Zia Tajeddin
Carol Griffiths  *Editors*

# Language Education Programs

## Perspectives on Policies and Practices

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# Language Policy

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The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity involving a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow the process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

The series publishes empirical studies of general language policy or of language education policy, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policy-making - who is involved, what is done, how it develops, why it is attempted. We will publish research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of implementation. We will be interested in accounts of policy development by governments and governmental agencies, by large international companies, foundations, and organizations, as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies. We are interested in work that explores new sites of language policy development, new approaches to its analysis and effects, and while critique is important we are also interested in documentation of its intentions and practices, including historical examinations and contemporary analyses. We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, e.g. the local effects of the developing European policy of starting language teaching earlier, issues to do with global languages, language and power and resistance, developments in postcolonial settings, de-colonial thinking and practice, all the way to programmatic issues such as the numbers of hours of instruction needed to achieve competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet. Other possible topics include the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy, the role of economic factors, policy as a reflection of social change.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists.

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This series is indexed in Scopus.

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# Language Education Programs

Perspectives on Policies and Practices

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# Series Editor's Foreword

## Language Policy Book Series: Our Aims and Approach

Recent decades have witnessed a rapid expansion of interest in language policy studies as transcultural connections deepen and expand all across the globe. Whether it is to facilitate more democratic forms of participation, or to respond to demands for increased educational opportunity from marginalized communities, or to better understand the technologization of communication, language policy, and planning has come to the fore as a practice and a field of study. In all parts of the world, the push for language policy is a reflection of such rapid and deep globalization, undertaken by governments to facilitate or diversify trade, to design and deliver multilingual public services, to teach less commonly taught languages, and to revitalize endangered languages. There is also interest in forms of language policy to bolster new and more inclusive kinds of language-based and literate citizenship.

Real-world language developments have pushed scholars to generate new theory on language policy and to explore new empirical accounts of language policy processes. At the heart of these endeavors is the search for the resolution of communication problems between ethnic groups, nations, individuals, authorities and citizens, and educators and learners. Key research concerns have been the rapid spread of global languages, especially English and more recently Chinese, and the economic, social, and identity repercussions that follow, linked to concerns about the accelerating threat to the vitality of small languages across the world. Other topics that have attracted research attention have been persisting communication inequalities, the changing language situation in different parts of the world, and how language and literacy abilities affect social opportunity, employment, and identity.

In the very recent past, language diversity itself has been a popular field of study, to explore particular ways to classify and understand multilingualism, the fate of particular groups of languages or individual languages, and questions of literacy, script, and orthography. In this complex landscape of language change, efforts of sub-national and national groups to reverse or slow language shift have dominated

concerns of policymakers as well as scholars. While there is a discernible trend toward greater openness to multilingualism and increasing concern for language rights, we can also note the continued determination of nation states to assert a singular identity through language, sometimes through repressive measures.

For all these reasons systematic, careful and critical study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning is a topic of growing global significance.

In response to this dynamic environment of change and complexity, this series publishes empirical research of general language policy in diverse domains, such as education, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policymaking which explore the key actors, their modes of conceiving their activity, and the perspective of scholars reflecting on the processes and outcomes of policy.

Our series aims to understand how language policy develops, why it is attempted, and how it is critiqued, defended, and elaborated or changed. We are interested in publishing research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of its implementation.

We are interested in accounts of policy undertaken by governments, but also by non-governmental bodies and international corporations, foundations, and the like, as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies.

We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, for example the local effects of transnational policy influence, such as the United Nations, the European Union, or regional bodies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. We encourage proposals dealing with practical questions of when to commence language teaching, the numbers of hours of instruction needed to achieve set levels of competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet, issues of program design and innovation.

Other possible topics include non-education domains such as legal and health interpreting; community- and family-based language planning, and language policy from bottom-up advocacy; and language change that arises from traditional forms of power alongside influence and modeling of alternatives to established forms of communication.

Contemporary language policy studies can examine the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy formulation, and the role of economic factors in success or failure of language plans or studies of policy as a reflection of social change.

We do not wish to limit or define the limits of what language policy research can encompass, and our primary interest is to solicit serious book-length examinations, whether the format is for a single-authored or multi-authored volume or a coherent edited work with multiple contributors.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists. We welcome your submissions or an enquiry from you about ideas for work in our series that opens new directions for the field of language policy.

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# Preface

The effectiveness of learning and teaching is underpinned by an effective language education program dealing with policies and practices. Hence, this book, titled "*Language Education Programs: Perspectives on Policies and Practices*," aims to describe and discuss effective or innovative policies and programs for language education developed and enacted in different international contexts. These include programs for general English instruction, English for specific purposes (ESP), English as a lingua franca (ELF) instruction, English-medium instruction (EMI), and content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

This book aims to make new contribution to research on language education programs in many respects. First, it deals with effective language education programs from the perspectives of both macro and micro policymaking. Second, there seem to be few books focused on language education programs across international contexts. Third, the book addresses different dimensions of language education programs, including good language education policies, curriculum and syllabus, effective teaching materials, effective ESP, EMI, CLIL, and ELF-informed instruction, effective school/institute-university partnership, effective use of technology, effective teacher recruitment and professional development policies, and effective policies for learner assessment, among others. Fourth, the chapters in this book are data-driven, including a report on an empirical study, and informed by effective language education program data from different contexts. While many other books on language education programs are descriptive and conceptual not data-driven, our book aims to unravel features of good language programs and how these programs are enacted in different international contexts.

The book can be used for both course and reference usage by students in Applied Linguistics, TESOL, TEFL, and Teacher Education. As such, it can be used by a wide range of readership, including specialists and researchers in language education programs and curricula, language education practitioners and student teachers, language education policymakers and administrators, curriculum developers, syllabus designers, and materials developers in language education, teacher educators and policymakers involved in international and national teacher certificate

programs such as CELTA and DELT, and postgraduate students in TESOL, TEFL, SLA, and Language Education.

This book consists of fourteen chapters, each of which is organized into five parts: introduction, background and literature review, an empirical study, implications for language education programs, and conclusion and directions for further research. The chapters are organized into two sections: (1) policies and language education programs (Chapters 1–8) and (2) practices and language education programs (Chapters 9–14).

