *get*.

Analysis

Data under examination

Our data have been derived from the two novels by F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Tender is the Night* and they comprise 20 occurrences of the periphrastic causative *get*.¹⁸ As far as the former novel is concerned, among the *get* occurrences analysed, one finds 9 *get* occurrences. With regard to the latter novel, our scrutiny refers to 11 cases of *get*. The specific examples are presented in the Appendix, Tables 2-3 (Table 2 in the Appendix refers to the causative *get* found in the former novel, whereas Tables 3 in the Appendix refers to the causative *get* found in the latter one).

Data distribution

In *The Beautiful and Damned*, *get* is used 9 times; 8 occurrences appear in the dialogued passages (Table 2 in the Appendix), whereas in *Tender Is the Night*, the verb is used 11 times; 9 cases of the verb are found in the dialogued passages (Table 3 in the Appendix). Therefore, in total, the causative *get* is used 20 times

¹⁸ We should stress the fact that our analysis refers only to those constructions where the causer and the causative verb are accompanied by the object of causative action (causee) and the complement of the causative verb, and as in the examples: *Air'll get the rotten nicotine out of your lungs* (Fitzgerald, 1922, p. 30). Therefore, examples with one or more of the above-mentioned elements missing have been disregarded. Moreover, it should be stressed that some of the analysed verbs may receive causative or non-causative interpretation, as in the example: *This is just a change—the situation is a father's problem with his son—the father can't get the son up here* (Fitzgerald, 1934, p. 355). Then “getting the son up here” could be interpreted as “bringing the son here” or “causing someone to bring the son here”.

in both novels: 3 times in the narrated passages and 17 times in the dialogued ones. With regard to the dialogued occurrences, *get* is used by a male character 13 times and is addressed 10 times to another male character, and 3 times to a female character. Female characters use causative *get* 4 times: 4 times to male characters and once to a female character; this is so, because one of the occurrences is addressed both to male and female characters. So, the above-mentioned observations may be summarised by means of the following symbols:

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \text{Get } 20 \text{ x} > 3\text{N} + 17\text{D} \\ \text{M: } 13 & > \text{M/M: } 10 & \text{M/F: } 3 \\ \text{F: } 4 & > \text{F/M: } 4 & \text{F/F: } 1 \end{array}$$

Moreover, our analysis with regard to the causative *get* (Tables 2-3 in the Appendix) reveals certain generalizations as found in the dialogued passages of both novels:

$$(1) \text{ get M (13) } \sim \text{ F (5) } \quad 2.6 \text{ x}$$

Causative *get* is used 13 times by male characters, whereas it is used 5 times by females ones. Therefore, male characters use causative *get* 2.6 times more frequently than female ones.

$$(2) \text{ get M/M (10) } \sim \text{ M/F (3) } \quad 3.33 \text{ x}$$

Causative *get* is used 10 times by a male character addressing another male character, whereas it is used 3 times by a male character addressing a female character. Therefore, male characters use causative *get* 3.33 times more frequently when addressing other male characters than female characters.

$$(3) \text{ get F/M (4) } \sim \text{ F/F (1) } \quad 4 \text{ x}$$

Causative *get* is used 4 times by a female character addressing a male character, whereas it is used once by a female character addressing another female character. Therefore, female characters use causative *get* 4 times more frequently when addressing male characters than female characters.

So, our expectation is, at least at this stage, that, pragmatically, we can talk about something like “masculine” *get*, which is that as a causative verb, *get* is a

Table 1. Specific characterisation of causative *get*-contexts

Table/ No. ¹⁹	Gender of interlocutors and object of causative action	Speaker-hearer power relation			Speaker's mood	Speaker's attitude expressed
		Superiority	Equality	Inferiority		
2/1.	M/M-NH ²⁰	X			Relaxed	Positive/Favourable
2/2.	M/F-MF	X			Nervous	Negative/Critical
2/3.	F/M-F	X			Relaxed	Negative/Mocking
2/4.	M/M-NH	X			Confident/Excited	Positive/Approving
2/5.	M/M-NH	X			Confident/Excited	Negative/Disapprovin g
2/6.	M/M-NH	X			Confident	Positive/Approving
2/7.	M/F-M	X			Irritated/Depressed	Neutral/Carefree
2/9.	M/M-F	X			Jovial	Positive/Favourable
3/1.	F/M-M	X			Reluctant	Positive/Encouraging
3/2.	F/MF-NH			X	Anxious/Tired	Negative/Doubtful
3/3.	M/M-M	X			Tense	Positive/Determined
3/5.	M/M-NH	X			Relaxed/Casual	Neutral
3/6.	F/M-F	X			Anxious/Tense	Positive/Favourable

¹⁹ Our numbering here corresponds to the order of the *get* examples in Table 2 and 3 in the Appendix. The specific examples are, then, referred to by the table and the occurrence number.

²⁰ The above-mentioned symbols should be understood as follows: (M) – male, (F) – female, (MF) – male and female, (NH) – non human, (/) – X speaks to Y, (-) indicates the object of causative action (causee). The same symbols will be used in the Case Studies and in Appendix. Additionally, in the Case Studies and the Appendix we find the following symbols: (D) – dialogued occurrence, (N) – narrated occurrence, (na) – no speaker/hearer relation, (UH) – unspecified human.

3/7.	M/M-M	X			Tense	Neutral
3/8.	M/M-M	X			Tense	Positive/Favourable
3/9.	M/M-M	X			Tense/Anxious	Positive/Favourable
3/11.	M/F-NH	X			Good	Neutral

characteristic of men's talk as well as the expected form while female characters address male ones. Let us go into specific contexts to see whether or not this could be so. As a check-up on our prediction, we will examine all the *get*-occurrences in both novels in terms of the speaker-hearer power relation, speaker's mood as well as the speaker's attitude expressed. By doing so we would like to investigate whether masculinity associated with causative *get* in the two novels by Fitzgerald can be associated with some other traits. As evidenced in Table 1 above, which presents the specific characterisation of the causative *get*-contexts, there does not seem to be any particular pattern in either the speaker's mood or the speaker's attitude expressed that would trigger the use of causative *get*. The speaker's mood can be anything from relaxed and confident through good and jovial to excited and irritated, whereas the speaker's attitude expressed towards what is being talked about has an equally vast range, from negative through neutral to positive. In other words, the mood exemplified by the speaker can be as desirable as jovial and as low as depressed. A similar observation can be dropped in regard to the attitude that the speaker expresses towards the subject matter of a given dialogue: the attitude can be as much mocking or disapproving as favourable and approving, with neutrality possible as well. At the same time, as we see in the Table above, no correlations between the type of the speaker's mood and the type of the speaker's attitude expressed towards what is being talked about have been found.

However, when it comes to the speaker-hearer power relation, the speaker's superiority seems to definitely outnumber the inferiority cases. This would mean that the causative *get* can more readily be found when the speaker assumes power position rather than when the speaker exemplifies the inferior position. As one can observe, what is important is that the superiority in most cases equals masculinity. This would be in line with what Tannen (1990) claims, namely, that men's speech often reflects their power. For the reasons stated above, we propose that in the case of causative *get*, the masculinity of the speakers can, as a

rule, be viewed in a strong and direct connection with their superiority; similarly, their superiority cannot be considered without associating it with masculinity.

Of the 4 occurrences of the causative *get* used by women, 3 of them are used by women having a superior status. Since superiority is so strongly connected with masculinity, we propose that those female characters also possess some masculine traits or they simply use “masculine” language, while addressing males, as to accommodate to the manner men speak. Therefore, we postulate that the causative *get* used in the two novels should, in most cases, be labelled not only as “masculine”, but also “superior” *get*. As this finding seems to be of a well-defined pattern, let us have a look to 3 specific contexts and analyze them in terms of (i) situational context, (ii) the intended pragmatic import and (iii) contextual assessment. Because the causative *get* is mostly used when the speaker’s position is superior (with only one case of the verb when the speaker assumes an inferior position), we shall only analyze the superiority cases in our Case Studies.

Case Studies

Case study 1

Table/ Item ²¹	Causative <i>get</i> occurrence in <i>The Beautiful and Damned</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald	Page	Object of causative action
2/1.	(...) Air’Il get the rotten nicotine out of your lungs. (...)	30	D-M/M-NH

Situational context

The quotation is part of a dialogue between Anthony Patch and Richard Caramel. The quoted sentence is generated by the former character. The conversation takes place on a freezing, winter afternoon in New York City. Anthony Patch walks along Forty-Second Street when he unexpectedly encounters Richard Caramel emerging from the Manhattan Hotel barber shop. Richard Caramel wears a fashionable, sheep-lined coat and a soft, brow hat. He stops Anthony, slaps him on the arms and shakes hands with him. Richard mentions that he has recently been working a lot on his novel in a cold room which makes him fear that he might get pneumonia as a result. Richard seizes

²¹ This is an excerpt from our Table 2 where we present all our *get*-occurrences. Similarly, whenever we offer a quotation in subsequent Case Studies, we also refer to our Tables 1-2.

Anthony's arm and they walk briskly up Madison Avenue. When Anthony asks Dick where they are going to, Dick replies: "Nowhere in particular" (Fitzgerald, 1922, p. 29). Dick's face is all red from the cold. They pass Forty-Fifth Street and slow down slightly. Both of them light cigarettes.

Anthony suggests that they walk up to the Plaza and have an egg-nog. Furthermore, Anthony asserts that walking up to the Plaza will be good for Dick, and additionally, the air will get the nicotine out of Dick's lungs. Anthony also says that Dick will be able to tell him about his book on the way to Plaza. The two men reach Fiftieth Street and turn over toward Madison Avenue. They continue their conversation, with Gloria Gilbert being its main topic. They have a little argument, but they reconcile by the time they reach the Plaza. It is the dusk when they enter Plaza where they have the egg-nog.

Pragmatic import

Richard Caramel is happy to meet Anthony Patch. He stops Anthony enthusiastically. Nevertheless, when he slaps Anthony on his arms, he does it "more from a desire to keep himself warm than from playfulness" (ibid.). Another reason why Dick is happy is that he has been working a lot and he is pleased with the results of his work. He says: "Done some good work on my novel" (ibid.). Dick believes that he occasionally needs to go out, meet other people and talk to them. He says: "I have to get out once in a while" (ibid.).

While meeting Dick, Anthony seems to be the person who dominates the conversation and emphasizes his superior position by means of both words and gestures. After Dick seizes Anthony's arm, Anthony withdraws his arm gently, which may be interpreted as a signal that he will not allow Dick to dominate him or exert control over him. What is more, Anthony says sarcastically: "I don't mind carrying you, Dick, but with that coat—", which again can be construed as not giving consent to Dick for controlling the situation (Fitzgerald, 1922, p. 30). Moreover, in response to Dick's dilemmas, Anthony does not show understating or offer any support, but he only grunts, which again marks his somewhat disrespectful attitude towards Dick. The two characters light up cigarettes, which may be understood as a way of easing their tension or indulging themselves.

It should be mentioned that it is the character that has the stronger position, Anthony, who suggests going to the Plaza. The very quotation in question may be interpreted as Anthony's advice which is offered to Dick. One normally expects that a suggestion or advice is usually given by the party who enjoys more power or authority in a relation, rather than the one that having an inferior position. This fact would again prove Anthony to be the more powerful interlocutor. The

intended, pragmatic result of the quotation is actually to make Dick go for a drink with Anthony, and not really to cause Dick's lungs to clear from nicotine. The suggestion that a walk and fresh air will do Dick good is, therefore, only a tool, if not a mere pretext, for achieving Anthony's goal. This goal would be having an alcoholic drink. Dick accepts Anthony's proposal which once more confirms Anthony's dominance in the relation. The hearer's response to the speaker's linguistic stimulus is, therefore, fully compatible to the intended one.

That this could be so can be further evidenced with some more phrases in the dialogue. Anthony "magnanimously" lets Dick talk about his book all the way to the Plaza. In reply, Dick says: "I don't want to if it bores you. I mean you needn't do it as a favour", which again portrays Dick as a weaker character (ibid.). Furthermore, it is Anthony who offends Dick when they talk about the types of women for whom Dick has liking. When Dick wants to react after he has been offended, Anthony does not let him do so by interrupting him "ruthlessly" (Fitzgerald, 1922, p. 31). Dick complains to Anthony thusly: "You talk sometimes as though I were a sort of inferior" (ibid.). This again confirms the observation that Anthony, in his acting towards Dick, shows superiority or at least Dick feels inferior.

Contextual assessment

The context clearly demonstrates that it is Anthony who assumes the more powerful, dominant position throughout the dialogue. This can be well evidenced both by Anthony's language and acting. Therefore, the kind of causative *get* that we see in this Case Study is clearly masculine and serves the purposes of imposing the superiority position by the speaker on the hearer.

Case study 2

Table/ Item	Causative <i>get</i> occurrence in <i>The Beautiful and Damned</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald	Page	Object of causative action
2/2.	(...) Do you want to get us pinched?'	145	D-M/F-MF

Situational context

The quotation is part of a dialogue between Anthony Patch and Gloria Patch. The quoted sentence is produced by Anthony. The conversation takes place when Anthony and Gloria Patch go by car to the countryside to find a house they could

rent. Gloria asks Anthony to let her drive the car. Anthony is not in favour of this proposal as he doubts Gloria's driving skills. Nevertheless, he agrees, they change seats and Gloria takes the wheel. The car leaps ahead and curves "retchingly about a standing milk-wagon" (Fitzgerald, 1922, p. 145). The driver of the milk-wagon stands up on his seat and bellows after them. Anthony tries to warn Gloria that an inexperienced driver should not go over twenty miles an hour for the first five thousand miles. Gloria nods briefly, but she fails to obey Anthony's warnings and she slightly increases the speed. Soon afterwards, Anthony makes another attempt to make Gloria slow down. He mentions to Gloria that she has ignored a road sign with a speed limit. He asks rhetorically if she wants them to get arrested for speeding. Gloria replies to Anthony that he always exaggerates. They hastily pass a policeman that has swerved into view. Anthony asks Gloria about the policeman: "See him?" (Fitzgerald, 1922, p. 146). Anthony continues warning his wife to drive carefully. He tells her to mind railroad tracks and approaching automobiles. Eventually, he insists on taking the wheel and he succeeds.

Pragmatic import

When Gloria asks Anthony to let her drive the car, he looks at her suspiciously and doubts her skills. He asks Gloria: "You swear you're a good driver?" This seems to confirm the stereotype that women are bad drivers, or it may simply indicate that Anthony doubts Gloria's skills. Anthony's unfavourable attitude towards the prospect of Gloria driving the car finds reflection in Anthony's language and behaviour. For instance, when he stops the car in order to let Gloria drive it, he does it cautiously, as if he wanted to express his uncertainty and reluctance. The very idea that a woman should drive the car may also, in Anthony's eyes, undermine his superior, masculine position. Soon after he allows Gloria to drive, he realizes that he has made a great mistake in relinquishing control over the car. Yet, Anthony marks his strong, dominant position by scolding Gloria and giving her frequent and numerous warnings and indications about driving.

The linguistic means that seem to confirm Anthony's dominant position include the use of the imperative: "Remember now!" or the verb *ought* in: "The man said we oughtn't to go over twenty miles an hour for the first five thousand miles" (Fitzgerald, 1922, p. 145). As to emphasize his superior position, he also makes use of rhetorical questions, such as "See that sign?" (ibid.). The quoted phrase itself: "Do you want to get us pinched?" is itself a rhetorical question. Its intended, pragmatic effect is to scare the hearer and in consequence cause her to slow down. This sharply contrast with the achieved pragmatic effect (import), as

the hearer's response to the speaker's linguistic stimulus is just opposite, that is, the hearer does not obey the speaker's commands and continues reckless driving. Gloria says that Anthony simply exaggerates and persists in her speedy ride.

The dominant position of the speaker can be further evidenced with some more data. Anthony continues trying to exert control over Gloria. He does it, for example, by asking another rhetorical question. He asks Gloria whether she has seen the policeman that they passed hastily. Moreover, he assumes the position of reasonable and responsible person as he warns Gloria of railroad tracks and points out approaching cars. Reproving Gloria and giving her confirms his powerful status. Eventually, as he gets his own way, his masculine, superior position is not endangered. He insists on taking the wheel and Gloria finally obeys.

Contextual assessment

The context clearly demonstrates that the speaker of the quotation under examination enjoys dominant and more powerful position throughout the dialogue than the hearer. This is well demonstrated by the language used by the speaker as well as by his non-verbal signals. Hence, our scrutiny of the causative *get* in the present Case Study clearly indicates that we deal with masculine *get* which is used in order to impose the superiority position by the speaker on the hearer.

Case study 3

Table/ Item	Causative <i>get</i> occurrence in <i>Tender is the Night</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald	Page	Object of causative action
6/6.	(...) Plenty for everything, and it ought to be used to get Nicole well.'	318	D-F/M-F

Situational context

The quotation is a part of a dialogue between Dick Diver and Baby Warren. The quoted sentence is produced by the latter character. Anthony encounters Baby in the doorway of the Excelsior in Rome. Baby says that she thought Dick was in America. Dick tells her that he was in America, but he has returned to Europe via Naples. They have dinner together. At Baby's request, Dick tells her about recent events in his life. As the conversation continues, Baby suggests that

Dick and Nicole move away, because a change would be desirable for Nicole. Dick reminds Baby that it was her idea to buy the clinic in Switzerland where Dick practises, so he does not understand why they should move away. Baby says that the decision on buying the clinic resulted from the fact that Dick was “leading that hermit’s life on the Riviera” (Fitzgerald, 1934, p. 317). Baby suggests that they move, for example, to London, as “the English are the best-balanced race in the world” (ibid.). Baby continues to persuade Dick to move to England with Nicole. She says that money is not a problem as there is plenty of it and it should be used to treat Nicole. Dick rejects Baby’s idea.

Pragmatic import

When Dick meets Baby in the *Excelsior*, she tries to establish the dominant position over Dick from the very beginning of the dialogue. She *demand*s, not *ask*s him to tell her about recent events in his life. She frowns at Dick, which may be interpreted as a sign of dissatisfaction and her dominant status. She says that she does not want to give advice or interfere with Dick and Nicole’s affairs, yet her words about Nicole’s prospects may be interpreted just to the contrary. She says: “Dick, I don’t pretend to advise you or to know much about it but don’t you think a change might be good for her—to get out of that atmosphere of sickness and live in the world like other people?” (Fitzgerald, 1934, p. 317). Baby appears to be very shallow and self-confident, but she is persistent and obstinate at the same time. While talking to Dick about the national character of the English, she strongly disagrees with Dick’s opinion on that issue. Baby is very anxious to make sure that her sister, Nicole, is treated well. Baby is a wealthy and powerful woman and she seems to take advantage of that fact.

The intended pragmatic effect of the quotation is to take Nicole from Franz and Dick’s clinic and to settle her in England. The money will be an instrument necessary to attain this goal. Baby knows that her position enables her to influence and manipulate people, including Dick. Dick, on the other hand, knows that he is dependent on Baby. He is aware of the fact that he became a co-owner of the clinic in Switzerland only due to Baby’s financial support. Albeit Dick agreed to acquire the Swiss clinic with the Warrens’ money, he had a feeling that Baby’s message, directed to him, was: “We own you, and you’ll admit it sooner or later. It is absurd to keep up the pretense of independence” (Fitzgerald, 1934, p. 261). This, once more, confirms that in the relation between Dick and Baby, it is the latter individual who has the dominant position. Yet, Dick rejects Baby’s idea. Therefore, Dick’s response to the linguistic stimulus produced by Baby is just

opposite to the intended one. Dick does not agree to move to England. In other words, Baby's ideas contrast sharply with the achieved pragmatic effect (import).

Nevertheless, Baby remains the more powerful character and her dominant status can be further evidenced with some other data from the novel. For instance, when Dicks gets arrested because of fighting with a man who happens to be an Italian policeman, ironically, the only person he can resort to is Baby Warren. Due to her persistence at the Consulate, she accomplishes Dick's release.

Contextual assessment

The context evidently shows that the speaker in the quotation (Baby Warren) has a stronger position than the hearer (Dick Diver). Baby's superior status is realized by means of both verbal and non-verbal signals. Our analysis of the causative *get* in the present Case Study clearly demonstrates that we deal with a "masculine" *get*, used by a female character. It may be speculated that the "masculine" *get* in the present Case Study, which on other occasions is regularly used by male characters in the novel, is employed by the female speaker to maintain or emphasize her superior position over the male hearer.

Conclusion

Our analysis refers mostly to the dialogued passages in the two novels. Generally, what we have found is that there is a clear pattern of how F. Scott Fitzgerald uses the causative *get* in his two novels in focus here. This pattern is evidently of social nature. *Get* is, first of all, a characteristic of men's talk, but it is also the expected form while female characters address male ones – this may be because females, while addressing males, tend to use "masculine" language; hence we label it as "masculine" *get*. Moreover, we have discovered that there does not seem to be any particular pattern in either the speaker's mood or the speaker's attitude expressed that would trigger the use of the causative verb in question. However, what seems to be a well-defined tendency, when it comes to the speaker-hearer power relation, is that the speaker usually assumes a more superior position than the hearer when he or she uses the causative verb. What is very important is that the superiority in most cases is strongly associated with masculinity and it should always be viewed in relation to masculinity. Hence, we label the causative *get* not only as "masculine" but also as "superior".

As can be seen above, we have established some very clearly-defined patterns as to the occurrence of the causative *get* in the dialogued passages in the two novels. One may be interested, why for the two novels, the above-mentioned patterns are clearly established? To what extent the established pattern is caused

by the fact that the author of the novels was a male? Or perhaps he was a skilful observer and masterfully depicted the language used by the two genders? It goes without saying that it very difficult, if not impossible at all, to answer those questions satisfactorily. Definitely, it would be interesting to compare our findings with other material, be it, fiction or actual utterances gathered in corpora presenting the language of the first half of twentieth century. This could undoubtedly shed some more light on the problem.

Bibliographical note

The present paper is a revised and elaborated version of the ideas presented in the author's doctoral dissertation entitled English Periphrastic Causative Constructions as Gender-Based Expressions of Human Experience in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Novels 'The Beautiful and Damned' and 'Tender Is the Night' (for details, see Gofqbek, 2015, in References).

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Appendices

Table 2. The causative *get* occurrences in *The Beautiful and Damned* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

No.	Quotation	Page	Object of causative action
1.	(...) Air'll get the rotten nicotine out of your lungs. (...)	30	D-M/M-NH
2.	(...) Do you want to get us pinched?'	145	D-M/F-MF
3.	(...) And I'll bet a hat if he's gotten an idiot to sit and be stupid with him he's tearing out on the side with some much speedier lady.'	149	D-F/M-F
4/5.	"There's the man who gets to be an assistant secretary or treasurer, gets his name on our folder here, before he's thirty, and there's the man who gets his name there at forty-five. (...)	187-188	D-M/M-NH D-M/M-NH
6.	(...) In fact, I had to get a lot of fancy stuff out of my head.'	188	D-M/M-NH
7.	(...) He probably came up to get me to wheedle some money out of grandfather for his flock.'	223	D-M/F-M
8.	This occupied several hours, for it was necessary to take a few drinks in each place in order to get the proprietor in the proper frame of mind to talk business.	316	N-na-M
9.	(...) We've got some pretty good stuff lined up for about eleven o'clock, when the shows let out. (...)	352	D-M/M-F

Table 3. The causative *get* occurrences in *Tender Is the Night* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

No.	Quotation	Page	Object of causative action
1.	Why don't you get Mr Dumphy to go with you?	71	D-F/M-M
2.	"This time he really has got everything planned out when he gets to New York."	92	D-F/MF-NH
3.	I'm going over and get Freeman out of jail.	147	D-M/M-M
4.	From time to time his mind reverted to the fact that he ought to go over and get Freeman out of jail, but he shook off all facts as parts of the nightmare.	152-153	N-na-M
5.	(...) I think it's because I get the first finger soapy when I make the line of my side-burn, but how it gets up on top of my head I don't know.'	267	D-M/M-NH
6.	(...) Plenty for everything, and it ought to be used to get Nicole well.'	318	D-F/M-F
7.	"This is just a change—the situation is a father's problem with his son—the father can't get the son up here."	355	D-M/M-M
8.	(...) Count on staying two or three days, and get the boy up here if he needs to be watched. (...)	356	D-M/M-M
9.	(...) Or I can get him in any one of a dozen enterprises in Paris—"	361	D-M/M-M
10.	(...) For fifty francs, increased to a hundred as he succumbed to the idea of getting her out hastily, Augustine yielded her fortress, covering the retreat with stormy grenades of "Salaud!" (...)	388	N-na-F
11.	(...) First the actress has lines to follow, then she has to get the audience's attention back on herself, away from the murdered Chinese or whatever the thing is. (...)	419	D-M/F-NH



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Rewriting rural community and dictatorial history through magical realism in Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

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Abstract

Márquez was greatly influenced by his grandmother's story-telling ability, and was highly indebted to the socio-political history of Latin America, particularly Colombia. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, he wants to reconstruct the lost world of childhood by using magical realism which gives expression to the world-view of a rural people who live in isolation from modern world. By retelling the official history from the perspective of the oppressed, he reveals the fact that history is never factual and impartial but serves the interest of those who write it. Through the banana company massacre and the subsequent hide and seek over the number of dead workers, Márquez exposes the way official history becomes fabricated and distorted by authorities, and fails to provide the original occurrences. He was disgusted with the political violence and civil wars which had distraught people; he was also against capitalism, scientific and technological inventions, and so-called modernization, which are the means through which foreign culture brings corruption and brutality, dominates, exploits and oppresses the natives, and threatens the native culture and identity. By employing magical realism, he was able to recreate Colombian history to protest against the way capitalism dominated the socio-political and economic structure of the region.

Keywords

magical realism, capitalism, modernization, solitude

Introduction

It is a general misconception that all magical realism is Latin American; nevertheless, it must be admitted that Latin America is a crucial location for magical realist writing. The Nobel Laureate Gabriel García Márquez, who is the epitome of magical realism, has inspired many writers all over the globe to employ this mode of writing; he has also strengthened the affiliation between

magical realism and Latin American literature. His *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is an excellent example of magical realist writing, in which the supernatural is presented as ordinary, and the ordinary as extraordinary or magical. According to Warnes (2009), "(...) the novel's magical realism is to be found in its technically brilliant interweaving of natural and supernatural, a style which routinely allows fantastic events to be treated as if they were perfectly normal" (p. 76). Márquez is gifted with an extraordinary ability to blend the mundane with the marvelous, the historical with the fabulous, and psychological realism with surrealism. He carefully balances realistic elements like poverty, sex, massacre, and house-cleaning with magical events like Father Nicanor Reyna's levitating six inches off the ground, Melquíades' return from the death, the canvas sack which contains the bones of Rebeca's parents and makes strange sounds, the strong farts of the characters that kill all the flowers in the house, man who runs through the house balancing beer bottles on his penis, and so on.

Márquez was raised in his grandparents' very big and supposedly ghostly house, situated in Aracataca in the sea-side region of Colombia considered even by the Colombians as an exotic part of the nation, in an atmosphere of superstition. His childhood place became the foundation for his imaginary town called Macondo where he set several of his novels, including *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and his childhood experience also contributed profusely to the use of magical and supernatural elements and events. Besides his colorful childhood memories, Márquez is highly indebted to the socio-political history of Colombia, for example, the civil war between the Liberals and the Conservatives in the story echoes events similar to the historical events of Colombia. According to Bowers (2004), there are three sources for magical realism in his novels: a confusion of time scales which includes characters having unusual life-span; a mixture of superstition and overstatement which includes incidents when characters are afraid of having child with pig's tail as a result of incest, and when it rains continuously for years; and the antipathy and shock of the new, which includes scientific inventions, brought to Macondo by Melquíades, and José Arcadio Buendía's amazement after seeing ice and a telescope (p. 40).

Although *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is, first of all, a comic novel, an entertainment, it is, at the same time, a deeply serious and highly ambitious book that sets out to rewrite the history of Latin America and to offer a view of the human condition (Higgins, 2002, p. 37). Márquez has stated that the prime goal behind writing the novel was to reconstruct the lost world of his childhood. He does so through the mixture of real and fantastic elements that avoids the documentary approach of realist fiction and instead gives expression to the

worldview of a rural people who live in isolation from the modern developed world. It should be noted that the magical realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* does not mean that Latin American reality is somehow innately magical, but it does highlight the prodigious scopes of the natural environment and the excesses of political life. The novel presents events not in the way they actually occurred, but as they were noticed and interpreted by the local people.

In order to give a literary depiction of his childhood world, Márquez has created the microcosm of a bigger world in the fictional community of Macondo. The story of Macondo, which is founded by settlers escaping their homeland from the ghost of violence and is born out of a utopian dream, in fact, mirrors the general pattern of the history of Latin America. Macondo thus stands for the dream of a “brave new world” seemingly promised by America and proved illusive by the course of history, and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a demystifying rewriting of the history of Colombia and, in a larger scale, Latin America. The tradition of manipulating history is revealed in the novel when the authorities play hide and seek about the massacre of the banana workers, claiming that in Macondo people live in peace and harmony. Young Aureliano, who, like his uncle, considers Macondo and its inhabitants the victim of the imperialist and capitalist exploitation of the Banana Company, finds that the high school history books portray the company as a harbinger of prosperity and progress. This novel attempts to expose and ridicule the official myths by providing an alternative version from the perspective of local people dominated and oppressed by outside forces.

In the first place, Márquez raises a voice of protest against the Spanish incursions aimed to colonize Latin America, whereas, in the second, he condemns the North American advances in the South to capture and subsequently make use of the resources of the latter (Ahmad & Afsar, 2014, p. 4). By re-telling the official history from the perspective of the oppressed, he reveals the fact that history never consists of purely factual and impartial accounts, but serves the interests of those who write it. He shows how capitalism, different technological and scientific inventions, and so called modernization are means through which foreign culture brings corruption and brutality, and dominates, exploits, and oppresses the natives. The aim of the article is to prove that magical realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is employed to create an alternative history by questioning those historical facts which have been included in the authoritative versions of the history of Colombia, to unveil the social and the political problems of the nation and criticize them, and to re-create Colombian history in order to

protest against the way capitalism dominated the socio-political and economic structure of the region.

Intertwining the real and the magical

Márquez asserts that everything in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is based on reality, and he presents those real events not in a realistic way, but through a wonderful mingling of the real and the magical. We find that, in the realm of this novel, beliefs and metaphors become facts, and more common and ordinary facts become uncertain and magical. The main medium for the Márquez's idea of the amazement of reality is his unastonished tone and his refusal of the questions or comments which the state of his culture would seem to require. He took a long time in finding his tone which involves a carefully pitched appearance of gullibility, and adapted it from the examples of his grandmother and Franz Kafka. It enables him to place the historical and the fabulous side by side without conflicting; it does not ask for belief or even a suspension of disbelief, but for something like a suspension of surprise. Márquez needs his tone to establish an unreliable but unquestioned world which is incurably soaked in myth, where legend, hyperbole, metaphor and fact all come to mind as stories coloured in all kinds of ways by need, innocence and expectation. We can look at the description of the death of Amaranta for an example of tone at work. Amaranta is not worried about the time of her death as she already knows it. Death is personified and considered a new character when Amaranta "saw it on one burning afternoon sewing with her on the porch a short time after Meme had left for school. She saw it because it was a woman dressed in blue with long hair, with a sort of antiquated look" (Márquez, 1967/1996, p. 284). She distributes her earthly belongings among the poor, refuses a last confession, and braids her long hair the way she has been told by death.

Several episodes show Márquez's manipulation of language, diction, and narrative to blend the real and the magical elements of his fictional world, the treatment of the mysterious death of José Arcadio being one of them. After returning from the hunting trip, he goes to his room to change clothes, and the very next moment the sound of a pistol shot signals his death and the strange occurrence that follows it: "A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went down steps and climbed over curbs, passed along the Street of the Turks, turned a corner to the right and another to the left, made a right angle at the Buendía house, went in under the closed door, crossed through the parlor, hugging the walls so as not to stain the rugs, went on to the other

living room, made a wide curve to avoid the dinning-room table, went along the porch with the begonias, and passed without being seen under Amaranta's chair, and went through the pantry and came out in the kitchen, where Úrsula was getting ready to crack thirty-six eggs to make bread" (Márquez, 1967/1996, p. 135).

It is also significant when Úrsula reveals that the blood comes from the right ear of the victim, and that no weapon or wound on his body is found. Although José Arcadio's death and its aftermath are not normal, it is made almost realistic by the stylistic accuracy and mundane details that surround the event, such as Úrsula's cracking of eggs.

A quite opposite effect is realized by the account of José Arcadio Buendía's discovery of ice when he goes to the circus with his two sons. He paid extra fee and "(...) put his hand on the ice and held it there for several minutes as his heart filled with fear and jubilation at the contact with mystery.....Intoxicated with the evidence of the miracle, he forgot at that moment about the frustration of his delirious undertakings and Melquíades's body, abandoned to the appetite of the squids. He paid another five reales, and with his hand on the cake, as if giving testimony on the holy scriptures, he exclaimed: 'This is the great invention of our time'" (Márquez, 1967/1996, p. 18).

In the previous passage an ordinary object like ice is imbued with an aura of magic by the imaginative, emotion-packed language and wealth of exotic details setting the stage for José Arcadio Buendía's intense reactions to the 'mystery' (McMurray, 1977, p. 90). Márquez's treatment of José Arcadio's death and José Arcadio Buendía's discovery of ice clearly demonstrates his technique of making the fantastic seem real and the real fantastic, thus removing the obstacle between objective and imaginary realities, and creating an entirely fictional world. The role of practical-minded Úrsula lends a note of realism over the extraordinary death of her son whereas her frivolous husband's role in the second occurrence turns an ordinary object ice into an object of wonder which implies that reality is relative, evasive and sometimes contradictory. In dealing with Colombian and Latin American history, and social and political reality, Márquez mingles the natural with the supernatural to show that there is nothing called absolute truth, and that truth is often manipulated by authority.

The depiction of extraordinary people and occurrences is one of the main weapons employed by Márquez to achieve desired effect. Events and personal traits are made larger than life although they remain the logical exaggeration of real situations. When Márquez (1967/1996) says, "It rained for four years, eleven months, and two days" (p. 320), he makes this logical exaggeration purposefully:

to underline the severity of the rainstorm that demolishes Macondo. Although such long period of rain is quite unlikely to take place, the exact duration gives the matter a considerable sense of reality; hence, the exaggeration works as an important device to intermingle the extraordinary and exotic with the real.

Resisting political violence

Márquez, who claims that there is not a single line in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* which is not based on reality, makes a perfect synthesis of the historical and the fictional world. By placing historical events in a fictional setting, and by treating these events in an unconventional manner through the use of myths and magic, he, actually, wants to create an alternative version of history from the perspective of the people who are oppressed, disempowered, and devoid of any social and political privileges. Since realism is not a suitable to comment on the social and political histories, and to recreate history, Márquez relies heavily on magical realism. He is able to do so because he believes that nothing is absolute and that everything can be challenged, and, through the novel, he tries to prove that the Colombian history can also be challenged. Márquez was disgusted with the political violence and civil wars that swept over Colombia and whole Latin America; he was also against capitalism, imperialism, scientific and technological invention, and so called modernization, all of which he thought to be the means of oppression. By creating a magical and imaginary town Macondo, providing different magical events, dealing with political violence, capitalism and other means of oppression, he, actually, criticizes the real life situation of Colombia and whole Latin America.

One Hundred Years of Solitude is well-appreciated for its social, political, mythical, and epic treatment of Latin America, life-like and imaginary at the same time. Apparently, the novel represents the local history of the fictional town Macondo, the founder of the town 'the Buendías', and the seven generations of it, even though the chronicle is the real representation of Colombia and the entire Latin America from its mythical founding to that of the real history, followed by ceaseless civil wars, dictatorship, short revival of democratic rule, massacre, rural violence, and so on. The non-linear time format of the novel is allegorical of the long course of colonization and the way it influenced communal and personal lives of people. The Spanish conquest is represented through the fifteenth century Spanish copper locket and the destroyed sailing ship. Next comes a series of contacts with native Indians and black slaves, and soon begin the civil wars typical for post-independence Latin America. The Americans soon arrive, and represent the modern Western imperialism of the twentieth century. Márquez

should be applauded for the historical representation of Macondo. According to Minta (1987), "his concerns are (...) with the origins of violence, and with the effects that it has on the society in which people have to live. He is thus, inevitably concerned with the whole history of his country and continent, and, both as a writer of novels and as a journalist, he has constantly laid stress on the importance of developing alternative sources of history as a challenge to the status of conventional ones" (p. 3).

