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Mexican university teacher-researchers’ biliteracy beliefs and practices

Jitka Crhová & María del Rocío Domínguez
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexico
jcrhova@uabc.edu.mx
rocio_dominguez@uabc.edu.mx

Abstract

There has been a growing interest in describing higher education academic literacy. In our study, literacy is conceived as multi-layered phenomena, multiple in its character, denominated “multiliteracies” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013). Furthermore, within the multiliteracies frame, multilingual literacies (Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000) are distinguished and discussed in the present paper, in particular the development of biliteracy in local academic settings. This paper explores connections between the teachers’ perceptions on literacy, teachers’ own biliteracy development as publishing authors and researchers. The research draws on the data obtained through a questionnaire applied in the first phase of the project to 100 participants from three public universities from northern, central and southern part of Mexico, which was completed by analysis of narratives gathered through interviews from a reduced sample of participants (31). The results seem to indicate that language teachers-researchers perceive their L2 literacy in wider terms, beyond mere reading-writing skills development and decodification of the text, which seems to be apparent in academics with higher academic credentials.

Key words: literacy, biliteracy, biliteracy beliefs and practices, language teachers-researchers’ professional development

Introduction

The multiple nature of literacy —the multiplicity of its meaning— has been described and discussed from different perspectives. This multiplicity of its meaning, according to Hamilton (2012) “... [has been] historically used to justify a range of policy interventions and educational practices” (p. 1). In as much as the present day situation and our educational context, it has been acknowledged that the labor of a university teacher has diversified. Moreover, it has been documented that with the divergent nature of labor, people have turned into more multi-skilled workers, able to do complex and integrated work (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997 as cited in New London Group, 2000).

Language teachers, in a similar way, have turned into multi-skilled experts, assuming different roles as facilitators, managers, organizers, diagnosticians, tutors, mentors, etc. in the acquisition and learning processes in diverse educational settings. Nowadays, with new information technologies, L2 teachers (as well as teachers in general) use multimodality to reach wider audiences in different forms of presenting the text (or meaning), not necessarily (or exclusively) paper-bound. Teachers also, in increasing number, engage in research activities as they disseminate knowledge, both generated and applied in their classrooms. These complex, multiple roles of a teaching profession thus require new, broadened forms of literacy. Literacy practices are also embedded socially in the communities of practice (Lave, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1998).

Literacy studies, especially under the perspective of the New Literacy Studies (discussed further on) can also be complemented by other interdisciplinary fields, such as narrative studies (Gee, 2000). Narratives allow people to construct their own lives and make sense of their experiences (Johnson & Golombek, 2002) within the specific social groups and cultures (the communities of practice). These narratives give account on forms of meaning-making and on the valence of disciplinary or social practices; they also enable sets of beliefs (regularly non-visible elements) that support such literacy practices of language teachers-researchers be perceived.

In this article, we explore the beliefs that language teachers-researchers hold on literacy and document the development of their L1, L2 literacies to disclose the pattern of interdependence of teachers' educational backgrounds, beliefs and publishing activities, in the context of new demands for scholarly articles placed upon university-based language teachers. It gives an account of the mixture of beliefs and experiences that guide the decisions of university scholars to publish either in foreign language of their specialty or in the national language. Furthermore, it is shown how these decisions, once transformed into practices, are also framed by the educational policies. To fulfill demands delineated by those policies, multi-skills that language teachers possess have to be put to use in line with their beliefs on professional development.

The present study is part of a broader research project, which investigated the beliefs of foreign language teachers about research in Mexican higher education, taking as a representative sample, teachers from three public universities. In the present paper, we use the acronyms NU, CU and SU (which stand for the Northern University, the Central and the Southern University respectively). We opted for the geographical location reference instead of the real names of the institutions to protect our participants' identity. One of the axis of the longitudinal project (2012 to the date) of the Research Network in Foreign Languages, RILE by this Spanish acronym "Red de Investigación en Lenguas Extranjeras" focuses on language teacher-researchers' literacy. This longitudinal project initiated with the teachers'

perceptions on literacy (in the first phase of the project 2012-13), continuing with the inquiry on teachers' academic literacy development through their narratives (the second phase, 2013-2014, with the selected sample of the participants from the first phase of the project), and at present (2016), the third, ongoing phase of the project), which complements the research with the data on teachers' (bi)literacy development and practices both in their academic productivity as both in the classroom and outside of it, analyzing artefacts produced by the participants from NU, CU and SU. The last phase of the project continues working with the second phase informants. This paper reports on some of the findings from the first and second phases of the project, in particular: 1. 1 the teacher-researchers' beliefs on literacy within the discipline of language teaching (phase 1); and 1.2 if these perceptions vary depending on teachers' academic credential. Furthermore, it reflects on 2.1 how language teachers developed literacy in L1 and L2 (bilinguality) as publishing authors and researchers, including their bilingual practices and language choices for their academic production; 2.2 the above also in relation to their academic backgrounds (phase 2).

Theoretical framework

The following section provides an overview on literature revision on the concepts of literacy, multiliteracy (multilingualities), which encompass academic literacy and bilinguality. It also reflects on professional development, the role of teachers-researchers within the L2 teaching profession, their beliefs on literacy, bilingualism and bilingual development and practices in their respective educational settings.

Literacy

Traditionally, literacy has been perceived as the capacity to decipher texts (i.e., being able to read and write texts). However knowing one's ABCs, in the conventional sense, does not necessarily imply the capacity of the effective use of the language and its comprehension in wider contexts. This broadened perspective on literacy has been adopted by the New Literacy Studies movement (Barton, 1994, 2007; Gee, 1996, Gee, 2000; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984, Street 2003; among others), which comprehends literacy as a social practice as opposed to "autonomous", skills-based approach, where literacy is broken into a set of decontextualized skills (Street, 1984; Barton, 1994, 2007), functional and rather utilitarian in the nature. Furthermore, literacy and in its' extension, is viewed as a social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Hamilton, 2012; Gee, 1996; Street, 2003; Lankshear, 1999; Zavala, 2009), which involves everything that people *do* with reading and writing (Zavala, 2009, p. 25). Moreover, the extended concept of literacy nowadays includes all four skills, not only reading and writing (Cassany, 2006; Cross, 2011; Ewing, 2013).

Literacy practices include both observable and collectable documents (texts), as well as their complements that underlie and co-construct them. In this sense, literacy practices also involve identification of the values, beliefs, and power structures that shape such practices which are more abstract than practices reported by international surveys, which focus on more common or typical literacy tasks (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Literacy practices (events, tasks) are embedded, situated in context of 'local' and 'translocal' (wider, or more global) communities of practice (Blommaert, 2010). Knowledge is thus embedded and distributed across the community of practice and the participants negotiate their participation in it (Gee, 2000). In our project, we follow the L2 university teachers' practices in L1 and L2 (and also beliefs that shape them) in regards to literacy (and biliteracy) development, and the valence of those practices in our participants' respective communities of practice. These practices require the effective use of languages in diverse contexts: both the traditional labor of a university teacher, i.e. knowledge creation and its dissemination in the classroom, and knowledge creation and its dissemination through publications in journals, books, etc.

Multiliteracy, academic literacy and biliteracy

In the recent years, and especially in the academic context, we can't talk about one single literacy, perceived as a set of practices of text comprehension and production, but as multiple literacies, or multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013). Multiple literacies have several components and require a sociolinguistic approximation towards language and literacy, always embedded in the social practice of a given academic community, the one in which we claim a membership as language teachers-researchers. For Thorne (2013), multiliteracy entails two fundamental notions: "1) the acknowledgment of growing cultural and linguistic diversity and 2) increasing importance of digital and multimodal forms of meaning" (p. 196). Multimodal refers to the use of two or more semiotic systems (Anstey & Bull, 2010), which, in line with the multiliteracies approach, would include written, spoken, visual, and audiovisual documents (Allen & Paesani, 2010). Both digital (technology mediated) emerging literacy practices and multimodal forms of meaning are present in all current educational settings, including higher education. In addition, in the tertiary education sector, another multiliteracy is often discussed —academic literacy.

Academic literacy is known as one of the multiple literacies (Johns, 1997), which should be pluralized as well, as it encompasses the multiple and diverse literacies found in academic contexts, such as subject and disciplinary matter courses, discourses and genres (Lea & Street, 2006), being one of the most studied a scientific article (Swales 1990; Cassany, 2005). Academic literacy refers primarily to literacy at tertiary level (undergraduate and post graduate), although it may apply also to prior degrees (Lea & Street, 2006). Academic literacy

development supposes the existence of a strong link between the critical-thinking skills and the competent academic writing (Catterall & Ireland's study, as cited in McWilliams, 2014, p.4). To determine what literacy is needed in the academic context is important to make meaning in the information-overloaded world; in that respect, Werlz et al. (2013) proved that information literacy and critical thinking are interrelated.

In our educational setting, the multiliteracies (such as academic, digital and others) combine with multilingual literacies, adding other dimension to the complexity of literacies (Martin-Jones & Jones, 2001), overlapping slightly with adjacent fields of research- New Literacy Studies and study of bilingualism from a sociolinguistic perspective, which is also subject to critical examination of power issues (Spolsky, 1998) related to the discriminate use of languages and the preferences in the literacy curricula selection and its implementation in the given educational context (Cadeiro-Kaplan, 2004). Our present research interest on the first (L1) and the second language (L2) literacies lies on the intersections of L1 and L2 literacies, in other words, multilingual literacies. L1 and L2 literacies are not only closely linked but also transferable across languages (Cummins, 2010). According to the author, the interconnection of language systems is based on the existence of the common underlying proficiency, which makes cognitive/academic or literacy-related transfer possible (p. 68).

Biliteracy practices and beliefs

Literacy in the second language is denominated as biliteracy. Biliteracy encompasses two key elements- bilingualism and biliteracy, viewed as the conjunction of both elements, previously treated as separate (Hornberger, 2003). Hornberger has worked on the biliteracy framework model since the late 80's. It fits the multiliteracies model and it also retakes certain features from the Blommaert's design (2010), taking into consideration the existence of mobile multilingual repertoires in local spaces, which are simultaneously translocal and global (Hornberger, 2013). The traditional take on bilingualism and biliteracy as polar opposites, such as L1- L2, oral – written or reception – production is overcome in the development of biliteracy, one of the four-axis model of biliteracy continua, proposed by Hornberger (2013). The three resting components are the context, content and media of biliteracy. Content of the biliteracy builds on Gee's (2004) distinction between the vernacular and academic literacy also contemplated in the data analysis of the presented study.

Language practices in bilinguals include code-switching, defined as "alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent" Poplack (2005, p. 208), which could be considered problematic if viewed from a "monolingual mindset" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015, p. 16); besides, the term monolingual, according to Canagarajah (2013) has an ideological significance and

hardly applies to real-life situations when languages are in contact. Transfer (a cross-linguistic influence from L1 to L2, and also vice versa) is another common practice in bilinguals, already mentioned in the previous text. Transfer has been also referenced as “interference” (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008), the term coined by Weinreich (1953), which has a negative connotation nowadays, as it draws attention to the negative outcomes of the transfer. Transfer may appear at all levels of the language, which also include skills or strategies, the latter documented, for example, by Perales-Escudero and Reyes-Cruz (2014) in the case of L2 to L1 transfer in one undergraduate program majoring in English in a Mexican university.

Language phenomena, language itself, as well as theories of teaching and learning or literacy practices are subject to reflection and evaluation. Teachers’ thinking (cognition), the decision-making, and practices are interrelated. Literacies as social practices ways of reading, writing and using of written texts are only partially observable, as they operate on socio-cognitive level, and elements such as beliefs, values, attitudes implicated in the process are not directly observable and have to be inferred and interpreted (Hamilton, 2000). Although it has been stated on many occasions that beliefs, concepts, opinion are neighboring terms (Baker, 2011), and have been treated in literature as synonyms (Pajares, 1992). For our research purposes, we selected a set of definitions of beliefs, provided by Pajares, as suitable for our current research framework: individuals develop a belief system that houses all the beliefs acquired through the process of cultural transmission; this belief system helps an individual define and understand the world, and knowledge and beliefs are closely connected and that beliefs constitute a filter through which phenomena are interpreted (p. 325). Borg (2003, as cited in Borg, 2006), uses the term language teacher cognition as encompassing beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions, and perspectives (p.41). Similarly to Borg (2006), we agree that there is a connection between beliefs, practices and teachers’ knowledge. Cognition, acknowledgement of the processes of learning-to-teach and what constitutes the knowledge in the discipline is linked to professional development.

Professional development: Teachers as researches

Professional development is closely related to literacy development. The most salient characteristic of occupations that are “traditionally thought as professions is that they require advanced education and extensive training” (Nunan as cited in Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, p.13). According to Nunan, the existence of advanced education and training is the first one listed of the four basic criteria that determine whether or not language teaching can be legitimately considered a profession. The professional development of the Mexican language teachers was influenced by the availability of teacher formation programs. It was not before the

90s when BA programs in language teaching spread (Da Silva y Gilbón, 1995; Sayer, 2007). Progressively later (in the 2000s), MA programs follow (Ramírez Romero 2010), yet still with virtually no coverage in doctorate programs in the specific area of foreign language teaching (Ramírez-Romero, 2013) at national level. Limited availability of the educational programs resulted in the lack of trained professionals, which caused a delay in professional trajectories of Mexican language teachers, and enable that language teachers were “launched” (Lengeling, 2007, 2013) into the profession from diverse educational backgrounds. It is also common that the education backgrounds of the university teachers in the discipline are partly in Mexican and partly in foreign institutions, which enhances biliteracy. The initial employment criteria for a language teacher in past was, in many cases, the fluency in the target language. Language teachers then worked mostly in language centers affiliated to universities.

Teacher formation and training typically happened simultaneously with their job as full-time professors until the 90s, when the national and institutional policies changed, which emphasized their participation in research, administration and community services. Furthermore, there was a demand to reach the desirable academic standard for university professors, including the language center staff; this situation led teachers to enroll in undergraduate and graduate studies, which also encouraged research and was expected to eventually increase the academic productivity. Allocation of funding and benefits, in line with the politics of evaluation, made university teachers work collaboratively in formal research groups (CA, by its Spanish acronym), affiliate to Professors’ Improvement now Professors’ Development Program (PROMEP, since 2013 renamed to PRODEP; referenced by its current Spanish acronym hereafter), to the National System of Researchers, (SNI, initials in Spanish) and compete for individual university productivity bonuses. All the above initiatives support faculty to conduct research as well as they promote productivity, which springs from literacy and at the same time enhances it.

Literacy is also research-based and research-driven. The institutional requirements and practices in university teachers in Mexico and elsewhere demand from academics increasing presence as publishing authors. Research in language teaching field in Mexico has been scarce (Ramírez-Romero 2007, 2010, 2013) as well as the resulting productivity. Moreover, language teachers-researchers did not have the opportunity to acquire the research skills at the early age; they learn how to research at the same time as they perform the activity (Reyes-Cruz & Hernández-Méndez, 2014).

Research on literacy has developed mainly in the Anglophone context, although the situation gradually changes. Before 2002, articles on academic literacy written in Spanish were almost inexistent, while in last decade their number has grown (Carlino, 2013). Academic literacy and the research on L2 writing in Mexican

universities is concentrated mainly in the books edited by Perales-Escudero (2010) and Santos (2010), both written in English. Regarding the language choice for academia, English is a lingua franca of the scientific communication (Mauranen, 2006). Prestige and visibility in the academia (Tardy, 2004) can be thus reached through publications in English, “lingua franca of research and scholarship” (Hyland, 2009, p. 4), converting English into an additional academic skill more than a language itself, according to the same author. The possibility to be cited also increments when publishing in English. Researchers in the periphery (non-native speakers) might feel underrepresented the current scenario as they might not know the genre specifics and contrastive rhetoric or simply the English language to get published (Englander, 2010). On that respect, Hyland (2016) targets beliefs on editors and referees bias towards non-Anglophone writers, claiming there is no research evidence that would prove such a claim. Moreover, in the applied linguistics and language teaching, non-Anglophone publications outnumber Anglophone researchers. As knowledge is constructed through publications, it is important to foresee where our participants are headed and if in the near future we are not going to face a diglossic situation where languages other than English would not be used for academic purposes.

Given the above, we stated our research questions as follows: 1. 1. What are the teacher-researchers’ beliefs on literacy in the Mexican higher education context? 1.2. Do their perceptions vary according to their academic credentials? 2.1. How have language teachers developed literacy in L1 and L2 (biliteracy) as publishing authors and researchers, including their biliteracy practices and language choices for their academic production? 2.2. Do their practices differ in relation to their academic backgrounds?

Methodology

Phase 1

The present study is part of a broader research project which investigated the beliefs of foreign language researcher-professor about research in Mexican Higher education. The project was carried out in two phases. The first phase of the study had the intention to identify the beliefs of 100 researcher-professors regarding research self-efficacy, collaborative research, research and thesis supervision and literacy. A 96 likert-scale questionnaire was designed to gather data. To estimate the reliability of the instrument the Cronbach’s Alpha test was run, obtaining a reliability coefficient of .855. Given the scope of the study, we report exclusively on the literacy items (see Annexes) in this paper.

Phase 2

This part of the project uses qualitative methodology. The data was analyzed through the procedures of content analysis (Mayring, 2000). To elicit the responses, semi-structured interviews were carried out, based on the set of eleven

leading questions that enabled us to obtain large chunks of information from the studied subjects. The categorization of the main themes and subthemes were established based on individual categorization of three researchers and only the categories where the consensus among the researchers was reached remained in the study. As a result, patterns and pathways of academic literacy development in language teachers could be established, where the following central themes arose: 1. university teachers-researchers developed their literacy through their prior schooling and participation in academic/teacher training courses; 2. literacy is also enhanced by academic productivity; 3. engagement in research projects; 4. through the development of specific academic skills related to reading, and finally, given the specificity of the sample, 5. biliteracy and bilingualism development theme, which emerged in the analysis of the data obtained through language teachers' narratives. Given the delineated objectives and limited space the present paper relates exclusively to themes 1 and 5.

Context

The study was conducted in three large Mexican public universities, located in three distinct, geographically representative areas (north, center and south). These institutions prepare future foreign language teachers in accredited BA and MA programs, recognized for their quality by the National Council of Science and Technology (Conacyt, by its Spanish acronym). CU offers Bachelors both in English and French Language Teaching in bilingual programs. CU was one of the first to implement BA in Foreign Language Teaching in Mexico in the 80s; NU and CU's BA programs initiated in the 90s. NU currently offers Bachelors in Language Teaching, with curriculum in English-Spanish content-based classes with a third language taught as a subject. Besides BA in Language Teaching, NU also provides BA in Translation. SU educational offer includes BA in English Language, with French or Translation as specialties. MA programs in all three universities date back to the first decade of the 2000s. NU offers an MA in Modern Languages, CU an MA in English Language Teaching and SU an MA in Education that contains a specialty in Didactics of English. NU and SU are located in the border area with English speaking countries (U.S. and Belize). All teachers that participated in both phases of our study are involved in the previously mentioned educational programs.

Participants

Phase 1

This part of the study involved 100 professors from three different language schools in public universities. They were professors who were working at these institutions (NU, n=33, CU =32, SU=35), either as part time or full time teachers. They all had experience doing research in the field of language learning and teaching, and had published at least one of these academic products: dissertations,

articles, books or chapters of books. Most of them held a Master degree (n= 70) and some also held a Ph.D. degree (n= 20). Some of them were members of the SNI, National Researchers System (n=14) or had obtained the recognition of the Professional Teacher Development Program from the Ministry of Education, PRODEP (n=53) and were working in a registered research group (CA) with different level of consolidation. Table 1 contains a summary of the demographic data of the participants.

Phase 2

In this part of the project, the original sample of 100 participants was reduced to one third. The second phase participants were selected on the base of their productivity, academic degree, type of contact (only the full-time teachers, research professors, members or collaborators of CA, SNI or PRODEP membership holders, actively involved in the research and publishing authors were included). The plan was to interview 10 participants from each university, but given to circumstances and participant availability, NU researchers, who were in charge of the instrument recollection in the rest of the country, could gather the narratives of 10 participants from the NU (participating researchers were excluded from this sample), 9 from the CU and 12 from the SU, in total 31 participants, who were interviewed in 2013-2014 period.

Table 1. Demographic data of the participants (2012-2013)

Years teaching a foreign language	Years researching	Academic degree	Contract type	Academic Recognition
1-10 = 22%	1-4 = 54%	Diploma = 1%	Full-time = 72%	PRODEP = 45%
11-20 = 62%	5-10 = 33%	B.A. = 8%	Part-time = 4%	SNI Candidate = 11%
21-30 = 16%	11-30 = 13%	M.A. = 70%	Hourly lecturers = 20%	SNI = 3%
		PH.D. = 20%	By contract = 4%	None = 41%

Instruments

Phase 1

To research language research-professors' perceptions of literacy, a 12 item Likert-scale survey was designed. The items addressed two main topics: language for literacies which refers to the use of language to develop literacies, and literacy for professional development, which explores specifically the relationship between literacy and professional development. Item writing was guided by Cross's work (2011); some of them were adapted from the questionnaire this

author designed to explore the understanding of literacy of teachers of English as an L2 in Australia. The 12 items had six response options: I strongly agree, I agree, I cannot decide, I disagree, I strongly disagree, and I do not know, the values ranged from 1 to 6. In the current study, participants were asked to respond to each item based on their perception. The instrument is in appendix 1.

Phase 2

In the three university locations, a set of 31 semi-structured interviews, based on the script of 11 leading questions, had been conducted in order to ascertain the information required to obtain data (responses on the research questions). The interviewers were the postgraduate students of the MA program from the NU mostly, with the participation of the researchers who also directly participated in the field work. The corpus contained in total 9 hours 53 minutes auditory data obtained through semi-structured interviews, transcribed and analyzed.

Data Analysis

Phase 1

Data gathered from the questionnaire was analyzed via SPSS 19 by calculating mean and percentages of the answers and present results. In order to establish if there were statistically different responses of the two groups of teachers with doctorates or masters, Mann-Whitney U test was carried out.

Phase 2

The data of the teachers were obtained through semi-structured interviews; the analysis was done through the procedures of the content analysis. The classification and the identification of main themes and subthemes (topics and subtopics) were done manually, by three codes independently. The final selection of the categories was based on consensus of the participating researchers. The patterns and pathways of academic literacy development in language teachers were established in this process, where the following central themes arose. 1. University teachers-researchers developed their literacy *through their prior schooling and participation in academic/teacher training courses*. 2. Literacy is also enhanced by *academic productivity*, and 3. *engagement in research projects*. Literacy requires 4. *the development of specific academic skills related to reading and writing*, and finally, based on the specificity of the studied population, 5. *biliteracy and bilingualism development* as the final major theme, which emerged in the analysis of the data obtained through language teachers' narratives. Given the delineated objectives and limited space, the research topics (themes and subthemes) which are reported and analyzed in this paper relate exclusively to themes 1 and 5 (research question #2 in the present paper).

Results and Discussion

Phase 1

The research aimed to find answers to the following questions (RQ 1.1): **What are the teacher-researchers' beliefs on literacy within their respective discipline in the Mexican higher education context?**

RQ 1. It was found that most university teachers agreed with the items related to the following topics identified in the beliefs on literacy questionnaire: 1. *Language for literacy* and 2. *Literacy for professional development* as it is observed in the next part of this report.

Language for literacy.

The participants of the study expressed agreement with the idea that literacy implies the development of the four main language skills (Cassany, 2006, Ewing, 2013) and that it does not refer only to reading and writing. 90% of the professors agreed with item 1: *Literacy development in ESL involves a focus on all four macroskills* (M=1.7), 55% strongly agreed and 35% agreed.

Item 2. *Literacy development in L1 facilitates development of literacy in L2 or L3* (M= 1.57) obtained the highest percentage of agreement (96%) in the results. It seems they coincide with Roberts (1994) who concludes that there is enough research evidence that basic literacy skills developed in L1 transfer to L2, but that it depends on the definition of literacy we stand for. Additionally, psycholinguists, Steinberg, Nagata and Aline (2000) also state that cognitive strategies in L1 are usually transferred to the L2 and the L3. It also seems to prove Cummins' (2010) point on the existence of the common underlying proficiency.

Literacy implies the use of multimodal texts which are defined as those that integrate two or more semiotic systems (linguistic, visual, audio, gestural or spatial); and they can be delivered through different media or technology (Anstey & Bull, 2010). Some examples are a magazine, a web page, or a television program. Professors showed agreement in item 3. *Literacy development implies the use of multimodal texts (visual communication means)* (M= 1.9), 37% strongly agreed and 50% agreed.

On the other hand, literacy also involves the development of digital skills by using information and communication technologies (digital literacy, c.f. Thorne, 2010), as stated in item 4. *Literacy development involves the effective use of information and communications technologies* (M=2.2). In this statement professors' answers were different since 75% agreed, 12% could not make a decision, 10% disagreed, and 2% said they did not know. This variation in the answers might indicate a possible generation gap between professors and students (Snyder, 2003) and that some professors do not relate the use of technology with literacy. This confusion could be due to the fact that technology

has been related to literacy is different ways: as a deliverer of literacy, as a place for interaction around texts and as a medium for meaning-making (Burnett, 2010).

In item 5. *Literacy development is highly related to the development of critical thinking* (M=1.9), we found that 86% agreed (40 % strongly agreed), 8% could not decide and 4% did not know. This results show that professors relate critical thinking with literacy development. Critical thinking has recently been related with information literacy since it has been considered a key issue to negotiate the information overload (Wertz et al., 2013).

Item 6. *My level of literacy is the same in Spanish and in the language I teach* has the intention to identify how biliterate professors think they are. The mean was 2.6 which shows a tendency towards indecisiveness and disagreement, 60% agreed (only 18% strongly agreed), 13% I could not decide, and 24% disagreed. It seems professors do not feel comfortable with their L2 literacy.

As a summary of this part of the results, we conclude that most of the professors believe that literacy development involves all four macro skills, the use of multimodal texts (visual communication means) and the development of critical thinking. They also believe that L1 literacy skills are transferred to the development of L2 or L3 literacy. However, there were some discrepancies in their answers about these two ideas: Literacy development involves the effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) and that their level of literacy is the same in the official language (Spanish) and in the language they teach.

In reference to the topic "Literacy for professional development", results showed that most professors agreed with the statements (M= 2.0-2.5) with some discrepancies, though. The highest percentage of agreement was for item 9. *Active participation in research encourages literacy development* (82%) and the lowest was for item 11. *My level of literacy is evident in my academic production (publications, paper in proceedings, etc.)* (64%). This item also presented 17% of disagreement, 12% could not decide and 7% did not know. The second highest percentage of agreement was in item 7. *Literacy development implies to communicate effectively in collaborative activities*, 81% agreed, but 12% could not decide and 3% did not know, and only 4% disagreed.

Item 8. *Active participation in the professional community encourages literacy development* (69% agreement, 19% undecided, 5 % disagreement and 7% I do not know) presented the highest percentage of *I cannot decide* answers, what might show that those professors do not participate actively in the professional community possibly because they are hourly lecturers (20%) and are not sure to what extent literacy development might encourage active participation in that particular professional community.

In item 10. *The level of literacy of a professor determines the level of research*, 65 % agreed, 12% could not decide, 16% disagreed and 7% did not know. This item presented the second highest degree of disagreement. Finally, in item 12. *Literacy*

development is closely related to professional development, 67% of professors agreed, 16% could not decide, 12% disagreed and 4% did not know.

In general terms, this statistical analysis showed that it seems professors relate literacy development to different issues linked to professional development such as academic production, active participation in professional and research activities and professional development itself. It was observed that, even though disagreement was not frequent in the answers, it was higher in the set of items denominated as “literacy for professional development” than in the previous set related to “language for literacy. Indecision and lack of knowledge percentages, and some disagreement with these ideas might be interpreted as a possible lack of previous reflection on these issues. However, their answers might also be closely related to these professors’ context. Full-time professors are encouraged to work collaboratively, 53% are associated to a CA membership in the three universities as result of a national policy supported by the Ministry of Public Education. This situation has given university professors the opportunity to improve their academic production associated to the development of research projects, which has implied the development of academic literacy practices such as papers, books and thesis writing.

To respond the RQ 2.2., and determine **if there were any differences in the responses of the teachers with doctorates compared to those with and with the masters**, the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted, which revealed statistical differences in four items from the questionnaire: #1 (sig. 0.016), # 9 (sig. 0.037), #11 (0.004) and #12 (0.009). In all cases, teachers with doctorates endorse more than teachers with masters the following statements: *Literacy development in ESL involves a focus on all four macroskills*, *The level of literacy of a professor determines the level of his/her research*, *My level of literacy is reflected in my academic production* and lastly *Literacy development is closely related to professional development*. The previous results may indicate that teachers with higher academic credentials perceive literacy in wider terms, with all four skills included, not just reading and writing. This result seems to support previous results obtained in a preliminary study (Crhová, Domínguez-Gaona, Molina-Landeros, Arias-López, & Thomas-Ruzic, 2014), which reflected a similar finding based on a reduced sample of participants (just one of the participating universities), in which 100% of doctors totally agreed with the proposition, while only 82.1% agreed with the statement. In addition, we observed certain interdependence between the research experience and the confidence, and academic habilitation since the participants with doctorate identify more with the idea that their level of literacy determines their level of research. Similar results were observed by Reyes-Cruz & Gutiérrez-Arce (2015), when studying research efficacy beliefs in students of an MA program related to the context of our current research. The study documents that the students upon concluding the MA degree report only a moderate research

self-efficacy; the changes in research self-efficacy from moderate to high are expected in the doctoral studies, which is in line with the our research findings. In as much as academic productivity, it has been documented that it is higher in number in academics with higher credentials (Ramírez-Romero, 2013), which at the same time matches the realistic perceptions that the teachers-researches have of their own productivity as reflected in this study.

Phase 2

This phase of the research project holds as purpose describing the development of literacy of teachers-researchers in the field of language teaching in three Mexican universities through the interviews, focusing namely on how language teachers developed literacy in L1 and L2 (biliteracy).

RQ 2.1: How have language teachers-researchers developed literacy in L1 and L2 (biliteracy) and which languages they use in their academic production; the above also in relation to their academic backgrounds (RQ2.2).

In this section, the results of the information that was gathered is exposed and interpreted. Firstly, we evidence the literacy development of our participants through their participation in academic programs and courses (table 3) and next, we document (table 4) biliteracy (and bilingualism) development in their academic production, providing excerpts from teachers' narratives.

From the previously mentioned, it results evident that educational backgrounds marked academic literacy of our participants. In the interview, they described their academic degrees and the field of specialization as antecedents for their literacy development. They also mentioned their participation in academic and teacher training courses. In reference to the development of literacy (L1 and L2) and as a response to RQ 2, 30 out of 31 participants mentioned in their narratives their previous bachelor's degrees as a relevant factor. 23 of them specified that their BA educational background was in the field of applied linguistics and similar degrees. Two participants' degrees were related to education in general, four participants' degrees are not related either to applied linguistics or education in general, and finally, one participant did not specify the BA degree obtained in the course of the interview. The most frequent responses regarding the BA antecedents belong to the Sub-category 'A' (Applied linguistics and related); the following excerpt exemplifies it.

I have unfinished didactics studies at UAG and I have a Bachelor's Degree in Educational Philosophy, but—with—it, it —held an emphasis on English Teaching uhm...from St. Mark and St. John's College in Exeter University in England.(1NDF).¹

¹ Participants are identified by a code. The initial letter refers to participant's number, the first letter refers to the university (N= Northern, C= Central, S= Southern University); the

Table 3: Literacy Development through the Participation in Academic Programs and Courses

Main category (theme)	Subcategory (subtheme)	Frequency (n=31)
Through their participation in academic programs	I) Bachelor's: A. Applied linguistics and related B. Education and related C. Non-related field D. Non-specified field.	A) 23 B) 2 C) 4 D) 1
	II) Master's Applied linguistics and related Education and related Non-related field Non-specified field	A) 11 B) 14 C) 0 D) 5
	III) Doctorate: A. Applied linguistics and related B. Education and related C. Non-related field D. Non-specified field	A) 6 B) 5 C) 0 D) 2
	IV) Participation in academic/teacher training courses	IV) 16

On the other hand, there are some teachers-researchers in our field, whose BA degrees do not directly relate to the discipline they currently teach, such as documented in the following testimony:

Well, what happened is that I ended up as an English teacher uhm...in a peculiar way, because I have a Bachelor's Degree in Biology. So, uh....due to a twist of fate, I didn't practice as... I didn't practice as a biologist. And I learned English since I was very little, so, uhm....there was a, here in the university, there was a call for English teachers and they said: you can, you can do it. (17CMF).

Contrastingly, in the postgraduate studies, when continuing with their master's degrees, we do not find participants who explicitly state that their masters are in fields unrelated to their current teaching positions. The masters they hold are either in the field *Applied linguistics and related* (mentioned by eleven

second letter refers to the degree (M for Master's and D for Doctorate), the following letter represents the gender (F for Feminine and M for Masculine); S stand for currently studying doctorate at the end of the code descriptor.

participants) or *Education and related* (frequented by six participants); however, there were five informants, who did not specify their master's degrees in the interview, such as documented in the following excerpt:

[...] and it was some years after I had finished the BA, like seven years after the BA, when I started the masters courses in a French University of Clermont-Ferrand in France, and well, until there, no? And probably soon, I'll start the doctorate, but not at this moment. (10 NMM).

The doctoral degree is a referent of academic literacy, explicitly mentioned by thirteen participants, who hold the degree either in Applied Linguistics and related fields (A) (n=6) or in Education and related (B) (n=5). In addition, two participants did not specify their doctoral degree during the interview, although considering their educational background is known to the authors of this text, these two participants would be listed in the A sub-category. The most frequent responses for the both A and B sub-categories of doctoral studies could be documented in the following two excerpts:

And... lastly, the Doctorate in Linguistics in the Autonomous University of Queretaro. (3NDM).

[...] and lastly, the Doctorate in Education in the University of Guadalajara, Marista of Guadalajara. And well, here I am since 1993, teaching, well then, almost for 28 years, right? (15CDM).

It should be mentioned that those who obtained their degree in (A) type of programs in Mexico where usually recently obtained degrees, while the (B) type of doctoral degrees include titles achieved previously, in programs established in the national territory; nevertheless, the vast majority of the PhD of the (A) type in our field were obtained in foreign universities as could be evidenced from a following excerpts.

[PhD]... in Applied Linguistics. This time at Macquarie. The same as [mentions other colleague who studied the same program]. And then they came, they gave us courses for several weeks and left, and we continued being autonomous, finishing the tasks. (14CDM).

... and a doctorate in English and Education from the University of Michigan. (21SDM).

In addition, a significant number of participants acknowledged that participation in academic courses and teacher training programs shaped their academic literacy within the discipline. 16 out of 31 informants mentioned they engaged in those kinds of courses either as attendees or, at occasions, as instructors. In both cases, their involvement in those courses marked the development of their literacy within their respective discipline. The following two excerpts document the experience of the attendees to those courses.

And then I did some studies in training, for teacher's training of English teachers in Edinburgh, in Heriot-Watt University... (1NDF)

The second, more detailed testimony was provided by one of our participants.

..I have a COTE, the Certificate for all— how was it? For Teachers, Overseas Teachers of English, the COTE, the one from Cambridge....Cambridge? Yes, it is from Cambridge, correct me if I am wrong, right... (2NMS)

In overall, the results obtained in the data analysis show consistency and similarity in intercampus comparison. The significant number of participants reported that their academic degrees, linked directly to the development of their literacy level, especially at postgraduate level, were obtained in a foreign university (mainly in Anglophone countries). The previous can be understood considering the limited coverage of the programs in the area of foreign language teaching at national level. According to Da Silva y Gilbón (1995), BA offer until the late 80s and 90s was restricted to just few universities, and it was not until the early 2000s when the coverage of these programs amplified significantly, offering also some limited options for those interested to enroll to MA programs (Ramírez Romero, 2010), yet still with virtually no coverage in doctorate programs (Ramírez Romero, 2013) at national level. Therefore, it does not result surprising that our participants' academic formation at masters and doctorate levels happened abroad (such as documented above by our informants 1NFD, 10NMM, 14CDM, and 21SDM, among others), or that the professionalization within the discipline was delayed as a result of the teachers' entering into the discipline with diverse educational backgrounds, combined with empirical foreign languages knowledge, which was back then a sufficient qualification for a foreign language teacher (e.g. 17CMF). In that respect, Sayer (2007) remarks that the BA programs in English teaching were created to professionalize the teaching practice in English language teaching in Mexico in the 90s.

The relative shortage of academic offer in the discipline at the time many of our participants studied their BA degrees also explains why we find teachers with BA degrees not related to the field they currently teach, and why, teacher training courses were vital components for teacher formation within the discipline. Among the courses that had high impact on English teachers' professional development from the mid-90s to the early 2000s in Mexico, COTE should be mentioned in the first place (such as reflected in the narrative of 2NMS). This one-year EFL (English as a Foreign Language) in-service training course offered by the University of Cambridge through the British Council, officially recognized by the Mexican Ministry of Education (SEP) in 2000 (Lengeling, 2007), provided graduates of those courses with credentials required for professional entry into EFL discipline, where many of the teachers "fell" (Lengeling, 2007; Lengeling, 2013) from diverse educational backgrounds. COTE-trained teachers then participate in BA programs

(Sayer, 2007); having both COTE (and other) courses and the BA in English Language Teaching (ELT) openings the biggest impact on ELT in Mexico, according to Davies (as cited in Wilson, 2015). In the same text, Davies also acknowledges that the ELT profession in Mexico is turning more academic at present, with the increasing presence of masters and doctorates in Applied Linguistics and ELT; however, in his opinion, the BAs in language teaching are sole beneficiaries of this academic literacy and professionalization increase, meanwhile the ELT practices in other undergraduate programs (BAs) or prior educational levels remain unchanged.

The second research question addressed in the project, the development of academic literacy in language teachers-researchers, brought up specific themes relative to biliteracy and bilingualism development and also practices in researches as publishing authors and their language choices. The following table concentrates the results, which will be analyzed further on in the text.

Table 4: Bilingualism and Biliteracy Development

Main category (theme)	Subcategory (subtheme)	Frequency (n=31)
Bilingualism and biliteracy development	I. Bilingualism and biliteracy through	I.
	A) Academic literacy practices	A) 3
	- early bilingualism, L2 in L1 classroom settings	B) 4
	B) Vernacular literacy practices	Ba) 3
	- a) L2 language at home, early bilingualism	Bb) 1
	- b) natural settings, late bilingualism	
	II. Code-switching***	II.
	A) Self-reported	A) 4
	B) Perceived	B) 11
		III. Bilitery in academic production
	A) Spanish (L1)	A) 11
	B) Spanish (L2)	B) 1
	C) English (L1)	C) 2
	D) English (L2)	D) 4
	E) Spanish and English	E) 11
	F) Spanish and French	F) 2
	G) Varieties of Spanish	G) 1

The initial interest was to describe teachers' biliteracy development as publishing authors. However all the transcripts in the procedures of content analysis disclose more themes and subthemes in the narratives of our participants. Some participants (n=10) made specific reference of the way they became bilingual (and biliterate). It can be inferred from the responses of our participants (not contained in the above table) that the majority acquired their L2 later in life, in academic contexts, through academic literacy practices, as Gee (2004) labels them. Both NU and SU geographical location in the border area with English speaking countries (U.S. and Belize) might have facilitated in some of participants the development of vernacular literacy in L2. One of the NU participant's close relatives spoke only English, so it became one of the languages used at home, in her own words:

[Before starting university] *I did not have any professional education, I only had high school and I was bilingual because my grandpa, wellwas American and this is the reason why I could speak English.* (5NDF).

Other SU participant was raised and received her schooling prior to university in an English-medium in Belize with her Mexican parents. We can infer from her responses that English was the dominant literacy and Spanish was her vernacular language, as she characterizes herself as a native speaker of English, the only one from her sibling that remained biliterate (and bilingual):

...knowing English and being a native speaker, I was given the opportunity to get a job in the area of English...but from my brothers, I am the only one that remained with both languages because I used to read, and read in English, and read in Spanish. [...] I am not from Mexico, but my parents are Mexican... (28SMF).

Three of our 31 participants are native speakers of English, but all are proficient in Spanish (language of the interview). One of them acquired Spanish in vernacular settings (community) as late bilingualism. In his narrative, he says he would like to possess the academic literacy in Spanish:

I read academic texts, I think that with some help, I could produce an academic text in Spanish for publication. [...] it would give a great deal of satisfaction to say, look, I could do it in Spanish as well, the same way you can do it in English. I feel impressed that my colleagues can master, their...their foreign language that well; so impressive that they publish in English, I wish I could say the same. (14CDM)

Only few participants (n=3) report code-switching, the existence of the language transfer or interference as conflicting phenomena that influenced at some point their academic literacy. One teacher reports problems related to language transfer upon entering to MA program in Mexico after studying her BA in the U.S; transfer from her L2 into her L1:

We were the first generation of the MA and so they were considerate with us, basically because of a lot

of interferences from the English language, honestly. So, they help us to realize these were anglicisms sometimes, and sometimes they were the structures... (5NDF)

Other participant from the same institutions had similar problems, without studying abroad, but studying a BA in English caused her problems when she started her MA, with transfer from L2 (English) to L1(Spanish).

During the interview, our participant also committed occasional code-switching, a practice common to bilinguals. Interestingly, the four teachers of French from sample did not code-switch from Spanish to French. The switches we observed were mainly lexical; usually one word switches or a single phrase switches in 11 out of 31 participants. The switched English elements referred frequently to language skills, foreign methodology terms, and specific features of writing or publishing. Code-switching in this context serves a marker of solidarity in bilinguals (Garret, 2010); moreover, transfer is related to identity changes or selection of new identities, as a result of biliteracy; the latter documented in Mexican university teachers' L2 writing (Crawford et. al., 2014).

The publication preferences of our participants were the following 12 out of 31 publish exclusively or almost exclusively in Spanish, 6 publish in English, or almost always in English, 11 report that their productivity is both in English and in Spanish and two publish in both French and Spanish. In this context, one participant mentioned that she had to master another variety of Spanish (peninsular Spanish) in her academic literacy practices, as she was studying her doctorate in Spain.

The teachers also expressed literacy practices, preferences in language selection and beliefs associated, or mentioned the recent shifts in mind. Some of the reasons for publishing in English are documented in the excerpts.

My discursive community generally demands this kind of publication from me [i.e. written in English]. This is probably the reason I have gotten more into English. There are more publications and places to publish in English. (18CDM).

A participant publishing in both languages wants to retake English again, as [...] publishing in English has--- opens doors to much wider audiences (1NDF).

Other three academics, display an orientation towards publication in English, although they have published in Spanish so far:

Of course, if the publication is in English or other language, it is a plus for you, don't you agree? (2NMFS).

I explore the possibilities to publish in English, but in reality I haven't done it... not so far. (3NDM).

Lately, I've been working on linguistic transfer. My goal is to get published in English [...] as it has more impact that means more people read you. (3NMFS).

On the other hand, some of the teachers who have been publishing in English also shift their practices and include progressively more Spanish, as seen in the following example.

But I also see the convenience in publishing in Spanish to reach other audiences. (11CDF).

Our participants feel, in general confident, in publishing in both languages (English-Spanish), in cases of teacher of French, only one participant considers that publishing in French journals is out of his reach and other participant considers more convenient to publish articles in English, in collaboration with her peers, who would provide some editing in English. Interestingly, one participant, whose L1 is English, publishes more in her L2 (Spanish), as a matter of convenience, since the institutional research reports are required in Spanish. What was also rather unexpected was the expressed unwillingness to publish in the mother tongue (Spanish) in two of our participants disclosed during the interview.

Conclusions

The general tendency, as perceived from the narratives, is to reach a balance in publications, at least as much as English-Spanish representation. This is particularly visible in the participants from NU, where the Spanish-only prevails in the academic production; however, as we explored our participants' beliefs and plans for future publications, this situation was changing –they were already working on their first articles in English or firmly decided on publishing in English. They have realized that publications in English have more impact and hence enable them reach major visibility and prestige, in line with Tardy (2004) or Mauranen (2006). On the other hand, some of our participants publishing in English recently include also publications in Spanish. There is no indication that the academic writing in the area of language teaching would be headed towards English exclusive domains, at least not in the near future. English, though, will remain, by far, ahead of French in foreign language publications for Mexican teachers-researchers from our sample, which reflects the matriculation in the L2 programs majoring in French language teaching (in CU) or the minor representation of French in the BA in Language teaching and MA in Modern Languages (NU), or in the case of SU, its presence as a curricular subject in diverse bachelors.

In response to second research question, we can't generalize on such a small sample, nevertheless, as an indicator, we observe that among of those who publish only in English (or almost exclusively in English) 5 (n=6) have doctoral degrees (83.33%). The MA degree holder, who publishes in English, is a native speaker,

which means that all the non-Anglophone teachers-researchers publishing in English have doctorates. By contrast, the publications in Spanish only (or almost exclusively) are frequented by just 33.3% doctors (4 out of 12).

In conclusion to research question number one, we found general agreement on proposed items related to *Language for literacy* and *Literacy for professional development* themes. Professors displayed major agreement with the items from the thematic line *Language for literacy*, in particular for the item 1 (*Literacy development in ESL involves a focus on all four macroskills*) and 2 (*Literacy development in L1 facilitates development of literacy in L2 or L3*). In as much for the second thematic line, we could observe some discrepancies (indecisiveness and disagreement) in items #9, #10, #11. The item # 10 reached major disagreement (*My level of literacy is the same in Spanish and in the language I teach*), which is explained by the fact that Spanish is the mother tongue of the majority and moreover, the teachers who participate in the second phase, some of them report feel comfortable publishing in that language. The statistically relevant differences between doctorate and master degree holders were found in items #1, #9, #11 and #12, items on the nature of literacy, research and productivity related to literacy, which were endorsed significantly more by teachers with doctorates.

We conclude that beliefs are also shaped by teachers' participation in their respective professional communities, or communities of practice, which are delineated by institutional and national policies. In our research, we have tried to cover one particular aspect of biliteracy, reported by Swales (2000) as overlooked – how and in what context scientific writers develop academic literacies in a first and second language (p.61). It should be mentioned that this research project on literacy is not concluded yet; the ongoing stage complements biliteracy beliefs and practices with an analyses of the artifacts of participant teachers-researchers.

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Contact

Jitka Crhová, PhD,
Laguna de Términos 19600
#96, Col. El Lago
Tijuana
B.C., Mexico
jcrhova@uabc.edu.mx

Dra. María del Rocío Domínguez,
Prolongación Jalisco 3465
Col. Madero Sur
Tijuana, B.C.
Mexico
rocio_dominguez@uabc.edu.mx

Appendices

Appendix 1: RILE Questionnaire on Research problems in the foreign language field - Literacy items

<p>Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with these statements by circling the corresponding option on the right column. 1 = I strongly agree; 2 = I agree; 3 = I cannot decide; 4 = I disagree; 5 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I do not know.</p> <p>Note: Literacy is defined as the use of code and written genres, the knowledge of the discourse function and the roles of the reader and the author; the social values associated with the corresponding discourse practices and the thought forms developed in relation to the previous.</p>						
1. Literacy development in ESL involves a focus on all four macroskills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Literacy development in L1 facilitates development of literacy in L2 or L3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Literacy development implies the use of multimodal texts (visual communication means).	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Literacy development involves the effective use of information and communications technologies (ICT).	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Literacy development implies to communicate effectively in collaborative tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Literacy development is highly related to the development of critical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Active participation in the professional community encourages literacy development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Active participation in research promotes literacy development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The level of literacy of a professor determines the level of his/her research.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. My level of literacy is the same in Spanish and in the language I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. My level of literacy is reflected in my academic production (publications, conferences, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Literacy development is closely related to professional development.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Multicultural society by university students' view

Mariana Sirotová & Veronika Michvocíková

University of Ss Cyril & Methodius, Slovakia

mariana.sirotova@ucm.sk

Abstract

The article focuses on exploring the way in which Slovakia is viewed as a multicultural society by the surveyed university students. For that reason it is necessary to examine to what extent participation in the educational process at university affects opinions of the surveyed university students on the existence of multicultural society in Slovakia. The theoretical part of the article defines basic key terms associated with the given issue. The aim of the presented article's empirical examination is to analyse the formation of opinions of the surveyed university students connected with the topic of multicultural society in the educational process at universities. 200 university students have participated in our empirical research. Data were collected in the course of April 2016 through a questionnaire prepared in advance. Processing and subsequent univariant, bivariant and multivariant analyses of the collected data were carried out by using the statistical software SPSS 2.

Key words: culture, multicultural society, nation, university education, university students

Introduction

In today's world we see constantly extending diversity and variety in almost all areas of, not only, social life. The everyday life of individuals is determined by the effect and course of several elementary interactions reflecting events in society. Understanding them is considered to be the essence of living a person's social and private life to the fullest. For that reason, it is necessary to pay more attention to exploring the attitudes and opinions of various groups of people who create by their interactions the inevitable precondition for maintaining and sustaining an effective and acceptable social order. However the past few years have brought along a gradual transformation of the way that some settled and accustomed conditions for the existence and effectiveness of values and norms in society work.

If we aim at defining both typical and specific phenomena and processes in the current arrangement of crucial social circumstances, we focus our attention on exploring the issue of multicultural society. Multicultural society is a result of the unstoppable collision of cultural differences. It is the diversity of the existing spectrum of cultures that is in many cases the source of constantly emerging

questions of individuals concerning the vision of the future.

University students definitely represent an important group of the population. This generation of people is essential not only for its multiplicity, but also for their attitudes and opinions which they present during their everyday interactions necessary for the constant development, formation and sustainment of an effective social order. University students in Slovakia begin to participate in the decision processes that influence not only their present life, but their future life as well. For that reason we find it necessary to explore opinions of the surveyed university students on the existence of multicultural society in Slovakia. The subject of our research is also outlining the possible preconditions for forming these opinions by our respondents based on their presence at lectures and seminars carried out within the educational process at university. The university environment is considered to be the place where an individual not only gains and deepens his knowledge, but also forms his attitudes and opinions according to which he lives his life in society. Therefore we need to focus our attention on the way that university students as a specific group of population perceive the multicultural society in Slovakia.

Culture and multicultural society

When defining the elementary interactions between individuals, it is necessary to draw from the overall character of basic characteristics and specifics of society. For that reason we focus on describing a chosen human creation that is culture. "Culture is a specific human way of organizing, performing and developing human activities objectified in both material and non-material results of its everyday performance" (Sabol-Zubková, 2003, p. 9). If we speak about the general definition of culture, we emphasize the fundamental fact that it is being created by human individuals. The everyday interactions between individuals result in producing both material and non-material outcomes which need to be characterized as the basic building pillars of culture in society.

In every culture we can observe various phenomena. Cultural phenomena can be understood as positive values participating in the cultivation and humanization of a man and directed towards the progressive development of human society (Soukup, 2000, p. 15). At this place we do not find it necessary to pay more attention to extensive definitions of culture and its specifics. However, we need to emphasize the fact that based on subsuming an individual into a specific culture, a significant development of his personality takes place through accepting and potential subsequent reproducing of given cultural values through which he integrates himself into human society. Culture represents an important and inevitable part of human survival and for that reason the phenomena connected with it participate in the progressive development of society as well.

In addition, we can not forget that the current society is experiencing an

expansion of diversity and variety. It is possible to observe many minority groups in comparison to the majority. Minority groups are often being either repressed or dismissed. Many member countries of the European Union have been experiencing the issue of the non-acceptance of minority groups for a long time and therefore anti-discrimination strategies should be adopted as a part of the accepted common policy of the European Union (Cabanová, 2006, p. 47 – 48). That means that the issue of existing prejudices and signs of rejecting the members of minority groups of the population by the majority affects various member countries of the European Union. That is why many different concepts and strategies striving to achieve an equal perception of all groups of population in society are being created. Despite that, it is necessary to think about the strategies that are being adapted and their real effectiveness, since it would be more adequate to direct their focus and content more at the middle generations of population.

In our opinion for social development, it is also typical that “cultural differences are the cause of many misunderstandings and conflicts. These misunderstandings are often being displayed in the form of prejudices and stereotypes, but they can also result in more serious forms, such as intolerance, xenophobia and racism” (Kurčíková, 2016, p. 165). Emphasizing and deepening cultural differences brings along conflicts between the members of individual cultures who are neither willing nor able to accept the existing differences. The differences between individuals can also arise from their different nationalities, since within the existence of multicultural society Kymlicka points out that every nation has its own homeland, language, as well as history (Kymlicka, 2000, p. 52). A person's nationality is also considered to be a way of perceiving members of different nations as individuals characterized by their diversity. Members of different nations can also relate to the specifics of different cultures, which only deepens potential prejudices or stereotypes of the members of majority nations in comparison with the minorities existing in society.

Since a gradual collision of elements of many different cultures is happening nowadays, there can be a situation where a pluralistic system of cultural values is being created. That is what we call an existence of multiculturalism in the current world society. The term multiculturalism is according to Sabol and Zubková usually used in the following meanings (Sabol-Zubková, 2003, p. 21 – 22):

1. state – multiculturalism can be defined as the coexistence of socio-cultural groups with a system of traditions, institutions and meanings,
2. process – multiculturalism is understood as the mutual influencing of different cultural systems,
3. scientific theory – exploring the aspects of socio-cultural diversity,
4. social aim – an effort to create a pluralistic society connecting various different socio-cultural groups.

There are many definitions of multiculturalism in the current theories. In

connection with the given subject of exploration set in our article, we focus our attention on the prevailing perception of multiculturalism as a social aim. Through promoting multiculturalism in the current society we can observe an effort to gradually create a pluralistic and diversified society based on the existence of several diverse and mainly culturally different groups. The direction towards creating a multicultural society is determined mainly by the overall character of current migration processes, when the elements of individual cultures gradually mix and blend.

If we focus on attitudes and opinions of individuals on perceiving the existing culturally different groups, Kadlečiková points out that these opinions are being formed in the family environment, although they can be changed based on secondary socialization through multicultural education in the school environment (Kadlečiková, 2009, p. 23 – 24). During childhood the family is considered to be a significant socializing factor. A child usually spends a lot of time with his relatives, which affects the process of forming his attitudes and opinions. With progressing socialization a young person, however, comes into contact with a different environment than his family. It is mostly the school environment where an individual expands his already gained beliefs, but he can also take a completely different direction in comparison with his values, norms, attitudes and opinions acquired so far. Therefore we agree with the importance of incorporating a multicultural education into the existing educational system. It is also necessary to emphasize that an essential part of multicultural education should be the consistent exploration of the issue of multiculturalism not only in the world, but the specifics of this phenomenon in Slovakia as well. Furthermore, a multicultural education is equally important in all levels of education.

The goals of multicultural education can be described in the following way (Kurčíková, 2016, p. 170):

1. delivering knowledge and information about cultural pluralism,
2. understanding different cultures, overcoming prejudices and stereotypes,
3. tolerance, empathy, fellowship, cooperation, positive relationship to different cultures.

The main goal of the content of multicultural education is mainly to deliver basic knowledge about the existence of specifics of many different cultures all around the world. Only deep knowledge and constant learning about the differences can lead to overcoming concerns and fear of unknown customs, values or traditions. On the other hand, it is necessary to outline that a consistent knowledge of the differences of various cultures can also lead to not only condemning diversity and gaining a hostile attitude, but even to creating new or enhancing existing prejudices or stereotypes. Another particularity of the multicultural education is the certainty that cultural factors should not restrain

anyone from getting education (Fullinwider, 1996, p. 3). If we speak about multicultural education, it is equally important for members of the majority culture as well as the minority culture to participate in the educational process.

Carrying out multicultural education also requires qualified educators, whose attitudes, opinions, abilities and skills are based on understanding the values of pluralistic society (Vavrus, 2002, p. 18). Learning about the preconditions for the existence of many different cultures within one society is necessary for teaching future generations the exact same thing.

Empirical research

During the empirical research of the given issue we focused on clarifying and answering the empirical question related to exploring the perception of Slovakia as a multicultural country by the surveyed university students. For that reason, we want to do a brief review of the opinions of our respondents related to the mentioned issue. As we consider a detailed and complex analysis of the given issue of multicultural society to be an extensive subject of both theoretical and empirical exploration, we need to focus our attention on the following chosen areas that characterize the subject of our research. Our focus is directed towards analysing opinions of the surveyed university students related to perceiving the issue of multiculturalism in the current Slovak society. Based on doing a brief review connected to the given issue, we can explore the preconditions for forming opinions by our respondents more closely. For that reason, we find it adequate to determine the connection between perceiving Slovakia as a multicultural country and viewing multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society by the surveyed university students. Besides that we do not forget about the educational process at university, which consists of carrying out education through lectures and seminars. Since we consider the educational process to be an important way of gaining knowledge, as well as a precondition for forming attitudes and opinions by the persons that are being educated in many different areas, we need to search for an existing connection with opinions of the surveyed university students related to perceiving multiculturalism in Slovakia.

During our empirical research of the university students' outlook on the issue of multicultural society, we asked 200 university students studying at universities all over Slovakia. We used the quantitative approach, which allowed us to map opinions of the given research group. The collection of data through a questionnaire prepared in advance took place in April 2016. The data that we collected were subsequently processed and evaluated using the statistical software SPSS 20.

Following a brief introduction of the given issue we find it adequate to explain the analysis of the issue of perceiving multiculturalism in the current Slovak society by the surveyed university students.

Table 1: Multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society according to the surveyed university students

Multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society	Number of students	%
Did not respond	14	7,3
No	20	10,4
Rather no	44	22,8
Rather yes	42	21,8
Yes	46	23,8
I do not know	27	14,0
Total	193	100,0

Based on data displayed in the table above, we can state that 10.5% of the university students expressly do not consider multiculturalism to be an issue in current Slovak society. However, we want to emphasize the profiling of 3 approximately same-sized groups of our respondents. On one hand, almost 23% of the surveyed university students responded that they rather do not consider multiculturalism to be an issue in current Slovak society. On the other, an approximately same-sized group of our respondents (almost 22%) rather perceive multiculturalism as an issue for the current Slovak society. However, we need to point out that the highest number of our respondents definitely view multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society (almost 24% of the surveyed university students). Besides that, we noted responses of the surveyed university students who did not have an answer when asked about the given issue (14% of our respondents). We can state that based on the results of our empirical research we cannot definitely assess whether the surveyed university students perceive multiculturalism as an issue for current Slovak society. Despite the dominant frequency of responses expressly considering multiculturalism to be an issue in current Slovak society, it is necessary not to exclude from the focus of our research other, almost equally representative responses. The reason for this observed result is the actual existence of multicultural society that is characterized by its complicated essence, which can only be understood through a detailed and complex exploration. For that reason and based on the results of our research, we consider the profiling of opinions on the issue of multicultural society in Slovakia to be an extensive and long-continuing process that requires constant learning about the essence of this issue. Learning about the essence of multiculturalism, as well as the consequences and contributions of its constant expansion, would be possible also through integrating multicultural education into the content of education on all levels of the educational system within Slovakia.

Based on the observed prevailing perception of multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society by the surveyed university students, it is necessary to further explore the preconditions for the formation and subsequent development of the opinions of our respondents. For that reason, we focus our attention on searching for a connection between the prevailing perception of multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society and discussing the issue of multicultural society at lectures and seminars in the process of university education according to the surveyed university students.

Table 2: Discussion about the issue of multicultural society at lectures and seminars connected with perceiving multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society

Discussion about multicultural society at lectures and seminars		Multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society						Total
		Without a response	No	Rather no	Rather yes	Yes	I do not know	
Without a response	number	0	1	5	4	3	2	15
	%	0,0	0,5	2,6	2,1	1,6	1,0	7,8
No	number	1	1	10	4	9	3	28
	%	0,5	0,5	5,2	2,1	4,7	1,6	14,5
Rather no	number	3	5	6	13	6	4	37
	%	1,6	2,6	3,1	6,7	3,1	2,1	19,2
Rather yes	number	6	4	8	10	11	6	45
	%	3,1	2,1	4,1	5,2	5,7	3,1	23,3
Yes	number	1	6	12	10	11	7	47
	%	0,5	3,1	6,2	5,2	5,7	3,6	24,4
I do not know	number	3	3	3	1	6	5	21
	%	1,6	1,6	1,6	0,5	3,1	2,6	10,9
Total	number	14	20	44	42	46	27	193
	%	7,3	10,4	22,8	21,8	23,8	14,0	100,0

By the results of second-degree processing of our research data displayed above (Table 2) we can point out the absence of a connection between discussing the issue of multicultural society at lectures and seminars during university education and the perception of multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society among the surveyed university students. Despite the fact that the mentioned issue is according to our respondents a part of lectures and seminars carried out at university, this way of learning about the given issue cannot be considered to be the basis for viewing multiculturalism as an issue for current Slovak society by the surveyed university students. Approximately 5% of our

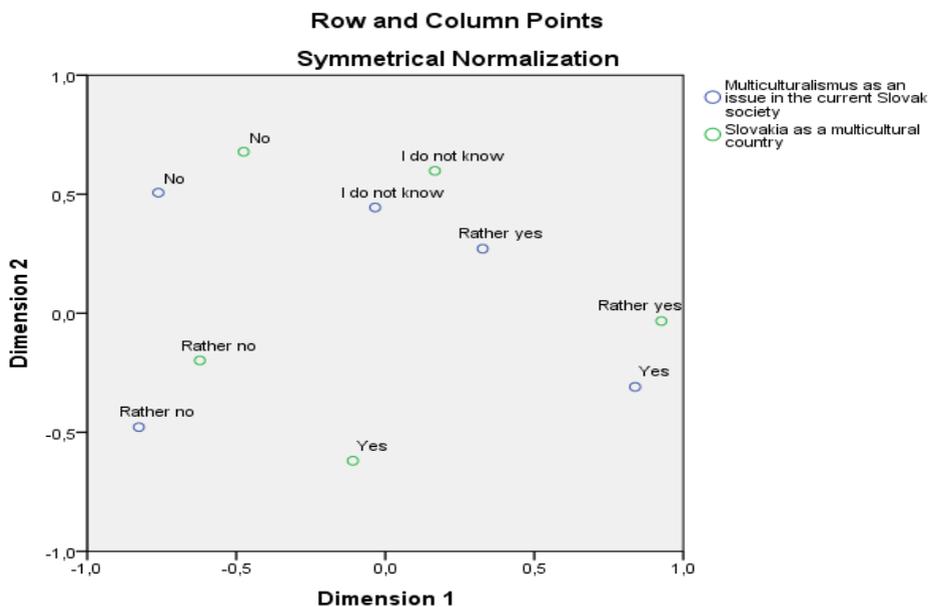
respondents, who did not have the opportunity to discuss the issue of existing multicultural society at lectures and seminars, rather do not consider multiculturalism to be an issue in current Slovak society. At the same time almost the same number of respondents, who also did not have the opportunity to discuss the issue of multicultural society at lectures and seminars, responded that they definitely perceive multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society. Besides that, we cannot forget to outline the group of respondents who did have the opportunity to discuss the given issue at lectures and seminars. Within this group of the surveyed university students, almost 6% of our respondents rather do not view multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society. On the other hand, we cannot forget the fact that almost the same number of the surveyed university students who had the opportunity to discuss the issue of multicultural society at their lectures and seminars definitely perceive multiculturalism in Slovakia as an issue, and at the same time again almost the same number of our respondents rather consider multiculturalism to be an issue in Slovakia.