Section one consists of eight chapters dealing mainly with the policies of effective language education programs. In chapter one, Hashimoto and Disbray address the need for well-designed programs as the basis of effective language education. This, as they argue, can be achieved by the integration of university-school partnerships in secondary and tertiary programs. They report on this partnership for an internship program for university students in high schools. Chapter two, authored by Hayes, is based on a case study of the policy and practice of language education in Thailand. It critically analyzes macro-level educational policies and their impacts on practice and outcomes at the micro-level of schools. The findings indicate the effect of educational policies on practice in classrooms and policymakers' failure to collaborate with teachers for the effective implementation of educational policies. The author suggests that the problem of students' under-achievement in English in Thailand should be solved in view of the inequity recognized in Thai successive National Development Plans. Loh, Renandya, Pang, and Aryadoust, the authors of chapter three, evaluate a language education program named STELLAR (STrategies for English Language Learning And Reading), selecting a sample of nine schools in Singapore representing a range of socio-economic profiles. The focus of this study is to examine how STELLAR is enacted in different school environments. Their findings show that the participating teachers across the nine schools adapted STELLAR curriculum materials regardless of the school profile. The study indicates the need for guidance in enacting curricular adaptations. The aim of chapter four, authored by Tajeddin and Tavassoli, is to examine the effectiveness of language education programs at private language institutes. Drawing on a framework for evaluating language teacher education programs, they found that the programs mainly embodied the pedagogy dimension, and that most of the other dimensions were underspecified. However, the teacher knowledge of the content, i.e., the language, was underspecified. Their suggestion is that effective teacher education programs should include all five dimensions of content, teaching force, learners, pedagogy, and teacher education to help the construction of the teachers' knowledge base and professional development.

Moore, in chapter five, analyzes sociohistorical and extant data to shed light on mechanisms for identifying, preparing, and placing well-qualified multilingual educators. Her findings show that each of the three approaches described in the study to increase and enhance educators resulted in the proper preparation of workforces of language educators for working in dual and multilingual settings. In chapter six, Tajeddin and Khanlarzadeh report on their findings about the perceptions of macro-level policymakers of intercultural language education and the related policies

for this education. The participants' responses to the interview questions revealed that the macro-level policymakers favored intercultural education and attended to cultural issues in their programs; however, there were no well-specified guidelines in macro-policy documents regarding the need for the inclusion of intercultural communicative competence in pedagogy. The authors' suggestion is the development of appropriate sets of intercultural language education policies for materials developers and teachers. The aim of chapter seven, authored by Park, is to investigate refugee-background minority students' experiences of learning English at university. The findings show that placing refugee-background students in the same English class with non-refugee students can manifest their low linguistic capital and, in turn, cause emotional strain and further marginalization. The author suggests that these students should be helped to view their unique backgrounds as an asset, rather than a disadvantage. Nayernia and Mohebbi, the authors of chapter eight, address an increasing need for educating teachers in technology and online assessment to enhance their assessment literacy. They found low and medium levels of online and digital literacy in language assessment among EFL teachers working in universities, language institutes, and schools. In view of these findings, they argue that teacher education programs for preservice teachers should integrate digital technology and online assessment courses.

Chapters 9–14 fall within section two, which includes studies on the practices of effective language education programs. In chapter nine, Kırkgöz and Griffiths discuss the importance of educating teachers to address learner needs in ESP programs. Their findings show that ESP teacher candidates need theoretical input in essential ESP topics, opportunities to engage in real-life ESP-related problems, and problem-solving skills. They suggest that teacher candidates can be familiarized with potential real-life ESP-related problems through problem-based scenarios. Chapter ten, authored by Kemsies and Hellmayr, aims to investigate the characteristics of successful CLIL programs, the role of CLIL in learning an additional language, and the way to reach a greater level of authenticity in CLIL classrooms. The findings document the reliance of successful CLIL programs on the interface of organizational, external, and internal factors such as leadership, suitable teacher education, and the cooperation of content and language teachers. In chapter eleven, authored by Kavak and Kırkgöz, the focus is on the classroom-based investigation of English-medium instruction (EMI) at university. The chapter aims to explore the frequency, linguistic focus, and types of language-related episodes (LREs) in two different EMI classes at university: Literature and Food Science courses. As the findings show, although LREs are common practices, the lesson content clearly affects them. Moreover, the authors found that most LREs in both classes focus on vocabulary.

Toh and McBride, the authors of chapter twelve, give a reflexive account of an English as a lingua franca program. Written responses from participating teachers showed that they espoused ELF-aware approaches, tried to find ways to adapt their language teaching practices toward ELF, and engaged in different amounts of struggle to align English teaching with ELF. In chapter thirteen, Bui and Nguyen argue for a pressing need for the re-conceptualization and inclusion of student agency in language education programs to achieve more effective and responsive language

teaching. Capitalizing on engaged ethnography and multiple qualitative methods, this chapter provides insights into how learner agency can be promoted for effective language learning and agentive transformations. Finally, in chapter fourteen, Utami and Prestridge describe features of remote online English language teaching and report on a mixed-methods study of teachers' and students' acceptance of emergency remote English teaching in a state high school. Their findings show that teachers and students favored remote teaching and positively perceived remote English instruction due to its use and ease of use.

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# Acknowledgments

This book was born out of our motivation to shed light on the features of good language education programs based on evidence from the development and implementation of these programs in different international contexts. This motivation aligns with the themes of two previous books titled *Lessons from Good Language Learners* (Edited by Carol Griffiths, 2008, Cambridge University Press) and *Lessons from Good Language Teachers* (Edited by Carol Griffiths and Zia Tajeddin, 2020, Cambridge University Press).

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## About the Editors

**Zia Tajeddin** is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Tarbiat Modares University, Iran. He co-edits two international journals: *Applied Pragmatics* (John Benjamins) and *Second Language Teacher Education* (Equinox). He is the co-editor of the Springer book series *Studies in Language Teacher Education.* His research interests center on teacher education and L2 pragmatics pedagogy in the context of EIL/ELF. He is the co-editor of *Lessons from Good Language Teachers* (with Carol Griffiths, Cambridge University Press, 2020), *Pragmatics Pedagogy in English as an International Language* (with Minoo Alemi, Routledge, 2021), and *Teacher Reflection: Policies, Practices and Impacts* (with Atsuko Watanabe, Multilingual Matters, 2022).