Márquez's magical elements derive from the mythology, cultural beliefs, and folklore of his own culture. He has often stated that "his magical realism has come from his grandmother's method of story-telling, and her stories that included folktales and superstitions from their rural region of Colombia" (Williams, 1985, p. 6). In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, he includes the rural superstition that an incestuous relationship will give birth to a child with pig's tail, when Úrsula is afraid of the consequence of her incestuous relationship with her husband. Eventually, the superstition comes true when Aureliano, the third child, is born with a tail. By calling Márquez's sources of magical realism a 'village world-view', Salman Rushdie (1991), in his book *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, means that it is the outcome of a belief system developed in a rural environment, and is one that is little infected by modern scientific explanation (p. 301). Most importantly, Márquez uses this particular technique not only to repeat folkloric mythologies, but mainly to generate a deeper understanding of the destructive present day atmosphere of political corruption. As Rushdie (1991) again comments, "The damage of reality in South America is at least as much political as cultural. In García Márquez's experience, truth has been controlled to the point at which it has been ceased to be possible to find out what it is. The only truth is that you are being lied to all the time" (p. 301).

Many critics have explored the ways in which *One Hundred Years of Solitude* records Colombian and Latin American history, with various characters and events based on real life characters and events. Márquez approaches history with a tormented consciousness that official history is tragically inadequate to understand the bloody history of Colombia. According to Warnes (2009), the association between faith-based (magical realism as representation of a provincial world-view) and irreverent magical realism (magical realism as deconstruction of the processes of narrativization) can be seen in the light of one of the most important episodes of the novel: the massacre of the banana company workers (p. 91). Márquez's description of the banana workers and their horrible mass murder is drawn directly from the real events that took place between Colombian government forces and United Fruit Company strikers in

Cienaga, a Colombian town, in 1928. Being dissatisfied with their strange payment system, and insufficient medical and sanitary facilities, the workers in the novel appealed to the local authority but after getting no justice they moved to high court which, being bribed by the powerful banana company, turned a deaf ear to their petition. Having no other way they decided to launch a protest which ended in a tragic event of death of thousands of workers.

After the massacre was over a conspiracy of silence was created over the event, particularly about the number of dead bodies. This is one example of the insufficiency of history written in a hierarchical world in which the oppressors write the history of the oppressed through distortion and fabrication. The authority establishes a fabricated version of history and uses it as a powerful weapon to destroy the identity of the native people. Márquez fictionalizes the event where José Arcadio Segundo is considered dead although he succeeds to jump off the train and return to Macondo where he finds that people have no memory of the massacre; no one believes his story, including the families of the dead and of the missing people, and the whole event of massacre is turned into a myth of which people are not at all interested. The authorities have given their official accounts of the events which intend to hide cruelty, and the town people have accepted the lie of the government that no massacre took place.

“Every time that Aureliano mentioned the matter, not only the proprietress but some people older than she would repudiate the myth of the workers hemmed in at the station and the train with two hundred cars loaded with dead people, and they would even insist that, after all everything had been set forth in judicial documents and in primary school textbooks: that the banana company had never existed” (Márquez, 1967/1996, p. 396).

This is a very good example of the way official histories manipulate facts and reality, when the government made every possible attempt to block information from the public and pacify the foreign plantation owners. This official history excludes the sufferings of the poor, and creates a sense of social, historical and political dominance. Here, Márquez is playing with the concept of denial by taking it to an extreme level where it is turned into complete ignorance. He employs magical elements to show the manipulation of reality by the authority, and creates and emphasizes an alternative one. He also depends on the use of nostalgia or memory as a means of rewriting the history of those who are oppressed and helpless in a world where the creation and representation of history has been dominated by authoritative figures. Only José Arcadio is conscious of such a deliberate manipulation of events, and the sole believer Aureliano becomes the essential figure in showing the relationship between the

massacre, its subsequent suppression from historical memory, and the decline of Macondo. For Saldivar, this episode confirms the extent to which Márquez is preoccupied with “showing the limits of historical discourse” by “showing how historical, governmental and news media discourses are constructed” (cited in Warnes, 2009, p. 91). Márquez defamiliarizes the notion of official and continuous historiography; his most powerful instrument in executing this task is magical realism, and the most direct object of criticism is impermanence itself.

Márquez has come from an extremely traumatized country, Colombia, and has given accounts of long lasting civil war, such as the ‘War of A Thousand Days’ (1899-1902), and the oppression of government known as ‘La Violencia’ (1948-1958). In his writing, he shares a troubled historical past, featured by violence and exploitation, triggered by colonialism, cultural and political marginalization, and the results of industrialization and technological development. Although some critics argue that his novels have lost the political power because of the quest for memory and the captivating eccentricity of blending the magical with the real, most other find that magical realism is a strong form of indirect political resistance. To Márquez, it is a way to express the violence, chaos, trauma and confusion of Colombian, and, in a wider sense, Latin American politics. In his Nobel Lecture, *The Solitude of Latin America* in 1982, he illustrated “how the horrific past and present of much of Latin America lends itself to magical realism due to its ability to convey the unearthly tidings of Latin America” (cited in Bowers, 2004, p. 39).

Because of the technological and social changes accompanying modernization, Macondo turns into a cosmopolitan city, and although increased traffic through the town brings prosperity, it also brings some horror associated with capitalism. We find that the town is changed by the interference of the government; the clash between José Arcadio Buendía’s more democratic style of government, and the rules and regulations brought in by the magistrate mirrors a political agenda that is very typical of Latin America. His Macondo, which is most probably a utopian representation of a communist society, is eventually entangled in an uprising against a dictatorial government. We come across the imminent war between the Conservative government in Macondo led by Don Apolinar Mascote and the mutinous Liberals where Aureliano Buendía leads his town people and conquers the town, although later the Conservatives start to rule the land by bringing armed soldier. The attempt to regain the lost innocence of Macondo by defeating the new leader makes things worse; for instance, José Arcadio’s mutiny against the government of Don Apolinar Moscote ushers in a worse dictatorship. Through José Arcadio’s dictatorship, Márquez shows his dissatisfaction and

disgust with this kind of government, and criticizes the dictatorial regimes in 20th century Latin America. We should also keep in mind that it is the corrupt Conservatives who allow the foreign investors to invest in Macondo, and facilitate the rise to the power of these foreign imperialists who, by bringing capitalism and modern luxuries, exploit the natives and, ultimately, destroy their lives and the town as well.

For much of the novel, Macondo is afflicted by the civil wars between the Liberals and the Conservatives, which was typical of the nineteenth century Colombia and other Latin American countries, and the futility of that bloodshed is conveyed by the progressive disillusionment of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, the champion of the Liberal cause (Higgins, 2002, p. 42). The character of Colonel Buendía is portrayed partially based on the character of Liberal leader General Uribe Uribe who was highly admired by Márquez's grandfather. As it is pointed out by Minta (1987), both heroes in fact lost all their wars and yet maintained an aura of glory (p. 14). Through the character of Colonel Buendía, Márquez criticizes the ceaseless and needless warfare between the political groups that has marked the violent history of Colombia. He reveals that the differences between the two military groups are so slight and silly that even Aureliano Buendía fails to perceive them. The Liberals are as abusive of power as the Conservatives; as the Governor, José Arcadio Buendía abuses his power and behaves like a tyrant. The legitimization of the second José Arcadio's rights over the land he has usurped in exchange for the right to impose taxes, which is later authorized by the Conservatives as well, exemplifies and strengthens the traditional pattern of oligarchic control. "Márquez also reveals the haphazard and fervent way in which people choose their political allegiances without regard for the political debates, which leads to disastrous and violent consequences" (Bowers, 2004, p. 42).

Aureliano decides to become a Liberal, being convinced on the ground that they wanted to recognize illegitimate children, and, ultimately, devotes a large part of his life to fight for the Liberals. Committed to radical reform, he finds that he is not only fighting the Conservatives but is also at odds with his own party, and finally realizes that they are fighting not for social change but for power. In the later part of his life he realizes, "He had had to start thirty-two wars and had had to violate all of his pacts with death and wallow like a hog in the dung heap of glory in order to discover the privileges of simplicity almost forty years later" (Márquez, 1967/1996, p. 174). This is a wonderful criticism not only of politics but also of human psychology; how easily people get convinced to fight others, and at the end of the day find that they are actually fighting needlessly and

uselessly, although by the time they realize it, it is very late. These political violence and civil wars are essentially related to solitude, the central theme of the novel, because after realizing that he has wasted the most precious moment of his life by fighting wars, Aureliano withdraws himself to his workshop and plunges into solitude. It is also suspected that his attempted suicide reflects his despair after realizing that the war is useless, and that pride is the only thing that keeps both sides fighting. "And only two generations later the last surviving Buendía discovers that the colonel's heroic exploits during the civil wars have been erased from the collective memory of Macondo" (McMurray, 1977, p. 82).

Criticizing Capitalism and Oppression

One Hundred Years of Solitude represents history in two different ways: the way the characters come in touch with it, and the way it actually takes place. Since the characters are trapped between the present and the past, from their standpoints everything is repeating cyclically. A group of people led by José Arcadio Buendía established the town Macondo which is exposed to external world only after the arrival of magical gypsies led by Melquíades. The paradise soon faces the 'insomnia plague' carried to the town by two Indian servants who are the symbolic representation of all the Indian population in America trodden on and oppressed by the dominant Spaniards. In the most general terms, the insomnia plague represents the loss of both political and social recollections, of language, identity, and reality. "The arrival of insomnia plague in the House of Buendía stands symbolic for the deliberate attempts of the governmental authorities to erase the local culture and ways from the collective memory of the Colombian nation. Through the insomnia plague episode, the author registered his protest against the manipulated version of history" (Ahmad & Afsar, 2014, p.12). Magical realism, which is regarded as a dominant form of political resistance, plays a significant role in creating an example of protest in the shape of insomnia plague. The people of Macondo protect their past through writing, attempting to hold onto their consciousness of the surroundings and, therefore, their past, which is also a protest against the oppressive authority. It is only when Melquíades comes back magically from death, like a 'deus ex machina', with a magic potion, that the memory is restored.

"If the story of Macondo reflects the general pattern of Latin America's history, it also reflects the evolution of Western civilization and the progressive alienation of Western man" (Higgins, 2002, p. 47). The early years of Macondo are depicted as Golden Age and the town itself is an earthly paradise where men live happily, but the fall from the zenith of happiness to the nadir of

wretchedness comes with its incorporation into the modern age. Under the influence of gypsy leader Melquíades, José Arcadio is seduced by the fascination for science, and feverishly devotes himself to all kinds of experiments, but his passionate pursuit of knowledge distances him more and more from reality and brings him to a state of madness that leaves him completely alienated. Throughout the novel, scientific discoveries execute two functions: science mystifies the citizens of Macondo, and leads to their exploitation. During the search for a utopian world in the second cycle of Macondo's historical time, the town has an increased communication with the rest of the world, bringing civilization, movie-theatre, electricity, running water, and rail-road, which ushered the arrival of US Banana Company. Through the introduction of technology, economic exploitation and foreign incursion, Macondo is transformed into a wonderful modern town from a rustic village within a short period of time. Unfortunately, the arrival of new machines and farming technologies fail to make Macondo a better and more suitable place to live; instead of providing peace, prosperity, and order to the people, situation gets more chaotic. Transportation, in Colombia, has inevitable link to the desire for progress, and the events that would deal Macondo its fatal blow—the strike, the public unrest, the massacre, and its aftermath—take shape at the precise moment when the railway begins to control the events of the novel. Aureliano believes that the railroad was quite essential to modernize his business, and most importantly, to connect the town with the rest of the world, but he fails to understand that the modernity, introduced to Macondo by the arrival of the railway, brings such period of progress which only serves to hide the decline of the true spirit of the town - the Buendía family. The entrance of the banana company is responsible for the destruction of Macondo and its inhabitants which is hinted by the massacre of the banana company workers.

The bringing of modernization into Macondo actually refers to the different real life events of the early 20th century in Latin America, such as the total control of the foreign investors over local resources like sugarcane, coffee, petroleum and so on. "In fact, the story of later Macondo illustrates Latin America's neocolonial status as an economic dependency of international capital, particularly North American" (Higgins, 2002, p. 43). "No sooner had Macondo embarked on a phase of autonomous economic development than it fell under the North American capital and, incorporated into the world economy as a source of primary products, became subject to cycles of boom and recession determined by the fluctuations of the international market" (p. 43). The manipulation of Latin American economy by foreign capital is indicated in the novel by the suggestion

that the crisis was created intentionally by the company whose directors were powerful enough to control the weather. The banana company builds houses and colonies which are separated from the local people, and makes a distinct identity. It treats its workforce quite brutally, and Macondo turns into a colony, a company town controlled by company men who are dressed as policemen. The company becomes so powerful that it sends in troops to break the strike by force and to massacre the strikers; the dominant influence of foreign capital in Latin America shows its extension from the economic to the political sphere.

The materialist reading of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is probably the most convincing attempt to understand the novel's use of magical realism in the light of the political background of Márquez. "It fits well within the paradigm of demystificatory faith-based magical realism of the kind identified at the end of *The Kingdom of This World* by Alejo Carpentier where Ti Noel, the protagonist, abandons the attraction of mythical metamorphosis in favor of commitment to the political here and now of this world" (Warnes, 2009, p. 84). By showing Macondo's journey from innocence to corruption, Márquez, actually, refers to and criticizes the corruption, instability and violence in the history of Colombia, and, more broadly, of Latin America. He talks about the powerless people who become the victim of this so called modernization. In his own and alternative version of history, this downtrodden people are given a place and voice. Márquez could not show his dissatisfaction and disgust towards Latin American history, politics, and dictatorship in real life, and thus created his fictional stories which, through the use of myth and magic, gave him the opportunity and ability to criticize the established history and to create his own.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, "Márquez incorporates folklore rather than authorized beliefs from, for instance, organized religion" (Bowers, 2004, p. 43) which makes it possible for the voices of the politically, socially, and culturally marginalized people of Colombia to be expressed and heard. Swanson (2010) notes that Márquez's magical realism "(...) must be a political question of reinterpretation of reality, utilizing the oral style inherited from his grandmother's fantastic story-telling, García Márquez seems to want to reproduce a traditional, popular rural perspective-challenging the hegemony of the alien, dominant, imported culture and reinstating the value of the community's own cultural perspective" (p. 12).

It is quite clear that Márquez was completely against the devastating influence of the foreign culture, and wanted to restore the values of his own culture. He shows the way foreign investors use and oppress the natives; he also emphasizes how the investors bring with them different means of chaos and

oppression, such as cinema, luxury items, and brothels, which threaten the indigenous culture and the native identity. For him, the attraction of writing about a place like Macondo is to emphasize the pluralistic story-telling and the story of the downtrodden people rather than the authoritative historical narrative.

As already mentioned, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is an attempt to question the historical facts found in official versions of history, and to provide an alternative version. One of Márquez's sources of alternative history is the magical manuscripts of Melquíades, telling the story of Buendía family and of long forgotten people and events in the rural and isolated Macondo. If we look at the narrative structure of the novel, we find there are two approaches to the same story; the history of Buendía family is presented in a chronological order whereas the same events in Melquíades' manuscripts are recorded in a non-linear and fragmented way. According to Merivale (1995), the difference in the treatment of time in the two versions creates a tension in the text between the straight narrative of the family history and the cyclical narrative of the manuscripts (p. 330). This double narrative structure provides the narration with a self-reflexive element by which the reader understands that the narrator is aware of the way the narrative is formed, and according to Sangari (1987), this self-reflexive notion of the novel works along with magical realism to disturb the idea that history is fixed and unchangeable. As Sangari (1987) maintains, "[B]y revealing its constructedness, and making knowledge and truth 'provisional' such novels as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* revise the history to make it relevant to the present circumstances" (p. 163). By disrupting fixed categories of truth, reality and history, magical realism creates a space between official discourses where the unrepresentable can be presented, the inexpressible can be expressed, and the unspeakable can be spoken.

One has to emphasise again and again, Márquez subtly blends the supernatural with the real to depict marginal communities within capitalist economies, and the destruction these economies can bring about. The banana company is nothing but the sign of the invading capitalism and imperialism the Macondians become victim of, and the plight of these suffering people is portrayed through magic. Because of the arrival of new money and new people by the banana plantation, the perfectly ordered Macondo becomes noisy and disordered. Although, apparently, it promises progress and wealth, the banana company takes a heavy toll on the pre-industrial, pre-material, and idyllic village. Because of its arrival, Macondo gradually turns into a cosmopolitan town, with the cinema, phonographs, luxury items, and more and more prostitutes making

the situation chaotic, uncontrollable, and threatening for the local culture. The United Fruit Company has not only exploited its workers physically, psychologically, and financially, but also attacked the local culture making the natives live in a constant threat of losing their cultural identity. "When progress is achieved at the expense of human rights, when material wealth brings about exploitations and spiritual death, then the foundations of a people or a nation are shattered" (Vega-González, 2001, p. 4). We find Aureliano Segundo's realization of the harmful traces the banana company left behind for the Macondians when he says that Macondo had been a prosperous place and well on its own way until it has been disordered, corrupted, and suppressed by the banana company.

The patriarch José Arcadio Buendía is also criticized for his inclination towards material progress; in his determined but futile attempt to find gold, he decides to use the magnet the gypsies brought into the village. The only things he finds are the traces of Spanish imperialism, which are surely predictive of the new oppression his village will encounter with the arrival and operation of the banana company, and the bloody and cataclysmic occurrences it will bring about between the natives and the army. Unfortunately, José Arcadio is prevented to see further connotations of the Spanish armor he finds because he is blinded by the fierce desire for progress, the technological advancement, and the temptation of enhancement. His initial attitude of collective initiatives, such as the traps and cages to ensure that all the houses in the village would have birds; the placement of houses in such a manner that they all could get same amount of solar energy and river water, is brutally destroyed by his fascination for scientific inventions. As Márquez (1967/1996) says, "However, that spirit of social initiative disappeared in a short time, pulled away by the fever of magnets, the astronomical calculation, the dreams of transmutation, and the urge to discover the wonders of the world" (p. 10). The magnifying glass not only burns him, but also insults him in front of the authorities since his attempt to show its effect on the enemies fails. Because of the frustration arising from his failure in his scientific enterprise, José Arcadio loses interest in life, becomes insane, and spends his last years tied to a chestnut tree in the backyard of his house. Márquez seems to make the reader understand that although science is considered to be miraculous in nature, it has been used as an instrument to subdue people and nations, and it can destroy the very person who is fascinated with it. Thus it could be said that Márquez clearly stands against materialism, capitalism, industrialization and scientific progress, and links them with frustration, solitude, oppression, and the fear of losing identity. In dealing with these issues, however, he heavily depends on the blend of the magical with the real.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, Márquez has got his story-telling ability and his unastonished tone from his grandmother, the Caribbean and his childhood in a supernatural atmosphere, and was hugely influenced by Franz Kafka and the socio-political histories of Colombia. He collected his magical realist elements from the oral story, local beliefs, rural superstitions, as well as familial and provincial world-view. In this sense, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be labelled as faith-based strand of magical realism which requires the reader to stop disbelieving for re-believing, i.e. to sense reality in a more multi-dimensional way than is common in modern and disillusioned world. The novel's magical realism is the instrument to criticize the corrupt government and political violence. By using this particular instrument, and through the descriptions of the Banana Company massacre and its subsequent hide and seek over the number of dead workers, Márquez doubts and challenges the manipulated official version of history and provides an alternative one from the perspective of the oppressed and the marginalized, and the vivid experience and narrow escape of José Arcadio Segundo. Márquez approaches history with a tormented understanding that official historiography is inadequate to understand the bloody history of Colombia. In the novel, magical realism is thus used to express the voice of the politically, socially, and culturally marginalized or un-represented people of Colombia, and to rewrite their own history. Again, by taking a strong stand against capitalism, imperialism, the so called civilization, modern inventions such as movie-theatre, electricity, railroad, farming technology, and different other means of oppression which have threatened native culture and identity and oppressed native people, Márquez seems to have challenged the hegemony of the alien and dominant culture.

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In the postmodern mirror: intertextuality in *Angels and Insects* by Antonia Susan Byatt

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyse the novel *Angels and Insects* by Antonia Susan Byatt in terms of intertextual references. The author's assumptions are based on the categorisation by Ryszard Nycz, who distinguishes three major types of intertexts: text versus text, text versus literary genre and text versus mimesis. Byatt uses intertextuality mainly to comment on the role of nature in the world, as well as to enhance the importance of human relationship with nature. Moreover, the writer moves towards literary criticism, discussing poems by famous artists, such as Alfred Tennyson or John Milton. In this way, the novel by Byatt is also an example of metafiction. All the narration techniques used by the English writer make the novel a typically postmodern work of art.

Keywords

intertextuality, postmodernism, metafiction

Introduction

Antonia Susan Byatt is a contemporary postmodern writer whose works can be distinguished by specific kinds of narration. They contain numerous references to English literature presented through the use of intertextual technique. Byatt utilises the knowledge of different literary époques, among which Victorianism is most frequently present. Her work *Angels and Insects* contains two stories: "Morpho Eugenia" and "Conjugal Angel". They are both revisions of the nineteenth-century world of science and literature and exploit numerous literary references.

The notion of intertextuality itself is not easy to be defined. As Andrzej Hejmej claims (2012, p. 13), there exist diametrically different individual opinions and definitions of intertextual references, which is why it seems impossible to agree on one clear view. The reason for this is that scholars analyse intertextuality from various perspectives based on incommensurable assumptions. To present the

complexity of intertextual references in a concise way in Byatt's work, I will mainly concentrate on the theory put forward by Nycz, who distinguishes three types of intertextual references:

1. Text vs. text
2. Text vs. literary genre
3. Text vs. reality (1995, p. 65)²²

Intertextual references

The first of the stories "Morpho Eugenia" exploits intertextual references of the types 'text versus text', as well as 'text versus literary genre'. It describes the life of William Adamson, a scientist doing research on insects in Amazonian forests. He goes back to England and makes friends with the Alabaster family. Later on, he marries Eugenia Alabaster and faces various marital difficulties. His story is interwoven with a precise observation of the life of ants, compared to human existence. The narrator, by referring to different literary works, attempts to show the place of the human race in nature. A quotation from the Bible presenting the power of animals draws the reader's attention to the idea that people are part of nature rather than the ruling race:

There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:

The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meal in the summer;

The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;

The locusts have no king, yet go they forth by bands;

The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

Proverbs 30, 24-8
(Byatt, 1992, p. 15)

The world of nature should not be ignored by humans. This is the conclusion that is drawn by William Adamson during his observations. Animals, especially

²² The division by Nycz can be compared to one of the five types of transtextuality distinguished by Genette. Genette divides all the text relations into: intertextuality (quotation, plagiarism, allusion), paratextuality (title, preface etc.), metatextuality (commentary on another text), architextuality (defining the type of writing: essays, poem etc.) and hypertextuality (usually a transformation of another text) (2014, p. 7-13). According to Genette's categorisation, Byatt uses mainly intertextuality (quotation) and metatextuality (commenting other texts focused on literary criticism).

ants, possess qualities that evoke respect or even fear in people. The structure of ants' society together with its buildings, work organisation and family duties, becomes an object of admiration for William and his companions. Miss Mead, William's colleague, while observing an anthill of dangerous red ants, compares it to Milton's Pandemonium, quoting at the same time the vast passage from *Paradise Lost* (Byatt, 1992, p. 79). Milton's famous work also becomes the way to express William's feelings of melancholy and longing. The scholar compares the passage describing expulsion from Paradise to his journey back home from the Amazonian forests (ibid, p. 31). William frequently misses his stay in Amazonia and the quiet life in natural surroundings. On the other hand, he admits to himself that during hot weather in the tropical Amazonian places he used to miss the English spring and recall the poem by Robert Browning "Home Thoughts from Abroad":

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England – now! (ibid, p. 79)

The 'text versus text' relations underline nature as the crucial element of human life. This is mainly an appreciation of the power of nature together with admiration and respect. The same subject appears in 'the text versus literary genre' intertextual relations. Byatt exploits legends, fairy tales and scientific books in order to enhance the plot of her two stories. Quoting other literary works is a way of using a prototype of a work belonging to the particular literary genre (Markiewicz, 1989, p. 208).

One of the legends is a revision of the story of Cupid and Psyche, told by Miss Mead to a group of young girls. In the story ants help Psyche to sort the amounts of different seeds. The task was imposed on Psyche by Venus, the Goddess of Beauty. According to William and Matty Crompton, the story's aim is to present these useful insects as helpful, hard-working and clever animals and compare them to humans (1992, p. 43-44). A similar question is raised in the tale by Matty Compton read by William one day in bed. The story entitled "Things Are Not What They Seem", presents a man named Seth who travelled around the world

and took care of different animals. While in danger, he is directed by an ant to leave some winding tunnels. The ant is willing to help the man, saying: '(...) I can do you a good turn, for you saved my life (...) 'I can get in and out of here. If I can, you can. Please follow me' (Byatt, 1992, 125-126).

The relationship between the ant and the man is evidence of the mutual coexistence of the human world and that of animals. It shows the need for a balanced interrelationship. Cherishing nature is indispensable, since animals and humans have numerous things in common. This subject is described in another work included by the narrator in the main story. This is William Adamson's book on insects, whose passages are frequently quoted in "Morpho Eugenia". The information about the book is given in a precise way; it is not limited to the text itself but also provides the reader with details of paratextual nature:²³

The book was put together in a provisional way during the Winter of 1862.
Its final title was to be

THE SWARMING CITY
A Natural History of a Woodland Society,
its polity, its economy, its arms and defences,
its origin, expansion and decline.

(ibid, p. 108)

In his book, William Adamson emphasises the ants' instinct and compares it to human intelligence: "I have seen a crew of a dozen ants manoeuvre a stem as tall, to them, as a tree to us, with about as many plausible false starts as a similar crew of schoolboys might make, before finding which end to insert at which angle" (ibid, p. 110).

The subtitles themselves are organized in such a way that they seem to refer to the structure of the human world; the words like society, economy and arms, prove the close link between animal and human patterns of life. William's book often provokes the reader to become aware of nature's role in human life. The author, describing insects' behaviour, approaches philosophical way of thinking about human existence. While observing a wedding dance of the Queens, William draws the conclusion that it is a great example of Charles Darwin's theory; males struggle to possess the Queens. This is "the remorseless random purposefulness of Dame Nature, of Natural Selection" (Byatt, 1992, p. 102). As a representative of

²³ The appearance of the title page, as well as further pages containing the titles of particular chapters, exactly imitates real books and it has a visual effect. This kind of quotation is a typical postmodern technique.

an academic world, William sees great power in nature claiming that God was created by people themselves and that it is nature that rules lives.

Another part of *Angels and Insects* entitled "The Conjugal Angel", uses mainly metafictional references. The whole part presents Byatt's vision of the figures of Arthur H. Hallam and Alfred Tennyson. The story presents Emily Jesse and a group of her friends who meet during séances to talk to the ghosts of the dead. During the whole of the story Emily expresses her longing for her dead fiancé Arthur H. Hallam and analyses poems by her brother Alfred Tennyson. The first group of references is related to an imitation of the nineteenth-century world. It can be categorized as the 'text versus reality' relations. Mrs. Papagay who organises the séances, perceives the contacts with ghosts as quite natural; "The Church Fathers too had seen them and some had seen unquiet spirits. Hamlet's father had walked (...) there had always been, Mrs. Papagay was quite sure, odd little local apparitions" (ibid, p. 170). Understanding the idea of séances in this way, Mrs. Papagay makes them a popular free time activity among her friends. The narrator of the story, using Mrs. Papagay's thoughts, presents to the reader the figures of The Conjugal Angel. He mentions not only Emily Jesse, but also her father, fiancé and brother. Presenting the two young men to the reader, the narrator says: "Alfred Tennyson had written In Memoriam which had made Arthur Hallam, A. H. H., an object of national mourning nearly twenty years after his death, and had later caused the nation somehow to confound his young promise with the much mourned Prince Albert, let alone the legendary King Arthur" (ibid, p. 175).

There is no doubt that poetry immortalizes people and is a powerful tool in creating national culture and identity. The reader also becomes familiar with the figure of Arthur H. Hallam from his letters, which constitute another intertextual reference imitating reality. Byatt includes in her work his correspondence with Emily, in which he appears to be a caring and loving man (ibid, p. 230-231). The letters become one of the ways of narration and allow the reader to become familiar with the story on the basis of a primary source. Emily herself lives constantly recalling the moments spent with Arthur. She remembers him compare her to the Fair Persian from Alfred Tennyson's work *Recollections of the Arabian Nights* (ibid, p. 224). In another letter, Hallam discusses with his fiancée his own work *Theodicaea*: "I do not think women ought to trouble themselves much with theology: we who are more liable to the subtle objections of the Understanding, have more need to handle the weapons that lay them prostrate" (Byatt, 1992, p. 217).

Hallam's point of view reflects the Victorian idea of female's place in society: she should not be interested in literature and philosophy, since she is expected to fulfil other domestic duties. The above quotation reflects a typical nineteenth-century view on gender roles. This shows another intertextual dependence in "The Conjugal Angel", which is 'text versus text'. The story contains works by both Hallam and Tennyson.

"In Memoriam" is the most frequently quoted literary work in the book by Byatt. The protagonists perceive the poem as "the greatest poem of their time" (ibid, p. 233). The reader experiences its unusual analysis; it is Emily who analyses certain passages of "In Memoriam". She recognized herself in the sixth lyric, in which Arthur is expected to return to a young girl, but never manages to do so (ibid, p. 233). The analysis is carried out from the girl's point of view; she is the central character in the poem. Emily also notices that Alfred Tennyson concentrated some parts of his work on his grief after losing a friend and there is just a brief mention of her sadness: "Alfred had taken Arthur and bound him to himself, blood to blood and bone to bone, leaving no room for her. It was true that late in the poem, reference was made to her love and her loss, but that too, was painful, most painful. Alfred had allowed his fantasy to imagine Arthur's future, Arthur's children, Alfred's nephews and nieces, mixing their blood" (ibid, p. 234).

It seems that Emily suffers from an unfulfilled promise to start a family with Arthur. She also feels embarrassed because of her marriage with Mr. Jesse and having two sons with him. She cannot get rid of the feeling that her and Arthur's unborn children mentioned in the poem are more cherished by the nation than her real ones. She feels guilty for getting married after Arthur's death and thinks that people blame her for that (ibid, p. 235). This is another comment on the female roles in the Victorian world. Emily subconsciously knows that she did not fulfil the duty that society expected from her. She also notices that in his poem Alfred Tennyson describes his sister Cecilia's wedding, while her wedding with Mr. Jesse was completely omitted as inconvenient for public opinion (ibid, p. 235-236).

Byatt also quotes those passages of "In Memoriam" that refer to the question of the afterlife. Emily liked the particular passage describing the dangers of rising from the dead. Their coming could interrupt the present life: wives have new husbands, lands have new owners. Although Emily missed Arthur very much, she had never succeeded in talking to him during the séances (ibid, p. 176-177). Both Emily and Alfred believed in the afterlife and hoped that the human soul lives on after death: "If there were no afterlife, he shouted at his friends, if it were proved

to him that was so, he would jump into the Seine or the Thames, he would put his head in the oven, he would take poison or fire a pistol at his own temple" (Byatt, 1992, p. 184).

The analysis of the poem by Emily, as well as organisation of the séances by Mrs. Papagay, are attempts at understanding the idea of life and death. On the one hand, the protagonists try to grasp the contact with dead members of their families, but on the other hand, they are aware of the fact that it is impossible. Their attempt to link the world of the living with the dead seems to be destroyed by the metaphorical appearance of a raven during one of the séances. The participants agree that the bird resembles the one from the poem by Edgar Allan Poe "The Raven". The famous expression *nevermore* shows for the protagonists their obsessive grief after losing a beloved person and lack of faith that he or she will ever rise from the dead (ibid, p. 209).

Conclusion

Byatt's entire work exploits various types of narrative techniques and intertextual references, diverging in this way from the typical, chronological narration popular in Victorian times. They are used to present different worlds: of people, animals and the dead, and to show the relationships between them. Using letters, poems and stories in different combinations can also be perceived as literary criticism towards nineteenth-century writing. Byatt uses other texts which enhance the author's primary text. According to Michał Głowiński, these different quotations from other works do not make up an example of a polyphonic work, but, on the contrary, prove the text to be monodic (2000, p. 23). The reader is distanced from the basic level of the story only to go back to it after some time (Bartoszyński, 1991, p. 12). Byatt's work exploits history as well; the reader becomes more familiar with the figures of famous English artists and thinkers. The historic nature of the work as well as examples of intertextuality are some of the elements that indicate its metafictional character (Hutcheon, 1997, p. 389).

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Plurilingualism – an educational challenge: the case of Slovakia

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Abstract

First, the author analyses current challenges of European institutions to implement plurilingual approaches to languages in national language policy. According to EU policies, the Slovak school system should be actively open to linguistic and cultural plurality. Plurilingual methodology uses educational approaches focused on awareness of the need both to acquire more languages and to use efficient means of acquisition. To describe the specific case of the Slovak Republic, the author first looks at the multilingual society living in the territory of current Slovakia in the 18th century, focusing on the response of Matej Bel – a Slovak polymath, scientist, teacher and language methodologist – to the challenge of his plurilingualism. In the next part, the study presents the current Slovak plurilingual policy. Data related to this policy are taken from state educational documents. Last part presents data from interviews with teachers and teacher trainees, specifically about their plurilingual needs and awareness.

Keywords

language policy, Slovakia, teacher, plurilingual approach, plurilingualism

“Linguistic and cultural diversity is one of the European Union's major assets. Language learning facilitates communication between peoples and countries, as well as encouraging cross-border mobility and the integration of migrants.”

Androulla Vassiliou

European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

IP/12/990, 2012

Introduction

Current educational reform efforts in the European context and the educational policy of European institutions emphasize the importance of finding better ways to respond to multilingualism and to promote plurilingualism in Europe. As the study will show, this applies to all European countries, including the Slovak Republic. Before going deeper into a description of this challenge, and the response of Slovak educational language policy to it, two main concepts must be defined.

Multilingualism denotes “the presence of several languages in a given geographical area, regardless of those who speak them (some people use only one).” (Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education, 2010, p. 16). Generally, European language policies deal with multilingualism as “a continuum of attitudes and approaches: on the one hand policy for the reduction of diversity, and on the other the promotion and maintenance of diversity.” (Guide..., 2007, p. 7). Promoting multilingualism, the European Commission has been seeking to achieve the following objectives: a) to promote intercultural dialogue and inclusive society; b) to help the public build a sense of EU citizenship; c) to develop more opportunities for young people to study and work abroad; and d) to create new markets for EU companies that can compete at the global level (European Commission, IP/12/990, 2012).

Plurilingualism implies the individual speaker’s command of more languages and the language variety (mother language, second and other languages). To facilitate the development of plurilingual competence of students means to aim at the ability to use a plural repertoire of linguistic resources to meet communication needs or to interact with people from other backgrounds and contexts, and enrich that repertoire while doing so. Plurilingual competence “refers to the repertoire of resources which individual learners acquire in all the languages they know or have learned, and which also relate to the cultures associated with those languages (languages of schooling, regional/minority and migration languages, modern foreign or classical languages” (Guide..., 2010).

Plurilingualism in European language policy

In its 1995 *White Paper* (p. 47), the European Commission stated an objective for member state school systems to support the proficiency of all Europeans in at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue. In 2012, the European Commission outlined a functional way to develop students’ communication skills in at least two foreign languages by the age of 15. It set a new benchmark for the year 2020 when at least 50% of 15 year-olds are to have a good knowledge of the first foreign language (currently 42%) and at least 75% (from the current 61%) should learn the second foreign language (Rethinking Education - Country Analysis, 2012).

The development of plurilingual and intercultural awareness as a life-long process has also been one of the overarching educational aims of the Council of Europe, starting with the primary education level. Its aim has been to deepen mutual understanding of European citizens and to raise respect for diversity of

other cultures. The Council of Europe has developed several explanatory and methodological documents (so called *Guides* – 2003, 2007, 2010) in order to show a) how to develop language policies on the basis of a systematic approach to develop plurilingual competence; and b) how to increase the effect of other already-published documents (e.g. Common European Framework of Reference for languages and the development of language policies – CERR, 2001), developed by the Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe.

According to *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), published in 2001, plurilingualism has to be viewed as the ability to use more languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has varying degrees of proficiency in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as “the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competencies, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw” (p. 168). In other words, plurilingual competence is “a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact” (p. 4). Applied plurilingualism means that during interaction the communicators switch from one language to another so that they can express themselves in one language and understand the other. The aim is not to achieve “mastery in a certain number of isolated languages but to use a combination of various skills in various languages”. (p. 1-2). Emphasizing understanding before speaking, CEFR promotes plurilingualism as well as intercultural understanding. The desired end result of language policies applying this CEFR approach is a communicating person who “has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures” (p. 168).