Table 3: Perceiving Slovakia as a multicultural country and perceiving multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society

Slovakia as a multicultural country		Multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society						Total
		<i>Without a response</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rather no</i>	<i>Rather yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>I do not know</i>	
Without a response	<i>No.</i>	3	0	5	2	4	3	17
	<i>%</i>	1,6	0,0%	2,6%	1,0%	2,1%	1,6%	8,8%
No	<i>No.</i>	1	6	6	6	3	4	26
	<i>%</i>	0,5	3,1%	3,1%	3,1%	1,6%	2,1%	13,5%
Rather no	<i>No.</i>	7	9	22	12	7	7	64
	<i>%</i>	3,6	4,7%	11,4%	6,2%	3,6%	3,6%	33,2%
Rather yes	<i>No.</i>	2	2	3	17	23	6	53
	<i>%</i>	1,0	1,0%	1,6%	8,8%	11,9%	3,1%	27,5%
Yes	<i>No.</i>	0	2	6	2	6	3	19
	<i>%</i>	0,0	1,0%	3,1%	1,0%	3,1%	1,6%	9,8%
I do not know	<i>No.</i>	1	1	2	3	3	4	14
	<i>%</i>	0,5	0,5%	1,0%	1,6%	1,6%	2,1%	7,3%
Total	<i>No.</i>	14	20	44	42	46	27	193
	<i>%</i>	7,3	10,4%	22,8%	21,8%	23,8%	14,0%	100,0%

The educational process at university that is carried out through lectures and seminars influences the attitudes and opinions of participating individuals in a significant way. However, it is necessary to emphasize the effect of many other factors and elements on forming the personality of a young person as well. It is mainly the undeniable influence of information presented in the media. In our opinion, it is the content of media that plays an important role in affecting the judgement of our surveyed university students.

Based on the data collected in our research and displayed in Table 3 we can state that multiculturalism is most often considered to be an issue in the current Slovak society by the surveyed university students who rather consider Slovakia to be a multicultural country. Approximately 9% of our respondents rather considering Slovakia to be a multicultural country also rather perceive multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society. Almost 12% of the surveyed university students who rather consider Slovakia to be a multicultural country, responded that multiculturalism definitely represents an issue for the current Slovak society.



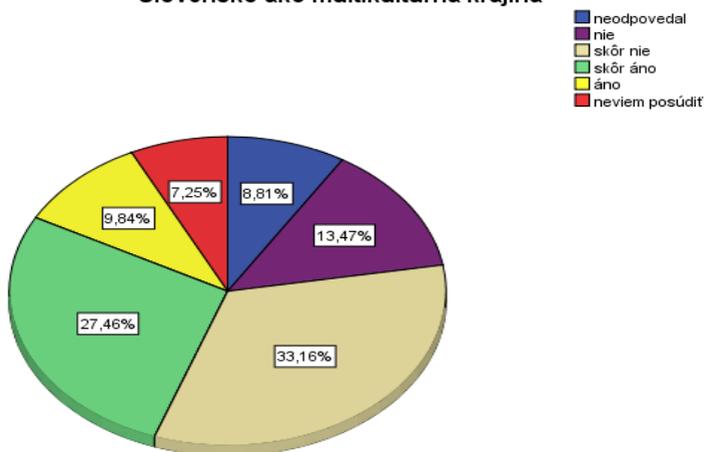
Graph 1: Correspondence map of perceiving Slovakia as a multicultural country and perceiving multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society by the surveyed university students

Besides that, it is also necessary to outline a group of respondents (approximately 11% of the sample) who rather do not consider Slovakia to be a multicultural country and at the same time they rather do not consider multiculturalism to be an issue in the current Slovak society. There is a correlation between the observed variables, which means that the surveyed university students who mostly perceive Slovakia as a multicultural country also mostly perceive multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society. These observed results can be explained through the image, constantly discussed consequences, as well as potential threats arising from constantly expanding multiculturalism in the current world.

The vision of existing multicultural society in Slovakia is according to our respondents highly relevant at the moment. Besides that, it is important to add that mainly based on the concept of multicultural society presented in the media or on social media, the respondents associate multiculturalism with various threats and that is the reason why many respondents perceive multiculturalism as an issue for the current Slovak society. These observed results can be supported by the results of our multivariate analysis of data displayed in the correspondence map below.

Slovakia as a multicultural country

Slovensko ako multikultúrna krajina



Graph 2: Perceiving Slovakia as a multicultural country by the inquired university students

Just to complete the vision of Slovakia as a multicultural country, Graph 2 records the responses of our respondents related to the given issue. We can note that based only on opinions of the surveyed university students, we cannot definitely assess whether Slovakia represents a multicultural country or not.

Discussion

By exploring the issue mentioned above we are able to outline the surveyed university students' view on Slovakia as a multicultural country. For that reason we would like to accentuate the results of our research based on which we cannot definitely assess, whether the surveyed university students perceive multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society. There are 3 approximately same-sized profiled groups of respondents, 2 of which rather consider multiculturalism to be an issue in current Slovak society. Besides that, almost the same number of surveyed university students do not perceive multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society. For that reason, we focused on a more detailed exploration and search for possible preconditions that would lead to forming of the observed opinions among our respondents. Since our research focused on mapping the opinions of the surveyed university students, we tried to determine to what extent the educational process carried out at university influences the formation of opinions related to the issue of multiculturalism in Slovakia by our respondents. The process of university education is carried out in many different forms and ways, where a significant role in its course plays mainly the active interaction between the university professor and the persons that are being educated, as well as the interaction among the students themselves. One of the various ways of interaction in the university environment is the option to have a discussion within lectures and seminars. Lectures and seminars in the educational process at university are composed in accordance with the effective curriculum of a specific study programme, but they also provide space for expressing opinions that respond to current events in society. According to the prevailing opinions of our surveyed university students, a part of discussion within lectures and seminars is also the issue of multicultural society. However, the prevailing perception of multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society among our respondents is not influenced by discussing the given issue within lectures and seminars carried out in the process of university education. Despite the fact that we are not able to determine in detail the extent, intensity, scope or course of discussing the issue of multicultural society among the respondents of our research, we can note that understanding the essence and existence of multiculturalism by young people, mainly by university students, would require providing more extensive and more professional space for explaining the given issue in the process of university education. Besides that, we cannot forget about

the constant process of development of a young man's personality. Despite the fact that the university environment significantly participates in the formation of an individual's personality, opinions of a university student are affected by many other socializing factors. It is necessary to emphasize the importance of information that is everyday being delivered by the media, in recent years mostly by the internet and social media. Thanks to modern means of communication, young people very easily come into contact with a huge amount of accessible information that broadens their horizons. In this way, individuals are able to learn about the potential more or less current issues not only all over the world, but also about the phenomena and processes occurring within the area where they live their everyday life.

Perceiving various issues in Slovakia by young people, who university students undoubtedly belong to, is usually oriented towards the phenomena and processes that directly affect the life of this above-mentioned group of population. The existence of multicultural society in Slovakia is to a great extent a highly current and discussed topic. The past few years have brought along a great amount of changes in society. Last but not least, it is necessary to emphasize the gradual and unstoppable collision of many more or less different cultures, elements of which either gradually blend together or they come into conflict. It is the concern or fear of the unknown or innovative, as well as atypical that gets us to think deeply about the current situation in the world. Since current society is accompanied by a great amount of constantly appearing conflicts, in many cases individuals contemplate their essence or causes. As stated above, the collision of many different cultures and their subsequent mixing or blending together can bring along conflicts in a different intensity or extent. For that reason most of the surveyed university students expressed the opinion that multiculturalism in Slovakia needs to be perceived as an issue supported by the prevailing perception of Slovakia as a multicultural country. There are members of various minorities that currently live in Slovakia, which also signifies the diversity of different cultures that occur in the given area and that are usually being preserved or constantly cultivated by their members.

Conclusion

In our article "Multicultural society through the optics of university students" we focused on presenting the opinions of the surveyed university students on the issue of existing multicultural society in Slovakia. Since this topic is an extensive subject of research, we focused our attention on selected aspects that would highlight the views of the surveyed university students on multicultural society. During our empirical research we asked 200 university students studying all over Slovakia. The collection of data was carried out through a questionnaire prepared in advance. The subsequent analysis of the collected empirical material was carried

out using the methods of univariant, bivariant and multivariant analysis of data in the statistical software SPSS 20.

Based on the results of our research, we are able to outline the views of the surveyed university students on the existing multicultural society in Slovakia. However by mapping the opinions of our respondents, we have to point out the diversity and ambiguity regarding the perception of the existing multicultural society in Slovakia by the surveyed university students. We would like to emphasize the observed prevailing perception of multiculturalism as an issue in current Slovak society. Among our respondents seeing multiculturalism as an issue in Slovakia is, however, not supported by learning about the given issue at their lectures and seminars carried out within the educational process at university. The process of education in the university environment indeed participates in the formation of attitudes and opinions of the persons that are being educated, but among the surveyed university students is in connection with their perception of multiculturalism in Slovakia necessary to pay more attention to the way they perceive multicultural society. This observed result regarding the prevailing perception of multiculturalism as an issue in the current Slovak society most often arises from viewing Slovakia as a multicultural country by our respondents. Multicultural society is nowadays associated mainly with the mixing of many different cultures, their diffusion, as well as the constant appearance of various conflicts, which brings along, mostly among young people, a great amount of unanswered questions related to future social development not only around the world, but also in Slovakia. For that reason, the process of university education should focus more on explaining the essence of how a multicultural society works all over the world and at the same time it should mainly focus on multiculturalism in Slovakia.

If we focus on further exploration of the issue of multicultural society, we need to point out again that this given issue provides a great amount of opportunities for both theoretical and empirical research. However, based on the observed results of our research we consider the usage of data from quantitative research to be a contribution for having a profound conversation with a group of selected university students. A more detailed and more extensive exploration of opinions of selected university students related to the position of Slovak nationals in the current Slovak society in comparison with the position of members of different national minorities that live in Slovakia can serve as one of the main goals of a subsequent qualitative empirical research.

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Contact

Doc. Mgr. Mariana Sirotová, PhD. & Mgr. Veronika Michvocíková

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius

Faculty of Arts, Nám. J. Herdu 2

917 01 Trnava, Slovakia

mariana.sirotova@ucm.sk

Reflections from teachers and students on speaking anxiety in an EFL classroom

Songyut Akkakoson, King Mongkut's University of Technology, Thailand
songyutbee@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper reports on part of the research project in which instructor perspectives on the role of anxiety in an EFL speaking classroom and anxiety-coping strategies students employ when speaking English have been investigated. The existence of students' speaking anxiety was revealed via a teacher interview. A total of 88 students from the intact classes also responded to an interview form for an analysis of anxiety-coping strategies they utilised when speaking English in class. The qualitative data from both instruments was analysed using the content analysis. The findings of the teacher interview data put forward that students of this study have experienced speaking-in-class anxiety. This anxiety may influence their grades, to some extent. Three factors that may hinder students' development of oral skills emerge, including their lack of self-confidence, having poor English background and having neither intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation to use English. Using the target language as the medium of communication in class is viewed by the teachers as a must in theory, but flexibility is allowed in practice. Moreover, the results of the student interview data show a wide range of strategies employed to deal with anxiety (ie social, affective, meta-cognitive, compensatory, cognitive and memory-related strategies). Social strategies are the most frequently-used techniques. Suggestions for improvement in the overall oral English (ie vocabulary focus, audiovisual focus, self-practice, social focus, auditory focus, meta-cognitive focus, compensatory focus and affective focus) have also been given by the student participants. An increased repertoire of vocabulary is viewed as the most effective tool for such improvement.

Key words: foreign language anxiety, speaking anxiety, oral English, anxiety-coping strategies

Introduction

In the ever-evolving world of technology and communication, English becomes the language of the technological revolution and the Internet. As a result, more emphasis on communication-orientated language competence has been placed. More and more students in the non-English speaking countries have, therefore, taken communication courses as part of their undergraduate curriculum, preparing for oral competence before leaving the university and entering working

circles. However, in an English as a foreign language (EFL) learning environment, affective learner variables, especially personality factors play an important role in students' language learning process either negatively or positively (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013). One of these factors is anxiety. Spielberger (1983, p. 1) defined anxiety as 'a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system'. Anxiety can be divided into three types: trait anxiety, situational anxiety and state anxiety. Dating back to the late 70s and 80s, we will find two seminal papers, Scovel's (1978) and Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986), that are influential in the history of research on anxiety in the language learning area. Scovel (1978) identified early conceptualisations of anxiety, which produced conflicting results in relation to the relationship between anxiety and second language anxiety. He claimed that the distinction between facilitating and debilitating anxiety should be made so that accurate experimental results can be received. According to him, facilitating anxiety makes the learner 'fight the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approval behavior', whereas debilitating anxiety encourages the learner to 'flee the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior' (p. 139). With this, facilitating anxiety helps to motivate learners to take more on challenges, but debilitating anxiety, in contrast, lessens self-confidence of the learners. In their paper, Horwitz et al. (1986) described foreign language anxiety as 'a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process' (p. 128). They constructed a self-report instrument, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which has been adopted by the bulk of later researchers, to draw out responses of anxiety specific to foreign language classroom settings. They further articulated that language anxiety is situation-specific, mainly separate from the other types of anxiety. According to them, the construct of foreign language (FL) anxiety consists of three interrelated performance anxieties: 1) communication apprehension, 2) fear of negative evaluation and 3) test-anxiety. The first anxiety is defined by Horwitz et al. (1986) as 'a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people' (p. 127). The second refers to 'apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively' (p. 128). The third is 'a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure' (p. 127) to pass elements of assessment. This model has contributed to a number of studies carried out over the past four decades employing measures to identify anxiety over different language skills experienced by different ethnic groups of language learners, in particular, second/foreign language contexts. The findings point to the same direction that FL anxiety is a unique phenomenon and largely a negative factor in the language learning process (Liu, 2007).

Realising the importance of anxiety as one of the factors influencing oral communication performance, later researchers have examined the role of anxiety in Asian language learners' speaking as well. For example, Liu (2007) studied anxiety in oral English of non-English major students in China, using the modified FLCAS. This researcher found that a large number of student participants experienced anxiety when speaking English in the classroom. They said that the most anxious moment was when being asked to speak or give presentations in front of other students while the least was during doing pairwork activities. They reported a lot of sources of anxiety such as limited vocabulary, low English proficiency and disassociation of memory. They also said that they could not solve their anxiety problem. Inthakanok (2009-2011) used the FLCAS to examine speaking anxiety of 28 Thai EFL university students. What he found was that generally, these students were in the middle anxiety category. Those who were high anxious students reported that audience and grammar/accuracy were their most frequent sources of anxiety, followed by lack of self-confidence, past experience and English attitudes. Subaşı (2010) explored two potential sources of the anxiety of Turkish learners of English in oral practice: 1) an individual student's fear of negative evaluation, and 2) his/her self-perceived speaking ability. A 55-item multiple-choice survey was administered to 55 first year students of Anadolu University. Another 15 students were also randomly chosen to conduct an interview in order to find out their reasons for being anxious in using English. The results indicated a positive correlation between an individual's fear of negative evaluation and his/her anxiety level. Mak (2011) investigated factors leading to the speaking-in-class anxiety of a group of 313 Chinese ESL first-year university students in Hong Kong. Based on the data from the FLCASs, it was found that there are five factors contributing to speaking anxiety in the classroom which include speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, uncomfortableness when speaking with native speakers, negative attitudes towards the English classroom, negative self-evaluation and fear of failing the class/consequences of personal failure. Heng, Abdullah, and Yusof (2012) administered the adapted FLCASs to 700 Malaysian undergraduate students to explore their English-speaking anxiety experience. These researchers found that most of the students experienced a medium level of oral communication apprehension, test-anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. They further put forward that anxiety forms an important element that could determine language learning success. Sadeghi, Mohammadi, and Sedaghatgoftar (2013) explored speaking anxiety among Iranian female EFL learners by utilising the FLCAS. They found that 22 out of 38 female learners experienced anxiety, whereas 14 of them were found to be high-anxious learners. The researchers concluded that socio-cultural factors were recognised as the factor evoking anxiety among those female students. Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014) examined the level, major causes, determining factors of foreign language

speaking anxiety and perceptions of the anxiety of 383 Turkish university students. The researchers found that the students experienced a low level of EFL speaking anxiety. Most of them thought that speaking skill is an anxiety-evoking factor. Moreover, pronunciation, immediate questions, fears of making mistakes and negative evaluation are the major causes of EFL speaking anxiety.

Given the review on how anxiety phenomenon comes into play in second/foreign language learning, this study reflects on speaking-in-class anxiety through the perspectives of Thai teachers of English and Thai EFL undergraduate students in a normal language learning context. Some pedagogical implications will be discussed for second/foreign language instructors when trying to promote a low-anxiety speaking classroom. Moreover, some suggestions will be given in order to help students to decrease anxiety and boost more confidence in speaking English in class, thus, at last, enhancing their oral English learning.

The Project

Four intact classes of 88 non-English undergraduate students enrolled on the English Conversation Course in a Thai university in Bangkok were invited for the study. Coming from different departments of science and technology disciplines such as engineering, architecture and applied science, these students met once a week for the lesson, which lasted 180 minutes per week. Moreover, three Thai instructors of English who have more than 10 years of teaching experience participated in the research. One held a Master's in Communication while the other two had PhDs in Language Education and Applied Linguistics respectively.

Research instruments employed were Instructor Interview Form (IIF) and Student Interview Form (SIF). Designed for interviewing the instructors in person with permission to be videotaped, the IIF was employed to gather the instructors' opinions on their students' English speaking anxiety. The complete form comprised four questions:

- 1) Do you think your students experience speaking anxiety in class?
- 2) How may speaking anxiety impact on students' grades?
- 3) Do you think some students have a hard time speaking English in class?
- 4) Why do you find it important for students to speak the target language in the classroom?

Designed as a written response form, the SIF was used to gather student perceptions of anxiety-coping strategies and suggestions for mastering oral English. Two questions were included:

- 1) How do you cope with your anxiety when speaking English in class?
- 2) What is the best way that can help you to speak English better? How will you help yourself (eg being well prepared for the class in advance or studying conversation models in the textbook before the class)?

The data collection procedures of this study started with designing and constructing the research instruments (SIF and IIF), followed by translating them into Thai. The Thai versions were then reviewed and verified by three colleagues for clarity. The modified versions were based on all suggestions and comments received. Before the course ended, a distribution of the SIFs was made as written response forms for out-of-class assignments to get feedback from the students. The instructor interviews, asking prepared questions in the IIF were conducted by the researcher himself after the course ended. The qualitative data from both instruments was analysed using the content analysis—being collated according to similarities and put in percentage terms. The coding of the data was validated by three experts in the field of Applied Linguistics using the index of item-objective congruence (IOC) test. As a result, items on both research instruments scored greater than 0.50, consistent with expert judge validity. Comments given by the participating instructors and students were also extracted to include in this report.

Results and discussion

Instructor interview question number 1

The question number 1 in the IIFs asks whether teachers think their students have speaking anxiety in class? The information gathered is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Instructors' opinions on students' in-class speaking anxiety

<u>Agreeing</u>	<u>Comments</u>
3 (100%)	<p><u>Instructor 1</u></p> <p>Yes, of course. Anxiety lessens their ability to speak. Most of them have speaking anxiety. This is obvious when they take a speaking exam. But in the classroom, I'm not sure whether they don't wanna say things or they are nervous. It's kind of our points of view. We don't know for sure whether they have got anxiety or not. We don't see their hands shaking when they speak English. When I posed them a question, they heard what the first peer answered. They had some time to think what to say when it's their turn. The questions are not hard ones, just those from the textbook, concerning the lessons they have learnt. I couldn't notice their anxiety obviously in class. Just feeling that if I don't push them to say something, they'll just keep quiet. I can just say some of them had anxiety but not obviously shown. No one couldn't answer the posed questions as they learnt those questions in the textbook earlier. I think if I ask them to say something impromptu, they will be anxious for sure. But if a question is from the learnt lessons, I don't think they feel any nerves. But if other things out of the</p>

textbook context, things that they don't know, I think maybe they will be nervous.

Instructor 2

I think yes it affects them. Even those who are efficient, when they come to talk to me in person, or when being tested, they are kind of getting nervous and can't think of the answers. As a result, their production is not as good as it should be. But when they are relaxed, they are kind of fluent and accurate. In a later class, I asked why they couldn't answer my questions in the test even though I asked them a follow-up question from the answer they previously gave me. They said they were nervous. In the moment of testing, they said they couldn't think of the answers. I told them next time in the final test, they needed to be calm down; or else, they wouldn't be able to do a good job.

Instructor 3

Yeah, it's obvious when they were being tested. Like my test comprised 3 parts: 1) a prepared conversation in pairs, 2) describing unseen pictures but similar to some in the textbook and 3) impromptu answering a question randomly selected from the textbook. Mostly, they did a good job for the first part because they kind of memorised every single word in the conversation they prepared in advance. But for the second and the third parts, some of them just sat still and said nothing. Their faces showed how nervous and worried they were. Someone was obviously nerve-racking. He was kind of shaking and tried to sigh heavily. So, I tried to comfort them, making them feel less anxious. I also helped them by dropping some hints and someone could give me some answers, but others looked worriedly at the pictures and said they couldn't think of what to say. So, for these students, I think they feel very nervous when it comes to their speaking test. And for sure, this anxiety affects their test marks as they can't produce the language fluently and correctly.

As the above sentences uttered, all instructors were unanimous in viewing that students experienced speaking anxiety in the classroom setting. This may be said that speaking can be an anxiety-evoking factor in students' language learning process. This result parallels several studies which find that speaking is a factor contributing to anxiety (eg. Liu, 2007; Inthakanok, 2009-2011; Subaşı, 2010; Mak, 2011; Heng, et al., 2012; Sadeghi, et al., 2013; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014). The codes 'This is obvious when they take a speaking exam.'; 'Even those who are efficient,..., when being tested, they are kind of getting nervous and can't think of the answers.'

and 'Yeah, it's obvious when they were being tested.' further indicate that students get more nervous being tested in the speaking exams than in their normal speaking classes. Because the foreign language anxiety here is about performance evaluation within an academic context, test-anxiety (one of the three performance anxieties conceptualised by Horwitz, et al. (1986)) becomes a dominant performance anxiety experienced by the students in the teacher interviewees' classes in this study. These students may consider speaking English at this stage as their classroom activities involving their performance assessment, rather than as communicating with foreigners through English. Horwitz, et al. (1986, p. 128) further put forward that '[s]tudents who are test-anxious in foreign language class probably experience considerable difficulty since tests and quizzes are frequent and even the brightest and most prepared students often make errors'.

Instructor interview question number 2

The question number 2 in the IIFs asks how the instructors think speaking anxiety may affect students' grades. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: How speaking anxiety may affect students' grades

Agreeing	Comments
2 (66.66%)	<p><u>Instructor 1</u></p> <p>I don't think it affects much as the full marks for speaking tests is not a very large percentage, just 40%. Those students who have been good at English since they learnt the fundamental courses are still good in this course. I asked who the number 1 of the class is. Their peers still mentioned the same guy who got straight A's from both English I and II foundation courses. Those who got low grades from those basic courses, they are still poor in this conversation course. Those who are good at English, I think they have got less anxiety than those who are poor at it.</p> <p><u>Instructor 2</u></p> <p>Yes. In fact, we can't measure the level of their anxiety. Although they are nervous, we won't reduce their scores. But the problem is that their nerves make them unable to produce the language. Or it makes them unable to understand my questions. Then, they can't give answers. That results in their marks. Although I know that English of this particular student is good, but if he just gives the wrong answers or can't give the answers at all, we can't give him or her a mark. I felt pity for those students who were in this situation. In fact, they would have got a better mark if they hadn't been nervous.</p>

Instructor 3

Of course, to a certain extent, it affects. Anxiety makes them nervous and they cannot successfully deal with answering the test questions or show the instructor how well they can communicate using English. But I think it's kind of problem-solving. As they are sci-tech students, I think if they have an idea that speaking English is a kind of problem-solving, they may not feel nervous in the test. I always try to instil this concept in class, asking students to imagine that they are figuring out a problem in the oral test, not being tested. But not sure whether they get my point. However, the speaking test is just part of the assessment. Marks from other kinds of tests and assignments may help them to pass the course. But they may not get good grades like A or B+.

The above utterances suggest that speaking anxiety may affect students' grades, to a certain extent, but not totally. One instructor pointed out that students' good language background still plays its role when it comes to being tested. However, although students may get low marks from the oral performance tests because of their test-anxiety, this does not mean they will fail the course. This is because in this formal foreign language learning setting, the evaluation scheme of this course comprises various appraisal aspects, namely midterm and final oral test (36%), aural test (18%), language test (18%), course project (15%), attendance (5%) and class participation (8%). All of these account for 100% of the total mark. Since the largest portion of the test scores is not solely from speaking tests but other scores the students may gain from other tasks, this may make the total surpass the fail criterion.

Instructor interview question number 3

The question number 3 asks why the instructors think some students have a hard time speaking English. The information obtained is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Instructors' opinions on students' hard time speaking English

Agreeing	Comments
3 (100%)	<u>Instructor 1</u> Yes, it's hard for students to speak up in English. I think this is because students have never spoken English without having the textbook at hand. They are kind of accustomed to having the textbook with them to consult it all the time. When they see example questions in the textbook, they just try to look at the

unknown words' meanings. They don't take it in turns asking the questions and giving answers like a normal conversation. They will complete the task by writing the answers and then speaking according to what they have written. Although I try to tell them not to do so as in a real conversation we have no time to write things down first. This is not listening-speaking at all. This is reading and writing. I don't know what to do. Sometimes I ask them to say things immediately. But it takes quite long before one says things out. No one dares to speak up. Even in a language game in which they are divided into two teams, they hardly speak up. Sometimes I time how long it takes before a student says. Like it took 3-4 minutes to speak just one sentence. Sometimes, someone is reluctant to say, repeatedly asking his peer, checking whether it is the correct word without saying it out.

Instructor 2

Some are poor students. They have joined the class because they followed other students in his major who chose to study this elective subject. This English Conversation I subject is designated for the students to study by their department. Thus, poor students have to struggle to pass the course. So, the problem is from their poor background. And how if the instructor can't pay enough attention to these students like 50 students in the class? We can't have every single student to practise speaking. Students who can converse are those who get accustomed to me. Actually, I try to complete all the lessons in each unit within 2 hours. Then, in the last hour, I'll ask a group of 3 students to take it in turns talking to me personally. But in the large class of 50 students, I can't do that as while waiting some students will leave the room and be gone. That means they blow their chance of getting more practice. This shows their attitudes of not wanting to participate in any speaking activities. When asking questions in class, I will call on the class to answer. And, it's always the same volunteer who gives me the answer.

Instructor 3

I think students in my classes, they are kind of having neither intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation or interest to gain skills to master the language. This may be because they don't need to use English to survive in this monolingual society. Even though they are students now, the subject content in their fields like engineering, science, or technology is also needed English to

access to. I read one study saying that engineering students just take a look at the applications or examples in the lessons shown in the engineering textbooks written in English. For this, they don't need the mastery of English at all. They just need to understand some English explaining how to do engineering things. Moreover, at this age, I usually ask these students on the first day of the class what their future plans are. You know, most of them said they had no idea yet. So, don't talk about instrumental motivation. No way are they thinking that English will be helpful in their future jobs or careers! So, without any motivation, they don't see the necessity to learn this language. Also, the English language teaching-learning in Thailand from primary schools, it kind of starts from the grammar. It doesn't follow a natural process of listening-speaking at the beginning stage like that of normal language acquisition. This also makes students stick to the grammatical rules and afraid that if they say some English, that may be grammatically wrong. They end up with not daring to speak English at all.

Based on the above opinions, three factors that may hinder students' speaking English in the classroom can be observed: lack of self-confidence, having a poor background of English and having neither intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation to use the language. The first point of this interview question is put forward by the codes '...students have never spoken English without having the textbook at hand. They are kind of accustomed to having the textbook with them to consult it all the time.' These items reveal that one factor distributing students' difficulties speaking English may be their lack of self-confidence. That is why they stick to the textbook, hoping that it can give them material to speak the language correctly. Self-confidence is defined as 'an attitude that you hold about yourself that allows you to move forward and achieve your goals' (Gruber, 2014, p. 1). Self-confidence takes part in speaking in a foreign language. It can be associated with risk-taking (Oxford, 1999) which is one of the important characteristics of successful learning in a second language. Even though it may be impetuous and too embarrassed to make a mistake, a good language learner-to-be should be prepared to take the risk of being wrong to succeed in L2 acquisition.

The next point is the codes '... poor students have to struggle to pass the course. So, the problem is from their poor background'. It is seen here that one instructor ascribes students' hard time speaking English, despite years of learning English in their mainstream schools, to their language learning background which is not beneficial enough for them. The reason behind this inferiority may be concerning problematic issues of English language teaching and learning in Thailand. According to Choomthong (2014), there is a gap in the country's language policies

and practices. Though English language teaching policy in Thailand promotes the implementation of the communicative approach (Kwangsawad, 2007), the English language teaching, in practice, revolves on the grammar translation method. In fact, this teaching method relies heavily on teaching grammar and practising translation. Its main focus is on reading and writing, emphasising accuracy rather than fluency while no emphasis is put on listening and speaking skills. Thai (L1) is largely used as the medium of instruction in the language classroom. As a result, a lot of students encounter English in written form only, leading Thai students to be unable to communicate effectively in spoken English.

The last point that should be discussed for this interview question is the codes '...I read one study saying that engineering students just take a look at the applications or examples in the lessons shown in the engineering textbooks written in English...they don't need the mastery of English at all.' and '...at this age, I usually ask...what their future plans are..., most of them said they had no idea....No way are they thinking that English will be helpful in their future jobs or careers!' As the codes describe, students' oral communication difficulties may be originated from a lack of motivation which could make them determined to master the language. As Thailand is generally a monolingual society where English is mainly used among a small group of people in the international context, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of these adolescent students may have not yet arise. However, since the use of English tends to expand into a larger group of people, not only for international relations but also for education, business and industry development, exchanges, entertainment etc; letting students be aware of this may help to raise their motivation. As Mayer (2003) points out that 'When students are motivated to learn, they try harder to understand the material and thereby learn more deeply, resulting in better ability to transfer what they have learned to new situations' (p.459), letting students have the motivation of speaking is, therefore, very important to teaching English.

Instructor interview question number 4

Question number 4 in the IIFs asks why the instructors find it important for students to speak the target language in the classroom. The information obtained is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Importance of speaking the target language in the classroom

Agreeing	Comments
2 (66.66%)	<u>Instructor 1</u> So, I think in class both teachers and students should use the target language. It's necessary to some extent. But students have some problems with vocabulary. For poor students, they then ask their peers about the right words to speak. But I won't tell

them the words but I will ask them to ask other students first. Or I ask them to find an unknown word from the Internet. Nowadays most of them have got a smartphone which provides dictionary applications. It's OK for them to kind of switch between L1 and L2. But for efficient students, it's necessary for them to speak English in class. When students don't know the words, I ask them to use the dictionary. And the textbook itself provides some glossaries and also the conversation models. Students can follow or adjust them for their own use. Another problem is that they try to speak English, but I don't understand what they are trying to convey. So I ask them OK to speak Thai. They hardly ever ask me the meanings of words. I usually ask them to practise speaking after model conversations in pairs and then report what his pair did using the third person pronoun. However, they can do this because they tend to write the answers first and then read them to me. They don't just say things spontaneously, but they just read what they have written. I tell them this is not speaking, but it is your reading your written words aloud. They tend to translate their Thai answers into English. They all are likely to do like this. Not just students in some of my sections but in all sections. I'm kind of surprised why they need to write the answers first. Sometimes I ask them to just list some keywords and say things based on them. But they don't they just write the answers in sentences. But there are only a few good students who don't write the answers but say things right away. But most good students also write the answers as well.

Instructor 2

Yes, I think it's important to use English in class. I believe that input matters a lot to students. In a conversation class, if they have no chance to listen to what we speak in English, words that we use, they may not get the target language. If we just let them study the textbook by themselves and we explain some points, I don't think that will work. Input from the instructor is important. And it's also important for students to speak English. But it's kind of hard to say that they can produce the real English. One of my sections contains half EP students and half ordinary students. Based on the speaking test, many students did a good job but some were poor. But the other two sections are of Prachinburi Campus. Most of them feel awkward about speaking up. When being asked a question, they couldn't answer at all. That is, they can't really produce the language. I asked them to tell me what

they wanted to say but in English. They said they wished to, but they couldn't. But by the way, they need to practise speaking English. For me, I'm OK if they say both Thai and English in a sentence. This is because I think I'd like to teach a conversation course that doesn't make students get stressed to use the target language. So I try to be as friendly as possible. They can do anything but try to communicate. If they can't really do, I ask them just to speak that in Thai, I will help translate it into English for them. But they don't kind of speak Thai all the time. They try to use English. But the important factor is the number of students in the class. One class contains 50 students. That's impossible to do so.

Instructor 3

I think so too. Since the course is about English conversations, the medium for teaching-learning should definitely be the target language. I think in an EFL context like Thailand, the only chance for these students to be able to use English is in the classroom. When they are outside, they communicate with others using their L1, Thai. Not much English is used in their daily life. They may find something in English like from ad banners on the roadsides, English newspapers, radio programmes, cable TV programmes, Hollywood films, information on websites. However, as far as my teaching experience is concerned, I don't think most of these students will spend their time outside the classroom exposing themselves to English. So, in theory, I think they should be getting accustomed to both listening to and speaking English in class as much as possible. They should also be encouraged more to expose themselves to the language outside the classroom. However, in practice, most of them still think that speaking English means translating Thai into English word for word. When asked a question, they kind of think of things to say in Thai and try to translate them into English before saying. It seems that they are unable to recognise equivalent words. So they need to have an e-dictionary with them all the time to look the words up. Many of them kind of mix both English and Thai words in a sentence when answering the instructor's questions. I keep telling them that speaking is not at all translating and encourage them not to translate words, but they should construct English sentences instead. One thing is the fact that there are a lot of students in one class. As a result, not every

student can practise speaking English in class. However, this is a matter of institutional policy.

Based on the above interview scripts, it can be seen that all the three instructors agree that in theory, using the target language in an English conversation class is of necessity. The instructors view that input in the target language is important as living in an EFL context like Thailand, the only chance for students to be able to use English is in the classroom. If they have no chance to listen to what people really say in English or particular words people use, they may not get the target language. However, in practice, there are some exceptions. For poor students, it is acceptable to switch between L1 and L2, but efficient students should use English all the time in class. For those who try to convey English messages but incomprehensible, using L1 is allowed. It is acceptable to say both English and Thai in one sentence. The codes 'For me, I'm OK if they say both Thai and English in a sentence. This is because I think I'd like to teach a conversation course that doesn't make students get stressed to use the target language.' are seen as a remarkable reason for reducing speaking-in-class anxiety. This is consistent with the finding of Mak (2011) who has found that allowing her Chinese learners to use their L1 in the ESL classroom helps to reduce their speaking anxiety. She posits that:

...the use of the L1 will build up learners' confidence and, in turn, encourage speaking. Teachers of all languages should, however, note that the amount of L1 to be used should only be enough in order to ensure that adequate exposure to the target language also takes place. (p. 212)

According to her, over-dependence on L1 is not recommended and the level of L1 use should be decreased steadily when learners' second/foreign language confidence and skill increase. Moreover, the interviewed instructors in this study also mentioned some other factors that do not allow a genuine English-speaking atmosphere in class. These involve a limited vocabulary, a culture of translating Thai words into English before reading aloud the words/sentences that have just been written, inability to express ideas, too many students in one speaking class and lack of enough exposure to the target language.

Student interview question number 1

As witnessed by the instructors that their students have experienced speaking anxiety in class, 88 students were then asked (question number 1 in the student interview form) to reflect on what strategies they used to cope with their anxiety when speaking English in the classroom. Totally 104 responses were given. Table 5 below shows the results obtained.

Table 5: How the students cope with their anxiety when speaking English in class

Responses	Frequency (%)
Total	104 (100%)
Social strategies	37 (35.57%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking English more often—with peers (in class), with foreigners (at sightseeing places, through social networking sites), with oneself (alone at home or when being free, trying putting on a native speaker accent, speaking based on instructions from the Internet or books on how-to-speak English). • Trying to have fun with the class by participating in the classroom activities. • Speaking what you have prepared to peers first so that they could help make corrections. • Speaking English with a close friend or the one whom you are acquainted with. 	
Affective strategies	22 (21.15%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to reduce anxiety, trying not to get nervous, thinking positively that I can do it. • Speaking up loudly to increase confidence and to release the stress. • Taking the risk of making mistakes, trying to think positively that English is not scary as mistakes can be made. • Overcoming the fear of speaking to foreigners, thinking that we just experience the way to learn to speak English. • Leaving out pressure on grammar, just caring about communicable messages. • Trying to think that speaking English is good fun. • Keeping calm, encouraging yourself to learn from mistakes for further improvement. • Imagining that you are speaking an official language that will be used in our neighbouring countries in the future. • Increasing more self-confidence. • Appearing natural, thinking that speaking English is not embarrassing. • Building encouragement in oneself. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting no pressure on oneself, telling yourself to be assertive, telling yourself that it is an experience which helps 	

increase your speaking skills, making yourself relaxed not stressed out.

- Keeping thinking that English is not our mother tongue so we can make mistakes.

Meta-cognitive strategies

20 (19.23%)

- Thinking before speaking something out, thinking of words to say before speaking up.
- Keeping on speaking although making mistakes, saying things as you think without paying attention to making mistakes.
- Keeping on speaking without losing concentration so that we don't think of anything else.
- Paying more attention to English.
- Being well-prepared before the class, studying the lessons in advance, preparing and practising saying what to speak first.
- Trying to get accustomed to English as much as possible by learning from things in the daily life, exposing oneself to the language, for example, watching English programmes on TV, watching films with English subtitles, listening to and/or singing English songs, reading cooking recipes in English, practising listening more often.

Compensatory strategies

14 (13.46%)

- Increasing English skills by taking extra courses.
- Increasing your repertoire of vocabulary used in various situations through self-studying.
- Keeping quiet, falling silent, not saying anything.

Cognitive strategies

9 (8.65%)

- Reading a lot of model dialogues in the textbook, reading English texts a lot more.
- Practising English pronunciation.
- Practising making English sentences.
- Paying attention to the questions posed and answering them with understandable details.

Memory-related strategies

2 (1.92%)

- Regularly revising the lessons learned.
- Remembering and recalling vocabulary regularly.

Once the anxiety comes into view, the student participants deal with it by using a wide range of anxiety-coping strategies. These strategies can be related to Oxford's (2003) classification of language learning strategies. The most frequent

strategies used are social strategies (35.57%). This is quite expected as social strategies lead to increased interaction with the target language by asking questions, co-operating with others, or empathising with others. Here is an excerpt from one student who said: *'I practise speaking English with a close friend or the one whom I am acquainted with.'*

The second most frequently-mentioned coping strategies fall into the category of affective strategies (21.15%). These strategies are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements such as lowering their anxiety, encouraging themselves, or taking their emotional temperature. Some statements from one interviewee represent this category: *'I try to reduce anxiety and try not to get nervous. I think positively that I can do it.'*

The next category in the order contains meta-cognitive strategies (19.23%) which help learners to regulate their learning (eg centring their learning, arranging and planning their learning, or evaluating their learning). One participant confirmed using strategies of this category as follows: *'I try to be well-prepared before the class. I study the lessons in advance. I prepare and practise saying what to speak first.'*

The third runner-up falls within the category of compensatory strategies (13.46%). These strategies assist learners in overcoming knowledge gaps to continue the communication (eg guessing intelligently, or overcoming limitations in speaking and writing). One student mentioned: *'I try to increase my repertoire of vocabulary or words that are used in various situations through my self-studying.'*

At the bottom of the list, two categories of less frequent strategies were reported, cognitive strategies and memory-related strategies. The former includes mental strategies learners use to make sense of their learning, for example practising, receiving and sending messages, analysing and reasoning, or creating a structure for input and output. One participant said: *'I pay attention to the questions posed and answer them with understandable details.'*

The latter includes those utilised for storage of information, for example creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, revising well, or employing action. Another participant said: *'I regularly revise the lessons I have learned.'*

The above results partly support those of previous researchers. First, the students in Woodrow's (2006) study referred to the following strategies they employed to deal with second language speaking anxiety: affective strategies (eg *not giving up when speaking, positive self-talk, deep breathing and conscious efforts to calm oneself*), meta-cognitive strategies (eg *preparing utterances and studying to improve speaking*) and compensation strategies (eg *smiling and volunteering*

comments). Another similar match is found in Liu's (2007) study. Her students reported that their coping strategy was *trying to tell themselves not to be nervous before speaking English in class*, which is also one of the affective strategies found in the present study. Next, the students in Inthakanok's (2009-2011) study reported employing four main anxiety-coping strategies, namely planning/practising, using other means of communication, teacher/other people correction/evaluation and avoidance of speaking. What can be similarly matched here are 1) his *planning* strategy which is one of the meta-cognitive strategies in the present study; 2) his *practising*, one of the cognitive strategies; 3) his *teacher/other people correction/evaluation*, one of the social strategies and 4) his *avoidance of speaking and using other means of communication*, those of the compensation strategies. Moreover, Zhiping and Paramasivam's (2013) students reported two types of strategies for coping with anxiety, namely compensatory strategies (eg *keeping silent, avoiding eye contact, expressive reactions*) and social strategies (eg *being with friends*).

Student interview question number 2

The question number 2 in the interview form asks the interviewed students what they think is the best way to help towards speaking English. Totally 156 responses were collected. Table 6 below details the results.

Table 6: Suggestions for making improvements in speaking English

Responses	Frequency (%)
Total	156 (100%)
Vocabulary focus	56 (35.84%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study vocabulary or new words every day./Memorise and recall vocabulary regularly./Have a dictionary at hand./Collect unknown words in a diary. 	
Audiovisual focus	26 (16.66%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch soundtrack films, or American TV series with English subtitles, or with no Thai subtitles./ Watch English cartoons./Watch VDO clips teaching how to speak English. 	
Self-practice	23 (14.74%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak or talk to yourself alone in English./Keep on practising speaking English to yourself more often./Try to speak in natural contexts which may result in unconscious learning how to speak English naturally. If we put it in leaning contexts, we will be under pressure to pass the exams./Experience speaking English by the process of trial 	

and error./Practise speaking, reading and writing 10 English sentences daily./Practise English regularly using a lot of methods.

Social focus 17 (10.89%)

- Speak to peers in English more often./In class, talk to peers in English. Anyone who accidentally speaks Thai, they will be fined some money./Practise speaking English with Thai friends in various daily life situations./Simulate real-life situations in the classroom./Experience speaking in a real situation./Join the in-class conversations and role-play/real life situations./Speak to foreigners as much as possible./Try to find foreign friends and speak to them./Follow the lessons the instructor taught and apply using them.

Auditory focus 16 (10.25%)

- Listen to English songs and reading their lyrics along and consulting a dictionary for those unknown words found./Try to listen to and remember conversation models and apply them to other situations./Listen carefully and grab the main ideas./Practise listening to the coursebook CD.

Meta-cognitive focus 16 (10.25%)

- Study the lesson content and model conversations in the textbook in advance and revising the lessons after the class./Study related grammar in advance./Study English sentence structures./Study language functions.

Compensatory focus 1 (0.64%)

- Take extra courses in English speaking.

Affective focus 1 (0.64%)

- Dare to speak up.

As shown in the table, the majority of respondents think that increasing a repertoire of vocabulary would help them to improve their oral English (35.84%). They believe that memorising and recalling vocabulary regularly, or having a dictionary at hand would help them to speak English better. 16.66% of the respondents view that audiovisual material would be a good source of language exposure. They agree with watching films with English subtitles or with no Thai subtitles, or American TV series. 14.74% of the respondents view that having recourse to self-practice would be the best way of oral English improvement. They

think that if one keeps practising speaking English to oneself, that would help. 10.89% of the respondents confirm that the best way is to depend on social interaction. They suggest trying to find someone to talk to in English. Moreover, 10.25% of them think that any practice that relates to improving listening skills would help, for example listening to English songs and trying to understand their lyrics. If unknown words are found, consulting a dictionary is a solution. Next, 10.25% of the respondents mention that realising one's own thinking process could be another way to help. This may include studying the lesson content together with its model conversations in the textbook in advance and revising things learnt after class. The last two resources involve finding something to assist learners in overcoming knowledge gaps (0.64%) and using learners' emotional aspects to help (0.64%). These may include taking an extra course in oral communication, or building up one confidence in speaking English.

Conclusion

The present study reflects the existence of speaking-in-class anxiety through the perspectives of Thai teachers of English and Thai EFL undergraduate students in a normal language learning context. EFL speaking anxiety experienced by the students in this study was revealed via a teacher interview. A total of 88 students from the intact classes also responded to an interview form for an analysis of anxiety-coping strategies they utilised when speaking English in class. The results of the teacher interview data reveal that the students in this study experience speaking-in-class anxiety. This anxiety may influence students' grades, to some extent. There are three factors that may hinder students' progress or development of oral skills. These include their lack of self-confidence, having poor English background and having neither intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation to use English. Using the target language as the medium of communication in class is viewed by the teachers as a must in theory, but flexibility is possible in practice. Moreover, the results of the student interview data illustrate that a wide variety of anxiety-coping strategies has been employed (ie social, affective, meta-cognitive, compensatory, cognitive and memory-related strategies). Social strategies are the most frequently-used techniques. The students believe that vocabulary focus, audiovisual focus, self-practice, social focus, auditory focus, meta-cognitive focus, compensatory focus and affective focus would bring about an improvement in their oral English. Vocabulary repertoire is reported as being the most helpful method. These conclusions give guidance on how teachers and students to deal with speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom. EFL teachers should identify students having anxiety over oral production and low self-esteem, seek for the appropriate strategies to assist students in decreasing or eradicating anxiety and build up a pleasant and encouraging classroom environment for them to practise the target language.

To identify anxiety, first and foremost, teachers ought to know who their students are in order to take precautions against anxiety. Students' background information, for example individual details, educational background, levels of English proficiency, should be learned of. A mini-survey using the classic instrument like the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, et al. (1986) can be used at the beginning of the course in order to identify and measure the level of anxiety students may have. Moreover, students should be encouraged to share their feelings with other classmates. If they find that other students are also nervous about speaking English, they might feel more relaxed in the classroom as they would realise that both their other peers and their teacher empathise with them.

The following suggestions about teaching strategies may be of benefit to reduce classroom anxiety. As emerging from the teacher interview data in this study, test-anxiety becomes a major factor leading to Thai EFL speaking-in-class anxiety, a conventional way of testing students' oral performance individually should be changed. A pair or a group evaluation should be implemented. Following this, more than one student will sit in front of the teacher for an interview examination, resulting in students' decreased fears of being constantly assessed and of anxious moments of oral English performance. An individual's assessment can still be made through teacher observation. In addition, various teaching strategies which have been recommended by previous researchers are worth noting here. According to Mak (2011), teachers should be certain that enough time is given for students to prepare their oral production or presentation and enough wait-time to speak up should be provided for them to deal with a question posed and organise a reply. Immediate questions which need impromptu answers should not be used. The use of learners' L1 in class should also be allowed to reduce speaking-in-class anxiety, but its amount should not extend much beyond the appropriate exposure to the target language. Teachers should create a balance between language accuracy and fluency in class. Using students' mistakes to exemplify linguistic points should be made when the whole class agrees about the focus on accuracy while a focus on fluency with less grammatical strictness would help to establish students' confidence in oral production. Sadeghi, et al. (2013, pp. 127-128) have suggested some useful classroom strategies to lessen students' anxiety as follows:

- 1) Teachers should try not to correct all the minor performance difficulties of the students while speaking as the classroom is just set for learning, not a real communicative event.
- 2) Strong criticism of students' accent is not recommended as poor or sensitive students may lose self-confidence and become stressed.
- 3) The chance to have classroom interaction should be promoted as much as possible, which would lead to a decrease in students' communicative fears.

- 4) Groupwork can increase students' motivation, classroom's communicative focus, bravery in making mistakes and confidence in oral production.
- 5) Teachers should build up a learning community which has a more helpful atmosphere.
- 6) Students should be encouraged not to be shy or embarrassed about asking the teacher for help.
- 7) Corrections in students' oral mistakes or errors should not be directly made, but the teacher's prompts should be provided as repair strategies.
- 8) Students' social image should be protected by keeping their marks a secret and advising the students not to laugh at any peers who make speaking mistakes.
- 9) Teachers' characteristics should be adjusted to be friendlier, more lively and more outgoing.
- 10) Both verbal and non-verbal kinds of praise from the teacher should be given as positive reinforcement.
- 11) Students' ideas of perfect English should be eliminated as speaking by using their limited knowledge of vocabulary and language is acceptable.
- 12) Teachers should be aware of social-cultural factors that may influence students' confidence in oral production.

Sincere and friendly classroom atmosphere in which students speak English in comfort should be created as well. Liu (2007) confirms that this would help to make students feel less intimidated to produce English utterances. Teachers should first be sociable rather than authoritarian and critical in class. Strict evaluation and critical reactions in the classroom should be got rid of. Students should be made aware of the fact that it is normal to make mistakes while speaking and that learning from their own mistakes is the best way for language learning. Moreover, various classroom activities to help students to break the ice during the first few lessons should be organised. Students should be trained to be friendly to one another in class. This is because competitive atmosphere makes students more worried, whereas friendly relationship causes them to feel more relaxed to speak the target language in class. To change fear into friendliness in the speaking classroom, Stewart and Tassie (2011) have provided some suggestions which are worthy of note here: respecting cultural differences, avoiding instructor bias, using class time for practice and providing an encouraging classroom atmosphere.

EFL students should recognise the existence of oral anxiety in the classroom. Then, they should look for strategies that help to deal with their anxiety. Learners should be well aware of the fact that it is the learners themselves who are mainly responsible for their own learning, thus having to control their own anxiety or minimise or get rid of it strategically (Inthakanok, 2009-2011). The findings of this study provide students with possible anxiety-coping strategies, which could give

them valuable insights for lessening their own anxiety. These strategies (ie social, affective, meta-cognitive, compensatory, cognitive and memory-related) are worth trying. Furthermore, when it comes to oral test situations held under timed conditions, Heng et al. (2012) have suggested some techniques that could be useful for students to defeat test-anxiety: breathing techniques, physical and mental exercises and early arrival for a test. The amount of success in students' oral improvement also depends on their participation in oral activities in class, which needs their motivation and a good rapport between students-teacher and students themselves in the classroom (Derakhsha, Tahery, & Mirarab, 2015).

In addition, as reflected in the instructors' opinions in the present study, three factors that may hinder students' progress or development of oral skills comprise their lack of self-confidence, having poor English background and having neither intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation to use English. These three obstacles should be treated with effort and attention. This is because all in all students' oral improvement can be bettered so long as they are driven by a desire to achieve. For making improvements in oral English skills, student participants in this study suggest that EFL students should be concentrating on vocabulary, audiovisual resources, self-practice, interaction with others, auditory practices, meta-cognitive knowledge, compensatory resources and emotional encouragements. Suggestions from some other researchers are also worthwhile following. Improvement of English proficiency, expansion of vocabulary, having an oral practice of English and getting prepared for oral English lessons are what Liu (2007) has suggested students to do. Woodrow (2006) also suggests that communication outside the classroom is also important for students' oral improvement. However, in the context of English as a foreign language, rich linguistic resources are not available for students to do out-of-class tasks. Short-term project work such as videotaping an interview with foreign tourists or expatriates can be a good alternative.

The study has some implications for further studies. First, exploring the potential sources of oral production anxiety using different forms of qualitative data collection such as diary writing and think aloud protocols can be conducted. Second, an empirical study should be conducted to see how effective anxiety-coping strategies such as those emerging from this study are in English-speaking classrooms. Third, because motivation and anxiety may be related in some way, research into motivation in English-speaking classrooms could also be worthwhile conducting. Fourth, examining the sources of foreign language anxiety for other language skills such as listening, writing and reading would be worthy of doing. Finally, since anxiety levels and anxiety-evoking factors may differ from context to context, more studies should be conducted with various groups of learners in different locations to better understand the construct and promote the learning of oral communication.

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Contact

Asst Prof Dr Songyut Akkakoson
King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok
1518 Pracharat Sai 1 Road
Wongsawang
Bangsue
Bangkok 10800 Thailand
songyutbee@gmail.com

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A critical look at the portfolio as a tool for teacher cognition at pre-gradual level: perceptions of students

Zuzana Straková, University of Presov, Slovakia
zuzana.strakova@unipo.sk

Abstract

Trainees in teacher training programmes experience a variety of courses focusing on helping them to master the basic skills as future language teachers. The most important issue in the entire training is the appropriate balance between the input they receive from the trainer and the hands-on experience in which they learn through experience. One of the best hands-on activities during teacher training is indisputably teaching practice, i.e. real experience of trainees in the school context. Teaching practice offers to trainees first experience with teaching English lessons with holding responsibility for planning, carrying out the lessons as well as learning from this experience, maintaining a good rapport with students and many other aspects. Since trainees work in the external setting without the presence of their Methodology course trainers, it is often a custom to ask trainees to keep a portfolio with lesson plans or material they used during teaching as well as some reflections on the first teaching experience, so that the trainers could create a picture of how their trainees succeeded "out there". Such a portfolio serves as a useful tool not only for the trainee since the portfolio offers a record of how they managed to carry out specific duty at a specific time; portfolio of this type can provide the trainer with a plastic picture of how trainee managed to apply what they had learned in their Methodology courses. There are many elements which can be included in the teaching practice portfolio such as lesson plans, reflections, various case studies, textbook evaluations, sample teaching aids prepared by the trainee, etc. However, the biggest benefit that portfolio provides the trainee with is the reflection itself – thinking about how successfully something has been mastered and thinking about how things could be done better. EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) where trainees focus on self-evaluation of their own teaching skills is one of the tools that can help to focus the trainee on specific skill the teacher needs to master. This article tries to answer the question whether trainees are aware of the beneficial effects of such reflection, whether they perceive a tool like the EPOSTL as something that can help them to develop or they consider it rather a duty to be carried out as a part of training. Based on the experience with a group of trainees who used EPOSTL during their teaching practice this case study analyses possible strengths and weaknesses of including such a complex material as EPOSTL in pre-service teacher training.

Key words: reflection, teacher cognition, portfolio, reflective teacher training, foreign language teachers, EPOSTL

Introduction

Reflective practice is acknowledged by many professions to be an important tool for growth and development (Marzano, 2012, p.4). In teacher education, it seems to be a legitimate part of many teacher training programmes even though the exact way how it is incorporated into individual programmes would differ in the same way as experts differ in the way they define what reflective practice exactly means (Walsh, Mann, 2015).

Reflection as it was presented in the work of Dewey (1933) offers the space for discovery, argumentation, belief-disclosure, internalisation of principles based on experience through the entire course of teacher education. It involves examination of personal *“teaching experience as a basis for evaluation and decision making and as a source for change”* (Richards, Lockhart, 1994, p.4) and it can be conducted by many tools such as diaries or journals, questionnaires or checklists, collection of sample trainee’s products, lesson reports, focused feedback logs etc. in a written form (whether paper-and-pen or digital e-versions e.g. Cimermanová, 2015) or it may take an oral form in e.g. feedback sessions with a tutor/peers/supervisors, discussions, etc.

The need for teacher education which incorporates constructivist views, reflective practices and evidence-based training is advocated by many educationalists (e.g. Richards, Lockhart, 1994, Spilková, 2007, Gough, 2007, Pollard et.al, 2008). Reflection, however, can fulfil its function only when it is applied in a systematic way, in a cyclical and spiralling process (Pollard et al., 2008) which implies that reflection must be carried out on a regular base. Reflection as a process connected to critical thinking, consideration and re-consideration of an act or experience is the way to use a snapshot from the memory to retrieve the details connected to it. During the act itself it is hardly possible to be aware of all incidents, causes and consequences, alternative ways of solving problems, etc. Looking back at the act on our own or as the outcome of a guided process can open the channels for learning from this experience.

However, reflection should not be based on incidental retrievals of flashbacks, something that Gün (2011, p.126) calls reacting rather than reflecting, but its benefits can be maximised only by a systematic approach stemming from tangible data rather than a vague feeling. Furthermore, the data needs to be used for clarification of intentions, thorough argumentation, and genuine search for best alternatives. Walsh and Mann (2015) support the idea that reflective practice in this or that way should be based on some data, some evidence; moreover, the process of reflection is according to them often wrongly seen as purely individual process while the place collaboration is underestimated (ibid., p.352).

Trainees in teacher training programmes are usually expected by the course tutor to carry out reflection during the course to enhance the quality and personalisation of the learning process. Some tasks might be based on

collaboration while the other tasks can focus on more individualised outcomes. One such task can be the use of self-assessment portfolio through which the trainee can practise the reflection process which is focused and based on evidence.

Portfolio in pre-service education

Portfolio in general serves as a collection of documents (MacBeath, J. et al., 2000), outcomes or products of the author over a period. It has been widely used in educational context from early years of schooling (Belášová, Bernátová, 2007) up to the tertiary level since it can document the learner's progress and achievements.

In teacher education portfolio – as a tool for reflection and at the same time for development of a teacher – has been used in many contexts in various pre-service as well as in-service programmes. In pre-service teacher training the portfolio is often connected to the initial teaching practice although it can be used as a part of the Methodology course as well. It often serves as a collection of documents connected to teaching practice such as lesson plans, feedback reports, essays, evaluations, etc. Píšová (2007) collected the experience of using the portfolio in teacher training programmes from the Czech Republic (e.g. Spilková, Svatoš, Holý, Brebera, Černá, Kostková, Dvořáková, Janda, Štáva, Mazáčová, Kratochvílová, Vojtková, Marková) and Slovakia (Doušková, Belášová, Bernátová). The research outcomes presented in these studies advocate the relevance of using portfolio in pre-service teacher training as a legitimate tool for reflection. The experience varies from using the portfolio in the process of teacher development as an evidence-based tool (e.g. Svatoš, Holý, op.cit.) where trainees can monitor their own progress in using portfolio for evaluative purposes e.g. in the final graduation exams (Spilková, op.cit.).

Self-evaluative function of the portfolio provides opportunities for trainees to exercise their skills of setting realistic goals and thus direct their own learning (Bullock, 2011) especially if they are offered some criteria according to which they can measure up.

1.1 European Portfolio of Student Teachers for Languages (EPOSTL)

EPOSTL has been designed by European Centre for Modern Languages as a document serving for the development of reflective skills of trainees in teacher training programmes. The authors (Newby et al, 2007) aimed at supporting the process of development of trainees' reflection in such areas which are usually covered by the Methodology syllabi and are important for future teachers of foreign languages. The aims stated explicitly for the trainee in the document are as follows:

- to encourage you to reflect on the competences a teacher strives to attain and on the underlying knowledge which feeds these competences;

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- to help prepare you for your future profession in a variety of teaching contexts;
 - to promote discussion between you and your peers and between you and your teacher educators and mentors;
 - to facilitate self-assessment of your developing competence;
 - to provide an instrument which helps chart progress. (ibid., p.5).

This document is divided into several sections and within each section trainees have a set of several descriptors focusing on key skills the future teacher should be able to demonstrate. Trainees are offered a bar for each descriptor and they decide how strong they feel within each area. They are invited to use the portfolio in various parts of their development and colour the bars in such a way that it becomes clear how much progress they have made.

There are nearly 200 descriptors so the portfolio is an extensive document. Besides the part of self-assessment there are two other parts in this portfolio – the personal statement and the dossier. The personal statement section focuses the attention of the trainee on the basic questions connected to teaching in general while the dossier is a collection of such documents or learning outcomes which can serve as the evidence of the developmental process.

EPOSTL became the prime focus of this study in which trainees using this document during their teaching practice expressed their attitudes towards the portfolio as a learning tool for the future teachers.

2 The Study: Attitudes towards the use of EPOSTL

Based on experience with EPOSTL (Straková, 2010, 2015) a focused study was conducted with the aim to:

- to identify trainees' attitudes towards using a reflective developmental tool;
- to disclose trainees' beliefs about possibility to develop through reflection;
- to identify the level of autonomy of the trainees in handling the reflective process;
- to find out how practicality of EPOSTL is viewed by the trainees;
- to specify the possible benefits from using this tool in the future.

The study was conducted with a group of trainees (n=36) in a two-year teacher training programme. The trainees were in the second semester of the ELT Methodology course and they have accomplished two types of teaching practice – one-week observation practice and a two-week teaching practice. One-week observation practice is based on the observations trainees conduct during the period of one week. These observations are not connected to the area of study of a trainee, i.e. they do not observe only English lessons. The reason for this is to focus their attention to the teaching process in general, observe teachers, classroom communication, classroom management, etc. Two-week teaching practice is based on certain number of lessons (16) trainees must teach within the area of their

subject. The teaching experience is analysed afterwards with their supervising teachers. The first teaching practice is conducted at elementary schools while the second teaching practice is based on secondary schools. Trainees involved in the study have had the prior experience with EPOSTL and provided the feedback on the EPOSTL after the return from the second teaching practice.

The study was conducted via questionnaires with 25 closed questions and it used the response scale for all items of Likert rating scale coded as follows:

Strongly (StD)/ Moderately (MD)/ Slightly (SID) Disagree – Neutral (N) – Slightly (SIA) / Moderately (MA)/ Strongly (StA) Agree. This type of response scale provided trainees with an option to consider their response within a wider variety of options.

Five areas in the questionnaire indicated the main interest areas connected to the EPOSTL as a developmental tool for pre-service teacher training:

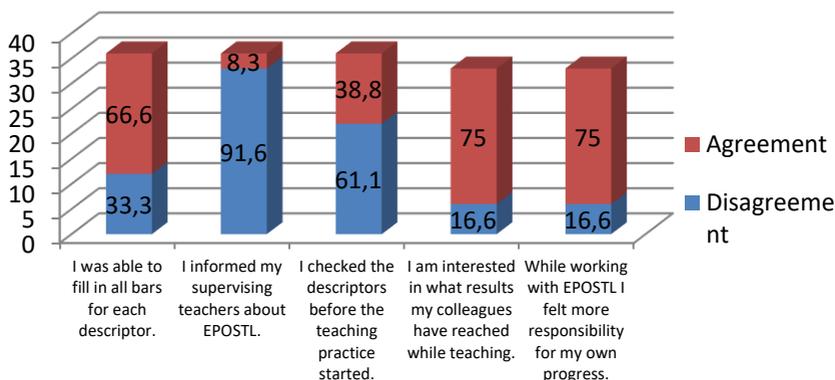
- *Responsibility*: questions within this area should reveal the responsibility level of trainees which included fulfilling the task – i.e. indicating the development on the individual bars -, informing the supervisor about EPOSTL, checking the descriptors before TP, interest in how other trainees scored as well as the overall feeling of being responsible for the tool, etc.
- *Autonomy*: because students needed to handle the entire evaluation process on their own, they were expected to demonstrate certain level of autonomy since they needed to decide how and when to work with EPOSTL, they were coping with the power of decision-making – evaluation of progress and indication of space for improvement
- *Development*: the use of EPOSTL could help the students to gain confidence, to become aware of what they can do (strengths and weaknesses) as well as of the complexity of teacher's job
- *Beliefs*: beliefs seem to be the most important guide in the decision-making process; this set of questions was focused on their beliefs connected to the importance of reflection, guidance, thinking, or security for the teacher
- *Practicality*: a very important factor in using any tool for development is how practical or user-friendly this tool is; the factors as usefulness, time, convenience, e-version or paper-and-pen version, comprehensibility, etc. can influence whether the teacher or the teacher-to-be will be happy to work with the tool or just use it because the course tutor requires it.