**Carol Griffiths** has been a teacher, manager, and teacher trainer of ELT for many years. She has taught in many places around the world, including New Zealand, Indonesia, Japan, China, North Korea, Turkey, and the UK. She is currently working as Professor of ELT for Girne American University in North Cyprus. She has presented at numerous conferences and published widely, including *Lessons from Good Language Learners* and *The Strategy Factor in Successful Language Learning.*

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# Policies and Language Education Programs

# University-School Partnerships

**Kayoko Hashimoto** and **Samantha Disbray**

## 1 Introduction

Well-designed language education programs are foundations for effective learning and teaching. University-school partnerships, integrated into high-quality secondary and tertiary language programs, have the potential to meet key education goals in order to achieve greater continuity of language learning, foster aspiration for language teaching, and produce job-ready graduates (FYA, 2017; Hogan-Brun, 2017). Continuity of learning and consistency in the curriculum have been shown to improve learners' motivation and achievement, while poor continuity and delivery contribute to the devaluation of language learning, particularly in Anglophone countries (British Academy, 2019; Lo Bianco, 2009). Despite the promise university-school partnerships may offer, research has predominantly focused on teachers such as practicum for pre-service teachers (Borg, 2013), professional development (Glasgow, 2018), and teaching licence renewal (Hashimoto, 2018), rather than enhancement of learning experience in secondary and tertiary education.

This chapter reports on a university-school partnership to deliver an internship program for university students with advanced Japanese skills in local high schools in Brisbane, Australia. We begin by detailing language policy settings in Australia, and at the state level, in Queensland. We introduce the internship program and argue that it is particularly pertinent to advancing two elements of these policy settings, the promotion of language study and intercultural learning in second language education, and the goal for universities to integrate graduate employability skills into all programs. We then move to the empirical study that we carried out to examine who the internship participants are and to gain insight into their experiences, motivations,

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and identities as advanced language learners. The study also investigated their experience of the internship and its impact on the university participants. We discuss the potential contribution of language internship programs to other contexts and conclude the chapter considering future research and development of the internship program.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 *Language Teaching and Learning in Australia*

A stated national language policy and planning goal in Australia is the delivery of language programs to an advanced level, with diverse benefits articulated. The Australian Curriculum: Languages (ACARA, 2017), for instance, recognises Australia's distinctive and dynamic migration history and states that "language-learning builds upon students' *intercultural understanding* and *sense of identity* as they are encouraged to explore and recognise their own linguistic, social and cultural practices and identities as well as those associated with speakers of the language being learnt" (authors' emphasis). Since 2009, the Australian Curriculum has been developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in part as a response to the concern that variations in teaching content between states were leading to a disparity in students' academic performance around the country (Japan Foundation, 2019). Discrepancies remain, however, with key decisions on the implementation of the National Curriculum determined by education authorities at the level of states and territories (Asia Education Foundation, 2014).

In Queensland (QLD), where the current study is situated, the Department of Education policy seeks to increase language study to develop a global mindset among students (Queensland Government, 2016). Language education is compulsory for students in the middle years (Years 5–8) and the stream of language learning from Prep to Year 12 is encouraged by ACARA. However, as in other jurisdictions in Australia, there is no guarantee that the same language will be available as students transition from primary school to secondary school (Australian Government, 2010). The Australian Curriculum only covers the compulsory years of schooling (i.e., until Year 10) and while broad national policy goals around language teaching and learning in senior secondary years (Years 11 and 12) are shared, the curriculum for senior secondary years is formulated by each state and territory.

Across Australia, schools struggle to retain or attract students in senior secondary (Years 11 and 12) language subjects—in 2020, only 9.5% of Year 12 students studied a language (ACARA, 2020). This is despite many universities allocating bonus points in the university entry score system to students who have studied a language to Year 12 (University Languages Portal Australia, 2015). In a further policy move to promote languages learning, the Australian government has identified it as an area of national priority to create job-ready graduates (Australian Government, 2020), and

its job-ready graduate package promotes skills in 'foreign' languages as enriching graduates' linguistic capital.

Our study is set within and interacts with this languages policy backdrop. Studies on university language teaching in Australia are focused predominantly on English related issues with non-English speaking international students (Liddicoat, 2016), and little is known about what sustains local language learners over time to achieve advanced levels of language study, and how their sense of identity, their intercultural understanding, and their global mindset develop through language learning.

## 2.2 Internship Program

Japanese is the most taught language in Queensland schools. In 2016, among 186 state secondary schools, 149 of them offered Japanese (Kadowaki & Hashimoto, 2020). A leading university in QLD runs an internship program as part of an advanced Japanese language course, which sends interns to local state high schools for one month as teaching assistants. In 2014, the idea of sending university students to high schools was proposed by a local Japanese language working party, made up of the state government, school principals and teachers, and the Japan Consulate. One goal of the working party was to increase the retention rate of Japanese language learners from middle to senior schools. University students with advanced Japanese language skills were identified as potential support for Japanese teachers in schools, more available and more connected to the Queensland student cohort than the few Japanese native speakers dispatched from Japan or sent by a local Japanese community.

When the program was launched in 2018, a call for an expression of interest for internship host schools was circulated among state schools in the region. It was limited to state schools partly because of a wish to support local schools with limited resources and partly because of an intention to allow students to experience a wide range of school settings, rather than in controlled environments of private schools. Initially, the university-school partnership was open to primary schools, but the lack of full-time Japanese language teachers in most primary schools made this unviable and it was discontinued in 2019. Despite this, over the last five years, the list of host schools has expanded (from 9 to 17 schools) as well as the enrolment number of the course each year (from 12 to 25 students). The internship is different from the practicum common in Education degree programs in many ways. While practicum is for Education major students and their placement schools assess students' performance, the interns are not assessed by host schools. The internship is an in-curricula task, open to all students with an advanced level of Japanese. Their main role is to assist students and teachers in high school Japanese classes.

The duration of the internship is 4–5 weeks out of 13 weeks (one semester). Interns are required to attend Japanese classes at their host schools for minimum 4 h per week, depending on their availability and host schools' timetable. During the first 8 weeks of the course, students read academic articles on Japanese language education in Australia, Japan, and Asia, discuss current issues surrounding Japanese language

teaching based on the articles, study Australian and QLD language curriculum, and conduct individual teaching demonstrations. Interns are encouraged to have pre-internship meetings at their host schools, which give them opportunities to introduce themselves with their CVs and negotiate their internship timetable. Prior to the internship, they are briefed with workplace rules and expectations such as dress code, communication (email and mobile phone etiquette), and punctuality.

As part of the course requirements, interns are asked to set their individual goals prior to the internship and assess their achievement after completion of the internship. This approach is designed for students to develop crucial workplace-ready metacognitive skills by anticipating and evaluating adaptation and application of their knowledge to a novel workplace situation.