Plurilingual competence involves the development of linguistic and communication awareness. The “experience with plurilingualism and pluriculturalism has potential to accelerate subsequent learning in the linguistic and cultural areas” (CEFR, parts 6.1.3.3-4). This may be achieved even if proficiency in some learned languages is ‘partial’.

Another tool promoting plurilingualism elaborated by the Council of Europe is *The European Language Portfolio*. After some experimental years, it launched officially throughout Europe in 2001. The ELP supports the diversity and synergy of learning languages in a transparent way, e.g., by offering multilingual dossiers and textual aids. Besides others, their educational functions are to “enhance a) the motivation of learners to learn additional languages”; and b) “their plurilingual and intercultural experience” (ELP Guide for Developers). If dealt

with correctly, the ELF can become a transparent and comprehensive evidence of one's plurilingual language proficiency development.

One of the leading principles upon which the Council of Europe (Guide..., 2003, p. 41) based its plurilingual policy is the idea that plurilingualism is "an unexceptional ability shared by all speakers which may either stay latent or develop just with respect to varieties very close to the first language" and that is "relevant for all European states whatever degree of multilingualism they embody" (Guide..., 2007, p. 38). That means that from the educational point of view all European states have to face the current challenge to become more active in supporting the plurilingual and intercultural competence of all students in their state school system.

The Guide 2007 (under the full title Guide for Development of Language Education Policies in Europe) introduces a complex process showing how to reflect and support linguistic variety in plurilingual education. It considers plurilingualism to be the fundamental principle of language policy in Europe. Very practically, it means that besides teaching the English language – often described as European *lingua franca* - the Council of Europe encourages teaching the whole variety of languages, primarily minority languages.

Of course, plurilingual education is interconnected with the intercultural competence of learners, as evidenced in the learners' knowledge about various cultures and one's own culture, attitudes (tolerance, openness, respect) and actual skills and actions (ability to use the intercultural contacts in self-orientation in the pluralistic world) (Zelenková, 2010, p. 26).

Pluralistic approaches to language education

As already indicated in part by the language policy of the Council of Europe, language teaching should build up the plurilingual competence by comparing the existing knowledge of languages, not developing each language separately – without connection to what the learners already acquired either from their mother tongue or from other languages they have been learning. The Council of Europe envisages a positive role of the influence of language transfer; of the previous knowledge of one's mother tongue and his/her first foreign language(s); and, to some extent, of learner's ability to construct the knowledge of other foreign languages based on the pre-requisites.

Plurilingual education is not to be thought of as a new methodology for language teaching. Rather it should be envisioned as a change in how language education is understood. Its main characteristic is that it should integrate the learners' experience not only with learning foreign languages but "also the

languages in proximity, the languages of the learners' repertoires, the languages of schooling and of all subjects. It implies global language education, across all languages of the school and in all disciplinary domains, which provides a basis for an identity open to linguistic and cultural plurality and diversity, insofar as languages are the expression of different cultures and of differences within the same culture. All disciplines contribute to this language education through the contents which they carry and the ways in which they are taught." (Cavalli et al., 2009, ff. 8).

Thus, **pluralistic approaches to language education** apply the kinds of teaching methods and techniques that stir up the learners' awareness of the need to learn more languages and that show how to do it. The range of methodologies for plurilingual language teaching must include various techniques of higher thinking skills, such as guessing, comparing, matching, evaluating, etc., associated with comprehension of related languages and with the intercultural approach, which is an inseparable ingredient of the plurilingual educational approach to languages.

According to *Project Graz 2000-2003 "Learning more than one language efficiently: Tertiary language teaching and learning in Europe"*, which was carried out by the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, one of the fundamentals of plurilingual didactics is the fact of the learner's existing language knowledge and cognitive and emotional learning experience (his/her mother tongue and the subsequently learned languages – via 'subconscious' process of their 'acquisition' as well as their 'conscious learning'). On this account, the development of plurilingual competence happens as a result of systematic, synergistic effort to utilize the learner's knowledge of the qualitative differences between learning the first, the second, the third and the following languages; or their similarities and differences.

A historical example of plurilingual education in the multilingual Slovak region

To sum up what has been said so far, plurilingualism is a phenomenon that has received special attention from various European institutions and which demands responsible reflection and response in the educational systems of individual European states. The next parts of this study focus on one country: Slovakia. The way that state educational policy responds to the challenge of plurilingualism depends on a whole set of factors, especially on the history of the nation, its legislation, educational management, teaching methodology, etc. We

begin the description of the Slovak case with a look at the 18th century because that period saw remarkable documentation of our situation.

The Central-European region, including Slovakia, has not only had a long history of multilingualism but there has been evidence of individual schools and teachers striving to develop plurilingual competence of their students with the aim of preparing them for future life in this region.

Looking back into the Kingdom of Hungary in the 18th century, it is possible to find an excellent example of this in the work of Matej Bel (Matthias Bel, 1684 – 1749), known as *Magnum decus Hungariae - the Great Ornament of the Kingdom of Hungary* (the following data – see e.g. *Pedagóg Matej Bel*, 1985; Hanesová, 2014). He considered himself as *lingua Slavus, natione Hungarus, eruditione Germanus* (by language a Slav, by nation a Hungarian, by erudition a German). He lived in a multilingual region and he was also a passionate plurilingual personality. Not only did he use classic languages (Latin, Greek and Hebrew) and several national languages (German, Hungarian and a kind of Slovak version of the Czech language) in his private and teacher-preacher-scientist professional life, but he also strove eagerly to promote plurilingual principles in his own teaching of languages.

Bel' approach to plurilingualism in the context of the 18th century's classical and modern philology was uniquely innovative. Due to the historical background and multi-ethnic character of the region, Latin was the main official communication language applied in all areas of cultural and political life. It was also the main language of school instruction, so the aim of studying it was its practical knowledge. According to Jóna's description (1984), Bel's times echoed ideas and methods of humanism and of the Renaissance that migrated from the Middle Ages and sometimes even from ancient times. Hebrew was considered to be the mother of languages. Writing and spelling usually prevailed over the correct pronunciation and sounds. Analysis of texts according to parts of speech (*partes orationis*), as advocated by Aristotle and Donatus, survived until 'modern' times of Matej Bel.

Scholars of Bel's era were interested in the problem of language diversity from various viewpoints, but Bel was an exceptional linguist, teacher, and headmaster (consequently of two Slovak grammar schools). He was persuaded and troubled with the idea that "the diversity of languages alienates man from man" (Jóna, 1984, p. 131). In his famous *Introduction into Doležal's Grammar* (*Grammatica Slavico-Bohemica*, 1746), Bel verbalized this idea in an almost poetic way. He was a major proponent of the idea that the ability to communicate in the languages of one's neighbors could contribute to better mutual

understanding and relationships between ethnic groups and countries. In this point Bel identified himself with Comenius who also argued in favor of learning several national languages, especially those of neighbors. He proposed that such mutual interaction would give all partners a chance to communicate with their neighbor in their mother tongue. In this *Introduction* Bel expressed his very high opinion of the profession of language teachers as they were trying to clarify languages and facilitate language learning. He appreciated that they did so in order to help the tribes and peoples, previously divided by linguistic differences, to reassemble and return to mutual, human natural social relationships. He even quotes St. Augustine, to the effect that not being able to respond to the variety of languages could become a hindrance to building community relationships among people, with the result that people “spend time with their dog rather than with another human speaking other language ... It happens that people speaking different languages almost do not treat the others as humans ... A human can comprehend the ideas of another human only if he comprehends his language ... Otherwise there cannot be any fellowship among neighboring nations, and it may end in mutual disagreements, or even expressions of hostility.” So Bel compares language teachers - who teach languages with the aim to ease contacts with neighboring nations - to negotiators sent to the warring opponents. (Slovak translation of *Introduction*, 1984, p. 3). Bel sincerely honored and loved to teach languages of the neighbors. He explicitly praised, e.g., both Hungarian and ‘Slovakized’ Czech language.

Matej Bel faced the challenge of multilingualism and the need to develop plurilingual and pluricultural competencies by acting in two directions. First, he paid careful attention to the new methodological approaches to teaching classical languages. He especially focused on a reform of teaching Latin with the aim of facilitating its study and of enhancing functional communicative competence in the Latin of his students. Bel’s rejection of the static learning of grammar rules by detailed explanation and memorization reminds one of the approach to languages by Comenius, who inspired him initially. Later on, Bel developed his own language methodology.

For Bel, Latin language was only a tool – not the aim – to become educated. He strongly emphasized the need to reduce the huge number of grammar rules to a minimum and to raise students’ interest in the cultural context of languages; he included the reading of authentic Roman and Greek literal texts (applying the *ad fontes* principle) of various (age-appropriate) levels. Bel can be considered a kind of a predecessor of content-based language instruction as he tried to integrate Latin language with interesting meaningful content by implementing historical,

geographic and legislative texts and their lexis. The students had, e.g., to learn to describe a trip to Slovak unique caves with verbal expressions such as “enter the cave, climb it, measure it” in Latin. Bel realized that for his students to learn Latin grammar from a detailed German grammar textbook might have been demanding, boring and frustrating. That is why he decided to write a very simple Latin grammar book usable for all nationalities,

Concurrently, Bel gave effort to developing communicative competence in all national neighboring languages needed by the then-living inhabitants of Hungarian/Slovak territory (German, Hungarian, Slovak). Though Bel was influenced by Comenius’ methodological ideas, especially his advocacy of taking a complex, holistic approach using visual aids, interesting content, age-appropriateness, etc., he rejected Comenius’ grammar textbooks as linguistically impure, and he composed his own textbooks. To face multilingualism in Hungary (with German, Slovak, Hungarian and Croatian native speaking students together in his classroom), he even wrote a grammar of German in Latin (1718) to enable people separated by different native languages to learn German. Later on he wrote more grammar books for other languages. In the words of Bel’s contemporary, Hruškovic, by producing his own grammar textbooks (for the Latin, German and Hungarian languages) Bel wanted to reform all schools in the region (1942, p. 77).

Besides the grammar textbooks, Bel compiled a multilingual dictionary based on the Latin-German dictionary written by Cellarius; he did so by adding the Czech and Hungarian equivalents. What Bel actually did was to simplify Cellarius’s Latin-German dictionary and to add not only more “modern” Latin key words, but also other language versions of all concepts, with the aim of supporting the principle of four-language competence that Hungary needed in its civil administration, and its cultural and educational institutions. Thus Bel’s Latin-German-Hungarian-Czech School Dictionary (*Liber memorialis*) was published in r.1719. It was intended for students in the senior grades of grammar schools; its second (shortened) version (*Primitiva Latina*) was designed for pupils in the lower grades.

Bel’s publications are clearly an attempt to balance language theory (etymology, syntax) with the methodology of teaching to communicate in the learned languages through short dialogues. Besides religious topics, his textbooks and dictionaries included predominantly practical topics of everyday life (e.g. getting up, getting dressed, taking care of the kitchen, an invitation for coffee, going to church, lunch, dinner, walks, leisure activities. These are examples not only of Bel’s pedagogical realism, but also of his response to the

multilingual context he lived in and the challenge he faced to encourage the plurilingual competence of his students. There are a few historical records from eye witnesses of his examinations of students, indicating that Bel's language teaching methods achieved higher results with at least some students (Sopko, 1985, s. 188). In fact, as the archives confirm, Bel's publications were used widely in the Slovak region and not only during his life, but through almost the whole next century. Several scholars and translators have studied these publications up to the present time.

Later, Slovakia continued to be a typical case of a country where many people had partial knowledge of more languages, even if they were not aware of it. Before the separation of Slovakia from the Czech Republic in 1993, Slovaks and Czechs living in Czechoslovakia comprehended both official languages – Czech and Slovak as they had lots of opportunity to acquire them naturally, e.g. via TV and radio broadcasting. In some places there was even trilingualism (e.g. with Hungarian language in the South of Slovakia or with German language in the same area), or quadrilingualism (e.g. according to the author's personal experience with older Slovak native people speaking/comprehending Czech, Hungarian and German living in Bratislava before 1989).

Plurilingual education and plurilingual awareness in Slovakia

According to current legislation, compulsory foreign language education in Slovakia starts in the third year of primary level at the age of 8. This system was approved by the Slovak government (2007) and introduced to schools in September 2008. The new language teaching policy was designed in accordance with the ideas of the *Millenium* project and with the *National Program of Education in the Slovak Republic* (2001) after a long tradition of compulsory foreign language learning from fifth class (at the age of 10). As §No. 4/ of the Educational Act No. 245/2008 stated, the aim was to allow the students to acquire proficiency in two languages - primarily in the English language and also in one other foreign language. In practice almost all kindergartens and many primary schools offer foreign language teaching even before reaching the age of 8. In years 2008 – 2014 the teaching of an obligatory second foreign language was introduced from sixth class (11-year-old learners) at lower secondary schools. Since 2014 the second foreign language has the status of an elective subject.

Since 2010/11 the compulsory first foreign language has been English language, taught at least three hours a week. At lower secondary school, English language teaching continues with three weekly hours, aiming at A2 level. The aim

is that the learners at the age of 10/11 reach A1 level and the graduates of lower secondary school reach A2 in English, according to the CEFR. The second foreign language is only an optional subject at ISCED 2, aiming at A1. At upper secondary school two languages had to be taught, the first language aimed at B2/B1, four lessons a week. The objective for the second foreign language (taught two lessons per week) was B1/A2.

Let us have a closer look at the aims of teaching foreign languages, as indicated in the State Educational Programs of the primary (ISCED1) and lower secondary (ISCED 2) education levels by the Ministry of education:

- to raise the interest in foreign languages,
- to create the basis for further language learning,
- to develop communication competences of students in the native and foreign languages;
- to promote holistic development of students: cognitive (distinguishing and remembering, systematic training of receptive and productive skills), social, emotional, personal,
- to develop intercultural competence,
- to develop all communication skills: listening with comprehension, speaking; gradually reading with comprehension and writing.

According to the Ministry of Education, Research and Sport in the Slovak Republic and its National Institute for Education, foreign languages learning should contribute to understanding and discovering the facts that go beyond the range of students' experience mediated by the state language. Having ensured a good quality of education, they should provide the basis for students' communication within the European Union, exploring the richness of various cultural traditions, deepening mutual knowledge and international understanding and tolerance, and creating conditions for school collaboration on international projects. The overall aim is that the graduates of Slovak schools will be able "to contribute to the development of pluralism and cultural openness, and to growing awareness of language belonging to the same ethnic, linguistic affinity and a sense of belonging to other ethnic groups, by operating the standard literary language" (Štátny pedagogický ústav, 2011a).

This implies that a standard situation of the plurilinguistic repertoire of a secondary school graduate living in Slovakia and coming from the Slovak majority is as follows: He/she is able to communicate in spoken and written form of Slovak as the state language (in schools and public institutions). His/her mother tongue may be a regional dialect of Slovak. Besides this, he/she masters at least one or two foreign languages learned at school (English and one other

language) both in a spoken and written form at different levels of ability. In cases where the person belongs to an ethnic minority in Slovakia (Roma, Hungarian, etc.) or is an immigrant to Slovakia, he/she has also the ability to speak in yet another language as a mother language. Children from ethnic minorities in Slovakia can study in schools using both their mother language and Slovak language. Of course there are cases with more acquired native languages (both parents use different languages) or learned foreign languages (via language courses or as self-learners etc.). Besides these considerations, the best conditions for acquiring an understanding of a neighbor's national language via TV and other media are naturally set in case of the Czech language which is understood to some extent by majority of population.

Comparison of the current language choice by students in compulsory education in the Slovak Republic with the European documents focusing on plurilingualism results in several generalizations about the Slovak language teaching policy:

- The decision to reduce the diversity of foreign language teaching to teaching English as the compulsory first foreign language for all students does not fully support the idea of plurilingualism. On one hand, of course, there were good reasons behind it and there are advantages to this approach – that is that all students have a democratic right to learn the *lingua franca* that will enable them to communicate with people from many nations, have wider access to study abroad, or to apply in the European labor market. But on the other hand, as a consequence, students are often not able to comprehend peers from neighboring states if they use their native languages (which was such a standard condition of an educated person in the times of Comenius or Bel).
- There is another problem connected with the dominance of English language teaching – and that is the persistent lack of sufficiently qualified English teachers (especially at the primary school level). A big group of new English teachers are graduates of other languages and they have learnt English only recently in re-qualifying courses. Their level of pronunciation and speaking competence is often not satisfactory.
- Having decided to eliminate compulsory teaching of the second foreign language during the lower secondary level, the chance for students to have exposure to other languages has been dramatically reduced in two ways: variety of languages, and depth of exposure.
- Generally, foreign languages in Slovakia are taught separately, with no ministerial requirement of making any connections between them. It means

that there is almost none emphasis on implementing pluralistic approaches as described earlier in, e.g. the Graz Project.

Besides describing the current language education policy in Slovakia yet another, different perspective of plurilingual competence can be applied. It is associated with the plurilingual awareness of the need for more languages in public and personal life. For the purpose of describing some aspects of this awareness, an investigation of plurilingual awareness of students in pre-primary and primary teacher education (TE) Bachelor non-linguistic study programs was carried out. The first phase of this survey was accomplished in 2002 in a sample of 547 students. Recently (spring 2015) a similar survey with the same target group of students though in a smaller sample of 111 students was repeated.

Because the samples were quite small, it is not possible to generalize their results to the whole population. But on the other hand, the acquired data can be useful in evaluating the current plurilingual awareness of students from faculties of education. The respondents had to answer two open-ended questions: What kind of language have you needed so far (in the past and at present), and what for? Which foreign language do you anticipate needing to use in the future?

In order to show the scope of plurilingual awareness of the respondents, the data are presented in the following order:

- some data from the survey of teacher education students in 2002 – about their past, present and future use of individual foreign languages,
- some data from the survey of teacher education students in 2015 – about their past, present and future use of foreign languages,
- comparison of both surveys.

Survey in 2002

Language	Work/study abroad	Better job position	Tourism abroad	Communication with foreigners in Slovakia	Contacts with colleagues	International conferences
English	8.7	7.1	2.0	37.8	11.3	5.2
German	4.2	3.8	12.0	2.0	11.0	0.9
Russian	1.0	0.9	2.0	5.8	1.6	0.2
French	0.4	0.5	3.1	1.5	0.5	0
Spanish	0.9	0.8	4.3	4.0	1.5	0.5

Table 1: Past opportunities for using foreign languages (%) – 2002

Language	Work/study abroad	Better job position	Tourism abroad	Communication with foreigners in Slovakia	Contacts with colleagues	International conferences
English	5.7	5.7	17.5	33.8	10.0	4.2
German	2.7	3.1	11.0	14.0	2.7	0.6
Russian	0.6	0.6	1.5	5.1	0.6	0.4
French	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2	0	0
Spanish	0	0	0.2	0	0	0

Table 2: Present opportunities for using foreign languages (%) - 2002

Language	Work/study abroad /Au pair	Better job position	Tourism abroad	Communication with foreigners in Slovakia	Contacts with colleagues	International conferences	Cultural purposes films, books	Information for my profession
English	30.7	33.0	32.7	42.3	21.5	15.9	43.4	7.0
German	8.0	12.0	11.9	16.8	4.7	2.9	10.0	2.9
Russian	1.0	1.7	2.0	2.9	0.9	1.5	2.2	1.0
French	1.0	1.0	1.8	0.9	0.9	0.2	1.3	0.07
Spanish	0.7	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	0
Italian	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.18	0.07

Table 3: The potential use of foreign languages in the future (%) – 2002

Comparing **the use of English in 2002** showed some discrepancies between their **past and present** use of it. When asked why it was like that the respondents reasoned that by the “present” they meant the period of the current school year, not including last holidays. The respondents anticipated much higher use of English in all areas in the future except of using English for communication with foreigners in Slovakia which was rather strange.

Comparing the use of **German in 2002** also produced some surprising results. The respondents expect a decreasing level of professional contacts in English and also a very slight raise of opportunities to use German during tourism abroad.

Data from comparing the use of **Russian in 2002** reflected a certain level of skepticism among respondents regarding their use of Russian in professional contacts and contacts with Russian-speaking foreigners in Slovakia, as well as a very low increase (if any) of speaking Russian during tourism abroad.

Survey in 2015

In the following tables, No. 4 and 5, data from **the survey** of teacher education **students in 2015** are presented. Because the respondents mentioned more

options for the use of foreign languages, the data are presented in two tables (A and B).

Language	Work abroad	Work in Slovakia	Tourism abroad/	Communication with foreigners in Slovakia	Contacts with colleagues/relatives Slovakia	Cultural purposes films/books	Information for my profession
English	12	16.2	58	22.5	18	59.4	7.1
German	14.4	7.1	26.1	4.5	0.9	3.6	1.8
Russian	0	7.1	2.7	1.8	1.8	2.7	
French	0.9		8.1	0.9	0.9	0.9	
Spanish		0.9	4.5	0.9	0.9	1.8	
Italian	0.9		6.3		0.9		
Croatian	0.9		9				
Greek			1.8				
Polish		1.8	4.5		1.8		
Czech			5.4		2.7	3.6	0.9
Hungarian		1.8	7.1	1.8	0.9		
Romanian			0.9				
Bulgarian			0.9		1.8		
Ukrainian		0.9	0.9				
Japanese			0.9			0.9	
Arabic			0.9				
Dutch	0.9						
Hebrew			0.9				
Turkish			0.9				
None	0.9						

Table 4: Which foreign languages have you used/needed so far? (%) – 2015 (A)

As the tables No. 4 and 5 from **2015** show, English continues to be the most important language for the respondents. But it is important to add that the scope of other languages that the respondents considered important in their past and present has grown to 18, even though only some of them use it. This shows a trend of growing plurilingual awareness. A surprising but realistic result of the survey is that there is quite a high percentage of respondents working in German-speaking countries (higher than in English-speaking countries). Not only does tourism in foreign countries raise the plurilingual need, but so do various cultural forms and media (TV programs, books). The goal of using foreign language for professional purposes is still very low among the respondents.

Language	Professional mobilities Erasmus etc.	Music	Computer/ Internet web-shopping /chatting	Everyday abroad - tickets, accommodation	General education/ Used at school	Helping friends learning/ translation	Writing/ Reading in Slovakia Instruction, texts	Related language/ Neighbor language
English	1.8	6	16.2	7.2	29	2.7	5.4	
German	3.6		0.9	3.6	9	0.9		
Russian			0.9		5.4			0.9
French	0.9	1.8	0.9		1.8			
Spanish		1.8			1.8			
Italian		0.9						
Croatian								
Greek								
Polish				0.9				
Czech	0.9				0.9			
Turkish	0.9							

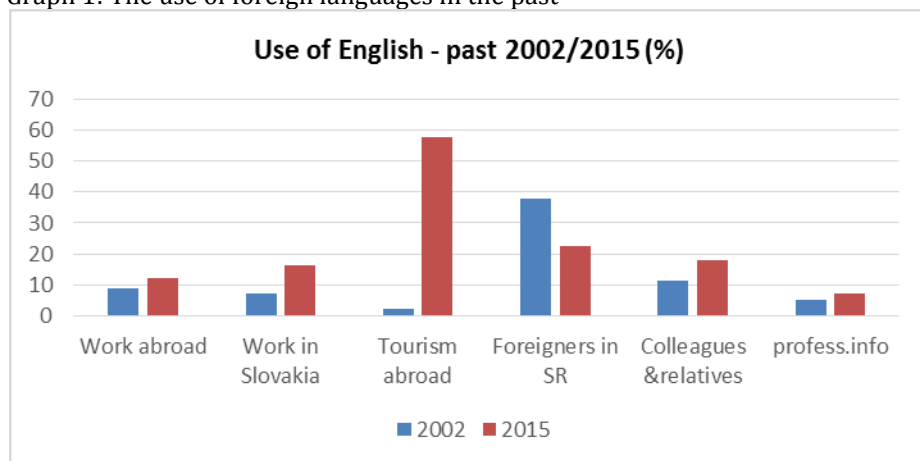
Table 5: Which foreign languages have you used/needed so far? (%) – 2015 (B)

Comparison between surveys 2002 and 2015

To start with, the survey showed that the number of students who had **no plurilingual awareness** in 2002 was much higher than in the 2015 sample. In the 2002 sample a) about 14% of respondents did not report any past use of any foreign language; and b) about 29% did not have any present need or opportunity to use foreign languages. What was rather sad was that almost 8% of them were so skeptical as not to see any chance to use any foreign language in their future at all. In the 2015 sample, none of the respondents mentioned zero past or present use of foreign languages, only 1 of them mentioned that she used only the English language. Only 1 respondent commented on this survey negatively “I have needed only the Slovak language because I do not go for holidays and I have never spoken to any foreign speaker – I had English only at school. I do not think I will need any foreign language in my kindergarten teacher career (or only minimum English).”

Comparing the level of plurilingual competence of both groups of respondents **2002 and 2015**, some more interesting information about the level of plurilingual awareness of the respondents appear:

Graph 1: The use of foreign languages in the past



As can be seen from the graph 1, the level of **past** experiences of **English** by the sample in 2015 (by past they meant before this academic year) increased (except talking to foreigners in Slovakia, which, on the other hand, may be explained by growing contacts with colleagues and relatives and friends in English).

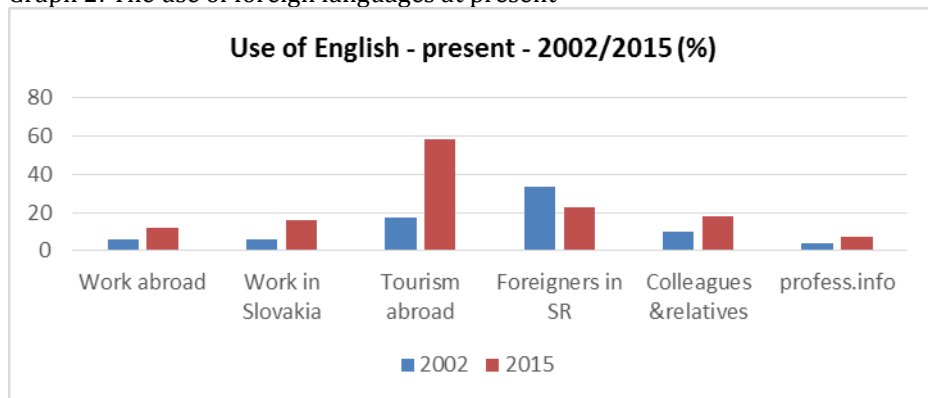
The percentage of the use of **German in the past** has increased in the group of respondents in 2015 (with the exception of the category of their professional contacts).

The **past use of Russian** has increased radically in the working position in Slovakia, but has decreased in relation to opportunities to work abroad or to speak to foreigners in Slovakia in the Russian language.

The percentage of the use of **Spanish in the past** seems to be at the same level in both samples; there is radical drop in their opportunities to use Spanish while working abroad or in contact with foreigners or even colleagues and friends in Slovakia.

The percentage of the use of **French in the past** has increased with the respondents in 2015 in all areas except of their speaking French with foreigners in Slovakia.

Graph 2: The use of foreign languages at present



Comparison of the present use all of the five mentioned languages (**English, German, Russian, French and Spanish**) by both samples showed similar results as the comparison about their past use (with the exception of Spanish as there was almost zero level of the 'present' use of Spanish in the 2002 sample).

a) Anticipated use of foreign languages in the future

The 2015 sample was also asked about the future need of foreign languages but focused specifically on their professional life. As the question was narrow, it was not possible to directly compare both samples and that is why we evaluated these responses in each sample individually. In the 2002 sample, up to 21% respondents could have imagined talking in English with colleagues, up to 15% communicating in English during professional conferences and only 7% using English in acquisition of professional information.

A massive increase of plurilingual ambitions was documented with the 2015 group. All students but one mentioned some kind of use of English in their future career. What is encouraging from the point of view of plurilingual awareness, almost 40% of the respondents think that they might use German in their future life, one fifth anticipate the use of Russian and there was a small number of respondents suggesting ten other languages: a) languages of minorities living in Slovakia – Hungarian, Roma, Ukrainian; b) languages of neighboring countries – Hungarian, German, Czech, Polish; c) languages of foreigners and immigrants living/working in Slovakia – Korean, Chinese; d) other traditional languages – French and Spanish. Not only did the awareness of the variety of languages

needed in the future profession of teachers increase, so did also the variety of purposes of their use – from teaching some languages at home or abroad to even founding new bilingual kindergartens, etc.

Conclusion

The intention of this study was to present some data about the situation associated with plurilingual education in the Slovak Republic. The methodology chosen was based on four different perspectives on this rather complex phenomenon: a) setting the situation in Slovakia in a broader frame of plurilingual educational policy in European documents; b) exploring the rich tradition of plurilingual education in the Slovak territory; c) examining current language education policy from the point of view of plurilingualism; and finally d) sharing some results of two surveys showing the level of plurilingual awareness of two samples of future Slovak pre-primary and primary teachers (in 2002 and 2015).

The final reflection of all these different views at plurilingualism in Slovakia may indicate two trends.

The first of them can be inferred from the fact that the recent movements in the official language education policy have reduced the scope of foreign language teaching (from various practical reasons which were not analyzed in this study). If this fact is ‘reflected in the mirror’ of European documents that to show evidence of supporting plurilingualism in a particular country is to show an effort „to increase the offer of languages by education system (the number of learners with access to foreign language teaching, the number of hours devoted to those languages, the number of linguistic varieties studied, etc.)“ (Guide..., 2003, p. 36), then the Slovak educational system shows decreasing interest in development of plurilingualism.

On the other hand, the comparison of plurilingual awareness evident in two samples of preprimary and primary teachers indicates a growing trend. The growth in the interest and real need of the use of more languages (privately as well as professionally) has been indisputably confirmed. As plurilingualism does not expect “perfect” but only “partial knowledge” of languages for the purposes of exploiting the ability to express oneself in one language and being understood by the other people, then the hope is that it may be successfully developed not only by more and more Slovak professionals and citizens as such, but hopefully there will be a new flexible system developed in the future to realize such linguistic facility on a national scale (e.g. by allowing more films without Slovak dubbing; organizing games and competitions focusing on the added value of

plurilingualism; awarding plurilingual competence of people of various generations; organizing various leisure time activities, mobilities, international conferences for various ethnic/language groups in Slovakia and with neighboring countries; implementing plurilingual approaches into regular school curriculum (e.g. integrating them with geography or history); producing plurilingual publications; and more and more other exciting ways of formal, semiformal or non-formal education.

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How Electronic Communication Changes English Language

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Abstract

The electronic communication makes connection among people distant thousands of miles possible. The main objective of the paper is to describe, explain, and analyse the essential nature of this new form of communication by pointing to its crucial features which make it a hybrid of spoken discourse and written texts. The theoretical framework of the paper is backed up by the arguments of such thinkers as Crystal, Findra, Herring or Patráš. A special attention is paid to the Internet communication on a pre-selected social network (Facebook) as it is the largest and therefore also the most influential communication channel of its kind at present. This new phenomenon means a challenge to traditional ways of communication, especially to written language. Attention is paid not only to the linguistic phenomena of the electronic communication, but also to search for the ways how the Internet interlocutors contribute to language change nowadays.

Keywords

chat; EMC; spoken and written discourse, language change(s)

Introduction

Crystal asserts that the Internet is “the largest area of language development we have seen in our lifetimes” (Crystal, 2011, p. 149). And language practice proves his words to be right because modern technologies make communication between two or more people, wherever far from each other, possible. Hybrid nature of electronic communication (e-mail, chat groups, social networking, etc.) has been well-known since its beginning (Carr, Crystal, Demčíšáková, Findra, Herring, Patráš, Štulajterová, and others). It shares features typical of spoken discourse as well as written texts (see tables 1 and 2 below). Linguists could not even come to an agreement how to denote this new socio-linguistic phenomenon. Several terms emerged, such as *cyberspeak*, *electronic discourse*, or *Netspeak* (Crystal, 2010, p. 414) to mention just a few. However, after the analysis of those terms one can see that they stress a particular phenomenon of communication and exclude another. Therefore other, more inclusive, terms have appeared, such as *electronically mediated communication* (EMC) and/or *digitally mediated communication* (DMC). From linguistic point of view both terms seem to be too broad leaving unclear borderlines between language and other forms of

communication open for discussion. According to Crystal (2010), the most inclusive term seems to be *electronically mediated communication* (EMC) referring to a technological and social revolution, but Crystal (2010, 2011) asks whether EMC can be considered revolutionary in terms of language as well. This paper attempts to answer this challenging question.

The aim is to find out whether EMC has tendency to share more common features with spoken or written form of language and how it contributes to language change(s). As a result a brief notice is taken to a debate whether the changes are positive or negative. The main research methods to achieve the goals are therefore observation of networking communication, description of the current state, and its further analysis backed up by explication and comparison. A search engine Google was used due to the research on the selected social network, Facebook, as it provides huge resource of material accessible to linguistic investigation.

Traditional communication vs EMC

There is an immense number of linguists who describe differences between spoken discourse and written texts (Crystal, Davy, Findra, Halliday, Mistrík, Pavlík, Štulajterová, etc.) viewed traditionally as opposing forms of language and communication. However, we find the works of Crystal (2010, p. 414–417), Pavlík (2006, p. 175–178) and Štulajterová (2014, p. 107–109) to provide optimal description of differences between the two forms (see table 1). Our research was conducted in terms of observing 12 binary pairs of features typical for spoken discourse or written texts (Table 1).

As table 1 shows, spoken discourse is usually dynamic and open to various flexible challenges in communication with an element of spontaneity, while written texts are traditionally considered arranged (or at least pre-arranged), static and permanent. However, these features may become disputable in particular concrete situations, e.g. spontaneity in terms of lecture held for students or arrangement of a written text in case of a brief note left in a hurry, etc.

There are still not many linguists investigating the new phenomenon of electronic communication, and since the new sub-branch of linguistics, the Internet Linguistics, has appeared only recently, it is understandable (see Carr, 2008; Crystal, 2010, p. 414–417, 2011, p. 1–180; Herring, 2007; Jesenská, 2015a, p. 28–34; Mochňacká, 2011, p. 202–211; Patráš, 2009, p. 1–150; or Štulajterová, 2014, p. 114–117). However, their number has been constantly increasing. The *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* is an influential (boasting of impact

factor 2.019) online linguistic magazine which offers linguists and other experts in (mass) communication enough space to publish their research outputs, and leaves the whole matter to an open scientific debate. The new form of communication brings new challenges and new opportunities to investigate dynamic nature of language. That is why researchers should “reinterpret everything they already know about language as realized through the older mediums of speech, writing, and sign” (Crystal, 2011, p. 14).

No	Spoken discourse (SD)	Written texts (WT)
1	realized in sounds	realized in letters
2	usu. takes place in real time (synchronous)	graphic record of past, present, or future events (asynchronous)
3	has no generally recognizable sentence-delimiting marks – loosely structured	the sentence is the fundamental structural unit
4	heavily context-dependent	is relatively independent of context
5	is usually very interactive – dynamic, spontaneous, and therefore rather flexible (or open to changes respectively)	their interactivity is limited – static, arranged, and usually permanent
6	the feedback is immediate	the feedback is delayed or none
7	only little revising and editing	extensive revising and editing
8	is usu. syntactically and lexically simple	is usu. syntactically and lexically complex
9	often employs non-standard or informal language means	often employs standard language means
10	often exhibits dysfluency and error	usu. free of dysfluency and error
11	represents a series of processes and actions	usu. describe states and objects
12	is flowing, processlike, oriented towards events – with meanings related serially	is dense, structured, crystalline oriented towards things, productlike – with meanings related as components

Table 1 Spoken discourse vs. written texts

Only some features mentioned in the table above are characteristic for electronically mediated communication, especially for chat groups and social networking (see Table 2 below). Our comparison has shown that out of 12 binary opposing/complementary features observed in spoken discourse and written texts (Table 1), seven typical of spoken discourse were observed in EMC (i.e. spoken form of communication prevails in chats), three can be viewed as variable (may be common for written as well as spoken language), and only one feature traditionally viewed as written can be clearly assigned to EMC (Table 2).