Trainees filled in the questionnaires after they returned from the teaching practice and there was a group-discussion held after the data were analysed to create space for clarification. Since one of the aims was to become clear whether trainees see the use of EPOSTL as beneficial the discussion was oriented on justification of attitudes within selected areas.

3 Discussion of findings

As to **responsibility**-related findings (fig.1) trainees in an overt question confirmed they felt responsible for their own progress (with the distribution StA 16,6%, MA 22,2%, SIA 36,1%). However, it was clear that trainees felt more responsible towards their methodology tutors since they tried to fill in nearly all descriptors even though they were of such nature that was impossible to experience within a short teaching practice. For instance, the descriptors connected to extracurricular activities such as school trips, excursions (e.g. *“I can help to organise exchanges in cooperation with relevant resource persons and institutions,”* or *“I can evaluate the learning outcomes of school trips, exchanges and international cooperation programmes.”*) the trainees expressed relatively high level of agreement based on no experience.

Figure1: Category 1: Responsibility



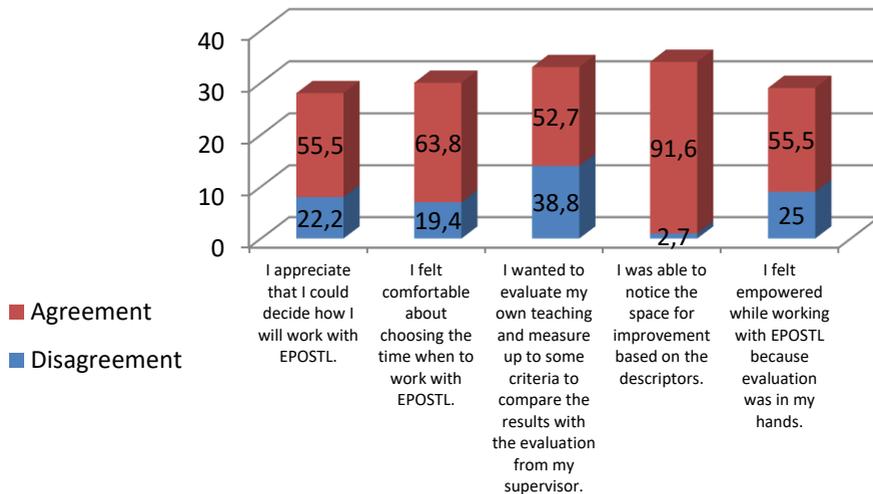
When addressed later with what evidence they could provide they confessed they had only anticipated they could do it but they felt the pressure of the document to state some answer. It seems that trainees need to be instructed very clearly that it is expected they have evidence to support their self-evaluation. Although it needs to be admitted while repertoire of the EPOSTL descriptors is too broad which can mislead trainees in understanding that this kind of skill is required from them from the very beginning. Student teachers within their initial teaching practice do not usually experience a lot of extracurricular activities. Another interesting finding was the fact that trainees did not feel the urge to reveal the use of such a developmental tool as EPOSTL to their supervising teachers. They did not consider EPOSTL as a useful document for their supervisors to know

although it could have generated a nice discussion about the complexity of a teacher’s job with a practitioner. Supervisors could have provided trainees with their viewpoints and trainees thus missed a chance to consider both sides of the same coin.

Similar weakness in responsibility can be seen in their attitude towards checking EPOSTL descriptors before the teaching practice started since it can signal they did not consider this document of lesser importance in connection to their teaching. More than 60% trainees (with the distribution StD 47,2%, MD 11,1%, 2,8%SID) ignored EPOSTL before teaching practice and only looked at the descriptors when it was over.

The category of **autonomy** (fig.2) was oriented towards the decision-making process, self-evaluation as well as the category of power. It is interesting to notice that even though the inclination towards the autonomous handling of the learning process prevailed the trainees expressed rather faint attitudes, especially in the “power” area (only 55,5%A) they do not prefer to at least share the control of their own learning.

Figure 2: Category 2: Autonomy



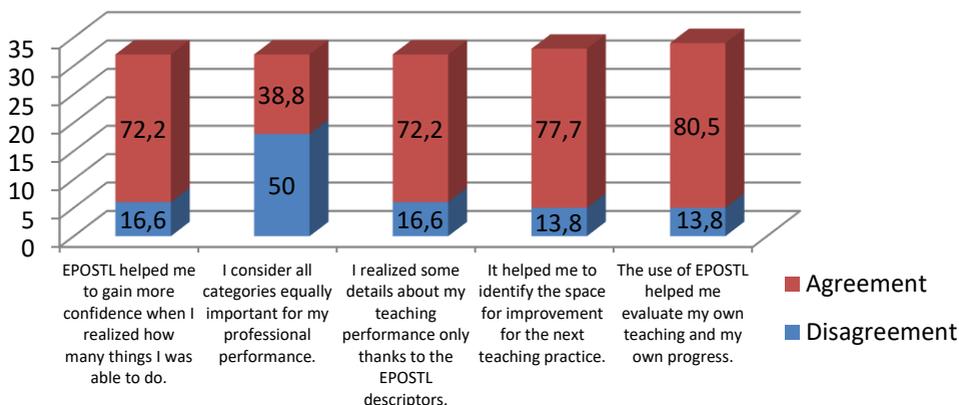
This could be caused by their lack of experience with an autonomous approach in education in general; however, it may also reflect their hesitance in taking over the control of their own development. On the other hand vast majority expressed that having clear descriptors actually helped them to identify the space for

improvement and their strengths. It can be a positive shift from a rather superficial reflection which is commonly based on “I liked” factor that trainees tend to use after teaching a lesson.

It can also be seen from the data that even though trainees indicated very high agreement with the self-evaluation of their own performance especially with the intention to identify the space for improvement, they did not check the descriptors in advance which might indicate they did not consider possible aims or desired performance before they started to teach (38,8%A/61,1%D in “responsibility” category).

What trainees seemed to appreciate as well (63,8%A) within the autonomy category was the organisation of their own work considering especially the time when they worked with to portfolio.

Figure 3: Category 3: Development



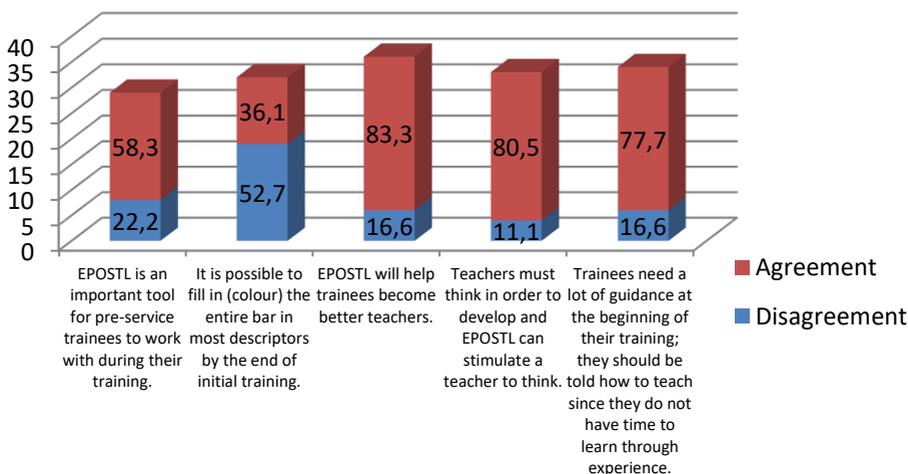
In the **development** category, it becomes clear that it is important for trainees to discover besides the space for improvement also the areas in which they perform on satisfactory level (*EPOSTL helped me to gain more confidence when I realized how many things I was able to do. 72,2%A*). Even though tutors or supervising teachers try to highlight both positive aspects of their teaching and the aspects to consider (i.e. negative points) the trainees tend to focus on the negatives. From this perspective, the EPOSTL offers a tool for acknowledgement of many details which would otherwise remain unnoticed (*I realized some details about my teaching performance only thanks to the EPOSTL descriptors. 72,2%A* with distribution SI25%, MA33,3%, StA13,8%). In evaluation EPOSTL seems to play an important role in building a more balanced self-perception since the teaching practice is traditionally evaluated by the supervising teachers only. Trainees, however, often feel that the evaluation of their supervising teacher is based on the

observation of several lessons only, or there are often the cases of clash between the trainee’s willingness to experiment and the supervisor’s fixed routine with the expectations that the trainee will keep them. Thus, trainees sometimes feel this kind of evaluation as unfair and are happy to have some evidence of their own viewpoint that can be presented to their tutors.

Trainees also indicated that not all descriptors seemed to be equally important for them at that level of development (only 38,8%A).

Beliefs category focused on addressing trainees’ assumptions connected to their own development as teachers. Beliefs seem to be a key factor in decision-making process and it is important to address them overtly in a pre-service teacher training. The high level of agreement that EPOSTL will help trainees become better teachers (83,3%A) stands in slight contrast with their views on whether the EPOSTL is an important tool for pre-service trainees (58,3%A) which might indicate that the belief is evaluated in a higher way than the actual experience with it. The positive consequences of the concrete experience might not be so evident from the very beginning.

Figure 4: Category 4: Beliefs

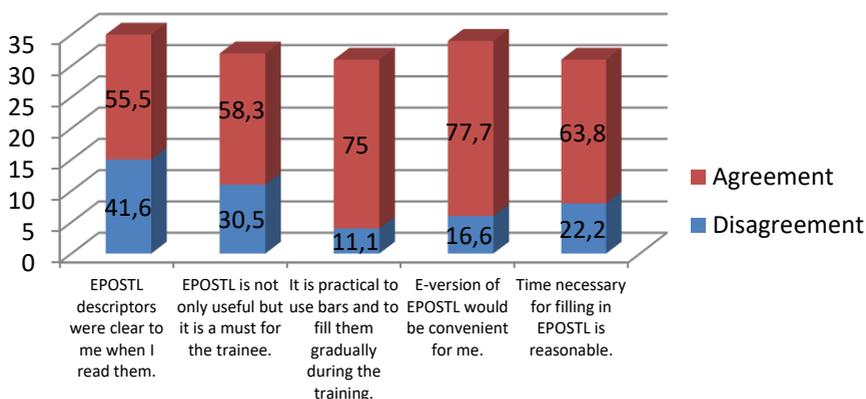


What seems to be an interesting finding is that trainees revealed their assumption about the level of *guidance that trainees need at the beginning of their training; they should be told how to teach since they do not have time to learn through experience* (77,7%A with a distribution 8,3%IA, 19,4%MA, 50%StA) since it

correlates with a low willingness of trainees to take over the control of their developmental process expressed in the category “autonomy”.

The category of **practicality** (fig. 5) monitored mainly such aspects as clear descriptors which did not require further study, time necessary for working with EPOSTL, paper-and-pen version vs. electronic version of the portfolio, etc. In general trainees view the portfolio as a practical document and they did not object to using such a document during their teaching practice.

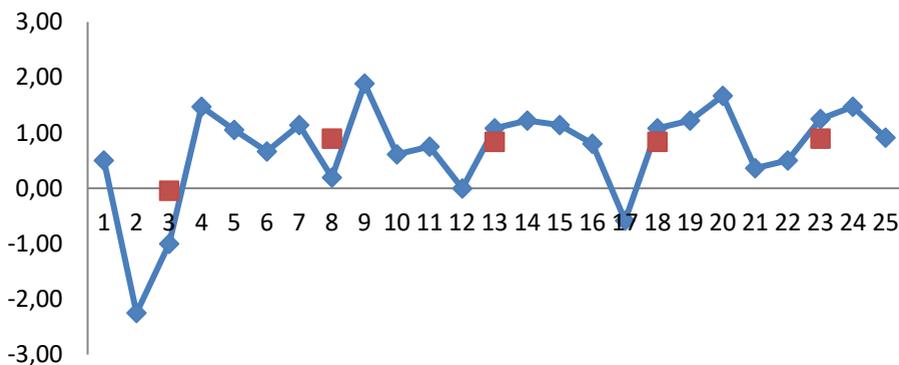
Fig. 5: Category 5: Practicality



In general, attitudes of trainees towards the EPOSTL as a developmental tool for reflection in pre-service teacher training are positive and trainees do realize that portfolio helps them to break down the complexity of teacher’s job into individual aspects and consider those separately. Four categories brought very similar average results for individual items (fig.6) but one category – the responsibility-related category – resulted in much lower level of agreement and demonstrates the space were trainees need more guidance.

In general, it can be concluded that the detailed concept of EPOSTL was found in general corresponding with the need of trainees to be instructed, to be guided and to be told what to look at. In this respect EPOSTL can be viewed as a beneficial tool in their own development as teachers.

Figure 6: Average – individual items and categories



Conclusion

Pre-service teacher training offers rather limited space for trainees to develop in all aspects of teaching skills. On contrary tutors usually find it problematic to choose which areas deserve more attention and to identify what approach could create more space for their development. Reflective part of this developmental process seems to be inseparable since it provides the opportunity for conceptualization of a concrete experience and generalization of specific contexts. The use of portfolio (in this case EPOSTL) for such cases will provide a solid starting point; however, it cannot be taken for granted that trainees will understand how they should use this tool. Trainees need a profound preparation before they start using it. The case study presented in this article points to remarkable lapses of trainees' anticipations if such preparation is missing.

At the same time, it seems unrealistic to expect that trainees will manage to focus their attention on all descriptors during a short phase. For a deep reflection trainees need to be guided or talked through the process to see what is expected from them, to reach the full understanding of the benefits of this process. Dialogical reflection (Chick, 2015, Walsh, Mann, 2015) or guided reflection can prepare them for the process they need to undergo in order to avoid superficial conclusions and tendency to tick the task as completed without the minimum effort.

Last but not least it is important to organize the work with EPOSTL in such a way that it provides space for clarification, proofs and evidence of a declared skill-level, and justification. Gün (op.cit., p.127) argues for the difference between "reflection" and "critical reflection" where the former as a superficial process ends by commenting on general feelings or acts in a descriptive way and the latter involves "why" question-and-answer process since only a genuine search for such answers can generate a deeper understanding followed by learning.

Trainees in pre-service training operate mainly on the base of prior experience as a learner and their belief system guides them during their decision-making process, during the act of teaching. They do not have a wide repertoire of experience-based strategies to use so they apply “the known, the experienced” even though they probably did not approve them as learners themselves. At this moment, however, they represent the solution in times of trouble. For this reason, the reflection cannot be avoided in pre-service training since this is the only way how beliefs can be disclosed on the base of argumentation and justification of the teaching acts. Trainees, therefore, need a variety of reflection tools to guide their cognition and to help them perceive and understand their own teaching from multiple angles. EPOSTL might serve as a useful tool for the initial teaching practice; however, further assistance is necessary to achieve desirable outcomes.

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Contact

assoc.prof. Zuzana Straková, PhD.
Institute of British and American Studies
Faculty of Arts, Univeristy of Presov
17. novembra 1
08001 Presov
Slovakia
zuzana.strakova@unipo.sk

Appendix: EPOSTL Questionnaire for Trainees

	7: Strongly Agree (most true); 6: Moderately Agree; 5: Slightly Agree; 4: Neutral; 3: Slightly Disagree; 2: Moderately Disagree; 1: Strongly Disagree (least true)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I was able to fill in all bars for each descriptor.							
2	I informed my supervising teachers about EPOSTL.							
3	I checked the descriptors before the teaching practice started.							
4	I am interested in what results my colleagues have reached while teaching.							
5	While working with EPOSTL I felt more responsibility for my own progress.							
6	I appreciate that I could decide how I will work with EPOSTL.							
7	I felt comfortable about choosing the time when to work with EPOSTL.							
8	I wanted to evaluate my own teaching and measure up to some criteria to compare the results with the evaluation from my supervisor.							
9	I was able to notice the space for improvement based on the descriptors.							
10	I felt empowered while working with EPOSTL because evaluation was in my hands.							
11	EPOSTL helped me to gain more confidence when I realized how many things I was able to do.							
12	I consider all categories equally important for my professional performance.							

13	I realized some details about my teaching performance only thanks to the EPOSTL descriptors.								
14	EPOSTL helped me to identify the strengths and weaknesses of my performance during the teaching practice.								
15	The use of EPOSTL helped me evaluate my own teaching and my own progress.								
16	EPOSTL is an important tool for pre-service trainees to work with during their training.								
17	It is possible to fill in (colour) the entire bar in most descriptors by the end of initial training.								
18	EPOSTL will help trainees become better teachers.								
19	Teachers must think in order to develop and EPOSTL can stimulate a teacher to think.								
20	Trainees need a lot of guidance at the beginning of their training; they should be told how to teach since they do not have time to learn through experience.								
21	EPOSTL descriptors were clear to me when I read them.								
22	EPOSTL is not only useful but it is a must for the trainee.								
23	It is practical to use bars and to fill them gradually during the training.								
24	E-version of EPOSTL would be convenient for me.								
25	Time necessary for filling in EPOSTL is reasonable.								

The relationship between language learning motivation and foreign language achievement as mediated by perfectionism: the case of high school EFL learners

Parisa Dashtizadeh & Mohammad Taghi Farvardin

Islamic Azad University, Iran
dashtizadeh@itc.ir, farvardin@iauhvaz.ac.ir

Abstract

This study examined the mediating effect of perfectionism on the relationship between language learning and foreign language achievement of high school EFL learners. To this end, 400 eleventh grade high school students were recruited through cluster random sampling. They were selected from eight high schools in four cities of Iran (i.e., Tehran, Ahvaz, Semnan, and Kerman). Afterwards, two questionnaires were administered to the participants. The first questionnaire was the shortened form of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) for EFL learners, and the second one was Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R) measuring the level of perfectionism among respondents. Moreover, the participants' scores on the English final exam held by Iran's Ministry of Education was considered as the indicator of foreign language achievement. The obtained data were analyzed through Pearson correlations and bootstrap resampling statistical method. The results indicated a positive correlation between all variables. Furthermore, it was revealed that language achievement and language learning motivation were partially mediated by perfectionism.

Key words: motivation, perfectionism, language achievement, mediation effect, high school, EFL learners

1. Introduction

Second language (L2) motivation is defined as "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (Gardner, 2010, p. 10). Language learning motivation has been recently received research interest in EFL/ESL contexts (Zusho, Anthony, Hashimoto, & Robertson, 2014). It is argued that an L2 learner with high motivation will be successful (Brown, 2007). In the same vein, Gardner (2010, p. 241) reports that "students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels".

On the other hand, among the most influential personal factors in one's academic achievement is perfectionism which is defined as a high level of performance associated with a propensity to critical self-evaluation (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990). In the realm of education, perfectionism has been examined concerning students' academic achievement (e.g., Altun & Yazici, 2014; GhorbanDordinejad & Farjadnasab, 2013; Pishghadam & Akhondpoor, 2011). However, in the field of L2 leaning, this variable has not adequately been caught remarkable attention. It should be also put forward that perfectionism as an affective factor infuses a desire and tendency toward getting high standard of performance in learners (Frost et al., 1990). Accordingly, the nature of these variables per se raises the possibility of any close relationship between them.

2. Literature review

Some studies have explored the relationship between motivation and L2 learning (e.g., Fatehi & Akbari, 2015; Karahan, 2007; Tahaine & Daana, 2013; Vaezi, 2008).

Karahan (2007) investigated the dissatisfaction caused by learners, teachers, and parents showing that most of EFL students in Turkey cannot achieve the anticipated level of English proficiency. The findings revealed that in spite of exposing students to English in the school environment constantly, they had little affirmative attitudes. In addition, the participants conceived the value and significance of the English language but did not show high level inclination toward learning English. In another study, Vaezi (2008) examined Iranian undergraduate students' integrative and instrumental motivation toward EFL learning. It was found that Iranian EFL learners had high motivation and positive attitude toward EFL learning. They were also more instrumentally motivated. Tahaine and Daana (2013), later, studied the motivation orientations (i.e., instrumental and integrative) of the EFL undergraduates and their attitudes towards English learning and its community. The results showed that learning English had the minimum effect on the students' English language motivation, while the participants' attitudes toward the English community were highly positive.

Conversely, Binalet and Guerra (2014) found that motivation is not highly associated with language learning achievement. They suggested that the success or failure of language learners to acquire a language is not related to the EFL learners' motivation in learning. However, in a recent study by Fatehi and Akbari (2015), a positive relationship between motivation and language achievement was found. In their study, they equipped the teachers with new and modern strategies in order to increase the learners' motivation in classrooms. The results indicated that highly motivated learners obtained better scores in their final exams.

Generally, few studies have ever dealt with the role of perfectionism in L2 learning, but fortunately, research on perfectionism has been recently growing at

a rapid rate (e.g., Altun & Yazici, 2014; GhorbanDordinejad & Farjadnasab, 2013; Pishghadam & Akhondpoor, 2011; Ram, 2005).

Ram (2005) investigated the relationship between perfectionism, academic achievement, motivation and well-being in university students. It was found that higher levels of positive perfectionism can be related to higher academic achievement, higher achievement motivation, and lower levels of anxiety. Ram (2005) also found that positive perfectionism can be highly correlated with the use of adaptive coping strategies and positive personality variables. In another study carried out by Pishghadam and Akhondpoor (2011), the roles of learners' perfectionism in EFL achievement and L2 learners' anxiety were examined. The results revealed a negative significant correlation between EFL skills and perfectionism. In the same vein, GhorbanDordinejad and Farjadnasab (2013) carried out a study to answer whether there was a significant relationship between students' levels of perfectionism and their English achievement. The participants were third grade high school students ($n = 239$, 110 males and 129 females). The participants' scores on their levels of perfectionism were measured by a questionnaire and their scores of the final English exam were also used as the measure of their English achievements. The results showed that there was not any significant relationship between students' levels of perfectionism and their achievement ($F = .515, p > .05$).

Altun and Yazici (2014), further, examined whether perfectionism, motivation, learning styles and academic achievement could differentiate gifted students from non-gifted students. The participants were 386 (164 female and 222 Male) gifted and 410 (209 female and 201 male) non-gifted students. The results showed that the model correctly predicted 98.4% of gifted students and 81% of non-gifted students. In a recent study, Fahim and Noormohammadi (2014) investigated perfectionism as a moderator between language learning styles and strategies. The study followed a mixed method design. The participants consisted of 265 EFL sophomores. The Persian version of Learning Style Questionnaire and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) were adopted. Afterwards, semi-structured interviews were administered on 34 high- and low-achievers. It was revealed that high-achievers had more positive perfectionism, while low-achievers showed signs of both positive and negative perfectionism.

The existing literature suggests apparent inadequacies in the L2 motivation research and scarcity of studies on perfectionism in the EFL context. On the other hand, there is dearth of research on the role of perfectionism as a determinant between language learning motivation and language achievement. Therefore, this study intends to explore the mediating role that perfectionism may play in the relationship between language learning motivation and language achievement. Additionally, the present study aims to examine if there is any relationship between perfectionism, language learning motivation, and foreign language

achievement. To fulfill the objectives of the study, the following research questions are raised:

- Q1: To what extent do EFL learners' language learning motivation and their language achievement correlate?
- Q2: To what extent do EFL learners' perfectionism and their language achievement correlate?
- Q3: To what extent do EFL learners' perfectionism and language learning motivation correlate?
- Q4: Does perfectionism mediate the relationship between EFL learners' language learning motivation and their language achievement?

3. Methods

3.1 Participants

A total number of 400 (210 female and 190 male) eleventh grade high school students were recruited for this study (Table 1). The participants' age ranged from 16 to 18. They were selected from eight high schools in four cities of Iran (i.e., Tehran, Ahvaz, Semnan, and Kerman). The researcher had an attempt to select the sample from the students of different cities across various geographical regions of Iran in order to gain more reliable and generalizable data. The participants were selected randomly through cluster sampling. All of the schools were selected among semi-public and gifted ones since perfectionism construct has been observed in talented and high-achieving students more than other students (LoCicero & Ashby, 2000; Schuler, 2000)

Table 1. Distribution of Participants

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	210	52.5
Male	190	47.5
Total	400	100

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery Questionnaire

In this study, to assess the participants' language learning motivation, Gardner's (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was adopted. The main reason behind selecting Gardner's AMTB in many studies is its established validity and reliability (Shams, 2008). Since the original version of this questionnaire includes 104 items, the shortened form of AMTB developed by Dordi-nezhad (2015) was adopted in this study (Appendix A). The shortened form of AMTB consists of 37 Likert scale items measuring four factors: 1) attitude towards importance of learning language; 2) parents' motivation towards their children's learning

English; 3) motivation tendency to foreign language learning; 4) attitudes towards origin of target language. The minimum and maximum possible score on this test range from 37 to 148. Cronbach's alpha for factors 1, 2, 3, and 4 has been reported to be .90, .85, .73, and .80, respectively. Moreover, the reliability of the questionnaire measured by Cronbach's alpha was 0.848 (Dordi-nezhad, 2015). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for AMTB was found to be .87.

3.2.2 Almost Perfect Scale-Revised Questionnaire

The Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R) (Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001) contains 23-items with three scales (i.e., High Standards, Discrepancy, and Order) APS-R is designed to assess the multidimensional construct of perfectionism. The High Standards subscale (7 items) measures high personal standards for performance and achievement (e.g., "I have high expectations for myself"). The Discrepancy scale (12 items) measures respondents' perceptions of themselves as failing to meet their personal standards for performance (e.g., "Doing my best never seems to be enough"). The Order subscale (4 items) measures a preference for neatness and order (Rice & Slaney, 2002). That is to say, the high standards and order are considered as adaptive perfectionism and the discrepancy as maladaptive one. The translated and validated version of APS-R (GhorbanDordinejad & Farjadnasab, 2013) was adopted in this study (Appendix B). The total scores for the entire instrument range from 23 to 165. The reliability of the complete APS-R scale is reported as .85 (GhorbanDordinejad & Farjadnasab, 2013). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for APS-R was found to be .76.

3.2.3 English Language Achievement Test

In this study, the indicator of language achievement was the students' English language final exam held by Iran Assessment and Evaluation Center early in June 2015, all over the country. Since the participants were selected from different regions and to ensure the integrity and reliability of the test scores, this national final exam was adopted as the achievement test. This test includes items assessing English reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. The researchers were provided with the students' scores by the given authorization of Education Office and the schools principals.

3.3 Procedures

First, all the ethical points and considerations of Iran Ministry of Education were observed and the participants filled out the consent forms. The target sample included 210 female and 190 male students from eight high schools in four cities of Iran. Early in June 2015, the last month of Iran's academic year, the participants completed AMTB and APS-R questionnaires. The participants were asked to

complete both questionnaires in one session. The questionnaires were administered in participants' first language, Persian. Afterwards, the participants' scores on the final English test were collected by the permission of Education Office and also the schools' principals.

3.4 Data Analysis

First of all, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to estimate the internal consistency estimate of reliability for each instrument. To investigate the first, second and third research questions, Pearson Correlational analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between perfectionism, language learning motivation, and language achievement. Considering the fourth research question, a bootstrapping procedure provided by Preacher and Hayes (2008) was adopted. Its macro program on SPSS version 21 was run to explore the mediating effect of perfectionism in the relationship of language learning motivation and language achievement. Scholars who study mediating effect of variables have advocated bootstrapping as one of the best methods for measuring and testing hypotheses on mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

4. Results

Initially, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to estimate the internal consistency estimate of reliability of both questionnaires (Table 2).

Table 2. The Results of Cronbach's Alpha for AMTB and APS-R Questionnaires

Questionnaire	Cronbach's alpha
AMTB	0.87
APS-R	0.76

As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's alphas for AMTB and APS-R were 0.87 and 0.76, respectively. Table 3 depicts the means and the standard deviations of AMTB, APS-R, and the achievement test.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of the Tests

Tests	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
AMTB	94.79	15.55	400
APS-R	61.83	8.43	400
Language Achievement Test	18.65	1.27	400

As displayed in Table 3, the mean and standard deviation in AMTB were 94.79 and 15.55, respectively. In APS-R, the mean and standard deviation were 61.83 and

8.43, respectively. Finally, the language achievement test had the mean and standard deviation of 18.65 and 1.27, respectively.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Motivation Sub-scales

Variable	Sub-scales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Motivation	Attitude towards the importance of learning language	45.92	7.65
	Parents' motivation toward their children's learning English	20.11	4.22
	Tendency motivation to learning foreign language	15.38	3.68
	Attitudes towards origin of target language	36.77	2.50

As Table 4 shows, the mean and the standard deviation were reported in attitude towards the importance of learning language variable 45.92 and 7.65, in parents' motivation in their children's learning English variable 20.11 and 4.22, in tendency motivation to learning foreign language variable 15.38 and 3.68, and in attitudes towards origin of target language variable 36.77 and 2.50, respectively.

4.1 Results of Correlational Analyses

To answer the first three questions, Pearson's correlation coefficients (Pearson's *r*) were computed.

Table 5. Correlation Coefficients between Students' Language Achievement and Second Language Learning Motivation and Its Sub-scales

Criterion variable	Predictor Variable	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Language achievement	second language learning motivation	0.42	.00
	attitude towards the importance of learning language	0.49	.00
		parents' motivation toward their children's learning English	0.33
	tendency motivation to learning foreign language	0.44	.00
	attitudes towards origin of target language	0.29	.00

Table 5 illustrates that there was a significant relationship between motivation and students' second language achievement ($r = 0.42, p < .001$). According to Cohen (1988), it is a positive and moderate correlation. Table 5 also shows that there were moderate correlations between all the sub-scales of motivation and language achievement: attitude towards the importance of learning language, $r = 0.49, p < .001$; parents' motivation toward their children's learning English, $r = 0.33, p < .001$; tendency motivation to learning foreign language, $r = 0.44, p < .001$; and attitudes towards origin of target language, $r = 0.29, p < .001$.

Table 6. Correlation Coefficient between Perfectionism and Students' Language Achievement

Predictor variable	Criterion variable	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>
Perfectionism	Language achievement	0.14	.003	400

As shown in Table 6, there was a positively weak correlation between perfectionism and students' language achievement ($r = 0.14, p < .01$).

Table 7. Correlations between Students' Perfectionism and Second Language Learning Motivation and Its Sub-scales

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Perfectionism	second language learning motivation	0.15	.00
	attitude towards the importance of learning language	0.18	.00
	parents' motivation in their children's learning English	0.17	.00
	tendency motivation to learning foreign language	0.19	.00
	attitudes towards origin of target language	0.11	.00

Table 7 displays that there was a significant relationship between motivation and perfectionism ($r = 0.15, p < .01$) which is, according to Cohen (1988), a weak and positive correlation. Table 7 also depicts that there were weak correlations between all the sub-scales of motivation and perfectionism: attitude towards the importance of learning language, $r = 0.18, p < .001$; parents' motivation toward their children's learning English, $r = 0.17, p < .001$; tendency motivation to learning

foreign language, $r = 0.19, p < .001$; attitudes towards origin of target language, $r = 0.11, p < .001$.

4.2 Results of Bootstrap Resampling Method

To examine the fourth research question, Preacher and Hayes' (2008) bootstrap method was used to investigate the mediating (indirect) effects on L2 learning motivation and language achievement. Initially, all the paths regarding the variables of the study were described clearly. Each path was composed of three variables: Mediator variable, criterion (dependent) variable, and predictor (independent) variable. During this statistical procedure, perfectionism was considered as a mediator variable, motivation and its sub-scales as predictor variables, and finally, foreign language achievement as a criterion variable (see Table 8).

Table 8. Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effects of Perfectionism on the Relationship between Second Language Learning Motivation and Language Achievement

Paths	Data	Boot	Bias	SE	Confidence interval	
					Lower level	Upper level
1. second language learning motivation	.0008	.0008	.0001	.0008	-.0007	.0027
2. attitude towards the importance of learning language	.0018	.0018	.0001	.0015	-.0005	.0056
3. parents' motivation toward their children's learning English	.0047	.0005	.0002	.0032	.0002	.0134
4. tendency motivation to learning foreign language	.004	.0042	.0001	.0034	-.0007	.0133
5. attitudes towards origin of target language	.0064	.0064	.0001	.0045	.0006	.021

As can be seen in Table 8, the mediating (indirect) effect of perfectionism on L2 learning motivation and its four sub-scales and also language achievement are illustrated. The bootstrap procedure could find the upper (UL) and lower levels (LL) of confidence interval (CI) for all variables. Initially, we examined the mediating paths between L2 learning motivation, perfectionism and language achievement. The upper and lower levels of CI were reported between -.0007 and .0027. According to Preacher and Hayes (2008), since zero is placed in this

interval, there would be no logical and meaningful mediating role for perfectionism in this path. The second step was investigating the paths between attitude towards the importance of learning language, perfectionism and language achievement (UL = .0056, LL = -.0005); again, no mediating effect was found. The third path was the one between parents' motivation in their children's learning English, perfectionism and language achievement (UL=.0134, LL= .0002). Here, an indirect effect was discovered since zero was not placed in this interval. The results of the fourth path which was between tendency motivation to learning foreign language, perfectionism and language achievement were similar to that of the first and the second ones (UL=.0133, LL= -.0007). The overall result of the last path was similar to the third one. This path attempted to investigate the indirect effect of perfectionism on attitudes towards origin of target language and language achievement. In this mediating path, UL and LL were reported as .0210 and .0006 in sequence.

Discussion

To answer the first research question, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed to determine whether there were significant relationship between L2 learning motivation and language achievement. Results of the study showed that there was a moderately positive correlation between the two variables. This implies that the respondents with higher language motivation were likely to have higher language achievement. Moreover, among all motivation sub-scales, attitude towards the importance of learning English language had the highest correlation coefficient with language achievement, and attitude towards origin of target language had the lowest correlation coefficient. These findings are in line with Dornyei (2005) who argued that attitude and motivation plays an important role in the rate and success of second/foreign language learning. The results are also in agreement with some previous studies (e.g., Fatehi & Akbari, 2015; Karahan, 2007; Tahaineh & Daana, 2013; Vaezi, 2008). However, the results are in contrast with Binalet and Guerra (2014) who found that motivation may not be related to L2 achievement.

The second research question examined the relationship between the L2 learners' perfectionism and their language achievement. In fact, there was a positively weak correlation between the two variables. That is to say, participants with higher levels of perfectionism were less likely to have higher language achievement. The results are in line with GhorbanDordinejad and Farjadnasab (2013) who reported weak relationship between perfectionism and English achievement. However, the findings of Pishghadan and Akhondpoor (2011) oppose the results of the present study. They found that EFL learners' perfectionistic tendencies can be related to low academic achievement and poor performance in language skills. The third research question delved into the

relationship between the L2 learners' perfectionism and their language learning motivation. A positively weak correlation was found between these variables. The results imply that L2 learners who enjoy high levels of learning motivation are not likely to be perfectionists and the other way round.

To answer the last research question, the bootstrap resampling method was used. The results indicated that perfectionism as a mediating variable did not have an indirect effect on all sub-scales of motivation. Therefore, it can be concluded that language achievement and L2 learning motivation were partially mediated by perfectionism. The only paths which confirmed the mediating role of perfectionism were told to be motivation in children's learning English and attitudes towards origin of target language. The results are in contrast with Pishghadam and Akhondpoor (2011) and Ram (2005). There is no doubt that many factors can affect the process of foreign language learning positively or negatively. In this study, we investigated motivation which is a complex psychological and it can be regarded as one of the determinant factors in successful foreign language learning. Moreover, the interrelation of motivation with other variables such as perfectionism, anxiety and personal traits can be crucial for learners since a better understanding of the link between these variables can accelerate the speed of a successful learning and lead them to a more successful language achievement.

Conclusion

The present study provides several pedagogical implications. As the first pedagogical implication, students should become aware that setting perfectionist high standards can change them into the stressful and disappointed learners with an unsuccessful learning process. They should replace their high and unachievable standards with logical aims in second language learning. One of the most useful and important implications in L2 learning is that teachers should find the origin of the feeling of perfectionism in their students and also to take remedial actions accordingly. Also, the teachers can be provided with training courses in which they learn how to tackle with psychological barriers such as maladaptive perfectionism, anxiety, stress, shyness, and etc. in their classes. By creating a friendly atmosphere and motivating the learners, the fear of making errors in students will be reduced. In other words, by providing an appropriate feedback to the learners, the students may stay away of perfectionism and accept that being fluent and proficient does not necessarily mean being perfect.

Furthermore, those who have the authority to control the educational system and make decisions about it should also consider much more about the effects of perfectionism on language learning in general and on motivation and language achievement in particular. Furthermore, many workshops can be conducted that

aim at familiarizing the students of how to control and overcome their negative dimension of perfectionism.

This study like any other is not devoid of limitations which should be dealt with in future research. First, the data of the study was collected from four cities in Iran. In order to have more valid results, the data can be collected in other EFL and ESL contexts with different teaching and learning styles and this can affect the results. Second, all the participants of the study who answered the research questionnaires were eleventh-grader students, aged 16 to 18. Due to our access limitation, we were not able to have participants from different age groups. Age as an important factor in L2 learning may influence the results. Moreover, different questionnaires might lead to different results. Furthermore, since the sample of this research involved the students of semi-public and the gifted schools, the students of public schools can be investigated in the future research. Besides, researchers may triangulate the data to gain a better picture. Interviews and classroom observations can provide more precise and valid data. Finally, other well-established questionnaires can be used to measure the level of motivation and the level of perfectionism in participants. Also, the effect of perfectionism on other variables and factors which are important in language learning can be explored in future, namely emotional intelligence, socioeconomic backgrounds, learning style, aptitude, etc.

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Appendix A

Shortened Version of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery for Iranian EFL learners

(Adopted from Dordi-nezhad, 2015)

کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	یادگیری انگلیسی مهم است زیرا به من این امکان را خواهد داد تا با افراد مختلف و زیادی ملاقات و صحبت کنم.	1
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	منتظر زمانی هستم که وقت کلاس انگلیسی برسد.	2
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	وقتی ناچار می شوم که به انگلیسی صحبت کنم بسیار احساس راحتی می کنم.	3
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	یادگیری انگلیسی مهم است زیرا قادر به ارتباط آسانتری با افراد انگلیسی زبان خواهم بود.	4
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	والدینم سعی می کنند در یادگیری زبان به من کمک کنند.	5
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	ترجیح می دهم زمان بیشتری را در کلاس انگلیسی و زمان کمتری را در سایر کلاس ها صرف کنم.	6
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	یادگیری زبان انگلیسی واقعا عالی است.	7
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	والدینم احساس می کنند که یادگیری زبان برای من بسیار مهم است.	8
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	صحبت کردن به زبان انگلیسی اصلا مرا آزار نمی دهد.	9
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	ای کاش می توانستم روزنامه ها و مجلات را به زبان های خارجی مختلفی بخوانم.	10
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	انگلیسی زبانان خیلی اجتماعی و مهربانند.	11
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	یادگیری زبان انگلیسی اتلاف وقت است.	12
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	دوست دارم انگلیسی را تا حد ممکن یاد بگیرم.	13
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	انگلیسی زبان ها چیزهای زیادی دارند که به آن افتخار کنند، زیرا ارزش های زیادی را به دنیا عرضه کرده اند.	14
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	یادگیری زبان های خارجی برای من مهم نیست.	15

کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	مطالعه زبان مهم است زیرا مرا با سوادتر خواهد کرد	16
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	یادگیری انگلیسی مهم است زیرا مرا قادر خواهد ساخت تا روش انگلیسی زندگی را بهتر درک کنم و تقدیر نمایم.	17
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تمایل شدیدی به یادگیری همه جنبه های زبان انگلیسی دارم.	18
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	دوست دارم تا با انگلیسی زبانان بیشتری آشنا شوم.	19
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	والدینم بر اهمیتی که انگلیسی در هنگام فراغت از تحصیل برای من خواهد داشت تاکید دارند.	20
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تقریباً با مرور هر روز رابطه ام را با زبان انگلیسی حفظ می کنم.	21
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	اگر قصد اقامت کردن در کشوری را داشته باشم تلاش خواهم کرد که زبان آن کشور را یاد بگیرم.	22
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	خانوده ام به تمام چیزهایی که در کلاس انگلیسی انجام می دهم علاقه مند هستند.	23
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	اگر دست خودم بود تمام وقتم را صرف یادگیری زبان انگلیسی می کردم.	24
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	ای کاش انگلیسی را روان صحبت می کردم.	25
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	اکثر انگلیسی زبان ها افرادی مهربان هستند و به راحتی می توان با آنها کنار آمد، از اینکه با آنها دوست هستم خوشحالم.	26
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	از ملاقات کردن با کسانی که به زبان خارجی صحبت می کنند لذت می برم.	27
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	واقعا از یادگیری زبان انگلیسی لذت می برم.	28
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	هرچقدر بیشتر انگلیسی زبانان را می شناسم آنها را بیشتر دوست می دارم.	29
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	ترجیح می دهم استاد زبان دیگری داشته باشم.	30
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	واقعا دوست دارم زبان های خارجی زیادی را یاد بگیرم.	31
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	والدینم اصرار دارند که اگر در انگلیسی مشکل دارم از استاد کمک بخواهم.	32
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	کلاس انگلیسی ام را خیلی دوست دارم، یادگیری انگلیسی بیشتری را در آینده در پیش رو دارم.	33
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تلاش می کنم تمام چیزهایی که به انگلیسی می بینم یا می شنوم را بفهمم.	34
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	یادگیری انگلیسی را دوست دارم.	35
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	والدینم احساس می کنند که بهتر است در تمام طول تحصیل در دانشگاه یادگیری انگلیسی را ادامه دهم.	36
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	می خواهم آتقدر انگلیسی را خوب یاد بگیرم تا برایم عادی شود.	37

Appendix B

The Persian Edition of Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R) (Adopted from GhorbanDordinejad & Farjadnasab, 2013)

دستورالعمل: برای سوالات زیر هیچ پاسخ درست یا غلطی وجود ندارد. ما فقط قصد داریم نظر شما را درباره گزاره های در کادر مقابل آن مشخص نماییم. زیر بدانیم. لطفا در هر سوال میزان موافقت و مخالفت خود را با گذاشتن علامت توصیه می شود در هنگام پاسخگویی وقت خود را بیش از حد معمول صرف بررسی یک سوال نکنید، اولین واکنش شما اغلب بیانگر نظر واقعی شما و بهترین پاسخ ممکن است.

کاملاً موافقم	موافقم	نسبتاً موافقم	نظری ندارم	نسبتاً مخالفم	مخالفم	کاملاً مخالفم	نظر شما درباره هریک از عبارات زیر چیست؟
							1 استانداردهای بالایی برای عملکرد خودم در محیط کار یا مدرسه قائل هستم.
							2 انسان منظمی هستم.
							3 اغلب به علت اینکه نمی توانم به اهداف خود دست پیدا کنم نا امید می شوم.
							4 پاکیزگی و نظافت برای من مهم است.
							5 اگر از خودتان انتظارات زیادی نداشته باشید هرگز موفق نخواهید شد.
							6 حتی اگر نهایت تلاش خود را کرده باشم باز هم از خودم راضی نیستم.
							7 به نظر من باید هر چیزی را سر جای خودش گذاشت.
							8 توقع زیادی از خودم دارم.
							9 در زندگی به ندرت به استانداردهای بالای خود می رسم.
							10 دوست دارم همیشه منظم و با برنامه باشم.
							11 به نظر من نهایت تلاش هم برای موفقیت کافی نیست.
							12 برای خودم استاندارد بالایی در نظر می گیرم.
							13 هیچوقت از میزان پیشرفت خود راضی نیستم.
							14 از خودم انتظار بهترین عملکرد را دارم.
							15 اغلب نگران این مساله هستم که نتوانم به انتظارات خودم دست پیدا کنم.
							16 عملکردم به ندرت با معیارهایی که دارم برابری می کند.
							17 حتی زمانی که می دانم نهایت تلاش خود را کرده ام، باز هم از خودم راضی نیستم.
							18 سعی می کنم در انجام هر کاری تمام تلاش خودم را بکنم.

						بسیار کم پیش می آید که بتوانم به استانداردهای بالای عملکرد خودم دست پیدا کنم.	19
						به ندرت از عملکرد خودم رضایت دارم.	20
						به ندرت این احساس را دارم که کاری که انجام داده ام به قدر کافی خوب بوده است.	21
						به شدت نیاز دارم برای رسیدن به برتری تلاش کنم.	22
						پس از تکمیل یک کار اغلب احساس یاس می کنم چرا که می دانم می توانستم بهتر عمل کنم.	23

Contact

Mohammad Taghi Farvardin, PhD
 Department of ELT, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University
 Golestan Highway, Farhang Shahr, Ahvaz, Iran.
 Email: farvardin@iauahvaz.ac.ir

Comparative exploration of learning styles and teaching techniques between Thai and Vietnamese EFL students and instructors

Nakhornsri Supalak, King Mongkut's University of Technology, Thailand
supalak.n@arts.kmutnb.ac.th

Abstract

Learning styles have been a particular focus of a number of researchers over the past decades. Findings from various studies researching into how students learn highlight significant relationships between learners' styles of learning and their language learning processes and achievement. This research focuses on a comparative analysis of the preferences of English learning styles and teaching techniques perceived by students from Thailand and Vietnam, and the teaching styles and techniques practiced by their instructors. The purposes were 1) to investigate the learning styles and teaching techniques students from both countries preferred, 2) to investigate the compatibility of the teaching styles and techniques practiced by instructors and those preferred by the students, 3) to specify the learning styles and teaching techniques students with high level of English proficiency preferred, and 4) to investigate the similarities of Thai and Vietnamese students' preferences for learning styles and teaching techniques. The sample consisted of two main groups: 1) undergraduate students from King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok (KMUTNB), Thailand and Thai Nguyen University (TNU), Vietnam and 2) English instructors from both institutions. The instruments employed comprised the Students' Preferred English Learning Style and Teaching Technique Questionnaire and the Teachers' Practiced English Teaching Style and Technique Questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using arithmetic means and standard deviation. The findings can contribute to the curriculum development and assist teachers to teach outside their comfort level to match the students' preferred learning styles. In addition, the findings could better promote the courses provided for students. By understanding the learning style make-up of the students enrolled in the courses, faculty can adjust their modes of content delivery to match student preferences and maximize student learning. Finally, this research could establish better understanding between language learning natures of people from Thailand and Vietnam.

Key words: learning styles, teaching styles, teaching techniques, EFL

1. Introduction

Students normally learn something in different ways. Some could learn best by seeing and hearing, reflecting and acting, reasoning logically and intuitively, analyzing and visualizing, and others steadily and in fits and starts (Felder, 2002).

These students' ways of learning are termed learning styles. According to Alkhasawe et al. (2008), learning styles are personal qualities that influence the way students interact with their learning environment, peers, and instructors. However, it is inevitable that teaching styles and teaching techniques implemented by instructors are diverse. Some instructors prefer to lecture and others demonstrate or discuss; some focus on principles and others on applications; some emphasize memory and others understanding. The compatibility of students' learning styles and the instructors' teaching styles and techniques may yield fruitful learning outcomes (Felder & Silverman, 1988). Consequently, a match between instructors' teaching styles and students' learning styles should be well recognized since it could possibly allow students to gain a deep understanding of the lessons due to the appropriate teaching techniques provided.

Once students have their own learning styles, likewise the instructors do. As a result, the instructors usually implement their own teaching styles in class. No model of instruction would be the best for all situations. Katz (1996) explains that teaching styles are a complex construct referring both to teachers' beliefs and actions. When a number of teachers' actions are arranged into varying patterns in order to create specific learning environments for students, it is possible to specify a particular teaching style.

In fact, most of the learning and teaching styles parallel each other. A student who favors intuitive over sensory perception, for example, would respond well to an instructor who emphasizes concepts (abstract content) rather than facts (concrete content); a student who favors visual perception would be most comfortable with an instructor who uses charts, pictures, and films. Dimensions of learning and teaching styles shown in Table 1 illustrate the commonality of the preferred learning styles and the corresponding teaching styles.

Since individuals have their own varied and preferred ways of learning. In every course, teachers should look for opportunities to connect to and use each of these styles to help students to be successful. Generally, students tend to employ one of the main learning styles shown above, but they can also adapt to another style if necessary. However, learners are likely to look for their preferred style in each learning situation mostly because they associate that style with learning success. When designing or teaching a course, teachers should seek to incorporate learning experiences and activities that appeal to each individual's learning style in order to increase the likelihood of learner success.

Felder and Silverman (1988) whose study is on the compatibility of engineering students' learning styles and the instructors' teaching styles found mismatches between common and traditional learning styles of students and traditional teaching styles of engineering professors.

Table 1: Dimensions of Learning and Teaching Styles

Preferred Learning Style		Corresponding Teaching Style	
Sensory	} Perception	Concrete	} Content
Intuitive		Abstract	
Visual	} Input	Visual	} Presentation
Auditory		Verbal	
Inductive	} Organization	Inductive	} Organization
Deductive		Deductive	
Active	} Processing	Active	} Student
Reflective		participation	
Sequential	} Understanding	Passive	} Perspective
Global		Sequential	
		Global	

(Felder & Silverman, 1988)

In consequence, students become bored and inattentive in class, do poorly on tests, get discouraged about the courses, the curriculum, and themselves, and in some cases change to other curricula or drop out of school. Professors, confronted by low test grades, unresponsive or hostile classes, poor attendance and dropouts, know something is not working; they may become overly critical of their students or begin to wonder if they are in a right profession.

The compatibility of the learning and teaching styles influences learning processes. Instructors who adapt their teaching style to suit students' preferred learning styles should come close to providing an optimal learning environment for most students in a class (Felder & Silverman, 1988). One common discrepancy is that most people, college age and older, are visual learners (Barbe & Milone, 1981), while most college teaching is verbal. A second learning/teaching style mismatch exists when the preferred input modality of most students and the preferred presentation mode of most professors are inconsistent (Felder & Silverman, 1988).

Practically, teaching styles are linked to teaching techniques. Dullien and Prieue (2010) suggested that teaching techniques include a detailed list of rules or a guideline for any teaching activity. It is based on the description of steps, or a set of do's and don'ts. Felder (2002) proposed the compatibility of the students' learning styles and teaching techniques such as the provision of a balance of

concrete information (facts, data, real or hypothetical experiences and the results) should be arranged for students who prefer sensory learning styles. With this, instructors should attempt to match teaching styles and techniques to students' preferred learning styles, not just promoting understanding in a classroom setting. The retained compatibility is likely to lead to a higher level of understanding (Wittmann-Price & Godshall, 2009). Moreover, information that is delivered in a style that matches the students' learning styles promotes understanding, leading to the retention of new information at a conceptual level, which is not surface learning that only requires memorization (Bastable, 2008).

On the other side, discounting learning styles can lead to bored, unresponsive class participants, which in turn affects grades and attendance rates, therefore, leading to a loss in satisfaction (Alkhasawe et al., 2008). Learners make the most out of information when they can select information and organize it into representations that make sense to them (Jonassen, 1999).

Since the regional political policy in Southeast Asia could be an important factor providing a great impact to the educational development, the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in the upcoming year could certainly influence developing plans within the region in many ways, especially in education. AEC consisting of 10 ASEAN member countries comprising Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam will be united as a community for the cooperation including human resources development and capacity building; recognition of professional qualifications; closer consultation on macroeconomic and financial policies; trade financing measures; enhanced infrastructure and communications connectivity; development of electronic transactions through e-ASEAN; integrating industries across the region to promote regional sourcing; and enhancing private sector involvement for the building of the AEC. A lot of action plans have timelines. A number of actions have already started and some have completed, but most are underway and have to be ready by the end of 2015.

Thailand stands ready to take a leading role in conducting the development cooperation with other countries both in bilateral and trilateral forms. Thailand's support has been designed in accordance with specific needs of each ASEAN country which ultimately will contribute to the strengthening of the ASEAN Community in the three pillars: political-security, economic, and socio-cultural, as well as the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (n.d.).

However, after seeing no concrete move towards preparing for the AEC by the government, Vongsinsirikul (Thai-AEC, n.d.), director of Dhurakij Pundit University's ASEAN Community Preparation Centre (ACPC) mentioned that foreign languages, English in particular, are Thai people's big problem. But we can learn them since we need to communicate with people from ASEAN countries that we are going to work with. The government should put preparations for the AEC

on the national agenda. The ministry should find more people with English communication skills and let them teach at schools. The curricula revamp should encourage students to think analytically and be able to solve problems so they are able to handle problems when growing up. Teachers should study and understand the ways of life and cultures of other ASEAN countries.

As Vietnam is one of ASEAN country members, it has since put in place a number of measures and is gearing up well for regional competition. The business community, as well as academics and other individuals are under pressure to institute reforms and increase competitiveness ahead of AEC (Vu, 2013). Importantly, the Faculty of Applied Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology (KMUTNB), Thailand and International School, Thai Nguyen University (ISTNU), Vietnam have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the academic co-operative activities. One of the important cooperative activities that the two institutes can implement for mutual benefits and may contribute to an enduring institutional linkage for education cooperation is particularly doing collaborative research.

To accomplish this, the present study includes the sample from both KMUTNB and ISTNU. The findings obtained will be able to provide better understanding not only for Thai students and instructors, but also for Vietnamese students and instructors. This would serve to fulfill the aim of AEC establishment, which is to develop the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

To address this identified need, this study aims at investigating the English learning styles Thai and Vietnamese students prefer, finding out Thai and Vietnamese students' preferred English teaching techniques, investigating the compatibility of the teaching styles and teaching techniques practiced by Thai and Vietnamese instructors and those preferred by the students, and specifying the English learning styles and teaching techniques students with high level of English proficiency prefer in order to investigate if these students' preferences are consistent with the teachers' practice.

In addition, the researcher is interested in further exploring if the students from Thailand and Vietnam report similarities regarding their preferences for learning styles and teaching techniques.

2. Literature review

This section reviews the concepts of learning styles, teaching styles, and teaching techniques. Importantly, situations of English teaching in Thailand and Vietnam are also explored. Finally, previous studies relevant to learning styles, teaching styles and teaching techniques are included.

2.1 Learning styles

Learning styles can be defined as the way one likes to learn. Learning styles are put into practice by particular learning strategies (Ehrman, 1996). Dunn and Griggs (1988) refer learning styles to "...the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others" (p. 3). According to such researchers as Keefe (1987), Kinsella (1995), Oxford and Anderson (1995), Provost and Anchors (1987), learning styles are composed of six interconnected features:

1. The cognitive feature includes preferred or habitual patterns of mental functioning: information processing and the formation of ideas and judgments (often referred to as cognitive styles).
2. The executive feature is the extent to which learners look for order, organization and closure in managing the learning processes.
3. The affective feature consists of the patterns of attitudes, beliefs, values and interests that influence what a person will attend to in a potential learning situation.
4. The social feature relates to the preferred degree of involvement with other people while learning.
5. The physiological feature involves what are at least partly anatomically based sensory and perceptual tendencies of the learners.
6. The behavioral feature concerns the learners' tendency to actively seek situations compatible with their own learning preferences.

According to Cohen and Weaven (2005), learning styles are not particular qualities in each individual's personality, but they are only preferences which can be changeable. If the classroom environment suits their learning styles, students are likely to learn better. If language material, for example, is delivered in several different ways, that means learning styles of various students in a class are more likely to be taken into consideration. To illustrate this, Cohen and Weaver suggest that the present and past perfect tenses in the target language should be taught by having students listen to the recording and then draw a chart in their notebook of a timeline that details when to use each form of tenses. If so, both ways serve both the auditory and visual learners.

Felder (2002) further categorizes learning styles into five main types.

1. **Perception:** Types of information students preferentially perceive
 - **Sensory** involves observing, gathering data through senses (Jung, 1971). Sensors like facts, data, and experimentation. They prefer solving problems by standard methods and dislike "surprise". Normally, they are patient with detail but do not like complication. They are good at memorizing facts. They are generally careful but may be slow. Their slowness in translating words puts them at a disadvantage in timed tests since they may have to read

questions several times before beginning to answer them, they frequently run out of time (Mayer, 1996).

- **Intuition** involves indirect perception by way of the unconscious-speculation, imagination, hunch (Jung, 1971). Intuitors prefer principles and theories and innovation and dislike repetition. They can be bored by details and welcome complication. However, they are good at grasping new concepts. Generally they are quick but may be careless. Intuitors may do poorly on timed tests but for a different reason – their impatience with details may induce them to start answering questions before they have read them thoroughly and to make careless mistakes (Mayer, 1996). Fischer and Fischer (1979) stated that these students do not follow traditional logic, chronology or step-by-step sequence.
2. **Input:** Sensory channels (touch, taste, and smell) through which external information is most effectively perceived (Felder, 2002).
- **Visual** learning style includes sights, pictures, diagrams, symbols. They remember best what they see: pictures, diagrams, flowcharts, time lines, films, demonstrations. If something is simply said to them they will probably forget it.
 - **Auditory** learning style means sounds or words. Auditory learners remember much of what they hear and more of what they hear and then say. They get a lot out of discussion, prefer verbal explanation to visual demonstration, and learn effectively by explaining things to others.
 - **Kinesthetic** involves taste, touch and smell. Kinesthetic learners prefer both information perception (touching, tasting, smelling) and information processing (moving, relating, doing something active while learning).
3. **Organization: Organization of information which the student is most comfortable with** (Felder, 2002)
- **Inductive** is a reasoning progression that proceeds from particulars (observations, measurements, data) to generalities (governing rules, laws, theories). Inductive students learn from observing the world around them and draw inferences.
 - **Deductive** proceeds in the opposite direction. In induction one infers principles; in deduction one deduces consequences. Deductive learners learn best from principles to phenomena.
4. **Processing: Ways students prefer to process information** (Felder, 2002)
- **Active** means doing something in the external world with the information – discussing it or explaining it or testing it in some way. Active learners are someone who feels more comfortable with, or are better at, active

experimentation through reflective observation, and conversely, for a reflective learner. They do not learn much in situations that require them to be passive (such as most lectures). However, they work well in groups and tend to be an experimentalist.

- **Reflective** involves examining and manipulating the information introspectively. Reflective learners do not learn much in situations that provide no opportunity to think about the information being presented (such as most lectures). They work better by themselves or with at most another person. Learners of this style tend to be a theoretician.

5. Understanding: Ways students progress toward understanding (Felder, 2002)

- **Sequential** means students who are comfortable with the presentation of material in a logically ordered progression, with the pace of learning dictated by the clock and the calendar. When a body of material has been covered, the students are tested on their mastery and then move to the next stage. Sequential students follow linear reasoning processes when solving problems. They can work with material when they understand it partially or superficially. They may be strong in convergent thinking and analysis. Students of this learning style can learn best when material is presented in a steady progression of complexity and difficulty.
- **Global:** Students who may be lost for days or weeks, unable to solve even the simplest problems or show the most rudimentary understanding, until suddenly they get it- the light bulb flashes, the jigsaw puzzle comes together. They may then understand the material well enough to apply it to problems that leave most of the sequential learners baffled.

Global students make intuitive leaps and may be able to explain how they came up with solutions. They may have great difficulty working with material when they understand it partially or superficially. These students may be better at divergent thinking and synthesis and sometimes do better by jumping directly to more complex and difficult material. They do not learn in a steady or predictable manner, but they tend to feel out-of-step with their fellow students and incapable of meeting the expectations of their teachers.

When they are struggling to master material with which most of their contemporaries seem to have little trouble, they may feel stupid. Some eventually become discouraged with education and drop out. Global students are the synthesizers, the multidisciplinary researchers, the systems thinkers, the ones who see the connections no one else sees. They can be truly successful if they survive the educational process.

From the above, we as teachers should be aware that every individual learns differently and thus has a unique learning style. However, learning styles are preferences which can be altered. Understanding of the ways students prefer to learn English can provide guidelines for improving learning and teaching EFL.

2.2 Teaching styles

Teaching styles may be defined as types of information emphasized by the instructor: concrete—factual, or abstract—conceptual, theoretical, modes of presentation stressed; visual—pictures, diagrams, films, demonstrations, or verbal—lectures, readings, discussions, the ways that presentation organized: inductively—phenomena leading to principles, or deductively—principles leading to phenomena, modes of student participation facilitated by the presentation; active—students talk, move, reflect, or passive—students watch and listen, and lastly types of perspective provided on the information presented: sequential—step-by-step progression (the trees), or global—context and relevance (the forest) (Felder, 2002).

Similarly, Fischer and Fischer (1979) defined teaching styles as a classroom made, a pervasive way of approaching the learners that might be consistent with several methods of teaching. Katz (1996) also explained that teaching styles is a complex construct referring both to teachers' beliefs and actions. When a number of teachers' actions are arranged into varying patterns, creating specific learning environments for students, it is possible to talk about a particular teaching style. Still, it is questionable whether the observable style is the result or the cause of classroom behaviour.

Felder (2002) specified five categories of teaching styles as follows:

1. Content: Types of information emphasized by the instructors
 - 1.1 Concrete: denotation of factual knowledge transmission
 - 1.2 Abstract: preference for theoretical information
2. Presentation: Stressed modes of presentation
 - 2.1 Visual: utilization of pictures, diagrams, films and demonstrations extensively
 - 2.2 Verbal: having many lectures, readings and discussions
 - 2.3 Kinesthetic: using both information perception (touching, tasting, smelling) and information processing (moving, relating, doing something active while learning) in the instruction.
3. Organization: Ways to organize the presentation
 - 3.1 Inductive: Presenting particulars (observations, measurements, and data) to generalities (governing rules, laws, theories). (Phenomena leading to principles) (Teachers may assign them to observe the things around them and draw inferences.)
 - 3.2 Deductive: Presenting principles to phenomena

-
4. Student preparation: Modes of student presentation facilitated by the presentation
 - 4.1 Active: Allowing students to talk, move and reflect
 - 4.2 Passive: Having students to watch and listen
 5. Perspective: Types of perspectives provided on the information presented
 - 5.1 Sequential: The presentation of material in a logically ordered progression, with the pace of learning dictated by the clock and the calendar. When a body of material has been covered, the students are tested on their mastery and then move to the next stage. Generally, teachers of this style tend to allow students to follow linear reasoning processes when solving problems, or have them work with material when they understand it partially or superficially. They also have convergent thinking and analysis and prefer to present material in a steady progression of complexity and difficulty.
 - 5.2 Global: Divergent thinking and synthesis. These teachers have students jump directly to more complex and difficult material. Teachers also realize that students do not learn in a steady or predictable manner and they tend to feel out-of-step with their fellow students and incapable of meeting the expectations of their teachers. They may feel stupid when they are struggling to master material with which most of their contemporaries seem to have little trouble. Some eventually become discouraged with education and drop out. Moreover, these teachers like to arrange the activities which allowing students to be synthesizers, the multidisciplinary researchers, the systems thinkers, the ones who see the connections no one else sees. They can be truly successful if they survive the educational process.

In brief, teaching styles can classify instructional techniques according to how well instructors address the proposed learning style component. Thus, learning styles and teaching styles are closely interrelated.

2.3 Teaching techniques

A teaching technique is implementational and it is something that actually takes place in language teaching or learning in the classroom. It is a detailed list of rules or guidelines for any activity. It is based on the description of steps, or a set of do's and don'ts, and can often be linked to a method or strategy (Dullien & Priewe, 2010).