Host schools are asked to fill a feedback questionnaire after completion of the internship. To the question, "In what way the intern(s) were helpful to your Japanese Program?", 80% of the host schools agreed that they are helpful in "sharing their experience of learning Japanese with students" and 90% of them agreed that they are helpful in "encouraging and motivating students to learn Japanese" in 2022. All host schools reported that the intern's presence has a positive impact on their Japanese program and wish to continuously host interns, which suggests host-schools' willingness to support the internship because of the benefits to schools.

## 3   An Empirical Study

### 3.1   Aim of the Research

This research was designed to better understand advanced language students and to review the internship program and the university student's internship experience. In the first year the internship was offered, many students reflected on their journey from high school to university and from learner to teacher/practitioner in their post-internship assessment. This research was developed in response and seeks to capture such reflection on learning a language to an advanced level and its application in a real-world and vocational way. The study explored the following questions:

1. Who are the advanced language learners participating in the internship and what are their language learning trajectories?
2. What was the student experience of the internship?
3. What role does the Japanese language play in the student's future plans?

### 3.2   Participants

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions on research in schools, the data gathered and described here focused on the interns only. Future research is planned to involve

host-school teachers, students, and interns, allowing rich triangulation and review of the partnership more broadly, and pursuit of questions of if and how the interns as like-aged peers and non-native speakers may impact younger learner motivation (Dörnyei, 2009; Ushioda, 2011), discussed in the final section.

A total of 21 students participated in the study: 4 (2018 cohort), 9 (2019 cohort), 4 (2020 cohort), and 4 (2021 cohort). When a participant is identified in this study, a combination of cohort year and participation order is used (i.e., 2018-1 for the first participant of the 2018 cohort). Two of the 2020 cohort did undertake the full internship despite the lockdown.

Most participants were female (71%), in line with the gender ratio among the students enrolled in the course. Most participants (67%) were studying Japanese as part of their dual degrees, which is higher than the trend of the students enrolled in the course, and 33% of the participants were Education majors. The breakdown of the majors overall is: Arts (18), Education (7), Science (4), Commerce (2), Business Management (1), Communication (1), International Studies (1), and Law (1).

## 3.3   Data Collection and Analysis

The data consist of autobiographical accounts (essay) and follow-up interviews with each of the student participants, providing them the opportunity to view their language learning journey through an autobiographical lens and reflect on their experiences. We applied a narrative inquiry to this data set, a methodological approach which allows us to put learning experience at each life stage together (Coffey & Street, 2008).

All participants were invited to take part in the research and share an autobiographical account of their Japanese language learning in the form of a short essay (1000–3000 words in English). The first cohort (2018) were asked to participate in the survey in the following year. No specific format or writing style was required. Suggestions for topics were provided for guidance:

Your essay can include but not limited to:

Linguistic and cultural background of your family;

Linguistic and cultural demography of the region(s) where you grew up;

Your memorable encounter with Japan, Japanese language, and Japanese people;

Your learning experience of Japanese in primary and/or secondary schools;

Your learning experience of Japanese at the university

Your experience in the internship component; and

Your future aspiration and plan in relation to Japanese language.

At the follow-up interview (approx. 30 min, in-person or Zoom), they were asked to elaborate their accounts they wrote in the essay and reflect further. In total 21 students contributed to the data set, over 4 consecutive year intakes. We acknowledge that the experience of the 2020 cohort (2 students) differed from the other cohorts,

as schools changed to online teaching due to the lockdown. Nevertheless, we see merit in the data with this cohort as carried out the same course work and processes of contacting and planning with their host schools. We believe that the internship planning contributed to their autobiographical accounts.

The data was analysed using a theme-based discourse analysis (Pavlenko, 2007), with NVivo software as a key tool, with the essays and interview transcripts undergoing several rounds of coding by the two authors and a research assistant to identify nodes and then keywords and expressions for each node, based on strong and recurrent topics and themes. The autobiographical data in the essays and interviews were examined as biographic case studies (Busch, 2016; Kramsch, 2006), aligned to the NVivo analysis, with the overall goal to identify strong themes.

## *3.4  Results*

Several key topics emerged from the autobiographical accounts and interviews with the 21 participants, and results are presented by topic in this section. These are "Multicultural and Monocultural Backgrounds", "Motivation to Learn Japanese", and "Japanese Language Learning Experience", which is divided by various subtopics including impact of individual teachers, level of schooling, transitions between levels and intercultural learning. The final section sets out results relating to the internship.

### 3.4.1   Multicultural and Monocultural Backgrounds

Of the 21 participants, most of them (15 participants) stated that they came from a family in which at least one parent was born overseas, and five mentioned coming from a monocultural Anglo background. Of the 15 non-Anglo participants, more than half had Asian backgrounds (three Japanese heritage background, seven of them had a non-Japanese Asian background, and five with other backgrounds i.e., Austria, England, Malta, New Zealand, and Romania). Most participants of multicultural backgrounds were exposed to languages other than English in their household while growing up, whether from being raised abroad and immigrating to Australia or having immediate family members fluent in a language other than English.

### 3.4.2   Motivation to Learn Japanese

The three key topics discussed in relation to motivation to start learning Japanese in primary or secondary school were family, popular culture, and school environment. Most (14) mentioned the influence of popular culture as a motivation to their study of Japanese. Cultivating an interest in Japanese language through exposure to Japanese hand-drawn and computer-generated animation called anime at a young age was a

factor for 12 participants. However, interest in Japanese pop culture was not enough to sustain students' motivation for advanced level language learning, a point made by one participant. More than half of the students had an Asian cultural identity and spoke an Asian language as a heritage language. While this is an interesting correlation, students own accounts did not draw strong connections with this to learning Japanese. The influence of a family member was mentioned, however, by eight of the participants, as a member of their immediate or extended family gave them a positive impression of Japanese society, culture, or language.

Parental attitudes mentioned by the participants ranged from supportive to moderately ambivalent regarding their children's decision to study Japanese. Several participants mentioned that their parents were proud of their efforts to continue studying Japanese to the university level. Three participants had siblings who inspired them to start studying Japanese. One participant (2019-3) reported that her family spoke only English though her mother was Japanese. This motivated her to explore the Japanese language and culture. Another participant's (2020-5) parents considered studying Japanese to be merely a hobby even at a tertiary level.

All but two of the 21 participants studied Japanese to some extent in primary and/ or secondary school, and these school experiences are detailed more fully below. The key trend was that when students were faced with the decision of which language to study in junior secondary school, students often decided to continue studying Japanese if they had already begun studying it at the primary level.