No	EMC (electronically mediated communication) with emphasis on the chat via social networks	Feature traditionally considered as spoken form (SF) or written form (WF)
1	realized in letters/graphemes (and other signs, such as emoticons)	WF
2	can take place in real time – synchronous / or can be postponed in time – asynchronous (it depends on a particular situation and interlocutors)	SF / WF
3	spontaneous (to certain point), flexible, and dynamic – very communicative	SF
4	relatively independent of context (this factor may be disputable under particular circumstances)	WF
5	has no generally recognizable sentence-delimiting marks – loosely structured	SF
6	the feedback is almost immediate / delayed or none	SF / WF
7	only little revising and editing	SF
8	usu. syntactically and lexically simple	SF
9	often employs non-standard or informal language means	SF
10	often exhibits dysfluency and (e.g. spelling) error, whether intentional or not	SF
11	represents a series of processes and actions / sometimes describes states and objects	SF / WF
12	flowing, processlike, oriented towards events – with meanings related serially	SF

Table 2 Features of EMC

Our comparison (Table 2) proved that “EMC is identical to neither speech nor writing, but selectively and adaptively displays properties of both” (Crystal, 2010, p. 415) and plus adds something ‘extra’ that none of ‘traditional’ forms of language has. One can further conclude that, though being a hybrid of spoken and written forms, EMC (or as Crystal says electronic texts) is not identical with other kinds of written texts (Crystal, 2011).

However, differences between salient features of spoken discourse and EMC on a selected network have been observed:

- a) compared to speech message size is different,
- b) lack of ‘natural’ simultaneous feedback (as there is no facial mimics, no gestures, and no physical proximity between/among interlocutors is possible) – this phenomenon has resulted in gradual appearance of over 60 various emoticons whose meaning is restricted,
- c) usage of emoticons,
- d) multiple conversations (possibility to involve more than two participants) – several various conversations may be conducted on different topics,
- e) compared to speech turn-taking is based on different rules,
- f) sequencing of utterances is more loose,
- g) interlocutors must cope with “ambiguous anaphoric references and elliptical utterances” (Crystal, 2011, p. 27).

There have been observed differences between salient features of written texts and EMC on a selected network:

- a) hypertextuality of EMC (embodied in hypertext links) which is “the most fundamental and functional property of the Internet” (Crystal, 2011, p. 30),
- b) persistence in terms of maintaining on the web as long as the page/message exists,
- c) messages (or other texts in electronic environment) are stylistically, pragmatically, and culturally heterogeneous (for more details see Crystal, 2011, p. 30-32, and/or Patráš, 2005, p. 42-47).

All the aforementioned features make EMC a unique medium. It is genuine and revolutionary in terms of (technological) form, but definitely not in the form of linguistic means used. Though terms discourse and text must be redefined in this context, spelling, grammar, lexis, syntax, and stylistic means used in EMC are not new. Put it in other words, new language forms appear due to the need of language economy and effectiveness (creativity and playfulness, respectively), not due to the fact that communication is electronically mediated. Abbreviated

expressions and even the whole phrases have always been a salient feature of written texts, e.g. rebuses, such as *b* for 'be' or *2* for 'to' are centuries old. Crystal asserts that the initialism *IOU* was recorded in 1618 and that "there is no difference, apart from the medium of communication, between a modern kid's *lol* and an earlier generation's *SWALK*, 'sealed with a loving kiss'" (Crystal, 2011, p. 5). This is also confirmed by the existence of Partridge's *Dictionary of abbreviations* (1942) recording *agn* for 'again', *mth* for 'mouth', or *gd* for good.

The most dynamic language level has always been vocabulary and EMC is no exception to this rule. A lot of neologisms, based on combination of naming need, economy of expression and semantic effectiveness, emerged, e.g. *belfie* (butt[ocks] + selfie), *blog*, *e-waste* (discarded electronic waste), *freegan* (a person scavenging for free food in store and restaurant waste baskets), *phablet* (a smartphone with a screen larger than a smartphone but smaller than a tablet), *selfie*, *telfie* (t[ummy] + selfie), *twaffic*, *tweep* (a person using the Twitter online message service to send and receive tweets), *webinar* (more neologisms can be found in articles published by Jesenská, 2010, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, and/or 2015b).

Our previous research (Jesenská, 2014a) has proved that percentage of new blends used by (post)modern young generation increased from 5% up to 29% and other new shortened forms slightly from 8% to 12%, while percentage of compounds decreased from 40% down to 15%. This makes sense when one realizes that EMC is characteristic for young users who are open to various forms of experimenting with language expressing creativity, imagination, and playfulness in this field. Blending and clipping as well as other ways of shortening and abbreviating words and expressions become one of typical features of slang used by the youth, such as *emoticon* (*emote/emotion* + *icon*), *leg* (for *legend/legendary*), *sup?* (*What's up?*), *whois*, *za* (for *pizza*), etc. However, many of these words would be created without existence of EMC. Shortening, texting, and simply a need to communicate as effectively as possible has been increasing since acceleration of the human life speed. Moreover, there is "a widely held belief that texting is a 'new language', highly deviant in character, which is fostering bad spelling practices in children, inappropriate use in essays and exams, poorer literacy results, and a general deterioration in written text standards" (Crystal, 2010). However, this has been refuted by many experts whose researches confirmed this being an urban myth (see Table 3 below):

No	Urban myths on texting (i.e. various forms of shortenings)	Reality
1	Electronic texts are full of shortened forms	Only a small number of expressions are shortened
2	Texting is a new language	Majority of shortened word-forms had been used before electronic EMC appeared
3	Texting encourages incorrect spelling (esp. in writing of young people)	If one wishes to shorten words, first they must be aware of proper spelling rules – in order to decide which graphemes leave out
4	Abbreviated forms are used in academic and other formal texts	Actually, this is quite rare
5	Abbreviated forms cause decrease of literacy	The more one practices the better they become (in texting, writing, spelling, reading – simply in working with texts of any kind)
6	Abbreviated forms cause language decay	Neologisms and even the whole new genres (e.g. specific text-messaging poetry) appear and thus enrich language

Table 3 Urban myths on texting vs. reality (inspired by Crystal, 2010, p. 417)

Rules of English morphology used in electronic environment have become a subject to innovation, too, especially plural of substantives referring to EMC/DMC. However, their semantics and usage are restricted, and they do not seem to be as productive as lexical or orthographical levels. Old English plural *-en* (as in words like *brethren*, *children*, *oxen*) has been revitalized in a few words ending in *-x* (may be motivated by the existence of *vixen*), e.g. *bixen* (users of BIX information exchange system), *boxen*, *matrixen*, *vaxen* (VAX computers). Replacement of regular plural suffix *-s* by *-z* when referring to pirated versions of software, e.g. *downloadz*, *filez*, *gamez*, *tunez*, *warez*, etc. Specific markers of plural form (*-en*, *-z*) do not fulfil mere grammatical function but add an extra semantic value to those words. However, there are not many lexical items used (resp. produced) this way (Crystal, 2011).

From time to time, a negative reaction to electronic communication appears in mass British, American and other mass media pointing out to EMC/DMC as

something perilous and harmful contributing to decay of language culture. In a *Daily Mail* article headed *I h8 txt msgs: How texting is wrecking our language* J. Humphrys (2007) calls texters of SMS “vandals who are doing to our language what Genghis Khan did to his neighbours eight hundred years ago. They are destroying it: pillaging our punctuation; savaging our sentences; raping our vocabulary. And they must be stopped.” One can suppose that his attitude towards the Internet users (chatters, bloggers, and other participants in social networks) is the same. And he is not alone with this prescriptive approach. Opponents of texting, abbreviating (*lol*), omission of particular letters in words (*srsly*, *xlnt*), logograms (*2day*), and nonstandard spelling (*wot*), however, do not take into account such factors as function of electronic discourse, its author(s) and recipient(s), and a form of discourse (Patráš, 2005, p. 42). What the opponents irritate most about this is a constant shrinking of distance between informal and formal language with the emphasis on increasing informality of electronic texts (c.f. Findra, 1998, p. 99-110). But constant playing with words (be it spelling, vocabulary, or grammar) paradoxically causes higher awareness of language standard which becomes strengthened this way (see Crystal, 2010 and 2011; and/or Patráš, 2005, or 2009). Moreover, brutal contents or obscene vocabulary is not accepted. Serious violators of netiquette, so-called ‘flamers’ and ‘snerts’ are not welcome in social networking communities. The polysemous word *flamer* is very often a teenage male provoking word ‘flamewars’ by sending other interlocutors occurring in an electronic environment messages (by means of e-mails or chat) full of expressive (vulgar, obscene, expletive) and offending expressions. An acronym *snert* refers to a snotty nosed egoistical rotten teenager who offends other Internet users (similar to flamer) or he/she may be a *persona not grata* in an online game (Mochňacká, 2011, p. 208).

Conclusion

Only some features observed between spoken discourse and written texts (Table 1 above) are also salient for electronically mediated communication, especially for chat groups and social networking communication (Table 2 above). Comparison has shown that out of 12 binary features observed in spoken discourse and written texts (Table 1), seven typical of spoken discourse were observed in EMC (i.e. spoken form of communication prevails in chats), three may be considered variable (may be found in written and/or spoken language), and only one feature traditionally viewed as written can be exclusively assigned to EMC (table 2). However, there is something more (or ‘extra’, respectively) that EMC can provide, besides mixing features of written and spoken language.

At present several levels of English language face challenge in the form of electronic communication contributing to modifications in orthography (spelling), enriching vocabulary (lexical level), syntax, and enlarging semantics. Morphology is influenced to, however, not in such an extent. Shortening of expressions and phrases of various kinds (acronyms, blends, clips, initialisms, logograms, and various hybrids), invention of new expressions naming new phenomena, emergence of emoticons, etc. are all results of language users' creativity, invention, novelty, willingness to play with words (and language as such) – it is the evidence of thinking over language which leads to higher language awareness. This fact results in the strengthening of standard language position (also proved by Crystal, Patráš and others). This is a paradox, as some linguists and laymen have been worried about the increase of informal language usage in public (though 'only' virtual) environment. Decay of language has not proved to have real basis (table 3).

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ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Semi-structured interview in language pedagogy research

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Abstract

The semi-structured interview is a valuable data collection method applicable in qualitative language pedagogy research. The presented paper focuses on general theoretical description of the semi-structured interview and practical application of this method in language pedagogy research. We analyse five research studies (from the field of language pedagogy research in which the semi-standardized interview is used) to shed more light on the practical implementation of this method. In the analysis, we discuss the research aims, interview guidelines, samples and sampling techniques, procedures related to data collection and data analysis, and validity. The outcome of the analysis has the form of a guide on how to proceed when applying semi-structured interview in language pedagogy research.

Keywords

semi-structured interview, language pedagogy research, analysis

Framing the semi-structured interview

As Cohen et al. (2007) write, the semi-structured (sometimes known as semi-standardized, in-depth, or focused) interview as a research method has its roots in the psychiatric or therapeutic interview, but unlike this approach whose course is in minimal control of the interviewer and mostly guided by the interviewee, the semi-structured interview introduces rather more control on the side of the interviewer. Cook (2008) explains that in a usual semi-standardized interview, the researcher has more guidance over the direction of the conversation and discussed content than in a non-directive data collection approach; but still the informants are not restricted in elaboration or changing the course of the interview into other related areas. A more active role of the researcher in this interviewing technique is recognized also by Merton et al. (1956), since they consider the interviewer to be the person who activates an interviewee's report of responses. In the traditional semi-structured interview, clearly, the interviewer is given the tools to influence its nature, yet the interviewees retain their freedom of response.

The principal aim of the semi-structured interview is to obtain an informant's subjective response to a known situation from his or her lived world. Here, as noted by Kvale (1996), the researcher seeks descriptions and understanding of the subjects' stock of knowledge about the topic under study, while he is interested in the main themes the participants experienced or lived through in their own lives. However, Scheele and Groeben (1988) identify the interviewer's goal not only as a matter of explication of interviewees' immediate assumptions about the studied subject, but also as a matter of uncovering implicit signs related to the topic (or "what is said between the lines").

This rich inventory of information about the topic of interest, i.e. about a situation in which the informant has been involved and which has been examined by the researcher in advance of the interview (Cohen et al., 2007), is by Scheele and Groeben (1988) termed as subjective theory, and in their approach, the semi-standardized interview is used to its complex reconstruction. It could be said that the major purpose of the semi-structured interview is to reveal an interviewee's subjective theory – one's complex stock of knowledge about the examined issue based on his/her own subjective experience and lived daily world.

From the structural perspective, Kvale (1996) compares the semi-structured research interview to an ordinary conversation. However, it requires a unique questioning technique (ibid.). According to Cook (2008), the researcher encourages the respondents to speak in detail about the subject of scientific interest without the use of a predetermined set of standardized questions. Researchers rather use a sort of interview guide or framework focused on central themes and suggested questions where the content is not strictly prescribed but can be modified according to how the conversation evolves (Gavora, 2006). In this sense, Cook (2008) and Kvale (1996) conclude that the semi-structured interview is neither a structured "questionnaire" with preconceived questions nor an unstructured conversation with no prescribed topics; it is a conversation where the interviewee makes account of his/her subjective experiences related to the theme introduced by the researcher, and the interviewer attempts to explore these experiences for further details worth of analysis.

The non-standardized organisation and relative open-endedness of the semi-structured interview make it a flexible data collection strategy. Cohen et al. (2007) and Gavora (2006) describe it as more adaptive than a rigidly structured interview since in this approach, the researcher is allowed to a.) rephrase, reformulate, or rearrange the suggested question items; b.) ask for particular examples and further clarifications or explanations; c.) make digressions, include further questions, or elide unsuitable ones; and d.) introduce or even represent

more precise verbal cues. The same authors mention that in confrontation with the completely unstructured interview, the predetermined thematic concentration of this technique enables more effective data collection.

Interviewing in this mediate area between fixed and absent structure, organised thematically with no fixed range of responses, brings the interviewer in-depth knowledge about the examined topic without determining the results prior to the questioning process (Cook, 2008; Prokša et al., 2008). As Švec et al. (1998) put it, the semi-standardized approach to interviewing represents a methodological compromise between norm and theory within the intentions of open systems.

Švec et al. (1998) find the semi-structured interview suitable for those research settings where one part of the educational phenomenon under investigation can be clearly and objectively identified in the preconceived interview framework, and the articulation of the other one depends on participants' perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes. Cohen et al. (2007) and Gavora (2000) believe that this open-ended conception may thus lead the interviewer to obtain new and unexpected knowledge. In an attempt to do so, the researcher has to focus on individuality, subjectivity, uniqueness, and spontaneity of response, and needs to understand and interpret the main points of respondents' statements with the use of natural language, avoiding generalisations and focusing primarily on specific topics, ideas, and situations (Cohen et al., 2007; Gavora, 2000). According to Kvale (1996), a qualitative approach is applied here in order to develop rich data.

Data collection is closely connected with the issue of how to record the interview data in a meaningful and systematic way. The first option is to take notes as the interview proceeds. However, some informants could consider this approach disturbing (Cohen et al., 2007), and moreover, the notes might not be accurate (Gavora, 2006). At least for these reasons, it is usually recommended to record the interview using mechanical means of recording such as audio or audiovisual recorders. Cohen et al. (2007) notes that although these alternatives might provide more accurate data, they might be also constraining for the respondents. To suppress such inhibitions, Gavora (2006) suggests placing the recording device outside the respondent's field of view. Prokša et al. (2008) and Gavora (2006) recommend making notes also in cases when the interview is audio or video recorded. The researcher's notes could include: a.) time and place of the interview; b.) comments on what is being said by the informant; c.) additional questions the interviewer wants to ask; d.) non-verbal cues; and e.) valuable information about the context of the interview (ibid.).

Proponents of the semi-standardized interview praise the relative cost-efficiency, ease, adaptability, and versatility it offers, and as Cook (2008) has it, these features are in fact the main reasons why this strategy belongs to the most widely employed methods for collecting data in qualitative research. In their volume, Švec et al. (1998) state that despite the existence of numerous modern and more sophisticated research instruments, the role of qualitative interviewing is irreplaceable in pedagogical research, because it explores deeply one's existence, personality, or experiences within the educational reality.

However, the semi-structured interview is not free of criticism. One of the most important drawbacks proposed by the critics of this research tool (presented by Cook, 2008) is probably the limitedness of interpretation, as reconstruction of an experience in an interview provides no insight into the motivations and intentions of the involved and does not duplicate real observation of the experience; therefore, reliance on the semi-structured interview as a single data collection strategy might lead to only partial investigation of the topic, and a combined approach involving other forms of data such as observations, documents, or diaries is suggested here (ibid.).

Gavora (2006) and Švec et al. (1998) mention another problem - the social desirability of responses. As they note, the informants may give false or misleading accounts of their experiences at least in two cases, namely if they don't understand the question, or if they don't want to explicate something truthfully. In such situations, interviewees usually incline to socially desirable answers; i.e., those of which they think the researcher wants to hear. Švec et al. (1998) suggests asking simple, non-ambiguous questions to eliminate misunderstandings on the interviewees' side and in-direct questions to get further explanations and to avoid distorted responses.

Gavora (2006) adds an issue that is encountered rarely but should be expected by the researcher. It is informants' reluctance to speak up about the examined topic, usually caused by mental blocks or lacking fluency, as he explains. Again, it is recommended to adapt the questions according to the interview situation (Gavora, 2006). This requires their adaptive phrasing or less offensive in-direct approach (ibid.).

Using the semi-standardized interview as a qualitative data collection method seems to be advantageous in terms of the offered adaptability and flexibility. Of course, it has a number of potential limitations such as interpretational limits, social desirability of responses, or informants' reluctance to speak about the studied issue. However, these might be partially eliminated by the mentioned procedures and careful preparation of the interview. In the end, the semi-

structured interview as a research method is of great help in educational research, because it does not reduce one's personality to numbers and non-personal answers but respects a research participant as a unique, dynamic, and integrated individuality (Švec et al., 1998).

Applying the semi-structured interview in language pedagogy research

This part of the study deals with the method of semi-structured interview from a more practical viewpoint. We aim to analyse how this qualitative approach can be used within the context of language pedagogy research. In order to meet the set aim and understand how this interviewing technique can be used in practice, we examine five scientific studies from the field of foreign language pedagogy in which this method is applied (either alone or in combination with other approaches). These research reports were obtained from ERIC (2), ScienceDirect (1), ProQuest (1), and Google Scholar (1). They had to fit two criteria, namely a.) usage of the method of semi-structured interview for the purposes of research in foreign language pedagogy, and b.) publication date after the year 2000. The studies that serve as a basis for this analytical part include the following:

- 1.) LO, Yu-Chih (2009) - A Study of Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes Toward English Language Learners and Perceptions of Their Professional Education Training and Instructional Strategies Regarding English Language Learners
- 2.) MACDONALD, Shem (2002) - Pronunciation: Views and Practices of Reluctant Teachers
- 3.) MANGUBHAI, Francis et al. (2004) - Teaching a Foreign Language: One Teacher's Practical Theory
- 4.) MERC, Ali (2011) - Sources of Foreign Language Student Teacher Anxiety: A Qualitative Inquiry
- 5.) MORADKHANI, Shahab et al. (2013) - English Language Teacher Educators' Knowledge Base: The Macro and Micro Categories

The application of the semi-structured interview in the analysed works is inspected from various perspectives. We focus on the research problems and objectives of the selected works, prepared interview questions, research samples and sampling methods employed in the examined studies, used procedures connected to data collection and analysis, and the question of validity. These perspectives reflect the main categories of our analysis.

The nature of research problems and objectives for which the semi-structured interview is suitable

As mentioned in the theoretical part of this paper, the method of semi-standardized interview is applicable in such research contexts where one aspect of the studied problem can be determined in the interview guide prepared according to the theory and set research objectives, and the formulation of the second one is dependent on interviewees' subjective theories related to the investigated topic. The respondents explicate their subjective theories (in terms of perceptions, views, opinions, beliefs, attitudes, etc.) connected with the research problem defined by the interviewer in the preconceived guideline, and the researcher explores them to generate knowledge.

To better understand the research settings of the analysed works, we first describe their research objectives. Lo (2009) examined teacher trainees' attitudes toward EFL learners and their perceptions related to their teacher training and EFL instruction strategies. Macdonald's (2002) aim was to explore in-depth English teachers' views regarding pronunciation teaching. In Mangubhai et al. (2004), the authors explored a foreign language teacher's understanding (and adequacy of her understanding) of communicative language teaching. Merc (2011) identified the sources of anxiety experienced by EFL pre-service teachers. Moradkhani et al. (2013) aimed to explore the nature of EFL teacher educators' pedagogical knowledge base. In the above cases, the formulations of the research aims suggest that the semi-standardized interview is used to gain subjective information (in form of foreign language teachers' or teacher trainees' attitudes, views, or opinions). Cohen et al. (2007) mention that beside this purpose, the semi-standardized interview may be used also to test or suggest hypotheses.

Thematizing and designing the semi-structured interview

Cohen et al. (2007) and Švec et al. (1998) note, that thematizing (i.e. formulation of the research objectives) is a crucial step in interviewing; since only carefully formulated aims lead the researcher in obtaining data relevant for the research. The set research objectives are then translated into the interview questions, having on mind that the formulated question items must "[...] reflect what it is the researcher is trying to find out" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 274). It is also noteworthy that researchers usually incline to a modifiable interview guideline focused on key topics and suggested questions (Gavora, 2006; Ayres, 2008). Cohen et al. (2007) add that researchers can rely on open questions, semi-closed or closed questions, items with fixed alternatives, or scales.

From this point of view, the presented studies (Lo, 2009; Macdonald, 2002; Mangubhai et al., 2004; Merc, 2011; Moradkhani et al., 2013) express both similarities and differences. A shared commonality can be identified, namely that the researchers used an outline of guiding questions or entries (based on the studied literary sources, designed in advance of the interviewing stage, and reflecting the set objectives) to tailor the course of the conversations. Except for Merc (2011) who designed a fixed interview framework from diaries, the interview guides of the rest were of open-ended nature, so their content could be modified or adapted according to the conditions. Additionally, the interview guideline in Moradkhani et al. (2013) includes also an introductory section informing the participants about the aim of the study.

As far as the questions and their organisation are discussed, the authors of the analysed studies used various types and approaches. Lo's (2009) "Guided Interview Questions" included nine items arranged simply as a list. They were of open-ended nature, e.g. "How would you describe your overall reaction to working with ELL students in your class?" (ibid.). Macdonald (2002) divided the guiding questions into four categories that express the major focus areas of the research. Between the seventeen questions, we identified open questions ("What experiences have you had as a learner/user of another language?"), closed questions ("Do you assess your students' speaking skills?"), and a question with fixed alternatives ("Different approaches to pronunciation are listed below. Which of these do you use?"). Moradkhani et al. (2013) prepared sixteen question items arranged in two groups, namely "Warm up" (questions aimed at personal and background information) and "Main questions" (connected directly with the research objective). "The interview questions had an open-ended nature", as the authors stated (ibid., p. 129.) The nature and organisation of the questions proposed by Merc (2011) could not be examined further, since there are no particular examples of questions shown in the paper or its appendices section. It is only mentioned that "A set of questions were prepared by the researcher to lead the conversation during the interviews" (ibid., p. 83). In case of Mangubhai et al. (2004), the interview guide does not include traditional questions. Their guideline rather focuses on central topics and has the form of a list of key words, e.g. "Beliefs, values, principles underpinning communicative language teaching approaches", "Metaphors, images appropriate to communicative language teaching approaches", etc. (ibid.).

Research sample and sampling techniques

The size of the research sample is another important aspect of interviewing. Kvale (1996) advises to conduct semi-structured interviews with as many persons as needed in order to gather the sought information. According to Cohen et al. (2007), the decision of the size of the sample is dependent on the interview purpose (e.g. whether the researcher seeks individual data or makes generalisations, etc.).

Conducting semi-structured interviews with thirty teacher trainees from a Turkish university allowed Merc (2011) to obtain first-hand evidence relevant for the findings of his diary analysis. Interview data from thirty subjects may eventually contribute to external validity (generalizability) of the research. Mangubhai et al. (2004), on the other hand, interviewed one particular foreign language teacher in Australia in order to understand her views of communicative language teaching. In contrast with the previously mentioned research, the authors focused on uniqueness, individuality, and depth of data, so there is only limited space for generalisation of the findings beyond this particular study. Lo (2009) surveyed twelve respondents (EFL trainee teachers at a state-funded university in the south U.S.), and Macdonald (2002) interviewed eight in-service teachers of English in Australia. Moradkhani et al. (2013) included fifteen informants from Iran in their sample; however, opposing to the remaining four studies, the research sample did not consist of only one “homogenous” group of participants, but it involved the views of five English teachers, five EFL teacher educators, and five university professors dealing with ELT.

The reviewed theoretical resources do not limit interviewers in sampling methods, and also the authors of the selected research studies employed several sampling techniques. Merc (2011) selected the research participants randomly from the population of students enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Anadolu University who completed their teaching practicum. Lo's (2009) informants were chosen voluntarily from the whole set of pre-service EFL teachers at a Texas institution of higher education. Macdonald (2002) applied purposive sampling, as this author was particularly interested in subjective theories of reluctant English teachers. First, the researcher distributed a questionnaire, and it resulted in nearly two hundred responses from all Australian states and territories (except for Tasmania). From this sample (n=176), eight Australian teachers of English who indicated a reluctant attitude toward pronunciation instruction in the questionnaire were selected. Similarly, Mangubhai et al. (2004) and Moradkhani et al. (2013) also used purposive sampling, since they wanted to include participants with certain characteristics

(such as stated commitment to use communicative language teaching approaches, articulateness, at least ten years of pedagogical practice for EFL teachers, minimum of five years of active involvement in EFL teacher preparation for teacher educators, etc.). In summary, research based on the method of semi-standardized interview involves sampling that reflects the objective of the research.

Data collection

In the analysed research reports, the interviews were audio taped with informants' permission. It means that the researchers did not rely on written notes solely; however, we are not sure whether the authors took notes while interviewing at all (though it is usually recommended in the literature), because this piece of information is simply missing in the examined works.

Lo (2009) informed the readers about the time frame of the semi-standardized interviews (between October and November, 2008) and also about their length (35 min.). Mangubhai et al. (2004) mentioned that their research included two hour-long interview sessions with the research subject. Merc (2011) and Moradkhani et al. (2013) indicated only approximate lengths of the conversations, while the interviews lasted between 8 to 12 minutes and 21 to 44 minutes respectively. Finally, Macdonald (2002) provided no such details as date, length, or place of the interview due to space limitations, as explained in the report.

Data analysis

The first step in analysing data obtained with the use of the discussed method involves transcription of the taped conversations to verbatim. This procedure was applied also in the selected works. Additionally, Lo (2009) and Macdonald (2002) noted that the interviews were transcribed to the textual form using a text editor. However, Cohen et al. (2007) advise researchers to be cautious while transcribing interview data, as they believe that this process causes data loss (when compared with the original encounter). They thus suggest recording also other types of data in the transcripts beside what was being said by an informant, namely the tone and modulation of a speaker's voice, emphases placed by the speaker, pauses and silences, interruptions, the mood of the speaker, whether a speaker used continuous speech or short phrases, etc. (ibid.).

The main analytical work starts after transcribing the interviews. The processing of the rich data developed in the course of a semi-structured interview requires a qualitative content analysis, as Kvale (1996) explains. The

same author goes on to say that the qualitative approach to data is encoded in the very nature of the semi-structured interview which is congenial to such philosophical traditions as linguistic constructions of reality, phenomenological descriptions of consciousness, or hermeneutical interpretations of the meaning of texts. It means that the researcher usually has to follow the rules of qualitative content analysis when processing data from semi-standardized interviews.

According to Cohen et al. (2007), the analytical process often requires some form of coding or scoring. Coding can be understood as “[...] the ascription of a category label to a piece of data, with the category label either decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected” (ibid., p. 283).

Macdonald’s (2002) qualitative content analysis resulted in the creation of four main categories. Within these four main categories, the informants’ individual responses were marked by more precise codes that attempted to capture the true nature of utterances. Both the categories and code labels arose from the data.

Mangubhai et al. (2004) analysed the interview data in two phases. The first step involved text reduction to ideational units; then in the second one, each unit was arranged according to defined categories. The data were labelled (coded) by one of the members of the research team. Once the coding had been done, the outcomes were recorded using “Nvivo” - computer software for organisation and management of coded qualitative data. It’s also worth noting that the code labels and categories were created in response to the collected data.

In Lo (2009), similarly to Mangubhai et al. (2004), the coding system emerged from the data, and the analysis involved using specialised computer software. From the included sample of coded transcript, it was visible that the author labelled the respondents’ answers with codes (in form of nouns) reflecting their main themes. The author used “Atlas.ti 5.0”, a computer application aimed to help the researcher in organisation, categorisation, and coding of qualitative data. The software is based on the philosophy of Grounded Theory. Creswell et al. (2007) explains that in Grounded-Theory research designs, the theory emerges from participants’ data.

The most detailed description of the analytical phase is offered by Moradkhani et al. (2013). Their analytic approach consisted of three phases - open coding, axial coding, and labelling. In the first phase, the transcripts were examined, and the segments related to pedagogical knowledge of EFL teachers were identified. These sections were coded with short designations in the form of gerund phrases; for example, the extract “Teacher educators should be aware of the new theories, they should be aware of actually the new advances that have

been made in the field of ELT” was designated as “being aware of ELT theories” (Moradkhani et al., 2013, p. 129). The extracts identified within the first phase were clustered into groups according to the thematic content in the axial coding phase. It simply means that in this second phase, the segments similar in meaning were put into the same “micro category”. Each micro category received a code label based on the shared theme of its constituents. These micro categories were then organised according to their similarities to form a set of “macro categories” which were labelled further in the final labelling phase. Data analysis based on open coding, axial coding, and labelling is an approach applied in Grounded-Theory studies (Creswell et al., 2007).

Opposing to the rest of the analysed studies, Merc (2011) processed the data from the interviews differently. The semi-standardized interviews were not taken for qualitative content analysis based on coding and categorisation. The author identified six main categories (as the sources of EFL teacher trainees’ anxiety) in students’ diaries prior to the interview and the informants’ responses “[...] were used to provide first-hand evidence and samples from student teachers’ own words” (Merc, 2011, p. 83). Stated differently, the role of the interview was to provide supplemental data for the diaries.

The question of validity

Cook (2008) states that using semi-structured interview as the only source of data could result in partial investigation of the research problem. It is therefore recommended to include also other forms of data to increase validity of the research (ibid.). Merc (2011) combined the semi-structured interview with observation and diary analysis. Lo (2009) applied a mixed research design involving both types of data, qualitative (semi-standardized interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires). To further validate their interview data, Mangubhai et al. (2004) conducted stimulated recall interviews with the research participant. Macdonald (2002) and Moradkhani et al. (2013) relied on semi-structured interviews solely.

The authors of the selected studies employed several other techniques to enhance the validity of their research. Merc (2011) informed the research participants about the aim of his study after conducting the interviews in order to avoid biased utterances. Furthermore, triangulation of data ensured increased internal validity. Lo (2009) conducted a pilot study, became familiar with the interview environment, and kept record of personal influences on the gathered data. The same author established content validity by consulting experts in linguistics, language acquisition, and teacher education. Macdonald (2002)

confronted the findings of the interview with results of other similar studies conducted in the past. Moradkhani et al. (2013) took multiple points of view into consideration. This inclusion of various groups of stakeholders known as triangulation of perspectives leads to improved validity. Additionally, the collected data were coded independently by a second party experienced in this way of data analysis. There was over 80% agreement between the two research teams, and disputable sections were solved in a discussion.

Conclusion

The semi-structured interview is a data collection method applicable in qualitatively-oriented language pedagogy research. Compared to an unstructured conversation, the researcher has more control over the content; however, the informants are not limited in response. The semi-structured interview is usually used to reconstruct one's subjective theory about a particular topic. It can be thus useful for gaining subjective, first-hand information (like perceptions, views, attitudes, opinions, etc.) about the studied problem. It is especially suitable for those research contexts where a part of the language pedagogy phenomenon under study can be specified in the interview guideline, and the identification of the second one is dependent on informants' personal knowledge. However, semi-standardized interview may be used also in such settings where the researcher's aim is to test or suggest hypotheses.

After setting the research objectives, the interviewer transforms them into an interview guideline. This guiding framework is focused on central topics and suggested questions. The content of the guideline can be modified by rephrasing the questions, omitting or adding items, giving cues, etc. It means that the preconceived interview guide usually has an open-ended nature. As far as the entries in the guideline are considered, the researcher can employ questions of open, semi-closed, or closed nature, questions with fixed responses, scales, or key words reflecting the key topics of the research. They can be organised as a simple list or according to defined categories. The interview guide may also contain information for the interviewees about the scope of the study.

In a study based on the method of semi-structured interview, the size of the research sample and sampling techniques depend on the research aim. The research sample of a study focused on generalisation should be larger than the sample of a study aimed at in-depth data. It is also recommended to conduct interviews with as many people as it is required to gain the desired knowledge. Sampling should reflect the research objective as well; for example, if the

researcher seeks data from reluctant EFL teachers, the sample has to contain subjects selected purposefully.

The interviewing phase (i.e. the data collection itself) requires a form of data recording. The basic approach involves taking notes as the interview proceeds. Valuable information such as time and place of the interview, interviewer's comments, additional question items, entries on non-verbal communication, and contextual cues can be included. The interviews can be recorded mechanically using audio or video recorders; however, recording should be permitted by the informants. To suppress the disturbing effect of the tools used to record data, it is recommended to place the device outside the respondent's field of view.

The audio taped interviews need to be transcribed to written text. Transcribing leads to data loss, and hence, the interview transcript should contain notes on the tone and inflection of an informant's voice and data reflecting the nature of one's speech (e.g. emphases, pauses, silences, and interruptions placed by the speaker, use of continuous speech or short phrases, etc.). In most cases, the processing of the transcribed interview involves a qualitative content analysis based on some form of coding or scoring. Coding denotes the process of labelling data with category labels (in form of gerund phrases or nouns) defined prior or in response to the collected data. The studies where the theory emerges from the informants' data could be considered as being Grounded-Theory studies. Here, the researcher may apply a three-step approach consisting of open coding, axial coding, and labelling in order to analyse the qualitative data. In the open coding phase, segments related to the research problem are identified and coded with short labels. The extracts similar in meaning are put into the same micro category in the axial coding phase. Then, the categories are organised according to their similarities to form a set of macro categories. They are labelled further in the final labelling phase. While analysing the data obtained in a semi-structured interview, the researcher may use specialised computer software (such as Nvivo or Atlas.ti 5.0) designed to facilitate the organisation, categorisation, and coding of qualitative data.

To avoid partial investigation of an educational phenomenon, it is suggested to combine the semi-standardized interview with other types of data such as observation, documents, or diaries. Furthermore, the researcher may apply several other approaches to validate the findings. The interviewer may inform the research participants about the aim of the research after conducting the interviews to prevent bias. Conducting a pilot research can also enhance the validity of the main interview instrumentation, so as familiarity with the interview environment, keeping a research diary, and consulting the interview

guide with experts from related fields. Other techniques leading to improved validity of research based on the semi-structured interview include triangulation of perspectives (inclusion of various groups of stakeholders in the sample), second-party coding, or confrontation of the results with the findings of similar studies conducted earlier.

Simple question formulations, adaptive phrasing of questions, and the less offensive in-direct approach are suitable for overcoming reluctance to speak about an issue and socially desirable responses.

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Content Analysis in ESL Research

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Abstract

Content analysis as an investigative method is widely used in research connected to the education of English as a second language. The present study aims to look more closely at this method as implemented within the research articles that were recently published. The first part of the study is devoted to the definition of content analysis and the steps important for its successful application. The second part focuses on the definition of the research aim and questions. In this practical portion selected research papers that implemented content analysis are depicted and a summary that discusses findings for the research questions is given.

Keywords

content analysis (CA), educational research, implementation, categories, codes, procedure, English as second language (ESL)

Introduction

Contemporary research of English as a second language or foreign language deals with various areas which study different aspects that study the use of the language. The English language is used not only as a school subject that is taught at different levels within countries where it is not a mother tongue; it is also used as a source for scientific research. As it is a very complex language it has its history as well as its presence not as a stagnant tool for communication but developing every single day thanks to its use worldwide. According to information from the British Council (2013, p. 6), "the Oxford English Dictionary added approximately 300 new words to the lexicon in June 2012". This growing vocabulary also expands as English "was also adapting and absorbing, soaking up vocabulary from elsewhere" (ibid.). Elsewhere meaning from other languages and vocabulary of various countries. With the widespread use of English also emerges wider knowledge about the language and therefore it is important to conduct purposeful investigations within this spacious field.