Felder (2002) suggests that students' learning styles and teaching techniques should be compatible so that it could make instruction more effective. This researcher also suggested teaching techniques for each learning style as follows:

1. Perception consists of two types of learning styles: sensory and intuition (Felder, 2002).

- 1.1 For sensors, they should be provided with a balance of concrete information (facts, data, real or hypothetical experiences and their results). The balance material should emphasize practical problem-solving methods. Explicit illustrations of sensing patterns, observation of surroundings, empirical experimentation, and attention to detail will be best to increase the sensors' understanding. They tend to respond well when using computer-assisted instruction-sensor.
- 1.2 Intuitors prefer to be taught by a balance of abstract (principles, theories, mathematical models). The balance material should emphasize fundamental understanding. They should be provided by explicit illustrations of intuitive patterns (logical inference, pattern recognition, generalization). They tend to prefer creative solutions, even incorrect ones.
2. Input: Students who prefer this type of learning style most effectively learn external information by touching, tasting, and smelling through which external information is most effectively perceived.
 - 2.1 Visual learners should learn through pictures, schematics, graphs, and simple sketches liberally before, during and after the presentation of verbal material. Teachers should show films. Teachers should provide them demonstrations, hands-on, if possible. These students will value to-do lists, assignment logs, and written notes (Carbo, Dunn & Dunn, 1986).
 - 2.2 Auditory learners will learn best when teachers use a lecture-style forum, presenting information by talking to their students. Regulating voice tone, inflection, and body language will help all students maintain interest and attention. Auditory learners succeed when directions are read aloud, speeches are required, or information is presented and requested verbally (Carbo, Dunn & Dunn, 1986).
 - 2.3 Kinesthetic learners prefer to engage with the learning activity such as in a science lab, drama presentation, skit, field trip, dance, or other active activity. A more hands-on approach: manipulatives and other "props" are incorporated into almost every subject (Stafford, Dunn & Bacon, 1993).
3. Organization includes inductive and deductive learning styles. The appropriate techniques for these learning styles are proposed here (Felder, 2002).
 - 3.1 Inductive learners can learn best when the material is presented to what has come before and what is still to come in the same course, and particularly to the students' personal experience. Teachers present theoretical material and then develop the theory.
 - 3.2 Deductive people prefer to know how the theory is validated and deduce its consequences and present applications.
4. Processing consists of two main types of learning styles: active and reflective (Felder, 2002).

- 4.1 Active learners prefer to study with material that emphasizes practical problem-solving methods. They should be provided with demonstrations, hands-on, if possible. Computer-assisted instruction is recommended. Much opportunity should be provided for them to do something active besides transcribing notes. Small-group brainstorming activities that take no more than five minutes are extremely effective for this purpose. Teachers should give students an option for cooperating in homework assignments to the greatest possible extent. Active learners generally learn best when they interact with others; if they are denied the opportunity to do so, they are being deprived of their most effective learning tool.
- 4.2 Reflective learners like to learn with material that emphasizes fundamental understanding. Teachers should not fill every minute of class time lecturing and writing on the board. They should provide intervals-however brief-for students to think about what they have been told.
5. Understanding includes the ways students progress toward understanding (Felder, 2002). The learning styles for understanding are sequential and global. The recommended techniques which fit their styles can be summarized here.
- 5.1 Sequential learners should be presented with theoretical material. Then, teachers should allow them to develop the theory. They prefer to learn how the theory is validated and deduce its consequences and present applications.
- 5.2 Global people prefer to relate the material being presented to what has come before and what is still to come in the same course, to material in other courses, and particularly to their personal experience. Teachers should assign some drill exercises to provide practice in the basic methods being taught but do not overdo them. Also, they should be provided with some open-ended problems and exercises that call for analysis and synthesis. Creative solutions, even incorrect ones should be applauded.

When instructional processes are implemented, classroom will continue to integrate more these techniques. When students understand their learning styles, they can better adapt to their learning environment. Thus, once a student's unique learning style is identified, the teacher can begin to build upon it. Understanding learning styles is only the first step in maximizing potential and overcoming learning differences.

English teaching situations in Thailand and Vietnam English teaching situations in Thailand

Generally, Thai students spend twelve years studying English from primary and secondary schools, but their English ability is still questionable. When compared to people in neighboring countries, their English proficiency is relatively low. The 2010 Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) showed that

Thailand ranked 116th out of 163 countries. In the 2011 report, the Thai average score was still low, which is 75 (Test and Score Data Summary for TOEFL, 2011-2012). However, these poor results were controversial. Some doubted the consistency and validity of the tests, while others questioned the teaching and learning practices in English-language classes in Thai schools (Noom-ura, 2013).

As for the causes of failure upon examining the English-language classes, many researchers pointed to a few main factors contributing to the failure of English-language teaching-and-learning: unqualified and poorly-trained teachers, poorly-motivated students, learners of mixed abilities in overly large classes, and rare opportunities for student exposure to English outside of class time. These are considered the causes of difficulties in English language teaching and learning in Thailand especially in the primary and secondary schools. Some of the problems posted were: teachers' heavy teaching loads, inadequately equipped classrooms and education technology, the university entrance examination system, teachers' insufficient English language skills and cultural knowledge. The problems involving students who wished to speak English fluently included challenging interference from Thai language, lack of opportunity to use English in their daily lives, unchallenging English lessons, being passive learners, being too shy to speak English with classmates, being poorly-motivated and lack of responsibility for their own learning. These problems have been attributable to the unsatisfactory results of English language teaching as mentioned earlier. However, the most important factor in student learning progress is the teachers and teacher quality which outweigh other factors such as motivation, funding, and class sizes. Qualified teachers can create the best environment for learning.

As for Thailand, a survey, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, measuring the qualifications of four hundred Thai teachers of English, found that a full 60% of them had knowledge of English and teaching methodologies below that of the syllabus level at which they were teaching. Of the remaining top 40%, only 3% had a reasonable level of fluency, and only 20% were teaching class-levels for which they were both qualified and competent.

In addition to the lack of qualified teachers, it is widely understood that what is expected from teachers these days is multi-faceted. They are required to teach effectively in challenging environments; to make effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) in their teaching; to cater to a variety of learning styles; to conduct research aimed at improving the quality of their teaching; and to deal effectively with multitudinous administrative tasks -- all of which are to meet up with the requirements for 'Quality Assurance.'

Moreover, most Thai teachers of English, especially at the secondary level, have to teach at least eighteen hours a week on average and often take on additional classes outside regular school hours in order to supplement their relatively meager salaries. Because of overloaded burden, their teaching styles start to

fossilize into ones of rote-learning, teaching grammar and translation with Thai as the medium of instruction, teacher-centered classroom activities, spoon-feeding, and so on.

In an attempt to improve the situation, institutions of higher education realize this fact and try to give assistance by organizing training sessions, seminars, and conferences for teachers at all levels of ability and experience: novice teachers, teachers with some experience, and teachers able to play more advanced roles as leaders or trainers. Also, the Thailand Education Reform implemented between 1996 and 2007 emphasized teacher development, and teachers would be offered continuous training with some form of training such as attending seminars, workshops, or conferences every two years (Wiriyaichitra, 2002).

However, the design and the implementation of professional development training courses, which focused mainly on lesson-planning and teaching methodology, emphasizing how to teach each skill and how to teach integrated skills, were in a sort of top-down and non-collaborative manner. In other words, teacher participants had no opportunity to influence or change the content or delivery of the professional development activities and materials being provided. Colbert, Brown, Choi and Thomas (2008) stated that improving teacher quality is both common and necessary, and it depends on professional development, which should create meaningful learning experiences for teachers.

Apart from the teacher quality, the student motivation, the curricula and textbooks, the assessment methods, and other supporting factors such as teaching aids, class sizes, and time allocation are often said to exacerbate the English language teaching problems in Thailand. Thus, with the present unsatisfactory results of English language teaching and learning and obvious desires for professional development of English teachers, the researcher aimed to identify a clearer picture of the problems teachers are facing and to find out if those teachers need any kind of professional development.

2.4 English teaching in Vietnam

Vietnam general education consists of three levels with 12 forms/grades: primary level (from Form 1 – 5 for children aged 6 to 11); lower secondary level (from Form 6 – 9 for children aged 11 – 15); and upper secondary level (from Form 10 – 12 for children aged 15 – 18).

English was introduced nationally as a compulsory subject at upper secondary level and as an elective subject at lower secondary level. In this period, two sets of English textbooks were concurrently used in Vietnamese schools: the 3-year set (for students who started learning English from Form 10-12) and the 7-year set (for students who started learning English from Form 6 – 12). The final upper secondary school exam, however, was based on the knowledge and skills required in the 3-year set. Both sets of textbooks, although differing in orientation, are

mainly grammar-based, taking the view that grammar can be taught systematically as a set of rules to be mastered and transferred by the learner into proficient language use. While they take cognizance of the significant place of reading comprehension and oral skills, the grammar sections in each unit tend to dominate.

Van Van (2010) also states the problems in teaching English in Vietnam as follows:

Firstly, there is a disproportionate demand-supply. With a population of over 85 million, of whom a sizeable proportion has a strong desire to learn English, the demand for English language teaching far outstrips the supply of native speaker and competent non-native speaker teachers.

Secondly, textbook writing and teacher retraining are the two important aspects to implement English curriculum. Textbook writing has been completed, but to do massive and long term retaining of teachers in English competence would demand manpower and logistic resources beyond the capacity of the system at present.

Thirdly, despite the importance of English in the new context of integration and globalization, English language teaching in Vietnam, due to its low quality, has not met the demand for competent English-speaking people. The main reasons are that (1) most of the English teachers, particularly those who are teaching at primary and lower secondary levels are disqualified, (2) most teachers, except some who are teaching at tertiary level, have not had a chance to study in an English-speaking country, and (3) many of them do not normally communicate in English and cannot sustain teaching that mainly depends on communicative interactions.

Fourthly, there are classroom constrains: schools are often located in noisy places, with poor ventilation, overloaded beyond their capacity to classes of fifty or even sixty, with poor libraries and poorly paid staff.

Fifthly, although the rhetoric of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training stresses the development of practical communication skills, this is rarely reflected at the classroom level, where the emphasis is on the development of reading comprehension, vocabulary and structural patterns for the purposes of passing the end-of-school and university entrance examinations into colleges or universities.

Sixthly, there is a mismatch between testing and teaching in English language teaching in Vietnam. While teaching follows the communicative approach, testing seems to focus on measuring students' lexicogrammatical knowledge. To make matters more complex, at tertiary level, what the Vietnamese tertiary institutions do is to adopt either TOEFL or TOEIC or IELTS as the main yardstick to measure the students' knowledge and skills in English. These instruments, as is known, are suitable for measuring the knowledge and skills of English of those students who

are going to study either in Britain or in the USA or in an English-speaking country. And finally, the fact that English is introduced into primary schools in Vietnam makes some people express their concern about the negative effects that early introduction of English is having on national identity (Nunan, 2003).

2.5 Previous studies

A number of studies on learning styles have been done over the decades both in Thailand and other countries. The related studies below report the findings obtained from ESL and EFL students.

Mulalic, Shah, and Ahmad (2009) investigated perceptual learning styles of students in English as a second language (ESL) situation in Malaysia. The differences in learning styles of the students according to their gender and ethnicity were also examined. Reid's (1995) PLSPQs were employed. The results revealed that the students' preferred learning style was Kinesthetic. They expressed minor preferences for Visual, Auditory and Group learning styles, whereas they showed negative preferences toward Individual and Tactile learning styles. There was a significant difference in learning styles between male and female students regarding Auditory and Kinesthetic learning styles. The mean scores for the males were higher in both cases, which means that they favored Kinesthetic and Auditory learning styles when compared to their female counterparts. Significant differences in all learning styles among Malay, Chinese and Indian ESL students were also found. The authors concluded that it is important to determine learning styles of the students and that there should be an effort from the educator's side to accommodate those differences in the classroom.

In Thailand, Akkakoson (Akkakoson, 2011) studied the perceptual learning style preferences of Thai EFL university students of science and technology disciplines. The results indicate that these students have identifiable learning styles that differ among them. They favor Group learning style the most and Individual learning style the least. Not all of the factors studied are found to contribute to the choice of learning styles; only the age and English learning experience are. Preferences for learning styles actually fluctuate within the course. Thai teachers of English are found to be Visual learners/teachers and Group learning is their least favorite style. Interestingly, a mismatch between student learning styles and teacher teaching styles is found. Both the students and the teachers unanimously agree on further views on learning and teaching styles, and the teachers generally agree on Reid's (1995) major and minor hypotheses. A balanced style of teaching in order to accommodate diverse learning styles in the classroom is highly recommended.

These two studies focus on the preferences or the perception of learners in learning styles and teachers' teaching styles. Mulalic et al. (2009) pointed out that factors such as gender and ethnicity can allow different learning styles. Akkakoson

(2011) also illustrated the mismatch between students preferred learning styles and teachers' preferred teaching styles. This finding is similar to Katsioloudis and Fantz's study (2012) who investigated the preferred learning and teaching styles for Engineering, Industrial, and Technology Education students. This study illustrated that while there was some variation within majors, the overall dominant learning style in the materials process course was the kinesthetic style. While this was a result the researchers expected, the technology education students were unexpected outliers from the rest of the group. According to the study, the dominant preferred teaching style of the faculty members who taught the materials process course was the kinaesthetic style. The researchers suggest that this is due to the learning style and comfort zone of the faculty. In essence, faculty members are teaching the way they were taught.

The similar recommendations obtained from these previous studies are to balance teaching styles to accommodate diverse learning styles. Literally, these reviewed studies mainly studied the preferences of both learning styles and teaching styles reported by students and instructors. The focus of the present study, on the other hand, took consideration of the teaching styles and teaching techniques practiced in classroom setting. The instructors participated in this study were asked to report their actual teaching styles and techniques implemented while teaching. Then, the match between the preferred learning styles reported by students and the teaching styles and techniques practiced by instructors could be investigated.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. Which English learning styles and teaching techniques are preferred by Thai and Vietnamese students?
2. Which teaching styles and teaching techniques practiced by Thai and Vietnamese teachers can be matched with those preferred by the students?
3. Which English learning styles and teaching techniques are preferred by students with high level of English proficiency?
4. What are the similarities of Thai and Vietnamese students' preferences for learning styles and teaching techniques?

3.2 Limitations of the study

One limitation of the present study is that the participants of undergraduate university students in both sampled institutions were selected by purposive method. Therefore, the results of the study may not be generalizable beyond these groups.

3.3 Participants

Since there are two main groups included in this study, the sampling techniques used are as follows:

- 1) For the student group, 50 Thai and Vietnamese students from KMUTNB and ISTNU were randomly selected and used as subjects. Totally, 100 students studying Industrial Management, Computer Design and International Business Administration are invited to participate in this study.
- 2) Regarding the teacher group, the sample included an intact group of six teachers who were purposively selected from native and non-native English teachers working at KMUTNB and ISTNU.

3.4 Research instruments

The instruments included 1) the Students' Preferred English Learning Style and Teaching Technique Questionnaire (SPELS-TTQ), 2) the Teacher's Practiced English Teaching Style and Teaching Technique Questionnaire (TPETS-TTQ), and 3) English proficiency test used for specifying students' English proficiency levels (EPT).

The instruments were developed according to the dimensions of learning styles, teaching styles and teaching techniques suggested by Felder (2002) and Felder and Silverman (1988). These researchers posit that the compatibility of the learning styles, teaching styles and teaching techniques are very crucial. Thus, the corresponding teaching style and teaching technique to each learning style are strongly recommended. The present researcher therefore adopts these recommended corresponding learning styles, teaching styles and techniques as the conceptual framework for examining the compatibility of the learning-teaching style construct in this study. The following table illustrates the adopted framework with detailed descriptions.

Table 2: Summary of the conceptual framework for developing the two questionnaires

Learning Style	Corresponding Teaching Style	Corresponding Teaching Technique
1. Perception-Sensory: observing, gathering data through senses	1. Content-Concrete: denotation of factual knowledge transmission	1. Perception-Sensory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a balance of concrete information (facts, data, real or hypothetical experiences and their results - Balance material that emphasizes practical problem-solving methods - Provide explicit illustrations of sensing patters (observation of

<p>2. Perception-Intuition: indirect perception by way of the unconscious-speculation, imagination, hunches</p>	<p>2. Content- Abstract: preference for theoretical information</p>	<p>surroundings, empirical experimentation, attention to detail) - Use computer-assisted instruction-sensors respond very well to it.</p>
<p>3. Input-Visual: sights, pictures, diagrams, symbols</p>	<p>3. Presentation-Visual: utilization of pictures, diagrams, films and demonstrations extensively</p>	<p>2. Perception- Intuition: - Provide a balance of abstract concepts (principles, theories, mathematical models.) - Balance material that emphasizes fundamental understanding. - Provide explicit illustrations of intuitive patters (logical inference, pattern recognition, generalization) - Applaud creative solutions, even incorrect ones.</p>
<p>4. Input-Auditory: sounds, words</p>	<p>4. Presentation - Verbal: having many lectures, readings and discussions</p>	<p>3. Input-Visual: - Use pictures, schematics, graphs, and simple sketches liberally before, during and after the presentation of verbal material. Show films. - Provide demonstrations, hands-on, if possible.</p> <p>4. Input-Auditory: - Use a lecture-style forum, presenting information by talking to their students. Regulating voice tone, inflection, and body language will help all students maintain interest and attention. Auditory learners succeed when directions are read aloud, speeches are required, or information is presented and requested verbally</p>

<p>5. Input-Kinesthetic: taste, touch and smell</p>	<p>5. Presentation-Kinesthetic: using both information perception (touching, tasting, smelling) and information processing (moving, relating, doing something active while learning) in the instruction.</p>	<p>5. Input-Kinesthetic: - Have students engage with the learning activity such as in a science lab, drama presentation, skit, field trip, dance, or other active activity. A more hands-on approach: manipulatives and other “props” are incorporated into almost every subject</p>
<p>6. Organization-Inductive: a reasoning progression that proceeds from particulars (observations, measurements, data) to generalities (governing rules, laws, theories).</p>	<p>6. Organization-Inductive: presenting particulars (observations, measurements, data) to generalities (governing rules, laws, theories). (Phenomena leading to principles) (Teachers may assign them to observe the things around them and draw inferences.)</p>	<p>6. Organization-Inductive: - Motivate learning. As much as possible, relate the material being presented to what has come before and what is still to come in the same course, to material in other courses, and particularly to the students’ personal experience. - Present theoretical material. Then develop the theory</p>
<p>7. Organization-Deductive: proceeding in the opposite direction, inferring principles; in deduction one deduces consequences.</p>	<p>7. Organization-Deductive: presenting principles to phenomena.</p>	<p>7. Organization-Deductive: - Show how the theory or madcam be validated and deduce its consequences and present applications.</p>

Statements designating each type of learning style, teaching style and teaching technique were developed. There were totally 44 items with an open-ended part for additional information (if any). Due to the fact that the participants included Thai, Vietnamese students and Thai Vietnamese and foreign instructors, the questionnaires were written in three languages, namely English, Thai and Vietnamese. (See Appendices A and B for examples of the questionnaires.) The complete sets of questionnaires were validated by three content experts in the fields of Applied Linguistics and Education for their examination of content relevance and appropriateness.

A 4 point rating scale format was applied in the two questionnaires. The even numbers of the scales deducted the neutral opinion so that the respondents’

opinions would be specified on just one side. The scales used in the SPELS-TTQ were strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) respectively while the scales used in the TPES-TTQ included very often (4), often (3), sometimes (2) and seldom (1).

Table 2: Summary of the conceptual framework for developing the two questionnaires (Cont.)

Learning Style	Corresponding Teaching Style	Corresponding Teaching Technique
<p>8. Processing-Active: doing something in the external world with the information – discussing it or explaining it or testing it in some way.</p>	<p>8. Student preparation-Active: allowing students to talk, move and reflect</p>	<p>8. Processing-Active:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance material that emphasizes practical problem-solving methods - Provide demonstrations, hands-on, if possible. - Use computer-assisted instruction-sensors respond very well to it. - Provide opportunities for students to do something active besides transcribing notes. Small-group brainstorming activities that take no more than five minutes are extremely effective for this purpose. - Give students the option of cooperating on homework assignments to the greatest possible extent. Active learners generally learn best when they interact with others; if they are denied the opportunity to do so they are being deprived of their most effective learning tool.
<p>9. Processing-Reflective: examining and manipulating the information introspectively.</p>	<p>9. Student preparation-Passive: having students to watch and listen</p>	<p>9. Processing-Reflective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance material that emphasizes fundamental understanding. - Do not fill every minute of class time lecturing and writing on the board. Provide intervals-however brief-for students to think about what they have been told.

10. Understanding-Sequential: Students who are comfortable with the presentation of material in a logically ordered progression, with the pace of learning dictated by the clock and the calendar. When a body of material has been covered the students are tested on their mastery and then move to the next stage.

11. Understanding-Global: Students who may be lost for days or weeks, unable to solve even the simplest problems or show the most rudimentary understanding, until suddenly they get it-the light bulb flashes, the jigsaw puzzle comes together. They may then understand the material well enough to they apply it to problems that leave most of the sequential learners baffled.

10. Perspective-Sequential: the presentation of material in a logically ordered progression, with the pace of learning dictated by the clock and the calendar. When a body of material has been covered the students are tested on their mastery and then move to the next stage.

11. Perspective-Global: divergent thinking and synthesis. Having students jump directly to more complex and difficulty material. They do not learn in a steady or predictable manner they tend to feel out-of-step with their fellow students and incapable of meeting the expectations of their teachers.

10. Understanding-Sequential:

- Presenting theoretical material. Then develop the theory or formulate the mod.
- Show how the theory be validated and deduce its consequences and present applications.

11. Understanding-Global:

- Assign some drill exercises to provide practice in the basic methods being taught but do not overdo them. Also provide some open-ended problems and exercises that call for analysis and synthesis.
- Applaud creative solutions, even incorrect ones.

A pilot study was then conducted to try out the instruments, data collection methods and data analytical methods, after which some revisions were made. The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using the alpha coefficients. The values obtained were .81 and .83 for the SPELS-TTQ and the TPETS-TTQ respectively. The coefficients show that the two questionnaires contain high reliability.

As for the English proficiency test, the test was adopted from that of Nakhornsri, Panproegsa, Wimolsasem, Sangwirach and Makhphunthong's (2014) study which developed the English proficiency test and the descriptors for each level of the ability band for the students' English proficiency. Its writing and

reading parts were used in this study. According to the levels of English proficiency, there were three levels, namely high, moderate, and low and these criteria were used to specify students' levels of English proficiency in this study.

3.5 Research procedures

The research was conducted through the following stages. Firstly, the student participants were asked to take the English Proficiency Test in order to classify their English proficiency levels. Then, the two questionnaires were distributed to all the participants. After that, data collection and data analysis were followed.

3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis procedures for each research question are discussed in turn as follows:

Data analysis for research question 1: Which English learning styles and teaching techniques are preferred by Thai and Vietnamese students?

The data from the SPELS-TTQs were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics (i.e. arithmetic mean and standard deviation).

Data analysis for research question 2: Which teaching styles and teaching techniques practiced by Thai and Vietnamese teachers can be matched with those preferred by the students?

The data from the TPETS-TTQs were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics (i.e. arithmetic mean and standard deviation), after which their findings were compared with those of the research question 1.

Data analysis for research question 3: Which English learning styles and teaching techniques are preferred by students with high level of English proficiency?

To categorize the student participants' English proficiency, the researcher followed the division of proficiency levels used in the study of Nakhornsri et al. (2014), which includes three different levels (i.e. low, moderate, and high). After that, the data obtained from the SPELSTTQs were analyzed to find out their preferred English learning styles and teaching techniques.

Data analysis for research question 4: What are the similarities of Thai and Vietnamese students' preferences for learning styles and teaching techniques?

The data from Thai and Vietnamese students and teachers obtained from the two research instruments were separately analyzed by means of descriptive statistics (i.e. arithmetic mean and standard deviation).

4. Findings

The results obtained from the analyses of the questionnaire data which address research questions 1-4 are presented in turn as follows:

Research question 1: Which English learning styles and teaching techniques are preferred by Thai and Vietnamese students?

Since the questionnaire used for this research question includes 4 rating scales, the following criteria were used to interpret the findings:

3.26 – 4.00 means "strongly agree"; 2.51 – 3.25 means "agree"
 1.76 – 2.50 means "disagree"; 1.00 – 1.75 means "strongly disagree"

Table 3: The learning styles preferred by Thai and Vietnamese students

Learning Style	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
Processing-active	3.20	.61	agree
Input-kinesthetic	3.12	.56	agree
Perception-sensory	3.05	.54	agree
Organization-inductive	3.05	.60	agree
Input-visual	3.04	.57	agree
Organization-deductive	3.04	.59	agree
Input-auditory	3.03	.65	agree
Understanding-sequential	3.02	.60	agree
Perception- intuition	3.00	.56	agree
Understanding-global	2.89	.66	agree
Processing-reflective	2.86	.66	agree

From the above table, the majority of students rated *Processing-active learning* style the highest ($\bar{X} = 3.20$, S.D. = 0.61) whereas *Processing-reflective learning* style has the lowest mean ($\bar{X} = 2.86$, S.D. = .66).

Table 4: The teaching techniques preferred by Thai and Vietnamese students

Teaching Techniques	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
Processing-active	3.20	.61	agree
Organization-inductive	3.19	.59	agree
Organization-deductive	3.12	.62	agree
Input-visual	3.11	.57	agree
Perception- intuition	3.10	.56	agree
Understanding-global	3.07	.63	agree
Input-kinesthetic	3.06	.58	agree
Understanding-sequential	3.04	.65	agree
Perception-sensory	3.01	.61	agree
Input-auditory	2.97	.63	agree
Processing-reflective	2.86	.62	agree

As for the teaching techniques, Thai and Vietnamese students rated *Processing-active* the highest ($\bar{X} = 3.20$, S.D. =.61) while *Processing-reflective* was reported as the lowest ($\bar{X} = 2.86$, S.D. =.62).

Research question 2: Which teaching styles and teaching techniques practiced by Thai and Vietnamese instructors can be matched with those preferred by the students?

To answer this research question, the students' preferred learning styles and the teachers' practiced teaching styles were reordered according to the mean scores from the highest to the lowest. The following interpretation criteria were used.

3.26 – 4.00 means "very often"	2.51 – 3.25 means "often"
1.76 – 2.50 means "sometimes"	1.00 – 1.75 means "seldom"

Whether the teaching styles would be considered to match with the learning styles depends on the same ranks they correspond to the teaching styles suggested by Felder (2002). The following table shows the match between the learning styles and the teaching styles.

In conclusion, the only matched pair between the learning styles preferred by Thai and Vietnamese students and those practiced by their teachers is *Processing-reflective* learning style and *Student preparation-passive*.

For the match between teaching techniques preferred by students and practiced by teachers, Table 6 illustrates the matched pairs.

Table 5. The match between the learning styles preferred by Thai and Vietnamese students and those practiced by their instructors

Rank	Learning Style preferred by students rearranged according to the mean	Corresponding Teaching Style (Felder, 2002)	Teaching Style practiced by teachers rearranged according to the mean	Compatibility
1	Processing-active ($\bar{X} = 3.20$)	Student participation-active	Presentation-visual ($\bar{X} = 3.50$)	X
2	Input-kinesthetic ($\bar{X} = 3.12$)	Presentation-kinesthetic	Student preparation-Active ($\bar{X} = 3.45$)	X

3	Perception-sensory (\bar{X} =3.05)	Content-concrete	Presentation-kinesthetic (\bar{X} =3.15)	X
	Organization-inductive (\bar{X} =3.05)	Organization-inductive		X
4	Input-visual (\bar{X} =3.04)	Presentation-visual	Presentation-verbal (\bar{X} = 3.13)	X
	Organization-deductive (\bar{X} =3.04)	Organization-deductive	Perspective -Global (\bar{X} = 3.13)	X
5	Input-auditory (\bar{X} =3.03)	Presentation-verbal	Organization-Inductive (\bar{X} =3.10)	X
6	Understanding-sequential (\bar{X} =3.02)	Perspective-Sequential	Organization-Deductive6 (\bar{X} =3.08)	X
			Content-concrete (\bar{X} =3.08)	
7	Perception- intuition (\bar{X} =3.00)	Content-abstract	Perspective-Sequential (\bar{X} =2.95)	X
8	Understanding-global (\bar{X} =2.89)	Perspective-global	Content-abstract (\bar{X} =2.65)	X
9	Processing-reflective (\bar{X} =2.86)	Student participation-passive	Student preparation-passive (\bar{X} =2.50)	√

Note: X = Not matched / √ = Matched / NA = Not Applicable

Table 6: The match between the teaching techniques preferred by Thai and Vietnamese students and those practiced by their instructors

Rank	Teaching technique preferred by students rearranged according to the mean	Corresponding Teaching Style (Felder, 2002)	Teaching Technique practiced by teachers rearranged according to the mean	Compatibility
1	Processing-active (\bar{X} =3.20)	Processing-active	Processing-Active (\bar{X} =3.33)	√

2	Organization-inductive (\bar{X} =3.19)	Organization-inductive	Input-visual (\bar{X} =3.27)	X
3	Organization-deductive (\bar{X} =3.12)	Organization-deductive	Perception-intuition (\bar{X} =3.19)	X
4	Input-visual (\bar{X} =3.11)	Input-visual	Perception-sensory (\bar{X} =3.03)	X
5	Perception- intuition (\bar{X} =3.10)	Perception-intuition	Organization-Inductive (\bar{X} =3.00)	X
6	Understanding-global (\bar{X} =3.07)	Understanding-global	Organization-Deductive (\bar{X} =2.94)	X
7	Input-kinesthetic (\bar{X} =3.06)	Input-kinesthetic	Understanding-Sequential (\bar{X} =2.89)	X
8	Understanding-sequential (\bar{X} =3.04)	Understanding-sequential	Understanding-Global (\bar{X} =2.88)	X
9	Perception-sensory (\bar{X} =3.01)	Perception-sensory	Input-auditory (\bar{X} =2.86)	X
	NA	NA	Input-kinesthetic (\bar{X} =2.86)	X
10	Input-auditory (\bar{X} =2.97)	Input-auditory	Processing-Reflective (\bar{X} =2.23)	X
11	Processing-reflective (\bar{X} =2.86)	Processing-reflective		X

Note: X = Not matched / \surd = Matched / NA = Not Applicable

Regarding the match between students' preferred teaching techniques and teachers' practiced teaching techniques reported by Thai and Vietnamese students and instructors, it can be concluded that there is a matched pair, namely *Processing-active* and *Processing-active*.

Research question 3: Which English learning styles and teaching techniques are preferred by students with high level of English proficiency?

The findings of this research question are shown in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7: The learning styles preferred by students with high level of English proficiency

Learning Style	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
Processing-active	3.38	.66	strongly agree
Input-auditory	3.22	.60	agree
Input-kinesthetic	3.19	.62	agree
Organization-inductive	3.13	.65	agree
Organization-deductive	3.13	.67	agree
Perception- intuition	3.10	.63	agree
Understanding-sequential	3.10	.67	agree
Input-visual	3.09	.67	agree
Perception-sensory	3.07	.64	agree
Understanding-global	2.91	.86	agree
Processing-reflective	2.90	.77	agree

It can be concluded that the majority of the students with high level of proficiency prefer *Processing-active* (\bar{X} =3.38, S.D. =.66).

Table 8: The teaching techniques preferred by students with high level of English proficiency

Teaching Technique	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
Processing-active	3.38	.66	strongly agree
Organization-inductive	3.29	.70	strongly agree
Input-kinesthetic	3.23	.54	agree
Organization-deductive	3.16	.64	agree
Perception-sensory	3.13	.60	agree
Input-visual	3.13	.61	agree
Input-auditory	3.12	.63	agree
Perception- intuition	3.10	.61	agree
Understanding-global	3.06	.79	agree
Understanding-sequential	3.01	.71	agree
Processing-reflective	2.93	.74	agree

The above table shows that students with high level of English proficiency prefer *Processing-active* (\bar{X} =3.38, S.D. =.66).

Research question 4: What are the similarities of Thai and Vietnamese students' preferences for learning styles and teaching techniques?

To answer this research question, comparisons of the preferred learning styles and teaching techniques between Thai and Vietnamese students were made. The findings were illustrated in the following tables.

Table 9: The comparison of the preferred learning styles between Thai and Vietnamese students

Rank	Learning Style preferred by Thai students rearranged according to the mean	Rank	Learning styles preferred by Vietnamese students rearranged according to the mean	Similarity
1	Processing-active (\bar{X} =3.21)	1	Processing-active (\bar{X} =3.16)	√
2	Input-kinesthetic (\bar{X} =3.17)	2	Understanding-sequential (\bar{X} =3.04)	X
3	Input-visual (\bar{X} =3.09)	3	Input-auditory (\bar{X} =2.98)	X
	Organization-deductive (\bar{X} =3.09)		NA	X
4	Perception-sensory (\bar{X} =3.08)	4	Perception-sensory (\bar{X} =2.91)	√
	Organization-inductive (\bar{X} =3.08)		Organization-inductive (\bar{X} =2.91)	√
5	Input-auditory (\bar{X} =3.04)	5	Input-kinesthetic (\bar{X} =2.89)	X
6	Perception-intuition (\bar{X} =3.03)	6	Processing-reflective (\bar{X} =2.84)	X
	NA		Understanding-global (\bar{X} =2.84)	X
7	Understanding-sequential (\bar{X} =3.01)	7	Perception- intuition (\bar{X} =2.82)	X
	NA		Input-visual (\bar{X} =2.82)	X
8	Understanding-global (\bar{X} =2.91)	8	Organization-deductive (\bar{X} =2.79)	X
9	Processing-reflective (\bar{X} =2.86)	9	NA	X

Note: X = Different / √ = Similar / NA = Not Applicable

From the above table, it can be concluded, Thai and Vietnamese students similarly preferred *Processing-active*, *Perception-sensory*, and *Organization-inductive* while preferences for other types of learning styles were differently reported.

Table 10. The comparison of the preferred teaching techniques between Thai and Vietnamese students

Rank	Teaching techniques preferred by Thai students rearranged according to the mean	Rank	Teaching techniques preferred by Vietnamese students rearranged according to the mean	Similarity
1	Organization-inductive ($\bar{X}=3.23$)	1	Processing-active ($\bar{X}=3.16$)	X
2	Processing-active ($\bar{X}=3.21$)	2	Input-visual ($\bar{X}=3.02$)	X
	NA		Understanding-global ($\bar{X}=3.02$)	X
3	Perception- intuition ($\bar{X}=3.14$)	3	Input-kinesthetic ($\bar{X}=3.00$)	X
	Organization-deductive ($\bar{X}=3.14$)		Organization-deductive ($\bar{X}=3.00$)	√
	NA		Organization-inductive ($\bar{X}=3.00$)	X
4	Input-visual ($\bar{X}=3.13$)	4	Perception-sensory ($\bar{X}=2.95$)	X
5	Understanding-sequential ($\bar{X}=3.09$)	5	Perception- intuition ($\bar{X}=2.91$)	X
6	Understanding-global ($\bar{X}=3.08$)	6	Input-auditory ($\bar{X}=2.86$)	X
7	Input-kinesthetic ($\bar{X}=3.07$)	7	Processing-reflective ($\bar{X}=2.75$)	X
8	Perception-sensory ($\bar{X}=3.02$)	8	Understanding-sequential ($\bar{X}=2.84$)	X
9	Input-auditory ($\bar{X}=2.99$)	9	NA	X
10	Processing-reflective ($\bar{X}=2.89$)		NA	X

Note: X = Different / √ = Similar / NA = Not Applicable

It can be summarized that regarding the similarity of the preferred teaching techniques, *Organization-deductive* was found to be preferred by both Thai and

Vietnamese students, whereas other types of teaching techniques were ranked in different orders of preference.

5. Discussion

This section provides an interpretation of the findings. The five findings are discussed as follows:

5.1 The preferred learning styles and teaching techniques of Thai and Vietnamese students

Interestingly, the results of this present study revealed that the preferences for learning styles and teaching techniques reported by student participants of both nationalities are congruent. Processing-active learning style which refers to processing information actively was rated with the highest mean score. This reflects the fact that the majority of students like to discuss or talk about the lessons they are learning. They tend to feel more comfortable with active experimentation; so, they may not learn much in situations that require them to be passive such as most lectures. Data from the open-ended part support this conclusion. Below are some examples of students' preferences on the *Processing-active* learning style:

Example 1:

"I don't like reading assignment. It's quite boring and repeated. I'm full of energy when joining in active games in class." (Code: VN 1)

Example 2:

"I enjoy being involved in active activities in class. I prefer games requiring group-work skills." (Code: TH 2)

This finding is also consistent with the analysis of Akkakoson (2011) who concluded that *Group* learning style is the most preferred. Oxford (2003) explained the characteristics of this learning style as a preference for studying with others. Group studying allows students to feel comfortable and and it is the best way for them to acquire knowledge. They also value class interaction and class work with other students and they remember information when they work with two or three classmates.

When investigating students' preference for teaching techniques, the finding is in accordance with the preferred learning styles. The students in this study would like their instructors to provide them material that emphasizes practical problem-solving methods. Demonstrations and hands-on could allow them to better understand the lessons. Importantly, they would like to have opportunities to do something active instead of transcribing notes. Instructors, therefore, should give

them an option for cooperating in homework assignments as they can learn best when interacting with others.

5.2 The match of the students' preferred learning styles and the instructors' practiced teaching styles

Since learning styles and teaching styles are closely interrelated, the style similarities between students and instructors can consistently and positively affect students' learning achievement. Brown (1994) stated that the match between students' learning styles and teachers' teaching styles can increase students' motivation, performances and achievements.

However, the findings of this study report that there is only one matched pair, *Processing-reflective* and *Student preparation passive* which was rated as the 9th rank. It can be interpreted that students have the least favor to this style and so do the instructors who use this teaching style the least.

Although the preferred learning styles and practiced teaching styles which appeared in the higher rankings were not exactly compatible. The findings also show that *Processing-active* was ranked first as students' the most preferred learning style. Its corresponding teaching style should be *Student participation-active* which was placed second in the order of instructors practiced teaching styles. This result indicates that even though instructors do not rate *Student participation-active* the highest practiced style, they also find it important and tend to implement this style very often.

5.3 The match of the students' preferred teaching techniques and the instructors' practiced teaching techniques

A match was found in terms of the students' preferred teaching techniques and the instructors' practiced teaching techniques. The students rated techniques used for *Processing-active* learning style as their most preferred teaching techniques and the teachers reported that the techniques they practiced very often in class were for *Processing-active* learning style. This indicates that the teachers emphasize practical problem-solving methods and tend to provide more demonstrations. However, when considering other rankings, styles of both parties were all mismatched.

This match would be more effective if instructors are also aware of their students' needs, capacity, and potential. Myers and McCaulley (1985) recommended teachers to use an assessment instrument to investigate these factors. It may help to reveal students' preferences, especially their learning styles. Based on the learning style assessment results, the instructors can alter and accommodate appropriate techniques to serve their students' preferences.

5.4 The preferred learning styles and teaching techniques of students with high levels of English proficiency

As Reid (1987) suggested that a match between students' and teachers' style preferences could result in better achievement, equal educational opportunities, and positive attitudes to learning, the construct of styles in teaching and learning should not be overlooked. Stebbins (1995) supports that mismatching could cause a negative impact on the students' attitude and learning process while matching could improve their attitude, behavior, motivation, and learning eventually.

Results of the current study suggest that *Processing-active* is the most preferred learning style and the most preferred teaching technique of students with high levels of English proficiency. This is in accordance with the most practiced teaching technique of the instructors. As *Processing-active* was ranked second, this can be concluded that the students with high levels of English proficiency tend to prefer learning/teaching styles which are compatibly given by the instructors. This is posited by Felder and Silverman's work (1988) which reveals that the compatibility of the learning styles and teaching styles can provide an optimal learning environment for most students in a class. Once an instructor attempts to match teaching styles or techniques to students' preferred learning styles, it can help to promote understanding in a classroom. Hence, the compatibility can lead to a higher level of understanding and learning achievement (Wittmann-Price & Godshall, 2009).

5.5 Similarities of the preferred learning styles and teaching techniques between Thai and Vietnamese students

The findings of present study reveal that Thai and Vietnamese students prefer similar learning style, *Processing active*. This could reflect the ways students process information generally. Felder (2002) explains that active learners prefer to do something in the external world with the information. They like to discuss or explain things. Importantly, they feel more comfortable with active activities; so, they can work well in groups.

This result can be explained by the students' awareness of the importance of English. They realize that English has long played an important role in many developing countries where it is modelled as a lingua franca or a shared language of communication (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Apart from the processes of globalized networks in which English plays a part, Thailand and Vietnam are entering the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by 2015 with an aim to create ASEAN economic community, free trade area, comprehensive investment area, trade in services, single aviation market, free trade agreements with other countries and ASEAN sociocultural community (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, (2009). For this, the students of both nationalities realize that English inevitably

become an important language of communication within this region. English ability could provide them great opportunities, especially those who look for a job.

Besides a similar preference on *Processing-active* learning style, the students also reported similar preferences on *Perception-sensory* (4th rank) and *Organization-inductive* (5th rank). As a sensory learner, students preferentially learn things through senses, for example observing, gathering data [20]. They prefer facts, data, and experimentation. Regarding *Organization-inductive* learning style, inductive students will be comfortable when information is organized inductively, or when a reasoning progression proceeds from particulars to generalities. They will learn best when observing the world around them and draw inferences (2002).

The teaching techniques for *Organization-deductive* learning styles are preferred by both Thai and Vietnamese students. This means they prefer to be presented by theory and assigned to read or listen to explanations with examples. Teachers should inform them directly what they are going to learn. When learning grammar, they prefer to pay little attention to meaning. As a result, the practice should be often mechanical.

6. Implications

The findings of this study are significant in several ways.

First, in terms of theoretical significance, the findings can contribute to the curriculum development. The data about students' preferred learning styles can be included when designing a course or preparing lesson plans.

For the preferred teaching style, suggestions can be made for English teachers so that they would realize students' preferred learning styles and their own comfort zone. This would assist these teachers to teach outside their comfort level to match the students' preferred learning styles.

In addition, the findings could better promote the courses provided for students. By understanding the learning style make-up of the students enrolled in the courses, faculty should be able to adjust their modes of content delivery to match student preferences and maximize student learning.

Finally, since this research includes students and teachers from Thailand and Vietnam, better understanding between language learning natures of people from these two countries can be established. Importantly, it can develop the bilateral relationships with respect to education and other co-operative activities, which could be implemented in the future.

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Contact:

Nakhornsri Supalak
King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok
Faculty of Applied Arts, Department of Languages
Pracharat 1 Road, Bangkok, Thailand
supalak.n@arts.kmutnb.ac.th

Appendix A.

Example of Questionnaire on Students' Preferred English Learning Styles and Teaching Techniques

Direction: Place a check in the appropriate space after each statement according to the meaning of each scale below. This item survey is not timed. Respond to each statement as honestly as you can.

4 = Strongly agree 3=agree 2= disagree 1=strongly disagree

คำสั่ง: กรุณาทำเครื่องหมายถูกลงในช่องตามความหมายของแต่ละสเกลต่อไปนี้

สามารถตอบแบบสอบถามได้โดยไม่จำกัดเวลา กรุณาตอบตามความเป็นจริง

4= เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง 3= เห็นด้วย 2= ไม่เห็นด้วย

1=ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

Hướng dẫn: Đánh dấu vào ô trống thích hợp theo các mức phân loại dưới đây.

Việc trả lời các câu hỏi này sẽ không giới hạn thời gian. Vui lòng trả lời trung thực, khách quan nhất bạn có thể.

4=Rất đồng ý 3=Đồng ý 2=Không đồng ý 1=Rất không đồng ý

Learning Style/รูปแบบการเรียนรู้/Phương pháp học	4	3	2	1
1. I am good at memorizing facts and data./ฉันจำข้อเท็จจริงและข้อมูลได้เป็นอย่างดี/Tôi có khả năng về việc ghi nhớ các dữ kiện và dữ liệu.				
2. I am very careful and patient with details, but may be slow./ฉันใส่ใจและอดทนกับรายละเอียด จึงทำให้บางครั้งใช้เวลานาน/Tôi rất cẩn thận và kiên nhẫn với các chi tiết, tuy nhiên có thể xử lý hơi chậm.				

Appendix B.

Example of Questionnaire on Teacher’s Practiced English Teaching Styles and Teaching Techniques

Direction: Place a check in the appropriate space after each statement according to the meaning of each scale below. This item survey is not timed.

Respond to each statement as honestly as you can.

4 = Very often 3= Often 2= Sometimes 1=Seldom

คำสั่ง: กรุณาทำเครื่องหมายถูกลงในช่องตามความหมายของแต่ละสเกลต่อไปนี้ สามารถตอบแบบสอบถามได้โดยไม่จำกัดเวลา กรุณาตอบตามความเป็นจริง

4= บ่อยมาก 3= บ่อย 2= บางครั้ง 1= แทบจะไม่

Hướng dẫn: Đánh dấu vào ô trống thích hợp theo các mức phân loại dưới đây.

Việc trả lời các câu hỏi này sẽ không giới hạn thời gian. Vui lòng trả lời trung thực, khách quan nhất bạn có thể.

4=Rất đồng ý 3=Đồng ý 2=Không đồng ý 1=Rất không đồng ý

Teaching Style/ รูปแบบการสอน/ Phương pháp giảng dạy	4	3	2	1
1. I like to have students memorize facts and data./ฉันชอบให้ผู้เรียนจดจำข้อเท็จจริงและข้อมูลต่าง ๆ/ Tôi thích truyền đạt cho học sinh cách ghi nhớ thông tin và dữ kiện				
2. I prefer to provide students with a lot of details and have them time to study very careful slowly./ฉันชอบให้รายละเอียดจำนวนมากและให้เวลาผู้เรียนในการศึกษารายละเอียดเหล่านั้นอย่างค่อยเป็นค่อยไป/Tôi thích cung cấp cho học sinh nhiều chi tiết và cho họ thời gian để tư duy kĩ càng, cẩn thận.				

Assessment preferences and learning styles in ESP

Ivana Simonova, University of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic
ivana.simonova@uhk.cz

Abstract

The article deals with the research on assessment preferences reflected in learning styles within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction on the higher education level. The sample group consisted of 287 respondents of the Faculty of Informatics and Management, University of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic. The main objective of the research was to discover expected correlations between respondents' learning styles and relating preferences in selected assessment formats. Two questionnaires were applied to reach the objective; however, the expectations did not prove. The discovered findings were discussed within the world context.

Key words: learning style, assessment format, assessment preference, ESP

Introduction

Either emphasized, or rejected by some scientists (e.g. Coffield, 2004; Mitchell, 2004), within last four decades various learning styles theories have been set (e.g. Kolb, Kolb, 2005; Felder, 2010; Honey, Mumford, 2002; Honey et al. 2000, Johnston, 1996 etc.) and applied in teaching various subjects, including foreign languages. Even in the current period of i-society and e-society, it is generally accepted the process of instruction includes (at least) four phases – motivation to learning, explanation the learning content, fixing new knowledge and assessing the increase with learners (Comenius, 1946). To make this process easier, students' learning preferences should be accommodated (Šimonová, Poulková, 2012). Therefore teachers take efforts to adjust the learning process to individual learner's needs and preferences, which mostly means various types study materials and sources of information are provided to the learners, various activities are conducted to help them fix the new knowledge and apply it successfully in practice (Šimonová, 2013; Šimonová, 2015). For these purposes various ICT-enhanced tools may be helpful (Honey, 2010). However, the phase of assessing learners' knowledge is rarely included in the process of accommodating their preferences. Quite the contrary, the process of assessment is identical for all learners to be 'fair', which in practice means it is very 'unfair', as it does not reflect

individual learners' preferences, as Leither states (Leither, 2011). She conducted research with students of Humanities, when giving them the choice to show what they know in two written formats – a multiple-choice test, or an open-answer essay. As expected, the experimental group where assessment preferences were reflected reached significantly higher test scores compared to the control group (Leither, 2011, p. 417).

Reflecting this finding, the research question was set whether there exists any correlation between individual learning styles and assessment preferences, particularly what the preferred ways (i.e. assessment formats) are through which learners of different learning styles can prove their knowledge to maximum extent.

Therefore, a research similar to Leither's one was conducted at the Faculty of Informatics and Management, University of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic, and to introduce and discuss its results is the main objective of this article.

State-of-art in ESP teaching at the institution

The Faculty of Informatics and Management (FIM), University of Hradec Kralove (UHK), Czech Republic, is an institution of a rather short history – it was established two decades ago. Currently, it has more than 2,500 students in bachelor, master and doctoral study programmes specialized in Applied Informatics, Information Management, Knowledge Management and System Engineering. Six semesters of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) were taught for more than 15 years. Then, the change was made from economic reasons and since 2013/14 academic year ESP has been taught for four semesters. The learning content has not been limited, which requires the process of instruction became more effective from both the teachers' and learners' side. As enhanced by ICT, particularly by the online courses in LMS Blackboard running both on immobile and mobile devices, individual learner's preferences were taken into account within selected approaches to acquiring the learning content and building new knowledge, mainly in the explanation and fixing phases. Additionally to traditionally applied motivation for foreign language (English) learning and to the fact the ESP focused on students of Information technologies (IT), the learners' motivation was supported by the use of latest technologies. The learning content covered IT topics, and reading, listening, speaking and writing skills were step-by-step developed within the four semesters. The increase in learners' knowledge was assessed by the written Czech-English translation (i.e. open-answer) test checking the grammar and professional vocabulary after each semester (ESP 1 – 4) and by oral exam in the form of dialogue with the teacher on two from approximately 150 pre-defined topics (ESP 2), or the presentation on any professionally focused topic related to the field of study or student' work. The topics reflect the latest developments in the IT field, as they are collected by the students as assignments in each semester from the professional sources available

to them at work; unknown items of professional vocabulary are translated and the recordings of the texts in the mp3 format are added. The e-English IT Reader is edited after each semester, and all materials are also available in the LMS. The assessment formats in each semester are binding for all students, which means that learners' assessment preferences are not reflected within this concept.

Research objective and hypotheses

To collect feedback and possibly propose changes in the above described state, the research was conducted having two main objectives: (1) to discover correlations between individual learning preferences and assessment preferences and (2) to identify the preferences/rejections of the exploited assessment formats by the students of different learning styles. So as to reach these objectives, the following main hypothesis was set to be verified/falsified:

H: There exist/s preference/s of certain assessment format/s with students of different learning style/s.

As three assessment formats were considered within this research, following partial hypotheses were set:

H1: There exists preference of written Czech-English translation with students of different learning style/s.

H2: There exists preference of oral dialogue with students of different learning style/s.

H3: There exists preference of oral/written presentation with students of different learning style/s.

Methods and tools

Reflecting the research objectives, two tools were applied: (1) Learning Combination Inventory (LCI) and Assessment Format Questionnaire (AFP). The former one (LCI) is a standardized tool designed by Johnston (1996) which determines students' learning preferences through 28 statements. Respondents express their agreement or disagreement to the statements on the five-point Likert scale (1 – never ever, 2 – almost never, 3 – sometimes, 4 – almost always, 5 – always). At the end, three open-answer questions are added, the second one dealing with the process of assessment: question 1 – What makes assignments frustrating for you?; question 2 – *If you could choose, what would you do to show your teacher what you have learned?*; question 3 – *If you were the teacher, how would you have students learn?* The final score determines the individual pattern of learning preferences of each student which consists of four approaches to information processing (Johnston, 1996: 51-54):

- sequential type, which applies the step-by-step approach;
- precise type, which focuses on information details;
- technical type, which prefers concrete numbers, figures and diagrams;
- confluent type, which does not follow any of common ways but these students are creative and ‘march to a different drummer’.

The latter tool (AFQ) was exploited to find out what assessment formats students prefer. The tool was designed in three phases. First, before this research started, a pilot group of 22 FIM students expressed their opinions in the open-answer format on question 2 of the LCI, i.e. If you could choose, what would you do to show your teacher what you have learned? Second, their answers were analyzed and a list of 18 assessment formats was set. Third, the list was piloted by another group of 48 FIM students; several unclear expressions were corrected and the AFQ was finalized. It included a rather wide scale of assessment choices – oral and written, individual, pair and team, pre-defined and unknown and their combinations. Each of these 18 items was evaluated on the ten-point Likert scale from 1 – I strongly prefer to 10 – I strongly reject. At the end of AFQ item 19 was added so as respondents could express any other comments relating to the process of assessment. Not a single student piloting the AFQ was included in the sample group described below.

Research sample

At the beginning, more than 300 FIM students enrolled in one of the above listed IT study programmes participated in the research. However, finally, only 287 of them completed the whole process of research from various (private) reasons. The research sample consisted of 58 % of male and 42 % of female respondents structured into five age groups (<20 years: 2 %; 20-24 years old: 64 %; 25-29 years old: 17 %; 30-39 years old: 14 %; 40+: 3 %), studying in the part-time (78 %) or full-time form (22 %). Both questionnaires were available to the sample group in the LMS.

Results

Data collected by LCI and AFQ were processed by the NCSS2007 statistic software by the method of frequency analysis. Findings are presented in three steps:

- LCI results,
- AFQ results,
- LCI – AFQ correlations.

LCI results

Been alert of the fact that individual learning style is the combination of various types, in this starting point of the research only the leading learning style of each respondent was considered. Those having equal values in two or more styles were comprised in the indifferent group. The LCI results are presented in table 1.

Table 1: LCI results

	Sequential	Precise	Technical	Confluent	Indifferent
Total (n)	141	38	71	29	8
Total (%)	49	13	25	10	3

The data show that nearly half of the respondents (49 %) have the sequential processing as the leading style, followed by technical processors (25 %); precise (13 %) and confluent ones (10 %). Eight respondents (3 %) were detected as indifferent types.

AFQ results

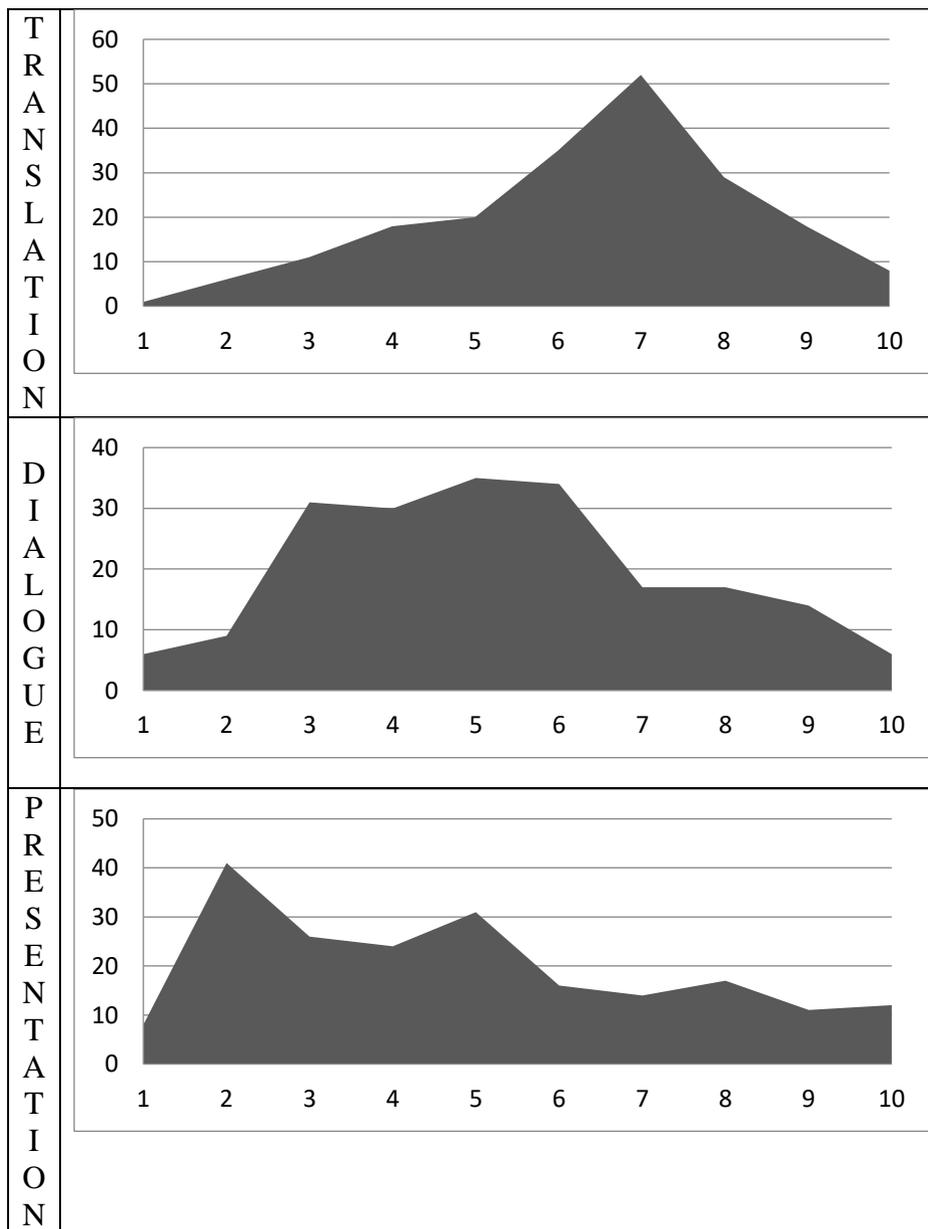
As mentioned above, 19 assessment formats were included into AFQ and considered by the sample group regardless the learning style preference. For the view of subjects of ESP 1 – 4, following formats were under our focus:

- *written Czech-English translation,*
- *oral student-teacher dialogue* on selected topics,
- *presentation* on any professional IT topic, preferably dealing with student’s work and/or the field of study, i.e. this format is the combination of written design of presentation following pre-defined conditions (professional vocabulary, style, grammar, layout, colours, font etc.), and oral performance in the monologue form, followed by replies to listeners’ questions in the dialogue form; this assessment format was proposed by AFQ respondents as item 19.

Respondents’ preferences and rejections are displayed in figure 1 (1 – I strongly prefer to 10 – I strongly reject).

The collected data show the most preferred assessment format was the oral/written presentation. Reflecting students’ comments under item 19, the reason was they felt free in creating the content of the presentation and the required layout and structure even helped them express their ideas. This result was rather surprising for the researcher because when the topic of presentation was taught to the students, long discussions were conducted on these ‘restrictions’.

Figure 1: Respondents' preferences and rejections to selected assessment formats



This opinion was presented by those students who had had some previous experience in designing commercial presentations. However, the main objective of such presentations is to be more eye-catching than to seriously introduce a certain content. On the other hand, this does not mean the students' school presentations should be boring and black-and-white only, however, the clear and unambiguous presentation of the content have strong preference to empty effects. Moreover, the presentation should work under various technical conditions, i.e. not only on the professional devices equipped with special (often paid) software which highly professional companies are equipped with but also on those available at the faculty which naturally cannot cover the whole field of IT profession. Students who had no or little experience in designing presentations appreciated the pre-defined rules. And, all students (with the exception of several ones having the proficiency knowledge) appreciated the vocabulary which they acknowledged during the semester and which helped them structure the presented content and join single parts meaningfully. Lack of, or no experience, was the reason why some students were very nervous before performing the presentation. Each of approximately 15 years, when the presentations have been conducted, about 5 % of students did not finish their performances – either from the stress, or because they were not well prepared and felt ashamed of that.

The student-teacher dialogue over the professional texts also belongs to the preferred formats. There are several reasons. First, the texts are collected by students during the semester and unknown vocabulary is translated using the Insert comments tool. Then the source of text and students' name are provided and the texts are displayed in the LMS. It means the text are not anonymous works, but students make efforts to create their professional image of high quality. Second, students can read the texts individually and to such an extent which is appropriate to their level of English, so as they can be well prepared for the exam. Third, students know before the exam they will receive two texts selected by the teacher, read them and provide information on the topic which is contained in the text (not all information they know from other sources). After a short introduction of the content the dialogue starts, when teacher asks questions or requires explanations of selected professional expressions or grammar items. For some students this assessment format is difficult mainly because of the necessity to speak actively – IT students (and experts as well) sometimes have problems to express their ideas in the form which is appropriate to the listener, regardless they speak Czech or English. This assessment format can help them eliminate this weakness.

Despite been traditionally and widely exploited in foreign language instruction, the Czech-English translation format was the least preferable one by students, as it does not give them much space to avoid using the required vocabulary or

grammar item and thus show what they really learned. Numerous students in the research sample had the B2 knowledge before the semester started. They may feel they do not need to learn more as they are able to express themselves rather well. Then, they do not make much effort and consequently their knowledge does not increase much; in many cases students with lower starting level perform large efforts during the semester and reach better results at the end.

LCI – AFQ correlations

Within this step, the complete patterns (not single types of processors, as in table 1) of individual learning styles were considered. The data were processed by the SPSS statistic software by the method of multiple regression.

First, the coefficient of multiple regression (R) of the three assessment formats was calculated. The coefficient expresses how tight the correlation between the variables is, i.e. what the preference to an assessment format is with learners of different learning style patterns. Results are displayed in table 2.

Table 2: Multiple regression coefficient for written translation, oral dialogue and oral/written presentation

Assessment format	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Written translation	.177	.031	.011	2.210
Oral dialogue	.212	.045	.025	1.892
Oral/written presentation	.227	.052	.032	2.712

Coefficient of multiple regression (R) can reach values from -1 to +1. If the value is low, as in our cases, the statistical significance cannot be precisely proved. Therefore, the ANOVA test (analysis of variance) was applied to discover whether the learning style – assessment preference correlation is significant, or not. The results are displayed in table 3.

Table 3: ANOVA results for written translation, oral dialogue and oral/written presentation

Assessment format	Significance value	Significant
Written translation	.184	No
Oral dialogue	.062	No
Oral/written presentation	.034	Yes

The result is statistically significant, if the significance value < .05, i.e. the statistically significant correlation was discovered between the learning style

pattern and the assessment format of oral/written presentation. To get a more detailed information, significance of single types of processors were calculated. The only significant correlations were discovered between oral/written presentation format with sequential processors and written translation format with technical processors. The results are displayed in table 4.

Table 4 Significance values in LS/AF

LS/AF	Written translation	Oral dialogue	Oral/written presentation
Sequential	.964	.256	.011
Precise	.145	.122	.313
Technical	.038	.268	.465
Confluent	.817	.209	.435

LS: learning style; AF: assessment format

Significance value < .05

Reflecting the statistic results displayed in tables 2 - 4, we can conclude that the hypothesis

H1: There exists preference of written Czech-English translation with students of different learning style/s was falsified;

H2: There exists preference of oral dialogue with students of different learning style/s was falsified;

H3: There exists preference of oral/written presentation with students of different learning style/s was verified.

Discussions and Conclusions

To sum up, the assessment formats applied in subjects of ESP 1 - 4 are considered appropriate for more than half of the respondents (see figure 1). Of course, we agree with objections of the other students saying their preferences are not accommodated and they thus cannot completely show what they learned. Therefore, for the next academic year, we plan to conduct another research correlating learning and assessment preferences. As we are not sure and it has not been proved that students are *able to set by themselves the appropriate assessment format reflecting their preferences and perform their knowledge within it*, the main objective of the research will be to discover answer to this question. We expect it will be rather difficult for the students to define assessment formats and direct the process of assessment by themselves; therefore, the current assessment formats will be applied simultaneously in the 'pilot' year.

To discuss the discovered findings within the world context is rather difficult – not numerous researches have been conducted within EFL or ESL, they are even

fewer in ESP. However, the work by Chew and Ng (2016) should be mentioned. Authors compare the style of participation of foreign language learners in different discussion settings, either online, or face-to-face,; they consider learners' level of language knowledge and personality type (extrovert, introvert) within observations, survey and online feedback. As expected, the results showed that synchronous online setting helped balance the participation of ESL learners, particularly in the group of introverts and those with lower level of knowledge. Contrary to this, Soto and Ambrose (2016), who did not assess the field of foreign language but mathematics, discovered that more authentic assessment formats were required, particularly those which enabled teachers to involve learners in the process. Therefore, screencast applications for mobile devices were used which record and save learners' answers (both oral and written) and thus enable teachers to re-call and analyze them later on.