### 3.4.3   Japanese Language Learning Experience

Primary School

Just over half of the participants studied Japanese as a part of their formal education in primary school, and students recounted memories of singing songs, playing games, and learning basic syllables. Many recalled enjoying the lessons but pointed out a lack of continuity from primary school to secondary school.

Secondary School

All but two of the 21 participants studied Japanese as part of their formal secondary school education. For most, studying a language other than English was mandatory for a period of their Years 7–9 studies. Some schools offered Japanese only and others a choice of languages at this level. The decision to continue studying Japanese in Year 9 and beyond was made for a variety of reasons, and the most prevalent was their teachers' passion for Japanese and their enjoyment of being taught by such educators. While most participants recalled engaging teaching, some students reported having had less skilled teachers. These students often mentioned that they felt that their teachers' Japanese ability was poorer than theirs at the time of interviewing, an interesting reflection on their own journey to language expertise.

University

A common theme among students was the unsteady transition from high school to university and the accompanying mismatched expectations. Many students expressed feelings of frustration that high school had not prepared them for the rigorous nature of tertiary level Japanese study, with its intense, fast-paced, and impersonal textbook-based approach to language learning. They also commented that the classes no longer felt unified and like "family" compared to their high school classes. Finally, other students mentioned feeling disengaged as there was a greater emphasis on reading and writing, which deviated from their passion of studying Japanese to better understand Japanese popular culture.

Conversely, other students appreciated aspects of tertiary-level Japanese language studies, being taught by native Japanese instructors, being surrounded by students who were more serious about their studies compared to high school, and the gradual transition from English-heavy introductory courses to lessons conducted almost completely in Japanese.

Exchange/School Trips

Cultural exchange, homestays, organised high school trips to Japan, study abroad, and visits from Japanese sister schools and the like featured prominently as valuable learning experiences. The overwhelming sentiment for these kinds of exchange programs and school trips was often a key motivator for continued study of Japanese. Eleven students visited Japan as part of high school trips and six expressed appreciations for visits from Japanese high school or university students to their high schools. Some of these were full exchange programs which also involved hosting Japanese students. At least two participants mentioned travelling to Japan with their parents, one before they began formally studying Japanese at university, and the other in lieu of a high school trip that was prohibitively expensive. During their university studies of Japanese, eight students studied abroad in Japan for periods of time ranging from a few weeks to one year. These trips were rewarding as students gained an understanding of another culture, history, and country, rather than just for study. Homestays allowed them a chance to be immersed in the Japanese language and observe how native speakers of Japanese spoke and acted, boosting language ability and confidence.

Teachers

Of the 19 participants who studied Japanese in secondary school, most spoke favourably about their teachers. Students often expressed gratitude for their teachers, particularly when the teachers were able to share their own stories of engaging with Japanese culture, offer ways of remembering Japanese from a learner's perspective as non-native speaker learners, or share their passion and enthusiasm for Japan and

Japanese culture. Participants did not favour native-speaker teachers over non-native speakers. Rather, there seemed to be benefits for both if the teacher was passionate and possessed adequate fluency in the language.

Two participants who had previously studied Japanese in high school changed degrees to study Japanese at university: one from nursing (2020-4) and one from science (2020-6). Participant 2020-4 returned to visit the former high school and spoke to the old Japanese teacher and was convinced to pursue a degree in Japanese. When participant 2020-6 was considering which discipline to change into from science, the subject enjoyed in high school, which was Japanese, was reflected on. Both recalled their high school Japanese teachers very positively.

High School to University Transition

Of the 16 students who mentioned the transition from high school to university in their essays, 11 students expressed concern or dissatisfaction with the stability of the transition between secondary and tertiary education. One student said that the commencement of their study of tertiary Japanese was a "rude awakening," while another described tertiary education as "intense, rigorous and unforgiving." Four students commented that they believed their level of high school Japanese was lower than the rest of the class despite excelling in high school, while others were convinced that they had been placed into a level that was too difficult for them. As mentioned earlier, some students did not expect such a drastic change in the learning style. One student commented that the transition to the university study felt especially unsteady because the expected study level did not match the student's actual ability.

There were three students who expressed satisfaction with this transition. One of those students mentioned that the presence of Japanese teachers who could bring greater cultural context into the lessons was appreciated. Another commented that the first Japanese course was a great bridge between high school and university, which revised high school content while steadily introducing new material. The third student mentioned that although the level was challenging, the difficulty was appreciated, saying that more was learnt in the first semester than in the first five years. It appears that the key to this transition is a clear outline of study expectations and a successful match between students' abilities and course level.

Intercultural Learning

The essay task was introspective and allowed students to reflect on second language learning and identity. Threads from individual essays were pursued in the follow-up interviews. Dominant themes were participants' intercultural learning through their experience as Japanese language learners and reflections on own heritage and background.

In their follow-up interviews, many participants discussed the relationship between Japanese language learning and increased intercultural understanding and

awareness. Looking back, they connected their learning about both the Japanese language and how Japanese people think and behave, and many recounted their experience of bringing the two together to connect and communicate with others. Several participants commented that learning Japanese helped them understand how to approach issues from different perspectives. Two participants said that studying Japanese changed how they thought, giving them a "different mode of thinking than usual," and changing their "core values." Another participant said they realised that they had taken their cultural assumptions and biases for granted, and that after noticing cultural differences between their culture and Japan's culture, they became adaptable to and accepted those differences. Finally, one of the participants commented that learning Japanese "sensitised [them] to complexity," with the effect of making them more adaptable and flexible when confronted with the unfamiliar.

Participants talked about their developed awareness of their own culture and background, while others began to appreciate the English language in new ways after studying Japanese. Many talked of their increased awareness of the high level of cultural diversity in Australia, in comparison to Japan and other countries. Anglo-Australian participants' awareness of stark cultural differences between Australia and Japan brought into relief previously unseen aspects about themselves that were "very Australian."

Finally, some of the reflections were transforming but more person-specific than others. For instance, a Japanese-Australian student, whose mother had previously chosen to discourage bringing Japanese culture in the house, was able to "fully discover [her] identity and ethnicity" and let her feel "more confident and at peace" with her identity. A Taiwanese student reflected on positive interactions with Japanese people in Japan in light of historical relationships between the two countries.

### 3.4.4  What Role Does the Internship Play?

All participants successfully completed the advanced Japanese course with the internship component, and accounts of the activities undertaken, evaluation of the course and its activities, and observations gleaned from placement in schools featured in their essays. Additionally, around half of the students offered comments about their post-internship career aspirations, including teaching Japanese, careers other than teaching, and pursuing further study.