One of the areas that is affected by growing language and its influence in the global world is the educational sphere. Many researchers and scholars worldwide study the language and conduct inquiries in selected branches. For these reasons they also apply different survey methods that aim to bring rich research findings. One of the methods that has been applied in educational

research of the English language is content analysis. Content analysis as a research tool has been used in different areas and according to Neuendorf (2002) it was involved in the examination of human interactions, within the analysis of characters in TV commercials, in novels and films. Content analysis was also applied to the investigation of word usage in newspapers, public comments and political speeches. Neuendorf (ibid.) further states that the implementation of this methodology has rapidly grown over the last 20 years within the area of mass communication inquiry. The growth of content analysis employment was also affected by the involvement of computer technology; i.e. the computer text content analysis software has facilitated the process thanks to online accessible textual archives.

Content analysis as a research method used in education is nowadays discussed by many researchers such as: Cohen et al. (2007), Krippendorff (2004), Švec et al. (1998) who in their publications provide a summary of all steps that should be taken. They give examples of how the method was applied in specific cases as well as referring to the tricky features that researchers should be aware of if they wish to use the methodology.

The present research paper is comprised of two parts. The following section discusses the theoretical background of content analysis where it focuses on definition, procedure, pitfalls and potentials. The second section describes five research papers that have applied content analysis in surveys conducted in the field of English language education. This section discusses also the author's insights into several categories that have been of particular interest.

Content Analysis and its Definitions

To arrange a coherent depiction of content analysis it is necessary to start with its early existence and definitions that represent its main focus and idea. Based on the information given by Švec et al. (1998) Bernard Berelson is considered the pioneer of this research method and has also written several useful publications and described content analysis in communication research and mass media. Berelson (in Švec et al., 1998) within his perception of the usage and application of content analysis talks about the quantitative as well as qualitative function of its implementation. Furthermore he describes it as: "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the apparent content of communication" (Švec et al., 1998, p. 146). Through his objective description is understood the analysis of precisely defined categories of the content with respect to the process that could be controlled, repeated and reproduced without the subjective intentions of the researcher. Systematic

description is perceived as a process whereby individual categories of the content that are strategic because of the selected research problem are examined and finally arranged into a structured text for the purpose of empirical theory. The quantitative description means the process whereby the analysis of the text content is focussed on the frequency of use – how often the individual items of the analysis appear or how intensively/many times are present in some specific attitude. But what is important according to Švec is that this counting (quantitative feature) would not be possible without qualitative aspects of individual categories such as: concepts, ideas, and themes. The most frequent usage of analysis is to determine the frequency of a category occurrence, to find out the presence or absence of an indicator, the measurement of time given to a specific problem or the measurement or portion of content in written or printed materials (ibid).

Other well-known authors of publications dealing with methods in research define content analysis as outlined below. According to Julien (2008, p. 120) “content analysis is the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes”. The same author along with Švec states that the beginnings of CA go back to its quantitative roots, but the fact is that the quantitative form of CA “is helpful in answering ‘what’ questions” and the qualitative form helps to give responses “to ‘why’ questions and analysing perceptions” (ibid).

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 475) also give a definition of the method when he states: “the term ‘content analysis’ is often used sloppily. In effect, it simply defines the process of summarizing and reporting written data – the main contents of data and their messages”. To this he adds that it is a strict and systematic process when examination of the content of selected written data is processed. Cohen (2007) also embraces content analysis as a specific method within a broader qualitative data analysis. The qualitative data analysis does not have a precise definition as it is mostly based on the purpose for which the researcher wants to use it. As stated by Cohen et al. (2007, p. 461) “The significance of deciding the purpose is that it will determine the kind of analysis performed on the data.” In this manner if we talk about the use of content analysis in the present study we mean the written materials that are connected to research in education as it pertains to English as a second or foreign language. The purpose is to seek answers for questions within the same field.

Content Analysis and How to Conduct It

When a researcher decides to use content analysis for his/her inquiry it is important to be aware of steps that should be taken to gather valuable data. One of the features that should be considered when applying content analysis according to publications 1980, 2004 by Krippendorff (in Stemler, 2001) is the following set of questions that must be addressed: "1.) Which data are analysed? 2.) How are they defined? 3.) What is the population from which they are drawn? 4.) What is the context relative to which the data are analysed? 5.) What are the boundaries of the analysis? 6.) What is the target of the inferences?" From these questions it is clear that any user of the method has to clarify in advance the data that would be analysed.

Also mentioned in Cohen et al. (2007) are the steps that should be considered. The author mentions as a first step the definition of the research question/s as it must be clear what is in the content of the text surveyed. The second step is identification of the population from which the units of text are going to be sampled. Population means not only the people but the source whether it be a textbook or newspaper or online conversation etc. The third step is the definition of a sample, meaning the process by which the sample is selected. Will it be a random sampling or stratified sampling? Will the samples be collected within a time frame or will the samples be based on a theme or purpose? The fourth step discussed in Cohen (ibid.) is the definition of the generation process of the selected document. In this case it is the way that the chosen document was made, whether the material was an originally printed - written or edited paper. The authenticity and credibility may also be reviewed. The fifth step talks about definition of the units for the analysis. The units may be labelled in different ways such as by word, phrase, paragraph, whole text or even headlines, number or types of pictures in newspaper or textbook. In the sixth step it is important to decide about the codes used for content specificity. They may be general or more specific. Some may be subordinated and some superordinated; some may refer to a situation, ways of thinking etc. The seventh step is the creation of categories. Categories are groupings of the key features of text and these usually show interconnections between units of analysis. It is important to define how broad or narrow the category will be, whether the category will be general or specific. The eighth step refers to the coding and categorizing of the data. It is a process by which the text is assigned to the categories and codes. In the ninth step the data analysis is carried out. After all the codes and categories are marked, the researcher then may count the frequency of the codes. In this phase as Cohen et al. (2007, p. 482) states: "The researcher can summarize the inferences from the

text, look for patterns, regularities and relationships between segments of the text, and test hypotheses. The summarizing of categories and data is an explicit aim of statistical techniques, for these permit trends, frequencies, priorities and relationships to be calculated." The tenth step includes the summary, when the researcher writes a conclusion that reflects all of the findings that have been investigated. The summary section usually discusses the key issues and areas for the next survey. It may also include some reflective notes, ideas or analogy of the already conducted research. As the last or eleventh step is given as the making of speculative inferences, it requires the researcher, on the basis of the evidence, to posit some explanations for the situation, some key elements and possibly even their causes (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 483).

Research Aim

The aim of the following research paper is to look thoroughly at content analysis as an educational research method that is often used in contemporary EFL studies. Many surveys worldwide have used the procedure of content analysis to gather valuable data, useful information to pinpoint issues which are relevant to the teaching of English as a foreign language. The idea of utilising content analysis along with the steps taken for definition and specification of individual categories and codes has its justification. The selected categories and codes are linked to the samples or respondents upon which the method is verified. Also important is the evaluation of findings, the processing of data in connection to the tools applied for better clarity and logical explanation of the results. The conclusions – suggestions for pedagogical practice are the main feature of content analysis as they bring answers to the research questions. All of the aforementioned steps of the content analysis are interconnected and play a crucial role in the researcher's purposes and the target chosen for the survey. Several already published surveys – research papers will be reviewed in order to demonstrate successfully adapted content analysis and their ability to manage the entire process in order to produce purposeful conclusions.

Selection of Samples

The decision was made to look for valuable research papers by browsing through reputable databases such as EBSCO, JSTOR, PRO QUEST, SCOPUS, WEB of KNOWLEDGE and others. To find a research article that was connected to the aim of implementation of content analysis within the educational research of English language it was necessary to set the right criteria into the search engine. The first criterion was that analysis not be older than 5 years as the aim was to look at the use of content analysis of educational research during recent years.

The second criterion was to find samples of educational research linked to the field of English language. In this case the researcher used key words such as: *content analysis, education and content analysis, content analysis in teaching English as second language, English language and content analysis etc.* Enormous number of articles was the result; therefore, it was necessary to read the abstracts of these research papers in order to determine the method used for the inquiry. Many research papers used content analysis within their study but this was not the only method or in some cases it was used as the secondary tool for proving the hypotheses stated for the specific researcher. The decision was then made that only those articles that used content analysis as their primary and only method would be chosen. This decision was made to better compare the findings of the research when the published articles had similar backgrounds.

It is also important to mention that the selected published articles that are included in the survey below were not restricted to one theme. That means that when deciding which articles to include for the analysis the researcher chose not to specifically state that the theme needed to be connected to only one area within the educational research of English as a second or foreign language. The author wanted to gain wider knowledge about how content analysis as a research tool could be implemented as well as the different ways that it could be processed. In the case of the first sample (below) the author already knew the publication and was familiar with the implementation of content analysis and chose to include it.

Methodology of the Research Procedure

According to the author's claims the aim of the present study is to look at the ways that content analysis is used within individual research papers that discuss the survey linked to English language education. The decision was made to analyse the content of these papers in a similar manner to the way that content analysis is conducted. The analysis therefore is looking firstly at each paper and the individual article is so described. As the number of selected samples was already stated as 5 items, it was important to carry out the analysis based on specific rules. To investigate the papers by reading them and afterwards to state the categories of main interest became the plan. These categories were created based on similarities among the articles. Each paper is depicted below according to following categories: 1.) *Background Information of the Article* 2.) *Samples – Materials Used for Analysis* 3.) *Content Analysis and its Implementation* 4.) *Categories and Codes* 5.) *Results – Findings Brought by CA*. It was decided that the descriptions would be written in a continuous manner not chunked according to

the categories in order to keep a flow throughout the study. For these categories specific codes could be found. In the first category it is namely the *Title of the Article*, the *Name of the Author*, *Year of Publication* and the *Source of Publication*; in some cases even the reason for conducting the research is mentioned. In the second category it is mainly the definition of the sample – the selected document as well as the statement regarding this choice. The third category mainly depicts the usage of the method. The fourth category discusses the codes for the created categories and the definition of codes if they were given in the analysed materials. Within this category the author also focuses on the justification of the codes. In the fifth category attention is paid to the research findings and also to the results that were found by the application of the method. It was also important to focus on how the findings were processed and what suggestions were given for the professional public within the researched field. Within the analysis a summary is given in which the following research questions are discussed.

Research Questions

- 1.) In what areas is content analysis used?
- 2.) What samples are used for the individual research targets?
- 3.) What are the categories and codes used within each paper?
- 4.) How are results gathered in the conclusion of each research paper?
- 5.) Are the steps in Cohen's procedure also adapted within the selected studies?

First Research Article with Implementation of CA

As previously mentioned content analysis is widely used in educational research. For the purpose of analysing the implementation of this method the following pages will discuss different research articles focussed on its usage. The first research paper is the publication entitled: *Intercultural Aspects in Teaching English at Primary Schools*. The author, Reid, published her entire research within this book in 2014 under the publishing house, Peter Lang GmbH. The interests of the book are linked to the teaching of cultural aspects within English lessons at primary schools in Slovakia.

Reid (2014) explained within her publication all of the reasons that lead her to the choice of several research methods to gain valuable results and findings for the questions she had posed. One of the methods that is adapted in her fourth chapter was document analysis. The document analysis that is used in the book in fact examines the contents of selected official documents so it is content analysis after all. As Reid (2014, p. 61) states: "one of the aims was to analyse and compare three different documents concerning the cultural aspects

recommended for teaching English at primary school level". For this aim the following documents were chosen: 1.) *The Common European Framework for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment A1 Level (2001) – CEFR* 2.) *The Slovak pre-reform English Curriculum for the Primary School Level (2001)* 3.) *The Current Slovak National Curriculum for the English Language ISCED 1 (2001)*. These documents were chosen as they contain issues connected to cultural aspects and they were the core materials for the curricular reform of foreign languages in Slovakia.

Before the process of analysing the selected documents Reid (ibid.) defined the main categories and codes for the evaluation and comparison. In her book she describes clearly how she designed the categories. The main idea came from the CEFR where the competences that learners of English language should develop were divided into a.) general competences and b.) communicative language competences. As the author continues, these two groups were not sufficient for analysis of intercultural competence and therefore she added categories and codes for recommended materials, methods and techniques. Finally Reid (2014, p. 65 - 67) decided to use the following six categories that were a combination of all the above mentioned aspects: 1.) *Sociolinguistic Competences* 2.) *Pragmatic Competences* 3.) *Non-verbal Communication* 4.) *Socio-cultural Knowledge* 5.) *Recommended Materials* 6.) *Recommended Methods and Techniques*. Within each category specific codes were also stated. Altogether 29 items were created. These codes were not of equal proportion. The number used depended on the topic of each category. Sociolinguistic Competences had the highest number of codes at nine; Pragmatic Competences had three codes, Non-verbal Communication three codes. The Socio-cultural category had six codes which included issues such as: everyday living, interpersonal relations, values, behaviour etc. The last two categories had the same number of codes with four each. As these codes were included within a table, an example for better understanding and analysis was given after most codes.

The researcher, Reid (2014), analysed each document separately by giving a table where she also included occurrence of each category within various contexts of the same document. The results of each content analysis of the three documents are expressed by individual table as well as by a detailed description. In the conclusion Reid draws a table where she compares the results of codes occurrence and at the same time she marks "the quality of the included codes as "very good", "sufficient", and "insufficient"" (Reid, 2014, p. 80). The quality marks are given according to the researcher's subjective judgment. She had gone through the documents and looked for the occurrence of codes and assigned

them according to the knowledge - information they aim to teach or offer to a learner. The two documents compared were the Pre-reform Curriculum (2001) and Current National Curriculum (2011). From the comparisons the researcher then gives a complex summary.

Second Research Article with Implementation of CA

One of the published articles that used content analysis as the main research method was published in the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. The study was called: *An Investigation into CLIL-related Sections of EFL Course Books: Issues of CLIL Inclusion in the Publishing Market*. The author Banegas published the research in 2013.

The study is based on several issues including: curricular content, second language learning and content language integrated learning. In the beginning the author discusses the situation of the global course-book market which implements the study materials for ELT usage with an innovative feature – CLIL sections. The researcher states: “the content side of CLIL rarely corresponds with students’ L1 curriculum” (Banegas, 2013, p. 1). Therefore the aim of the survey and the article was to investigate how CLIL was included within the ELT course book series for teenage learners. Furthermore Banegas (2013) specifies that the series he had chosen for the survey was a sample for examining how language-driven CLIL as a weak form of bilingualism works in the EFL context.

For the research method Banegas (ibid.) decided to use content analysis. To apply the analysis it was important to choose suitable materials. As the author focused on CLIL oriented samples 4 general English international course books were chosen: *More!, Insights, Champions, Upbeat*. The books were aimed at international use and so marketed in Argentina. For the choice of samples the researcher kept in mind the following criteria: 1.) labelled as featuring a CLIL approach, 2.) used for teenage learners’ levels: A1 – B1 according to CEFR 3.) used by the vast majority of English teachers in Argentinean public secondary schools.

Within the process of analysing the content of course books labelled as CLIL the researcher was looking for pages where CLIL materials were physically placed, the number of pages dedicated to the approach as well as the comparison of advertisements on the back-cover blurbs. To gather valuable results it was necessary to design the categories for the evaluations. Following are the defined categories: 1.) *General Features of Series A – D* 2.) *Contents in the CLIL Section* 3.) *Comparison between Topics of Series A – D and a School Curriculum* 4.) *Skill*

Development in CLIL Sections 5.) Thinking Skills involved in CLIL Activities 6.) Types of Texts in CLIL section.

The results gathered from the research by Banegas (ibid.) were put into different charts according to the individual categories and expressed numerically as well as in percentages. Below each chart the researcher discusses specific aspects of each category and explains the findings from the content analysis. Within the first categories the results speak about the CLIL oriented pages and their topics. The interconnection between the normal school subjects of curriculum in Argentina and the section topics of the series labelled as CLIL are compared. An aspect that is further interpreted is the way in which language skills are practised and taught via individual tasks within the sections. To what extent do the activities develop thinking skills and whether the level of these activities corresponds to the age of the learners they are aimed at. It was revealed that two series do not include activities developing listening skills. When looking at the discussion of findings Banegas (2013) pointed out that the series she chose for her analysis are marketed as CLIL oriented and the reality is that less than 10% of the series is focused on the connection between curricular content and language. The next fact revealed is that some contents of the sections are trivial and texts are undemanding which may result in “students with low level of English being treated as students with low cognitive abilities” (Banegas, 2013, p. 11). Another finding was that visual materials and artwork were used as decoration and attraction rather than as educational tools.

Third Research Article with Implementation of CA

A major implementation of content analysis was found in the research article that was titled: *Differences in Quality between Thai and International Research Articles in ELT*. This article was published in 2012 in the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. The paper was written by several authors: Woravut Jaroongkhongdach, Richard Watson Todd, Sonthida Keyuravong and David Hall who all together are known as Jaroongkhongdach et al. within the article.

The main focus as found within the title can be said to be an issue regarding the quality of Thai research articles. According to the Jaroongkhongdach et al. (2012) the paper focuses on the matter of research articles published in international journals which are considered as the benchmark for the quality of research. The number of research articles published in the international journals indicates the ranking status of a university. Therefore Thailand has decided to increase the number of articles published in international journals. The strategy that was adopted along with the encouragement of and pressure by the

government on academics to publish internationally had little impact and only a small number of research papers has been published in international journals. The fact that the majority of articles produced by Thai researchers were published in local journals has revealed that ELT academics have problems getting their research manuscripts published in the international field. Therefore the focus of the study was oriented toward researching the problems with Thai articles. What causes the difficulty in having the articles published in international journals?

The research that was conducted by Jaroongkhongdach et al. (ibid.) and based on the use of content analysis was aimed at the issues of Thai articles with the following sections that are included within published articles in international journals: a.) literary review b.) discussion of research articles and c.) problems with research methodology. The mentioned sections were main areas of the research focused on the survey of the quality of Thai articles. The researchers decided to use content analysis as the method for seeking answers. Keeping in mind the quality sections to be used they decided to conduct a comparison of 200 research articles in total. These articles consisted of 100 items published by ELT academics in Thailand and 100 research papers published in international journals. While collecting samples for the content analysis to find the differences between the Thai articles and articles published in international journals the researchers decided that to make the comparability relevant they were choosing articles using the following principles: 1.) the published papers were in the same field (ELT), 2.) same language – English 3.) same time period 4.) similar context 5.) similar source (research papers that were published in journals. It is also important to mention that among the 100 Thai articles were included those published under the name of a university in Thailand as they represented the research output of the country. Articles chosen for the sample representing international publication were selected randomly from journals such as: Applied Linguistics, International Journal of Applied Linguistics, Language Learning, The Modern language Journal and TESOL Quarterly.

To be able to apply content analysis within the research the authors Jaroongkhongdach et al. (ibid.) realized they needed to set criteria to evaluate the quality of the research articles and so they created five aspects: justification, clarity, coherence, appropriacy, awareness. Within each aspect they closely defined its meaning, explanation and then described the categories. Altogether there were 25 categories of 5 aspects in 3 sections. For the categories three main codes were determined each indicating a level of quality: 01 (low), 02 (medium), 03 (high). In some cases while the coder was reading the articles he/she had to

focus on two specific traits - (T1 and T2) for instance in terms of the category about coherence of the literary review. If the coder found both traits satisfied the result was rated with code (high), if only one trait was satisfied it was marked with (medium) code and if none was satisfied it was coded as (low). The whole process of analysing the content of research articles was carried out by several coders. One researcher coded all the articles and afterwards all these codes “were then checked for inter-coder reliability with three experienced and knowledgeable non-Thai inter-coders. All the inter-coders were trained regarding how to code, but were not made aware of the research purpose” (Jaroongkhongdach et al., 2012, p. 199).

Looking at the results of this survey the researchers had to use the chi-square analysis to determine whether the differences in each category between the Thai and international research articles were significant. This was based on the frequency of each code. The research findings have shown that the Thai research articles are lacking crucial components that should be included in the literary review and discussion sections. Therefore the lower quality of these articles in comparison to those published in international journals was present especially in terms of justification, awareness and coherence. The content analysis has also pointed out that the majority of categories defined for the analysis were rated poorly within the Thai articles more so than in the international ones. Being more precise seven categories were noticeably poorly marked and according to the words of the authors Jaroongkhongdach et al. (2012, p. 201) “these categories may be enough in themselves to make it unlikely that an article rated poorly would be accepted for publication in an international journal”.

On the other hand it is also important to mention that not only the lacking components in the literary review and discussions sections influence the lower level of publication in international journals. The topic orientation of Thai research articles was more focused on conducting research that deals with solving problems that emerge in the EFL classrooms. These practically-oriented surveys – research papers have valuable advice or importance for use by local Thai teachers but they rarely meet the goals of international journals. This fact also has great impact on the validity of Thai research articles in terms of being accepted for publishing.

Fourth Research Article with Implementation of CA

Another example of content analysis used as a research method is an article with the heading: *Pronunciation Teaching Materials in Finnish EFL Textbooks*. The author Tergujeff published her study in 2010 as part of the collection called:

English Pronunciation: Issues and Practises (EPIP) Proceedings of the First International Conference.

In the beginning of the study the author carefully describes the situation within the Finnish educational system as she discusses the problem of how English pronunciation is taught to their learners. According to Tergujeff (2010) the teaching of English pronunciation seems to be a difficult aspect and therefore it would be beneficial if these teachers had supportive teaching materials. For this reason the researcher decided to conduct a detailed survey of the teaching materials that are used in Finland for the teaching of English pronunciation. The Majority of Finnish learners begin the acquisition of the English language in the early stages of elementary school. The materials that are used for teaching were designed on the basis of Finnish standards and their national curriculum. The textbooks aim for the local context and can be characterized “as all-inclusive general course books: they include texts, exercises, teacher’s guides, CDs (and CD-ROMs) for both the teacher and the pupil, websites and video material”. (Tergujeff 2010, p. 191) Furthermore the author talks about the importance of the textbooks and sets the reasons for her research.

The author clarifies that the textbooks play an important role in the teaching of English pronunciation and therefore she is determined to analyse the Finnish textbooks especially the tasks linked with the practise of this particular aspect of teaching – pronunciation. The researcher seeks answers for the following questions: “*What kinds of materials do Finnish EFL textbooks offer for the teaching of pronunciation?*” The research question is further divided into two sub questions: (1) *How can the pronunciation teaching materials be classified?* and (2) *What are the focus areas of the pronunciation teaching materials?*” (Tergujeff 2010, p. 192) Another benefit that the research discusses is the fact that through the analysis of the content of the textbooks the results would spotlight information not only about the teaching materials used during live lessons but also the reality of teaching practises in classrooms.

Tergujeff (2010) carried out her survey on research materials from the series of EFL course books that had been published by two major Finnish publishers. The sample textbooks were published between the years (1999-2007) and they aimed at three levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced). All of the student’s books also included a CD and the teacher’s guide was enclosed with extra materials for practice. The entire sample of materials consisted of a total of 16 textbooks.

The whole survey was based on the application of content analysis although the author calls it “textbook analysis”. The principle is the same as Tergujeff

(ibid.) uses the analysis of texts that were designed for the practising of English pronunciation. Furthermore as the author states she used a so-called “data-driven classification” which meant that she had gone through all the student’s books, teacher’s guides, workbooks and so on to evaluate only those materials that were connected to teaching pronunciation. The researcher analysed materials that were based on following principles: 1.) they required oral production of English, 2.) the International Phonetic Alphabet was used or 3.) they were in different ways connected to pronunciation and oral production. Based on the principles mentioned before the textbook analysis was then applied to 829 examples of pronunciation specific materials. As the researcher was making decisions about the materials for the analysis she also considered the division of the materials into eight categories in order to “determine the relative frequency of occurrence of each category in EFL course books: 1.) Phonetic Training, 2.) Read Aloud, 3.) Listen and Repeat, 4.) Rhyme & Verse, 5.) Rules and Instructions, 6.) Awareness-raising Activities, 7.) Spelling and Dictation, 8.) Ear Training” (Tergujeff 2010, p. 194).

The research results from the implementation of the content analysis are discussed in the article. Numbers showing the frequency of each category were arranged in descending order where the *Phonetic Training* category was the most frequently used with its 33%. At the opposite end the least frequent category was *Ear Training* with only 2%. Each category in the research findings is carefully recorded in the way they were found in the materials as the author gives an overview of the content and types of different tasks used within the textbooks to teach English pronunciation in Finnish schools. In the discussion section Tergujeff (2010) looks at the individual tasks of the analysed materials and reviews them with suggestions of reputable authors that deal with the teaching of English pronunciation. The findings revealed that the textbook materials she analysed do not comprise communication activities and games focusing on pronunciation that should be included within the EFL materials as they support the acquisition of the English language. Further the research has revealed that the content of the studied materials does not include any visual aids and that recordings of a learner’s oral production are not suggested. According to the words of Tergujeff (2010, p. 201) “in a broader sense, these Finnish EFL course books exclude explicit teaching materials on intonation, rhythm and connected speech”. The researcher also mentions some advice for teachers of English about how to cover the lacking aspects.

Fifth Research Article with Implementation of CA

One of the research articles that was chosen for the survey of content analysis implementation in educational research connected to the EFL field was the paper entitled: *Comparison of the English Language Teaching (ELT) Departments Course Curricula in Turkey's Education Faculties*. The research paper was published within the journal: *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences – ELSEVIER*. The article of the Turkish author Sanli was accepted and published in 2009.

The main idea of the survey is linked to the curriculum which the author explains as “a definition of what is expected to be learned as well as how it is taught” (Sanli, 2009, p. 838). The author explains that the curriculum is mostly based on educational experiences that students acquire during they school time, but it also includes some formal elements. With higher education the curricula have recently undergone significant changes i.e. the faculties with English language teaching programmes have adopted curricula which are different from each other in certain ways.

The researcher, Sanli (2009), had therefore decided to have a closer look at these curricula for English language teaching programmes in Turkey. The aim of the author's study was to analyse and examine the course curricula with the intention of comparison. To fulfil this aim the author decided to use content analysis as the research tool. Within the research article the content analysis is also labelled as data analysis or document analysis as the official documents – curricula of several faculties were evaluated. The survey was connected to the ELT departments of ten education faculties in Turkey. The faculties were chosen according to the author's “maximum variation strategy” which means that faculties were chosen from universities that were situated in different geographical zones - one for each. The faculties were selected both from state and private universities (Sanli, 2009).

The content analysis – document analysis that was implemented within Sanli's survey was carried out on written materials that provided information about the targeted information. The facts chosen for comparison of course curricula were divided according to seven categories arranged as follows: 1.) *Field Subjects*, 2.) *Teacher Education Lessons*, 3.) *Courses in Both Field Subjects and Teacher Education Subjects* 4.) *General Information Courses*, 5.) *Elective Lessons* 6.) *Teacher Training*, 7.) *Lessons Hours in Schedule*. After all of these categories were created the author also specified individual codes for each category. For instance in the category *Field Subject* the codes that were analysed were as follows: *English Literature*, *American Literature*, *Oral Communication Skills*, *Contextual*

Grammar, Listening and Pronunciation etc. The total number of all codes in the categories was 70 (ibid.).

While the researcher was analysing the curricula of universities and course contents to provide validity it was decided to send completed analysis of the content to three specialists who were working in the field of educational sciences. After their suggestions were attained the researcher incorporated them into the research findings. The results were inserted into seven tables according to categories where each code that was present in the analysis (each subject, course or lesson taught at individual university) was marked with the symbol “*”. If the code was not included in the curriculum materials the space was left empty.

The presence of individual codes that were recorded in the tables were also more thoroughly described in comments below each category. The results were compared pointing out their frequency as well as their justification according to official documents. In the conclusion Sanli (ibid.) discusses the fact that within the research results there are many similarities especially in the categories of *Field Subjects* and *Teacher Education Lessons*. The main differences were found in the categories of: *Elective Lessons*, *General Information Lessons* and *Lesson Hours*. When comparing the number of lesson hours for theory and practical seminars the difference is striking. Therefore the researcher recommended an increase in practical lessons. Also notable was the variety of elective lessons as the results had shown that the options were limited. In some university curriculum specific lessons are offered in the category of field subjects and some have them in a category as elective lessons. The author also recommends further investigation within the area and suggests possible comparisons of ELT curricula in Turkey to other countries.

Summary

The summary aims to present the responses to the research questions of the conducted analysis within the selected articles that implemented content analysis in their surveys. The first aspects that were observed were connected to the question: **in what areas is content analysis used?** Through this question it was interesting to realize how many different ways that researchers implemented content analysis. This method is a tool that could be adapted for many various surveys, in different fields of study and can bring valuable insights into the issues that are of interest. In this particular study the content analysis was involved 1st in the field of research that was concerned with the intercultural aspects within the process of teaching English as a second language. In the 2nd case the field of analysis was connected to the production of books that were

marked as including a CLIL section for specific use where English is taught as the second language. In the 3rd study the area of focus was connected to the research quality of Thai articles in comparison to the articles published in international journals. This example of content analysis usage was aimed at university research articles. The 4th sample implemented the analysis of the content of Finnish school materials for teaching English. This study was looking for insights as to what Finnish books offer their learners in terms of acquiring skill in pronunciation. This article was connected again to ESL teaching. In the 5th and last paper the focus area was the comparison of different curricula at Turkish faculties that educate the future teachers of English. In this case the field may be labelled as university English teachers training research. The following table shows the areas of content analysis implementation.

Research article	Area of the content analysis usage
1.)	Research about the ESL teaching
2.)	Research about the ESL teaching
3.)	Research about the Quality of University Articles
4.)	Research about the ESL teaching
5.)	Research about the University English Teachers' training

Table 1: Areas of CA Implementation

To discuss the findings for the question: **what samples are used for the individual research targets?** it is good to emphasize that the number of samples vary according to the needs of individual research papers. Whether the author was seeking answers connected to the presence of some aspect or to the frequency of some feature. Reid for instance in her article was looking for the presence of specific codes within the materials while Jaroongkhongdach et al. were comparing the frequency of specific features between two types of research papers. The table 2 shows the samples.

Within this question it is necessary to mention that some researchers (Jaroongkhongdach et al., Tergujeff, Sanli) used their own criteria for selecting sample materials.

Research Article	Samples
Reid	3 – official documents
Banegas	4 – general English international course books
Jaroongkhongdach et al.	200 – research articles (100 Thai + 100 articles in international journals)
Tergujeff	16 – textbooks
Sanli	10 – curricula form different faculties

Table 2: Samples of the Research Articles

In connection to the question: **what are the categories and codes used within each paper?** the fact is that researchers were designing the categories and codes based on similar features that sample materials had. For instance in the cases of Reid and Jaroongkhongdach et al. the individual categories were compared between the samples to find the missing features. Tergujeff, Banegas and Sanli had in their categories what the comparison told them were the materials offered to the learner. In the following table we can see that not all research articles had defined their codes or they were not tagged as codes but were described more as examples. This may be because the results as they were found were not necessary for the investigation or just were not included in the published paper.

Research Article	Categories	Codes
Reid	6	29
Banegas	6	X
Jaroongkhongdach et al.	25	X
Tergujeff	8	X
Sanli	7	70

Table 3: Categories and Codes

How are results gathered in the conclusion of each research paper? is a significant question. In this case the observation of how individual researchers had processed and interpreted gathered results was thought-provoking. In her publication, Reid gave her results in the form of tables where she indicated the frequency of the categories and codes but she also clearly depicted her findings in sentences where she employed numbers and answered the given questions. Thanks to the quality marking of the codes she also pointed to the sufficiency or insufficiency of individual aspects within the comparison of CEFR and Slovak curricular documents. Banegas inserted the findings from the content analysis

which were expressed as numbers and percentages into charts. Linked to each chart there was also a textual explanation of each category. In the conclusion the author judged and commented on specific features of CLIL sections. In the article by Jaroongkhongdach et al. the results were explained in the discussion section that was accompanied by several tables. The results were mostly discussed in text where the author related to the codes and their frequency and so specified all the negative sides of the Thai articles and their low success for publication in international journals. Also suggestions for improvement were drawn based on the content analysis findings. The results that were brought by Tergujeff's content analysis were expressed by percentage as the order of the frequency of individual category was stated. The author also commented about the missing aspects of the tasks for teaching English pronunciation within the analysed textbooks and gave some suggestions for improvement. In the case of the last article Sanli explained the results of individual categories in the tables where a special sign represented the presence of each code under each selected faculty curriculum. The texts that accompany the charts compared the numbers of individual codes among each faculty and so the author evaluated the English courses according to curricula contents.

The answer for the last research question: **are the steps in Cohen's procedure also adapted within the selected studies?** is more difficult to answer as this researcher does not have all of the information regarding the procedure for each individual article because the samples do not provide detailed descriptions of each step taken while conducting each specific survey. It is barely possible from the information given to mark which article included what step as it is shown in the table below. The table contains two symbols. One is the letter "P" which means that the step is present or included within the sample's research articles or it can be logically marked as a step from the text. The second sign is "NS" which stands for "not stated" as this step was not described in the samples or cannot be clearly marked as one.

In the table above we can see that the third step which is connected to the definition of the sample was not stated in the samples 1 and 5. These research articles have not closely defined the process of sampling. They rather broadly mentioned already selected samples but did not depict the reason for their selection. Another step that was not stated within the research papers of all authors was the definition of the generation. The samples did not include what the original purposes of the text for content analyses were or whether the texts were reviewed or gave the process for creating the texts. For this reason the researcher decided to mark them as *not stated*. With regard to the codes as has

been previously mentioned in three cases, the codes were not directly numbered and therefore are recorded in table 4 as *not stated*. A specific situation appeared in the research conducted by Jaroongkhongdach et al., the authors mention in their article 3 codes but they were not the codes in the sense of Cohen's definition. The eighth step was also not present within the investigated papers as the authors do not report how the codes were assigned to individual parts of the textual contents. One claim is to be stated in connection with the last two steps. These steps are marked with the indicator "P" as they were present within the selected research papers but to directly define them within the individual sections (Summary and Conclusion) of each article was challenging to conduct.

Table 4: Cohen's Steps of CA

Cohen's Steps	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3	Article 4	Article 5
1.) Define the research questions to be addressed by the content analysis	P	P	P	P	P
2.) Define the population from which units of text are to be sampled	P	P	P	P	P
3.) Define the sample to be included	NS	P	P	P	NS
4.) Define the context of the generation of the document	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
5.) Define the units of analysis	P	P	P	P	P
6.) Decide the codes to be used in the analysis	P	NS	NS	NS	P
7.) Construct the categories for analysis	P	P	P	P	P
8.) Conduct the coding and categorizing of the data	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
9.) Conduct the data analysis	P	P	P	P	P
10.) Summarizing	P	P	P	P	P
11.) Making speculative inferences	P	P	P	P	P

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Qualitative survey in a CALL research

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Abstract

The present study is focused on qualitative survey as a research method in language pedagogy, especially in the field of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The study is to be handled from both, theoretical and practical perspectives. The theoretical part of the study provides the reader with an insight on the qualitative survey as a research method. The practical part is concerned with the analysis of current studies in the field of the CALL, which adopted the research method of qualitative survey.

Key words

survey, qualitative survey, CALL

"Surveys have broad appeal, particularly in democratic cultures, because they are perceived as a reflection of the attitudes, preferences, and opinions of the very people from whom the society's policy makers derive their mandate."
(Rea and Parker, in Griffiee, 2012, p. 52)

Introduction

Surveys have been used in (and not only in) education for many years. The first surveys date back to beginning of 19th century. In 1918, de Paris designed a 34-page international survey on national education systems. In the 1890s, Hall surveyed children; next there were surveys that examined social problems, including educational issues ranging from educational planning for school buildings to issues of children in classroom who are slow learners (Bogdan & Biklen, in Cresswell, 2012).

The modern survey began to emerge during the period from World War I to World War II. Improvements in sampling techniques and the development of different scales of measurement were the factors that contributed to its development (Cresswell, 2012).

Nowadays, survey research is widespread and well known in many countries. Almost every day we can come across the results of a survey in the newspaper, on the Internet, or on TV (Griffiee, 2012). Surveys are used for collecting data in the areas of social inquiry, from politics to sociology, from education to linguistics. The most typical surveys are those on community attitudes, opinions and practices on many subjects (Nunan, 2008). Griffiee (2012) claims that survey

research has experienced a dramatic increase in the field of social sciences; especially in the field of experimental psychology. As for the field of foreign language education, surveys are used very often, but the major problem is the over-identification of questionnaire instruments with survey design. It may mean that there might be a problem with identifying survey research as an example of data collection, which – as the following quote asserts - is not. “A survey is a *research design*, while a questionnaire is a *data collection instrument*. Since any research design can accommodate data from any collection instrument, a questionnaire and the data it produces can be used in any research design and should not be exclusively identified with survey design research” (ibid., p. 52).