Learning results in online courses in LMS, which also exploited in ESP 1 – 4, can be also assessed by the Knowledge Assembly (Knowla) tool which measures students' knowledge in any subject (including ESP) by collecting the set of arbitrarily sized scrambled fragments into a logical order using a web-based interface (Thompson, Braude, 2016). The testing of this tool is still in the initial phase; however, students mostly appreciated that the tool also considered their critical thinking applied within the process of assessment.

Generally, mobile devices have been widely exploited to enhance open and distributed learning of various subjects, and customization and personalization can be applied in this process to accommodate students' learning preferences. For this purpose, a customized digital learning system (CDLS) and personalized digital learning system (PDLS) were uploaded into students' mobile devices. They tailored the environment to learners' preferences. Hsieh and Chen (2016) discovered that students exploiting either CDLS, or PDLS had a similar level of pre-test knowledge, as well as post-test scores; however, the CDLS users spent significantly more time on completing the tasks. Reflecting these findings authors suggested that the PDLS was useful for learners mainly to complete their tasks efficiently.

In the research of Iranian EFL students, Soltani and Rajabioon (2016) appreciate teachers' awareness of students VARK (Visual, Auditory, Read/write, Kinaesthetic) learning preferences, however, no assessment-relating results were not mentioned by the authors, as probably not discovered.

Last but not least, to support the complex approach to assessment, the written, reflective and dialogic feedback (WRDF) strategy was applied by Crimmins et al. (2016). The strategy included three formats – students' pre- and post WRDF surveys, students' post-WRDF focus group and teachers' post-WRDF survey. The results discovered preference to processes combining all elements of the strategy and indicated its integral role from both the students' and teachers' view.

Despite all the above mentioned, we are aware the results of our research cannot be generalized, particularly because of the limitations in the amount of respondents and the specialization of the sample group focusing on IT students in one subject (ESP) only. All the limitations should be challenging for further research activities in this field, particularly of those exploiting the latest, learners' motivation-supporting mobile technologies, to verify, or falsify the finding of the study by Coffield et al. (2004) who detected 50 % of supporters and 50 % of rejectors of learning style theories more than a decade later.

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Contact

Assoc. Prof. PhDr. Ivana Simonova, PhD.
University of Hradec Kralove
Rokitanskeho 62
50003 Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic
ivana.simonova@uhk.cz

A corpus-based analysis of textbooks used in the orientation course for immigrants in Germany: Ideological and pedagogic implications

Ray C. H. Leung, University of Potsdam, Germany
chungleungde@gmail.com

Abstract

Contextualized within immigrants' acquisition of specialized knowledge about the host country at the institutional level, this article examines a 64295-word corpus of textbooks written for participants of the orientation course in German politics, history and culture. Corpus-based techniques ("keyness," collocation and qualitative examination of concordance lines) are deployed to explore the corpus. The findings reveal that the collocational patterns of the identified keywords construct particular world views vis-à-vis Germany. For instance, the keyword *DDR* [German Democratic Republic (GDR), aka East Germany] frequently co-occurs with negatively connoted lexis while collocates of the keywords denoting present-day Germany (e.g., *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [Federal Republic of Germany] and *Staat* [nation, country, state]) facilitate the portrayal of Germany as a nurturing welfare state that is popular among foreigners. It is argued that such discursively-construed opposition between the "bad" GDR and the "good" Federal Republic of Germany helps to legitimize the German reunification. Furthermore, it is found that certain keywords (e.g., *Sie* [you], *Kurs* [course, class] and *z.B.* [e.g.]) are "metadiscourse resources" (Hyland, 2005). Their pedagogic effects are discussed in relation to the ideological implications of the research findings.

Key words: orientation course; immigrants; Germany; corpus linguistics; textbooks; ideologies

Introduction

In 2015 Germany and its chancellor Angela Merkel received global attention due to her compassionate stance on the issue of immigration which led to the substantial surge in asylum seekers from Syria (Hutton, 2015). Apart from asylum seekers, many foreigners have moved to Germany in recent years for a variety of purposes such as work and family reunification. According to the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (2016), the foreign population in Germany reached 9 million at the end of 2015. Immigration is actually not a new topic in Germany. As Wegmann (2014, p. 132) pointed out, Germany was an important host country of

foreign guest workers (e.g., Italians, Turkish, Greeks, etc.) after the Second World War, resulting in many immigrant families. This marked the commencement of immigration in contemporary German history. Starting from 2004, the German government began to set integration of immigrants as its priority and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees was established to manage issues related to immigration. One measure taken by the office to enhance integration of immigrants is the implementation of the compulsory integration course (p. 134). The integration course consists of two main components—a 600-hour German language course² (*Sprachkurs*) and a 60-hour orientation course (*Orientierungskurs*). The orientation course, which takes place after the completion of the German language course, is about the German political system, history and culture. At the end of the orientation course, participants will sit the “Living in Germany” (*Leben in Deutschland*) examination. Passing the examination is a prerequisite for naturalization (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2016b).

The present research will capitalize on analytic tools (“keyness,” collocation and qualitative examination of concordance lines) from corpus linguistics to examine three selected textbooks (totaling 64295 running words) designed for the orientation course. More information about the corpus and the methods used for data analysis will be given in Data and Methodology. To the best of my knowledge, no prior researchers have specifically conducted a corpus-based analysis of educational materials for immigrants in Germany. Most of the relevant research performed so far is related to textbooks used by overseas learners of German as a foreign language (e.g., Byram, 1993; Lipinski, 2010; Snider, 2005) or students in German local schools (e.g., Bottici & Challand, 2013; Moser & Hannover, 2014). The shortage of comparable previous research provides a strong justification for carrying out the current study. There are two further reasons which make the present research worthwhile. First, textbooks, as van Dijk (2008, p. 62) remarked, are “powerful” discourse because students are obliged to read them and the contents of such materials embed a “dominant consensus” or are geared towards the interests of the most powerful social groups. Attending the orientation course (which entails the use of textbooks) is a form of knowledge acquisition for the immigrants. While such knowledge may be “general” or “commonsensical” for most German citizens, it can be new and unfamiliar (“specialized knowledge”) for the immigrants. Acquisition of the specific knowledge about Germany not only marks the immigrants’ membership in the German community, but it also enables them to comprehend public discourse (e.g., news reports) in Germany (van Dijk,

² Participants of the German language course are expected to graduate with B1 German language proficiency under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2016c).

2014, p. 136). It is hoped that the present research will shed light on the ideological implications associated with the use of the textbooks. Secondly, the orientation course is basically offered to learners of German as a foreign language. As earlier corpus-based research on textbooks (e.g., Lam, 2009; Neary-Sundquist, 2015; Wood & Appel, 2014) has shown, they tend to contain specific lexical or phrasal patterns of language use which have pedagogic implications. This is what I would like to explore in the current study as well.

Literature review

Depending on its focus, previous corpus-based research on textbooks can generally be classified into two types (or a combination of both): (i) one that reveals the ideological implications of the textbooks (e.g., the representation of particular events or social/cultural groups); (ii) one that contributes to language education (viz., patterns regarding the use of certain linguistic features). It is not possible to review all the relevant studies here. I will provide an overview of some of them, especially those relevant to the German context.

Byram's (1993) work is made up of content analysis on five series of textbooks for learners of German as a foreign language outside Germany. Byram (1993, pp. 34–35) focused on evaluating the textbooks' potential to aid the development of intercultural awareness. The textbooks were assessed in accordance with eight criteria, one of which is "national history." Noticeable differences were identified across the textbook series. For instance, cultural contents are better integrated into the learning of vocabulary and grammar in certain textbooks than the others. Byram (1993, p. 196) concluded that more uniformity across the textbook series is necessary. Despite its comprehensiveness, techniques from corpus linguistics were not applied in the work of Byram (1993) so it lacks the support of empirical linguistic evidence. Similar to Byram (1993), Lipinski (2010) analyzed three textbooks for beginners of German as a foreign language. The objective of the research, which was oriented towards pedagogy, was to cast light on the use of vocabulary in the textbooks. By using an established frequency list of German for data analysis, Lipinski (2010) found a noticeable amount of low-frequency words used in the textbooks. She argued that these words, which tend to be rarely used in daily life, should be avoided in order to minimize an "overload of students' capacities" (p. 173). Interested in the formation of present-day European identity, Bottici and Challand (2013, pp. 57–61) compared history textbooks used in three founding members of the European Union—Germany, Italy and France. The findings show that Italian textbooks are very unwilling to favor the interpretation of Europe as "born out of the Second World War" whereas German textbooks are more inclined to do so, as evidenced by the use of lexical items such as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (acceptance of the past) and *Erinnerungsarbeit*

(memory work) to attribute the European integration process to the experience of the war.

Research which explicitly employed corpus-based techniques to examine textbooks can be identified as well. Two examples from the Asian contexts are the research of Fraysse-Kim (2010) and that of Hong and He (2015). Fraysse-Kim (2010) compared Korean language textbooks adopted in elementary schools across four geographical regions. Keywords which signal national consciousness of Koreans were identified in order to study their collocational patterns.³ Fraysse-Kim (2010, p. 225) found that a common pattern among all the textbooks is the strong collocation of the words *wuli* (we, our) and *mal* (language). Also, the word *ilbon* (Japan) tends to contain negative connotation. It was suggested that these findings show how the Korean collective identity is forged and reproduced in textbooks. Hong and He (2015) studied how cultural and ethnic diversity is represented in Chinese language textbooks endorsed by the Confucius Institute (the Chinese equivalent of organizations like the British Council and the Goethe-Institut which promote the learning of the target language worldwide). Frequency counts regarding the linguistic expressions which trigger ethnic and cultural themes were conducted. It was discovered that the Han ethnic group is over-represented while the minority groups are subject to marginalization (pp. 97–99). Hong and He (2015) believed that the textbooks fail to offer a representation of multiculturalism in contemporary Chinese culture.

The review of the relevant empirical studies has demonstrated that textbooks constitute a well-researched area in academia. However, none of the studies mentioned in this section has directly addressed the issue vis-à-vis the institutional socialization of immigrants through textbooks or discourse of similar nature. It is hoped that the current research will be able to fill this gap in the literature.

Data and methodology

The corpus of this study was compiled from three textbooks written specifically for the orientation course in Germany. They were published by different publishers, which also produced a wide array of course materials for learners of German. Details of these three textbooks can be found in Table 1.

In order to analyze the keywords of the corpus, AntConc 3.5.0 (Anthony, 2015) was used to generate the keyword list. In corpus linguistics, keywords are words of a corpus (viz., the study corpus) which appear significantly more often in comparison with a reference corpus. The term “keyness” is a statistical measure of how salient a word is in a given corpus. Thus, it is suggested that the keyword list

³ More information about the notions of “keywords” and collocation, which form part of the analytic framework of the present research, will be given in the following section.

of a corpus can provide researchers with ideas of the “aboutness” of the corpus (Cheng, 2012, p. 70).

Table 1: Corpus of textbooks for the present research

	Title	Abbe- viation	Year of Publication	Publi- sher	Number of pages	Number of words
1	<i>60 Stunden Deutschland</i>	<i>60SD</i>	2013	Klett	96	22157 (34.46%)
2	<i>Orientierungskurs</i>	<i>OK</i>	2014	Cornelsen	91	21042 (32.73%)
3	<i>Zur Orientierung: Basiswissen Deutschland</i>	<i>ZO</i>	2014	Hueber	86	21096 (32.81%)
Total						64295 (100%)

As noted by Culpeper and Demmen (2015, p. 97), the reference corpus is normally as large as or even very much larger than the study corpus. A typical example is the British National Corpus (BNC) which consists of 100 million words. Finding a reference corpus for the present research posed a real challenge. The reason is that users of AntConc 3.5.0 must upload either the entire reference corpus or a tailor-made word frequency list of that corpus to the software program before the keyword list can be obtained. Existing corpora of German language such as the German Reference Corpus (*Deutsches Referenzkorpus*) housed by the Institute of German Language allow researchers to perform user-specific searches only and are not available for download. I had to resort to looking for the word frequency list of a reference corpus instead. However, this word frequency list must be in a particular format in order for it to be read by AntConc 3.5.0. Unlike their English counterparts, such lists for German are not widely accessible. In the end, the one made by Krummes (2013) from the corpus “internet-de” was found and chosen. This corpus, which is made up of more than 100 million words, was compiled by researchers from the University of Leeds. Although the corpus is a collection of texts on the Internet, a specific procedure was followed during text selection so as to make the corpus “balanced” (Sharoff, 2006).

As said by Culpeper and Demmen (2015, p. 99), “keyness” is only the initial statistical step to analyze texts in corpus linguistics. Once the keyword list of the present corpus was generated, the keywords were grouped on the basis of semantic domains. This would pave the way for a systematic analysis. The “collocational profiles” (Jaworska & Krishnamurthy, 2012) of the keywords were then analyzed. Collocation may broadly refer to the recurrent co-occurrence of words. Two types of collocates (i.e., “wider collocates” and “immediate collocates”) are distinguished (Wolf & Juffermans, 2008). In general, “wider collocates” are

words which appear within a span of five words on either side of a specified word while “immediate collocates” denote adjacent words (p. 136). Like “keyness,” there are statistical tests which measure the degree of collocation between words. The common ones are the mutual information (MI) and the t-score tests. Although these two tests are both available in AntConc 3.5.0, I selected the t-score test for this study. In fact, cross-checks were performed with the MI test but many of the top MI-identified collocates are low-frequency words which occur only one time throughout the corpus, hence insufficient for insightful analysis.

Qualitative examination of the relevant concordance lines was later carried out. Manual checks on the concordance lines were needed in order to unfold the ideological or pedagogic implications associated with the use of certain lexical items. During this process, attention was paid to the “semantic prosody”—the attitudinal meanings arising from the neighborhood of specific words in discourse (Sinclair, 2003, p. 178).

Findings and discussion

As pointed out by Culpeper and Demmen (2015, p. 97), the two statistical tests for “keyness” (viz., Chi-Square and Log-Likelihood) produce highly similar results with merely unimportant differences in the ranking of the identified keywords and such differences do not affect the general picture derived from the keyword list. In light of this, the default option offered by AntConc 3.5.0 (i.e., Log-Likelihood) was chosen. Table 2 displays the first 23 keywords⁴ obtained.

Before going into detail, I have to first clarify that the keyword search was performed in a case-sensitive manner. The use of initial capital letters in German is different from that in English. As remarked by Durrell (2011, pp. 506–507), initial capital letters apply to four types of words: (i) those which start a sentence; (ii) all nouns; (iii) the formal second person pronoun *Sie* [you] and all its grammatical variants (e.g., *Ihnen* [dative form of *Sie*], *Ihr* [possessive determiner of *Sie*], etc.); (iv) proper names. The third type poses a challenge to concordancing and keyword generation, given the fact that the third person feminine pronoun and the third person plural pronoun carry the orthographic form *sie* without initial capitalization. If case-sensitivity had been disregarded during the keyword search, the difference in meanings between *Sie* [you] and *sie* [she or they] would have been completely overlooked. In other words, the results would have been distorted.

⁴ In order to have a focused analysis, I intended to single out the first 20 lemmas of the keyword list for discussion. However, the list given by AntConc 3.5.0 is not “lemmatized” and some of the keywords are simply grammatical variants of the others (i.e., *Bundeskanzlerin* and *Bundeskanzler*; *Bundesland* and *Bundesländer*; *Grundgesetz* and *Grundgesetzes*). After manual checking, it has been found that the first 23 keywords of the list constitute 20 different lemmas.

Although the case-sensitive search did not exclude situations where *sie* [she or they] is the first word of a sentence, it could at least mitigate the potential distortion of the results, making subsequent manual checks on the relevant concordance lines more manageable. In fact, manual checks have revealed that instances of *sie* [she or they] being the first word of a sentence are relatively infrequent. More information about this will be provided later

Table 2: First 23 keywords in the corpus of textbooks

Rank	Keywords		*Freq.	Keyness
	German original	English translation		
1	<i>Sie</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you (formal) • she (at the start of a sentence) • they (at the start of a sentence) 	1419	3193.412
2	<i>Deutschland</i>	Germany	641	2390.399
3	<i>z.B.</i>	e.g.	144	1307.930
4	<i>Welche</i>	which (question word)	185	973.837
5	<i>Ordnen</i>	to order (imperative polite form)	59	830.345
6	<i>Kreuzen</i>	to cross (imperative polite form)	56	788.124
7	<i>Lesen</i>	to read (imperative polite form)	132	727.771
8	<i>DDR</i>	German Democratic Republic	143	708.679
9	<i>Bundesrepublik</i>	Federal Republic	142	691.164
10	<i>Bundeskanzlerin</i>	Federal Chancellor (feminine)	47	661.462
11	<i>Was</i>	what (question word)	265	567.936
12	<i>Bundestag</i>	Federal Parliament	107	565.314
13	<i>Staat</i>	nation, country	166	552.459
14	<i>Kurs</i>	course, class	108	551.389
15	<i>Grundgesetz</i>	German constitution	71	438.526
16	<i>Gesetze</i>	laws, legislation (plural)	96	427.004
17	<i>Bundesland</i>	federal state	52	365.963
18	<i>Ergänzen</i>	to complete (imperative polite form)	26	365.915
19	<i>Bundesländer</i>	federal states (plural)	58	361.032
20	<i>Bundeskanzler</i>	Federal Chancellor (masculine)	71	351.176
21	<i>Grundgesetzes</i>	German constitution (dative form)	49	330.225
22	<i>Menschen</i>	people (plural)	266	329.030
23	<i>Kinder</i>	children (plural)	174	316.045

*Frequency: Number of occurrences identified within the entire corpus

By following the way Gerbig (2010, p. 152) systematized keyword analysis in her study, the keywords identified and illustrated in Table 2 are grouped manually into 9 sets of “semantically related words.” The groupings are exhibited via Table 3.

Table 3: The 9 dimensions along which the first 23 keywords are grouped

Number	Dimension	Keywords	Number of keywords
1	Government	<i>Bundeskanzlerin, Bundestag, Staat, Bundesland, Bundesländer, Bundeskanzler</i>	6
2	Processes	<i>Ordnen, Kreuzen, Lesen, Ergänzen</i>	4
3	Germany	<i>Deutschland, Bundesrepublik, DDR</i>	3
4	Law	<i>Grundgesetz, Gesetze, Grundgesetzes</i>	3
5	Question word	<i>Welche, Was</i>	2
6	General public	<i>Menschen, Kinder</i>	2
7	Pronoun	<i>Sie</i>	1
8	Abbreviated adverbial	<i>z.B.</i>	1
9	Learning	<i>Kurs</i>	1

Given the syllabus of the *Orientierungskurs*, the prominence of Dimension 1 (Government), Dimension 3 (Germany) and Dimension 4 (Law) is not surprising because they are all related to the German political and social contexts. Among these three dimensions, the one with the keywords referring to Germany (i.e., *Deutschland* [Germany], *Bundesrepublik* [Federal Republic], *DDR* [German Democratic Republic]) is worth special attention because the collocational environment of these words, due to their direct reference to Germany, is highly relevant to the study of how Germany is represented in the textbooks.

Since the full name of present-day Germany is the Federal Republic of Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*), it is expected that the keyword *Deutschland* is a strong collocate of *Bundesrepublik* at N+1. The collocation analysis (see Table 4) confirms this and it also demonstrates that within the corpus, *DDR* is a “wider collocate” (viz., within the span of N-5 and N+5) of *Deutschland* and *Bundesrepublik*, and vice versa.

Table 4: Statistical significance vis-à-vis the co-occurrence of *Deutschland*, *Bundesrepublik* and *DDR* within the span of N-5 and N+5

Node	Collocate	T-score ⁵
<i>Deutschland</i>	<i>Bundesrepublik</i>	11.88
	<i>DDR</i>	5.76
<i>Bundesrepublik</i>	<i>Deutschland</i>	11.84
	<i>DDR</i>	5.78
<i>DDR</i>	<i>Bundesrepublik</i>	5.78
	<i>Deutschland</i>	5.67

DDR is the acronym of *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*. In English, it stands for the German Democratic Republic (GDR)—the Soviet-oriented administration which existed between 1949 and 1990 in the eastern part of Germany (commonly referred to as East Germany). Examination of the concordance lines shows that the co-occurrence of *DDR* and *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* tends to concern the German reunification. Some examples are:

- (1) Am 3.10.1990 **tritt** die DDR der Bundesrepublik Deutschland **bei**. Dieser Tag ist heute Nationalfeiertag. (ZO, p. 75)
 On 3 October 1990 the GDR **joins**⁶ the Federal Republic of Germany. This day is the national holiday today.
- (2) Einheit: Zusammenschluss der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der DDR am 3. Oktober 1990. (OK, p.84)
 Unification: The merge of the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR on 3 October 1990.
- (3) Am Anfang der achtziger Jahre gibt es sowohl in der DDR als auch der Bundesrepublik Deutschland eine große Friedensbewegung. (OK, p. 41)
 At the beginning of the 80s there is a huge peace movement in both the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany.
- (4) Am 3. Oktober 1990 kommt es zur Vereinigung der DDR und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (ZO, p. 64)
 On 3 October 1990 it comes to the unification of the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The GDR is portrayed as the party which was dissolved and became part of the Federal Republic of Germany after the reunification. This is evidenced by Example 5 below.

⁵ A t-score of at least 2 is considered significant (Cheng, 2012, p. 94).

⁶ It is not uncommon to apply the present tense to talk about historical events in German.

- (5) Am 3. Oktober gibt es die DDR nicht mehr. Sie wird Teil der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (60SD, p. 56)
 On 3 October there is no more GDR. It becomes part of the Federal Republic of Germany.

This example conveys the covert power difference between East Germany and West Germany. Such power difference concerning these two German states in the course of the reunification can be illustrated by analogy with business amalgamation. During a takeover or an acquisition, the company with less power (usually more financial problems) is absorbed by the one with more power. It has been found that numerous concordance lines for *DDR* (47 out of 143) carry negatively connoted words (e.g., *Protesten und Streiks* [protests and strikes], *schrecklich* [awful], *Diktatur* [dictatorship], *Flüchtlinge* [refugees] and *Einparteienstaat* [one-party state]), resulting in a generally negative “semantic prosody” (Sinclair, 2003, p. 178) of the word *DDR*. Some examples extracted from the corpus are:

- (6) Am 17. Juni 1953 kommt es in der DDR zu **Protesten und Streiks**. (60SD, p. 54)
 On 17 June 1953 **protests and strikes** happen in the GDR.
- (7) Die Bilder vom Volksaufstand in der DDR waren ja **schrecklich**. (60SD, p. 54)
 The pictures of the popular uprising in the GDR were **awful**.
- (8) Die DDR verändert sich politisch **von einer Diktatur zu** einer Demokratie. (60SD, p. 56)
 The GDR changes politically **from a dictatorship to** a democracy.
- (9) Wie sind die DDR-Flüchtlinge im Sommer 1989 in die Bundesrepublik Deutschland gekommen? (OK, p. 43)
 How have the GDR-refugees come to the Federal Republic of Germany in the summer of 1989?
- (10) Ein **Einparteienstaat** ist ein Staat, in dessen Parlament nur eine Partei vertreten ist. Beispiele in Deutschland waren der nationalsozialistische **Einparteienstaat** (1933 bis 1945) **und** die DDR. (ZO, p. 81)
 A **one-party state** is a state in which only one party is represented in its Parliament. Examples in Germany were the national socialist **one-party state** (1933 through 1945) **and** the GDR.

By using the terminology of critical stylistics regarding equivalence and opposition (Jeffries, 2010, pp. 51–55), it can be said that Example 8 makes use of “transitional opposition” (as linguistically manifested by the expression “**von X zu Y**” [“**from X to Y**”]). This strategy explicitly constructs the difference which the reunification brought about to the GDR. By contrast, in Example 10 the GDR is “equated” to the *Nationalsozialismus* [Nazi] regime on the basis of their being a

one-party state (such equivalence being triggered by the conjunction *und* [and]). As suggested by Fairclough (2003, p. 88), setting up equivalence and/or differences between groups of people and entities in discourse is a feature of the “continuous social process of classification,” which effectively “operationalizes” political hegemony. Here, “value assumptions” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 55) come into play as well. Something undesirable (i.e., the GDR and dictatorship) has to be removed and replaced by its desirable counterpart (i.e., the Federal Republic of Germany and democracy).

Within the corpus, a contrast is often drawn between the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany in the pre-reunification era. One example is:

- (11) Im Gegensatz zu den Westzonen** erhält die Sowjetische Besatzungszone in der Nachkriegszeit keine Wirtschaftshilfe. Die Siegermacht Sowjetunion lässt Fabriken und Eisenbahnschienen abbauen und in die Sowjetunion schicken. Deshalb ist der wirtschaftliche Wiederaufbau **schwieriger und langsamer als in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland**. (60SD, p. 54)
In contrast to the Western zones, the Soviet Occupation Zone receives no economic assistance in the post-war period. The victorious power Soviet Union dismantles factories and railway tracks and sends them to the Soviet Union. Therefore the economic recovery is **more difficult and slower than in the Federal Republic of Germany**.

In this example, “explicit opposition” (*im Gegensatz zu* [in contrast to]) and “comparative opposition” (*schwieriger und langsamer als* [more difficult and slower than]) can be identified. These linguistic triggers help to underline the difference between the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany.

One may argue that negative associations of the GDR are quite self-evident. Surprisingly, the predominantly negative portrayal of the GDR in the textbooks of the present study deviates from the findings of Vanstone and Mennecke (1993, p. 85). The two researchers found that in *Deutsch konkret* (a textbook for learners of German as a foreign language on the international market), a more comprehensive or neutral representation of the GDR is given. What is more, as Kupferberg (2002, p. 176) discovered, public sentiment on the GDR is a complex topic which goes far beyond the simplistic evaluation “Everything was bad in the GDR.” At this point, I want to emphasize that my purpose is not to question the validity of historical facts or to deny the presence of social problems in the GDR. Instead, examination of the concordance lines for the keyword *DDR* has shown that a one-sided perspective concerning the GDR is presented via the use of negatively connoted lexis and syntactic triggers of equivalence and opposition. As van Leeuwen (2008, p. 112) argued, evaluation-laden lexis and comparisons in discourse frequently perform a legitimating function. In this case, they are used to legitimize the German

reunification or, more specifically, the removal of the GDR and its subsequent integration into the Federal Republic of Germany.

Compared to *DDR*, the keyword *Deutschland* [Germany] tends to conjure up a different image of contemporary Germany. Table 5 captures the “immediate collocates” (at N-1 and N+1) of *Deutschland*.

Table 5: “Immediate collocates” of *Deutschland*

N-1			N+1		
Collocate	Joint frequency ⁷	T-score	Collocate	Joint frequency	T-score
<i>in</i> [in]	319	17.05	<i>ist</i> [is]	42	5.43
<i>Bundesrepublik</i> [Federal Republic]	126	11.09	<i>gekommen</i> [come (past participle)]	10	3.11
<i>ganz</i> [all, whole]	26	5.01	<i>gibt</i> [give, there is/are] ⁸	14	3.07
<i>nach</i> [after, to] ⁹	27	4.81	<i>und</i> [and]	40	3.01
			<i>was</i> [what]	13	2.69

At N-1, *in* [in] and *Bundesrepublik* [Federal Republic] are not surprising collocates of *Deutschland*. It is common that the preposition of location “in” is used for names of countries and the strong association between *Bundesrepublik* and *Deutschland* has been mentioned above. Thus, I will not discuss these two collocates in detail. The other two collocates *ganz* [all, whole] and *nach* [after, to] present some noteworthy patterns. Inspection of the concordance lines reveals that the two-word cluster *ganz Deutschland* [all/whole Germany] is often used in contexts where the German political system and social policies are described. Some examples are:

⁷ The threshold for the minimum joint frequency is at 10.

⁸ The verb *geben* (the infinitive form of *gibt* [give]) is commonly used to denote existence. This is signaled by the impersonal construction *es gibt* [there is/are] (Durrell, 2011, p. 360).

⁹ The German preposition *nach* has two meanings. In the sentence *Nach der Hochzeit fliege ich nach Hongkong* [After the wedding I fly to Hong Kong], the first occurrence of *nach* is a preposition of time whereas the second instance is a preposition of movement.

- (12) Ziele der Gewerkschaften sind Tarifverträge, die in ganz Deutschland gelten und höhere Löhne. (60SD, p.39)
 Goals of the labor unions are wage agreements, which apply in whole Germany, and higher pay.
- (13) Das Parlament für ganz Deutschland ist der Bundestag. (OK, p. 87)
 The parliament for whole Germany is the Bundestag [Federal Parliament].
- (14) Im Parlament treffen sich die Abgeordneten aus ganz Deutschland und diskutieren über die Politik der Bundesregierung. Sie werden von allen Deutschen gewählt. (ZO, p. 11)
 In the parliament the delegates from whole Germany meet together and discuss the politics of the federal government. They [the delegates] are elected by all Germans.

Germany is now composed of 16 federal states and each state can practice some levels of autonomy over its internal affairs. Besides, Germany was split up by the allies after the Second World War and was then divided into East and West Germany before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (The World Factbook, 2016). Given the historical past of Germany and its present federal administration structure, it is necessary to highlight its homogeneity. The use of *ganz Deutschland* in the examples seems to serve the purpose of constructing a sense of collectivity within discourse.

On the other hand, concordance lines for the two-word cluster *nach Deutschland* [to Germany] demonstrate that Germany is constantly depicted as a destination for foreigners such as immigrants and refugees:

- (15) Die ersten **Gastarbeiter** kamen ab 1955 nach Deutschland. (OK, p. 41)
 From 1955 the first **guest workers** came to Germany.
- (16) Vor einiger Zeit sind Sie aus Ihrem Heimatland oder einem anderen Land nach Deutschland gekommen. (60SD, p. 74)
 Some time ago you have **come to Germany** from your homeland or a different country.
- (17) In den 1980er- und 1990er-Jahren kommen politische **Flüchtlinge** aus verschiedenen Ländern nach Deutschland und bitten hier um „politisches Asyl“. (ZO, p. 38)
 In the 1980s and 1990s political **refugees** from different countries come to Germany and ask for political asylum.
- (18) Ich bin mit meiner Familie 2005 aus dem Irak nach Deutschland gekommen. (OK, p. 52)
 In 2005 I have **come to Germany** from Iraq with my family.

In Examples 16 and 18, the verb *gekommen* [come (past participle)] co-occurs with *nach Deutschland*. As Table 5 shows, *gekommen* is a top collocate of *Deutschland* at N+1 (t-score \approx 3.11). In fact, intercultural coexistence (*interkulturelles Zusammenleben*) is a topic of the *Orientierungskurs*. These co-occurring words (*nach, Deutschland, gekommen*) help to construe the cultural diversity or pluralism of Germany.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the keywords in other dimensions, I would like to examine the collocate *ist* ([is]) of *Deutschland* (at N+1), as the collocation analysis illustrates a very high level of association (t-score \approx 5.43) between these two words. It is found that when *ist* occurs on the immediate right of *Deutschland*, the writers are trying to define what Germany is:

- (19) Deutschland ist eine Demokratie mit freien und geheimen Wahlen. (OK, p. 8).
Germany is a democracy with free elections by secret ballot.
- (20) Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist ein föderalistischer Staat. (ZO, p. 26)
 The Federal Republic of Germany is a federalist country.
- (21) Deutschland ist ein Sozialstaat. (60SD, p. 14)
Germany is a welfare state.
- (22) Deutschland ist ein Rechtsstaat, d.h. auch der Staat muss sich an Gesetze halten. (ZO, p. 9)
Germany is a constitutional state, that is, the state has to comply with the law as well.

As Flowerdew (1992) pointed out, definitions are common in academic discourse. It is unavoidable for writers of textbooks to define terms. Again here, a critical lens can be adopted to interpret the use of definitions. Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 116) noted that definition constitutes a strategy of “theoretical rationalization” which facilitates the discursive construction of legitimation. A definition decomposes an abstract concept into more concrete ideas and during this process of decomposition, specific features of the abstract concept have to be foregrounded while the rest are excluded. Which features are highlighted would have a significant ideological implication. As the examples above exhibit, Germany is defined in terms of *eine Demokratie* [a democracy], *ein föderalistischer Staat* [a federalist country], *ein Sozialstaat* [a welfare state] and *ein Rechtsstaat* [a constitutional state]. This means that the target readers are likely to be socialized into such conceptualization of Germany. Furthermore, in comparison with “modalized assertions,” using the finite verb *ist* [is] as a syntactic means to define Germany (viz., “non-modalized assertions”) is considered to be “less dialogical” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 47). As Fairclough (2003, p. 61) commented, reducing the

level of “dialogicality” in discourse is a way to achieve hegemony because the propositions conveyed are harder to contest.

Now let us turn our attention to the common nouns (*Staat* [nation, country], *Kurs* [course, class], *Gesetze* [laws, legislation (plural)], *Menschen* [people (plural)] and *Kinder* [children (plural)]) in the keyword list presented in Table 2. Concordance lines indicate that *Gesetze* and *Menschen* occur in a wide range of contexts so it is difficult to make generalizations about the use of these words in the corpus. Because of this, they are not included in the discussion. In German, *ein Staat* can mean a nation, a country or even a state. This keyword is categorized under Dimension 1 (Government) in Table 3 because within the corpus the word *Staat* is repeatedly used to impersonalize the German government:

- (23) Der Staat **kümmert sich um** seine Bürger, z.B. in sozialen Notlagen. (ZO, p. 75)
 The state **takes care of** its citizens, for example, in social hardships.
- (24) Die Wirtschaftsform in Deutschland nennt man soziale Marktwirtschaft. Sie richtet sich nach Angebot und Nachfrage, aber der Staat **sorgt für** sozialen Ausgleich. (OK, p. 86)
 The economic system in Germany is named social market economy. It is directed by supply and demand, but the state **ensures** social justice.
- (25) Der Staat **schützt** die Ehe und die Familie. (OK, p. 55)
 The state **protects** the marriage [married couples] and the family.

It can be seen from Examples 23 to 25 that the state (or the German government) is represented as an actor that looks after members of the society, as evidenced by the material processes¹⁰ *kümmert sich um* [takes care of], *sorgt für* [ensures] and *schützt* [protects]. Indeed, collocation analysis reveals that deontic modality *muss* [has to] and *darf* [must] has a propensity to occupy the N+1 position of the keyword *Staat* (t-score \approx 2.50 for *muss*; t-score \approx 2.34 for *darf*):

- (26) Der Staat **darf** die Menschen nicht körperlich verletzen oder die Todesstrafe einführen. (OK, p. 12)
 The state **must** not physically hurt the people or implement the death penalty.
- (27) Der Staat **muss** die Religionsfreiheit beachten und **darf** nicht über die Kirche inhaltlich bestimmen. (60SD, p. 79)
 The state **has to** respect the freedom of religion and **must** not appraise the church contentwise.

¹⁰ The Halliday way of classifying verbs. For details, refer to the work of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

To sum up, the “collocational profile” of the word *Staat* in the corpus helps to project a positive image of the German government as one that plays a major role in safeguarding the interests of its citizens. This image is further reinforced when we look at the concordance lines for *Kinder* [children (plural)]. The word *Kinder* tends to occur in contexts where education and parents’ duty of care are mentioned:

- (28) In der Bundesrepublik gilt für **alle** Mädchen und Jungen die Schulpflicht: Ab sechs Jahren **müssen alle Kinder** in die Schule gehen. (ZO, p. 49)
 In the Federal Republic compulsory education applies to **all** girls and boys. From 6 years [of age] **all children have to** go to school.
- (29) Die Fürsorge und Erziehung **ist** die **wichtigste** Pflicht der Eltern. Der **Staat** passt auf und greift ein, wenn Eltern ihre Kinder nicht gut versorgen oder sie schlecht behandeln. (60SD, p. 20)
 Childcare and parenting **is** the **most important** duty of parents. The **state** pays attention and intervenes if parents do not cater for their children well or [they] treat them badly.

In Example 28, the deontic modality *müssen* [have to] is employed again. The two instances of the determiner *alle* [all] emphasizes the universality of schooling for children in Germany, irrespective of the gender. In Example 29, the superlative *wichtigste* [most important] is identified. In Martin and White’s (2005, p. 141) terminology, the “force” of the necessity to care for children in society is “up-scaled.” Also, the conditional clause *wenn Eltern ... sie schlecht behandeln* [if parents ... treat them badly] creates a hypothetical world in which the assistance from the state is deemed essential. The role of the state as a social gatekeeper is fortified.

Unlike the keywords which have been discussed so far, the keyword *Kurs* [course, class] performs a completely different function in the textbooks. A significant collocate (t-score≈9.47) of *Kurs* at N-1 is *im*¹¹ [in the]. The two-word cluster *im Kurs* [in the course or in class] is often found in the instructions for the various exercises stipulated in the textbooks, as shown by the following examples:

- (30) In welchen Situationen werden Grundrechte verletzt? Diskutieren Sie im Kurs. (OK, p. 12)
 In which situations are the basic rights infringed? Discuss in the course [in class].
- (31) Was ist typisch für die deutsche Kultur? Sprechen Sie darüber im Kurs. (ZO, p. 54)

¹¹ In German, *im* is the contracted form of the definite article *dem* [the] when preceded by the preposition *in* [in] (Durrell, 2011, p. 63).

What is typical for [of] the German culture? Talk about this in the course [/in class].

In contrast to the keywords like *DDR*, *Deutschland* and *Staat* which indicate the specificity of the subject contents which participants of the *Orientierungskurs* are expected to master, the keyword *Kurs* marks the general pedagogic nature of textbooks for students. Semantically, the two-word cluster *im Kurs* refers to the *Orientierungskurs* itself or the period of time in which students are learning at school. However, from the perspective of pragmatics, the use of *im Kurs*, as demonstrated by Examples 30 and 31, directs readers' attention to their role as a learner. Besides, the referent of the expression *im Kurs* may vary because not all the readers are taking the course at the same time or in the same place. Hence, I would argue that *im Kurs* here is an "indexical expression." As Levinson (2004, p. 102) elucidated, the key of "indexicality" in communication is to draw the addressee's attention to some characteristics of the spatio-temporal physical setting. This remark echoes the use of *im Kurs* in the corpus of the present research.

The analysis about the keyword *Kurs* as a device to engage readers is reminiscent of the notion of "metadiscourse" discussed by Hyland (2005). As he wrote, "metadiscourse" is a prevalent term in research on language education and it stems from the idea that writing is a form of "social engagement." "Metadiscourse" concerns how writers articulate and construct interactions so as to convey both information and attitudes (p. 3). Hyland (2005, p. 49) presented a framework to analyze "metadiscourse." Under this framework, there are two main types of "metadiscourse resources"—"interactive" and "interactional." The former refers to linguistic devices which guide readers through the text (e.g., connectors like "in addition" and "furthermore") whereas the latter encompasses those which "involve" readers in the text (e.g., overt reference to the writer with the first person pronoun). In fact, looking at the 9 dimensions of the keywords which I suggested in Table 3, I found that in addition to the one with *Kurs* (Dimension 9: Learning), the keywords in four other dimensions can be considered "metadiscourse resources" as well. They are Dimension 2 (Processes), Dimension 5 (Question word), Dimension 7 (Pronoun) and Dimension 8 (Abbreviated adverbial).

Like *Kurs*, the keywords in Dimensions 2, 5 and 7 (*Ordnen* [To order], *Kreuzen* [To cross], *Lesen* [To read], *Ergänzen* [To complete], *Welche* [Which], *Was* [What], *Sie* [you, she, they]¹²) tend to occur in the instructions of the exercises. The keywords *Ordnen*, *Kreuzen*, *Lesen* and *Ergänzen* are used in the imperative mood, as the concordance lines show that all occurrences of these words are followed by

¹² Only when "she" and "they" are the first word of a sentence.

the formal second person pronoun *Sie*.¹³ As mentioned earlier in this paper, the case-sensitive keyword search is unable to single out the instances where the third person feminine pronoun *sie* and the third person plural pronoun *sie* are subject to initial capitalization at the beginning of a sentence. A manual check was done and it was discovered that such instances constitute a minority (182 out of 1237). This means that *Sie* as the formal second person pronoun appears 1055 times in the corpus. The occurrences of the imperative verbs and *Sie* can be seen from the following examples:

- (32) Lesen Sie den Text. **Welche** Aussagen sind richtig? Kreuzen Sie an.¹⁴ (ZO, p. 52)
Read the text. **Which** statements are correct? Check¹⁵ [the box].
- (33) Was bedeutet Artikel 1? Lesen Sie den ersten und wichtigsten Artikel des Grundgesetzes. Unten finden Sie Erklärungen. **Welche** Erklärung passt zu welchem Absatz? (60SD, p. 17)
 What does Article 1 mean? Read the first and most important article of the German constitution. You find explanations below. **Which** explanation matches which paragraph?
- (34) **Was** sind die Vor- und die Nachteile der sozialen Marktwirtschaft? **Was** meinen Sie? Sammeln Sie Ihre Ideen im Kurs. (ZO, p. 25)
What are the advantages and the disadvantages of the social market economy? **What** do you think? Gather your ideas in the course [/in class].

The three examples also display the occurrences of the keywords *Welche* [Which] and *Was* [What]. There is no doubt that questions are frequently being posed so that target readers (viz., students) will take part in active learning. In Hyland's (2005, p. 49) terms, the imperative verbs and the second person pronoun can be classified as a specific kind of "interactional metadiscourse resources" called "engagement markers" because through such markers writers are explicitly establishing a relationship with readers. Nevertheless, Hyland (2005, p. 49) did not include question words in his model of "metadiscourse." The empirical evidence of the current research demonstrates that question words, when used by

¹³ For information about the formation of the imperative in German, refer to the work of Durrell (2011, p. 313).

¹⁴ To be more specific, the verb here is *Kreuzen ... an* (infinitive form: *ankreuzen*). *Ankreuzen* means "to check the appropriate box." This is an example of German separable verbs, which consist of a prefix and a "root" verb. On specific occasions the prefix is separated from the "root" verb. Separable verbs are supposed to carry a different meaning from the corresponding "root" verb (Durrell, 2011, p. 233). AntConc 3.5.0 does not identify separable verbs automatically. Manual checks are needed. In the corpus of the present research, all instances of *Kreuzen* are in fact the separable verb *Ankreuzen*.

¹⁵ In English, the second person pronoun is omitted in the imperative mood.

textbook writers, have an “engagement” effect too. This finding may help to enrich Hyland’s framework.

Last but not least, the keyword *z.B.* [e.g.] is the abbreviated form of the adverbial *zum Beispiel* [for example]. Within the corpus, it is used 144 times and ranks third in the keyword list (keyness≈1307.930), indicating its tendency to be over-used. Two examples are shown below:

(35) Die **Gemeinden** regeln außerdem Dinge, die besonders für ihre Einwohner/innen wichtig sind. Sie kümmern sich z.B. um die Strom- und Wasserversorgung, die Abfallbeseitigung, die Jugendarbeit und um Bildungs- und Freizeitangebote. (*60SD*, p. 11)

The **municipalities** also regulate things which are especially important for its inhabitants. They take care of, for example [e.g.], the power and water supply, the waste disposal, the youth work and education and leisure attractions.

(36) In **Bürgerinitiativen** versammeln sich oft Bürger eines Ortes, um ein bestimmtes Ziel zu erreichen. Es gibt **Bürgerinitiativen** für z.B. mehr Kinderspielplätze, für die Erhaltung von Naturschutzgebieten oder gegen den Bau von Straßen oder Industriegebieten. (*OK*, p. 30)

In **citizens’ initiatives [or action groups]** citizens of one place often gather together in order to reach a particular goal. There are **citizens’ initiatives [or action groups]**, for example [e.g.], for more children’s playgrounds, for the conservation of nature reserves or against the construction of roads or industrial areas.

Instead of being an “engagement marker,” *z.B.* belongs to a type of “interactive metadiscourse resources” known as “code glosses.” As Hyland (2005, p. 50–52) commented, “interactive metadiscourse resources” are utilized by writers to organize information so that it can be understood by target readers. These linguistic resources also reflect writers’ estimation of the readers’ “knowledge-base.” In Examples 35 and 36, *z.B.* is employed to introduce extra information which from the writers’ viewpoint can facilitate readers’ understanding of *Gemeinden* [municipalities] and *Bürgerinitiativen* [citizens’ initiatives or action groups] respectively. On top of the pedagogic implication, it can be argued that the use of *z.B.* has an ideological undertone. As Jeffries (2010, pp. 67–70) maintained, using phrases like “for instance” and “for example” to elaborate on something in text (viz., “exemplification”) may boost readers’ confidence on the quality of the text as it appears to be more thorough and less ambiguous.

Conclusion

To research how immigrants in Germany are socialized into the host society at the institutional level, three textbooks written for participants of the orientation

course have been investigated. Tools from corpus linguistics have been utilized to analyze the data. The keyword list has been generated and the “collocational profiles” of important keywords have been studied. Manual checks on the concordance lines have been performed to determine any ideological and pedagogic characteristics of the textbooks.

The top keywords of the corpus generally echo the nature of the orientation course, which is supposed to equip immigrants with knowledge of the German politics, history and culture. One may argue that some of the keywords (e.g., *Bundesrepublik* [Federal Republic] and *Deutschland* [Deutschland]) are predictable, given the contents of the corpus. Nevertheless, collocation analysis of the keywords has provided us with many insights into the discursive representation of Germany and its ideological effects. First, it has been shown that *DDR* [German Democratic Republic (GDR), aka East Germany] co-occurs frequently with *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* in contexts where the reunification is underscored. A negative “semantic prosody” has been noted from the concordance lines for *DDR*. A multitude of linguistic strategies are deployed to portray the GDR as an undesirable entity. For instance, “explicit opposition” and “comparative opposition” (Jeffries, 2010) are used to juxtapose the “bad” GDR with the “good” Federal Republic of Germany whereas equivalence between the GDR and the *Nationalsozialismus* [Nazi] is forged by presenting them as the co-hyponyms of *Einparteienstaat* [one-party state]. It has been argued that these linguistic strategies, together with the negatively connoted lexis surrounding *DDR*, are used to legitimize the German reunification, which actually means the official dissolution of the GDR as it “joined” the Federal Republic of Germany. On the other hand, the collocational patterns displayed by the keyword *Deutschland* construe contemporary Germany as a popular destination for foreigners (e.g., the three-word cluster *nach Deutschland gekommen* [come to Germany]). A sense of collectivity is also constructed by emphasizing the unity of Germany (viz., the co-occurrence of *ganz* [all, whole] and *Deutschland*). Furthermore, the keywords *Staat* [state] and *Kinder* [children] tend to collocate with deontic modality (*muss* [has to] and *darf* [must]) and lexis associated with care and protection, thus projecting an image of Germany as a nurturing welfare state.

As remarked in the introduction of this paper, the orientation course is an official means to diffuse specialized knowledge about Germany into a foreign population. The textbooks examined in this study signify the (re-)production of such knowledge. Which knowledge to (re-)produce is highly dependent on the decision of the textbook writers, who to a great extent are constrained by the governing party, as the contents of the textbooks are derived from the 300 questions designed for the “Living in Germany” (*Leben in Deutschland*) examination (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2016a). What I would like to highlight through the present research is that learning such knowledge also

implies acquisition of particular world views (i.e., the dominant ideologies in this case), of which the immigrants may be unaware.

Another contribution of the current study is that analysis of the keywords has informed us of the pedagogic character of the textbooks. It has been found that certain keywords (e.g., the imperative verbs, *Sie* [you (formal)], *Kurs* [course, class] and *z.B.* [e.g.]) can be classified as “metadiscourse resources” (Hyland, 2005). The concordance lines have shown that these “metadiscourse resources” are mostly “engagement markers” which direct readers’ attention to their role as a learner or a participant in the orientation course. Although question words (*Welche* [Which] and *Was* [What]) are not included in Hyland’s (2005) framework, they are used as a tool to “involve” readers into the text as well. Analysis of the keyword *z.B.* [e.g.] bridges the gap between the ideological and the pedagogic facets of the textbooks examined. While this “code gloss” is supposed to organize information in discourse so as to facilitate readers’ comprehension, it simultaneously marks writers’ assumption of readers’ “knowledge-base.” Along the line of critical stylistics (Jeffries, 2010), using *for example* or similar expressions to exemplify ideas in texts can be seen as a strategy to increase readers’ trust on the texts, making them less doubtful about the propositions presented. This finding concerning a mixture of ideological and pedagogic implications arising from the use of certain lexical items in textbooks opens up a space for future corpus-based research on this genre.

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Contact

Mr Ray C. H. Leung
Department of English and American Studies
University of Potsdam
Am Neuen Palais 10
14469 Potsdam
Germany
chungleungde@gmail.com

The intercultural component in an EFL course-book package

Zuzana Sándorová, Constantine the Philosopher University, Slovakia
zsandorova@ukf.sk

Abstract

Along with mastery of the grammar and vocabulary of a given language, contemporary students are also expected to acquire intercultural communicative competence (ICC), i.e., the ability to use the language efficiently with regard to the sociocultural background of the communicative situation. This requirement should also be reflected in FL course-books, which are considered to be fundamental didactic tools in FL education, even in an era of information communication technologies. Therefore, the aim of the present paper is to report the results of the research focused on the investigation of intercultural component in the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate course-book packages.

To validate the findings of the content analysis, as the main research method, the method of triangulation was used, i.e., the results of the course-book package analyses were compared with those of observation and interview analyses. The findings of the research revealed that in the investigated course-book packages only some aspects of the intercultural component could be considered relevant because they were suitably treated.

Key words: FL course-books, culture and language, content analysis, intercultural communicative competence

Introduction

It seems that due to massive migration flows and signs of increasing ethnocentrism, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is gaining more and more significance in contemporary globalized world. However, *“intercultural knowledge and intercultural communication skills do not come naturally; they have to be acquired through conscious learning”* (Liu et al., 2011, p. 26). Undoubtedly, FL education can enhance the acquisition of these competences to a great extent by systematically integrating the intercultural aspects into the teaching of linguistic issues.

As FL course-books still represent the core of FL education, they have a great impact on what is taught and how it is taught in the FL classroom (Byram, 1989, Davcheva et al., 2003). According to the research findings, they have the power to

influence the perception of the target culture and the attitude towards it, as well as the whole process of learning the target language and culture. Therefore, it is of particular importance that FL course-books contribute to the development of ICC. However, the research on FL textbooks used in Slovakia, especially from the point of view of their intercultural content, cannot be regarded as sufficient. In order to fill this gap, the aim of the research was to investigate the culture-related aspects in the second most often chosen EFL course-book package in Slovakia (based on a questionnaire survey carried out in 2013) (Sándorová, 2013).

The paper is divided into two main parts: the theoretical background of the study and the research part. The former is concerned with the content and the structure of ICC, as the keyword of the research, as well as with the role of FL textbooks in fostering ICC. Furthermore, some proposals by intercultural scholars with regard to the content of FL course-books and its investigation are also discussed. The latter, in addition to the methodology of the research, contains the findings and conclusions of the research.

Literature review

Understanding intercultural communicative competence

A discrepancy can be detected between intercultural scholars in relation to the use of the term *intercultural communicative competence*. On the one hand, some scholars find it important to distinguish between *communicative competence*, *cultural competence*, *intercultural competence* and *intercultural communicative competence*. On the other hand, as in the examples below, there are scholars who use the terms *communicative competence* and *intercultural communicative competence* interchangeably, as their definitions of the former also comprise features of the latter.

According to the Council of Europe (2001, p. 9) *communicative competence* refers to a person's ability to act in a FL in a linguistically, socio-linguistically and pragmatically appropriate way"; whereas *cultural competence* can be defined "as knowledge of the life and institutions of the target culture" (Corbett, 2003, p. 31). In addition, *intercultural competence* is the ability to interact *in one's own language* with people from another country and culture, using one's own knowledge of the given country and culture (Byram, 1991). Finally, *intercultural communicative competence* means the ability to interact with people from another country *in a foreign language*. "The knowledge of another culture is linked to the language competence through the ability to use language appropriately – sociolinguistic and discourse competence – and the awareness of the specific meanings, values and connotations of the language" (Byram, *ibid.*, p. 71). Similarly, Sercu (2005) argues that intercultural communicative competence is based upon communicative competence and enriches it by incorporating intercultural competence.

The concept of communicative competence was established by Hymes (1974, in Brown, 2000, Hall, *ibid.*, p. 105-106), who claimed that Chomsky's theory of language universals, as an innate property of mind, could not explain the knowledge and skills which individuals must have in order to be able to "understand and use linguistic resources in ways that are structurally well formed, socially and contextually appropriate, and culturally feasible in communicative contexts constitutive of the different groups and communities of which the individuals are members". According to Hymes, communicative competence has four dimensions. The first is called systematic potential and it refers to the basic knowledge and ability to use a particular language. The second dimension is appropriateness, which can be understood as the ability to use language appropriately with regard to its contextual features. Occurrence which can be defined as "knowledge of whether and to what extent action is taken with language, and the ability to use language to take such action", is the third dimension of communicative competence. Finally, feasibility includes "knowledge of whether and to what extent something is possible, and the ability to be practical or feasible" (Hall, *ibid.*, p. 105-106).

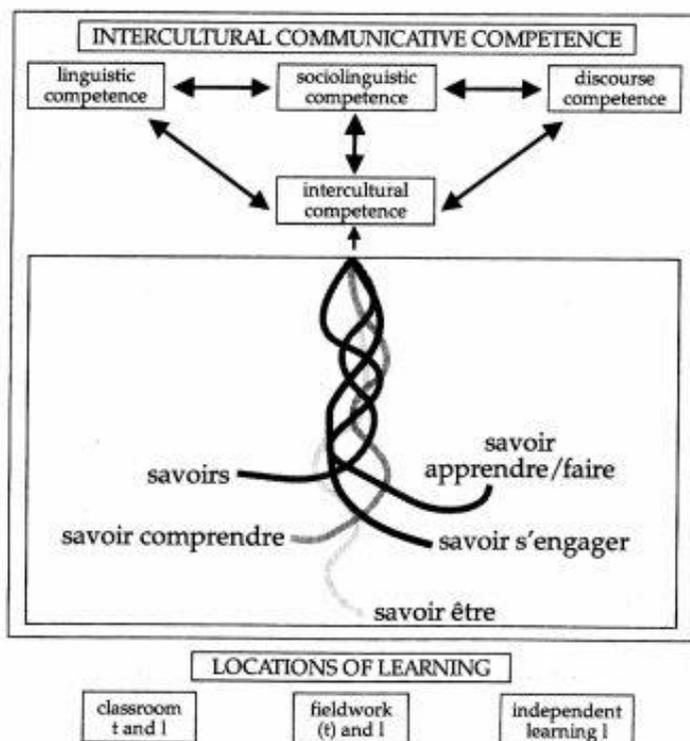
Jong (1996) defines communicative competence as the ability to use a foreign language effectively, which in addition to knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, also comprises the knowledge of foreign culture in terms of issues that should be avoided, what topics are considered safe or how to cope with misunderstandings that might occur during intercultural interactions. Similarly, Kachru and Nelson (1996, p. 90) also understand communicative competence in terms of appropriateness, with regard to "all facets of language, including rate of speech and level or register of lexis"; hence, the ability to recognize the different types of situations is equally important.

According to Saville-Troike (1996, p. 362), communicative competence, which consists of linguistic knowledge, interaction skills and cultural knowledge, can be "broadly defined as what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a particular speech community". Linguistic knowledge, as the first dimension, in addition to the "traditional elements", such as grammar, lexicon or phonology, should also comprise paralinguistic and nonverbal phenomena. Interaction skills include a wide range of knowledge, which can be understood in terms of expectations or conventions in the target culture, such as when to speak and when it is better to be silent, what nonverbal communication is appropriate in certain situations, how to take the floor and how to request, and the like. The last dimension, cultural knowledge, involves all aspects of culture, but especially the social structure of a particular speech community and "the values and attitudes held about language and ways of speaking" (*ibid.*, p. 367).

As it can be seen, all the above discussed perceptions of communicative competence emphasize the ability of appropriate language use in a particular

social setting. The central idea of these definitions can also be well-illustrated by Byram's model of ICC (1997, p. 73), consisting of four dimensions, i.e., linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and intercultural competence (see Figure 1). According to him, *intercultural competence* comprises the following five factors: attitudes (*savoir être*), knowledge (*savoirs*), skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) and skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), as well as critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). *Attitudes* refer to "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (Byram, 1991, p. 50). It means, for example, that the intercultural speaker is willing to share their experience about others' daily life, is interested in others' opinions on familiar or unfamiliar issues, or takes into consideration expectations about appropriate behaviour in a particular situation.

Figure 1: Model of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, p. 73)



Knowledge means the knowledge “of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction” (ibid., p. 51). For instance, the intercultural speaker has familiarity with the historical events, cultural products, institutions or geographical features of his/her own and the interlocutor’s country. Skills of interpreting and relating referring to “ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own” (ibid., p. 52), comprise, for example, the readiness to identify the sources of misunderstandings and address them. Skills of discovery and interaction stand for the “ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (ibid., p. 52), e.g., identifying contemporary as well as historical relationships between cultures, behaving in accordance with the conventions of verbal and nonverbal interaction, etc. Finally, critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997, p. 63) refers to “an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries”; for instance, in terms of identifying and interpreting values in events or being aware of potential conflicts between ideologies.

Intercultural communicative competences in the CEFR

Byram’s model, acknowledged by various scholars (e.g., Corbett, 2003, Sercu, 2005), has also been accepted by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR, 2001) as the main curricular document of the European Union in the field of FL education, which proposes a framework for the elaboration of curricular documents, course syllabi, examinations as well as teaching materials for all European countries. It defines six reference levels of language proficiency, from Breakthrough (A1) and Waystage (A2), through Threshold (B1) and Vantage (B2), to Effective Mastery (C1) and Operational Proficiency (C2), providing illustrative scales of descriptors for each of them, in terms of what an FL user “can do” at a particular stage. In addition, with regard to the components of intercultural communicative competences, a set of minimum requirements to “survive” in the target country, i.e., for the Threshold level (B1), was elaborated and published as Threshold 1990 by J. A. van Ek and John Trim (Jong, 1996).

According to the CEFR (ibid.), all skills acquired by a person can contribute to the development of communicative competence; however, we have to differentiate between more closely connected abilities and less closely related skills. In these

terms we have to distinguish between general and communicative language competences. General competences consist of declarative knowledge (savoir), skills and know-how (savoir faire), “existential” competence (savoir être) and the ability to learn (savoir apprendre). Communicative language competence is a sum of more language-related components which can be divided into linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

Declarative knowledge comprises knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness. In the category of *knowledge of the world*, the CEFR (2001, p. 102) emphasizes that “of considerable importance to the learner of a particular language is factual knowledge concerning the country or countries in which the language is spoken, such as its major geographical, environmental, demographic, economic and political features”. With regard to *sociocultural knowledge*, the documents highlights that FL learners often lack even basic knowledge and they are frequently influenced by stereotypes; hence, acquisition of this type of knowledge deserves considerable attention in FL teaching. It involves aspects of everyday living, such as food and drink, meal times, table manners, public holidays, working hours, leisure activities or living conditions, i.e., housing, welfare arrangements and living standards (ibid.). Learners must also get acquainted with some unwritten rules of behaviour of the target culture, such as punctuality, getting and giving presents, dress code, behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos, length of stay, leave-taking, etc. (ibid.). In addition, values and beliefs in relation to social class, occupational groups, regional cultures, tradition and social change, history, politics, religion, humour, etc., that are hidden under the surface have a strong impact on the communication, as well. Furthermore, one must be aware of paralinguistic characteristics, such as body language, extra-linguistic speech sounds and prosodic qualities, as well as paralinguistic features of written texts. Word-completing practical actions comprise pointing, demonstration and clearly observable activities; body language refers to gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact, body contact, proxemics; extra-linguistic speech includes requesting silence, expressing approval, public and polite disapproval, disgust or disgruntlement. Furthermore, features of prosody, such as voice quality, loudness, pitch (intonation), stress, rhythm or length, can also play a “paralinguistic role”. Last but not least, *intercultural awareness*, as the third aspect of declarative knowledge, stands for the awareness and understanding of the similarities and differences between the target and the home culture. However, it does not relate only to the distinctive features at national level, also includes regional and social variations in both communities.

The “**skills and know-how**” group stands for a sum of *practical skills and know-how* and *intercultural skills and know-how*. In the category of the former, social skills have to be mentioned, comprising the ability to act in correspondence with

the expectations related to foreigners. The latter comprise “the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other” (ibid, p. 104), as well as to be culturally sensitive and apply a range of strategies to establish and maintain contact with the members of the target community. In addition, FL learners must also be equipped with the ability to overcome stereotypes.

Existential competence is connected with the individuals’ personality, as the ability to communicate is also affected by factors such as *attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles* and *personality types*. Attitudes refer to the FL learner’s degree of “openness towards, and interest in new experiences, other persons, ideas, peoples, societies and cultures; willingness to relativise one’s own cultural viewpoint and cultural value-system; as well as willingness and ability to distance oneself from conventional attitudes to cultural difference” (ibid., p. 105).

The **ability to learn** refers to *language and communication awareness, general phonetic awareness and skills*, which imply “sensitivity to language and language use” (ibid., p. 107), as well as to *study and heuristic skills*, i.e., the ability to cope with new experience (language, people, behaviour) by observing and inferring, etc.

Linguistic competences include lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competences. *Lexical competence* refers to the ability to use the lexical elements of a language, such as fixed expressions and single words, together with their grammatical elements. *Grammatical competence* is the mastery of structure (syntax) and form (morphology) and is related to grammatical accuracy in using different elements, categories, classes, structures, processes and relations of the language. *Semantic competences* is connected with the awareness and control of the lexical, grammatical and pragmatic meaning of words. *Phonological competences* stands for the perception and production of phonemes, the awareness of their distinctive features and the ability to use prosodic qualities. *Orthographic competence* refers to the knowledge of and skill to apply the rules of written language, whereas *orthoepic competence* is connected with the sound realisation of language.

Sociolinguistic competences involves “linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk-wisdom, register differences and dialect and accent” (ibid., p. 118). *Linguistic markers of social relations* comprise the use of different forms of greetings (when arriving, leaving, etc.), ways of addressing (frozen, formal, informal, familiar, peremptory, insult) and the use of expletives (ibid.). *Politeness conventions* refer to both “positive” politeness (e.g., expressing gratitude, offering gifts, etc.) and “negative” politeness (e.g., apologizing, expressing regret, etc.), as well as the appropriate use of such expressions as “please” and “thank you”. In addition, FL speaker must also be aware of direct commands, strong complaints and reprimands, venting anger, impatience or asserting superiority being considered impolite behaviour (ibid.).

Expressions of folk wisdom include proverbs, idioms, familiar quotations, expressions of belief, attitudes and values, etc. Whereas proverbs are defined as “pithy sayings expressing general truth, popular wisdom or advice” (Kvetko, 1996, p. 90), idioms have certain features that make them different from other lexical units. They consist of more than one word, however, they function as single lexical units. In addition, they cannot be translated literally, for they have a unique and figurative meaning (ibid.). Phrasal verbs and similes rank among idioms, regarded as a special group of fixed expressions. The former are combinations of verbs and particles (e.g., look for, turn on, etc.), and their meaning may be opaque. The latter are “used to describe one thing by comparing it to another”, e.g., “as busy as a bee”, etc. (ibid., p. 90). Furthermore, there are also so-called “minimal idioms”, idiomatic phrases consisting of only one content word, e.g., “of course”, “at last”, “at all”, etc. (ibid.). The expressions of belief most frequently function as weather-saws, and the expressions of attitude can be understood as clichés.

Register differences are connected mainly with the level of formality distinguished as: frozen, formal, neutral, informal, familiar and intimate. The appropriate use of register is extremely important as it can lead to misunderstandings and make the speaker look ridiculous when wrong words are selected. Sociolinguistic competence also refers to the ability to recognize the differences between social, geographical and regional varieties of a language, as well as between different subcultures (in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and paralinguistic characteristics).