Students overwhelmingly expressed positive evaluative comments about the course and particularly the internship experience. Several students commented that it was the best course they took in their degree, while others used words such as "fantastic," "unforgettable," and "memorable" to describe the internship. Students enjoyed the internship experience for a variety of reasons. They had the opportunity to have a taste of working in a Japanese classroom. Interns noted the amount of effort teachers put into preparing classwork for different levels and types of classes, and appreciated the work involved in classroom management. For several interns, connecting with students of different year levels and finding out their motivations

for studying Japanese was a highlight. One student said the experience reinforced the decision to become a Japanese language teacher in high schools.

Observations about school life and teaching while participating in the internship were principally divided into two areas: engagement levels across the different grades (lower level of engagement among Years 7–9 classes than among senior years classes) and comparisons between high school Japanese language study now and in their own high school learning experiences. They noticed that there are now considerably more students studying Japanese, and some observed that the content and students' abilities seemed much higher than when they were studying Japanese. For example, Participant 2018-1 was surprised to see junior secondary students communicating with the Japanese teacher in Japanese outside of the classroom. Finally, students noticed increased use of technology for learning.

Many of the internship participants were final year undergraduate students and reflected on their future goals after the internship. Seven were Education majors, already on a trajectory to language teaching, and the internship experience reinforced their resolve to pursue this career. One participant decided to become a teacher and enrolled in the Master of Teaching. Among these participants, several emphasised the importance of having near native or otherwise adequate levels of Japanese language ability before teaching at high schools and expressed their hopes of spending time in Japan to further improve their language skills. Two students commented on their desire to promote Japan and Japanese as a second language to young people in schools.

On completing the internship, the remaining students expressed a variety of views on their career trajectory, and the place of Japan or the Japanese language. Most wished to maintain their Japanese ability through travel in Japan, living or working in Japan, or through further self-study of Japanese. Career choices other than teaching Japanese related to fields that students studied concurrently for their Japanese degree, such as law, accounting, human resources, counselling, food technologies, and science. These students expressed interest in making use of their Japanese abilities by seeking relevant employment in Japan. One student obtained employment with the local government education sector while several others were interested in applying for the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme to teach English or work as a coordinator for international relations for local governments in Japan. All students who expressed interest in further study intended to take up language related programs including Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) certification, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) courses, honours degrees, master's degrees, and Japanese/English translation/interpreting courses.

## 4 Implications for Language Education Programs

This study of a relatively new partnership between schools and a university in Australia yields a range of generalisable insights. The study shows that in-curricular internships provide a rich addition to university language programs, with diverse

benefits to the various participants, and languages teaching and learning. For the participating undergraduate students, internships provide a flexible, integrated and meaningful workplace experience, within which they adapt and apply their academic learning in a real-world setting. The preparation for and the completion of the internship is more than a "taster" for the teaching profession, though it positively impacted the uptake of language teaching as a career among the cohorts overall. More broadly, it affords the students the learning experience of preparing, presenting and reflecting upon themselves in a workplace, and fine-tuning metacognitive skills to enhance their transition from student to professional. The transformational force of the internship is further realised in the students' multilingual identities, as they shift their role from language learner to expert in their position among more novice learners. We follow this thread in the section below.

The internship augments much-needed collaboration between Higher Education providers and industry. In the current study, the teachers and schools appreciated both the outreach from the university languages staff, a tonic to the relative neglect of language education in comparison to other disciplines. Teachers and subject co-ordinators valued the contribution from the interns, whether this involved classroom assistance with small groups of students, resource development or other tasks. The school staff feedback is critical to the university to continuously develop the internship program. Indeed schools-university partnerships come into play in terms of collaborative improvement. For instance, in the current study, many of the undergraduate students reported the difficulties they encountered in the transition between school and university. While the adoption, or adaptation, of existing familiarisation programs for secondary students interested in language studies offers potential to address this, the increased contact between university and school students may better prepare the latter for the transition to higher education. Notwithstanding this, university language programs, facing an ever more competitive market for students (Hashimoto, 2022), might consider this as important feedback and adopt pedagogies that mitigate the negative shock students experience.

School-university partnerships can be conduits for research into practice, with more direct and immediate channels for sharing and interrogating research with educators. Important findings from the current study include the importance of teachers and their pedagogies and the continuity of language between levels of schooling to maintain student achievement and motivation. The experiences that university students recalled as still resonant were the teacher's stories of their experiences as second language and culture learners. These outsider perspectives point to an important advantage of non-native speaker teachers, and to the significance of identification by the learners with the teacher's experience.

With a partnership in place, study findings can be shared through current network of schools and language teachers, creating a tighter community of practice and scholarship between university language departments and schools. University Schools of Education typically have direct links to industry via schools; however, language departments need to promote languages education and their industry relevance and responsiveness. Taking this route is potentially strategic in a competitive higher

education market, where industry demand and work-readiness are increasingly prioritised. Internships provide a vehicle for such work.

Among other insights, the profile of successful advanced language students gathered in the current study gives insight into the cultural diversity among the Australian student population, which is a shared feature of many Anglophone contexts. In the case of Australia, it raises one of the fundamental problems in Australia's engagement with Asia — the government and public authorities have continuously failed to understand and reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity which constitutes modern-day Australia without recognising Australia's transformation into a multicultural and multilingual country (Hamid & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2016, 2017). In Australia and other Anglophone countries, many students are living multi-cultural and multilingual lives. We found that young Anglo-Australians are more aware of this, and this awareness is enhanced for all through language learning. The student's reflections reveal both their own awareness of their intercultural learning and their selection of professional pathways that employ their language and inter-cultural skills. While many students aspire to put these skills to use in Japan, the recent history of travel restrictions and concerns over environmental implications of international travel in country internship programs may offer an alternative for students to use and hone their language skills in local workplaces.

## 5   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

We conclude this chapter by looking forward and outline plans for expanding research and the internship program. Our research was originally designed to include insights from the participating high school students and more in-depth review from teachers. This was curtailed due to restrictions associated with the global pandemic. With restrictions lifted, further review and research can be pursued. Future work will build on the existing collaboration between schools and the university to design data gathering processes and activities, aimed at capturing host-school teachers' and students' experience of the interns and internship. This will augment the intern reflections, triangulating and potentially workshopping the various perspectives, to build, review and fine-tune the partnership. In addition, we will work with school partners to co-design research and research outputs. It is intended that building collaborative practice will contribute to highly effective and responsive language teaching and learning programs in both universities and schools.