Qualitative survey method

The term “survey” is usually associated with quantitative analysis of some research data. This association arises from the fact that, at least in respect of the term “quantitative survey”, the expression indicating this approach is more commonly used than the qualitative one. Even publications on research methodology provide readers with the definitions of a survey as a statistical or quantitative method. For example, Groves et al. (2004, in Jansen, 2010) gives a definition of the term *survey*: “The survey is a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purpose of constructing *quantitative* descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members.” Jansen (2010) adds that the term *survey* primarily covers the studies aimed at describing numerical distributions of variables in the population. Cresswell (2012, p. 376) states that “survey research designs are the procedures in *quantitative* research in which investigators administer a survey sample or the entire population of people to describe attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of the population. In this procedure, survey researchers collect *quantitative*, numbered data using questionnaires (e.g., mailed questionnaires) or interviews (e.g., one-to-one interviews) and statistically analyse the data...”. The mentioned definitions do not involve any aspect of qualitative analysis. Therefore, as it seems, the term *survey* is most frequently approached from its quantitative side. Hence, after studying a number of books on research methodology, we are able to agree with Jansen’s opinion (2010), that the term *qualitative survey* is almost non-existent both in textbooks on general social research methodology and as well as in the ones on qualitative research methods. However, in her book *The Survey Handbook* Fink (2003) included a chapter entitled “Analysis of Qualitative Surveys”. Similarly, Brown (2001) in his book *Using Surveys in Language Programs* not only mentions the

term *qualitative survey* but also provides a theory how to conduct qualitative survey in language programmes. Jansen (2010) explains that there is a problem in terms of distinguishing the qualitative survey, since this term (as stated above) almost does not exist. Many empirical studies use from ten to fifty semi-structured interviews with the participants selected from the given population in order to investigate the diversity of certain cognitions or behaviours within that population (ibid.). Usually, the analysis involves "the comparison of interview data for each topic inquired and then a summary of their diversity into a number of categories (themes of concern, types of behavior, attitudes, etc.). In the report, these categories are justified by quotations from the interviews. This type of research is often labelled simply as a "qualitative study" (ibid., p. 2).

Therefore, it seems to be necessary here to distinguish between statistical (i.e. quantitative) and qualitative forms of survey. "Qualitative surveys collect information on the meanings that people attach to their experiences and on the way they express themselves" (Fink, 2003, p. 61). According to Jansen (2010), quantitative type of survey aims at **establishing frequencies, means or other parameters**. This type of survey counts the number of people with the same characteristic (value of variable). On the other hand, qualitative survey aims at determining the **diversity of some topic of interest within a given population**; it establishes a meaningful variation (relevant dimensions and values) within given population. Fink (2003) explains that statistical surveys provide data answering such questions like: 'How many X-es are there?', 'What is the average X and how does it compare to the average Y?'. On the other hand, qualitative surveys provide information for answering questions like these: 'What is X, and how do different people, cultures and communities feel and think about X, and why?'

In his article entitled 'The Logic of Qualitative Survey Research and its Position in the Field of Social Research Methods', Jansen (2010) explains the logic of qualitative survey as a research design in detail. Qualitative and statistical surveys are compared in the Table 1.

Key components of qualitative survey design

As can be seen in the Table 1, Jansen (2010) lists four components (steps) in the survey process. Ary et al. (2013) list six basic components (steps) in the survey process: *Planning, Defining the population, Sampling, Constructing the instrument, Conducting the survey, Processing the data*. Earlier, Brown (2001) provided a very similar list.

Steps	Qualitative Survey	Statistical Survey
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1. Defining knowledge aims		
Topic (material object)	any topic	any topic
Aspect (formal object)	diversity	frequency distribution
Empirical domain	any population	any population (collection)
Unit of data collection	(collection)	members of population
Knowledge function	members of population primarily description	primarily description
2. Sampling		
Method of selection	diversity; by purpose	probability; by chance
Criterion for size (N)	saturation, coverage of population diversity	precision of estimate (CI)
3. Data collection		
Measurement level	any	any
Method of collection	any	any
4. Analysis		
	diversity analysis	distribution analysis
1st-level analysis Unidimensional description	coding data (downward and upward) in objects, dimensions and categories	counting frequencies descriptive statistics estimating parameters
2nd-level analysis Multidimensional description	<i>case oriented:</i> combinatory synthesis of diversity: property-space analysis, typology construction <i>concept oriented:</i> holistic synthesis by core concept	<i>unit oriented:</i> cluster analysis, homogeneity analysis <i>variable oriented:</i> correlation, factor- analysis, index construction, scaling
3rd-level analysis Explanation	deterministic explanation: combinatory analysis QCA, pattern analysis	probabilistic explanation: discriminative analysis, regression, LISREL

Table 1: The logic of the qualitative survey in comparison to the statistical survey (adopted from: Jansen, 2010, p. 6).

Below is our summative account of the qualitative survey components (steps):

1. Planning

Survey research begins with the survey question. Such survey question typically concerns the beliefs, preferences, attitudes or self-reported behaviours of respondents in the study (Ary et al., 2013).

2. Defining the population

To define the population under study is one of the first important steps. Defining the population is necessary for selecting the appropriate subjects and determining to whom the results can be generalized (ibid., 2013). The population might be the inhabitants of a town or a country, or the members of some specific category like teachers, or male students, etc. The point is that the study does not observe social interactions or communications among people or institutions in a specified population, but only the characteristics of each individual member involved, e.g. alcohol consumption, preferred colour, etc. In a qualitative survey, the population is treated as „a set of loose entities that are units of data collection“ (Jansen, 2010, p. 7).

3. Sampling

The statistical survey aims at evaluating the frequencies of characteristic units in a population. Such aim requires a **probability sample**. The sampling here in qualitative survey is different from the one aimed to be established in a statistical survey. “A qualitative sample should represent the diversity of the phenomenon under study within the target population” (ibid., p. 8), which can be achieved by a large random sample, but the method would not be effective. Thus, it is logical and more efficient to purposefully select a **diversity sample** with “the aim to cover all existing relevant varieties of the phenomenon (*saturation*)” (ibid, p. 8).

4. Constructing the instrument

A very important task in survey research is the construction of the data collection instrument. Ary et al. (2013), Jansen (2010), Berg (2001), and also Cresswell (2012) state that survey researchers usually collect the data using two basic forms: questionnaires and interviews, or some combination of both (Nunan, 2008). Researchers should consider the forms and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each of them.

A questionnaire

“Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers” (Brown, 2001, p. 6). Dörnyei (2012) lists two broad senses of questionnaire: 1. Interview schedules – reading out a set of fixed questions and marking the answers on an answer sheet. 2. Self-administered pencil-and-paper questionnaires – questionnaires that are filled in by respondents themselves.

Questionnaires can yield three types of data about the respondent: *factual*, which cover demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, race), residential location, marital status, level of education, religion, occupation, and other background information that can be relevant to interpreting the findings of the survey, (in L2 studies it can be the facts about learner's language learning history, amount of time spent in an L2 environment, etc). Another type of data about the respondent is of *behavioural* type, i.e. the ones that involve responses about the past – past actions, lifestyles, habits and personal history. Questions of this type used in L2 studies are usually the items that ask about the frequency of the use of a particular strategy in the past. The last type of data about the respondent collected via a questionnaire is *attitudinal*. This is a broad category that involves attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests and values (Dörnyei, 2012).

Questionnaires consist of questionnaire items. These items can be *closed* or *open ended*. A *closed* item is the one in which the researcher determines the range of possible response/s/, e.g. 'Foreign languages should be compulsory in high school. Agree/Neutral/Disagree.' An *open* item is one in which the respondent can decide what and how to say the response, e.g. 'What do you think about the proposal that foreign languages should be compulsory in high school?' Questionnaires can consist entirely of open questions, entirely of closed questions, or a combination of closed and open questions (Nunan, 2008).

Questions that are the most suitable for qualitative survey are those that are *open-ended*. This statement can be supported by Brown (2001, p. 2012) who claims that a qualitative survey data analysis is the "process of systematically searching and arranging the answers to open-ended survey questions (that is, questions in interviews or on questionnaires)." It is also important to point to the fact questionnaires do not belong to the most prominent methods in qualitative research because these methods usually require subjects to respond to a stimulus, and thus the subjects are not acting naturally. However, such questionnaires have their uses, especially when a researcher wants to collect information from a wider sample that can be reached by an interview (Woods, 2006).

An interview survey

An interview survey is a form in which the researcher records answers supplied by the participants of the study. The researcher asks questions, listens to the answers or observes the behaviour and records the responses on the survey. The quantitative interview procedures are not to be confused with qualitative interviewing. In *quantitative survey interviews*, the researcher uses a structured or semi-structured interview consisting of mostly closed-ended

questions, provides response options, and records their responses. On the other hand, in *qualitative survey interviews*, an interviewer asks open-ended questions without response options, listens and records the responses (Cresswell, 2012).

The choice whether to use an interview schedule rather than a questionnaire is based on the selected procedure's ability to provide maximum opportunity for accurate and complete communication of ideas between the researcher and the respondent. This notion of accurate communication of ideas implies that a researcher has clear ideas about the type of information he/she wants to gain access to, relative to the aims and purpose of his/her research (Cannel and Kahn, in Berg, 2001).

5. Conducting the survey

Once a data collection instrument is prepared, it should be field tested (i.e. in a pilot test) to determine if it is able to provide the desired data. In this step are also included the procedures entailing training the users of the instrument, interviewing subjects or distributing questionnaires to them and verifying the accuracy of the data gathered (Ary et al., 2013). The questionnaire can be conducted either in a paper and pencil or an online form; the interview can be conducted face-to-face, or, also via the e-mail, or chat (Abdallah, 2011).

6. Processing the data

The last step includes coding the data, analysis of the data, interpreting the results and reporting the findings. According to Glesne and Pleshkin (in Brown, 2001, p. 212) "qualitative data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned. Working with the data, you create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories and link your story to other stories. To do so, you must categorize, synthesize, search for patterns and interpret the data you have collected".

Analysing survey data qualitatively

As already mentioned, in his book Brown (2001) included a chapter entitled „Analysing survey data qualitatively“. In this chapter, he presents the theory of Huberman and Miles (in Brown, 2001). The main point of this theory is to divide qualitative analysis of survey data into three subordinate processes: *data reduction*, *data display* and *conclusion drawing and verification*. They argue that these processes should be occurring before, during and after data collection.

Data reduction is a process in which the huge universe of all possible data is reduced to manageable dimensions. Such reduction is done by choices that researchers make in terms of research questions, cases, instruments and

conceptual framework. Researchers make choices in setting up their studies that reduce the proportions of the data because they want to save time, energy and resources. In all types of survey research, choices are made that help to reduce the dimensions of the work involved: (1) the number and types of conceptual frameworks involved, (2) the number and types of respondents sampled, (3) the number and types of instruments used, (4) the number and complexity of the research questions addressed, (5) the number and types of analyses attempted and (6) the length of the research report.

Data display is a procedure in which researchers display their data in various ways so that they can analyse and synthesize the information. Displaying qualitative data is different than in the case of qualitative data processing. Quantitative data analysis requires different tables and graphical displays of various data in order to understand the patterns. When analysing qualitative survey data, researchers rely on other means for displaying the data. Miles and Huberman (in Brown, 2001) suggest the main ways of displaying qualitative data: transcribing, using matrices and using computer tools for data analyses processes.

The idea of *transcribing* means „making copy, arrangement, or record of the data to a form that can be easily stored, accessed, sorted and analysed.“ (ibid, p. 215). *Matrices* help to analyse the transcribed qualitative data. They are tables or arrays (usually in two dimensions), with one set of categories labelled across the top and another down the left hand side. The data in a matrix are arranged in columns and rows and they help the researcher discern patterns in the data. There are also computer programmes that are developed to analyse the data.

Conclusion drawing and verification involve interpreting and “drawing meaning from displayed data” (Miles & Huberman, in Brown, 2001, p. 223). Concepts of validity and reliability are as important in quantitative as in qualitative research. The most prominent method for supporting validity and reliability is triangulation. Fink (2003) states that in terms of validity and reliability qualitative surveys rely on triangulation. Triangulation can be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). Gavora and Lapitka (1998) state that the use of multiple methods in qualitative research is really important, because each of the methods used (e.g. survey, observation, or content analysis) provides its own perspectives of the research problem and as Brown (2001) adds, the use of multiple methods supports the trustworthiness of the data. He also proposes a very effective form of triangulation, such as an attempt to combine qualitative and quantitative methods, for example combining the

quantitative results of a questionnaire with the qualitative results of interviews and observations.

Inductive (open) and deductive (pre-structured) qualitative surveys

In his article, Jansen (2010) illustrates the need for distinction between *pre-structured* (or deductive) and *open* (or inductive) qualitative surveys. In an *open* survey, relevant topics (objects), dimensions (aspects of objects, variables) and categories (values at dimensions) are identified through the interpretation of raw data (e.g. interview transcripts). In *pre-structured* survey, some main categories, topics and dimensions are defined beforehand and the identification of these matters in the research units is guided by a structured protocol for questioning. Jansen, (2010, p. 4) sees it in the following way: "In the pre-structured case the diversity to be studied is defined beforehand and the aim of descriptive analysis is only to see which of the predefined characteristics exist empirically in the population under study."

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as a part of language pedagogy

In recent years there have been dramatic changes in the field of English language teaching. Due to the fact we live in 21st century, which is full of new opportunities and technologies, it can be assumed that (within language pedagogy) language teachers have been partly supplied by modern technologies, especially computers and the multimedia. It means that with the development of digital technologies, the possibilities for learning and teaching languages have changed and the using of ICT tools has started. Such tools not only enable the appearance of more learner-centred approach but also more interaction among students and between students and teachers. When using CAL in FLE, a learner can be exposed to real and authentic language situations, which provide interaction among learners, and motivate students (Malá, 2004). "Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is often perceived, somewhat narrowly, as an approach to language teaching and learning in which the computer is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of material to be learned, usually including a substantial interactive element" (Levy, 1997, p. 1). The author defines CALL in much broader terms as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning". The second definition better corresponds with the view of most of modern CALL practitioners.

CALL has more than 50 years of tradition. Many authors write about the history, presence and even future of CALL in their works. Warschauer (1996; Warschauer & Healey, 1998) divide the history of CALL into three main stages or

phases: Behavioristic (Structural) CALL; Communicative CALL and Integrative CALL. Veselá (2012) also deals with the future of CALL and adds the fourth stage – Ubiquitous CALL. Warschauer (2004, p.10) stresses the fact that “(...) stages have not occurred in a rigid sequence, with one following other, from ‘bad CALL’ to ‘good CALL’, since any of these may be combined for different purposes. However, there has been a general transformation in CALL over the years with new ideas and uses of computers being introduced.”

For the purposes of the present study, the current stage in CALL is of particular importance, since the studies which are analysed below are concerned with the current position of CALL. The current position can be somewhat an intersection between what Warschauer (1996) calls *Integrative CALL* and what is termed *Ubiquitous CALL* (Veselá, 2012). *Integrative CALL* is a perspective on language learning and technology, which both seek to integrate various skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) and the applied technology into the language learning process (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Integrative CALL approaches are based on two important technological developments: multimedia computers and the Internet (Warschauer, 1996). From the theoretical point of view, within Integrative CALL, there is a broad emphasis on meaningful interaction within an authentic discourse; and from the technological point of view, the development of computer networking allows a computer to be used as a vehicle for interactive human communication. Thus computers can be seen as mediating tools which shape the ways people interact with the world (e.g. spreadsheets, accessing and organizing information through the databases and word processors). The main purpose of programmes based on such socio-cognitive approach is to allow learners to reconstruct the original texts and, subsequently, to develop their own constructions of language. Computer simply facilitates access to other people as well as to the necessary information data (Yang, 2010). To conclude, the role of computer in Integrative CALL is to “(...) provide alternative contexts for social interaction; to facilitate access to existing discourse communities and the creation of new ones” (ibid, p. 910).

Ubiquitous CALL is characterized by omnipresent technology and pervasive presence of foreign languages. Veselá (2012, p. 40) cites Wheeler (2009), who developed the idea about ubiquitous computing in a learning context, and claims that if the following definition is applied to CALL, the term “Ubiquitous CALL” is approvable: “U-learning will rely heavily on access to devices and tools that enable and support learning in any context, whether mobile or static, anywhere 24/7, and in a manner that is seamless and unobtrusive. It will also need to be ‘intelligent’ according to the strictest interpretation of the ubiquitous model, so

that it can predict changing contexts and user needs as they occur. The key tools of U-learning will be mobile phones, laptops and other wireless devices.” CALL is not only about learning languages online. It involves a wide range of technological tools that can be effectively used by both teachers and learners in order to successfully support language education.

The use of qualitative survey in CALL research

The following part of the study is focused on the analysis of current studies from the field of language pedagogy that use qualitative survey. The studies were selected according to the main topic, i.e. we made an attempt to focus on a specific field of language pedagogy i.e. CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). We have decided to focus on CALL because it is of particular interest of the author of the study, and will serve for the purposes of the further research in the field of CALL.

The main objectives of the present study were set as follows:

1. *To learn about the diversity of different issues investigated within CALL by the use of the method of qualitative survey;*
2. *To find out whether qualitative survey was supplemented by other methods of research;*
3. *To learn about the selected aspects of research methodology applied in the studies, i.e. sampling, data gathering, instrument, units of analysis, etc.*

With regard to the research aims, we have formulated the following research questions:

1. *What issues are investigated within research studies on CALL, i.e. what was the focus of the studies using qualitative survey?*
2. *Was qualitative survey supplemented by other research methods?*
3. *What information is provided about the sample, instrument and the units of analysis?*

We would like to start the analysis with the study called “A Qualitative Survey of Tertiary Instructor Attitudes towards Project-Based CALL” by Debski and Gruba (1999) from the University of Melbourne, Australia. Although the study is not a current one, we have made up our mind to analyse it as, altogether with a precise description of all of the aspects of the methodology, it can be considered as a perfect example of how to use the method of qualitative survey in the field of language pedagogy. All the remaining studies presented here are of more current type.

As the title of the study implies, the main *focus* is to investigate tertiary instructor attitudes towards Project-Based CALL. The method of qualitative survey was not accompanied by any other qualitative or quantitative method. As for the qualitative survey *sample*, the selection was based on the recommendation that the “inclusion of a wide variety of voices in a dataset best informs the construction of conceptual framework” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, cited in Debski & Gruba, 1999, p. 224). Eight instructors, with the different amount of teaching experience, teaching styles and familiarity with computers were chosen for the purposes of the study. Such choice of the participants in the sample corresponds with Jansen’s (2010) diversity sample, which is based on saturation.

As for the *data collection instrument*, the series of 8 semi-structured interviews (one with each of the participants) were used. The categories were not specifically defined before conducting the interviews, thus the study was *open*, or inductive.

Analysis of the data: The interviews were transcribed and consequently processed by a qualitative data analysis application. Based on a semi-structured interview schedule, three broad categories that helped with preliminary coding scheme were set out: language learning, project work, and technology. Furthermore, the subcategories were then derived from the intersections of the key components of the project-based CALL. The second stage of the data analysis was aimed at defining the classification scheme and in order to achieve this, the comments of the participants were either coded as ‘in concordance with’ or as ‘in discord with’ the pedagogical principles of PBCALL. The third stage of the analysis was focused on narrowing the framework in order to come up with a set of key insights about the attitudes towards PBCALL in the setting of the University of Melbourne. As a result, six key themes eventually emerged from the overall analysis of the data, i.e. Technology is potentially frustrating; Positioning of new technologies; New forms of management; Issues of responsibility and assessment; Computers as instruments for social interaction; and Authentic tasks and outcomes. The results of the study are summarized as a diversity of attitudes, accompanied and supported with the quotes from the semi-structured interviews.

In their study, Park and Son (2009) dealt with the factors that affect EFL teachers’ use of computers in the classroom and sought for EFL teachers’ perceptions on CALL and for possibilities to improve CALL practice in school settings. In order to investigate the mentioned issues, the authors employed a questionnaire as well as a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire served

as the main source for quantitative data and the semi-structured interview as a source for qualitative data, which were then analysed qualitatively. The qualitative survey was pre-structured, since the categories such as advantages and disadvantages of using computer in the classroom, factors influencing the use of CALL, future of CALL, etc. were defined beforehand. The *sample* for the qualitative survey within the study consisted of 12 secondary school EFL teachers from South Korea, both male and female, with their age ranging from 31 to 57 years. The participants had different length of teaching experience (from 3 to 26 years) and also various length of computer use for work-related purposes (from 4 to 15 years). The choice of the sample corresponds with the diversity sample. The study does not provide the precise description of qualitative data *analysis*, all we can learn is that the interviews were transcribed and translated into English (the original language was Korean). The data were then coded and analysed qualitatively and presented as statements of the teachers' responses to the questions. The results of the study are presented as a diversity of attitudes towards the integration of CALL into the classroom. The findings indicated that the teachers involved in the study had generally positive attitudes towards the integration of CALL and recognized the potentials of such integration in the language classroom.

The method of qualitative survey was employed by Fang (2010) as one of the methods possible to be used for the investigation of ELF college learners' perceptions on the Computer-Assisted writing program *MyAccess*. The study explored quantitative and qualitative aspects of using *MyAccess* in an EFL composition class from the learners' perceptions.

The *sample* consisted of forty-five junior university students from Taiwan, who had enrolled and took the EFL Computer Assisted writing course (*MyAccess*). After taking the course, the students filled in a questionnaire survey, which was recognized as a source for the subsequent quantitative analysis. As for the qualitative survey, the follow-up interviews were conducted with nine students; therefore the sample for qualitative survey consisted of the nine students. In order to ensure the saturation of a diversity sample, the students were chosen by a teacher on the basis of "their English writing proficiency: 3 from the top 33%, 3 from the middle 33%, and 3 from the bottom 34%." (ibid., p. 248)

A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was used as an *instrument* for gathering the data. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and were also recorded. "In addition to the first interview with the participant, second, or third follow-up interviews were conducted with the participant through e-mail or by telephone. These follow-up interviews were designed to

elicit further details suggested by the earlier interview, in order to best serve the purposes of the study, and suggest potential themes in the process of data analysis." (ibid.p.249) Hence we can claim that the qualitative survey was *open*, because the themes were not defined before conducting the interviews, thus they were found out through the process of the data analysis. The data were then analysed qualitatively; i.e. the data were coded, compared and categories were established. For the purpose of writing the report, the themes were broken down into the categories, as reflected by the interview data. The results are presented as a diversity of attitudes and perceptions towards the investigated phenomenon, supported by the quotes from the interviews.

The next analysed study that employed qualitative survey method was simply termed by its author (Abdallah, 2011) a 'qualitative study' and – as one can see - its aspects correspond with Jansen's (2010) description of a qualitative survey. The study is focused on the integration of the Internet for academic purposes in the context of a pre-service EFL teacher education in Egypt. The study attempted to answer the questions concerning the perceptions of teachers and students on the range of difficulties, challenges and concerns involved in the process of such integration; on the new forms of literacy skills of Egyptian EFL teachers and students; and last but not least, on the guidelines that can be used to inform the integration process. In order to answer the research questions, the methods of qualitative survey as the main source of the data, altogether with the content analysis were used.

As for the study sample, ten EFL student teachers and ten EFL teacher educators from Assiut University College of Education were chosen to participate in the study. The information about the saturation of the sample was not provided.

The main sources of data were semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in an unusual way. Instead of face-to-face procedures necessary for the recorded kind of interview, the participants of the study had the opportunity to choose from the two options - an interview via the e-mail, or via the chat. Both options were chosen by participants; in order to preserve the semi-structured nature in e-mail-based interviews, the participants were not sent all the questions at once, but only one question at a time and - based on the participant's response - another question was sent till all the needed data were obtained.

The data from the interviews were then analysed qualitatively and recurrent themes were found. The themes were compared and contrasted with the results from the content analysis. Therefore, we can claim that the qualitative survey was *open*, because the themes were found through the interpretation of the data.

The results are provided as a diversity of perceptions of EFL teacher students and educators on the chosen phenomenon.

The investigation of ESL students' attitudes towards a computer composition (WebCT) class was the principal focus of the study conducted by Ghandoura (2012). The purpose of the study was to investigate the beliefs and attitudes on the writing development through the extensive use of the Web-based course management system (CMS) called WebCT. The method of qualitative survey was accompanied by the observations, diaries, and content analysis of the collection of students' assigned papers. Classroom observations served for yielding the information about the structure of the class, instructor activities, including the success of repeating key ideas and brainstorming about topics in class. The diaries were used for investigating students' introspective processes.

The *sample* for the qualitative survey involved 13 ESL university students from the United States. As far as the saturation of the sample is concerned, the students came from different countries (e.g. Malaysia, Netherlands, Bulgaria, etc.) and held a degree in different fields (e.g. finance, business, nutrition, etc.). Most of the participants had not taken any *WebCT* course before conducting the study. The participants had various level of computer competence and their age ranged from 18 to 25 years.

The *data gathering instrument* for the qualitative survey was a series of unstructured interviews, in which students reported their perceptions on the course and materials. The qualitative survey in this case was *open*, since the analysis of the themes was done after the data had been gathered. The study does not provide the whole procedure of the data analysis, but the themes are justified by quotations from the interviews, which corresponds with the presentation of the results in the form described by Jansen (2010).

Last but not least, we would like to provide an analysis of a qualitative survey method as it was used in a most recent study conducted by Erguvan (2014). The study was focused on the exploration of instructors' perceptions towards the use of a web-based instructional tool called *Achieve3000* in a private higher education institute in Kuwait. The mentioned program was used in two consecutive courses as part of the coursework, with the main focus on the Academic English skills. The qualitative survey with the semi-structured interview as a data collection *instrument* was used as the only method within the study, thus it was not accompanied by any other qualitative or quantitative method.

The *sample* for the study consisted of eight (four male, four female) academics who had used the program *Achieve3000* in the English department of a private

Kuwaiti university. Due to the fact that Kuwait is a culturally diversified country, the author of the study tried to cover the requirement of saturation processes by the selection of the participants that reflected the situation of cultural diversification. Therefore, the sample involved 2 Americans, 2 Indians, 1 British, 1 Jordanian, 1 New Zealander and 1 Russian. All the participants had extensive experience in teaching English and various levels of ICT use in education experience.

Author(s), Year	Focus	Sample for qualitative survey	Data collection instrument	Other methods		Open vs. Pre- structu red
				Quanti tative	Quali tative	
1. Debski and Gruba, 1999	instructor attitudes towards Project-Based CALL	8 tertiary instructors	Semi- structured interview	x	x	Open
2. Park and Son, 2009	factors affecting EFL teachers' use of CALL; EFL teachers' perceptions of CALL and ways to improve CALL practice in school settings	12 teachers	Semi- structured interview	Question naire survey	x	Pre- structured
3. Fang 2010	ELF college learners' perceptions on the Computer- Assisted writing program <i>MyAccess</i>	9 students	Semi- structured interview	Question naire survey	x	Open
4. Abdallah 2011	Perceptions on the integration of the Internet for academic purposes of a pre-service English teacher education programme	10 students + 10 instructors	Semi- structured interviews via chat or e-mail	x	Content analysis	Open
5. Ghandoura 2012	ESL students' attitudes about a computer- aided composition (<i>WebCT</i>) class	13 ESL students	Unstructured interview	x	Diaries Observa tions	Open
6. Erguvan 2014	faculty members' perceptions of a specific web-based instruction tool (<i>Achieve3000</i>) in an academic English setting	8 academics	Semi- structured interview	x	x	Open

Table 2 Selected CALL oriented studies that used qualitative survey

As already mentioned above, the data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted with all the participants specified in the research sample. Audio recordings were transcribed, and in order to ensure reliability and validity, the participants were presented the interview transcriptions for their approval before using them for the analysis. The raw data was then coded and categorized. "In this context, the paragraph that expresses a complete opinion was specified as the unit of analysis." (ibid. p. 118) Here again, the qualitative survey was *open*, as the categories were defined through the analysis of the raw data.

The data analysis showed that the participants of the study had generally positive views towards the use of an online instructional tool. The discussion contains a diversity of perceptions on the investigated issue, supplemented by the quotes of the participants.

Conclusion

We have analysed the use of the qualitative survey method in six studies – one of them (Debski and Gruba 1999) was not very current, but was used as an example with excellent description of the use of qualitative survey method. The other five studies were current ones, ranging from 2009 to 2014. The summary of the analysis is displayed in the Table 2 above. All of the selected studies were concentrated on CALL, as a part of foreign language pedagogy. As already mentioned, we have chosen the studies focusing on CALL because this selection has further research implications for the author of the present study, and moreover, the studies needed to be connected with each other not only in terms of the methodology used, but also in terms of the common topic. However, it must be noted that the primary focus of the present study was not to analyse the conclusions of the studies, but the main attention was placed on the application of the qualitative survey method in the selected studies. Therefore, neither Table 2, nor the analysis of the studies provides the final results and conclusions of the analysed studies.

In order to summarize the main features of the analysed studies, we would like to provide the following answers to each of the research questions:

1. What issues are investigated within research studies on CALL, i.e. what was the focus of the studies using qualitative survey?

All of the analysed studies were concentrated on the field of CALL. Debski and Gruba (1999) investigated instructor attitudes on Project Based CALL; Park and Son (2009) explored factors affecting EFL teachers' use of CALL and EFL

teachers' perceptions of CALL and ways to improve CALL practice in school settings; Fang (2010) and Ghandoura (2012) concentrated on the learners' perceptions on a specific Computer Assisted writing program; Abdallah (2001) aimed to elicit perceptions on integration of the Internet in the course; and, finally, Erguvan (2014) sought for the perceptions of a specific web-instruction tool. To conclude, all of the analysed studies were investigating 'perceptions' or 'attitudes of either students or teachers, or both of them, towards some specific phenomenon in the field of CALL. Since such perceptions or attitudes towards any phenomenon are always diverse, and as Jansen (2010, p.2) states, the investigation of "diversity of some topic of interest" should be the main aim of a qualitative survey, it can be concluded that all of the studies fulfilled the requirement to explore the diversity within a given population.

2. Was qualitative survey supplemented by other research methods?

Only two of the analysed studies (Debski & Gruba, 1999; Erguvan, 2014) used qualitative survey as the only research method. Two other studies (Park & Son, 2009; Fang, 2010) were supplemented by another quantitative method, i.e. a questionnaire survey. The last two studies employed qualitative approach only, and used another qualitative method – content analysis (Abdallah, 2011), or qualitative methods – diaries and observations (Ghandoura, 2012).

3. What information is provided about the sample, instrument and the units of analysis?

As far as the *sample* for qualitative survey is concerned, Jansen (2010) states that it is not efficient to use large random sample; the sample for the qualitative survey should be purposively selected as *diversity* sample that should "...cover all existing relevant varieties of the phenomenon (*saturation*).” (ibid. p.5) The analysed studies used small samples from eight up to twenty participants. The sample in two of the studies (Park & Son, 2009; Ghandoura, 2012) consisted of EFL/ESL learners, three studies (Debski & Gruba, 1999; Park & Son, 2009; Erguvan, 2014) used a sample that consisted of teachers, or instructors. Only Abdullah (2011) used a sample that consisted of both, the students and teachers. The samples were used purposefully and the studies in general tried to cover the saturation by selecting diverse participants for the survey, e.g. the last of the analysed studies conducted by Erguvan (2014) was based upon the fact that the country where the study was conducted, i.e. Kuwait, is a culturally diversified country, therefore the sample involved 2 Americans, 2 Indians, 1 British, 1 Jordanian, 1 New Zealander and 1 Russian. All of the participants had extensive

experience in teaching English and various levels of ICT use in education experience

Another example can be found in the study conducted by Fang (2010), where the students were chosen by a teacher on the basis of "their English writing proficiency: 3 from the top 33%, 3 from the middle 33%, and 3 from the bottom 34%" (ibid, p. 248). The most common criteria for choosing the participants for the qualitative survey were different levels of computer experience, various fields of study, or age of the participants.

We also investigated the *pre-structured* versus *open* nature of the qualitative survey. As already mentioned, according to Jansen (2010), in an *open* survey, relevant topics, dimensions and categories are identified through the interpretation of raw data (e.g. interview transcripts). In a *pre-structured* survey, some main categories, topics and dimensions are defined beforehand and the identification of these issues in the research units is guided by a structured protocol for questioning. Regarding this classification, most of the qualitative surveys within the analysed studies were open and only Park and Son (2009) conducted the survey that was pre-structured in nature.

As far as the *data collection instrument* is concerned, when employing a qualitative survey, in most of the studies the data were gathered via a semi-structured interview. Only Ghandoura (2012) gathered the data with the help of an unstructured interview. Within most of the studies the semi-structured interviews were conducted in a traditional way – as a recorded face-to-face interview. Abdallah (2011) used an unusual approach to conduct the interview - the participants in the sample had the opportunity to choose from an interview conducted by means of e-mail, or chat. Both options were chosen by participants. In order to preserve the semi-structured nature in e-mail-based interviews, the participants were not sent all the questions at once, but only one question at a time and, based on the participant's response, another question was sent till all the needed data were obtained.

Data analysis is another issue we tended to explore while analysing the studies. A precise example of data analysis could be found only in the first and the oldest study conducted by Debski and Gruba (1999) and can be summarized as follows: the interviews were transcribed and consequently processed by a qualitative data analysis application. Based on the interview schedule, three broad categories that helped with preliminary coding scheme were set. Furthermore, the subcategories were derived from the intersections of the key components of the project-based CALL. The second stage of the data analysis concentrated upon an attempt aimed at defining the classification scheme. The

third stage of the analysis was focused on narrowing the framework in order to come up with a set of key insights about the attitudes towards the phenomenon under the study. As a result, six key themes eventually emerged from the overall analysis of the data. Finally, the results of the study were summarized as a diversity of attitudes, accompanied and supported with the quotes from the interviews. The remaining examples of the analysed studies did not provide such a precise data analysis process. The most often found commentary was that the data were transcribed, coded, and further qualitatively analysed. In all the studies, the results were presented as a diversity of themes developed in the process of data analysis and supported by the quotes from the interviews.

To conclude, qualitative survey is a research method that can be effectively used in small-scale qualitative studies in various fields of study. As for the language pedagogy and CALL especially, on the basis of the analysed studies we can claim that it is efficient to use this method in order to investigate perceptions and attitudes on a number of different phenomena that involve various means of technology that have potential to enhance teaching/learning EFL/ESL. This can be achieved either by the application of this method as the sole method employed in the study or, more efficiently, to combine it with different methods of either qualitative or quantitative type.

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INSPIRATIONS

Addressing Differentiation: Effective Classroom Teaching Strategies

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Abstract

This paper on addressing differentiation, aims to help teachers of English and of other disciplines, implement differentiated instruction in their own teaching practices. Research (Paron et al., 2013; Taffe et al., 2012; Brimijoin, 2005; Brown, 2004; Gregory, Chapman, & Tomlinson, 2001) has found that teachers can differentiate content, process or product for a more effective student learning process. Differentiated instruction in the classroom, whether in schools or higher education, is the belief that all students can learn but will do so at different rates and through different approaches. The effectiveness of these principles of differentiated instruction as a teaching approach, lies in the fact that they are carried out proactively with careful planning; Lawrence Brown describes this as a “multilevel lesson planning system” (2004). The paper will provide readers with practical teaching strategies, multiple examples and useful tools to maximise the learning of all students both in the English language classroom and mainstream classrooms. These strategies can be adapted to all learning contexts.

Keywords

differentiated instruction (DI), English Language, Addressing Differentiation, Teaching Strategies, Effective Learning, Feedback Strategy and Remedial Practices, Formative Assessment.

Introduction

Classrooms where there are students with mixed language levels and mixed learning abilities, whether they are in the English language classroom or mainstream lecture sessions, will usually come across several factors that will either aid in the learning process of the students or undermine it. In such classrooms, some students will learn fast while other students will need to work twice as hard in order to accelerate their learning process. The effectiveness of teaching in mixed language level or mixed ability classrooms largely depends on the effort invested by the instructor into carefully planning the module as well as planning for each teaching session. Such proactive planning is not just essential in overcoming the challenges posed by mixed ability and mixed language level

classrooms but also highly recommended in order to address the learning needs of each individual student within a group setting. In previous years, little attention was paid to the importance of addressing differentiation in the mixed ability and mixed language level classroom as a teaching strategy. Today, with the attention paid to staff development and student-centered learning, addressing differentiation or Differentiated Instruction (DI) as it is often called, has become a widely used instructional approach to ensure all students work towards one common goal but achieve at their own pace and in relation to their own learning style and language level. Although much of the professional development literature concerned with Differentiated Instruction (DI) discusses the necessity of addressing differentiation, it does not give the steps of planning for differentiated instruction, and leaves out what to do during instruction that is both practical and effective in order to engage students to reach their full potential within a group context. This paper aims to fill this gap.