Pragmatic competences, refers to the ability to use the language appropriately for particular purposes with regard to the sociocultural context and can further be divided into discourse, functional and design competence. *Discourse competence* stands for the ability to produce a text, both written and spoken, with regard to “thematic organisation, coherence and cohesion, logical ordering, style and register, rhetorical effectiveness” (ibid., p. 123), and it also includes the aspect of text design, i.e. the way in which information is structured in terms of different macro-functions (description, narrative, exposition, etc.), as well as the way in which stories, anecdotes, jokes, etc., are told, and the layout, signposting and sequencing of written texts.

The second component of pragmatic competences, *functional competence*, is the ability to use the language for different purposes (both in written and spoken form) and comprises “micro-functions”. A “macro-function is characterised by its interactional structure” and consists of several micro-functions. Micro-functions comprise a wide range of various types of utterances (including skills from looking for information and reporting, through expressing and finding out different attitudes, suasion and socializing, to structuring discourse and communication repair). *Design competence* means that macro-functions are patterned on the so-called “interaction schemata”, i.e., patterns of social interaction structured by the

communication partners in turns (e.g. between a shop assistant and a customer or between a doctor and a patient, etc.).

To summarize, apparently, the framework provided by the CEFR (ibid.) does not rely only on developing communicative competence, understood as the ability to use the language in different situations of communication (Homolová, 2003). It also contains a wide range of other skills and knowledge to be acquired by a FL speaker in order to become an intercultural competent speaker of the target language. Consequently, “the objective of language learning is no longer defined as solely the acquisition of communicative competence. Teachers are now required to teach intercultural communicative competence” (Sercu, 2005, p. 2).

FL course-books in developing intercultural communicative competence

Since FL course-books “present the country in a nut-shell” (Risager, 1991, p. 191), they can have a great impact on FL learners’ intercultural knowledge and skills, as well as on their attitudes towards the target culture. Buttjes (1991) claims that the acquisition of the target language can be enhanced by culturally rich textbooks and a socially realistic presentation in them. Davcheva et al. (2003, p. 91) emphasize that FL “textbooks can significantly influence the way culture is taught in the FL classroom”. Byram (1991) based on his research adds that the dominant role of FL course-books in developing ICC should be taken seriously by all those involved in FL education. These opinions are also supported by empirical research on the extent to which FL textbooks are used to teach cultural aspects in FL classrooms and what impact they have on FL learners’ perception of the target culture. For example, the aim of the research project called “The Durham Project” conducted by Byram et al. (1991), was to reveal the impact a “French as FL” textbook had on learners’ tolerance of French people and their knowledge of French culture. It was based on case studies of two secondary comprehensive schools, the subjects were 200 students who were tested and 100 of whom were also interviewed. The results of the field notes from over eight months’ classroom observation revealed that textbooks played a determining and dominant role in the forming FL learners’ attitudes towards French culture. In addition, Davcheva et al. (2003) “examined and compared views and practices of FL teachers with regard to the cultural dimension of the teaching materials they used in class”. Results showed that teachers, regardless of their country of origin, relied chiefly on FL textbooks when teaching cultural aspects.

Based on the abovementioned studies and viewpoints, it seems that one of the new roles which FL textbooks should gradually acquire is that of mediator between the home and the target culture (Risager, ibid.). Despite the vast amount of recommendations on the content and methodology of teaching cultural issues in general, the list of proposals given for the intercultural content of FL course-

books is more limited. Yet, the following part discusses suggestions which address the content of both FL lessons and FL teaching materials.

Seelye (1997) notes that it is not enough for FL course-books to have footnotes or endnotes; they should also offer experiential activities which develop FL learners' skills using the cultural context to decode the meaning in communication.

Concerning the methods of teaching the cultural input in FL course-books, according to Hatoss (2004), the following two different aspects have to be taken into consideration:

1. Implicit versus explicit teaching of the cultural input
2. Cognitive versus experiential teaching of the cultural input.

Culture is taught explicitly when students are "constantly confronted with different values, different perspectives, traditions, and the ways of interpreting the world" in order to become "critical intercultural speakers" (ibid., p. 29). In these terms, it is also important to consider whether the learners are only exposed to the cultural input, or they are provided with the opportunity to reflect on it. Another confronting way of teaching cultural input is building learners' awareness of their own culture as an essential part of developing their intercultural competences. However, the constant comparison of the learners' first culture to the target culture should not happen in a competitive way, and EFL courses should not suggest the replacement of the students' own culture. With regard to cognitive versus experiential teaching, Hatoss (ibid.) outlines that both methods are equally important, yet modern teaching approaches emphasize the experiential ways of teaching as they make learning more effective.

Another interesting viewpoint is offered by Brooks (1997, p. 25), who claims that "as long as we provide our students only with the facts of history and geography, economics and sociology, as long as we provide them only with a knowledge of the sophisticated structures of society such as law and medicine, or examples and appreciative comments on artistic creations such as poems, castles, or oil paintings, we have not yet provided them with an intimate view of where life's action is, where the individual and the social order come together, where self meets life". To support this idea, Brooks constructed a list of 10 issues, based on Hall's scheme presented in *The Silent Language* (1959, in Brooks, ibid., p. 27-29). The list contains the following issues:

1. Symbolism: e.g., literature, art, myths, politics and religion;
2. Value: e.g., personal preference, morality, philosophy, etc.;
3. Authority: e.g., whose world is accepted at different stages in one's life, etc.;
4. Order: e.g., dispositions towards a clear arrangements of thoughts, etc.;
5. Ceremony: e.g., dress, rituals;
6. Love: e.g., parent and child, husband and wife;
7. Honour: e.g., attitude towards ourselves, our families, friends or country;

8. Humour: e.g., what is witty and how it differs from one culture to another;
9. Beauty: e.g., in terms of the aesthetic sense of products of the human mind and hand;
10. Spirit: e.g., awareness of oneself as human at different phases and situations of life.

According to Brooks, the listed issues can be considered central in terms of teaching cultural aspects of a target country, and, therefore, should also be taken into consideration by authors of teaching materials, as well as methodological materials for teachers. In addition, it is important that textbooks show how components of the target culture are reflected in the target language. Brooks also emphasizes that culture should already be integrated in the early phases of the FL learning process, which should be reflected in the teaching materials, as well.

Another set of goals for the teaching of culture, which should be taken into consideration by textbook publishers, was proposed by Lafayette (1997, p. 123). His list can be understood in terms of the ability of FL learners to recognize and explain issues, as follows: geographical monuments, historical events, major institutions (e.g., religious, political, etc.), artistic monuments (e.g., arts, literature, etc.), “active everyday cultural patterns” (e.g., eating, shopping, etc.), “passive” everyday cultural patterns (e.g., marriage, work), “culture of the target language-related ethnic groups” and “culture of non-European peoples speaking target language”. In addition, FL learners should also be able to “act appropriately in common everyday situations, use appropriate common gestures and value different peoples and societies”.

Apart from the mentioned goals, Lafayette (ibid., p. 128-134) also developed six basic principles for integrating language and culture both in FL teaching materials and in FL classrooms, as follows:

1. “Cultural objectives and activities must be planned as carefully as their language counterparts and be specifically included in lesson plans.
2. Cultural components must be tested as seriously as their language counterparts.
3. Textbook photographs must be considered as viable teaching content.
4. Language teaching must emphasize the teaching of content as much as it does the teaching of forms.
5. The teaching of culture must extend beyond factual learning and include community resources, experiential learning and process skills.
6. The target language should be the primary vehicle used to teach culture”.

Stern (1992, p. 219-221) defines the content of cultural teaching in six areas, covering aspects which FL learners should have some familiarity with. They include, as follows: *geographical places*, i.e., physical location to which FL learners

are able to relate the target language; *people and way of life*, i.e., how they live, what they do and think; *people and society*, i.e., social, professional and economic groups; *history*; *institutions*; as well as *art, music and other achievements*. Stern also emphasizes that teachers who do not want to neglect these issues need accessible and reliable sources. However, there is a lack of publications, especially in terms of certain aspects, e.g., everyday life in the target cultures.

Finally, as Skopinskaja (2003, p. 52) puts it “*the existence of cultural input in the teaching materials does not automatically entail its exploitation*”, and it is up to the teachers how a particular course-book is used. It means that they should know how interculturally useful the course-book in question can be. For this reason, on the one hand, teachers should be acquainted with the basic principles of evaluating and selecting course-books; on the other hand, research analysing FL course-books should be extended to help teachers identify interculturally appropriate teaching materials.

Analysing the cultural content in FL course-books

In order to analyse the cultural content of FL textbooks several checklists have been proposed. For instance, Byram (1989) and Huhn (1978) distinguish the following seven criteria dealing with the cultural content of FL textbooks:

- Cultural information must be accurate and contemporary;
- The question of stereotypes must be handled critically;
- It must provide a realistic picture of the foreign society;
- It must be free from ideologies;
- Facts should not be presented in isolation;
- The historical material should be presented explicitly.

Another set of criteria is provided by Risager (1991, p. 182-183) and they can be divided into four main groups. “The micro level – phenomena of social and cultural anthropology includes the social and geographical definition of characters, material environment, situations of interaction, as well as interaction and subjectivity of the characters: feelings, attitudes, values, and perceived problems”. “The macro level – social, political, and historical matters”, as the second category comprises “broad social facts about contemporary society (geographical, economic, political, etc.), broad socio-political problems (unemployment, pollution, etc.) and historical background”. The third group of criteria, i.e. “international and intercultural issues”, consists of “comparisons between the foreign country and the pupils’ own, mutual representations, images, stereotypes, as well as mutual relations: cultural power and dominance, co-operation and conflict”. Finally, “the point of view and style of the author” also has to be taken into consideration.

According to Cunningsworth (1984, 1995, p. 92) the social and cultural context in the FL course must be comprehensible to the students and they should be able to interpret “the relationships, behaviour, intentions, etc. of the characters portrayed in the book”. His checklist also pays special attention to gender differences, e.g. it is important to examine whether women are treated equally to men, what inner qualities and physical attributes women are given, and what professional and social status women have. Other aspects focus on the inner lives of the characters portrayed in the course and the social background against which they exist. Similar criteria are also listed by Kilickaya (2004), that is, “socio-cultural information, learners’ needs, stereotypes, generalisations and intercultural communication”.

The model proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999, in Aliakbari, 2005) serves for investigating the type of culture which is presented in a particular FL course-book. They distinguish between the following three basic types of FL course-books:

1. FL course-books that reflect the source culture, i.e. FL learners’ first culture;
2. FL course-books that reflect the target culture, i.e. cultures where the target language is spoken as first language;
3. FL course-books that reflect international target cultures, i.e. cultures where the target language is spoken as second or foreign language;

Damen’s “textbook evaluation guide” (1987, p. 272) is divided into three parts. The first is focused on general information about the cultural content and its presentation; in addition, a number of questions is used, such as what specific cultural items are covered or how and through what method they are presented. The second part serves for the evaluation itself, i.e. giving personal opinion through answering a list of questions, e.g. whether the information is authentic, unbiased or problem-oriented, etc. Finally, the last part is designed to summarise the cultural load.

A further model for analysing the cultural content in FL textbooks was presented by Hatoss (2004). It resulted from a pilot study carried out as a content analysis of textbooks for English business communication within European context. The model focuses on the evaluation of three dimensions: text and visual input, methods used to teach the cultural content and aims set by the author/s or publisher/s of a particular textbook for developing learners’ intercultural competence. Input factors include sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, sociocultural knowledge, as well as paralinguistic and semiotic input. With regard to the methods, implicit versus explicit as well as cognitive versus experiential teaching of the cultural input are concerned, and the criterion of the authors/publishers’ aims deals with the issue of assimilation.

Apart from the provided checklists, another set of categories and labelling codes was created by Reid (2014), who investigated how different aspects of ICC

were implemented in teaching EFL at Slovak primary schools. In document analysis, she compared Slovak curricular documents with the CEFR, which also served as a core document for setting the categories and codes. Similarly to the previous checklist (by Hatoss, *ibid.*), hers takes into consideration all the aspects of ICC as described in CEFR (2001). Therefore, the present analysis of the intercultural component in the chosen FL course-book package will be carried out drawing on both Hatoss's and Reid's model.

Research methodology

The main aim of the research was to discover which aspects of the intercultural component in the New Opportunities course-book packages were relevant because suitably treated in terms of developing ICC at B1 level (according to the CEFR), while suitability was understood in terms of the requirements which FL learners were expected to fulfil according to European and Slovak key documents in the field of FL education. In addition, based on the model of Hatoss (2004), the particular aspects of the intercultural component in the selected course-book packages were considered as appropriate if they were treated both implicitly and explicitly in a sufficient extent. Furthermore, the structure of the codes, i.e. the equal representation of the functions comprised within the codes, were also taken into consideration.

Drawing on the methodology of several empirical studies (e.g. Byram, 1989, Risager, 1991, Aliakbari, 2005, Mineshima, 2008, Si Thang Kiet Ho, 2009, Juan, 2010, Kim, 2012, Liu, 2012, Oñate and Amador, 2013, Melliti, 2013), content analysis was selected as the main research method. However, as it is considered crucial not to rely merely on the analysis of a given teaching material, the method of triangulation was applied, i.e. the method of content analysis was supplemented by the methods of observation and interview.

In addition, both European and Slovak key documents in the field of FL education were analysed, in order to explore what specific requirements should be fulfilled by EFL course-books to be suitable for B1 level in terms of developing ICC. For the purpose of the documents analyses four documents were selected, as follows: the CEFR (*ibid.*) and Threshold 1990 (van Ek – Trim, *ibid.*), as well as the Slovak curricular documents, namely: The Slovak National Curriculum for the English Language ISCED 3 (Gadušová, 2011) and The Goal Standards for students taking school leaving exam of English language at level B1 (Štátny pedagogický ústav, 2012).

The results of the document analyses served to fine-tune the research instrument (See Appendice 1) for application in the course-book package analyses, the aim of which was to identify which aspects of the intercultural component were relevant because treated suitably in terms of developing ICC at B1 level. The sample consisted of materials that prepared secondary school FL learners for B1

level of language proficiency (according to the CEFR), namely: New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate Student's Book (Harris, 2006b) and New Opportunities Intermediate Student's Book (Harris, 2006a), New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate Language Power-book (Reilly, 2006) and New Opportunities Intermediate Language Power-book (Sharman, 2006) functioning as workbooks, as well as New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate Teacher's Book (Mugglestone, 2006b) and New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book (Mugglestone, 2006a).

In order to prove the suitability/unsuitability of the aspects of intercultural component in the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate course-book packages, in the next phase of the research, further data were collected through applying the method of observation. The aim of this phase of the research was to reveal which aspects of the intercultural component were developed suitably and sufficiently in the EFL lessons through the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate course-book packages. With regard to the methodology of the observations, the sample comprised fifty EFL lessons observed at four different types of secondary schools in Nitra. All the lessons were taught by teachers regularly using the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate Student's Books and Language Powerbooks. The selected materials were used during all the fifty lessons, either as the only teaching source or supplemented by other materials. During the observations, an observation schedule and the technique of field notes have been applied. Prior to the data analysis, the collected data have been categorised according to two principles: whether an ICC component was taught through the investigated student's books and workbooks, or through using other materials. However, the sample for the content analysis only contained the data achieved from the former group, i.e. the aspects developed by the examined course-book packages. The subsequent analysis has been carried out through applying the same set of categories and codes as course-book package and interview analyses. Similarly to the course-book packages, both explicit and implicit treatment of the particular aspects, and the representation of the functions within the set of components have been taken into consideration.

The aim of the interviews was to find out which aspects, in teachers' view, of the intercultural component in the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate course-book packages were relevant because suitably treated in terms of developing ICC at B1 level. With regard to the procedure of the interviews, the sample comprised twelve teachers who used the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate Student's Books and Language Powerbooks on a daily basis. The set of categories and codes, applied in the course-book package analyses as well as observation data analyses, served as a basis for the semi-structured interviews, upon which the open-ended schedule was built. In addition,

the predefined categories and codes were used for the analyses of the collected data.

Finally, the findings of the course-book analyses were juxtaposed with the results of the observations and interviews. However, as the research was primarily concerned with the content of FL course-books, and not with the content of FL lessons or with teaching techniques, content analysis was regarded as the central method of the research. In addition, since the reliability of the results gained from both the observation and the interview analyses could be distorted by the teachers, (in the sense that they might have spoken and acted in a different way during the lessons than they normally would have), in case of contradictory results, the findings of the course-book package analyses were considered more reliable than those gained from the observation or the interview analyses. However, in case of contradictory results both from the observation and the interview analyses, the reliability of the findings of the course-book package analyses was questioned.

Results and discussion

Below the findings of the course-book package analyses are contrasted with the results of the observation and interview analyses within each category of the applied research instrument, i.e. within the category of sociolinguistic, pragmatic, sociocultural and intercultural competence.

Sociolinguistic competence

It may be assumed that the treatment of none of the components of *linguistic markers of social relations* (codes No 1, 3: greetings, addressing, expletives and fillers), can be considered as suitable in the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate course-book packages. Even though greetings (code No 1) and expletives/fillers (code No 3) occurred relatively frequently, due to their almost exclusively implicit character it can be assumed that they were not treated suitably in both the course-book package and in the EFL lessons. What is more, the interviewed teachers' opinions also supported this finding. In addition, even though some explicit attention was paid to formal and informal ways of addressing (code No 2), the results of all the three sources indicated they were not sufficient; hence, its treatment was identified as merely partially suitable.

Similarly, the treatment of the aspect of *politeness conventions* (codes No 4-7: positive and negative politeness, appropriate use of please, thank you and similar expressions, impoliteness), may be considered as unsuitable or only partially suitable. Specifically, the teachers indicated that the course-books treated positive and negative politeness (codes No 3-4) to an acceptable extent, the results of both the course-book analyses and the observations however proved that they were not presented almost at all, or merely implicitly. In addition, the treatment of please,

thank you and similar expressions as well as impoliteness expressions (codes No 6-7), despite the teachers' views and the relatively high number of their occurrence during the observations, can be regarded as rather unsuitable, as these sociolinguistic markers were almost exclusively treated implicitly.

As far as *expressions of folk wisdom* (code No 8) are concerned, some controversy can be seen in the results of the three methods. Although both the course-book analyses and the observed lessons showed that they were treated both explicitly and implicitly to a sufficient extent, surprisingly, the teachers considered their treatment only partially suitable. They pointed out that there was lack of practice for the development of this issue, in addition, proverbs and quotations were not catered for at all. However, these statements may be contradicted, as every unit in the investigated student's books and workbooks contains at least one exercise focused on phrasal verbs; in addition, discussing the meaning of a proverb or a quote is a regular task in the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate Student's Books. Furthermore, the discourses of the analysed materials were also rich in idioms and phrasal verbs. Therefore, the treatment of the given aspect can be found suitable in terms of developing ICC at B1 level.

In connection to *register differences* (code No 9), a high consensus can be seen, as these were treated not only implicitly, but also explicitly both in the course-books and during the observed lessons. In addition, teachers also claimed that they were satisfied with the extent of attention given to this issue. What is more, in correspondence with the Slovakian and European key documents, the majority of the discourses were written in neutral style. Furthermore, the differences between informal and formal registers were also catered for sufficiently.

Finally, the treatment of *dialect and accent* (code No 10) differences can be considered only partially suitable, due to relatively little attention paid to the differences between the varieties of English. However, in accordance with the Slovakian and European key documents, the dominant accent of the course-book package was RP and FL learners could also experience listening to some other standard varieties, as well as to slightly-coloured regional speech.

Pragmatic competence

The results of all the three methods proved that the treatment of *discourse competence, imparting and seeking factual information, expressing and finding out factual attitudes* (codes No 11-13) and *expressing modality* can be identified as suitable in terms of developing ICC at B1 level. They were catered for both implicitly and explicitly and to a sufficient extent not only in the course-book packages, but also during the EFL lessons, in which the given materials were used. In addition, the teachers' opinions supported the appropriateness of these codes.

Although both the teachers and the EFL lessons proved the opposite, *expressing emotions* (code No 17) was not suitably treated in either component of the course-book package. With *expressing knowledge* (code No 14), *expressing volition* (code No 16) and *suasion* (code No 18) the interviewees claimed that they were appropriately catered for, on the other hand, the results of the content analyses and the observation showed that that they were either treated implicitly, and if treated explicitly, only to a lesser extent. Therefore, the presentation of these aspects can only be regarded as partially suitable.

Treatment of *socialising* (code No 19) and *communication repair* (code No 21) can be regarded as not suitable in terms of developing ICC at B1 level, both in case of the course-book packages and the EFL lessons. In addition, the interviewed teachers also agreed on neglect of these components throughout the course. Similarly, with *structuring discourse* (code No 20) and *interaction schemata* (codes No 22) they expressed dissatisfaction with the extent of treatment in the investigated course-book packages. Although some examples of the given codes could be traced both in the course-book package and during the observations, their treatment cannot be regarded as particularly suitable.

Sociocultural competence

Unlike the results of the course-book analyses, the treatment of *low culture – everyday living* and *high culture – arts* (codes No 23-24), based on the teacher's opinions and the observations proved that knowledge of the given aspects can be extended to a significant extent with the help of the chosen teaching materials. It may be explained by the fact that, on the one hand, everyday life issues and information on arts occurred to a relatively great extent mainly in comparison with the other components of sociocultural knowledge. However, the investigated functions of *low culture – everyday living* were represented very unequally as the majority of the information focused on sports and media. On the other hand, all the examined issues comprised in the *high culture – arts* aspect occurred almost equally frequently and covered a lot of facts related to film, literature and music. Hence, despite partial appropriateness in representing *low culture – everyday living* and *high culture – arts*, their treatment can be regarded as suitable.

Living conditions (code No 25) and *social conventions and rituals* (code No 28), in the interviewed teachers' opinions, were treated partially suitably; however, neither the course-book analyses nor the observations supported this viewpoint. Both aspects can be thus regarded as rather unsuitable. In addition, *interpersonal relations, major values and attitudes*, and *body language* (code No 27-29) cannot be considered appropriate either, as it was revealed in all the three types of investigation.

In terms of the treatment of *prosodic qualities* (code No 30) rather controversial results were identified. Firstly, although treated both explicitly and implicitly and

adequately in the investigated student's books, their overall treatment was evaluated as only partially suitable, due to inappropriate attention given to them in the workbooks. However, in the teachers' views, their representation was assessed as suitable. Yet, during the observed lessons they were given negligible attention. The explanation may be found in the teachers' attitude in other words, the teachers simply did not tackle the issues of stress and intonation during the observations at all. To sum up, despite the discussed findings, the treatment of prosodic qualities can be considered as suitable.

Intercultural competence

Generally, it is possible to conclude that the representation of none of the aspects of intercultural competence was particularly relevant in terms of developing ICC at B1 level. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that they were not catered for at all. Even though the other components of the course-book package (workbooks and the teacher's book) did not devote significant attention to them, *the role of the first culture and understanding of similarities and differences between the target and the home culture* (codes No 31-32) were treated to a relatively sufficient extent in the student's books. As opposed to these results, according to the majority of the teachers, none of the aspects was suitably treated. In addition, none of the four aspects occurred during the EFL lessons either; neither when the New Opportunities nor when the supplementary materials were used. Thus, it might be concluded that in terms of the teaching objectives, intercultural competence was not ranked as teachers' priority. In addition, it also evokes the idea that the interviewees might not be completely aware of the potentials which the investigated course-book packages possess; since comparing the target and the home culture, as well as making students aware of their own culture were regular issues within the so called "Culture Corner" sessions comprised in every unit.

Conclusion

Based on the above summarised findings and in order to draw conclusion, it seems to be reasonable to create three groups of the examined codes. The first group includes those aspects of the intercultural component whose representation and treatment may be considered as ***relevant because suitably treated*** in terms of developing ICC at B1 level in the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate course-book packages, such as: *expressions of folk wisdom* (code No 8), *register differences* (code No 9), *discourse competences, imparting and seeking factual information, expressing and finding out factual attitudes* (codes No 11-13), *expressing modality* (code No 15), *expressing emotions* (code 17), *high culture – arts* (code No 24), *prosodic qualities* (code No 30).

The second group comprises so called **partially relevant** aspects (i.e. treated either to an insufficient extent or chiefly implicitly), as follows: *addressing* (code No 2), *dialect and accent* (code No 10), *expressing knowledge* (code No 14), *expressing volition* (code No 16), *suasion* (code No 18), *structuring discourse* (code No 20), *interaction schemata* (codes No 22), *low culture – everyday living, the role of the first culture and understanding of similarities and differences between the target and the home culture* (codes No 31-32).

Finally, the third group contains aspects whose representation and treatment were identified as **irrelevant because unsuitably treated** (i.e. treated both to an insufficient extent and chiefly implicitly), such as: *greetings* (code No 1), *expletives/fillers* (code No 3), *positive and negative politeness, appropriate use of please, thank you and similar expressions, impoliteness* (codes No 4-7), *socialising* (code No 19), *communication repair* (code No 21), *living conditions* (code No 25), *social conventions and rituals* (code No 28), *interpersonal relations, major values and attitudes*, and *body language* (codes No 27-29), *overcoming stereotypes and fostering cultural sensitivity* (codes No 33-34).

Recommendations

In the light of the results, the following recommendations might be worth taking into consideration.

First of all, teachers using the New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate Course-book Packages should be presented the results of the present study showing that some ICC aspects (See above) are suitably developed. However, it also seems to be advisable that teachers be instructed in ways of exploiting the course-book potential to the maximum or be given advice about the ways of exploiting other sources. Secondly, teachers using the investigated teaching material should be trained how to cope with the insufficient treatment of some ICC aspects (See above). In addition, they should be also instructed how to supplement the course-book with other materials and activities in order to develop the above-mentioned ICC aspects effectively. Furthermore, teachers using the given course-book packages should be informed about the fact that some ICC aspects (See above) are not treated appropriately in these course-book passages. Hence, they should be encouraged to use extra materials and activities in order to develop these aspects effectively. Moreover, teachers who want to select suitable course-book packages should be encouraged to opt for such packages that cater for a variety of ICC aspects suitably. Last but not least, teachers should be motivated to regularly participate in methodology seminars or workshops in order to keep up with the latest research findings and improve their skills both in terms of developing ICC and evaluating course-book packages. In addition, they should be motivated to constantly expand their own knowledge of the target country culture.

As far as course-book writers are concerned, it seems to be of significant importance that they be informed about the research on this area (including the present research findings), about the aim of FLE today, which is to develop interculturally competent speakers of a given language; hence, the aspects of ICC need to be taken into consideration when writing course-books. In addition, course-book writers should be familiarised with the research findings indicating that the given aspects be treated both implicitly and explicitly and be offered sufficient practice in order to be developed effectively. Finally, the authors of teacher's books should learn about the necessity to provide detailed and adequate methodological guidance and especially, sufficient background knowledge on all the aspects of ICC, (not only high culture, i.e. arts).

Finally, with regard to teacher training programmes, it seems to be essential that EFL methodology courses to EFL teacher trainees pay considerable attention to the development of the given ICC aspects. Secondly, within the EFL methodology, undergraduate students should also be trained in terms of evaluating and selecting course-book packages that would contribute to the development of ICC. In addition, they should be taught how to supplement or replace unsuitable parts of course-book packages.

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Contact

Mgr. Zuzana Sándorová, PhD.

Department of Tourism, Faculty of Central European Studies,

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

Dražovská 4, Nitra 949 74, Slovakia

zsandorova@ukf.sk

Appendix

Aspects of intercultural communicative competence with assigned codes used in the content analyses based on the CEFR (ibid.), Threshold 1990 (ibid.), ISCED 3 (ibid.) and the Goal Standards (ibid.)

CATEGORY	CODE N.	CODE
Sociolinguistic competence	1	Greetings (CEFR, ibid., p. 119)
	2	Addressing (ibid.)
	3	Using expletives (ibid.) and fillers (SERR, ibid., p.120)
	4	Positive politeness (CEFR, ibid.)
	5	Negative politeness (ibid.)
	6	Appropriate use of thank you and please (ibid.)
	7	Impoliteness (ibid., p. 119-120)
	8	Expressions of folk wisdom (ibid., p. 120)
	9	Register differences (ibid.)
	10	Dialect, accent (ibid., p. 121)
Pragmatic competence	11	Discourse competence (ibid., p. 123)
	12	Imparting and seeking factual information (ibid., 126)
	13	Expressing and finding out factual attitudes (ibid., p. 126)
	14	Expressing knowledge (ibid.)
	15	Expressing modality (ibid.)
	16	Expressing volition (ibid.)
	17	Expressing emotions (ibid.)
	18	Suasion (ibid.)
	19	Socialising (CEFR, ibid., van Ek - Trim, ibid.)
	20	Structuring discourse (van Ek - Trim, ibid., p. 42-45)
	21	Communication repair (van Ek - Trim, ibid., p. 45-47)
	22	Interaction schemata (ibid., p. 126)
Sociocultural competence	23	Low culture – Everyday living (van Ek – Trim, ibid., p. 95)
	24	High culture – arts (CEFR, ibid.,)
	25	Living conditions (van Ek – Trim, ibid.)
	26	Interpersonal relations (ibid., p. 96)

	27	Major values and attitudes (ibid., p. 96)
	28	Social conventions and rituals (ibid.)
	29	Body language (ibid.)
	30	Prosodic qualities (ibid.)
Intercultural competence	31	Role of first culture in developing ICC - Reinforcing cultural identity
	32	Understanding of the similarities and differences between the target and the home culture;
	33	Overcoming stereotypes
	34	Fostering cultural sensitivity towards other cultures

EFL teacher professional change in India

Helen B. Toraskar, Centennial College (HKU Group), Hong Kong
Helen.toraskar@Centennialcollege.hku.hk

Abstract

This article examines teacher professional change and compares two 10th standard English as a Foreign Language teachers employed in a Marathi-medium secondary school in Pune (India) at different stages in their careers. Wenger's (1998) three interconnected Community of Practice dimensions (i.e. mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire) highlight pertinent facets of the teachers' professional lives as viewed from the sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978). Case study methodology was utilized within a qualitative, ethnographic research paradigm. The aim is to uncover how the two EFL teachers engage in their professional community of practice and their career trajectories. Firstly, the data analysis indicates that periphery member status is established through active engagement in the professional community which creates trajectories along which novices may travel. Secondly, the accessing and sharing of information, ideas and experiences is beneficial for all members as it strengthens professional relationships and reconfirms already existing members' central position. Lastly, active engagement in a professional community of practice offers a means of potential growth for novice teachers and central members. Access to communal resources such as new knowledge, stories and artifacts is acquired and aids in establishing novices' competency.

Key words: Sociocultural perspective; professional community of practice; EFL teaching; novice EFL teacher; professional change

Introduction

This study focuses on two tenth standard EFL teachers, namely Mr. L. (an expert EFL teacher) and Mrs. So (a novice EFL teacher), who are at different stages in their teaching careers in the same Marathi-medium secondary school in the Pune district. The school in this study adheres to the tenth standard syllabus for English as a third language in Maharashtra. The aim is to understand the transformation they have experienced during their professional lives and to demonstrate how these experiences have contributed to such change. Professional transformation is examined through the lens of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire which Wenger (1998) identified as three

interconnected dimensions of a Community of Practice (CoP). These elements are employed to highlight significant facets of the teachers' professional lives from the sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978).

Thus, the stance adopted here is that learning to teach is a developmental process which is dialectical in nature and which is embedded within the sociocultural context. Of significance is that the process of transformation is not envisioned as a group of isolated incidents occurring one after the other. Teacher transformation arises from the tension that exists between two elements (i.e. "social competence and personal experience") of social learning systems, and which is reflected in the dialectical nature of the relationship within the sociocultural context (Wenger, 2000). What is portrayed is the willingness of these two teachers to pursue and accommodate professional change within their work CoP.

The two EFL teachers participate as members of their professional CoP by engaging in collaboration with colleagues and others both within and outside the school context. For example, teachers in Maharashtra are required to participate in in-service teacher training outside the school context when the syllabus is modified every five years. The sharing of knowledge and skills among the participating teachers and teacher trainers was considered to be a bonus in attending such programs. However, Mrs. So was unable to attend any in-service teacher training to date as she had been on maternity leave.

Sociocultural context

The state of Maharashtra in India is bordered by the Sahyadri mountain range of the Western Ghats, the Deccan plateau and the river valleys to the east. Maharashtra is one of the most economically advanced states of India which hosts a vibrant urban industry and rural agriculture (Sinclair, 1995, p.130). The city of Pune is located in Maharashtra and the Pune culture has strong ties to both Hinduism and the caste system. The Pune sociocultural context is culturally and linguistically rich with values and practices of a historical nature. The local Pune culture exhibits the features of a collectivist culture as it places a high value on family and community rather than on the individual (Toraskar, 2015).

The implicit expectation in collectivist cultures is that any successful relationship evolves over time into a more personal one (Ageyev, 2003, p.439) and this underscores the engagement of the two EFL teachers, namely Mr. L and Mrs. So in their professional community of practice. Therefore, every social interaction originates as a formal, official relationship and evolves into a more personal, dynamic relationship. The interactions which evolve between the EFL teachers, students, colleagues, school administrators and the local community exemplify the relationships which exist in a collectivist culture. The formal teacher-student relationships observed in the EFL classroom stand in stark contrast to the warm

rapport between teachers and students outside of the classroom and are characteristic of a collectivist culture (Toraskar, 2015). Thus, in the Pune culture, it is the social group to which one belongs which takes precedence over the individual's needs and which forges strong ties to both the immediate and extended family and also the local community. This notion of "cultural inclusiveness" is best expressed in the ancient Indian concept of *vasudhaiva kutumbakum* which means that the world is one family (Dasgupta and Lal, 2007).

The changing view of English

It is essential to examine the metamorphosis of the public's view of English in order to fully understand the sociocultural context in which these two teachers live their professional lives. From the early 1800's beginning with the arrival of the missionaries, India has witnessed a rise in the use of the English language in areas such as administration, judiciary and the medium of education (Agnihotri, 2007). The sociocultural context of the past had labeled the English language as the language of the colonizers and a language which belongs to the firangi (i.e. foreigner). English was used as a symbol of prestige among the elite as a means of exploitation of the masses. Although the historical sociocultural context thus described is not erroneous, today a new view has emerged helped along by the emergence of information technology and India's developing economy. The view of 'English as a colonizer's language' has been replaced with the view of 'English as a tool of economic empowerment and social equality' for all, especially the poor.

Krishnaswamy and Krishnaswamy (2006) support the view that English is the language of the world-wide web and the Info-Age. They claim that the Indian mindset has shifted away from the view of English as a beacon of colonialism. Today, Hindi is recognized as an "intranational lingua franca" and official language, whereas English is regarded as an "associate official language" and an "international lingua franca" (Agnihotri, 2007, p. 199). English is now perceived as a tool with which to communicate internationally and to locate job opportunities in the global market. The Indian public nowadays perceives English as a "culturally neutral tool of communication" (p. 158). The possibility of future economic prosperity has removed the fear that the learning of English endangers the Indian identity and results in westernization. The highly-valuable market skills of the twenty-first century require individuals to have strong oral and written English communication skills essential for lucrative employment such as call-centre jobs, a fact which the public has clearly understood.

Knowledge of Pune community life, both past and present, its customs, values and practices are essential for the EFL teacher. The degree to which such information can be successfully integrated into the daily teaching of EFL is an indicator of the skill and knowledge of the teacher to adapt the textbook content

to the lesson and to use relevant examples from the sociocultural context to generate student interest in the content of the lesson (Toraskar, 2015).

The families

Many of the parents in the school are employed as farmers, street-vendors or maids and their children may be the first in the family to have completed a tenth standard education. The farmers' children are usually required to work on the farm or at home and are not encouraged to continue with their education which is a financial burden for the family. Female students are married at an early age and are more likely not to be encouraged by their families to proceed beyond tenth standard. However, the parents are now beginning to realize the importance of the tenth standard SSC examination.

Mr. L and Mrs. So identify and attend to the needs of their students' parents, which are as equally important as the SSC (i.e. tenth standard Secondary School Certificate) examination results. For some parents, the EFL lesson is much more than simply good SSC examination results. They know that today English is 'the language of the world' and 'the language of the internet' and that it can free their family from the cycle of poverty in which they live. In addition, the parents want their children to be sufficiently educated to be able to use the language in practical situations such as in the banks and post offices in Maharashtra. Furthermore, the child's ability to use English is a matter of parental pride as their child can be publicly seen and heard using English which was once a symbol of the elite in society. Consequently, both the parents and the teachers do not place much value in teacher awards, such as the 'Ideal Teacher Award' but instead look towards the financial and career opportunities which a sound knowledge of the English language offers students.

The Pune School

The Marathi-medium secondary school in this study is located in the semi-rural Pune district of Maharashtra and the school is affected by the socio-economic conditions of the surrounding area. These socio-economic conditions impact the schools and the teachers who are employed in these schools by presenting a range of challenges in providing quality education for the students. For example, Marathi-medium schools are state funded and usually financially underfunded. The school principals must depend on their own resources and imagination to fund the school even if this involves collecting door-to-door donations from the local community. Although today the area is developing economically, limited opportunity still exists in acquiring school donations from either local families or businesses compared to schools in economically developed areas of the Pune district.

The influence of the MoI on students extends beyond classroom instruction and the SSC examination. Marathi students who cannot communicate in English experience difficulty succeeding in job interviews where some questions are asked in English. Their low level of English language proficiency limits their employability and career choices and traps them in a cycle of poverty, depriving them of the opportunity to benefit from India's emerging economy. Thus, it is unsurprising that educators at all levels and parents are eager for students to reap the perceived benefits of the English language. At a societal level, these students must amass the skills, particularly in English, to participate in and support the infrastructure which India badly needs to move into the competing global markets of the twenty-first century.

The tenth standard EFL teachers

The teachers who work in Marathi-medium government schools are overworked and underpaid and may even lack teaching qualifications. Class size in the semi-rural areas of Maharashtra may range from forty to fifty students. The teachers who work in these schools have received a Marathi-medium education and the school is staffed by Maharashtrians. The tenth standard syllabus which is designed by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Education in Pune is fast-paced and heavy in semester one to accommodate the revision schedule in semester two and the many local festivals and school activities. As a result, the tenth standard teachers must complete the teaching of one unit from the EFL coursebook each month until all units are covered. They are required to teach additional EFL lessons to cover the syllabus between June and December so that students can take the SSC examination in March in semester two.

The necessity for students to use and hear English in class is propagated by the Pune B.Ed. program which insists on English-only classrooms and the exclusion of the regional languages. During classroom observations, school officials pay attention to the medium of instruction used in the EFL lesson. However, the tenth standard classroom reality involves using both English and Marathi in Marathi-medium secondary schools (Toraskar, 2015). Interestingly, school officials use the MoI as a measure of the teacher's knowledge and ability to teach the English language. Teachers are evaluated using the Teacher's Confidential Report form which asks the headmaster to comment (in written form) on the teacher's MoI. The EFL teachers are also assessed on their honesty, public relations and faults (if any) and classroom performance and duties 'other' than teaching. This includes their subject knowledge; ability to explain; question students; provide examples to students; motivate students; class control; discipline; relationship with students, teachers and co-workers. Other Duties include an interest in extra-curricular activities e.g. sports, PE, Scout organizations; Empathy, earnestness, loyalty and

dedication; honesty, moral character, obedience, punctuality and punishments or rewards received

The EFL teachers in this study experience pressure to teach using only English as the MoI from various stakeholders in the Pune community. On the other hand, there is the reality of the EFL classroom where the majority of rural students experience problems with an English only classroom situation and the ensuing silence it produces. Both teachers were observed using Marathi and English at different stages of their classroom instruction. The reasons given ranged from helping students understand the lesson to keeping the students interested and motivated.

In-service teacher training

Mr. L and Mrs. So believe that participation in the in-service teacher training programs as part of their work CoP is an advantageous learning experience. For example, they cited learning about the changes to the syllabus and how to effect these changes in classroom instruction. In addition, the exchange of ideas among their peers and the teacher-trainers running these programs resulted in teachers developing an awareness of best teaching practices and an awareness that each teacher has their own style of teaching.

B.Ed. Teacher training

The B.Ed. qualification and a B.A. is an educational starting point for teachers in Maharashtra and it is the minimum qualification for teaching in Marathi-medium secondary schools in the Pune area today. Although Mrs. So and Mr. L are supporters of the B.Ed. program as a compulsory teacher qualification (#1, Q.18) yet they recognize that the B.Ed. program has certain inadequacies. For example, Mr. L. referred to a gap in the B.Ed. program which does not address the administrative part of a tenth standard teacher's workload. In addition, Mrs. So questioned the usefulness of the B.Ed. program for teaching tenth standard. For example, she claimed that when she was studying in the B.Ed. program, she was instructed to teach only one paragraph in each EFL lesson, to use teaching aids and to ask the students many questions. However, she now believes from drawing on her experience of teaching tenth standard students that she will not be able to finish teaching the syllabus if she adheres to the B.Ed. advice, especially as the syllabus has "Too much load.". The commonly held belief is that teachers will learn the administrative side of their work when they are employed in the secondary schools. In other words, the B.Ed. program is out of sync with the teaching reality of the school environment (Toraskar, 2015).

The relevance of the sociocultural context

Tsui (2003) points out that the skills and knowledge which teachers develop are intimately connected to the contexts in which they work and also to the teacher's own personal background. Furthermore, there is a dialectical relationship between the development of teacher's knowledge and the specific context in which they work, which at the same time fashions the contexts in which their knowledge is formed. According to Vygotsky (1978) where the mind is considered to be an entity which is constantly changing according to the socially and culturally shaped contexts in which it finds itself at any given time, it is this participation in the social and cultural milieu which makes us what we are. Therefore an essential aspect in understanding teacher change and learning is to examine the sociocultural context in which teachers live and work.

Support for the relevance of the sociocultural context is found in the work of Sternberg and Grigorenko (1999) who conducted field research in the slums of the city of Lucknow in India. They support the stance that the contextual relevance of a research site is of extreme importance in conducting field research. In fact, Sternberg and Grigorenko are convinced that "We [researchers] have an opportunity to see life through the eyes of those whom we seek to understand." (p.20). Therefore, it is essential to understand the local context in which the teachers work and live in order to fully comprehend the transformation they experience in their professional lives.

Theoretical perspectives

One of the most significant theories to emerge from the domain of situated or social learning theory is the concept of a community of practice which has been employed not only as an explanatory framework for learning but also as a means to metaphorically explore instruction (Hoadley, 2012). Although Lave and Wenger (1991) are credited as the originators of the community of practice notion, the work of others such as Brown and Duguid (1991), Orr (1990) and Constant (1987) make reference to the concept.

Hoadley (2012) identifies two definitions emanating from Lave and Wenger's work (1991) which are defined as a 'feature-based definition' and a 'process-based definition'. The feature-based definition of a community of practice is one which adopts a more anthropological perspective of knowledge and situated learning which exists between cultures and individuals and involves practices in context. Therefore, the community shares its practices and learning is situated in a problem-solving context. It involves tacit knowledge which "could only be made explicit through social processes in the context of an actual problem." (Hoadley, 2012, p. 288). Lave and Wenger's (1991) major breakthrough which is corroborated by Orr (1990) is that learning is entrenched in cultural practices in authentic contexts of practice.

The second definition of a community of practice attributed to Lave and Wenger is defined as a process-based definition. According to the process-based community of practice “the process of knowledge generation, application, and reproduction, is that communities of practice are groups in which a constant process of legitimate peripheral participation takes place.” (Hoadley, 2012, p. 290). Learners, such as the teachers in this study, enter a community of practice and over time continuously adopt the central practices of the group in which they hold membership through their legitimate peripheral participation. This means that for learning to occur, learners must have access to expert practices and experts; the community of practice must already be in existence and have a shared history and identity (Barab & Duffy, 1998) and learners must be afforded space for legitimate peripheral participation (Hoadley, 2012).

Wenger’s (2000) conceptual framework is used to examine EFL teacher change as a process which is determined as social in nature. The rationale for adopting Wenger’s social theory of learning is based on Vygotsky’s (1978) theory whereby learning is fundamentally social in nature and is mediated by culture. Furthermore, at the heart of Vygotsky’s theory is the principle of dialectical logic whereby the only constant is change and phenomena are viewed as “processes in motion” (Mann, 2012, p. 103). In Vygotsky’s words, “To study something historically means to study it in motion. Precisely this is the basic requirement of the dialectical method.” (1997, p.43).

Therefore, the activities in which Mr. L and Mrs. So engage necessitate critically examining the origin and path of development of these activities as they participate in their professional community of practice (CoP). According to Lave and Wenger, a CoP “does imply participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities.” (1991, p. 98). Therefore, Wenger (2000) defines “social competence and personal experience” as two components of social learning systems. He determines that learning occurs whenever there is tension between the two components and that it is this tension which underscores the dialectical nature of the relationship.

Community of Practice (CoP)

Communities of practice have existed wherever and whenever humans have practiced learning and knowing together. The collective nature of learning and the engagement in the process shapes and sustains a community of practice. However, learning can be the result of the interactions (or lack of interaction) between members or it may be the reason why the community is formed in the first place. The point is that learning is incidental and not intentional to a community of practice. For example, EFL teachers who interact with one another in a school

setting may support and learn from one another and this could result in learning, yet at the same time such interactions provide emotional support for one another.

Membership in a given community of practice, of which there are many for each individual, positions each member within a community. Some members weave in and out of communities along tumultuous trajectories and exist as core or central members whereas others exist as peripheral members. Lave and Wenger (1991) claim that participation in the practices of a community is the basic, prominent feature of learning. Thus, a “community of practice” (CoP) is defined as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p.98). Wenger et al. (2002) identify three elements of a community of practice which are domain, community and practice. The domain element spans the every day know-how to professional expertise. Community is the interaction which occurs between people, including the learning and building of relationships within a specific environment. Lastly, practice consists of the tools, documents and ideas which the members share.

Learning in a CoP

Learning occurs regardless of whether we are novices, experts or old-timers. Learning always involves the components Wenger identified as social competence and personal experience and which he explains as “the *competence* that our communities have established over time (i.e. what it takes to act and be recognized as a competent member), and our ongoing *experience* of the world as a member (in the context of a given community and beyond).” (2000, p. 227). Therefore, this research examines the participation of Mr. L. and Mrs. So in their professional community of practice (CoP) using Wenger’s three elements as a lens which define competence, i.e. *joint enterprise*, *mutual engagement* and *shared repertoire*. These elements are explained as follows.

Firstly, according to Wenger, competence is defined by a community of practice through the uniting of these “three elements”. Therefore, “...members are bound together by their collectively developed understanding of what their community is about and they hold each other accountable to this sense of *joint enterprise*. To be competent is to understand the enterprise well enough to be able to contribute to it.” (2000, p.229). Wenger identified the second element as *mutual engagement* which is how members build their community. Wenger opines that “They interact with one another, establishing norms and relationships of *mutuality* that reflect these interactions. To be competent is to be able to engage with the community and be trusted as a partner in these interactions.” (2000, p. 229). According to Wenger, the third element he identified as a *shared repertoire* which is the communal resources the communities of practice have produced. These include “language, routines, sensibilities, artifacts, tools, stories, styles, etc. To be

competent is to have access to this repertoire and be able to use it appropriately.” (2000, 220).

The study

This study aims to illustrate the trajectories along which Mr. L and Mrs. So have traveled where learning is situated within the specific professional experiences of joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire. The teachers’ quotes are reported verbatim.

Research questions

The three research questions which guided this study were (a) what is the nature of the professional transformation, (b) what is the impetus behind the professional transformation and (c) how is the professional transformation framed within the work CoP?

Methodology

Case study methodology (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) was employed to examine the professional development of two tenth standard EFL teachers in a Marathi-medium government-sponsored secondary school in the Pune district of Maharashtra (India). Ethnography was deemed highly appropriate due to its orientation to the understanding of culture, local contexts and the role of triangulation in incorporating different points of view (Hornberger, 1994; Davis & Lazaraton, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 2008). A sociocultural approach was used to analyse the professional transformation of the EFL teachers as they live and work in the Pune context (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Johnston, 1994). Mr. L is an expert teacher (Toraskar, 2015) and his career trajectories placed him as a central member of the school and the teaching community in comparison with Mrs. So, a novice teacher who had less than one year of teaching experience at the time of the study. In comparison, Mrs. So is accorded periphery member status by the school and the teaching community. Thus Mr. L and Mrs. So, in their own words, illustrate their practice and the professional trajectories each teacher undertakes which are socially and culturally situated.

Data sources

The primary data set consists of one initial teacher interview for Mr. L. and Mrs. So which was approximately fifty-five minutes in length with follow-up interviews conducted approximately 40 minutes in length. One B.Ed. College teacher trainer was interviewed (i.e. currently teaching in the English college stream) from a local B.Ed. college in the Pune area (approximately 45 minutes in length); one school supervisor interview (approximately twenty-five minutes in length); one school principal interview (approximately 25 minutes). A Participant General

Information survey, which was a 15-item survey was used to collect background information on the EFL teachers such as: age; education; number of years teaching experience; professional development; teacher training and whether they had received any awards.

On-site classroom observations were conducted for each 10th standard EFL teacher which were videotaped. One cameraman was employed to videotape the lessons using a digital camera and focusing mainly on the teacher. Each EFL lesson recorded in the study was reviewed in India and completely transcribed verbatim in Hong Kong. Researcher notes were used as an aid in comprehending the videotapes. Semi-structured audio-taped interviews of the two EFL teachers were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire which included questions related to the dimensions of teacher's classroom practice such as their personal convictions as influenced by their life experiences; learning and teaching experiences; academic background; professional development; pedagogical content knowledge and the dialectical relation between teachers' knowledge and their world of practice. The interviews took place on the same day as the classroom observation or one or two days later. Once transcripts had been produced for the initial interviews of the two teachers, the transcripts were then carefully read and follow-up interviews (semi-structured, audio-taped) were then conducted. In addition, various school-related artifacts were collected throughout the data collection process and these included the teachers' lesson plans, teacher evaluation forms, the tenth standard syllabus, the 10th standard English language textbook (Third Language) and Researcher field notes.

Participants

The rationale for selecting Mr. L and Mrs. So for the study was based on the particular stage of their professional lives. Furthermore, Mr. L. had been identified as an expert teacher (Toraskar, 2015) who was mid-career whereas Mrs. So was identified as a novice teacher who was at the beginning of her teaching career. A more detailed description of the two EFL teachers is provided below.

Analysis

The analysis of the semi-structured, audio-taped interview data employed Strauss and Corbin's (1998) grounded theory approach which involved open and axial coding of relevant themes associated with professional change. Furthermore, thematic analysis was conducted using the axial codes as a guide (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and pertinent themes were identified which were congruent with the research questions. The entire data analysis process was recursive in nature and involved triangulation of the data.

Findings and discussion

The following two case studies will address the three dimensions of practice of a professional CoP in a semi-rural school in the Pune district. These dimensions include 1) joint enterprise 2) mutual engagement and 3) a shared repertoire.

Case study: Mr. L

Mr. L is identified as a central member his professional CoP who is currently teaching tenth standard secondary school students in the Pune area (Toraskar, 2015). Mr. L. is in his early forties and he had been teaching EFL for more than fifteen years. He was the English department head at the time of this study. His formal qualifications include a B.Ed., a B.A. and an M.A. in English. In addition, he had received the Ideal Teacher Award which is awarded by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) to outstanding teachers in recognition of their teaching ability.

The tenth standard syllabus for English as a third language in Maharashtra is modified every five years. Changes to the syllabus necessitate the organizing and scheduling of in-service teacher training programs which are important events and where teacher attendance is mandatory. Mr. L is a proponent of such programs because he recognizes the potential for learning from his participation in and contribution to his professional community. In Mr. L's words: "Training programs are most important because without training programs, teachers are unable to know the new trends of the syllabus and the new techniques of the syllabus, how the paper [SSC examination paper] should be arranged and all the facts. Without training the teacher is unable to understand [the new syllabus]." (FI, Q1)

Mr. L is explaining what Wenger defines as the *joint enterprise* dimension, how the communal resources are shared and also how participants contribute in shaping these resources. He understands the relevance of teachers' engaging in and working towards the common aim of comprehending the modified syllabus content, how to teach it and how the SSC examination is set. In other words, Mr. L, as a competent member of the professional CoP participates in and contributes to his professional CoP. Any modifications to the tenth standard syllabus are conveyed to teachers through participation in such training programs and a lack of attendance is discouraged.

In-service teacher training programs offer members an opportunity to strengthen and develop the CoP. According to Mr. L, "The first benefit is that other teachers [are] from different schools...Everyone has different styles, different methods, their knowledge and we can communicate with each other. So, we discuss in the training program...They are talking with each other, sharing our thoughts, techniques, methods. Everyone has some good qualities that we can get chance to learn it [best teaching practices]." (FI#1, Q30)

Mr. L is referring to how the teachers mutually engage with one another and the potential to learn from such interactions. He continued, "This person [teacher-trainer] was telling," You [teachers] should introduce this one [topic] in this way into the class.", but we teachers try to tell that this is the way you are talking, teaching us to teach. But amongst the teachers there are some different kinds of experiences and other teacher they also confirm. And everyone's style is different and in the training program I think the discussion, because a lot of teachers from different schools, they have different ideas, with different styles. It helps them, their experiences. It is more useful for us, helpful for us." (II, 2.4)

Mr. L has learned from his experiences that the key to successful mutual engagement among teachers is grounded in communication, collaboration and the sharing of teaching-related knowledge and ideas. Competent members come into existence through their relationships of mutuality with other members of the CoP and are viewed as a trusted partner in these social interactions. At the same time it is essential to be sufficiently open-minded in accommodating any differences between members in order to fully maximize the learning potential of the situation.

Mr. L recalled how communal teaching knowledge was shared with him by his B.Ed. teacher trainer. The sharing had occurred after Mr. L was observed in class during his practicals (i.e. teaching practice) when he was teaching vocabulary. His lecturer introduced him to the specific language which EFL teachers employ during his feedback session. Mr. L said, "And that lecturer told me "Don't call it difficult word. It is a new word." I got that idea. Yes, every word is easy. You can call it new. It is new for us. That's why we think it is difficult. But that is not the difficult one. It is a new word." (FI#2, Q.5)

Mr. L is recalling an interaction which occurred between two members of the same CoP (i.e. the EFL teacher trainer and Mr. L) and the sharing of communal resources or in this case, jargon (i.e. new word) which facilitates student learning. Wenger referred to this activity as a *shared repertoire* of communal resources produced by a CoP and which now constitutes a past event or story which was shared with the researcher. It further establishes the peripheral position of Mr. L as a student-teacher compared to his lecturer who was a fully-fledged member of the teaching CoP.

Case study: Mrs. So

Mrs. So is a novice teacher and peripheral member of her professional CoP. She was in her mid-twenties and had completed only one year of tenth standard teaching at the start of this study. Mrs. So had been asked to teach tenth standard English when the school's tenth standard teacher had resigned and as a result she had faced many challenges. For example, she was afraid to teach the tenth standard syllabus although she had attained both a B.A. and a B.Ed. in English prior to her

employment with the school. Her fear was rooted in the belief that the syllabus was 'very large' and the insurmountable pressure on her to teach within the designated timeframe. Mrs. So had not participated in any in-service teacher training courses as she had taken maternity leave after her first year of employment.

Mrs. So was a new addition to the teaching profession and as such she was not defined as a competent member of her work CoP due to her peripheral status. Therefore she relied on more competent members or 'insiders', such as the school principal, Mr. Po and Mr. L to offer positive reinforcement based on their collective understanding and sense of *joint enterprise* of their CoP: "My role model is the Head of our department, Mr. L sir and our principal, Mr. Po sir. They, both of two [them] always encouraged me. You do this! You do this! You have the abilities to do this so don't fear." (FI#2, Q.25)

Veenman (1984, p. 184) refers to novice teachers in their first year of teaching as suffering from "reality shock" when they experience the reality of the school context. This may explain Mrs. So's fear with her limited participation in her school and her professional CoP. Consequently, she relied on Mr. L and Mr. Po as more competent members to provide support and assistance which in turn verified their acceptance of her into the professional community. She was able to draw upon her interactions with these more competent members in their mentorship role to allay her fears of teaching tenth standard English and to receive positive reinforcement of her potential to fully participate in the future. It was their encouragement, support and faith in her ability as a tenth standard teacher and learning to teach that helped establish her as a new, albeit peripheral member who had the potential to become a competent member of their CoP.

Two challenges Mrs. So faced in the first year of teaching which was her lack of support and social interaction with the lower level administrative staff (i.e. peons) and her colleagues. "...But the peons, they do not listen to what I say. Then I feel very sorry. But the second year, everybody help me." (FI#1, Q.68). Mrs. So said "They [the peons] thought that I'm going [to leave]. I'm not staying." (FI#1, Q.69). "Because there were no English teacher for ten years. Nobody stay there" (FI#1, Q.70).

In describing her interactions with her colleagues, Mrs. So had cited that there was no-one to whom she could turn for help other than Mr. L and Mr. Po: "So I am always, want to speak but they [other teachers] are having more, they are having more experience. So they are not tell [telling] me what I can do at that time." (FI#1, Q. 74)

Mrs. So was willing to engage in and be recognized as a participant in her professional CoP. However, the lack of support and social interaction afforded her by the school peons and her colleagues limited her opportunity to learn. Her inability "to take part in meaningful activities, in the production of sharable

artifacts, in community-building conversations, and in the negotiation of new situations.” resulted in what Wenger (1998, p. 184) coined as “a lack of mutuality in the course of engagement [that] creates relations of marginality” (p.193). Therefore in her first year of teaching, she was not able to form meaningful interpersonal relationships with her colleagues at school which would have created a history of and mutual engagement in shared experiences. Neither was she given full access to “reificative paraphernalia of practice” (p. 184) such as document, tools, symbols and language etc.

Learning to teach the tenth standard content in an examination-oriented educational system was a challenge for Mrs. So. She depended on Mr. L to share with her the communal resources which would help her learn and overcome any of her difficulties. She stated that “We talk about some essays, which essays we give for which standard. Mr. L is a very experienced teacher so I always discuss about the syllabus. [If] I have any problem of any words, I discuss and the homework, which homework, how many homework.” (FI#2, Q.18)

Mrs. So is referring to the shared repertoire or resources of tenth standard teaching which is characteristic of practice in her work CoP. For example, tenth standard teachers habitually give their students homework. How much homework to give to students and how often is part of the tenth standard teaching practice. Thus, this routine of giving students homework is part of the repertoire of her work CoP which has been adopted as part of its practice.

To sum up, decades of research on teacher’s professional development shows that the expectations placed on novice teachers from the first day of their employment in schools means that they are expected to perform the same duties required of experienced teachers. Clearly, novice teachers like Mrs. So have less time for lesson preparation and to reflect on their teaching practice. Mrs. So had difficulty obtaining administrative and collegial cooperation and ‘learning the ropes’. Mr. L is shown to be a competent member of his CoP who contributes to his professional CoP through his participation in in-service teacher training events and shares what he learns with Mrs. So. It is essential for novice teachers to actively engage in discourse on shared strategies and problem solving through legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and social interaction among colleagues which will result in effective, professional change in practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has attempted to draw upon real-life examples from the sociocultural context which illustrate the trajectories of two tenth standard EFL teachers who are at different stages in their professional development and how they participate in their professional CoP. The aim was to answer the three research questions in this study which were (a) what is the nature of the professional transformation, (b) what is the impetus behind the professional

transformation and (c) how is the professional transformation framed within the work CoP? Firstly, this study indicates that the source of professional tenth standard teacher change is rooted in the desire to participate as a fully-fledged core member of the CoP. Furthermore, the motivation to change originates from the drive to learn how to be a contributing member of the CoP. Lastly, professional change can only occur when the teachers are offered the opportunity to participate in and benefit from social interactions, either formal and/or informal, within a professional CoP where learning and exchange of ideas and information which can be applied to classroom reality are at the forefront of their professional development. Most notably, the two case studies support the view that the nature of the EFL teachers' professional change is 'adaptive or fluid' (Berliner, 2001) and that it is in a constant process of transformation as it interacts with the sociocultural context.

Today, the Indian classroom poses a challenge for teachers regardless of their qualifications given the large class size, first-generation learners and the lack of resources (OECD, 2011). In view of the urgent call for effective teacher training and teacher professional development (OECD, 2011, 2005), the findings of this study concretely support the existence of professional communities of practice which offer a practical solution to teacher development.

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Contact

Dr. Helen B. Toraskar
Associate Professor,
Language and Communication
Centennial College (HKU Group)
3 Wah Lam Path, Pokfulam, Hong Kong
Helen.toraskar@centennialcollege.hku.hk

Adventure in a new language: what a first generation Canadian immigrant's narrative holds for ESL teachers

Xing Fang, Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau, China
xfang210@aliyun.com

Abstract

This paper explored the value of learner's stories for ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers' teaching and research through a narrative inquiry of the lived English learning experience of a first generation Canadian immigrant. It first reviewed the concept of narrative and the significance of launching narrative inquiry. Then, it presented an interview conducted with the Canadian immigrant as a model of narrative inquiry. Themes of the narrative interview were found to resonate with theoretical issues of SLE (Second Language Education), ESL and SLA (Second Language Acquisition). Considering the themes and the entire interviewing process, this paper closed with a discussion of the benefits of narrative inquiry for ESL teachers' teaching and research.

Keywords: Narrative inquiry, qualitative research, ESL teachers, L2 learning

Introduction

As human beings, we hear and tell stories every day. These stories depicting our life are also named narratives, which can appear in various forms such as autobiographical writing, letters and conversations, diaries and journals (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 96-118). These different shapes and structures of narrative enable people to draw associations among disconnected experiences and happenings to make sense of their life and the world (Cadman & Brown, 2011, p. 444; Moen, 2006, p. 2). For the ESL classroom, learners' stories encompass issues that directly affect their language learning experience (Bell, 2002, p. 211) and therefore can contribute to teachers' understanding of second language education. Recognizing the value of narratives, this paper intends to elucidate how specifically learner's stories of English learning and use enrich ESL teachers' knowledge of teaching and research.

In a wide range of academic disciplines, narrative has been adopted as a qualitative method of inquiry (Bell, *ibid*; Riessman, 1993) in that it can reveal the meanings underlying people's external actions and open windows into their inner

worlds. Likewise, as Johnson and Golombek (2011) claimed, narrative provides people with chances for introspection and explanation on their life experiences and allows them to disclose their unstated emotions, thoughts and beliefs, which can be examined and used for managing their behaviors (p. 491). With regard to language learning, learner's narrative with its inherent temporal line (Carr, 1986) foregrounds the causal relationship between their current actions of language learning and use and their past experiences with the target language. Understanding this relationship and learner's underlying beliefs and values shaping it enables teachers to "be more thoughtful and mindful of their work" (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, p. 7) and to help students regulate their learning behaviors timely. Employing narrative inquiry, Bell (ibid) studied her own effort to develop Chinese literacy, and she confirmed that: Narrative lets researchers get at information that people do not consciously know themselves. Analysis of people's stories allows deeply hidden assumptions to surface. These assumptions had direct implications for teaching and learning (p. 209).

Furthermore, Moen (ibid) in her discussion of the use of narrative inquiry in the field of education commented that narrative as familiar and informative thinking tools enables teachers to capture the complexity of the classroom, reflect on teaching practice and develop inquiry questions for research, so it is an ideal tool for teacher education (p. 9).