A key question for planned future research is whether like-aged peer role models have an impact on language learner motivation (Dörnyei, 2009; Ushioda, 2011). Most of the interns in the program described here entered university straight from high school and are only a few years older than then eldest high school students. Initial findings demonstrated that many students experienced a sense of relatability to their non-native speaking but accomplished and effective language teachers. We seek to explore whether this is or can be enhanced given the small age gap between the school and university students.

Finally, the participating schools in the program under discussion have been only in metropolitan areas, close to the university. Scoping work to expand the program is underway in response to regional schools across the state as well as university students expressing strong interest in participating. Currently, the QLD state department of education offers grants to support preservice teachers to undertake a professional experience in a rural or remote state schools. We would seek a similar support for the internship from the university, which has provided scholarships for students from rural and regional areas. Expanding the program beyond metropolitan centres is important for a range of reasons, not least equity, with regional students facing various gaps in education access. These include factors such as unequal access to university based on socio-economic status, and limited program availability in regional schools and universities, including language learning opportunities (Molla et al., 2019). This metropolitan-regional divide is not unique to Australia, and developing innovative ways to address this will benefit other jurisdictions similarly seeking to provide high quality and equitable and sustainable language programs.

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# State Language Education Systems

**David Hayes**

## 1 Introduction

English is the first foreign language in many national education systems, increasingly taught from the beginning of primary school and through at least the early years of university. Governments typically maintain that this emphasis on English is needed for their countries to compete economically in a globalized world, though whether widespread English proficiency is actually needed for national economies is disputed (Rassool, 2013). Research indicates that for a limited number of people who have high-level skills in an area in demand in the labour market, e.g., engineering or information technology, proficiency in English is an asset; in contrast, those with proficiency in English but no other marketable skills are much less likely to derive economic value from it (Ricento, 2018). Nonetheless, governments continue to pursue educational language policies which focus on English to the detriment of other languages, in spite of data which indicates that system-wide outcomes are often poor (Kaur et al., 2016; MOEM, 2013) and that within systems there may also be significant achievement gaps, most notably between urban and rural areas (Azman, 2016). Moreover, in multilingual contexts, where there are policies which promote a single national or official language as the medium of education, Indigenous students who have to learn this as a second language at the same time as learning English, their third language, are likely to be additionally disadvantaged (Ramírez-Romero & Vargas-Gill, 2019).

Set against these background factors, this chapter places the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in its wider socio-educational context in a particular country—Thailand—as a case study of policy and practice, critically analyzing factors at the macro educational policy level which affect practice and outcomes

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at the micro level of schools and classrooms. The perspective of teachers, supervisors and school directors who have to implement policies are foregrounded through interview data gathered during the evaluation of a large-scale professional development programme for English teachers. The chapter argues that the existing poor outcomes for English in the Thai education system are dependent as much on wider system issues as they are on factors specific to the teaching of the language itself. In conclusion, the chapter alludes to (pre)conditions for effective policy and practice in language education which may have implications for EFL in similar education systems elsewhere.

## 2   Background

### 2.1   National Language Policy, Languages and the Place of English in Thailand

Thailand defines itself in part by its national language, Thai. An ideological policy to create 'Thai-ness' through the Thai language was first enshrined in Mandate 9 of the 'Twelve Cultural Mandates' put forward by the government between 1939 and 1942:

1.  Thai people must extol, honour and respect the Thai language, and must feel honoured to speak it;
2.  Thai people must consider it the duty of a good citizen to study the national language, and must at least be able to read and write; Thai people must also consider it their important duty to assist and support citizens who do not speak Thai or cannot read Thai to learn it. (Cabinet Secretariat, 1940, p. 78, as cited in Draper, 2019, p. 233)

Thai was declared the national language in 1940 but successive constitutions (the most recent in 2017) have not mentioned an official language. Nevertheless, Thai governments have continued to pursue a de facto monolingual policy with Central Thai as the standard language for education, government and the mass media (Srichampa et al., 2018). This policy belies the plurilingual nature of Thailand, which is home to some 70 languages according to a survey conducted in 2004 by Mahidol University (Srichampa et al., 2018).

At a theoretical level, the plurilingual reality of Thailand was acknowledged in the draft *National Language Policy*, developed between 2007 and 2010 by the Royal Institute and approved by two successive governments in 2010 and 2012. Srichampa et al., (2018, pp. 97–98) enumerate the three major goals of the policy as:

1.  Language for the maintenance of local/ethnic language identity and national reconciliation (including support for Thai as the national language and local/ethnic languages)

2. Language for communicating and accessing fundamental rights (for all Thai people—including the disabled—as well as migrant workers; and
3. Language for economic development (in border areas, the ASEAN community, and worldwide).

Unfortunately, the National Language Policy (NLP) remains at a theoretical level, as a 'strategic implementation plan is still a "work in progress"' (Srichampa et al., 2018, p. 97), lacking commitment from the current government. The absence of any attempt to implement the policy prevents progress towards the first goal of promoting a vision of Thailand as a multilingual, multicultural society and, in turn, hampers efforts to improve the existing low achievement and low literacy rates amongst minority ethnic groups in schools. Lo Bianco (2019, p. 1) notes the impact of national policies on education in southern Thailand where "80% of people speak a form of Malay, which is different to that used in Malaysia, but children are educated in Thai, resulting in the lowest academic achievement rates in the country" and that "[c]ompounding the pressure on minority languages from official national languages are the global meta-languages such as English". Thus, with the third goal of the NLP seeing 'language for economic development' as much more than a single international language, English, the delay in its implementation also inhibits the wider teaching of ASEAN languages such as Bahasa Malaysia and Vietnamese, as well as major regional languages such as Chinese and Japanese, in the school system.