The aim is to provide instructors in the EFL classroom and the mainstream field where there are students of mixed language levels or mixed abilities with practical and effective strategies for addressing differentiation. The paper will a) define Differentiated Instruction, b) discuss class instruction strategies for addressing differentiation, c) highlight feedback strategies which address differentiation and the different forms relevant to a variety of learning styles, d) provide remedial and developmental practices to accelerate learning for all learners within a group setting, e) conclude with a summing up of the most desired traits of instructors who differentiate effectively, f) list the most common characteristics of an effectively differentiated learning environment.

Background

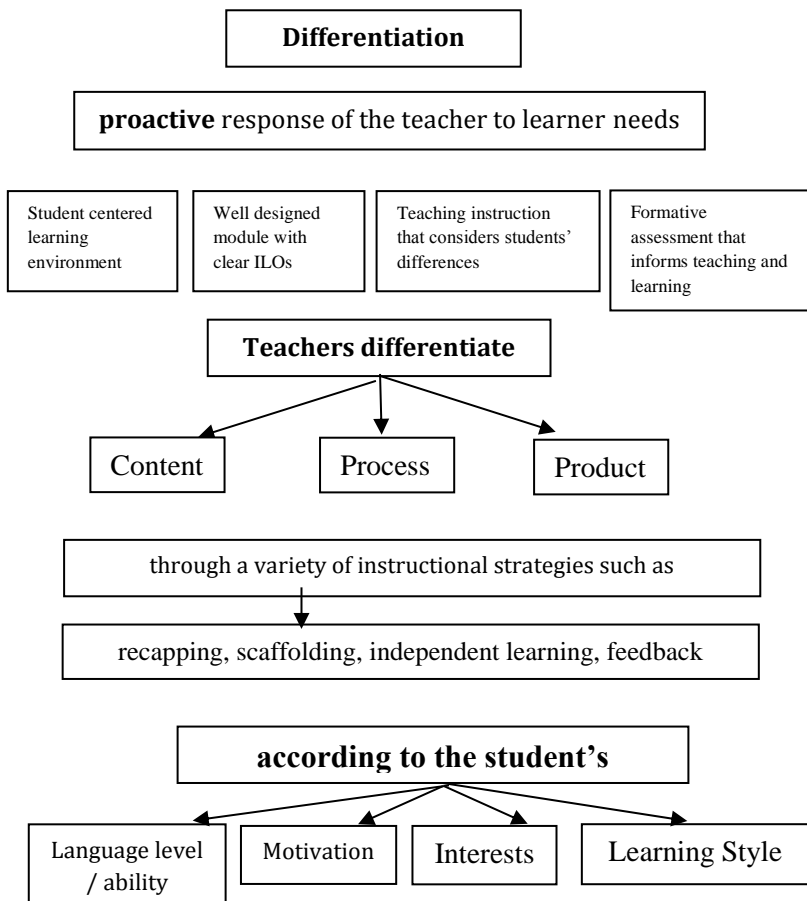
The British University in Egypt (BUE) was established in 2005 as a private university. The BUE today boasts a cohort of 6000 students all of which come from different educational backgrounds. Instruction at the BUE is in English and most of the registered students at the university are L2. Although many, if not all, of the students enrolled at the BUE would have acquired some English language learning in their secondary school education, many continue to require English language instruction. All students entering the university are required to take a placement test which determines their English language level in the English language programme offered by the university. The English language programme at the BUE, is English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Students are placed in one of the four English levels (Intermediate, Upper Intermediate, Advanced, Advanced Writing). In the English language classes, students are grouped according to their

language level, hence the students are addressed according to their level on entry. On the other hand, in their degree areas, students are grouped based on the module relevant to their Faculty and not their language level. It is because of this reason of having mixed language levels in the classrooms, that the BUE, in order to ensure it delivers high quality teaching and learning in accordance with UK higher education standards, enforced the philosophy of differentiated instruction. The BUE in its vision to become the first leading British university in the MENA region adheres to rigid quality standards in teaching and learning. Among such standards is ensuring that all students are enabled to reach their full potential through appropriate academic support and that all academic staff receive professional development that builds their capacity to fulfill this vision.

Differentiated Instruction (DI)

A significant number of research has indicated that a major segment of learners are able to reach their full potential in the classroom when differentiated instruction is applied as an instructional strategy. This type of instruction as Irujo (2004) presents it, is not individual teaching but rather, all learners learn the same in the classroom using different learning approaches based on their learning ability. It is also the balance teachers make between the input activities and the learners' language level / achievement level. Gregory and Chapman describe differentiated instruction as "a philosophy that enables teachers to plan strategically in order to reach the needs of the diverse learners in classrooms today" (2001). Likewise, Brown articulates differentiation as a "multilevel lesson planning system" (2004). Boyd-Batstone (2006) states that "differentiated instruction gives us the mindset and tools for "how" to teach successfully." Tomlinson (2013) and Visser (1993) both support the view of differentiation as a process by which "teachers meet the need for progress ... by selecting appropriate teaching methods to match the individual student's learning strategies, within a group situation." Instructors can differentiate in content (what they teach), in the process (how they teach) or the product (evidence of learning) in order to help all learners, in the one class, to prepare for the final common assessment. The principles of effective differentiation in the classroom lie in the fact that the process is carried out proactively.

This simple diagram adapted from Tomlinson and Moon's (2013) *Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom* shows the key elements of effective differentiated instruction.



The philosophy of differentiated instruction advocates the setting of high standards for all learners and the belief that all students can achieve those standards at their own pace by providing them with varying levels of scaffolding

so they can all work towards the same goals. This should ultimately lead to effective assessment and feedback.

The Underpinnings of Differentiation

I. Planning for Differentiation

Planning ahead is the foundation of differentiated instruction; many students are physically present and psychologically absent “about 40% of students... lose interest because they cannot keep up, and many are bored by the lack of appropriate challenge” (Tomlinson, 2014). Instruction that is based on planning one lesson for everyone and then “trying in the moment to make adaptations when students indicate trouble is not differentiation; it is reaction” (Parsons, Dodman, & Burrowbridge, 2013). Teachers who address differentiation do not assume that the road map for learning of one student is the same as the others; proactive planning allows them to prepare alternatives that facilitate for each student to “learn as deeply as possible and as quickly as possible” (Tomlinson, 2014). Engaging instruction can only begin with pre-assessment at the start of the teaching semester. Pre-assessment or diagnostic tests can yield valuable data to instructors with regards to students’ varying levels of mastery / knowledge level and skills. The analysis of pre-assessment data helps instructors identify students’ strengths and weaknesses in regard to the degree of mastering the module’s objectives. The analysis of data also allows instructors to proactively plan and design appropriate methods of scaffolding and material prior to the start of teaching while keeping grouping students in mind for a more effective learning environment.

Planning for the classroom entails several key elements among which is helping students identify their role and responsibility in the learning process. Addressing differentiation may be primarily a teaching philosophy but the complexity of students thinking makes it a shared responsibility of the teaching and learning process. Just as teachers play a key role in creating a positive student-centered learning environment, students too must be aware that differentiated instruction requires completing pre-tasks prior to coming to the classroom, searching for additional background information through extra readings to prepare for the learning process, identifying knowledge gaps by taking quizzes that require self-correction, taking risk in the classroom in order to maximize their learning process, benefit from feedback on assessment and take advantage of the remedial activities recommended by the instructor for further development.

II. Instruction in the Differentiated Classroom

Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a certain cohort of students during the planning stage for addressing differentiation, allows instructors to plan each teaching session with a more flexible and inclusive teaching approach. Gradually introducing differentiation strategies into one's own teaching approach can yield great effects because the instructor, in a sense, is prepared for any learning challenges that may arise during the teaching process. The learning environment of the differentiated classroom is set up to provide learners with engaging instruction through a variety of material of varying difficulty. It is however, important at this point to note, that research has indicated that many teachers often struggle with selecting tasks of the right complexity (Watzke, 2007; Samuda, 2001). By assigning pre-tasks to be completed prior to coming to the learning classroom, the tone is set for the success of each learner. Pre-tasks can include simple assignments such as referring students to a list of vocabulary to familiarize them with new terminology necessary for the session, request they watch a short documentary on which the session can build on, ask them to complete a worksheet online to help them fill in any knowledge gaps, refer them to screen-casts which focus on main concepts, or have them write a few lines in a learning journal about what challenged them in the previous session and how they plan to overcome this challenge should it arise again in future sessions. By completing pre-tasks students have already become involved in the learning process even before it has begun in the classroom.

Implementing effective instruction in the differentiated classroom relies heavily on the teacher's ability to lower the affective factor and consider the psychological aspects of learning. These two aspects are directly related to the theory of thinking styles explored by Sternberg (2000) in *Handbook of intelligence* and Grigorenko & Sternberg's (1997) *Styles of thinking abilities and academic performance* as well as Sternberg and Zhang's (2001) *Thinking Styles and teachers' characteristics*. According to Sternberg and Zhang (2001) in *Perspectives on thinking, learning, and cognitive styles* thinking styles are divided into 3 types:

Legislative. The legislative student likes to decide what to do and how to do it, rather than to be told. Legislative students prefer to do work on projects than take exams. They may therefore be penalized by conventional instruction and assessments, because of their preference for a creative way of thinking.

Executive. The executive student prefers to be told what to do. The student with an executive orientation will take naturally to memorizing given material,

taking multiple-choice or short-answer tests, and doing assignments in ways that teachers expect.

Judicial. The judicial student tends to prefer evaluation, analysis, comparison–contrast, and judgment of existing ideas, strategies and projects. The judicial person tends to like evaluative essays, commenting on other people's ideas, and assessing others' strengths and weaknesses.

When instructors take the above factors into consideration while selecting or preparing in-class tasks and at the same time allow flexibility for students to choose material, it is then, that the tasks help accelerate the learning process and facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge.

Introducing some flexibility in making a match of instruction to styles is also important while implementing in-class tasks as it can give students the opportunity to demonstrate their true learning abilities. Students while working on in-class tasks depending on their difficulty can be grouped in pairs, small work groups of mixed abilities/language levels or can be asked to work individually. Grouping students according to the afore mentioned, has proved that students are able to pursue their learning process in a learning environment that is safe for risk taking and one that is conducive to exploring new learning opportunities without fear of failure. At first impression a classroom where differentiated instruction applies grouping to styles of thinking or learning abilities, may seem chaotic and noisy; however, close observation reveals a well-planned and organized class that is engaged in meaningful learning. Moreover, setting expectations for the class or introducing what can be called "classroom routines" allows a common understanding of what is expected every class to be established between instructor and students. These expectations help students understand what they are doing in class, why it is being done and what will happen next. Some examples can include: writing clearly the learning objectives of each teaching session where it is visible to all students at the start of the teaching session, listing the tasks that need to be completed during the session and ticking off what has been completed as students move from one task to the next, provide 40 minutes of instruction relating to assignment directions and expectations or reinforce at the start of each session important concepts which you as the instructor intend to build on during the session. This strategy of setting expectations in the teaching classroom lowers the affective factors and prompts students to explore new learning experiences.

The differentiated instruction classroom takes into consideration the difficulties which students may encounter as they progressively become over a period of time autonomous learners with life-long skills. Instructors in a

differentiated classroom work deliberately with students to shift the responsibility of the learning process from the instructor to the student. A useful strategy for developing learner autonomy is the "I/We/You" model which entails that the instructor introduce key information of the topic/task, then model the task by walking students through the application stages and finally in the "You" stage, the responsibility of the learning process is shifted from the teacher to the learner. The learner is then required to work independently, in pairs or group work. This is one of the many heralds of differentiated instruction.

Effective differentiation begins by proactive planning but it does not end at just being prepared for teaching at the start of a semester. Each teaching session is built on the previous one. By reflecting on the previously taught session, the instructor is able through lesson planning to either proactively accommodate additional material or enhance his/her teaching practices based on what worked and what did not work well. This also includes continuous monitoring of students' progress and achievement through assessment. Good lesson planning when implemented consists of:

1. Reinforcing objectives based on the percentage to which the objectives of the previous session were mastered,
2. Administering a short assessment to determine whether the learning outcomes were mastered
3. Designing a variety of tiered (leveled) activities, that ensure mastery of the objectives

Using the planning sequence of objective, assessment followed by activity during class time, helps ensure that the teaching criterion will not be, "Is my lesson creative?" or "Does it employ enough of the right strategies?" but, "Will it be the best and fastest way to help my students achieve the desired learning objectives of the session?"

III. Assessment in the Differentiated Classroom

In a differentiated classroom, assessment is ongoing and diagnostic (Tomlinson, 2014). Assessment in the differentiated classroom is used for three main purposes: to plan instruction, guide instruction, and evaluate instruction. Effectively planning and implementing differentiated instruction, requires teachers to "engage in informed decision making by considering a myriad of instructional approaches and resources based on pre-identified instructional goals and objectives and guided by worthy assessment data revealing student need throughout the course of construction" (Biggs, 1999).

Purpose 1: Assessment for Planning Differentiated Instruction

Pre-assessment data prevents instructors from overlooking deficits in prerequisites that might impair student progress. It also permits instructors to begin instruction where students are and end instruction at appropriately challenging outcomes. In the absence of “carefully collected pre-assessment data, the teacher may start with assumptions of mastery and, as a result, the teacher may provide instruction on what the students’ have previously mastered, thus missing the opportunity to extend learning for students” (Moon, 2005).

Purpose 2: Assessment for Guiding Differentiated Instruction

Because students do not progress at the same rate and in the same patterns, it is necessary for instructors to monitor student progress through formative assessment during the course of instruction: “[t]eachers orchestrate a variety of classroom activities designed to help students learn, but even in the midst of this orchestration they must constantly gather information to make decisions about when to move on, stop, or change direction” (Lambdin & Forseth, 1996). Black & William’s (1998) research relevant to classroom formative assessment concludes that formative assessment *does* make a positive difference to student learning. A good method to collect data through formative assessment in order to make adjustments to instruction, assimilate new material or simply to take note of students’ levels of mastery and learning needs is the classroom assessment techniques (CATs).

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) are simple, non-graded in-class activities designed to give feedback on the teaching-learning process as it is happening. This strategy advocated by Angelo and Cross (1993) in their book *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* is an ideal method to use in any classroom to assess student achievement and to collect meaningful data. CATs help address the following questions:

- Are my students learning what I think I am teaching?
- Who is learning and who is not learning?
- What am I doing that is useful for these students?
- What am I doing that is not useful for these students?

Like all formative assessment, CATs can be administered at the end of each teaching session or at critical points in the module. CATs give teachers instant feedback about their students which can help them in a) making short-term modifications to teaching instruction and assessments, b) identifying at risk students, c) preparing for long-term modifications in programme development.

CATs also benefit students because they a) motivate students to participate in in-class activities, b) prompt students to take responsibility for their learning, c) develop students' critical thinking, d) help students monitor their own progress at certain intervals. For an example of CATs (see Appendix).

In the absence of ongoing formative assessment and reliable data collection, instructors may assume that "all learners are the same" (Moon, 2005). This false assumption may (a) prevent students from mastering the intended learning outcomes, (b) disengage students from the process of learning because material is either below or above their level, (c) result in students becoming disruptive because they are bored, or (d) affect the progression rate.

Purpose 3: Assessment for Evaluating Instruction for the Purpose of Differentiation

The effectiveness of differentiated instruction is evaluated based on students' level of mastery of the identified learning objectives, and grades. Assessment for the purpose of evaluating instruction tends to address these questions: "[t]o what degree has each student mastered all of the identified learning goals? Are there patterns within individual students' mastery that suggest "error" in the teaching process or a collective misunderstanding of the learning goals that may have arisen through this process? (Moon, 2005) This type of collected data is reliable enough to be utilized in reflecting on the effectiveness of teaching. Results which indicate that all students have achieved the learning outcomes can serve as evidence that the teaching strategies used for instruction were effective in accelerating and facilitating student learning. However, if, results reflect a poor level of achievement of the learning outcomes, it becomes a red flag that modifications are imperative in the teaching and learning process. Formative assessment at the same time can, by providing feedback, help develop "deep learning" among students (Biggs, 1999). Ongoing evaluative formative assessment is far more effective when instructors provide students during the instructional phase with feedback to help them monitor their own progress, and show them what steps need to be taken in order to develop and acquire the necessary skills.

IV. Feedback strategy for differentiation

Feedback plays a crucial role in the learning process of students after assessment in the differentiated classroom. Formative assessment feedback "has the capacity to turn each item of assessed work into an instrument for the further development of each student's learning" (Hyland, 2000). Hayland's (2000) study

on feedback indicated that 90% of students believed that feedback can “engender a sense of achievement, and raise their marks in future work.” Research by Higgins & Hartley (2002) points out that 80% of students interviewed in their investigation regarding feedback, felt that feedback was useful when instructors highlighted the “strengths and weaknesses of their work.” Moreover, 75% of students interviewed for research on the types of feedback found to be most purposeful by Higgins & Hartley (2002) indicated that comments which clarify errors and provide remedial strategies for development are highly useful and important. Feedback, however, is in a way shaped by how instructors perceive the role of feedback which is also likely to influence what they provide. Some instructors may give remedial advice, while others will simply “provide evaluative information as a way of justifying the grade” (Higgins & Hartley, 2002). Feedback strategy for differentiation is a coordinated plan integrating the following aspects of the learning process with feedback (Narciss, Feedback in instructional contexts, 2012):

- scope and function – what (instructional) goals or purposes the feedback serves;
- content – what information is included in the feedback;
- presentation – in which form and modes the feedback content is presented to a learner;
- timing – when within the learning process.

In most universities today, students have an overload of coursework and if the feedback they receive on their formative assessment does not help them to improve, then feedback may be perceived as irrelevant. More importantly, feedback on formative assessment, if it “is not timely students might not make the effort to go back to the assignment, which may seem distant and remote” (Mackenzie, 1976). Additionally, if feedback is vague or too general and does not provide helpful information for development, it might be viewed negatively by students. It was found for example that feedback which included one-word phrases such as “well done” or “improvement required” were confusing for students.

Effective feedback is characterized by being timely, specific, relevant, constructive and developmental. In our experience at The British University in Egypt (BUE) we have found that providing students with a Coursework Feedback form indicating strengths and weaknesses throughout the assignment was useful was helpful (see Appendix). This approach takes into account the need to

eliminate any vague comments, use correction codes that are consistent, explain misconceptions and make suggestions for improvements for future work.

Feedback can take many forms: generic feedback, individual feedback and peer feedback. Generic feedback of the most common errors made by a group of students in a particular task can be perceived as vague and too general. It must however, be pointed out that generic feedback when complemented by individualized and specific comments on areas of development and suggestions for improvement is more effective for students because it is tailored to their learning needs. Research on individual feedback strategies or tailoring feedback to important factors of the learning process has been recognized as a promising developmental instructional strategy (Narciss, et al., 2014). Peer feedback benefits students and helps them identify what requires improvement based on criteria for evaluation such as a rubric or checklist. Yang et al. (2006) studied students' revisions of tasks after receiving feedback and found that they made more meaning-level revisions after receiving peer feedback. Peer feedback has been found to have benefits such as increasing the amount of interaction and communication in the classroom as well as increasing learners' confidence and critical thinking skills. The students have opportunities to engage in important cognitive activities, such as deciding what constitutes a good or poor piece of work as well as gain an understanding of what assessment is. Lastly, students get a better understanding of what is required to achieve a particular standard.

Advancement in technology has introduced a variety of feedback forms which appeals to the millennium generation. Some of these forms include: turnitin (Originality Report), audio-feedback and screen-capture feedback. The feedback is individualized and pertinent to each student's particular errors. Hence immersing the student deeply in the process of learning and ultimately independent self - development. In our effort to continue addressing differentiation, a recently conducted study in the English Department at the British University in Egypt (BUE) out of 85 Advanced English level students on audio feedback found that "on average, 80% of the students believed that audio feedback fulfilled their need for either written or in person feedback." The study also found that "473 words of complements, constructive and critical academic comments were allowed to be given to each student" (Deihl & Lane, 2015).

All the above feedback methods have significant potential for assisting students through differentiation in understanding the goals of an assignment and closing the gap between current and desired performance. However, "[f]ormative feedback comments can only be effective if students ... make use of them" (Higgins & Hartley, 2002) and find them to be of relevance.

V. Remedial and developmental practices for addressing differentiation

Students need remedial practices in addition to instructor feedback in order to know how to move forward: “[p]roviding error feedback helps students evaluate, reflect and improve their performance (Jensen, Kornell, & Bjork, 2010). Wiggins (2004), stresses that the learner needs both feedback and guidance to be able to learn effectively. Accordingly, raising students’ awareness and helping them understand the central importance of feedback in their educational development is the first step towards improvement. Specific advice is therefore vital in ensuring students understand their areas of strength and key areas of development. In our experience in the English Department at The British University in Egypt (BUE), we have found that using Correction Symbols aligned to remedial activities set a common understanding regarding the error and provide guidance for development (see Appendix).

Helping students move ahead can be a difficult task if the number of errors is overwhelming. Ellis et al. (2008) argue that “[l]earners are more likely to attend to corrections directed at a ...limited number of error[s] and [hence are more likely] to develop a clearer understanding of the nature of the error and the correction needed.” Using error awareness logs, allows students to focus on rules that pertain to their most frequent error type and raises their awareness of patterns of error. A remedial practice using error logs, requires students to engage in a reflective writing activity before starting the final draft. In the English Department at The British University in Egypt (BUE), it was found that using an Error Awareness Sheet helped students better understand error feedback in a manner that addresses differentiation and relates to their individual learning deficiencies (see Appendix). The remedial practice of providing students with focus for academic development following assessment feedback, addresses differentiation by allowing individual students to recognize their patterns of error, develop independent learning skills, take responsibility for their academic success and frees them from dealing with overwhelming complicated instructor comments which may otherwise prove to be ineffective. Evidence supporting the effectiveness of this remedial practice was found by (Suzuki, 2012) who argues that this reflection on error feedback is associated with improved performance in later tasks. Providers of feedback, in the differentiated classroom, need to base their feedback on comments that are meaningful keeping in mind, the long-term educational value for their students.

Conclusion

The discussion in this paper around differentiated instruction leads to several pedagogical implications. First, it is fundamental to proactively plan to use a variety of material or tiered activities to meet the learning needs of weak students and at the same time challenge the more advanced learners prior to the start of teaching. It is also of vital importance that instructors collect reliable data through continuous formative assessment in order to monitor student progress, provide constructive feedback, suggest developmental practices and make informed decisions about teaching and learning. Respecting students' preferences while providing comments on students' work ensures that students know how to use formative feedback and understand why feedback is important. Additionally, sharing the rationale behind remedial practices for academic development with students is bound to accelerate the learning process. In a differentiated classroom "[e]verybody learns ... and expectations are high even for students who don't yet have high expectations for themselves" (Lemov, 2010).

It can therefore be argued that instructors who effectively address differentiation in their classrooms should have four main characteristics, they should: a) have extensive knowledge about how students learn and effective pedagogy, b) consistently monitor students' progress through multiple assessment methods, c) be capable of delivering effective feedback accompanied by remedial activities to facilitate the learning process for all students, d) be highly reflective of their action after teaching and in-action during teaching.

Practical and effective differentiation strategies have been shared in this paper, in order to, familiarise instructors with what constitutes a successful differentiated learning environment and maximise student learning and achievement within a group setting. These differentiated instruction practices are merely a means to an end. In our experience, successful differentiation is characterised by:

- Having prior knowledge of students' abilities and knowledge level through reliable and valid diagnostic pre-assessment.
- Implementing monitoring methods such as (CATs) to aid in gauging students' progress and to allow effective grouping using relevant instructional strategies to match students' skills and knowledge.
- Providing support strategies where all students are motivated to reach the highest levels of their potential.
- Using feedback and remedial practices to promote independent learning.

Although there are many ways to address differentiation in the classroom, it is the knowledge level and the strengths and weaknesses of students' learning abilities within a specific instructional context that primarily guide the decisions of instructors about how best to differentiate. Instructors can easily adapt the strategies and practices shared in this paper for a meaningful and rewarding educational process. It is worth noting that to date there have been no studies focusing on the negative implications of differentiated instruction.

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Appendices

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

Activity # 1 Background Knowledge Probe

These are short simple questions administered at the start of the semester in order to determine students' knowledge baseline level and the most appropriate level to begin instruction.

Example: Where would you place a thesis statement in an essay?

Activity # 2 The One Minute Paper

These are questions that can be shared at the end of the teaching session.

1. What was the most important thing you learned during this class?
2. What are you still confused about?
3. Write down three key concepts or main ideas from today's class.
4. How can I help you understand the concept that is most difficult for you?
5. Are the questions asked during class contributing to your learning?
6. Am I using enough examples?

Activity # 3 Focused Listing

This strategy of asking student to list what they know can help instructors identify knowledge gaps.

1. List ten fallacies with a short explanation for each.
2. List three places for the main idea in a reading passage.
3. List three grammatical or structural errors you usually do in your essays.
4. List the information required about a source in your essay bibliography.
5. List different types of reliable sources.

Activity # 4 Reading Rating Sheet

After completing a reading passage give students 4 or 5 questions on the reading taken in class.

1. How useful was it to you in improving your vocabulary and reading skills?
2. What did you learn from it that you want to make sure to remember?

Activity # 5 Misconception Checklist

Use this method to uncover any incorrect knowledge that may be blocking the students' learning process. Use True or False or MCQ.

Example:

A paragraph is:

- a. one block of words
- b. has more than one block of words
- c. a sequence of logical sentences about one topic

Note: CATs can be used in the traditional pen and paper assessment method or implemented using teaching technology such as Socrative.com (see Appendix)

British University in Egypt Coursework Feedback Form

*The member of staff responsible for the coursework assessment must complete all sections below and return a completed copy to the student normally **within 15 working days** of the deadline for submission, or of the actual date of submission, whichever is the later.*

SECTION A: STUDENT'S DETAILS (*To be completed by the tutor*)

Family name:	
Given name:	Student ID:
Module code:	
Module title:	
Group:	Tutor:

SECTION C: FEEDBACK (*To be completed by the tutor*)

Specific aspects of your work that were effective:
Specific aspects of your work that need more work:
Specific advice on how to improve your work:

Correction Symbols and Remedial Activities

Sym bol	Expla nation	Example	Remedial Activity
T	Incorrect verb tense	Wrong: When I <i>come</i> to the UK, I was surprised by many things. Revised: When I <i>came</i> to the UK, I was surprised by many things.	
WF	Incorrect verb or word form	Wrong: The U.S. and Japan used to be very <i>difference</i> . Revised: The U.S. and Japan used to be very <i>different</i> .	http://www.english-grammar.at/online_exercises/word-formation/wf017-coffee.htm
WO	Incorrect word order	Wrong: Hot and spicy food <i>Korean</i> is delicious. Revised: Hot and spicy Korean food is delicious.	http://www.tolearnenglish.com/exercise/s/exercise-english-2/exercise-english22382.php
SV	Incorrect subject-verb agreement	Wrong: John <i>do</i> not like sports. Revised: John <i>does</i> not like sports.	https://depts.dyc.edu/learningcenter/owl/exercises/agreement_sv_ex1.htm
RO	Run-on	Wrong: He will go to school <i>he will make good grades</i> . Revised: He will go to school, <i>and he will make good grades</i> .	http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/run-ons_add1.htm
FS	Use Formal Style	Wrong: Applicants who <i>don't</i> have strong computer skills <i>won't</i> be recruited. Revised: Applicants who <i>do not</i> have computer skills <i>will not</i> be recruited.	http://www.uefap.com/writing/exercise/future/styleex1.htm
Cit	Wrong or missing citation	Wrong: <i>Rajaratnam, 2001, 49, points to the possible economic and social costs incurred by a nation, when individuals work 24 hours a day.</i> Revised: <i>Rajaratnam (2001: 49) points to the possible economic and social costs incurred by a nation, when individuals work 24 hours a day.</i>	https://ilrb.cf.ac.uk/citingreferences/apaciv1/

Error Awareness Sheet

Put a tick (✓) in the second column for each error marked on your returned paper.

Symbol	Explanation	Total Number of Errors	Top- Priority Errors to Work on
T	Incorrect verb tense		
WF	Incorrect word form		
WO	Incorrect word order		
WW	Wrong word choice		
SV	Incorrect subject-verb agreement		.
N+P	Incorrect noun-pronoun agreement		
Art+N	Incorrect noun-article agreement		
RO	Run-on		
Frag	Fragment		
Prep	Incorrect use of a preposition		.
P	Punctuation		
Cap	Capitalization		
SP	Incorrect spelling		
FS	Use Formal Style		.
Cit	Wrong or missing citation		

Teaching Tools - Socrative.com

1. Log on to www.socrative.com
2. Register and create a free account as a teacher on socrative.com
3. A room number and password will be sent to your email after registration
4. Create quizzes in any of the provided formats (True or False, MCQ or Short Answer Questions) and administer them in class online either on a regular computer or a smart device
5. Results of the quizzes are sent immediately to your email on an excel sheet (no marking required)

Peer Feedback Checklist

Portfolio: Process of Writing - Introduction:

Use the following checklist to evaluate your colleague's introduction:

Indicate whether the descriptors are met by filling in Y (Yes), N (No) or NA (Not Applicable)

	Points to consider	Descriptor	Met
1	Introduction to topic	The introduction introduces the topic clearly.	
2	Background information and extent of the problem	The background information is a broad overview of the problem (definition / history / statistics on the extent of the problem / research results / expert's opinion) with in-text citation as relevant.	
3	Thesis statement / Outline of essay structure	The thesis statement clearly communicates the paper's main idea with its controlling ideas (causes and effects) appropriately expressed, to give the reader an overview of what will be discussed in the essay.	
4	Paragraph structure	There is a logical sequence of sentences with appropriate transitions, moving from the general to the specific.	
5	Style and Register	Academic formal writing style with appropriate relevant vocabulary is used.	
6	Sentence structure	The sentences are free of grammar, punctuation and spelling errors.	

Some remarks on teaching English to autistic learners

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Abstract

Learning English is a complex process. There exist many individual traits that contribute to progress in mastering language competences such as motivation, cognition, and attitude, learning style or previous experience with language learning. Nowadays we witness the fact of an increasing number of learners who lack some traits that are relevant to learning in general and learning English in particular. The aim of my article is to point at a specific group of autistic learners and their integration to normal population classes. We provide some basic guidelines for classroom work based on their disorders and clarify the reasoning behind approach, technique and tasks used in the English classes.

Key words: autism, language competence, strengths, weaknesses, techniques, tasks.

Introduction

Teaching and learning a foreign language is a long and frustrating process. Any language is a complex system of sounds, words and grammar structures and functions. Mastering a language requires reorganization of learner's thinking, lots of exposure and a large amount of practice. It takes some time to make the appropriate connections and to retain them so that the learner can retrieve them quickly when needed.

Obviously, there exist many individual traits that contribute to success in developing communicative competence such as motivation, cognition, and attitude, learning style or previous experience with language learning.

Unfortunately, nowadays we witness the fact of an increasing number of learners who lack some traits that are relevant to learning English. For all teachers it is important to realize that an individual approach to learners with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia is a must (dyslexia affects processing and interpreting written information; dyscalculia refers to a wide range of lifelong learning disabilities involving mathematics. Dyspraxia affects motor skill development. Dysgraphia affects spelling, handwriting and putting thoughts on paper; see www.ncld.org). In other words the teacher has to facilitate their learning and, create conditions for them that would support their perseverance to continue in language learning

despite their limitation e.g. in reading, spelling, writing or understanding grammar rules.

Learners with specific learning needs

As it has been mentioned having learners with learning difficulties such as dyslexia... becomes a common phenomenon but it is quite rare to teach a learner with autism in the secondary school in Slovakia.

Sooner or later the situation may change rapidly and many teachers can face the problem – how to approach an integrated autistic learner in the class?

The aim of my article is to increase awareness of an integration of autistic learners to normal population classroom, to provide some basic guidelines for classroom work based on their needs and to clarify the reasoning behind approach, technique and tasks used in the English classes.

In general I will try to list all strengths of autistic learners that can serve as a springboard for successful language learning and teaching. Alongside I will suggest some useful steps that can guide a teacher facing an autistic learner in the English lesson.

General characteristic of autism

First of all the teacher should know as much about the disorder as possible to choose a suitable approach, method and tasks for the learner. Finding out about strengths and weaknesses of autistic learners can make the decision process less frustrating for the teacher and more effective for the learner. A lot of disappointment on both sides can be lowered by identifying areas of language development that the teacher can develop in the lesson and the ones that have to be ignored due to learner's disability.

Autism can be defined as a developmental disability that causes problems with communication and other social skills. It is referred to as an umbrella term for a wide spectrum disorders or, in other words, „Pervasive Developmental Disorders“. Autism is a life-long problem that cannot be cured. Children with autism spectrum disorders may be non-verbal and asocial, as in the case of many with “classic” autism, or Autistic Disorder. On the other end of the spectrum there are children with a high-functioning form of autism characterized by idiosyncratic social skills and play, such as Asperger Syndrome. Children with Asperger Syndrom have not severe problems with the speech production and usually display normal or even higher IQ than normal population.

Nevertheless both disorders are defined by deficits in three core areas:

- social skills,
- communication,
- behaviors and interests.

Deficits in social skills can be listed as:

- Poor eye contact with people or objects;
- Make offensive remarks due their sincerity;
- Poor play skills (pretend or social play);
- are overly focused on a topic or objects that interest them;
- have problems making friends;
- Cry or laugh, become angry for no known reason or at the wrong time;
- Disliking being touched or held.

Deficits in communication can be listed as:

- Not speaking or very limited speech;
- Loss of words the child was previously able to say;
- Difficulty expressing basic wants and needs;
- Poor vocabulary development;
- Problems following directions or finding objects that are named;
- Repeating what is said (echolalia);
- Problems answering questions;
- Speech that sounds different (e.g., "robotic" speech or speech that is high-pitched).

Unusual behaviors and interests can be listed as:

- Rocking, hand flapping or other movements (self-stimulating movements);
- Not paying attention to things the child sees or hears;
- Repetitive movements;
- Problems dealing with changes in routine;
- Using objects in unusual ways e.g. toys;
- Unusual attachments to objects /topics;
- No fear of real dangers;
- Being either very sensitive or not sensitive enough to touch, light, or sounds (e.g., disliking loud sounds or only responding when sounds are very loud; also called a sensory integration disorder);
- Feeding difficulties (accepting only select foods, refusing certain food textures);

- Sleep problems (Schopler, Reichler, Lansing, 2011).

The symptoms mentioned above are varied and are not present with every child. But one thing is clear; the learner with autistic triad disorders who is integrated in a school with normal population faces very demanding and often unbearable situations.

Strengths and weaknesses of autistic learners

To understand better an autistic learner and target the teaching process the right way the teacher should be aware of strengths and weaknesses of such a learner. It is possible to do it comparing strengths of autistic learner and non-autistic learner. In general we can state that learners with autism respond better in a context where there is a structure and clear guidelines regarding teacher's expectations. It is also recommended that the environment the learner spends most time in, has its invariable system and order without any unexpected changes. This general rule goes hand in hand with strengths and weaknesses of autistic learners.

Table 1 Strengths of autistic and non-autistic learner

Strengths of autistic learner	Strengths of non-autistic learner
Analytical thinking	Integrated thinking
Focus on detail	focus on whole
logical rules	Illogical rules
Facts	thoughts
objectivity	subjectivity
Deduction	induction
Rigidity	flexibility
Absolute	relativity
real image	fantasy
Similarity	analogy
step-by-step process in information	Parallel processing information

It is obvious that any strength of non-autistic learner can be compensated by other strength of autistic learner. In other words, most teaching and learning in the class should be based on strengths of the autistic learner. It is important to "discover" the way of combing positive sides and eliminate negative ones to create bearable conditions for both the learner(s) and the teacher.

Theoretical background of language teaching and learning

The aim of teaching and learning foreign language in the European Union is to reach communicative competence defined in terms of sub-competences; linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence (see Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

The fundamental problem in teaching a foreign language is derived from the deficits in social skills and communication. The autistic learners do not like participating in conversation and set up relationship with other people (e.g. peers). On the one hand considering these facts the question: *Should learners with autism study English?* is more than relevant. On the other hand any learner who is integrated in secondary school has to pass school leaving exam in one foreign language.

The teacher can base their teaching on:

- Visual memory

Autistic learner processes better a visual stimulus than verbal stimulus. Even in real life situations they rely on “visual thinking” than verbal. In the class the teacher should use visuals as often as possible. Their excellent visual memory enables them to remember a great number of lexical items and rules.

- Ability to discriminate

Due to this ability autistic learner are good at matching exercises, correcting mistakes in texts, multiple choice exercises and fill-in exercises.