Given the advantages of narrative and its implications for language education, this paper intends to illustrate the value of narrative inquiry for ESL teachers' teaching and research through a careful examination of a first generation Canadian immigrant's story of learning and using English in an ESL setting, Canada. To achieve this goal, it aims to address two specific questions:

- What issues of ESL education does the Canadian immigrant's narrative inform teachers of?
- What does the Canadian immigrant's narrative contribute to ESL teachers' knowledge of narrative inquiry as a qualitative research method?

Method

Sarah is the girl who participated in this study. She is originally from Venezuela, and she moved to Toronto, Canada with her mother when she was thirteen. They left Venezuela because rampant violence there had made it insecure for them to live their life. Sarah speaks Spanish as her first language and had learnt some English in a general English course at school and with a private tutor in Venezuela before she came to Canada. However, when she arrived in Toronto, she found that she could not hold a normal conversation with a person in English because she did not know how to express herself properly in this new language. In order to improve her English proficiency, she matriculated in an ESL class in Toronto when

she was in grades 7 to 9 of junior high school. She is now a grade-10 student at a Catholic high school in Toronto where students come from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Her current English class at school concentrates on classic English literature such as Shakespeare's works as opposed to survival English topics that she encountered in an ESL class. English as a subject is still a challenge for her, but she communicates with people mainly in English at school at present. Outside school, Sarah mostly speaks Spanish to her mother and other family members as well as friends at a Columbian church that she attends on Saturdays.

Dörnyei (2007) claimed that interview is a frequent part of people's social life because they can watch others being interviewed on television or they themselves often participate in interviews of various types either as interviewer and interviewee (p. 134). In response to the widespread use of interview, Weiss (1994) explained, "Interviewing can inform us about the nature of social life. We can learn about the work of occupations and how people fashion careers, about cultures and the values they sponsor, and about the challenges people confront as they live their lives. We can learn also, through interviewing about people's interior experiences. ... We can learn the meanings to them of their relationships, their families, their work, and their selves. We can learn about all the experiences, from joy through grief, that together constitute the human condition" (p. 1).

Since interview unwinds people's life experiences that are the basic elements constituting narratives (Wajnryb, 2003, p. 8), it is suitable for carrying out this narrative inquiry.

Before Sarah was interviewed, a pilot interview was conducted to refine the questions to ask and address issues that could potentially undermine the actual interview process. Main questions that were equivocal or lacked specific goals were removed after piloting to ensure the quality of data to be obtained. The actual interview happened in a quiet study room at York University in Toronto. Prior to the interview, Sarah was requested to sign an informed consent form, which she carefully read and fully understood. After the interview, the recording of the interview was transcribed with ELAN 4.5.0, and the transcript was emailed to Sarah for verification. With Ryan and Bernard's (2003) theme identifying techniques and Pavlenko's (2007) notion of systematic analysis, several rounds of reading and analyzing the interview transcript was conducted, and salient themes lending support to theories of SLE/ ESL/ SLA were noted.

Findings

Sarah's recollections of her inability to maintain a normal conversation in English during her early days in Canada bring forth the first theme - affect in second language learning. She described herself as "sad", "depressed", "desperate", "tired", and "frustrated". However, she said, "I was really desperate to speak English and to talk with people, 'cause I was really desperate." Her negative

emotions did not seem to restrain her motivation to learn English, but rather to turn “the learning switch on” (Vail, 1994). This situation evidences that affect not only interacts with motivation in language learning as argued by Stern (1983, p. 383), but also is a fundamentally significant motivator (MacIntyre, MacKinnon & Clément, 2009).

Accent and identity appears to be the second theme identified in Sarah’s narrative. “I want the English accent. Sometimes you wanna feel like you’re Canadian”, she said. Accent or pronunciation is deemed by many scholars such as Labov (1972), Zuengler (1988) and Seidlhofer (2001) as a prominent linguistic marker of a speaker’s identity. Lybeck’s (2002) study of second language pronunciation of Americans in Norway also shows that learners who have acculturated to (or identified with) the target language community evidenced more native-like pronunciation. This finding is akin to the linkage between becoming a Canadian and speaking the English accent as established by Sarah. Moreover, Gatbonton, Trofimovich and Magid’s (2005) investigation of L2 accent in characterizing learners’ ethnic group affiliation discovers that learners may endeavor to achieve the highest level of pronunciation accuracy “but nevertheless retain ways of manipulating their pronunciation to clearly signal where their loyalties lie” (pp. 505-506). This finding on accent and group identity wins good support from Sarah’s remarks. “Sometimes it’s good to have an accent, ’cause you remember where are you from ... You are never gonna forget where are you from”, she emphasized.

Another theme derived from Sarah’s comments on accent is standard language ideology. “Sometimes I really want my accent ... to go away. I don’t want. I want the English accent. I want to talk and not to have an accent. I wanna feel like, my, I want my English to be perfect. My future goal is to get rid of my accent,” said Sarah. Her ambition to achieve standard and impeccable English accent seems to originate from what Milroy (2001, p. 530) termed “standard language cultures” which Sarah may have been socialized into. For people in such cultures, they often hold a standard language ideology, which has been defined as a preference for a flawless and internally consistent language which is grounded on the spoken language of the upper middle class and imposed by governing institutions (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 54). The standard language, as contended by Collins (1991), is the product of the dominant groups whose standards are considered as universal (p. 236). Sarah’s determination of claiming perfect Canadian English could result from her desire to gain the membership of the dominant group (i.e. native-born Canadians) and obtain access to resources available to them instead of being marginalized as a new landed immigrant from outside Canada. This likelihood underlies Sarah’s words - “Sometimes you wanna feel like you’re Canadian, ’cause you live here.”

The fourth theme is noticeable when Sarah talked about vocabulary being her

foremost difficulty in learning English. "My most difficult thing to get in English is the meaning of the words. Dictionary doesn't give easy response. It's better if someone explains it [the word] to me. Because if someone explains the word to me, I can understand the story, the word," she said. These remarks yield the theme of context-based vocabulary learning. Nash and Snowling's (2006) study reveals that the context method of teaching vocabulary, as compared to dictionary definition method, is more effective in helping children with poor vocabulary knowledge to improve reading comprehension and attain durable vocabulary growth. Nelson (2008) in her investigation of vocabulary teaching also garnered more positive remarks from her students about the enduring benefits of using a context-based strategy for learning vocabulary than about any other strategy used, including looking up definitions in dictionary. Kruse (1979) believed that the context is useful for vocabulary development in that it provides the learner with various aids, such as synonyms or antonyms, example clues, summary clues, experiences clues (pp. 209-210). Likewise, Nash and Snowling (*ibid*) claimed, "Seeing the word in a context provided more information (semantic, syntactic, pragmatic) to create a well specified semantic representation" (p. 350). They added that the context method is interactive and engages the learners more so that it results in better learning. These advantages of context-based vocabulary learning seem to justify Sarah's strong preference for learning vocabulary through stories.

The fifth theme - speech rate and fluency becomes striking in Sarah's repeated mentioning of speaking fast and her learning goal of speaking with fluency. Rigenbach (1991), informed by her microanalysis of nonnative speaker conversations, concludes that speech rate contributes to the judgments of L2 non-fluency (p. 438). Some other scholars have also identified speech rate as one of the most significant temporal variables of L2 fluency (Derwing et al., 2004; O'Brien et al., 2007). Sarah's perception of her speech being "really slow" and her aspiration of speaking "a little bit faster and with fluency" seem to align herself with these findings.

At the end of the interview, Sarah expressed her opinion on the language policy of Canada, saying, "The languages of Canada, they don't need to be English and French, they need to be like, any language, 'cause in Canada, we live in- we are immigrants, right? Most of the people are immigrants. English and French don't need to be the main languages." This comment elicited the theme of multilingualism. At the heart of studies of multilingualism is linguistic human rights, which Skutnabb-Kangas (1998) defines as "the right to identify with, to maintain and to fully develop one's mother tongue(s)" (p. 22). Annamalai (2003) further claimed that language rights include the right for the language of marginalized groups to be used in public domains such as administration, law or education (pp. 124-125). Targeting at equality (Tsuda, 2008, p. 53), requests for

linguistic human rights pose a powerful challenge to the dominant status of English in an ESL setting like Canada. However, Lotherington (2011), a Canadian expert in multilingual education, claimed that developing students' multilingual competence rather than focusing on only one or two national languages can effectively prepare them for success in today's multilingual world.

Discussion

For ESL teachers, the themes divulged through Sarah's narrative may direct their attention to critical issues in ESL education that are bound up with one another to exert a collective influence over the learners, and may give rise to new approaches to classroom teaching. For instance, Pappamihel's (2002) study that explored English language anxiety of ESL students in the U.S. finds a deep relationship among English language anxiety, identity development and interethnic interactions, and proposes peer collaboration to circumvent threatening situations and optimize students' learning. In addition, Hilton's (2008) study of the link between vocabulary knowledge and spoken L2 fluency reveals that lexical knowledge is the greatest impediment to spoken L2 fluency from a temporal point of view, and advises that secondary language classes should have ambitious lexical syllabus so as to maximize students' L2 vocabulary learning and develop their L2 fluency. Moreover, Garcia (2009), in her discussion of language standardization and identity, maintained that an exclusive focus on a standard language negates other languaging practices that are learners' authentic identity expression, and school's insistence on using only the dominant standard language may aggravate the linguistic insecurity that many minority speakers feel (pp. 36-37). Thus, she proposed bilingual education as a pedagogical approach to incorporate immigrants' minoritized language practices into formal school learning (pp. 312-365). These suggested teaching approaches and methods may not only enhance students' learning experience but also become fresh orientations of research endeavors for ESL teachers.

Apart from informing teaching practice, Sarah's narrative may also expand ESL teachers' knowledge of narrative inquiry as a qualitative research method. It can be understood through Sarah's story that narratives are not merely shaped by narrators' knowledge, experiences, emotions and beliefs but collectively shaped by the addressees and the cultural, historical and institutional contexts in which the narratives occur (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002; Moen, *ibid*). Her story was co-constructed in that the interview questions (see Appendix A) provided a frame within which Sarah shaped her accounts of her experience, directing the plot of the narrative. Also, Sarah's narrative could have appeared differently if the interviewer had been someone else such as her ESL teacher (Riessman, *ibid*, p. 11). Regarding the influences that contexts exert on narrative construction, Pavlenko (*ibid*) suggested examining the impacts at both macro (or global) and micro (or

local) levels, and claimed, "The micro level should attend to the context of the interview" (p. 175). Thus, Sarah's language choice (English as opposed to Spanish), interview venue (a study room at York University instead of her household), the purpose of the interview (for a formal research project rather than a casual conversation), modality (a face-to-face interview instead of an online interview) could have altered the shape of her narrative, individually or collectively. On the other hand, "the macro-level of analysis should attend to historic, political, economic, and cultural circumstances of narrative production," stated Pavlenko. In this sense, Sarah could also have narrated very different stories if Canada's second official language were Spanish not French, or her home country Venezuela were an equally developed country as Canada, or Spanish culture were part of the mainstream culture of Canada. Therefore, when conducting narrative inquiry, ESL teachers should consider the formation of narratives in relation to the context of narration and the addressee.

Furthermore, in light of Sarah's narrative, it is equally essential for ESL teachers to note that narrative research is a continuing hermeneutic or interpretive activity (Moen, *ibid*, p. 7). When Sarah selected one story over many other stories to include in her narrative, she had started assigning meaning to her experiences. For instance, when she was asked to tell life lessons she had drawn from her experience of being unable to communicate with people in English on her first arrival in Canada, she unfolded the meaning of this experience by saying, "I learn that everything has its time. You don't need to press yourself to learn something. You just need to wait." The interpretation of the meaning or lesson of Sarah's stories did not end with her narration but continued during the entire research process, because the researcher, who is the author of this paper, went on interpreting what the interview narratives signify through analysis, reshaping what was told by Sarah and turning it into a hybrid story (Riessman, *ibid*, p. 13). Even when this current research is completed, the interpretation will not finish, because the meaning of all texts is fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal, so the final hybrid narrative will be subject to further interpretations by others who read and learn of this report (Moen, *ibid*; Riessman, *ibid*, pp. 14-15). These layers of narrative interpretation corroborate that the power of narrative inquiry lies not just in the interviewer's "controlling how discourse unfolds in the context of its production but gaining control over its recontextualization - shaping how it draws on other discourses and contexts and when, where, how, and by whom it will be subsequently used" (Briggs, 2007, p. 562). Because when themes are extracted from Sarah's stories and elevated as theories regarding English education for the entire population of immigrant ESL students, it is the researcher and a host of different readers who will decide how and where the findings of this narrative research are presented (e.g. a conference, scholarly publications or policy decisions).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to illustrate that narrative is of significant value to ESL teachers' teaching practices and research undertakings through a careful examination of a first generation Canadian immigrant's stories of her English learning and use in an ESL setting. It is demonstrated that the themes originating from narrative inquiry may enable ESL teachers to remain well informed of issues that are significant in shaping learners' languaging and learning experience and to search for new teaching approaches and fresh research topics. Also, the process of narrative inquiry illuminates the fact that narratives are co-constructed by the narrators, the addressees and the social contexts where narration occurs, as well as the actuality that narrative research is a continuing hermeneutic process. This reality requires ESL teachers interested in applying narrative inquiry to be fully aware that the quality of narratives to be obtained is entirely dependent on how they manage the relationship among themselves, narrators and contexts of narration, and that their interpretations of the narratives are always subject to modification and revision.

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Contact

Xing Fang, M.A., M.Ed.
Lecturer in English
Tourism College
Institute for Tourism Studies, Macau
Colina de Mong-Ha
Macau
xfang210@aliyun.com or xfang@ift.edu.mo

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Before moving to Canada

- When did you start to learn English in Venezuela?
- Why did you learn English?
- How did you learn English in Venezuela?
- Who did you speak English with in Venezuela?

After moving to Canada

- When did you come live in Toronto?
- Tell me one or two stories of your English use in Toronto that you can never forget.
- What have you learnt from this story in terms of English learning and use?
- Please tell me about your school in Toronto.
- What role does English play in your learning at school?
- Who do you usually speak English with at school?
- How do you use English when you interact with them?
- What do you think of the English local students speak?
- What do you think of the English of ESL students?
- Do you also speak Spanish at school? Why or why not?
- In general, what are the gains or losses of living your life in English in Canada?
- What suggestions would you give to ESL students?
- What advice would you give to ESL teachers?
- What is your future goal for English learning?
- What would you suggest as a title for all the stories you shared with me today?

TEFL teachers' and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions on the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy

Amir Zand-Moghadam¹ & Hussein Meihami²

¹ Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran, amir.zand.moghadam@gmail.com

² Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran, husein.meihami@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study explores TEFL teachers' and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the relationship between second language acquisition (SLA) research and language pedagogy with regard to familiarity, involvement, accessibility, consultation, relevance, and usefulness of SLA research in L2 pedagogy. To this end, 83 teachers, 40 TEFL teachers and 43 non-TEFL teachers, participated in this study. They filled out a questionnaire addressing their perceptions about SLA research and language pedagogy. The results revealed that the majority of TEFL teachers involved in doing research, at least as their educational term projects, while mostly no contribution was reported by non-TEFL teachers. In addition, TEFL teachers insisted that L2 teachers need to be involved in SLA research to be successful in their teaching career, while non-TEFL teachers were of the opposite opinion. Moreover, it was revealed that TEFL teachers considered the knowledge gained from research studies relevant and useful to their classroom actions, whereas non-TEFL teachers saw their experience more important for managing their classroom actions. Although both groups had contradictory perceptions of the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy, they showed some common points in this regard. That is, both groups reported on their difficulty in having access to the research materials; they also expressed their willingness to do research.

Key words: SLA research, L2 pedagogy, TEFL teachers, L2 research familiarity

1. Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that bringing research findings to practice is a long-lasting debate and controversial issue not only in second language acquisition (SLA) but also in other fields such as medicine, business, and law (Nassaji, 2012). The main quest of such debates is to specify the relationship between research and practice in different fields. In other words, a controversial debate is in progress on how an interaction can be established between the research conducted in a field and the practice of the findings of that research in the real situations. Heilbronn

(2008), mentions that the relationship between research and practice can be referred to as “evidence-based practice” which is, then, defined by Nassaji (2012, p. 338) as “practice which is based on systematic research evidence.” This principle finds its way into research in applied linguistics and taps out the application of SLA research in second language teaching.

According to some researchers (e.g., Davis, 1995; Shavelson & Towne 2002; Tabatabaei & Nazem, 2013; Thomas & Pring 2004), teachers are not just responsible to deliver the assigned curriculum but also to deal with the classroom problems. They need to implement measures successfully to solve the problems which they may face in their L2 classrooms. The findings of the already conducted SLA research can be a resource for L2 teachers to solve these problems. In turn, these issues accentuate the need for SLA research to offer solutions for L2 teaching and learning problems. Nevertheless, there is a two-fold debate between the relationship of SLA research and language pedagogy. On the one hand, formulating the debate in form of a question, some scholars (e.g., Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Pica, 2005) suggest that SLA research is for improving language teaching in L2 classrooms. However, others are of the idea that it is, SLA research, for influencing the teaching in the language classrooms (Block, 2000; Klein, 1998). Because of that, there is a long lasting argument on the probable benefits of engaging teachers in SLA research (Lyle, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Kirkwood & Christie 2006).

The importance of doing SLA research and using its results in L2 classrooms to remove L2 related problems is clear for language organizers (Ellis, 2001). In Iran, which has an EFL context, language teachers are not just those who have a degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) but there are some non-TEFL teachers who teach English in different institutes. In this regard, it is more important to know about the non-TEFL teachers’ perceptions of SLA research since sometimes their unfamiliarity with SLA research or their perceptions about SLA research role in L2 pedagogy may have drastic effects on the overall language pedagogy.

This research was an attempt to obtain the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers’ perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. The research went through the familiarity, involvement, accessibility, consultation, and relevance and usefulness of SLA research in the classroom practices; addressing the gap which has been already asked by Nassaji (2012) for further research. One more significant aspect of the study which was not paid attention to before was the EFL context of it. Moreover, different teachers with different culture backgrounds participated in this study. The other strength point of this research was the dichotomy between those teachers who studied TEFL as their major and taught in the language classes and those who had degree in other majors such as engineering disciplines and taught English in the language classes.

2.Literature Review

The number of research investigating the perceptions of L2 teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy is less than the number of research advising teachers how to conduct it (Borg, 2009). To address this shortage existing between the relationship of SLA research and language pedagogy, one can stick to the dichotomy that made by Nassaji (2012). He asserted that there are two types of knowledge: practical and technical. Nassaji (2012) stated that L2 teachers devote themselves to practical knowledge that can be achieved through practical experiences and are implicit and intuitive. On the other hand, technical knowledge is explicit and systematic and can be attained through doing research. Interestingly enough, Ellis (2001) asserted that while L2 teachers need to have practical knowledge, researchers are adamant in doing studies that have technical outputs. Crookes (1997) mentioned another reason for the mismatches between what L2 teachers need and what SLA researchers do. He, further, suggested that since much of the research done in the SLA realm were viewing learning with the eyes in which the learner is at the center and as an internal process rather than a social phenomenon, it is not an easy job to establish the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy with the centrality of the L2 teachers' perceptions.

Not all the researchers accepted the importance of doing research in language pedagogy. Block (2000), for instance, stated that since the aim of SLA research is to quench the theoretical aspects in L2 teaching rather than the practical aspects, it is not that much helpful for the real language learning situation. In this way, SLA research emphasizes on underlying theoretical aspects of SLA not the practical considerations. Nevertheless, some such as Freeman (1998) expressed their opposite ideas about the utility of SLA research in language pedagogy. She asserted that SLA research contributed to language learning/teaching and material designing. It should be mentioned that she did not mean that SLA research had to be defined just as a way to provide appropriate materials for teaching purposes. However, she declared that SLA is a broad term of inquiry including psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistics and defining SLA just as "*research*" for designing material is not appropriate. Because of this, the mentioned perspective about SLA research may downplay its roles in language pedagogy.

Nassaji (2012) defined another term of difficulty existing between the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy. He stated that due to the different research methods in SLA research it is hard to establish a straightforward relevance relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. In the domain of SLA research methods Nassaji (2012) mentioned the various type of research studies "ranging from those conducted under highly controlled experimental conditions or in lab settings to those conducted qualitatively or in

classroom settings.” (Nassaji, 2012; p. 341). As he stated, while some classroom-based research may be well-relevant to the real classroom conditions, other research which are tightly experimental are not that much resemble to what happen in the real situations.

SLA research should be relevant to language pedagogy; however, it should be specified that this relevancy is from whose perspective and to what extent. According to Bartels (2003) SLA teachers and researchers have different discourses of practice which force them to have different demands. Ellis (1997) mentioned two approaches to bridge the gap. First, applied linguist may work on different aspects of SLA research to obtain its utility for the language teaching. As one may complain, this approach uses an outsider view to this phenomenon. Consequently, some discrepancies may happen between the applied linguists and the classroom teachers. The second approach opens up the case with the problems which the teachers and the educators state about their classrooms. Ellis (1997) stated that this approach is more advantageous since the findings may be used by the practitioners and teachers in the language classrooms. As a result, doing an investigation to obtain teachers’ perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy is important in SLA realm.

This section of the literature review is devoted to some operational studies conducted to achieve teachers’ perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. The forerunner of these studies is Simon Borg. In different studies, among them there were some international studies, Borg considered this issue. Borg (2009) examined the conception of research by 505 language teachers in 13 countries by using a questionnaire and a follow up interview. His study showed that “teachers held conceptions of research aligned with conventional scientific notions of inquiry” (p. 358). Borg’s study indicated that teachers did not do research due to the reasons such as lack of knowledge, resource, and time. Moreover, his study demonstrated that teachers “engaged in research reported being driven largely by practical and professional concerns rather than external drivers such as employers or promotion” (p. 358).

Macaro (2003) conducted a study on 80 heads of foreign language department to obtain their perceptions about doing SLA research and its relevance to language teaching. Participants of this investigation asserted that they ran into problems in having access to research resources. This inaccessibility was dichotomized into both conceptual and physical aspect of it.

The perceptions of 22 Canadian language teachers, instructing English language at university, were investigated through the use of questionnaire and interview in a study conducted by Allison and Carey (2007). The overall results of their study indicated that the time left after teaching for the teachers constrained them in doing any research. Besides, since doing research is not a part of teaching requirement the encouragement and motivation of doing it remain at low.

One can refer to Tabatabaei and Nazem's (2013) study as an example of a research conducted in an EFL context to obtain teachers' perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. Investigating the conception of 150 English language teachers, Tabatabaei and Nazem study's (2013) showed that teachers referred to lack of research knowledge, time, and support by their institutions as the foremost reasons for restricting their engagement in doing SLA research.

Referring to the aforementioned studies, the thrust of this study is to explore the perceptions of EFL English language teachers both those who have degree in Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and those who do not about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. To do so, the perceptions of TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the familiarity, involvement, accessibility, consultation, and relevance and usefulness of SLA research in L2 pedagogy were investigated. This investigation is an attempt to address the following research questions to address the further research posed by Nassaji (2012):

1. To what extent TEFL and Non-TEFL language teachers are familiar with SLA research?
2. How easily can they access SLA research, and what sources do they consult?
3. To what extent do they read research articles and, if they do not read them, what are their reasons?
4. How do they perceive the relevance and usefulness of SLA research for classroom teaching?
5. How do they perceive the relationship between researchers and teachers?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants and Setting

For the purpose of obtaining the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy, 87 teachers from two institutes in Tehran, Iran participated in accomplishing a questionnaire extracted from Nassaji (2012). After collecting the questionnaires four of them were eliminated since they were incomplete. Teachers who participated in this study had the following background characteristics illustrated in Table (1).

Table 1: Teachers' background characteristics

		TEFL Teachers	Non-TEFL Teachers	Total
Age	Mean	25.5	23	24.25
	SD	6.60	2.94	4.77
Years of Teaching Experiences	Mean	6.5	5	5.75
	SD	3.10	2.44	2.77
Highest Degree Completed	BA	78.2%	71.4%	74.8%
	MA	21.8%	29.6%	25.7%
	PhD	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Age Group Teaching at the Time of the Study	Adult	64.8%	49.7%	59.25%
	Children	35.2%	50.3%	42.75%
Additional Teaching Certificates		15%	89%	

As Table (1) shows, the participants in this investigation were young teachers with the age average of 24.25, yet they had fair teaching experience in terms of years of teaching experiences with the mean of 5.75. If one compares the participants of this study in terms of teaching experiences with that of Nassaji's (2012) whose participants had average years of experience of 8.15, he/she understands the similarity of the two studies in terms of the participants' teaching experience. The most frequent degree accomplished by the participants of this study was Bachelor of Art (BA) with total percentage of 74.8%, next, Master of Art (MA) with percentage of 25.7%. Nonetheless, no participant in this study had a Philosophy of Doctor (PhD) degree. Table (1) also indicates that 59.25% of teachers instructed adult L2 learners while 42.75% of them were teaching children. Finally, in terms of additional teaching certificates non-TEFL teachers had a higher frequency with the percentage of 89%, however, just 15% of TEFL teachers had additional teaching certificates. The rationale behind the higher percentage of the non-TEFL teachers who had additional teaching certificate is that in Iran there are two approaches to employ an English teacher. First, if they have TEFL or TEFL related discipline degrees there is no need for another language teaching certificate. However, if they are from other majors such as chemical engineering with a good language background they have to take part in SLA related instructions such as TTC or CELTA.

3.2 Instrumentation

3.2.1 Questionnaire

To achieve the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy a questionnaire was used which was extracted from the study done by Nassaji (2012). This questionnaire included five sections. The first section of the questionnaire was devoted to draw the background information of the participants. Then, the second section of the questionnaire was to find out about the educational background of the participants including the courses they had in SLA. Additionally, this section investigated about the participants' involvement in doing research study. The third part investigated the attitudes of the respondents about action research and their opinions about the responsibility of the researchers and teachers. Next, the respondents' attitudes about doing SLA research was sought. Finally, the last section of the questionnaire including two open-ended questions investigated respondents' expectations of SLA research. It should be stated that to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The results showed a high index of reliability (0.81).

3.3 Data collection procedure

For collecting the information about the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy, the researchers visited two language institutes to distribute the questionnaires. The respondents were told about the purpose of the research. The questionnaire was anonymously filled and no time constraint was set.

4. Results

The first research question of this study was *"To what extent TEFL and non-TEFL language teachers are familiar with SLA research?"* The first section of the questionnaire designed to answer this question by tapping upon teachers' familiarity with SLA research. Table (2) demonstrates the results.

As Table (2) indicates, all of the TEFL teachers (100%) had a course in second language acquisition while only 34% of the non-TEFL teachers had such a course in their educational program. In their education, 95% of the TEFL teachers reported that they had courses in second language research methods whereas just 8% of the non-TEFL teachers reported it. The statement that sought about either the teachers did research or not shows that 78% of the TEFL teachers conducted a research on SLA subjects (not always for publication but for their projects in their careers in teaching or as their educational term projects); however, this is 12% for non-TEFL teachers. Finally, 25% of the TEFL teachers stated that they published a research; yet, just 4% of non-TEFL teachers reported that (sometimes they meant contribution with others not individually publication). The teachers were also asked to provide reasons for which they did not do research. Table (3) shows the results for which teachers did not conduct research.

Table 2: Teachers' familiarity with SLA research

		YES	NO	Total
Courses in second language acquisition	TEFL Teachers	40 (100%)	0 (0%)	40 (100%)
	Non-TEFL Teachers	15 (34%)	35 (81%)	40 (93%)
Courses in second language research methods	TEFL Teachers	38 (95%)	2 (5%)	40 (100%)
	Non-TEFL Teachers	8 (18%)	35 (87%)	43(100%)
Conducting research	TEFL Teachers	35 (78%)	5 (13%)	40 (100%)
	Non-TEFL Teachers	5 (12%)	37 (86%)	42 (98%)
Publishing research	TEFL Teachers	10 (25%)	25 (62%)	35 (87%)
	Non-TEFL Teachers	2 (4%)	39 (90)	41(95%)

Note: Total is not equivalent with 83 since not all respondents provided response for all items.

Table 3: Teachers' reasons for not conducting research

	No time	No ability	No interest	Not useful	No need	Others	Total
TEFL Teachers	1 (12%)	5 (62%)	1(12%)	0	0	0	8 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	6 (16%)	10 (27%)	3 (8%)	8 (21%)	5 (13%)	5 (13%)	37 (100)

Table (3) shows that 62% of the TEFL teachers that did not conduct research studies were of the belief that they were unable to do research. For the non-TEFL teachers also inability in doing SLA research was the foremost reason for not doing research studies with a percentage of 27%. They also claimed that time limitation (16%) and research uselessness (21%) were among other reasons for not doing research. In addition, 8% reported that they were not interested in doing SLA research.

The second research question in this study was an attempt to achieve information about the research accessibility and research consultation for the

TEFL and non-TEFL teachers. First, they were asked about the research material accessibility. Almost 75% of the TEFL teachers reported that it was easy for them to have access to research resources while 24% of the non-TEFL teachers declared this. Then, those who reported they could easily have access to research resources were asked to define their consultation resources. Table (4) indicates the results of teachers' consultation resources.

Table 4: Teachers' consultation resources

Sources	TEFL Teachers	Non-TEFL Teachers
Books	6 (15%)	4 (9%)
Internet	12 (30%)	6 (13%)
Journals	5 (13%)	1 (2%)
Online Journals	6 (15%)	0
Data Bases	1 (2%)	0
Total	30 (75%)	15 (24%)

As it can be seen, both the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers consulted their issues by using the Internet (30 % and 13% respectively). A total of 13% TEFL teachers and 2% of non-TEFL teachers asserted that they found journals useful as a consultation resource. The TEFL and non-TEFL teachers also used books as their consultation resource (15% and 9 % respectively).

One section of the questionnaire was devoted to address the third research question referring to the frequency of reading the research studies by the teachers and the reasons for not reading. Table (5) indicates the results.

Table 5: Frequency of reading research by the teachers

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
TEFL Teachers	15 (37%)	5 (13%)	13 (32%)	5 (13%)	2 (5%)	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	3 (7%)	8 (19%)	12 (28%)	19 (44%)	1 (2%)	43 (100)

Table (5) shows that while 37% of the TEFL teachers "always" read research studies, 7% of the non-TEFL teachers did so. Another difference in the percentage of reading research between the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers was for the frequency of "rarely" reading research studies with TEFL teachers 13% and non-TEFL teachers 44%. Both the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers had similar percentage for reading research studies "sometimes." To find out the reasons for

which the participants did not read research studies a part of the questionnaire was designed to investigate it.

Table 6: Reasons for not reading research

	No time	Difficult	No interest	No access	No useful	Others	Total
TEFL Teachers	12 (30%)	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	15 (37%)	0	1 (3%)	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	2 (5%)	13 (30%)	2 (5%)	16 (38%)	10 (23%)	0	43 (100%)

As can be seen, Table (6) shows that the most cited reason for not reading research for TEFL teachers is time limitation (30%) whereas it is inaccessibility for non-TEFL teachers (38%). One significant difference between the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers is the difficulty perceived by them (10 % and 30% respectively). Moreover, 20% of the TEFL teachers reported that they were not interested in reading research studies while it was 5% for the non-TEFL teachers. Following that, both groups of teachers were asked whether they were provided with any kinds of support for doing research in the institution they taught. The answer to this question was another common point for both groups. Of the total, 95% of the TEFL teachers reported that they were not provided with any sort of research supports. The same percentage of the non-TEFL teachers, 97%, reported that they did not get any research supports.

The fourth research question of this investigation sought to obtain the perceptions of the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers about the usefulness and relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy. Table (7) shows the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about SLA research usefulness.

Table 7: Teachers' perceptions about SLA research usefulness

	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful at all	Total
TEFL Teachers	18 (45%)	12	8	2	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	3	12	17	11	43 (100)

In its second part, the fourth question investigated the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy.

Four statements in the questionnaire were assigned to fulfill this quest. Table (8) illustrates the results.

Table 8: Teachers' perceptions on the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
<i>Knowing about second language acquisition research improves second language teaching practice:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	11 (27%)	14 (35%)	5 (12%)	6 (15%)	4 (11%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	9 (20%)	15 (39%)	11 (25%)	43 (100%)
<i>Second language acquisition research is not relevant to language teaching:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	0	2 (5%)	3 (8%)	14 (35%)	20 (50%)	1 (2%)	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	5 (12%)	10 (24%)	9 (21%)	10 (24%)	8 (18%)	1 (2%)	43 (100%)
<i>Second language acquisition research provides teachers with practical suggestions for improving second language instruction:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	15 (38%)	18 (45%)	6 (15%)	1 (2%)	0	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	5 (12%)	8 (18%)	10 (24%)	12 (28%)	5 (12%)	3 (6%)	
<i>The knowledge I gain from teaching experience is more relevant to my teaching than the knowledge I gain from second language acquisition research:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	6 (15%)	8 (20%)	10 (25%)	9 (22%)	7 (18%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	16 (38%)	9 (20%)	10 (24%)	5 (12%)	3 (6%)	0	43 (100%)

Table (8) shows that there are some differences between the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers in terms of their perceptions on the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy. Of the total TEFL teachers, 74% of them agree (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) that knowing about SLA research could improve their teaching practice. However, 16% of the non-TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) on this statement. The reverse statement of the first statement was that no relevance between SLA research and language pedagogy. As expected, this time more than half of the non-TEFL teachers (57%) agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) on it while less than one third of TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) (13%). Next, the

third statement sought to see how teachers perceived SLA research as practical suggestion provider for teaching. The results showed that up to 98% of the TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) on it whereas 54% of the non-TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) that SLA research could bring practical suggestions to the language classrooms. It should be stated that there was almost no disagreement (Strangely disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree) opinion on the third statement by the TEFL teachers (2%), nevertheless, up to 46% of the non-TEFL teachers were in disagreement (Strangely disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree) with this statements. The final statement to obtain language teachers' perceptions on the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy was about the knowledge which teachers achieved through their classroom experiences. Of the total, 60% of the TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) that their classroom experiences were relevant to their teaching while this was 82% for the non-TEFL teachers.

The last question of this study was to investigate the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the teacher-researcher relationship. Five statements in the questionnaire were devoted to this quest. Table (9) indicates the five statements with the results obtained.

The results obtained and shown in Table (9) indicate that both the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers agreed that researchers should be university professors (68% and 88% respectively); however, the disagreement opinions of the TEFL teachers were more frequent (32%) in comparison with the non-TEFL teachers (12%). The non-TEFL teachers agreed more (79%) on the second statement stated the teachers should teach and the researcher should conduct research. Equal to three-fourths (75%) of the TEFL teachers agreed that the teachers and researchers should work together. Nonetheless, less than half (41%) of the non-TEFL teachers agreed on this statement and they showed 59% disagreement in this regard. When teachers were asked that the researchers need to consult with the teachers for research issues the TEFL teachers agreed up to 82% while the non-TEFL teachers agreed on it 61%. Finally, the non-TEFL teachers showed their strong disagreement (68%) with the statement that the teachers should consult with the researchers for advice on teaching and learning while the TEFL teachers indicated their strong agreement in this regard (78%).

Table 9: The teacher-researcher relationship

	Strogly agree	Agree	Somewh at agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
<i>Researchers should be university professors or academics, but not teachers:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	8 (20%)	10 (25%)	9 (23%)	11 (27%)	2 (5%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	14 (32%)	16 (38%)	8 (18%)	0	5 (12%)	0	43 (100%)
<i>Researchers should carry out research and teachers should teach:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	7 (18%)	4 (10%)	10 (25%)	15 (38%)	4 (10%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	15 (34%)	10 (24%)	9 (21%)	4 (9%)	5 (12%)	0	43 (100%)
<i>Teachers and researchers should work together:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	15 (38%)	10 (25%)	5 (12%)	10 (25%)	0	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	8 (18%)	6 (14%)	4 (9%)	15 (34%)	10 (25%)	0	43 (100%)
<i>Researchers should consult teachers for advice on issues they want to research:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	20 (50%)	5 (12%)	8 (20%)	7 (18%)	0	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	12 (28%)	10 (24%)	4 (9%)	15 (34%)	0	2 (5%)	43 (100%)
<i>Teachers should consult researchers for advice on teaching and learning issues:</i>							
TEFL Teachers	13 (33%)	10 (25%)	8 (20%)	5 (12%)	4 (10%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	4 (9%)	2 (5%)	8 (18%)	19 (44%)	10 (24%)	0	43 (100%)

5. Discussion

This study was an attempt to investigate the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. To do so, different aspects were investigated. These aspects turned into five research questions seeking to answer the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the familiarity, involvement, accessibility, consultation, and relevance and usefulness of SLA research in L2 pedagogy. The first research question of this study was "To what extents TEFL and non-TEFL language teachers are familiar with SLA research?" The statistical evidence achieved from the answers provided by the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers demonstrated that the majority of the TEFL teachers were familiar with the concept of SLA research and had passed courses in both SLA and research methodology. On the other hand, the non-TEFL teachers' reports on the questionnaire showed that they were not

familiar with SLA courses and research methodology. Moreover, the information obtained from Table (2) illustrated that the non-TEFL teachers were not that much involved in SLA research as the TEFL teachers were. This may be due to the syllabus that these two groups went through to be L2 teachers. The TEFL teachers have a syllabus including courses to familiarize them with SLA principles and research methodology; besides, during their courses their professors also require them to conduct research for their educational term projects; even those papers are not often for the purpose of publication. However, the non-TEFL teachers are required to participate in some Teacher Training Courses (TTC) designed to make them familiar with the principles of SLA that are relating to teaching and language classrooms. Consequently, they are not familiar with research methodology or even different aspects of SLA. This way of thinking may cause the non-TEFL teachers to consider themselves as just responsible for teaching and not researcher or even making use of others research. When they were asked why they did not conduct research both the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers perceived inability in doing research as the most frequent reason for that. This shows the paucity of practical research courses not only for the non-TEFL teachers but also for the TEFL teachers. Here, the syllabus format which once was proposed by Gass (1995) draws the attentions of teacher trainers. This syllabus called SLA research based course was designed to make language teachers familiar with SLA research to augment their ability not only in conducting SLA research studies but in using them. However, one dramatic difference can be spotted between the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers for not conducting research: it was the conception of the non-TEFL teachers that SLA research is of no use. Hence, this may be caused with the lack of knowledge that the non-TEFL teachers had about SLA research.

The second research question investigating the accessibility and resource consultation of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers came to the evidence that it was easier for the TEFL teachers to have access to research materials. It might due to the fact that they practiced more different methods and ways of finding and using research materials in their courses while these practices were rarely done by the non-TEFL teachers. For consultation resources, both groups of the teachers showed the same points of commonality. The books and the internet were among the most frequent consultation resources that both TEFL and non-TEFL teachers used.

One another area of discrepancy between the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy was the percentage of reading research studies. According to Table (5), up to 82% of the TEFL teachers reported that they read research studies whereas this was 54% for the non-TEFL teachers. This percentage in total (63%) was more than what the study of Nassaji (2012) indicated (53%). In his study, EFL teachers read more research studies than ESL teachers (61% and 38% respectively).

Knowing that, the current study was conducted entirely in an EFL context so it is sound to have a higher percentage of reading research studies. The second part of the third research question designed to obtain information about the reasons for which the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers did not read research studies. Table (6) showed that for the TEFL teachers' lack of time and accessibility issues were the major reasons for not reading research studies, yet for the non-TEFL teachers the difficulty level of the research and accessibility issues were the main reason. Time constraint issue is not a far reason for consideration since the previous research conducted with the same theme of the current study also indicated higher percentage for this factor (Borg, 2007; Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991; Nassaji, 2012). The difficulty level of the research studies for reading was also the point of discussion in the previous contributions (Crookes, 1997; Ellis, 1997). It is the fact that sometimes researchers write their research in the way that just people who specially work in their specific field can figure them out (Ellis, 1997). One suggestion for removing the problem is what Crookes (1997) proposed. Crookes suggested that the researchers need to be informal in their research writing and have in mind the level of classroom teachers in terms of theoretical background. One can extend this proposal by the same token that for the non-TEFL teachers it will be harder to come up with SLA research due to the lack of related courses they have, so the researchers may even be more informal when writing research for classroom teaching.

The data obtained about the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers' perception about the usefulness and relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy indicated that the TEFL teachers were more of the opinion that the research studies were relevant and useful to language pedagogy than what the non-TEFL teachers thought. In like manner, the cause for such results might be for two reasons. First, this study was conducted in an EFL context and the results of the previous studies showed that in EFL contexts the research studies were read more than ESL ones. Second, the TEFL teachers confirmed the usefulness and relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy since they had more interaction with them in comparison to the non-TEFL teachers.

Both Lightbown (2000) and Pica (2005) suggested that the teacher-researcher collaboration could improve both teaching and researching in L2. The teacher-researcher collaboration is referring to as the relationship between the teachers and researchers in which they conduct a research together (Nassaji, 2012). In this relationship the L2 teachers use the research findings provided by the L2 researchers and in this way improve their knowledge of SLA research. Besides, the L2 researchers consult the problems of the L2 teachers. Consequently, they conduct their research based on the problems expressed by the L2 teachers. In this study, the TEFL teachers agreed more than the non-TEFL teachers on the collaborative relationship between the teachers and researchers. Two reasons can

be mentioned for these results. First, the TEFL teachers see themselves as action researchers who do action research. As Nassaji (2012, p. 358) stated "action research is a kind of research to improve practice." They perceive the problems existing in the L2 classrooms contexts and try to do research to remove them to improve the L2 classroom practice. The second reason is that the non-TEFL teachers in this study did not show good relationship with SLA researchers, SLA research, and SLA research courses. The fact of the teacher-researcher collaboration is not of importance for them since they think L2 teachers should teach and L2 researchers should do research. They perceived the responsibilities of the teachers and researchers separate from each other. For this reason, they did not accept the concept of action research.

Overall, the results of this study showed that the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers perceived the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy in different ways and with different opinions. They also showed difference in the research familiarity, and involvement. The two similar points for them were that both found reading research difficult and the shortage of research related courses in their institutes. The first reason for the information obtained about the opinions of the non-TEFL teachers might be their TTC classes. In Iran like many other EFL/ESL contexts, upon the interest and their job requirements, the students of other majors try to be English language teachers. To do so, they will be required to participate in some TTC classes to prepare their theoretical and operational background for language classes. These intense TTC classes, ranging from one week to at most three weeks, are held around some predetermined principles of teaching second language to EFL students. In these classes no teaching time is devoted to SLA research, its methodology, and the relationship between these two. Consequently, the teachers receiving TTC certificate have no idea of SLA research and think of SLA research as the responsibility of SLA researchers. They do not see any relationship between them. TTC classes need to be more than instructing some methods of teaching L2. TTC classes should increase teachers' knowledge of the statistics and their ability in reading research text (Brown, 1991; Hedgcock, 2001). Moreover, top-down model of teacher education (Nassaji, 2012) in which the researchers are perceived as knowledge producers and the teachers are seen as knowledge consumers should be replaced with more collaborative teacher-researcher relationship. Another way to improve TTC classes to change teachers' perceptions of SLA research and language pedagogy is to prepare sessions for the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers to discuss different aspects of SLA. One more way to involve teachers (both the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers) is action research. In their TTC classes and their syllabus, the non-TEFL and TEFL teachers respectively should be provided with instruction on doing action research (Nassaji, 2012). Finally, it should be stated that the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy need to be always in progress and assessment of that should

be taught to the teachers so they can see the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy more useful.

6. Conclusions and implications

The results of the current study showed that the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers had different opinions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. The results supported the hypothesis that due to the lack of SLA research courses and the scarce interaction with SLA research, the non-TEFL teachers think that SLA research is not that much relevant and useful for the purpose of teaching L2 and there should be a distinction between what a researcher does and an L2 teacher does. Thus, this study supports Stewart's (2006) study that reflects on the division of the teachers and researchers' responsibility since teachers' research is not that much rigor in methodology. This study is also in line with the one conducted by Nassaji (2012) when EFL teachers' research reading is considered.

It is an undeniable fact that each research study has some limitations. For this study, first, the questionnaire did not show why participants selected the answers like that. Second, more participants are needed for the survey studies like this one. Hence, further research may be conducted on the perceptions of the teacher trainers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. The results of the study shed light on the fact of including courses such as SLA research in the TTC programs held for guiding the novice L2 teachers. These courses could help the teachers to obtain an in-depth knowledge of SLA research and language pedagogy.

The implications of this study bear some reasons for the teacher trainers and teacher program designers to pay more attention to consider different aspects of SLA research in their programs. In this regard, they can familiarize the novice teachers with the fact of SLA research and finally can help them to be action researchers and do research for removing their problems in their L2 classes.

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1. Have you ever taken any course(s) in second language research methods (i.e. courses that teach you how to conduct research)?

• Yes • No

If yes, how useful have you found the course(s)?

• Very useful • Useful • Somewhat useful • Not useful at all

2. Have you ever taken any course(s) in second language acquisition (i.e. courses on how people learn a second language)?

• Yes • No

If yes, how useful have you found the course(s)

• Very useful • Useful • Somewhat useful • Not useful at all

3. Have you ever conducted any second language acquisition research?

• Yes • No

If no, could you please indicate why? Check all the options that apply.

Because:

- I don't have time to do research.
- I don't have the ability to do research.
- I am not interested in doing research.
- I think research is not needed.
- Second language acquisition research is not very useful for language teaching purposes.

Others

4. Can you easily access readings on second language acquisition research?

• Yes • No

If yes, please indicate how (e.g. through books, journals, the internet, etc.).

5. Have you ever published any research on second language acquisition?

• Yes • No

If yes, please mention where (i.e. the name of the journal(s))

6. At the institution where you teach, is there any support for teachers to do

research on second language acquisition?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate what kind of support.

7. Do you make any use of second language acquisition research findings in developing ideas for teaching?

- Yes
- No

If no, could you please mention why?

C. Please kindly check your position regarding the following statements using the scale

provided. Please indicate what you believe rather than what you should believe.

1. Researchers should be university professors or academics, but not teachers.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly disagree

2. A teacher should also be a researcher.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly disagree

3. In order to be a good teacher, you should also be a good researcher.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly disagree

4. Researchers should carry out research and teachers should teach.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly disagree

5. Teachers and researchers should work together.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly disagree

6. Teachers should consult researchers for advice on teaching and learning issues.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly disagree

7. Researchers should consult teachers for advice on issues they want to research.

- Strongly agree • Agree • Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree

8. Knowing about second language acquisition research improves second language teaching practice.

- Strongly agree • Agree • Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree

9. Second language acquisition research provides teachers with practical suggestions for improving second language instruction.

- Strongly agree • Agree • Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree

10. Second language acquisition research contributes to second language pedagogy.

- Strongly agree • Agree • Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree

11. Second language acquisition research is not relevant to language teaching.

- Strongly agree • Agree • Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree

12. The knowledge I gain from teaching experience is more relevant to my teaching than the knowledge I gain from second language acquisition research.

- Strongly agree • Agree • Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree

D. Answer the following questions by checking the options provided.

1. How interested are you in doing second language acquisition research?

- Very interested • Interested • Somewhat interested
- Somewhat uninterested • Uninterested • Not interested at all

2. How useful do you think second language acquisition research is for second language teaching?

- Very useful • Useful • Somewhat useful • Not useful at all

3. How often do you read second language acquisition research articles?

- Always • Often • Sometimes • Rarely • Never

a. If your answer to question 3 is positive (i.e. if you have chosen 'Always,'

‘Often,’ or ‘Sometimes’), have you found the information useful for your own language teaching purposes?

· Yes · No

b. If your answer to question 3 is negative (i.e. if you have chosen ‘Rarely’ or ‘Never’), could you please indicate why? Please check all the options that apply. Because:

- I don’t have time.
- Research articles are very difficult to read and understand.
- I cannot easily access them.
- I am not interested in reading them.
- I do not find them very useful to read.
- Others _____

4. If you want to find information about issues related to language teaching, you usually (You can check more than one option):

- Talk to your colleagues
- Read books
- Read journal articles
- Attend conferences or workshops
- Do empirical research
- Please specify if others _____

5. Which of the following research journals do you usually read or consult for information on second language acquisition issues?

- Language Teaching Research
- TESOL Quarterly
- Foreign Language Annals
- Language Learning Journa
- Studies in Second Language Acquisition
- Annual Review of Applied Linguistics
- Applied Psycholinguistics
- None of them
- The Modern Language Journal
- The English Teaching Forum
- ELT Journal
- Language Learning
- Applied Language Learning
- Applied Linguistics
- Language Testing

Please mention any other journals that you usually consult but not listed above.

E. Please kindly write your answers to the following two questions

1. What would you expect or would like to learn from second language acquisition research?

2. Please add any other comments you have about the role of second language acquisition research in second language teaching.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Marketing masculinity, branding the book: Current gender trends in the presentation of selected boys' adventure novels

Janice Robertson, University of South Africa
janice@jrobertson.co.za

Abstract

Chris Bradford's **Young Samurai** series, and his more recent **Bodyguard** Series draw on a strong sense of hegemonic masculinity to secure popularity for the protagonist. The success of these books is particularly interesting when one considers the gender agendas that are embraced by modern western society and the extent to which general opinion has altered in terms of the performance of masculinity.

According to John Stephens in *Ways of Being Male: Representing Masculinities in Children's Literature and Film* (2002, p. x), a problem for boys, both in narrative fictions and in the world, is that hegemonic masculinity 'appears simultaneously to propose a schema for behaviour and to insist on their subordination as children, to conflate agency with hegemonic masculinity, and to disclose that, for them, such agency is illusory. These paradoxes are currently being increasingly dealt with as a theme in children's literature and film'. My paper will discuss these apparent paradoxes in Chris Bradford's novels in the context of a 21st century child readership.

Key words: Children's literature, gender literacy, masculinity studies, adventure novel

Background

The school theatre was packed to capacity at the English boys' prep school in Pretoria, South Africa. For the past week, the boys had been eagerly anticipating the publicity talk by the widely published British author, Chris Bradford. Already loved by many of the boys as the creator of the *Young Samurai* novels, Bradford had come to South Africa for the launch of the third book in his new adrenalin stoked *Bodyguard* series. To start off the proceedings, two rather nervous looking schoolboys joined the author on stage and began to read out a welcome and introductory speech. Bradford had dressed in uniform black for the occasion and wore fashionable shades despite being indoors. The young boys stuttered their way through their lines, reciting Bradford's achievements as an author and musician. Suddenly, the hall was filled with the deafening sound of gunshots and Bradford, immediately embracing the persona of a bodyguard, shielded the two

boys from the imaginary shots and shepherded them into the wings of the stage. The audience was thrilled, entranced.

The rest of the publicity stunt continued along similar lines, usually involving volunteers from the crowd to demonstrate evasion, surveillance and close combat techniques. Even the usual 'reading' from one of his books took the form of a thrilling dramatic skit with the boys who volunteered to act receiving free promotional posters and bodyguard accreditation sticker badges. The display was convincing as this is one of the characteristics that set Bradford apart as an author: before he wrote the *Young Samurai* series, he attained his black belt in Zen Kyu Shin Taijutsu. Recently, in preparation for his *Bodyguard* series, he had trained as a close protection officer: a qualified professional bodyguard with an intimate working knowledge of the lingo, strategies and techniques used in the field.

The boys found Bradford's approach irresistible. By the end of the talk, the entire body of students divided into three groups: the first for boys who had brought money to buy books after the show, the second for boys who were lining up to order copies of the books, and the third for the fans who had brought their well-worn copies of Bradford's books to school for him to sign. The marketing strategy had proved overwhelmingly successful. As I leaned back in my seat in the gallery, I considered the possibility that what these boys were so eager to possess was not just a bundle of cracking good stories. The other commodity, the deeper attraction lay, perhaps, in the display of capable, skilled and confident masculinity, the enactment of a persona that takes danger, risk and pressure in its stride. As a children's literature scholar with a masculinities research profile, my interest was piqued.

Introduction

Chris Bradford's bestselling books have been published in over 20 languages and have received several children's book award nominations. His hugely popular *Young Samurai* series tells the tale of Jack Fletcher, a twelve year old English boy with straw-blond hair and azure-blue eyes, who is stranded and orphaned in Japan in the year 1611. By good fortune, he is adopted by a noble samurai Masamoto who allows him to train as a samurai warrior. The ninth instalment in this series is due for publication later this year.

The *Bodyguard* series, Bradford's most recent set of publications, is set in the general present and will be the focus of this paper. In reading order, *Bodyguard: Hostage*, *Bodyguard: Ransom* and *Bodyguard: Ambush* follow the adventures of Connor Reeves, a British teenager, who is recruited by Buddyguard – 'a secret close-protection organisation that differs from all other security outfits by supplying and training only young bodyguards' (frontispiece Bradford, 2014). The clientele is the growing class of young 'starlets', as well as the children of

prominent politicians and billionaires. 'The best bodyguard is the one nobody notices' and that is why, the managers of this organisation claim, highly skilled Buddyguards are more effective than the typical *adult* bodyguard, 'who can easily draw unwanted attention. Operating invisibly as a child's constant companion, a Buddyguard provides the greatest possible protection for any high-profile or vulnerable young person' (frontispiece, Bradford, 2014).

One would ask, however, what would cause a young boy to put aside his international kickboxing ambitions and place himself, literally, in the line of fire. The reason is rooted in chivalric intentions: Connor's father died in service to his country eight years before and, as a fourteen year old, Connor is not in a position to provide for his aging grandmother and his mother who is suffering from multiple sclerosis. The Buddyguard organisation offers to pay for a professional nurse to live with Connor's maternal relations and provide all the medical care they may require. It is an irresistible offer for a boy who sees himself as the only possible provider in the household and he agrees to attend Buddyguard school in return for these benefits.

Connor is recruited by Buddyguard and earns his gold wings after his rookie mission to protect Alicia Mendez, the only daughter of the president of the United States. The novels are quick paced, with breathtakingly intense moments of crisis and suspense; yet, there are moments of reflection, even a hint of tenderness, which endear the protagonist to its audience.

Young masculinity

According to Capdevila (2010, p. 217), the heroes of recent adventure fiction aimed at adults 'are constructed with nostalgic reference to a past tradition of adventure and masculine ideals. They are virile, strong and valiant figures committed to action and the pursuit of a noble quest. They are furthermore endowed with the characteristics that make up 'peerless and magnificent manhood' (Green, 1993, p. 95): courage, sagacity, energy and 'musculinity,' which [...] signifies 'muscular physical power ... an expression of freedom and a form of protection, ... bodily invincibility' (Green, 1993, p. 133; Green referenced in Capdevila 2010, p. 217).

It is no coincidence, then, that we are introduced to our teenage hero in an undeniably masculine space: 'The fist caught Connor by surprise. A rocketing right hook that jarred his jaw. Stars burst before his eyes and he stumbled backwards. Only instinct saved him from getting floored by the left cross that followed. Blocking the punch with his forearm, Connor countered with a kick to the ribs' (Bradford, 2013, p. 11). Aged 14, Connor Reeves holds the UK title for the Under Sixteens Battle of Britain Kickboxing tournament with 8 years of martial arts training under his belt and the physique to prove it.

From the start, it is obvious that the protagonist embodies the ideals of what gender researchers call 'hegemonic masculinity'. For the purposes of this paper, 'hegemonic masculinity' will refer to 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell, 2005, p. 77). Robinson (2015, p. 61) notes that historically, there has been a move to recognising 'hegemonic masculinities', and asking how 'particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance' (Brod, 1987, p. 92 in Robinson 2015, p. 61). From the outset, it would appear that Connor's performance of masculinity conforms to the aggressive-protective kind that sets manly heroes apart and he seems well equipped for the daunting task he has set for himself. Moreover, as Swain (2005, p. 224) observes, 'sporting success [...] is a key signifier of successful masculinity' and here, at least, Connor's ability appears unparalleled.

Morgan (in Murphy, 1994, n. p.), in his praise for the book *Fictions of Masculinity* claims that 'we are just beginning to understand masculinity as a 'fiction' or a localizable, historical, and therefore unstable construct'. Essentially, the notion that gender is not inevitable but constructed and performed has become the basis of research that analyses the way people interpret their identity and re-enact gendered performances in the context of societal expectations. In masculinity studies, these performances may be seen as an indication of the type of masculinity a subject subscribes (or, more often, aspires) to. Connell (in Swain, 2005, p. 224) summarises the concept by claiming that 'masculinity does not exist as an ontological given but comes into existence as people act'.

Gender performances that align with traditionally hegemonic male behaviour situate the subject in the general playing field with the consequence that successful re-enactment usually results in increased physical currency and acceptance, while failure may (and often does) lead to marginalisation. The successful performance of dominant masculinity is thus critical for those men and boys who wish to reap the benefits of the hegemonic domain, for those who seek acceptance and validation as a man amongst men.

Owing to the fact that 'the social and material practices through which, and by which, boys' masculine identities are defined are generally described in terms of what boys do with or to their bodies', several researchers have 'embraced the concept of embodiment' (Swain, 2005, p. 224). Connor's relationship with and control over his body is central to his identity and capability as a bodyguard and all the years of martial arts training pay off in situations when he is required to perform at an almost impossibly high level of precision with instinctive speed. The following passage, for example, shows Connor in action as he attempts to protect the US president's daughter, Alicia (who is not yet aware of Connor's status as

personal protector), from two muggers: *"Gold Tooth snatched for his prize. Connor instinctively stepped in to protect Alicia. [...] The situation demanded an all-or-nothing approach and he drove the edge of his hand into Gold Tooth's throat. [...] Connor immediately followed up with a hook punch to the solar plexus, then a lightning-fast upper cut to the jaw. There was a bone-jarring crunch and the gangster's gold tooth flew from his mouth. Over in less than five seconds, the final punch knocked the former Gold Tooth unconscious and he collapsed to the sidewalk in a heap"* (Bradford, 2013, p. 229-230).

And the heroics are not yet over! No sooner has Connor disposed of this threat than he is stabbed in the side by Gold Tooth's accomplice. The reader is aware, by now, that Connor has developed the habit of wearing stab-resistant T-shirts (supplied by Buddyguard to its recruits), a circumstance which makes Connor's survival plausible (to a certain extent, that is). In this first real attempt upon his life and that of his Principal (the person he is assigned to protect), Connor *"felt a sharp stab of pain in his ribs as the blade hit its mark. But the adrenalin blocked out the rest of the damage. Battling now for his own survival as well as Alicia's, Connor fought with the fury of a tiger. He palm-struck Crew Cut in the face, stunning and weakening his opponent. Then, grabbing the gang member's hand that held the knife, he spun himself under Crew Cut's arm. The whole series of joints from wrist to shoulder twisted against themselves. The effect was instantly crippling. [...] Connor then finished off the gang member with a strike to a pressure point at the back of his skull. Crew Cut ceased screaming and crumpled to the ground."*

Ensuring that there were no other immediate threats, Connor pulled Alicia to her feet.

'Are you hurt?' he asked." (Bradford, 2013, p. 231).

If this had been a James Bond movie, this would have marked the moment when the main female character falls hopelessly and distractedly in love with the hero. And yes, this is exactly what happens to Alicia. After witnessing Connor's selfless and flawless performance, she begins to consider him in a romantic light and the narrative gains interest on an emotional level. Connor is caught in a moral dilemma. Upon entering his duties as a bodyguard, Connor had sworn, under oath, not to become 'involved with' (Bradford, 2013, p. 255) his Principals. Yet he is deeply attracted to Alicia. Part of the 'action' now involves a physical and emotional balancing act in which Connor must remain close enough to Alicia to allow him to fulfil his mission as her protector, and yet not go against his commitment to the professional code of conduct.

While this provides impetus and dynamics for the narrative, the episode presents another underlying message: the successful performance of masculinity puts one in line to receive the recognition and benefits of hegemony; a prize which

Connor undoubtedly, and the young male reader, potentially, seeks. Connor seems to not only embody, but epitomise the ‘muscular physical power ... an expression of freedom and a form of protection, ... bodily invincibility’ that Green (1993, p. 133; Green referenced in Cadevila, 2010, p. 217) refers to in his book, *The Adventurous Male: Chapters in the History of the White Male Mind*.

Picking upon Green’s apt term, it is, moreover, Connor’s ‘masculinity’ that gives him the dominant position in this extract. Notably, he reaches down to lift Alicia to her feet after defeating the attackers; his bearing confident and controlling. By contrast, Alicia is depicted as frozen with fear at the start of the fight and she eventually succumbs to ‘brain fade’ (Bradford, 2013, p. 229), a temporary, yet natural reaction to unexpected danger which bodyguards are trained to avoid. In effect, there are three potential dangers in the episode above: two strong assailants and one terrified Principal whose reactions could jeopardise the success of the protagonist’s efforts.

While it may seem that Bradford is presenting a rather helpless image of femininity here – the typical (and often warranted) catalyst for reactionary feminist commentary – it must be admitted that this implied incompetence does not necessarily characterise all the girls and women in Bradford’s books. In fact, one his female Principals, the teenage daughter of a French ambassador to Central Africa, saves Connor from a black mamba and later joins him in fighting a particularly strong poacher who is attempting to hold them hostage: *“In the second that Connor took to consider his next best target, Amber stepped up and kicked Muscleman straight between the legs. The poacher’s eyes bulged and he bent double, expelling a pained gasp. Then she hammer-fisted him in the temple. Muscleman went down like a felled buffalo. Connor stared at Amber in stunned admiration.”* (Bradford, 2015, p. 279).

It is refreshing to see a girl character who is actively involved in protecting herself and her (momentarily stunned) protector. There is certainly no evidence of ‘brain fade’ in Amber’s reaction to danger here, with both bodyguard and Principal working with the common goal of survival in view.

Another notoriously feisty female character is one of his fellow bodyguards, a girl called Ling, who fights every bit as hard as Connor despite the fact that she has not yet earned her Buddyguard wings. We are told that although Connor ‘was a black belt in jujitsu and kickboxing, that didn’t mean he took a match with Ling lightly. At their very first encounter, she’d demonstrated she was a supremely tough combatant. In Amir’s words, “Ling *always* wins her fights”’ (Bradford, 2014, p. 45). Connor respects Ling’s skill and, upon her request, does not hold back in his attack in deference of her gender. In one particular instance, Ling challenges Connor to a knockout to chastise him for a comment which she deems to be sexist. In the kickboxing ring, she channels her frustration into her fight moves:

Like a whirling dervish, Ling came at him with a flurry of kicks and punches. Connor fought hard to defend himself. He ducked her spinning back fist, blocked her cross and evaded her crescent kick. As he retreated from Ling's relentless onslaught, Luciana goaded him from the ringside, "Some champion you are, Connor!"

Needled by the taunt and wanting to get a word in edgeways with Ling, Connor now went on the attack.

"Ling, I meant you got the job," he replied with a blistering combination of jab, cross and upper cut, "because ... our two Principals ... are girls. It therefore makes sense –" he almost floored Ling with a back fist – "to have a female bodyguard. [...] You can go places I can't. [...] And their protection is supposed to be low profile, so a girl bodyguard will be even less noticeable than a boy."

Connor grunted as Ling thrust a front-kick into his gut, forcing him backwards.

"Is that low profile enough for you?" grinned Ling, relishing the buzz of the fight.

Although this extract demonstrates Ling's physical and mental strength, it also highlights the fact that, in order to gain the dominance, acceptance and respect she craves in this traditionally masculine space, she must perform and excel in the activities which define its hierarchy.

According to Reardon and Govender (2011, p. 79), 'the male body has come to symbolize masculine characteristics such as power, control and invincibility. [...] Not only the body's size and shape, but also the skills and movements it is capable of all constitute ways in which masculinity is performed through the male body.' They further claim that 'the use of the body in aggressive and intimidating ways within peer relationships is a key means through which adolescent boys define and affirm their masculinity' (Reardon & Govender, 2011, p. 79). Apart from the 'musculinity' required on the field during a mission, the dynamics between the male bodyguards training at Buddyguard school also give rise to intense displays of aggression to prove status and gain validation. In this sphere, Connor's main competition is Jason, a young Australian boxer who takes it on himself to make sure that the newbie kickboxing champion doesn't get too high an opinion of himself. Although their 'friendly' sparring and training sessions sometimes flare up into actual fights, they generally maintain a decent façade for the sake of (the aptly named) Alpha Team they both support in a professional capacity. Connor, however, recognises Jason's antagonism as a bid to maintain his position in the school. He reflects that 'although their relationship was still fractious, Connor had come to realise Jason wasn't a bad lad in himself. Just neither of them wanted to be second best' (Bradford, 2014, p. 101).

Nevertheless, as Swain (2005, p. 215) notes, 'schools are invariably hierarchical and create and sustain relations of domination and subordination; each orders certain practices in terms of power and prestige as it defines its own distinct gender regime' (2005, p. 215). Inevitably, then, in this school, perhaps more so

than in any other, the boys are “consciously concerned about the maintenance of their bodies; they can be seen learning to control their bodies, acquiring and mastering a number of techniques [...]; and they can be seen using them in the appropriate ways that being a boy demands. Moreover, they are aware of the body’s significance, both as a personal (but unfinished) resource and as a social symbol, which communicates signs and messages about their self identity”. (Swain, 2005, p. 224).

Even in this arena, where young boys have been handpicked on the grounds of their suitability as bodyguards there are the (arguably oversexed) topdogs, the less assertive underdogs and the middling class of boys who recognise the unstated hierarchy. As Connell observes, ‘in every setting [...] there will be a hierarchy of masculinities, and each will generally have its own dominant, or hegemonic, form of masculinity, which gains ascendance over and above others; it becomes “culturally exalted”’ (Connell in Swain, 2005, p. 220).

When, after the success of his rookie mission, Connor is awarded his gold wings, he immediately becomes the target of renewed attempts by the other boys to reaffirm their own positions despite their officially subordinate status. The situation merely plays in Connor’s favour, however, as he, in turn, is challenged to ‘up his game’ even more and hone his skills in order to save face; the rivalry serves as an unofficial aspect of the curriculum at this unique school that serves to toughen the recruits for the more malicious threats that await on assignments. Connor, as a winner in the game of masculinity hierarchy, understands the rules and dedicates himself with renewed energy to his training, pushing his body to, at times, seemingly insane limits. According to Swain (2005, p. 224), this is typical of the workings of the hegemonic domain where ‘for much of the time, boys define their masculinity through action, and, [...] the most esteemed and prevalent resources that boys draw on to establish status are physicality and athleticism, which are inextricably linked to the body in the form of strength, toughness, power, skill, fitness and speed”.

This observation supports the concept of embodiment mentioned earlier, in which ‘the social and material practices through which, and by which, boys’ masculine identities are defined’ (Swain, 2005, p. 224) position boys as ‘embodied social agents, for they do not merely have a passive body that is inscribed and acted upon; they are actively involved in the development of their bodies throughout their school life’ (Swain, 2005, p. 224). Moreover, as Connell (1995) suggests, bodies are both the ‘objects and agents of practice, with the practice itself forming the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined’ (in Swain, 2005, p. 224). For example, in Connor’s world of close combat and high profile protection, the physical demands on masculinity are necessarily high, yet it is these very expectations and the means employed to meet them that produce both the object and the practice of this construction. More importantly for the concept of

embodiment, Connor is an active participant in his development, an agent in control of his own body and its actions. After all, as Whitehead and Barrett (2001, p. 17) observe, 'masculine power' is largely exercised through self-regulation and self-discipline – a process of 'identity work'.

For Connor, however, the attainment of 'strength, toughness, power, skill, fitness and speed' (Swain, 2005, p. 224) is not merely a matter of status; it is a means of survival. These are necessary skills in his profession, ones that could mean the difference between life and death. Featherstone (1982, p. 18) asserts that our inner and outer bodies are, in fact, 'conjoined' in consumer culture, with the aim of inner body maintenance being the improvement of outer body appearance and the cultivation of 'a more marketable self'. Thus bodies now have an important exchange value' (McKay et al., 2005, p. 280).

Featherstone's observations take on a rather ominous light in the context of the boy bodyguard. He is training his body, fine-tuning his reflexes to become a better bodyguard – more marketable, in a sense – a body whose services can not only be bought but who is expected to place himself as the final shield, the last point of defence for the significant and vulnerable Principal. The body that he has trained to execute actions with flawless precision can, in fact, be read as a marketable commodity for the comfort and safety of illustrious clients.

In his profession as a bodyguard, Connor's body actually takes on a physical 'exchange value', and is potentially expendable. In extreme cases, for example, the bodyguards are trained to provide body cover to their Principals; in effect, to place themselves between the client and the threat. Over the course of the three novels, Connor frequently does this, the first serious episode of this kind being when he takes two bullets for Alicia in an assassination attempt. Having sensed and identified the threat just seconds before the attack, Connor launches Alicia out of harm's way and is shot in the chest and the leg. His bullet proof shirt prevents a fatal upper body wound but he takes some time to recover from the flesh wound in his thigh. It's all part of the job, it seems, and Connor is dubbed 'Bullet-catcher' (Bradford, 2013, p. 414) in his get well card from Alpha Team at headquarters. Earlier in the novel, Connor deliberates about the potential consequences of becoming a Bullet-catcher (as some bodyguards are indeed called) and he wonders whether this is a risk he is willing to take and whether he would even 'have the guts to throw himself in the line of fire' (Bradford, 2013, p. 102).

After proving to himself and others that he is indeed capable of such an act, Connor suffers from the trauma of the experience, reliving the shooting in grotesque nightmares; even then, however, his main fear seems to be that he could so easily have been too late to protect his Principal. The fear of failure to perform his duty seems to outweigh his fear of personal injury. He has become, in fact, an ideal military recruit. But this is material for another research paper.

Conclusion

In an article entitled 'He comes back badder and bigger than ever!', Capdevila (2010, p. 217) claims that adventure novels allow heroes 'to stand tall among lesser men and to stake out the space of action and adventure as their own manly turf'. She relates Neal King's comment that it is in the realm of adventure that the hero 'can throw his head back and howl while knives skewer thighs, fists pound faces, and bullets rip flesh. [Heroes] call this manly turf their own. They earn it by killing criminals and playing to live another day' (King, 1999, p. 201). Connor Reeves performs his masculine role in this harsh environment with flair. Whether battling pirates in the Seychelles or wrestling a crocodile in Central Africa, the hero stakes his life on the belief instilled in him by his father that the strong should protect the weak. Like the late nineteenth-century adventure tradition which was, in Richard Phillips' words, thoroughly 'committed to the continuous reinscription of dominant ideologies of masculinity' (1997, p. 5; in Capdevila, 2010, p. 216), the *Bodyguard* series validates the manly hero's ability and therefore, his right, to assume physical and political ascendance over all other gender configurations.

It would appear, moreover, that Chris Bradford has harnessed the marketability of hegemonic masculinity and capitalised on a (perhaps initially latent) desire in 21st century young male readers to experience, albeit in a surrogate capacity, the thrill of the masculinity game and the triumph of invincible 'muscularity' over every form of opposition. The popularity of the series is significant in the light of current social and political agendas of gender activists that seek to destabilise the masculinity hierarchy. In many cases, these awareness campaigns have made considerable progress in shaping new, less exclusive, expectations for gendered performances. But for many young *Bodyguard* fans across the globe, Connor is still king.

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Contact

Dr Janice Robertson
PO Box 299
Midstream Estate
1692 SouthAfrica

janice@jrobertson.co.za



Teaching Jessica: race, religion, and gender in *The Merchant of Venice*

Efraim Sicher, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel
sicher@bgu.ac.il

Abstract

The Jew's "fair daughter" in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice* converts and marries a Christian, Lorenzo. Recent attention, however, to changing ideas of race and identity in the early modern period has brought into question the divisions of Christian/Jew/Moor. Can Jessica convert and no longer be considered the Jew's daughter? As "gentle" and "fair" is she to be considered gentle and in no way dark (spiritually or racially)? Jessica's conversion has apparently little religious meaning, but rather she is saved from the Jew her father by marriage to Lorenzo, who becomes Shylock's heir. Is Jessica's conversion to be considered a matter of convenience that might, as Launcelot quips, raise the price of hogs, or is it also to be counted as an ideological and racial conversion that reveals underlying anxieties about gender, sexuality, and religious identity? This essay attempts to argue against the grain of the performance history of *The Merchant History*, which often downplays the role of Jessica or revises the text of the play, and returns to the text in order to contextualize the conversion of Jessica in contemporary discourses of gender, race, and religion in England's expansionist colonialism and proto-capitalist commerce. The conversion of Jessica can be seen in that context as an exchange of monetary and ethical value, in which women's sexuality also had a price-tag. These questions have implications for the teaching of the play and for the understanding of its concerns with unstable sexual, religious, and national identities.

Key words: Shakespeare; *The Merchant of Venice*; gender; religion; sexuality

Introduction

Much has been written about the figure of Shylock in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice* (Gross, 1994; Sinsheimer, 1947). Indeed, the prolific criticism, not to mention the plays and novels written to counter the image of Shylock (Nachshon & Shapiro, Eds., at press), seems excessive for this character's limited role in the play--Shylock is already defeated and exits at the end of Act IV, and while the pound of flesh motivates Antonio's readiness for martyrdom in the trial scene, it does not outweigh the casket test with its attendant and overriding theme of love and harmony, played out in Act V. While attention has been paid to Jessica (Delgado, 1994; Kaplan, 2007; Slight, 1980), her conversion has not been

sufficiently considered (Berley, 1999), though critics have strained to find theological grounds in order to exonerate her (Dobbins & Battenhouse, 1976), or exerted themselves to rehabilitate her reputation as a literary character on textual grounds (Slights, 1980). M. Lindsay Kaplan, however, relates Jessica's conversion to medieval theories of reproduction, as well as ideas about the immutable nature of the Jew that was represented by inherited somatic or biological characteristics (Kaplan, 2007; Metzger, 1998). The Dutch scholar Lieke Stelling (2007) has claimed Jessica as a renegade whose voluntary conversion opens up new possibilities of early modern identities, and Michelle Ephraim (2008) reads Jessica in the archetype of Jephthah's daughter in the Bible, a sacrificial figure who becomes a victim of patriarchy and power relations. Jessica's challenge to gender hierarchy has become a byword of contemporary scholarship, in particular as an example of the contingency of gender boundaries which, like other personal and collective identities, are based on social and cultural constructs that were being undermined in the early modern period by changing attitudes towards individuality and subjectivity, as well as religion, and sexuality, and were subversively performed through corporealized signs and discursive strategies that spell what Judith Butler would call "gender trouble" (Cox, 2000). Nevertheless, all too often critics ignore the ambiguities built into the text and continue to juxtapose essentialized concepts of "Christian/Jew" in a test of whether the play is "anti-Semitic," or reread the play from the vantage point of modern Jewish identities, looking for evidence before or after Shakespeare's time for the real presence of Jewishness in the play (Adelman, 2008; Levin & Watkins, 2009, pp. 85-110). There have also been attempts by directors and actors to wrench the play from Shakespeare and interpret it as a contemporary sermon on racism and anti-Semitism.

Every production is, in a sense, a new play, but reinterpretation of the play from a post-Holocaust standpoint in scholarship and in performance history has tended to focus on Shylock as the crux of the problem of anti-Semitism (though that term would have been an anachronism in Shakespeare's day), which is nowhere more painful and inextricable than in Germany (Ackermann and Schülting, 2011). Middleton (2015) has given us a useful performance history of Jessica on the post-Holocaust stage that shows the multiplicity of identities in the staging of Jessica which often reduces her to a counterpart for a sympathetic Shylock or typifies her as a rebellious teenage daughter running away from a hard-hearted father, bypassing the issue of religious conversion or stressing the need for respect of difference. Trevor Nunn's 1999 production at the National Theatre (made into a movie in 2001) follows a trend to interpret Shylock in the wake of the Holocaust as the victim of cruel persecution and an intolerant society. He is played by Henry Goodman as a modern Orthodox Jew who speaks Yiddish to his daughter; in Nunn's film version he sings the Hebrew Sabbath melody *Eshet khayil* ("Woman of Valor") together with Jessica (played by Gabrielle Jourdain), as Shylock recalls his

deceased wife Leah, whose portrait he peruses while considering whether or not to answer Bassanio's invitation to dinner. This episode is inserted just at the point (II, v) when Launcelot (played by a Black) gives Jessica Lorenzo's message with instructions about their elopement. In this interpretation, Jessica is running away not because she wants to convert, but because she wants to escape her father's oppressive house and his domineering character. She discovers too late her mistake and the price she must pay to be accepted as a Christian, a clear parable of the lesson learned by assimilated Jews in the twentieth century. In Act V, scene I Jessica breaks down at the moment of Portia's return to Belmont when the couples are to be reunited and fidelities renegotiated. While Lorenzo is jubilant over the gift of the Jew's wealth, Jessica wails the lines of *Eshet khayil* (the verses from Proverbs usually sung at the Sabbath eve dinner table), falling to her knees as she understands her loss of family and home. The intrusion of Hebrew emphasizes a moment of Jewish identification that undoes Shakespeare's troubled tranquility and the restitution of stability in Portia's homecoming, but it also rewrites the Jewish alien as a legitimate cultural voice.

Besides the stereotypical Jewish daughter opposite Al Pacino's Shylock on Broadway in 2010 (directed by Daniel Sullivan), Jessica has been coopted as a rebellious Jewish daughter on the New York stage played by Dara Seitzman (Revolving Shakespeare Company, 2002), as well as being scripted by postmodern Jewish novelists, as in Erica Jong's bawdy novel, *Serenissima* (1987, later retitled *Shylock's Daughter: A Novel of Love in Venice*), a fantasy about an erotic relationship between a Jewess and the Bard. A children's novel by Mirjam Pressler, *Tochter* (1999), translated as *Shylock's Daughter* (2000), retells Jessica's story from a post-Holocaust perspective of anti-Semitism and assimilation. Michael Scrivener, in his book on the figure of the "Jew" in nineteenth-century British culture, follows Janet Adelman in a revisionist reading of Jessica as a tragic figure in the spirit of Romantic performance of Shylock from Edmund Kean on, immortalized in Maurice Gottlieb's 1876 painting *Shylock and Jessica* (Scrivener, 2011). This has become an icon for modern representation and promotion of the play (for example, in the National Theatre poster for Nunn's production). Few contemporary critics take Jessica seriously as a Shakespearean (rather than Jewish) type, and few ponder the significance of Jessica's (rather than Shylock's) conversion.¹⁶

I would take issue with attempts to introduce Jessica into a debate between Judaism and Christianity or to read Shakespeare's play from the standpoint of postmodern identity politics or American Jewish communal concerns about

¹⁶ Exceptionally, Aaron Landau (2006) has compared Jessica's conversion with Zoraida's conversion from Islam in "The Captive's Tale" in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as an example of a gendered cross-cultural paradigm.

assimilation. Instead, I would like to come back to Shakespeare's text, and turn to the question of why Jessica converts, a conversion that is not staged and often puzzles modern audiences (though it would surely not have troubled Shakespeare's contemporaries). I believe Jessica's conversion may hold the key to central ideas in the play that are connected with equally compelling and no less topical concerns such as colonialism, hybridity, "Englishness," race, and sexuality, which scholars of early modern England have pinpointed as key issues in Elizabethan society and culture (Loomba, 2002; Shapiro, 1996). Why indeed does Jessica have to convert? Many students ask this question. I want to suggest that Jessica's conversion is a key to a preoccupation with gender, race, and color in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, in fact with anxieties about boundaries in these categories that were shifting in the early modern period. I would go as far as to say that Jessica's conversion carries a far greater weight in the meaning of the play than Shylock and the bond, which in fact is part of a larger plot (the love story and Portia's bonding to her father's will in the casket contest of marriage suitors).

Early modern conversions: Fidelity and Inconstancy

Firstly, let us briefly consider the early modern view of whether the Jew's body was convertible. Several English theologians debated whether Jewish biological identity—including the Jewish smell, or *foetor judaicus*,—could be washed away by baptism, and asked what happened to the Jewish body when it entered the communion of the Christian commonwealth, or wondered how it would be affected by a relapse (Shapiro, 1996, pp. 170-71). These anxieties are not unconnected with the question of sincerity in conversion in a country torn apart by Protestant and Roman Catholic claims and counter-claims. In his enormously popular *Acts and Monuments* (1570), John Foxe questioned the efficacy of forced conversion, attacked its abuse, and critiqued the persecution of heretics by the Spanish Inquisition, which turned against anyone who was deemed theologically wayward or who fell victim to political intrigue and envy. The secret ways of the Inquisition, Foxe averred, trapped and condemned many a true believer (Cattley, Ed. 1837. Vol. 4, pp. 451-2). If such barbarous practices were to send shivers down Elizabethan spines, how much more horrible was the fate of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, who had been forced to convert to Catholicism under Mary Tudor but recanted shortly before his execution in 1556. Foxe, who paints a graphic picture of Cranmer's martyrdom and praises the Archbishop's steadfast faith to the last, apparently speaks for religious tolerance and against forced conversion (Cattley, Ed. Vol. 8, pp. 3-19). In his account of the pogrom of London Jews at the time of the coronation of Richard I in 1189, he described the forced conversion of one Jew who thereby sought to save his life and who was subsequently allowed to revert to Judaism after the King's inquiry into his forced conversion, but this is reported negatively, as reversion to worship of the devil (Cattley, Ed. Vol. 2, pp. 276-77).

However, Foxe's attitude toward Jews was increasingly hard and implacable (Achinstein, 2001, 109-11). In the following description of the 1190 York massacre, when Jews killed themselves rather than convert, Foxe repeated the widely believed blood libel when he declared that the victims deserved what befell them on account of their annual crucifixion of a Christian child on Good Friday (Cattley, Ed. Vol. 2, p. 277).

Contact with Jews in the strategic eastern Mediterranean gave opportunities of their candidacy for conversion. Foxe relates an apocryphal tale of a converted Jew in Constantinople, who was martyred by the Turks and whose body miraculously did not putrefy, demonstrating the redemptive efficacy of baptism, which presumably washed away his "Jewishness" (Cattley, Ed. Vol. 4, p. 555). In his *Sermon Preached at the Christening of a Certain Jew, at London* (trans. James Bell, 1578) Foxe voiced his hope that the example of conversion of a Jew transported out of Barbary, who renounced "at the last the natural contumacy of his native country," would lead to the remnant of the "circumcised race" joining the nations of the world embracing faith in Jesus, a supranational faith in the spirit of Paul's notion of a Christian nation. Yet as an example of infidelity he gives the Jews' "unbelief, which being more noisome than any pestilent botch, may rightly and properly be called the Jewish infidelity, and it seemeth after a certain manner their inheritable disease, who are after a certain sort, from their birth, naturally carried through perverse frowardness, into all malicious hatred, and contempt of Christ, and his Christians" (Foxe, p. 303). These examples of conversion of male Jews uncover the ambiguities and unease about the Jewish body: is "Jewish" infidelity inherent and passed on together with the curse that was believed to afflict Jews from one generation to the next, or could conversion put an end to the Jews' stubborn misbelief without fear of relapse and treachery? The usual story in the conversion narrative is that the wicked Jews are given a chance to recognize Christianity as the true religion through the working of a miracle, as a result of which they convert, thus saving their souls if not their bodies. If there is a "miracle" in *The Merchant of Venice*, it is Portia's intervention in the trial, not the Virgin Mary's, and the only voluntary conversion is Jessica's.

In any case, there seem to be few theological qualms in either *The Jew of Malta* or *The Merchant of Venice*. The paradigm of wicked Jew-father and desirable fair daughter is exemplified by the wicked Barabas and the beautiful Abigail, as well as Shylock and Jessica—Berenice in Maria Edgeworth's *Harrington* (1817) and Rebecca in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) are anti-Jessicas who confirm the stereotype but subvert the requirement of conversion by insisting on endogamy in the resolution of the plot. Michael Ragussis sees an intimate link in Shakespeare's play between religious conversion and the trope of conversion in comedy, a transformation of identity which tests other forms of "conversion" in the play (Ragussis, 1995). Indeed, Jessica has some affinity with the father-daughter pair of

the *commediadell'arte* and joins Portia and other daughters in conflict with their father's will in the choice of marriage partner in Shakespeare's plays, sometimes with comic resolution, for example, in *Midsummer's Night Dream*; Olivia Delgado de Torres casts Jessica in a comparative "daughterology" of Shakespeare's plays (Delgado, 1994). The Shylock-Jessica pair cannot apparently be separated, since Jessica's rebellion makes no sense without Shylock's story, yet, unlike Abigail in *The Jew of Malta*, Jessica does marry a Christian and has a life on the stage independent of her father.

At first glance, there seems little serious concern with miscegenation (itself an anachronistic term), notwithstanding Portia's prejudice against Morocco, who recommends his racial profile as a mark of sexual prowess (2.1.1-12). Abigail in *The Jew of Malta* is considered a suitable partner for a Christian noble. Don Mathias regrets that Abigail landed up in a nunnery rather than a bed and Friar Barnardine (one of two "religious caterpillars" who compete for the soul of the Jew) is grieved by her death because she died a virgin! Barabas rails against his daughter's disloyalty to his faith and tribe, yet Abigail eventually converts for real as a result of her father's Machiavellian strategies in which she too (like Iphigenia) has been sacrificed; however, she does not set out to betray him (Charney, 1979). By contrast, Jessica intends from the beginning to disown her Jew-father, who would rather she marry someone from the stock of "Barabbas" (4.1.190-92), the thief released instead of Jesus (Mark 15:6-15); she wishes to marry Lorenzo, who steals the Jew's daughter and with her his gold. Unlike Abigail, Jessica has no part in her father's evil doing and has no part in the blood vengeance against the Christian. Yet her desertion motivates Shylock's determination to demand his bond: Solanio and Salario warn that Shylock will make Antonio pay for both the loss of his daughter and his gold (2.8.25) and taunt Shylock with his double loss in act 3 scene 1, provoking him to revenge, "Let him look to his bond."

I argue that the issue of convertibility is not restricted to conversion of the Jews, but serves as a malleable trope for inconstancy at several levels. In order to understand the conversion of Jessica in the perspective of the play as a whole, it is important to bear in mind the unstable complexity of ideas in *The Merchant of Venice*, in which Jessica, not Shylock, stands at the center of the notion of conversion. Conversion here is not so much an act of faith, but a conversion of value that is pragmatically convenient and reflects unstable, often fuzzy, boundaries of ethnic, racial, and sexual identities. There is no doubt that early modern England was witness to much anxiety about conversion, as the nation switched between Protestant and Catholic churches, and suspicion was cast on recusants, closet Papists, and "Judaizers" (Questier, 1996); to say someone "turned Turk" was to suspect them of betrayal (see the study of the renegade of the English stage in Vitkus, 2008). To take Jessica's conversion seriously as a typical search for spiritual salvation or (anachronistically) for civic emancipation (Lupton, 2005)

misses the point that it is anxiety about changing and unstable identities which comes subversively to the fore in *The Merchant of Venice*.

One way of defining Englishness at a critical moment of formation of the nation was to delineate the Other, so that the construction of the figure of the “Jew” projects shifting boundaries of racial, religious, or gender difference in a changing economic climate and global mercantile and strategic environment (see Shapiro, 1996). What with the incessant flow of foreigners in English ports and the frequent encounters with unfamiliar peoples in the new worlds whose religions and cultures did not fit European paradigms of White Christian “civilization,” the Englishman would be hard put to name a precise and consistent classification of nationhood (see Shapiro, 1996). In fact, the terms nation, religion, color, and race were in flux at the time as England adjusted its self-identity *vis-à-vis* its emerging role as a major colonial power and trading empire. In particular, commercial contact brought home the threat of miscegenation and infiltration which would harm English economic interests at home (Hall, 2006; see Bovilsky, 2008). Religious, racial, and national difference was becoming further destabilized by Moors, Negroes, Romany, and others who were claiming charity on England’s shores, not to mention the tensions in gender and class roles shown by cross-dressing (Howard, 1988; Bullough & Bullough, 1993; Cressy, 1996) and passing (Mounsey, 2001), fake or disguised identities (a deception reflected in the wording of the 1597-98 vagrant laws) (Eliav-Feldon, 2012). The clandestine presence in England of Spanish and Portuguese *converses* is only one example of false identities and “counterfeit professions” in an atmosphere of intrigue, espionage, and suspicion. Marranos, a pejorative term in current usage for a renegade and rogue, professing Christianity but secretly practicing some form of crypto-Judaism, could be considered the archetypal Renaissance man, disguised and secretive (Berek, 1998; Campos, 2002; Shoulson, 2013, pp. 33-34).

Jews were aliens everywhere, not confined to one country (though Jessica refers to her father’s “countrymen”), and so were to be considered a danger within the nation because they embodied a cultural and racial difference that was impermeable to conversion (Loomba, 2002). There had been, officially, no Jews in England since the expulsion of 1290, but there was a number of merchants or musicians and other persons attached to the court, who may have been of New Christian descent, though the legend of the Beautiful Jewess, Maria Nuñez, captured by English pirates while *en route* to refuge and safety in Holland, who rode with the queen in her carriage, is historically inaccurate (Bodian, 1999, pp. 23-24). Gratiano’s reference to the hanged wolf in his speech in the trial scene (4.1.133-135) might allude to the infamous Dr. Roderigo Lopez, physician to Queen Elizabeth, who was executed for allegedly plotting to poison the English monarch in June 1594 (two years before the possible date for the first staging of *The Merchant of Venice*) (Modder, 1939/1960). In a popular engraving, “Lopez

compounding to poison the Queen" (first published in *Popish Plots and Treasons*, 1606), Lopez is depicted as Judas, for whom the question is "how much will you give?," a clear reference to the secret identity of the "Jewish doctor," as he was called in his indictment (Green, p. 305). Marlowe's play about another conspirator, double-agent, and poisoner, *The Jew of Malta* was staged at the Rose just three days after Lopez was taken to the Tower, and Lopez's gruesome execution would have been in the public mind when *The Merchant of Venice* was first performed (Green, pp. 244-45, 307-311). The figure of Lopez, who was associated as a Jewish physician with Machiavelli and poisoning even before his trial and execution (Harris, 1998, pp. 79-87), fitted the image of the deceptive Maranno perfectly.

I would argue that the problematic relation of outer appearance and inner self (a juxtaposition that goes back to Matthew in the Christian scriptures) indicates an embodiment of the deceit in the religious and moral identity of the Jew to which Antonio draws attention in *The Merchant of Venice* when he refers to Shylock as falsely appearing to be a good apple that is rotten inside (1.3.93-94). Bassanio also draws on this opposition between material outside and spiritual inside when choosing the lead casket (3.2.73-80), an argument that he applies to both religion and law and that is not irrelevant to the trial scene. However much the Jew may satanically disguise himself, he remains internally unchangeable, and thus would be unconvertable.

The perfidious heresy of the Jews, who were classified as black (from contact with the devil, as well as from inherent filth), could not be changed any more than the "black Moor" could change his skin or the leopard could change its spots, in the Geneva Bible rendering of the well-known passage in Jeremiah 13: 23 (Loomba, 2002), a verse that can be related to the racial discourse in *Othello*. The Venerable Bede expounded the verse to mean that by casting off sin the "Ethiopian" can be "whitened" through baptism. However, other Christian commentators used the verse to show that, to the contrary, the Jews were, like the Ethiopian, unredeemable. Such allegorical readings did not remain in the realm of the metaphorical but related also to the somatic difference of the Jewish body. Medieval medicine and natural science took this spiritual analogy to be empirical fact, adducing the Jew's blackness to divine punishment and irredeemable sinfulness, yet blackness could also be attributed to external factors, such as climate and geographical location, that could change over time. Blackness was also associated with melancholy and inclinations (see Resnick, 2012). In late medieval romance there are many examples of representations of embodied Jewish or Muslim otherness which are immutable despite baptism, suggesting a biological essence inseparable from religious difference (Resnick, 2012, pp. 294-299; Ziegler, 2009, pp. 198-199).

While it was the male who was thought to determine lineage, that is, "race" and "class" (Loomba, 2002), it was widely believed that the woman's thoughts at the

time of coitus or during pregnancy could affect the color and appearance of the embryo (an oft-cited example was Jacob's genetic experiment with Laban's sheep in the Bible, to which Shylock refers in his defense of usury). This would give Jessica a significant role in marriage with a Christian, in which color and physiology were significant. Jew and Moor were, in the thinking of Shakespeare's day, each an alien Other, and this is reflected in the construction in medical knowledge of an inherent physiological difference, with all that this implies for breeding and miscegenation (Japtok & Schleiner, 1999).¹⁷

The conversion of Body and Spirit

Sexual fantasy clearly played a part in the drive to convert Jewish women who were perceived as both beautiful and eligible for conversion because, unlike wicked, ugly Jewish men, they were not cursed for abusing Jesus on the way to crucifixion but had tended the Christians' savior compassionately, like Mary Magdalene. Inter-racial sexual relations were regarded with a mixture of aversion and derision, yet it was invariably the Jew's daughter, not any male offspring, who was the desirable partner and ripe for conversion. It was widely believed that Jewish women preferred intercourse with uncircumcised men (Sir Thomas Brown, 1646, cited in Bulwer, 1654, p. 378). From a Freudian standpoint, desire doubles with fear of the Other in fantasies of miscegenation, and in early modern Europe tales abounded of sex with Black or Asiatic slaves, titillating readers but warning them of the boundaries of religious and power hierarchies (Young, 1995; Groebner, 2009). Whiteness was a measure of beauty, as distinct from the blackness of the Moor (a confused classification of blacks in northern parts of Africa at the time), which was a sign of dirt and evil, danger and repulsion (Winthrop, 2000). Besides the repeated pun in the play on gentle/Gentile, the association of "fair" with color and beauty emphasizes Jessica's whiteness (Lorenzo praises the fair hand that wrote him a letter [2.4.12]), as well as virtue and justice (Antonio's "fair flesh" signifies more than just weight and value).

A theological argument would say the sins of the father are laid upon the children and no baptism can wash away the inherited guilt and blackness of the Jews. Launcelot jokes in Act 3, Scene 5,

¹⁷ Emily Bartels, however, insists on the distinction between the Jew, who is allowed sufficient humanity to demonstrate the monstrosity of his behavior, and the Moor, who, on the early modern stage, "is uniquely poised to negotiate, mediate, even transform the terms of European culture" (2008, p. 15).

LAUNCELOT Yes truly, for look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore I promise you, I fear you. I was always plain with you and so now I speak my agitation of the matter. Therefore be a good cheer for truly I think you are damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good, and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

JESSICA And what hope is that, I pray thee?

LAUNCELOT Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

JESSICA That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed- so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me!

LAUNCELOT Truly then, I fear you are damned both by father and mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother. Well, you are gone both ways.

JESSICA I shall be saved by my husband. He hath made me a Christian. (3.5.1-20)

Launcelot's teasing insinuates that Jessica cannot throw off her father's religion without also cutting herself off from his circumcised body by having a Christian "get" her. The Second Folio reading ("beget") suggests the possibility that Jessica is not her father's child (Adelman, 2008, pp. 71-72).¹⁸ Marriage to Lorenzo is an act of conversion (a reference to I Corinthians 7-14) that frees Jessica from being the Jew's daughter, but this raises socioeconomic anxieties about the influx of converted strangers. Launcelot quips,

This making Christians will raise the
price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork eaters, we
shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.
(3.5.23-5; 52)

Joking aside, Jessica is to be "saved" by her husband and will no longer be her father's daughter, so that birth would not override an incontrovertible difference of nation, color, race, and religion.

¹⁸ Adelman infers that an Elizabethan audience would have heard "begets" rather than "gets" with its association of possession (2008, pp. 71-72). Harris and Rubinstein, however, read "get" as consistent with Launcelot's sexual innuendoes throughout this scene that make light of Jessica's virtue (2004, pp. 14-15).

Jessica becomes a Christian's wife through a sexual and gender transformation (Metzger, 1998). When Jessica is cross-dressed as a boy page, the covering of her sex that "garnishes" Lorenzo's appetite for her body, both masks her alien status and suggests a switching of gender identities, alluded to in the bawdy pun of Jessica (played by a Christian male actor) holding a "candle" (penis) to her "shames" (genitals) (Harris & Rubinstein, 2004, p. 14; Jardine, 1983, pp. 29-30). Cross-dressing is appropriate for the Venetian carnival setting, but whatever Freudian significance it may have (Berley, 1999), this common early modern stage device draws attention to an inversion of social and sexual identities, which Shakespeare uses in his plays to deflect the threat of male submission and to playfully insinuate homoeroticism (Bromley, 2012, pp. 73-75). Like the switch of religion, cross-dressing offers yet another exchange in the commodity-value of bodies (see Mentz, 2003; Shell, 1982). Inversion of social and sexual identities, moreover, enables conversion of the feminized "Jewish" body into a Christian body (see Kruger, 2006, pp. 96-109). While men could be saved through the grace of Jesus, women were the gendered Other, who (at least in medieval Christian hermeneutics) had to transcend their sex to reach salvation. The circumcised Jew, however, who lacked a full phallus and was thus gendered as Other, had first to convert (Lampert, 2004, pp. 29-35). Jessica's conversion is thus an exchange of both sexual and monetary value, as she converts the Jew's money and her body to Christian use, a natural joining, in Reformation discourse, to the spirit of the Christian nation, in contrast to the unnatural Jewish body (Blank, 2003, pp. 94-96).

Yet this act of conversion must still overcome the difference of blood. Whatever the fantasies of castration and emasculation pertaining to circumcision (Katz, 1999) in Solanio's obscene jesting about Shylock's manhood in Act 3, scene 2 (after Jessica has fled with Lorenzo and the gold), Salerio makes a significant point: "There is more difference between thy flesh and hers / than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods / than there is between red wine and Rhenish" (3.1.35-38). Is it possible to reverse the Jewish difference of blood, a difference that Christian theologians believed derived from the Jews' primal sin in calling the blood of Jesus on their heads (Matthew 27.25), as Shylock calls his deeds on his head in the trial scene? Jessica has herself testified in 2.3:

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
 To be ashamed to be my father's child!
 But though I am a daughter to his blood
 I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
 If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife-
 Become a Christian and thy loving wife. (2.3.17-22)

This would distinguish the inheritance of blood from the inheritance of morals and suggests an argument for the possibility of a moral or spiritual conversion that

can override, or at least excuse, unredeemable tainted Jewish blood without need of a transfusion. This possibility indicates a shift from a biological determinism to moral choice, and it sets the stage for a move in the last act, which comes after Shylock's forced conversion and his humiliating exit from the play, to a more metaphysical resolution of the inconstancy of conversion and the vagaries of religious and racial boundaries.

Harmony and its Discontents

The final act transports us to Belmont, in some ways an alternate space to Venice and in some ways an extension of it. Here money is converted to love, but conversion can itself call into question the constancy of love and the value of exchange. The Renaissance stamp of humanism is evident in the typical romantic ending, the coupling of the lovers:

LORENZO In such a night
 Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
 And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
 As far as Belmont.

JESSICA In such a night
 Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
 Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
 And ne'er a true one.

LORENZO In such a night
 Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
 Slander her love; and he forgave it her.

JESSICA I would out-night you, did nobody come,
 But hark- I hear the footing of a man.

(5.1.19-31)

How can we understand this competition between the lovers over fidelity, cut short by (of all gendered choices) a man's footing? In fact, the series of mythic couples summoned by Lorenzo and Jessica suffer tragedy and (with the exception of Thisbe) betrayal, casting further doubts on the seriousness of a marital bond that depends on conversion¹⁹ and evoking a sense of inauspicious doom for the eloping lovers. Significantly, Jessica's example that trumps Lorenzo's Dido in their contest of classical myths is Ovid's Medea who triumphs through revenge, but who is also the giver of a magical gift to Jason in his quest to win the golden fleece, as

¹⁹ See Kaplan's extrapolation of these couples and its possible significance for Jessica's conversion (2007, pp. 27-29). Lampert (2004, p. 165) sees the allusion as further evidence of Jessica's incomplete conversion and aberrant sexuality; Berger explains the anomaly of Thisbe as bringing us back to Jessica's abandonment of her father (2010, p. 21).

well as poisoning Jason's new wife and committing infanticide to avenge faithlessness (Tassi, 2011, p. 254). These insights into sexual relationships introduce irony into Gratiano's boast that they are the Jasons who have "won the golden fleece" (3.2.329). Not only is their fidelity tested and found wanting, but the moon-like inconstancy of human hearts reflects an anxiety about convertibility.

The play ends, not with revenge on the avenger, as in *The Jew of Malta*, but with conversion aided by Diana, rather than Mary, to the hedonistic lighthearted ways of Belmont. Diana is an agent of conversion who transformed Actaeon into a stag after he stumbled upon her bathing in her birthday suit (as portrayed in Titian's *Diana and Actaeon*, 1556-1559). Lorenzo's and Jessica's musings prepare for the homecoming of the metamorphosed Portia, hunter and (as the golden fleece) hunted object of desire; Portia and Nerissa have virtually converted their husbands into both stags and cuckolds (who were traditionally horned). Now the converted Jessica must learn to overcome the aversion in her father's house to sweet music, though the reason for her sadness, Lorenzo explains, is that her "spirits are attentive" (5.1.68); only music, he says, has Orpheus's power to transform (Oz, 1995).

A man without music is fit for "treasons, stratagems and spoils" (5.1.83) and is not to be trusted— one cannot but think of the treacherous Jew who shuts out of his house the harmony of music. In the harmonic music of the spheres, there is no place for the exacting retribution and mathematical law of the Jew in a Belmont of lightness and joy, merriment and love, even if harmony can only be dimly seen by mortal eyes and its cherubic music is inaudible (5.1.61-63) (Oz, pp. 188-91). The Jew's revenge has failed, and Antonio's readiness to martyr himself to the Christ-killer has paid off the debt for the loan of his body for the advancement of his friend's wealth and sexual pleasure.

Commentators have ascribed Jessica's initial unease in Belmont to her status as a social outcast, not completely washed clean of her father's blood by baptism (Adelman, pp. 73-74); Graziano refers to her as an "infidel" (3.2.216) and a "stranger" (3.2.235). Yet there is scant evidence in the text to support any regret for her apostasy. Hamilton conjectures that Jessica's silence on her father's fate implies her feelings of guilt; in the 1987 Royal Shakespeare production, an explanation for her sad mood in Act 5 is given in having Jessica dressed differently from the rest of the Belmont crowd and in the final scene Antonio dangles a cross over her head as she falls down, stricken with grief (Hamilton, 2003, 51-52). Yet her story does not end, as one would expect in conventional conversion narratives, with transformation by a new faith or (as in Shylock's case) by humiliating defeat and submission. Indeed, the efficacy of conversion becomes as much a matter of teasing between Lorenzo and Jessica in the last act as do his vows of faithfulness, suggesting that both marital and religious fidelity are not constant, that hearts may be stolen as much as the Jew's money.

Belmont's idyllic harmony seems a world apart from the rapacious money-getting of Venice and Shylock's murderous menace, yet it offers a pertinent message about the anxieties of early modern capitalism and colonialism. Not for nothing does Portia compare the candle burning in her hall to "a good deed in a naughty world" (5.1.89). It is a moment that has its comic relief, which nevertheless does not detract from the ideal humility of the Christian Merchant who offers a moral substitution for the Jew-usurer's unyielding insistence on the merciless letter of the law, as well as a business ethics that responds to the current debate over usury and the risks of finance in the early modern economy (Cohen, 1985; Hinley, 1980; Nirenberg, 2013; Rosenshield, 2002). Antonio converts materialistic gain to the good, and his self-sacrifice closes the circle that opened the play with his sobriety and melancholy. Echoing Jessica's own cross-dressing that freed her from her father, Portia's and Nerissa's cross-dressing has unbound Antonio from Shylock and bound Bassanio in debt to Antonio. Antonio, who had bound himself for Bassanio by selling his body to the devil, is prepared to bind his soul for his friend's renewed fidelity (5.1.47-251). Antonio is rewarded with the return of part of his argosies, Lorenzo and Jessica with the gift after Shylock's death of half the Jew's estate. This gift symbolically confirms salvation through the "manna" (5.1.292) of material, not spiritual, abundance. Harmony has been restored, yet the conversions which have made this possible have raised questions about its durability and stability, reflecting concerns in early modern England about infidelity in conversion from Catholicism or Protestantism, as well as in credit and trust in commerce as England's mercantile fleet gained ground in global trade in competition with Venice.

All's well that ends well, yet the danger in which Antonio had placed himself must be understood as a serious one from which he is saved by a woman, Portia, who converted her gender identity in a transgressive act of cross-dressing and who nonetheless managed to get her will without breaking her father's. The laws of patrimony are broken only by Jessica, the Jew's prodigal daughter, who has symbolically emasculated the Jew by stealing his euphemistic "stones" (2.8.20-21; 2.9.22) (Lampert, 2004). Jessica has become one flesh with the Christian in a supersession of the Christian body over the Jewish threat to it, of grace over law, of music over usury, of luxurious contentment over barren breeding.

Shylock's conversion is a condition of Antonio's mercy, one clause in Christian clemency, not a punishment (as in Al Pacino's movie), but Jessica's conversion, inasmuch as the representational world of the play operates within English common law, ensures that she loses her female subjectivity when her property goes to the male heir (Lorenzo), who inherits Shylock's property as his "son." Similarly, Portia tells Bassanio that "Myself and what is mine to you and yours / is now converted" (3.2.171-2; 22) (Shoulson, 2013). In "converting" her wealth to Bassanio (3.2.166-67), Portia is a convertible coin (an "angel" in Morocco's pun

[2.7.56]), which makes marriage a profitable transaction of trade and desire (Loomba, 2002), though Newman reads this exchange as a sign of a conservative society trading in women as objects, not partners, of marriage (2009, 59-76). However, when Portia calls on Bassanio to take into “account” her virtues (3.2.155-158), the tension is evident between the spiritual and the material, between fair trade and excess, between purchase of goods and of human flesh. It is Portia who, in the trial scene, safeguards the commodity relations which, in Antonio’s warning (3.3.31-32), the Venetians—and by extension the Elizabethans—have with strangers, who are perceived as an economic, cultural, and sexual danger that must be controlled. In the new conditions of intense and unregulated mercantile activity, legal and ethnic difference had to be redefined for the protection of the local and national economy from competition and piracy. In the Machiavellian marketplace that was the early modern Mediterranean, both the Jew’s ducats and his daughter were equally profitable (Vitkus, 2008). As Jonathan Gil Harris has argued, the figure of the Jew in *The Merchant of Venice*, when compared with other contemporary figures of usurers, presents less the condemnation of unnatural breeding of money as a Jewish vice than an Elizabethan concern with transnational mercantilism (Harris, 2004, p. 53).²⁰ On the face of it, the mythical narrative and theological archetype of the Jew’s daughter have been transformed into a successful romance that fends off the racial, gender, and sexual risks of early modern commodity exchange, in which love, too, has a price and an exchange rate. If we can put aside the debate over the loaded question of anti-Semitism in the performance history of the play, we can see that Jessica’s conversion uncovers a sexual transaction which foregrounds the concern over fidelity in commercial as well as marital relations, against the background of unstable religious and national identities.

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²⁰ Lisa Jardine has shown, for example, the shrewd and intricate negotiation of contracts and financial loans in the Hapsburg Empire in the early sixteenth century which ensured profitable commercial and political gains from colonization in the new world, natural resources, and marriage with a king’s daughter (1996, pp. 277-87). The conflicts of national and personal interests or the dictates of the Church on usury that arose from this commodity culture were often hotly debated against the background of the Reformation, power struggles between European nations, and the military threat of an expansionist Ottoman Empire (Jardine, 1996, p. 326-76). Gil Anidjar has theorized the trope of blood in the play as engaging with this economic discourse in the flow of money in the Christian imagination, which sets up the Jew as an economic enemy (2014, p. 150-53).

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Contact

Professor Efraim Sicher
Abrahams-Curiel Department of Foreign Literatures & Linguistics
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
Beer-Sheva 84105
Israel
e-mail: sicher@bgumail.bgu.ac.il

Romantic imagination in a comparative perspective: English and Slovak Romantic literature

Anton Pokrivčák¹ & Silvia Pokrivčáková²

¹University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Slovakia, anton.pokrivcak@ucm.sk

²Trnava University, Slovakia, silvia.pokrivcakova@truni.sk

Abstract

The paper discusses Romantic imagination in two, relatively distant, national literatures. The first part is concerned with the problems comparative literature has faced in recent decades. In the second part, the work of two Slovak Romantic writers, Ján Kollár and Janko Kráľ, is compared to the poetry of Lord Gordon Byron and William Wordsworth. By identifying certain affinities between the discussed literary works, the authors point to the importance of the concept of national literature which has not lost its role even in contemporary literary studies.

Key words: Romanticism, national literature, postcolonial literature, English, Slovak

Since the 1958 lecture of Wellek entitled “The Crisis of Comparative Literature” (Wellek, 1964) there have been constant speculations about the nature and sense of this literary discipline. The speculations included the name, method and object of comparison as well as reflections about parallels between comparative literature, national literature, and, perhaps, general or world literature. One could write a lengthy article, if not a book, about each of these concepts. In many discussions, it has been pointed out that the concept itself is not a happy one (at least in English), since the term *comparative literature* has come to denote not literary works (poems, novels, etc.) expressing some comparative aspect, as in the case of national literature which is usually assumed to be an accumulation of literary works of one nation, but rather the theoretical, historical and critical works focused on comparing literary texts based on various criteria. Thus, what is called comparative literature could perhaps better be called comparative literary studies.

In spite of theoretical disagreements, crises and the confusing name, one must say, after all, that comparative literature, in the sense of the theorising about literary works of different nations, regional groups or minorities of various kinds, and comparing them with regard to certain criteria, has been very productive in enriching literary studies by many useful theoretical categories used permanently outside the discourse of comparative literature – in what can be called general

literary studies. This has been pointed out by Saussy (2006, p. 3) who claimed that “[c]omparative literature [has], in a sense, won its battles”, since it can take credit for, he seems to indicate, the acceptance of the transnational dimension of literature and culture, interdisciplinarity, and theory. Indeed, looking back at the twentieth century one must acknowledge the fact that many of its important theorists were working in comparative literature (Wellek, de Man, Bloom, to mention just some “Anglophone” comparatists), drawing in their conceptualisations on what Saussy called “comparative reflex”, or, “comparative way of thinking” (2006).

But the inherent capitalisation on the “comparative way of thinking” did not end in the twentieth century. Almost everything important recent literary studies has brought to the discourse on literature has also originated based on comparisons, implicit or explicit, comparing at least 2 systems, 2 worlds, 2 perceptions or expressions of being, 2 views of cultural or literary artefacts. As to a model example illustrating this claim one could point to postcolonial studies. This very fashionable movement of contemporary literary theory initially emerged because of cultural tensions between the so-called developed western nations and their former colonies, mostly in Africa and Asia, using the coloniser-colonised dichotomy and fostering the literature and culture of the colonised peoples to achieve cultural independence from the colonisers. A variation of such cultural and literary revival occurred also in Central European literary studies, as it is testified by the recently published collection of essays entitled *Postcolonial Europe? Essays on Post-Communist Literatures and Cultures* (Pucherová & Gáfrík, 2015) exploring the attempts of Central European national literatures (the colonised) to get rid of the grips of ideology imposed on them by Communist totalitarianism.

Our aim, however, is not to analyse postcolonial studies, which use the principle of comparison to include literature into a wider social-political-ideological spectrum, but to point to it as to one of the strongest examples of the continuing vitality of the local, the particular, or the national, in literary studies, since what many postcolonial critics, in fact, do is highlighting their otherness and independence from colonial centres on the spatial, cultural, linguistic, or national basis. Thus, one can say that postcolonial literary studies have a very similar aim as when in the 19th century Europe “literature and literary scholarship acquired a political justification, and social as well as academic prestige, by becoming as it were the keeper of the national soul” (Neubauer, 2013, p. 100).

Stressing that “all literature has always been comparative, watered by many streams” (2006, p. 5), Saussy also sees its clear beginning, like Neubauer, in the era of nationalisms which created a need for it, and the history of which is full of negative moments and traumas. Some of those moments, unfortunately, caused that the concept of the national has been discredited and made controversial and suspicious. What we would like to say, however, is that despite the past abuses and

totalitarian manipulations, the experiencing of national consciousness within modern nations does not have to be, and mostly it is not, the one of chauvinism and exploitation – material or cultural. On the contrary, if one looks around, one finds many positive examples of the expression of national belonging in various areas of life. Thus in spite of the turbulent history and current general tendency towards the transnational, regional, areal, multicultural, world, global, or planetary dimensions, we would venture to say that it is not possible to ignore the national dimension, since it was one of the main instruments in the creation of modern nations which are still very much with us at present, and whose symbolism does not show any tendency of weakening even in the space of transnational EU. So instead of getting rid of the nations-based Europe and moving to the sphere of the postnational one, we “recognize that the conventional nationalistic picture of Europe is partial and clearly based on (if not biased by) a self-explanatory and contemporary notion of Europe” (Buescu, 2015, pp. 13-14). Therefore, in this paper discussing Romantic imagination in English and Slovak literature, we will not get discouraged by common pressures in academic circles to avoid the concept of the national, especially because it played a crucial part in the formation of Slovak Romantic literature in which the period of Romanticism is often called a period of national revival, as in many other European literatures. But that national would in no way be nationalistic.

Being aware of these distinctions (i.e. between the national and the nationalistic, which, however, could get slightly blurred in English, unlike, for example, the Slovak language where there is a clear difference between the *národný* – national, and *nacionalistický-nationalistic*), one cannot be surprised by finding a strong national emphasis in British Romantic literature as well. It is emanating, on the one side, from the nature of Romanticism as such, from its birth in the times of the decline of enlightened rationality and “the revival of indigenous mythologies” (Brown, p. 35), and, on the other side, from the political, revolutionary and military tensions of the Europe of French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. These events were of enormous significance especially for the two greatest British Romantics to be discussed here – William Wordsworth and Lord George Gordon Byron, though in different ways. While to Wordsworth one could absolutely apply Crocco’s claim that the Romantic poet was the “bard-like national figure who wrote to and for his [English] fellow men and women” (. . .) “the inspired solitary poet [who] speaks to and for a singular people or nation (2014, Kindle Location 63), Byron turned, for example in his *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, rather towards other nations of Europe (Portugal, Spain, the Balkans). Not even the more metaphysically oriented S. T. Coleridge was free of national sentiments, when in “Fears in Solitude” he directly addressed the nation: “O Britons! O my brethren! I have told / Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.” (. . .) “...O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle! / Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy” (2013, Kindle Location 13077, 13095).

Naturally, equally strong, if not stronger, emphasis in British Romanticism is its ontological, transcendental orientation, manifesting itself in the expression of a different kind of imagination, in strong emotionality. Literary criticism has made this emotional, existential, ontological almost the sole qualifier of Romanticism throughout most of the twentieth century (Abrams as well as the above-mentioned Wellek, de Man, Hartman, etc.). Its importance, however, should not efface the importance of the feelings the poets had towards their nation which in many cases were expressed indirectly, through the transcendental musings in nature. What else could Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" be than the poet's universalizing of a particular place and time, so typical and unique for him as well as for England and, at the same time, so invested with the spirit of human predicament.

As far as Slovak Romanticism is concerned, there are many articles and book-length studies discussing its importance and place in national culture, since, as we have already mentioned, the period was very important in the history of the creation of Slovak national consciousness. However, there are very few works which would situate Slovak Romantic literature into an international context (outside general literary history books). By the international context we do not mean the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire. In it Slovak Romantic literature was in the natural context of the languages of the peoples making up the Empire (German, Czech, Hungarian). There are almost no extensive comparisons of individual writers (some attempts were done in the discussion of the influences of Byron), not speaking of an almost total lack of translations of English Romantic literary works into Slovak (with an exception of Byron and some American romanticists, like Poe and Emerson).

The Croco's "bard-like national figure" and "solitary poet" are the qualities which could easily be attributed also to Slovak Romantic writers, since in the area where the Slovaks lived (Upper Hungary) the Romantic period saw a strong manifestation of national consciousness, with literature playing crucial role in its emergence. As Pišút claims (1974, p. 12), by the end of the 18th century literature in this cultural territory has its culmination in the works of Classicism with the first symptoms of Romanticism which was manifested especially by the cult of national past and folk song. Even though the use of the national past can be found in other Romantic national literatures, what makes Slovak Romantic literature slightly different is the fact that Slovakia did not have its own fixed political space, but formed one part of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian monarchy. This fact significantly strengthened both individual and social anxieties of almost all most important "Slovak" Romantic writers who found themselves torn between the romantic feelings of individual alienation or love (to a woman), and love to one's country, resulting in the necessity to fight for its people's independence, the cultural and political one.

The first major writer embodying the conflictual emotionality of Slovak Romantic imagination, and the one who can be credited with the introduction of the motifs of Romantic being into Slovak literature, is Ján Kollár. Although he is generally classified as a neoclassical poet, in the sonnets of his main work *Slávy dcéra* (*The Daughter of Sláva*) he expressed both the feelings of the "loneliness of the thinking soul in the midst of confusion and pain from disillusionment" (Pišút, p. 14, translated by authors) as well as his love to a woman (Fredericka Schmidt) and to the country. As the title suggests, by the country Kollár did not mean a political nation, but rather a place of Slovaks within a broader cultural unity of Slavs. This was a reason of his later disagreement with the generation of younger Romantic writers for whom the issue of language and national independence were of utmost importance.

Kollár was compared to Petrarch, Dante, as well as, most importantly, Byron, especially to his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. He in fact did not mind being compared to Petrarch or Dante, but vehemently denied Byron and the Byronic tendency in modern poetry. The poet "without hesitation condemns the Byronic stream of modern poetry. He sees it as sentimental and oversensitive, fanatical, overexcited and feverish, in short: unnatural and non-aesthetic, originated from repletion and flatness of spirit and feeling. Byronic irony is a blasphemy for him, strong images of human misery and depravity, a Satanism, huge contradictions of fire and ice, laughter and crying, love and hate, virtue and vice, heaven and hell, an aesthetic tyranny. Modern poetry is an excess of romance, it is the same in art, what is fanatical delirium in religion, is a decline of taste and the autumn of education" (Vlček, translated by authors). However, in spite of the author's own disagreement with the connection, Vlček further insists that the Byronic elements were instrumental for the *The Daughter of Sláva* which "would hardly have seen publication in its current form without the journal-like, snippety form of travelogue entries, without a strong protest against the bloody animosity of kindred nations and without the elegy over the past historical greatness, as well as without a strong pathos of freedom. As it was all said in an unattainable way in 'Childe Harold' by the denounced Byron" (translated by authors). Vlček further claims that the dependence is not only in ideas and composition, but in the external, technical relationship. There are formal reminiscences, tropes and figures allegedly taken over by Kollár from the German edition of the Byron's poem published in 1821.

Undoubtedly, the strongest similarity between the two works is the form in which they were written – a kind of poetic travelogue. In both cases, lyrical heroes travel - Byron from England, through Portugal, Spain to Greece and Albania, Kollár from the German city of Jena, through the Czech lands to the land under the Tatra mountains, as Slovakia has frequently been referred to. Although the lyrical heroes in both poems are significantly different, Childe Harold representing what has become famous as the Byronic hero, the disillusioned bored young man fleeing his

own country and seeking wild experiences, and Kollár's hero rather a romantic figure torn between love and patriotism, they have one thing in common – a romantic pull towards freedom. Kollár expressed it most forcefully in his "Prologue" to the *Daughter of Sláva*, in unforgettable example of quantitative prosody, combining hexameter and pentameter:

Ai, zde leží zem ta, před okem mým selzy ronícím,
 někdy kolébka, nyní národu mého rakev.
 Stoj noho! posvátná místa jsou, kamkoli kráčíš, (Kollár

Here lies the country, alas, before my tear-laden glances,
 Once, 'twas the cradle, but now – now 'tis the tomb of my race;
 Check thou thy steps, for the places are sacred, wherever thou turnest.
 (Selver, p. 42)

Kollár here laments over the destiny of the Lusatian Serbs, a Slavic people who were assimilated to the surrounding Germans. This can be prevented in the future if other Slavic people turn to Russia "the mighty old oak, that stands there yonder (Selver, p. 42). The ancient oak as the symbol of Russia protecting the Slavic people against, in case of Western Slavs, the Hungarian and German elements, was very frequently used in the cultural and national struggles of Slovak Romantic writers. The motif of inclination to Russia as a way out of the grips of the "spoiled" West can be found in the famous *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft* by Ludovít Štúr (1931), the author of modern Slovak language and the leader of the coming generation of Slovak Romantic writers (who, by the way, was also torn between love to a woman and love to his country – the country finally winning in that internal struggle).

The motif of national freedom appears also in the Byron's poem. However, it is not the freedom of his own nation that he worries about, for England is not in danger of occupation, and it is the country from which he flees, a place of his boring and spoiled life:

Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
 Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
 But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
 And vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.
 Ah, me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
 Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;
 Few earthly things found favour in his sight
 Save concubines and carnal companie,
 And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

(Byron, *Kindle Locations* 31-34)

Since “loathed he in his native land to dwell,” (42-43) he sets on a journey through Europe, reflecting on the history, culture as well as politics of the countries of his travels. Like Kollár, he laments over the fate of a nation, here Greece, which lost its freedom. But unlike Kollár, he is much more revolutionary:

Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not
 Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
 By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
 Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? No!
 True, they may lay your proud despoilers low,
 But not for you will Freedom’s altars flame.
 Shades of the Helots! triumph o’er your foe:
 Greece! change thy lords, thy state is still the same;
 Thy glorious day is o’er, but not thy years of shame.
 (Byron, *Kindle Locations 855-859*)

If comparing Byron and Kollár, in addition to the just discussed similarities, it is necessary to point to a crucial difference between them. While Byron was an extremely liberally minded nobleman engaged in various scandals – sexual, social and political, Kollár was an evangelical priest whose love was much more “civilised”. Moreover, even though Byron is considered, despite his early death, to belong to the second generation of English Romantic writers (together with Shelley and Keats), Kollár was a person who struggled with the transition from Enlightenment to Romanticism, writing in sonnets, though already beginning to express the personal gloom and grief of Romantic writers in which Byron was an absolute master. Although the differences in mood between the two writers, emanating from their place in the development of respective countries’ literary sensibilities, are undeniable, it is paradoxical, however, that even here one can find some similarities. Namely, the use of Spenserian stanza by Byron brings him close to Kollár’s sonnets than to, for example, balladic verse of Wordsworth.

Of course, their greatest similarity remains their European vision which, on the one side does not ignore the national features of its cultures, but, on the other one, sees them as belonging to larger wholes, though in case of Kollár this would be a highly controversial Pan-Slavism safeguarded by Russia - the country which alone would supposedly be able to stand against the cultural domination of the West - while Byron, despite the fact that his journey initially takes him also from West to East (from England to the Balkans), remains firmly entrenched in the Western cultural space. As we have said above, Kollár’s “geopolitical” musings were taken up by Štúr and his generation and, in a sense, they have not been totally abandoned even nowadays. But this can be an expression of the natural indecisiveness in the search for identity in Central European cultural space.

Byron, however, was only a secondary author in the English Romantic context. Its founder and the most important representative is William Wordsworth who, unlike Byron, was considered much less present in Europe, or, for that matter, Central Europe. The reason for this could be the fact that Wordsworth is a different type of poet than Byron - much more related to the English nature, countryside, than to a political and cultural strife, though he was not free of it either. Thus, while Byron was a “bard of foreign nations”, Wordsworth’s Romantic imagination was put to the service of the English people.

Crocco has clearly summarised these qualities of Wordsworth’s verse when discussing his most famous collection of poems, *Lyrical Ballads*. He maintains that “Lyrical Ballads exemplifies Wordsworth’s bardic poetics by combining the simple language and style of the popular ballads with rustic characters and pastoral imagery. In so doing, Wordsworth appeals to forms of continental Romantic nationalism that evoked nationalist images of country folk and to anti-urban populism in Britain that developed in reaction to the dislocating effects of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. Lyrical Ballads further enacts its nationalism by positing a link between landscape and the collective memory of an ethnē, thereby producing national space. Finally, the prevalence of English characters and places drawn from the Lake District for an ostensibly demotic bardic poetics reinforced the existing hegemony of an English ethnē within representations of the British nation” (Kindle Locations 1137-1149).

Almost all that Crocco said about Wordsworth, especially his simple language, the style of popular ballads, rustic characters and pastoral imagery, could be said about the poetry of another Slovak Romantic writer discussed here, Janko Král’, adding such other universally agreed upon qualifiers of Romanticism as emotionality, individualism, and, last but not least, revolutionary spirit. As Wordsworth in his young age observed and admired the events of French Revolution, so Janko Král’ engaged himself in the revolutionary struggle on behalf of his people during his whole life. This can be illustrated by many of his shorter ballads in which he combines the past and present, the folklore elements with contemporary suffering and national woe. But again, his is not only a narrow national vision. In this regard, Milan Rúfus, a Slovak poet and critic, points to Král’'s autostylization into the form of an eagle – a universal spirit of the European format, who with his own philosophy of history and the cosmogony of being, carries in himself the fate of his nation (4).

Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads* is generally taken to be a “manifesto of romanticism”. The author himself may have provoked this with his “prefaces” in which he deliberately stresses the emotionality of his poems, considering them to be “spontaneous overflows of powerful feelings” in contrast to more rationally elaborated works of the preceding period. What needs to be stressed here, however, is that the strong feelings come from the nature the author moves in, from

the English countryside in which Wordsworth was taking long walks, sometimes alone, sometimes with his sister Dorothy. Long solitary walks in nature were also characteristic for Janko Král', to such an extent that he was nicknamed "Divný Janko" (Strange Johnny). Nature is the source not only of his philosophical broodings, but it is the most direct setting for the materialisation of the spirit of his people, expressing both its pleasurable as well as dark folklore-based irrational facets. Thus, like Wordsworth, also Janko Král' employs natural elements to reflect the dark human prospects. The dark natural setting, reflecting the hero's uneasiness, highlights one of Král's first, and best, ballads entitled "Zakliata Panna vo Váhu a Divný janko", the one in which, as Pišút has observed, "he expressed ...all his contradictions, his sadness and the dissatisfaction with the world as well as his love to the people and a will to disenchant the 'enchanted virgin' even at a price of his own life" (2005, p. 22, translated by authors).

Conclusion

Reflecting on the reasons of the current crisis of the European Union, one can say that one way of its solving is to "re-credit" the concept of national culture. The crisis shows us that Europe is still perceived as a Europe of nation states with their unique cultures, and ignoring this is a flight into the realm of the unreal. Romanticism is a "good" period to demonstrate the strength of the national, since it was a movement not restricted to one country or nation, but was Pan-European, if not global in nature. And as the above discussed literary works from English and Slovak literature demonstrate, despite the nations' geographical distance, the works have common denominators which do not stand in the way of their being perceived as unique expressions of the respective national spirit, and, at the same time and because of that, of the "spirit of unified Europe". The concept of postnational literature is then perhaps promising, but it seems to be rather a political wish than the present commonly felt and lived reality.

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Contact

Anton Pokrivčák
 KAA FF UCM
 Nám. J. Herdu 2
 917 01 Trnava, Slovakia
 anton.pokrivcak@ucm.sk

Silvia Pokrivčáková
 KAJL PdF Trnavská univerzita
 Priemyselná 4
 918 43 Trnava, Slovakia
 silvia.pokrivcakova@truni.sk

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