- Logical thinking

Autistic learner can rely on his/her logical thinking and higher IQ in processing grammar rules, categorizing lexical items, compare and analyze information.

- Excellent mechanical memory

Their excellent long term mechanical memory enables them to remember number of lexical items, schemes, grammar charts or visual representations of any rules in a short time.

- Unchangeable interests and hobbies

Autistic learner has very specific interests and hobbies and they are able to devote all their energy and attention to the area of their interest. The teacher should try to make use of their interests in the lesson.

The following weaknesses hinder progress in language learning and acquisition.

- Problems in communication

Oral performance is rigid; the learner does not react to prompts, is not spontaneous and flexible in interaction. Verbal communication is one of their biggest problems.

- Social contact with other people
They are egocentric with their own rules that other people “have to obey”. They do not like working in groups, pairs, they do not participate in creative activities and prefer individual work.
- Absence of abstract thinking
They are not able to function in many everyday situations, formulate opinions in which it is necessary to make conclusions or suggest hypothetical solutions.
- Slow working pace
Autistic learners do not react promptly; their “working memory” is short and usually need more time to start working.
- Rigid thinking, problematic imagination
Autistic learners prefer routine as it is more comfortable for them to exist in unchangeable environment and situations. They are not able to cope with illogical imaginary situations.

Some basic guidelines for English lessons

On the basis of learner’s strengths and weaknesses it is possible to suggest some basic guidelines that can serve as a springboard for classroom work. For autistic learners it is very important to “structure” everything and move on in linear steps. Everything should have its order; the structure of the lesson, timetable, instructions for work in the class and their environment (classroom, desk, pencil case etc.). Any change in their routine can distract learner’s attention and cause problems in the class.

All information (language) should be visualized as autistic learners can process visual forms more effectively than verbal information. Moreover, all information should be presented as a system because they are fascinated by systems, schemes and patterns (e.g. syntactic and morphological rules). It is advisable to reduce content and focus on areas they can manage. In general, they solve written tasks better and faster than oral tasks. Reduction of content can result in higher motivation.

Another aspect that can play an important role in language teaching and learning is computer technology. Autistic learners love working on a computer as it is “safe environment” for them. A learner can control it, as it does not change its functions and does not think. It reacts in a predictable way, offers visual input and provides a learner with multi-sensory stimulus. Many autistic learners prefer interaction as this kind of interaction is much safer than face-to-face communication.

Conclusion

It is very important that more people, both professionally in the education system (school managers, teachers, assistants) and in the homes of autistic learners (parents, siblings, other relatives and friends) more fully understand the situation and conditions in which teaching and learning English would not be stressful and painful.

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Educational blogs in higher education: a case study

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to introduce blogs as educational tools in higher education. At first the author presents the reflections of selected theorists on using blogs in teaching. She follows the assumptions of Luehmann and Frink, who claim that in the process of blog(s) creation students are in the position of co-constructors of scientific knowledge; and Hidgon and Topaz according to whom blogs are excellent example of 'just-in-time-teaching' method, because they help to create specific knowledge environment. In the paper, blogs are also considered as performative space, and a kind of storyworld (after Ryan).

The author introduces also her own experience with using blogs as educational method during two academic courses in the Institute of Audiovisual Arts among full-time and among part-time students of the first and the third year of their study. The blogs were created by the students during the courses: "Issues of cyberculture" and "Theory of television". In the paper both blogs's using is compared, and moreover are introduced the results, advantages and disadvantages of such educational proposition.

Keywords

blogs, education, just-in-time-teaching, performative space, communication, participation

Introduction

Nowadays one cannot deny that blogs are a visible and important part of popular culture and cyberculture – culture depending on the development of digitalization and new forms of communication. At first, they were used as new diaries – one of many forms of expression in the time of the development of new technologies. According to Leuhmann and Frink, we can define blogs as follows:

"a blog is a frequently updated personal online space (a type of web page) where an author publishes a series of posts, engages others in discussion about her posts, and collects and shares resources; these posts are searchable by categories and typically archived in reverse chronological order, sometimes over a long period of time thus presenting the most recent work first while preserving the history of posts" (2009, p. 276).

They are usually available for free, easy to create, edit and administrate, therefore, they appear perfect for sharing personal emotions, experiences and opinions. Over time, their potential has been recognized by various fields of activity, not only individual, ranging from journalism, through marketing (a well-known report in Poland written by the famous blogger Hatalska suggests that contemporary bloggers function as a brand itself, 2012), to political debates and

education. However, blogs are still perceived as an easy form of communication, as entertainment rather than a tool of development.

Therefore, in reference to assumptions by selected authors dealing with blogs as well as to my own experience, in the paper I would like to show that blogs can be the very first space in the teaching and learning process – a method which helps engage students in systematic learning. I am going to present my own experience with using blogs during two academic courses at the Institute of Audiovisual Arts at Jagiellonian University, among third-year full-time and first-year part-time students of the specialty Film and New Media Studies. The first blog was created by the whole group during the course Issues in Cyberculture. The second was a project composed of a few blogs (created in five groups), related to each other during the course Television Theory. I will compare my observations with Pearson's (2009) conclusions on her use of blogs with about 260 students during an introductory social problems course in the USA.

However, first, I would like to introduce some important research on blogs in the context of using them especially, but not exclusively, in higher education. I am going to refer to the assumptions by Luehmann and Frink (2009) arising from their research on classroom blogs. Both authors claim that with the use of blogs students are centrally in the discourse of science, they can be an active party creating and sharing scientific knowledge. To me, even more crucial are theses by Hidgon and Topaz (2010), who treat blogs as an excellent example of the "Just-in-Time-Teaching" method, as a tool which helps gather students' answers in one place and create a specific learning environment.

Moreover, I would like to consider blogs as a performative space – created on a regular basis, where the lecturer and his or her students can share their comments and observations, not just during one class per week, but in a performative space. In this context I perceive blogs as part of a method which provides students with new forms and formats of participation and teaches how to present ideas and arguments publicly, also in so-called digital environments, cyberspaces, extremely important in expressing their own participation in the public sphere. I suggest treating this digital environment also as an interesting type of a storyworld, important both for learning and expressing students' personalities. I am using the definition of the storyworld following the newest assumptions by Ryan (2014), one of the most important theorists of contemporary narratology, focusing on the post-classical reflection on the narrative – cognitive narratology. Teaching as a process of creating stories appears to be a challengeable and innovative form of education.

1. Reflections on blogs in education

Many authors (Mortensen, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006) suggest that blogs have great potential in terms of supporting the learning process. There are of course many reasons why blogs may be important for creating new learning conditions, but one should remember that this theoretical approach is more valuable when it is based on everyday practice, that is teaching with blogs. Only empirical experience can show whether our way of using blogs in teaching is valuable and brings appropriate, rewarding results.

I agree with Luehmann and Frink, whose theories on the functioning of blogs in education are based on their experience with teaching young students (mostly from primary schools) in classrooms (2009, p. 275). The authors focus mostly on the classroom environment, its development, and the learning process, and they do not have experience with higher education, although their assumptions appear adequate for teaching at this level. Luehmann and Frink claim that teachers usually offer their students only time-limited classes with a clear structure and students have mostly passive roles – they have to absorb knowledge – because of certain institutional and historical conventions in teaching. According to the authors, the new teachers-students relationships require “a new form of classroom learning that engages students centrally in the discourse of science, placing them in the collaborative and creative position of co-constructors and critical consumers of scientific knowledge” (Luehmann & Frink, 2009, p. 275-276). The authors think that one of the solutions might be using new technologies connected with the development of the internet, especially social media: “Social networking technologies such as blogging have the potential to offer reform-minded teachers unique support that may address many of these challenges” (ibid, p. 276). According to Luehmann and Frink, blogging is also part of the New Media Literacies (NML) project, the main goal of which is to produce “skills and practices that capitalize on the affordances of emerging technologies to both consume and produce new knowledge within social communities and collaborations” (ibid, p. 276). From this perspective, the most important task for teachers is to establish new forms of student engagement in the learning process, that is creating and sharing knowledge.

Luehmann and Frink mention also five crucial affordances that they observe in their empirical research. The first is “long-term scientific engagement” (ibid, p. 277), which is of course strongly connected with the “technological nature” of blogs: they have the possibility of archiving posts, linking to other pages, reading something a number of times. The fourth point is similar, “use of peer feedback in developing scientific explanations,” that is the possibility of more dynamic

discussion and sharing critical opinions. The second are “supported scientific explanations,” and the third – “extending scientific work.” Both are connected with the multimodality of such a workspace as blogging. It is really important because it gives students the possibility of using various forms of personal expression (images, text, tables, etc.). The last one “focuses on the public nature of blogs and the importance of publicly communicating and defending scientific ideas. It is important to consider <<outsiders>> as those who are not normally part of the normal viewing of student work—anyone other than the teacher” (ibid, p. 278).

We can find reflections on the learning affordances of blogging in many other papers as well. Among those which are not directly mentioned by Luehmann and Frink, the following are worth mentioning: first, the notion by Luehmann and MacBride (2008) that blogs as a technological solution offer a venue as well as a tool to extend discussion among students also outside the classroom and even during time outside of school; and second, one by Poling (2005, p. 12-15), who says something obvious to people who use blogs, namely that students have to read and comment on each other's posts, which provides a form of deeper interaction between them. All such reflections on blogs as tools and methods supporting the learning process are also adequate for higher education, but I would like to add one more, very important for adult students: the possibility of being independent and creative. It is possible to achieve especially when the rules of writing a blog are not very clearly defined and students can choose topics about which they want to write.

Another interesting suggestion concerning analysis of blogging in education comes from the Just-in-Time-Teaching methodology adapted by Hidgon and Topaz (2009), based on the classical pedagogical idea offered by Novak et al. (1999). JiTT uses “web-based tools to gather students' responses to questions on pre-class reading assignments” (Hidgon & Topaz, 2009, p. 105), and it is useful in the immediate catching of gaps in students' understanding of problems discussed during classes. It is also a way of adapting social software for the teaching process. JiTT is, first of all, an answer to the revolution in consuming and producing information caused by the digital era. Blogs are an element of this evolution which became an important help for academia (ibid, 2009, p. 105). Hidgon and Topaz adapt this methodological framework in order to establish a method of using only free social software tools offered by blogs, wikis and RSS aggregators, and name it “Just-in-Time-Blogging.” Although they develop the method for mathematics classes at universities, they claim that this solution can be adapted in any other fields and institutions (ibid). As the authors maintain, the

method requires a system within which students submit responses and some mechanisms which allow teachers to investigate those responses (ibid).

Both, the methods offered by Novak et al. as well as Just-in-Time-Blogging, are used to investigate students' understanding of analyzed problems by asking simple questions about what is difficult or incomprehensible to them. I use both forms of blogs for similar purposes, although they are applied in a completely different way, which requires more independence from students and more engagement from teachers. However, before I describe my method, I would like to introduce also further interesting observations that come from Just-in-Time-Blogging adapted by Higdon and Topaz (ibid). The one important part of their reflection on JiTB is the presentation of common questions and concerns, which are quite reasonable objections, I suppose, in case of every attempt, in almost every higher school, to introduce the blogging method. The main problems – according to the authors – are: lack of computer skills necessary to implement the method, students' unhelpful attitude toward scientific blogging (they are unwilling to blog) and not enough time for teachers to check their students' answers and investigate the whole process (ibid, p. 106-107). Basing on my experience, I know that contemporary tools supporting the process of writing blogs are completely intuitive and easily available, thus some introductory classes during which teachers could present how to use blogs would suffice to overcome those problems. Moreover, so far I have not experienced any lack of the willingness to cooperate on the students' part. They are extremely interested in the new method and I have not received any negative comments. To me, the problem is finding time to investigate every student's activity on the blog. I will describe this difficulty in the next part of the paper, as right now I would like to emphasize that teachers in this method are required to devote to it much time outside the classroom, which should be free from work.

2. Teaching and learning with blogs. Case study

At the Institute of Audiovisual Arts at Jagiellonian University in Cracow, history and theory of film are taught as well as issues connected with media studies, that is advertisement, the theory of television, social media, etc., and with cultural studies, such as e-literature, issues in performativity or cyberculture. Those are courses which usually have flexible programs and structures.

The students are almost exclusively people with broad interests, especially in current events and phenomena rooted deeply in popular culture. After completing the studies, they usually work for advertising agencies or cultural institutions, organize cultural events, etc. The students are usually daring,

adventurous young people, who dominate shy and weaker classmates and very often also their teachers. They talk a lot during classes and are really good researchers, but they also act almost like rebels in the face of rigid rules of learning: they do not like reading long, complex papers and memorizing much theoretical information. As teachers, we also have to teach them practical skills, even if the studies are more concerned with acquiring general, theoretical knowledge. We are unable to teach them how to take excellent photographs, how to produce a movie or how to create an advertisement strategy, but we should show them what is necessary to make a good movie, how to analyze television shows, interpret new media art practices or critique current phenomena in popular culture. As early as after my first year of teaching, I knew that analyzing texts and audiovisual materials was not enough to engage such active and resolute students, especially ones only a few years younger than me. It was the main reason for my search for new forms of teaching. I became aware that if I wanted to maintain discipline and make the course interesting to them, I had to find a way to engage the students' whole energy and encourage them to work independently. Of course, this independent work had to be assigned in a form which was generally available, quite easy and interactive.

What is more – which was the second reason – since we teach students about new media, we should also utilize them. As Pearson says: "Furthermore, students of all ages and backgrounds have begun to expect to use technology in their classrooms, whether or not they are well-versed in its use. Responding to these trends, Benson et al. (2002) argue that because a growing number of instructors are now integrating digital technologies, any sociologically informed scholarship of teaching and learning must take into account the effects of technology in the classroom" (2010, p. 207).

Undoubtedly, using new technologies is a trend in education, although it should not substitute teaching with the use of books or based on discussions on specific problems; however, when new media are the topic of studies, the use of new technologies becomes more of a necessity than a whim. Therefore, it is important to combine both teaching strategies.

Another reason was my skeptical attitude toward the evaluation of students' work based on only one grade received after the final exam. I tried to find a way to investigate students' work during the whole semester. Additionally, I wanted to be positive that those students who were shy and did not like talking a lot during classes were appreciated as well. As Hidgon and Topaz rightly state: "In large and small lecture classes, it is often easiest to address the learning needs of outgoing, gregarious, confident students, but harder to address the needs of

those who are shy, quiet or less confident. By giving voice to individual students in the class (for instance by using technology) an instructor can overcome these challenges (...)” (2009, p. 108).

The least important reason to me was connected with Pearson’s argument: “(...) online written work is public and students are provided with an opportunity to read each other’s ideas regarding the readings as they post. Students are therefore presented with an opportunity to create knowledge as they discuss with each other the meaning of a text or idea; they are not merely reporting their isolated understanding of issues or readings to an audience of one, the professor. Instead, they are presenting their own analysis in the context of analyzing and evaluating arguments posted by their peers. Collectively, students work to create meaning and thereby are involved more actively in the learning process” (2010, p. 209).

In other words, I found it crucial to ensure that not only did the students gain knowledge from texts, but that they were also able to learn from each other in order to create an environment centered around the topic of our classes. I am convinced that when a teacher has to work with a really dynamic, impulsive group, creating an appropriate environment is just as significant as sharing knowledge itself. In their analysis of Just-in-Time-Blogging, Hidgon and Topaz also pay attention to the fact that: “[k]nowledge-centered refers to a focus on disciplinary content from a rich conceptual (as well as factual) perspective. (...) [C]ommunity-centered refers to building opportunities for students to learn in a social context, collaborating with peers and learning as part of their classes, their school community, and the world outside of the classroom” (2009, p. 107).

My decision to choose the blogging method was also motivated by various other reasons arising from numerous assumptions about the proper process of education at a university. I was also aware that I was not the very first teacher who had decided to use an unconventional teaching method, although I did not know the possible outcomes of this method. I decided to develop two different forms of teaching with blogs with two student groups in the form of an experiment.

The first one was a project incorporating a few blogs related to each other within the course Television Theory. I suggested this method to first-year part-time students. It was a really large group – about 40 people – too large for a seminar. I was unable to learn enough about all of them during only one seminar every two weeks. It was their first year of studies, so they were not used to reading scientific papers. Therefore, I divided them into eight groups (five people in each), and each group had to create a blog on any web platform of their

choosing. In Poland, I suppose, the most popular websites are blogspot.com and blogger.com, and all eight blogs were created with the use of those. The main idea was that every two weeks the students had to answer questions related to an academic text discussed during our class directly on their blog. Every group named their blog – some of them had very creative titles. The deadline for posting answers on the blogs was exactly a week after a given class. Therefore, the following week was left for me to check and comment on each post. That week was also the time for other students to share their comments, doubts and questions. Always only one question was asked about a given text, the same for each group. The students had to gather together and in groups of five answer the question in the form of a short essay (about 7,000 characters – three pages, Times New Roman, 12). Such frequency allowed the students to remember the discussed topic at least until the next class. I am convinced that it is extremely important especially in case of part-time students because there are usually only two classes of a given subject per month.

The topic of the seminar, television theory, was also an appropriate topic for blog posts because television is a current phenomenon which requires investigations on a regular basis. Importantly, students wrote on their blogs under nicknames, although I had a list of their names, so that I could identify each essay-post with its authors. In their essays not only did the students answer the scientific question, but they were also able to share their problems with understanding the paper and critique the author's assumptions and theses. Therefore, when I was reading the posts, I knew which issues caused problems, how the students built their arguments, how they thought, what was most important to them. The questions were always structured in a way which required answers in reference to the students' own experience, so that they could express their personal opinions. The questions took the form of the following: "What do you think about...?", "Do you agree with the author that...?", "What can you say about the idea that ... in reference to your own experience?" The students' blogs were thus always the starting point of the next class and the sphere where they could and had to think about the topic outside the classroom. I treated their blogs as additional materials, a common ground for sharing knowledge and thoughts. I agree with Pearson, who claims that: "During class, I refer to the blog as a means of initiating discussion at the beginning or to clarify dimensions of discussion already in progress. In class, the blog is treated as an alternative sphere where meaning is made and challenged" (2009, p. 211).

I noticed that from the very beginning the students investigated essays by their classmates with great interest: they commented on every posts which

appeared on the blogs, which they of course followed. Sometimes very dynamic discussion took place in the comments. I also commented on each post; however, I did not evaluate any. The overall work of each group was evaluated at the end of the semester, although if it was necessary to write to some of the groups and say that something was extremely well-written or completely wrong and that certain things had to be corrected. Therefore, I kept monitoring the quality of the essays, the deadlines and the discussions on a regular basis. It required much work and engagement, which made me realize that this method cannot be possibly used in this form when one has many groups to teach. I suppose that three groups per semester are the limit. I am convinced that when we want to use this method, we cannot rely only on the natural dynamics of the functioning of blogs – the lecturer has to constantly supervise their development because the students wait for his or her comments; with those, they stay more motivated.

I did not conduct any extended evaluation of the blogging method among the students, although short questionnaires which I gave them after the end of the semester showed that almost all of them were satisfied with their blog activities. They admitted that the blogs motivated them to read the assigned texts and to think about the discussed topics; they could also express their personal opinions. As a result, they were better-prepared and had less work to do before the final exam. Among the disadvantages the frequency of posting essays was mentioned – according to about 50% of the students, one essay per month would have sufficed. Therefore, the most visible problem with blogging was probably meeting deadlines, as usually about five in eight groups posted essays in time and the rest were one to three days late. What is more, the students also said (about 35%) that even though they had worked in only five-person groups, sometimes they did not have a chance to share their thoughts because each group always had a leader (or two, three of them), who imposed the answer to the question and the shape of the essay. However, in spite of those complaints, the students also thought that the blogging method had given them many more opportunities to be active during our classes and discussions than any other forms of group work. Almost all of them (93%) confirmed the observation by Pearson that “[t]he blogs were extremely useful and were a good way to anonymously voice opinions when being too afraid to speak up in class on the topic” (2009, p. 212). They also emphasized similar issues to those mentioned by Pearson’s students, namely that the teacher’s engagement in the teaching process had been very valuable, the blogging method had made the classes more interactive and the blogs themselves had helped each of the students feel like part of a given group. I must also admit that later the students passed the final exam with very good results.

The second form of teaching with blogs was implemented during the course Issues in Cyberculture. The group was composed of third-year full-time students and it was much smaller than the previous one – it consisted of about 20 people. Basing on my previous experience with the blogging method, I slightly changed its form: this time I created one blog with the use of WordPress, similarly to A. Fiona Pearson, because I agree with her that the software is easy to operate and offers its users many valuable functions. For instance, it is easy to follow posts by each author as well as publish various audiovisual materials. The blog was named “Cybercultureblog.” I decided not to make it publicly available, so that it could be only our inside-group platform. The general rules were completely different: over four months, the students had to put on the blog one note a week (16 notes in total) and three essays per semester, one per month during the first three months. The topics depended on the students’ choice, although they had to be related to topics discussed during the seminar and to current events. Notes had to be about 1,000 characters and essays – about 5,000-7,000 characters long. The students were older than those in the previous group, so I decided that giving them their own voice in reference to the discussed issues and phenomena was more important than motivating them to read scientific papers. Each post was written by single student, therefore, I did not have any problem with identifying the authors, which gave me the possibility of investigating the work of each student during the whole semester. It was a valuable experience because it transpired that three of my students who did not talk much during the seminar were extremely intelligent and interested in the course. I decided to evaluate each essay right after posting and later those students stated in the correspondence which we exchanged that they were grateful for the opportunity to express their opinions. They said that they had never before had a chance to be so active during classes. This opinion was shared by 95% of all the students in a short questionnaire which I gave them after the semester. About 85% of the students admitted that activities with the use of blogs had improved their writing and critical thinking skills. Therefore, I am convinced that I managed to achieve with the use of this method similarly beneficial results to those mentioned by Pearson: “Beyond keeping up with the readings, students also frequently commented on the learning benefits of the blogs, both in terms of understanding course content and improving their critical thinking and writing skills” (2009, p. 211).

I also quite often used the students’ posts as inspirations for discussions during the seminar. Their blog activities enabled me to see in what my students were interested and which topics connected with cyberculture they regarded as

the most important. What is more, their posts were really well-written, interesting and related to current events significant for the development of cyberculture. Therefore, after the course, the blog may serve as a great compendium of cyberculture created in four months. I suppose that such a blog can be even more valuable in teaching than textbooks, which very quickly become "out of date," especially as regards the field of new media.

In reference to my observations, I can say that both forms of blog activities can be perceived as the process of creating a scientific and community performative space. Of course, it does not mean that we can treat blogging as a form of artistic performance because it is a rather strictly defined genre of art; however, there are some similarities which can be of importance in higher education. As Fisher-Lichte claims, in the performative perspective passive observers become active participants (2008, p. 16), and of the greatest significance is their experience, deep, real participation in actions and cooperation with the author (2008, p. 20). Therefore, a performance becomes a community event, and the production and reception of such an event is incorporated in one experience. I believe that this definition of the performance and performative practices describes the process of generating engagement among students working with blogs very well. From mere observers of the lecturer's presentation they transform into active participants, even if some of them can only be active outside the class – sometimes it becomes their only chance to participate. What is more, the blog environment functions as a safe place where almost every post is an event organized by means of cooperation between the students and the teacher. This cooperation also helps establish a specific scientific community, which is an important element of a performative space (Fisher-Lichte, 2008, p. 80). According to Fisher-Lichte, the performative space, primarily theatrical space, it is not the geometrical, physical space of the stage. It is more of a volatile space created by means of interactions between actors and viewers (ibid, p. 174-175). The digital space of the blog is also a space, material, created in discussions, by means of expressing opinions and asking questions. It is dynamic and remains in the permanent process of creation.

From a completely different perspective, the blog environment can be perceived also as a storyworld filled with stories – stories of students' research. With this understanding of the storyworld I follow Ryan's notion connected with cognitive narratology. According to the theorist, a storyworld, a space filled with stories, "is more than a static container for the objects mentioned in a story; it is a dynamic model of evolving situations, and its representation in the recipient's mind is a simulation of the changes that are caused by the events of the plot"

(2014, p. 33). Ryan emphasizes the dynamic dimension of this type of world, which of course can differ from the real one, but which is based on it. A storyworld should consist of a few elements, such as: the characters of the story, setting, physical laws, social rules and values, events and mental events (ibid, p. 34-36). The blog space contains all of the elements, although I suppose that the most important for a storyworld is the fact that it is a space created in a way which allows it to include stories, and which allows the stories to exist in it. It is possible in case of blogs because of a variety of technological solutions, that is easily-operated software, as well as the teacher's or lecturer's efficient management. Every post is the student's own story about a phenomenon or a theory, not just an essay which has to be written in order to pass the course, but also a story which can be read publicly, in the virtual space.

Conclusions

The main question which appears in Hidgon and Topaz's reflection is: "Do students learn what is really important?" (2010, p. 109). It is of course a knowledge-centered question of great significance; however, another crucial consideration is how they learn. The processes of teaching and learning are important, with teaching based not only on transferring knowledge but also on creating a specific environment to engage and to support critical and creative thinking. It is especially the case when the teaching-learning process pertains to new media studies. The blogging method appears to have been very useful in both my courses. The activities engaged all the students, even those who were shy and quiet during regular classes. The process of writing a blog motivated my students to work individually, look for additional information and read scientific papers. They were satisfied because they felt that they were treated and evaluated individually and that they could share their ideas with others. It probably is not a perfect solution in order to ensure better teaching because it requires much additional time from the teacher or lecturer; however, it is worth trying.

What is more, students' scientific blog activities, just as any other form of blogging, are an interesting area for analysis from other perspectives than that of education. It is a topic for a separate paper; however, considering educational blogging in terms of creating a performative space based on performative practices and as a storyworld filled with individual stories can introduce such "forms of entertainment" as important elements of popular and cyberculture.

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Reviews

Teaching English to autistic learners

Homolová, E. & Ivančíková, I. (2013). *Výučba angličtiny žiakov so špecifickými vývinovými poruchami učenia a špeciálnymi výchovno-vzdelávacími potrebami. 2. časť. Výučba angličtiny žiakov s autizmom*. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus. 84 p. ISBN 978-80-7435-278-2

Learning differences have become appealing issues in today's world of education. Due to the fact that currently in almost every classroom there are pupils or students diagnosed with a specific learning disorder, it is inevitable for every teacher to acquire a general concept of specific approaches to such students. However; the approach and teaching methods should be specified in the methodology of every subject.

The publication *Výučba angličtiny žiakov so špecifickými vývinovými poruchami učenia a špeciálnymi výchovno-vzdelávacími potrebami. 2. časť. Výučba angličtiny žiakov s autizmom*. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus is the second series with the focus on English language teaching to the students with specific learning disorders and special educational needs. It gives an insight into the world of autistic students and brings some useful advice to English teachers on how to help such students to grasp as much as they are able to from the teaching process.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first one deals with the general characteristics of autism. It describes and explains the basic notion of the term "pervasive developmental disorders" and refers to those as to a group of conditions that involve delay of most basic skills. Primarily, there is a lack in ability to socialize with others as well as to communicate and use imagination. Despite of the fact that the behaviour of autistic students differs due to the individual specific levels of a pervasive disorder, yet there are the common features reflected in the triad of autism symptoms which give the base for the specific diagnosis. An impaired social interaction, impaired social communication, impaired imagination as well as a rigid repetition of the tasks and activities belong to general features and characteristics of autistic behaviour.

The sub-chapter offers the division of the two basic types of pervasive disorders and according to the authors these are:

1. Children's autism;
2. Asperger's syndrome (AS).

The author disputes over these two definitions as not all the professionals approve both of them. Nevertheless, more important is the fact that within both diagnoses the IQ reaches the average and above average level. This proves that both types are able to succeed in reaching the necessary level education; however, their social and communication intelligence suffer.

The last sub-chapter of the theoretical part provides the summary of positive and negative sides of autistic students reflected in the learning process. That part gives a very helpful demonstration and systematic comparison of differences. The authenticity of the offered content is strengthened by providing the real experience in learning of autistic students.

The answer for the question of how to deal with such students in the classroom is a structured teaching strategy covering the system of classroom management, timetables, and provision of planned activities where students know what to expect, and the use of visual aids.

According to the authors, autistic students feel safe when they are informed about and know what is going to happen as well as what they are expected to do. Secondly, the visualisation helps them create the system and thus they are able to interconnect acquired knowledge. Even the reduction of problematic sides of the content should help; however, motivation and appreciation are the most important factors in education, even small success should be commented in form of a positive and challenging praise. Apparently, the use of modern technologies could be a great help in teaching autistic students as they can combine multisensory approach in educational process; however, they should be used appropriately and effectively. The last point is then applied in the methodology of English language teaching and learning. Special computer programs enabling matching pictures and words with appropriate pronunciation, grammar exercises with multiple choice but limited answers, power-point presentation following the structured teaching strategies in education could be very helpful in demonstration, acquiring, reviewing and drilling the language functions and skills.

The practical part of the book introduces and gives handy ideas on how to prepare useful and effective teaching materials for English classes with the use of modern technologies. Every day-life context is covered by seven areas such as housing, giving personal details, food, school, feelings, etc. Apart from the

practical use of these language functions, these topics are also included in the scope of school leaving examination in the English language. Therefore, the motivation and need to cover them is even more appealing for teachers as well as for students who want to succeed and continue their education at the university level. The book offers the links for “ready-made” materials in forms of worksheets and Power Point presentations as these are the practical outcome of the research made by the authors.

To summarize, the intention of this review is to comment on the publication focused on ELT for autistic students. This booklet is strongly recommended to be read by all the English teachers and language students in the teaching programs. There is still lack of available materials specifically focusing on teaching and learning a foreign language to students with specific needs. Moreover, it must be said that the book is clearly organized, written in a comprehensible way with lots of references to authentic sources, providing also personal experiences with autistic students. The practical part supports the theoretical background with clear demonstration of every-day topics in English with further practice within the particular context. Although the provided theory does not go deep in the matter, it gives a clear overview on the issue of autism and offers very practical and useful piece of advice to English teachers. The only recommendation could be to publish the book also in English language and thus provide the wider public with the helpful insights and teaching experience. The practical activities with provided webpages give an additional value of the authors’ work. Hopefully, the practical part will be later enriched with other ready-made materials in order to enhance quality and efficiency in ELT and thus enable more effective and fruitful work of both, autistic students and English teachers.

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Double review: The world at their feet

Kovács, J. – Trentinné Benkő, É. The World at Their Feet. Children's Early Competence in Two Languages through Education. Budapest: Könyvkiadó, 2014. 222 p. ISBN 978-963-9955-55-4

CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning has become one of the most important and leading approach to teaching languages in bilingual education. This innovative pedagogical approach to teaching foreign languages becomes popular as a new possibility of how to work with a foreign language more often and use it in authentic situations.

The book is divided into two main parts. Part one entitled 'CLIL – Early competence in two languages' is written by J. Kovács, and it focuses on how language develops in the human brain as well as different approaches of language acquisition (e.g. instinctive, behaviourist approach, etc.). Linguistic competence and capacity of the human brain, which is not limited to one language only, is connected also with understanding the terms monocompetence and multicompetence as a basis for bilingualism (as well as its negative and positive assumptions). Recent research results show positive associations between the mentioned concepts and child's linguistic and cognitive development.

Chapter two describes the knowledge of foreign languages and their value. Communication in a foreign language has become a necessary skill rather than just knowledge of linguistic form. This emphasizes the importance of foreign language in the 21st century. Educational bilingualism provides a way to use a language productively.

The next chapter is dedicated to CLIL such as types of content-based language teaching, immersion and CLIL and continues with the CLIL history and CLIL in Hungary.

The following subchapter emphasizes the age factor in CLIL. The author states that the way of young learner's language learning is completely different from any other learner's age. Common features in language acquisition and early CLIL as a successful educational innovation are important for second language acquisition.

The fifth chapter focuses on CLIL from the teacher's perspective. It deals with differences between a CLIL lesson and a foreign language lesson connected with CLIL teachers' multiplied competences. The author also points to the work with

very young learners and discusses some questions of methodology. The last part of this chapter is dedicated to specific questions of assessment in a CLIL lesson. It emphasizes the rule that the content is more important than the language also for assessing the learners in a CLIL lesson.

‘Being a CLIL learner’ is the title of the sixth chapter focusing on question who is CLIL good for? Learning strategies, integrated learning, relying on cognitive skills, learning in interaction, task-based learning and making posters are described from the learners’ point of view. The chapter closes with CLIL learners as effective learners.

The last chapter focuses on research on primary CLIL, i.e. young CLIL learners’ second or foreign language competences and CLIL teachers’ beliefs. The two mentioned researches were carried by the authors of the book and bring interesting results.

The second part of the book is devoted to teacher training and teacher development tasks written by E. Trentinné Benkő. This part is divided into seven topics – The theory of CLIL, CLIL practice and the early start, Planning for CLIL teaching, CLIL activities for young learners, Classroom language in CLIL, CLIL teachers’ beliefs and CLIL teacher education. Every topic contains several tasks which offer to challenge the knowledge in CLIL teaching for teachers but also students (containing various teaching material or types of tasks).

Furthermore, every chapter and topic as well ends with references or sources which are helpful and important for further study. Appendices at the end of the book are inspirational and valuable, such as useful CLIL glossary.

Finally, it can be stated that the book “The World at Their Feet” is helpful and inspirational guide to teachers and students – future teachers, too. I recommend it to teachers interested in or using CLIL methodology, because it is not only theoretical but also practical – oriented on school practice. It can be the way to help and support our teachers and students with the study of CLIL as an innovative approach in the field of foreign languages teaching through the school subjects. It brings also the possibility to review the knowledge through practical tasks which helps to understand and use CLIL methodology correctly.

This publication is both theoretical and practical. Therefore, it can be a helpful source of information about CLIL in general but also insights from Hungary. It is inspirational for future research into this truly interesting, innovative method.

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Judit Kovács and Éva Trentinné Benkő have been working together for many years. Their research areas cover CLIL, teaching English to young learners and teacher education. These studies have led to a number of publications.

Their publication entitled *The World at Their Feet* provides a view into children's early competence in two languages through education. It analyses the children's ability to learn two languages at the same time and it proves that early instruction in target languages can lead to an early competence in languages. The book provides a complex view on how bilingual programmes and the usage of CLIL method may work in real school conditions. Bilingual educational programmes have been a feature of education for the past two decades. These various methods have had to deal with negative criticism and have had to prove their importance and effectiveness. This criticism was caused by unfamiliarity with this type of education and its methods. In the past there had been conducted little research in the field of second language learning and the young child, but nowadays these areas of education are more developed and spread worldwide. This book highlights the necessity of doing research to gain the results that show the efficiency of bilingual educational programmes and methods as CLIL. *World at Their Feet* provides such results and states that early instruction in foreign language helps children to learn new language easier and without drilling the target language and its grammar structures. The way how to achieve positive, friendly and stress free lessons is described in several chapters of this book. The publication is divided into two parts. The first part of the book analyses the importance of education, especially, bilingual education. The authors claim that such programmes may increase not only a development and extension of bilingual education but also they may cause the improvement and success that learners will be able to achieve via these programmes. They also state that bilingualism is a kind of gift that should be developed and used efficiently. This book in its first seven chapters provides highly detailed analysis and description of bilingual skills in two foreign languages, the childrens' competencies, teacher abilities and skills and the usage of CLIL method. In each of the chapters the importance and effectiveness of all these areas is highlighted, and then exemplified via numerous activities and examples. The book also provides numerous results gained from research conducted in Hungary. The research results show that learners had to be put into 3 categories only, excellent, good and satisfactory. No lower categories were needed. How it is possible that children achieved such a good results are deeper explained in the second part which deals mainly with the new, innovative educational method called CLIL. The authors say that CLIL method is an inseparable part of new educational

programmes that can help students with weaker ability to learn foreign language. It is a mean of achieving better results in the target language. The book focuses on CLIL teachers and trainees. It describes teachers' beliefs, competences, learning outcomes, needs and challenges. It also investigates the impact of CLIL teacher-training courses and the correlation between teacher education and researching teachers using qualitative research methods and techniques. It answers many questions as: the importance of the learners' age, who CLIL is good for, what teachers think about this method, how the teachers can prepare lessons supported with CLIL method, some recipes how to become an ideal CLIL teacher, and it also gives many ready-made lesson plans supported with CLIL.

The strengths of the book are complexity, clearness, a well-organized structure and plenty of examples, lesson plans and reasons given to prove the effectiveness and usefulness of bilingual study programmes and the use of CLIL method. I recommend this book to all teachers who have the will to develop their ability to teach languages and who want to enrich their knowledge about the use of CLIL method. This book provides a well-structured view on bilingual education and CLIL method and the importance of its incorporation into the curricula.

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