With respect to the 'global meta-language' of English, prior to the global Covid-19 pandemic which has affected economies worldwide since the beginning of 2020, the Thai economy was dependent on exports and tourism, for which there has long been a perception that English is essential for the workforce and both of which were growing at annual rates of over 7% (https://www.enterprisesg.gov.sg/overseas-markets/asia-pacific/thailand/market-profile). Closer analysis reveals, however, that growth in pre-pandemic tourism was largely driven by group tours from China which were "linguistically cloistered" (Bangkok Post, 2018), i.e., served entirely by Chinese-speaking guides and having minimal interaction beyond the group. Even in those tourist interactions where English was being used, as Kaur et al., (2016, p. 352) commented, "the ability to conduct limited English conversation, while highly important for those working with tourists, is not equivalent to genuine proficiency in the language". In the export economy, the need for some workers to communicate in English (presumably those at higher organizational levels who have contact with overseas businesses) would appear to be of value given that 12.72% of exports went to the USA in 2019. However, a close second in share of exports was China with 12.01%, followed by Japan with 9.90%, Vietnam 4.97% and Hong Kong 4.69%, which indicates that knowledge of other languages could be useful for economic purposes (data from https://wits.worldbank.org/CountrySnapshot/en/THA/textview). Domestically, of course, "few people use or need to use English since Standard Thai continues to hold its strong position as the only national and official language of the country" (Trakulkasemsuk, 2018, p. 99), and so a legitimate question for Thailand would seem to be "*Who needs English and for what purposes?*" On this, research is largely silent and the comprehensive language audit for the economy that

Takahashi (2012) identified as being needed a decade ago has still not been carried out. It appears that Ricento's (2018) observation, that proficiency in English may be an asset for people who have other high-level skills but not otherwise, holds true for Thailand as much as elsewhere, calling into question its status as a national economic necessity which then has to be taught at all stages of schooling.

## 2.2  The Thai Education System, Student Outcomes and the Teaching of English

The Thai education system follows a 6-3-3 model, the 1999 National Education Act mandating 12 years of free education, of which 9 years to the end of Mathayom (Secondary) 3 are compulsory and constitute 'basic education'. In terms of its funding as a percentage of GDP, the Thai education system figure of 3% was below the global average of 3.7% in 2019, and much less than the percentage spent by countries which have performed consistently well in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) 'Project for International Student Assessment' (PISA), which is often regarded as a benchmark for other educational systems. For example, Finland allocated 6.3% of GDP to education in 2018, Sweden 7.6%, and South Korea 4.5%. Total allocations may not reveal the whole picture, however, as another high-performing country in PISA, Singapore, spent just 2.5% of GDP on education in 2020 (all figures for government spending on education available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS). An implication of these expenditure rates is that it is not just how much governments spend that is important but how the amount available is allocated within the system. In this respect, Thailand's educational expenditure is not always well-directed. For example, as Fry (2018) notes, there is a top-heavy bureaucracy of some 30,000 civil servants at the Ministry of Education, an expense which does not directly contribute to quality education in schools. Another significant problem derives from the equal per-student school funding model, which is a major factor in unequal resource allocation affecting small, rural schools, which "are not only endowed with inadequate material resources and physical infrastructure, but […] are also hindered by severe shortage of teachers (in terms of both quality and quantity)" (Lathapipat, 2018, p. 357). These resource deficiencies exacerbate inequality across the system, both urban–rural generally as well as for socio-economically disadvantaged children in urban areas who are unable to access the larger, 'good' urban schools. A recent research report by the World Bank (2020, p. 21) found that "non-poor students are 8 times more likely to attend 'Advantaged' and 3 times more likely to attend 'Above average' or better quality schools than the Poor and the Very Poor".

Inequality has been a source of concern for many years and its reduction has featured as a goal in at least the last two National Economic Social and Development Plans. In the twelfth plan (2017–2021), the first two key strategies focused on 'Strengthening and Realizing the Potential of Human Capital' and 'Creating a Just

Society and Reducing Inequality' but, while there were 147 mentions of 'education' in the plan, 'English' only featured on four occasions (ONESCD, 2017). The fifth objective for human resource development stated specifically that:

> 5) Educational excellence should be promoted at all levels by improving the management of primary education quality in small schools, reforming teaching and learning methods, and developing the quality of teachers within the whole system. (ONESCD, 2017, p. 19)

Similarly, the third objective relating to 'Creating a Just Society and Reducing Inequality' was to "Enhance the more equal distribution of quality public services including education" (ONESCD, 2017, p. 20). In the most recent plan, the thirteenth (2023–2027), which was endorsed by the cabinet on 3 May 2022 but has yet to be implemented, the failure to meet the objectives of the twelfth plan can be seen in the reiteration of themes from the earlier plan. The second of the major goals of the thirteenth plan focuses on human development and the third on creating a society of opportunity and fairness and reducing inequality. Once again, mention of 'English' specifically is scarce, this time restricted to a paragraph discussing low educational achievement in nationwide testing at the end of Grade 6 in 2019 while 'education' featured 103 times (ONESCD, 2021). Acknowledgement of the need to increase the quality of education as a key driver of national economic development is, then, sustained across national development plans while the place of English in the plans is peripheral, in spite of its prominence in public discourse as a national necessity for the globalized economy (Talerngsri, 2019).

That educational quality is in need of improvement can be readily seen in research into outcomes across the system. Another World Bank study, in 2015, was entitled *Thailand: Wanted, A Quality Education for All* and reported that almost a third of Thai 15-year-olds were functionally illiterate in their first language, a figure rising to 47% in rural villages (World Bank, 2015). Quality outcomes for students are closely linked to quality teaching but here there are also long-standing problems, with the World Bank (2020) also noting that not only are teachers "highly inequitably distributed and small schools are clearly much more disadvantaged compared to larger schools" (p. 20) but that:

> almost 39 percent of teachers in the Disadvantaged schools hold the position of 'Assistant teachers' compared to only 9.5 percent in the Advantaged schools. The Assistant teachers have no academic ranking and more than 70 percent of them are classified as 'Temporary employees'. (pp. 20–21)

With respect to the teaching of English specifically, teachers are routinely criticized for using 'outmoded' grammar-translation methods though the curriculum expectations are that a communicative methodology should be used, and their own language proficiency levels are considered to be inadequate (Franz & Teo, 2018). Assessment of over 12,000 teachers' English proficiency levels on a recent nationwide in-service teacher development project found that half of the teachers had an A2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), almost a third had B1, just over 8% had B2 or above and 9% had only an A1 level (Hayes, 2020). Enever's (2011) research indicates that B1 on the CEFR is a minimum entry requirement for teachers of English at the primary level and that C1 is desirable if a teacher

is to be "fully functional in the informal and incidental language regularly required in the primary classroom" (p. 26). Nearly 60% of these Thai teachers, from both primary and secondary schools, were below Enever's (2011) minimum, which is a matter of significant concern as the Office of the Basic Education Commission regards B2 as the target level for students by the time they leave school (Bangkok Post, 2020). Similarly, there are concerns about outcome levels for students, and significant public debate whenever national-level test scores are released, whether the assessment is internal to the system or conducted by an external body. Internally, until the tests were cancelled for Grade 6 and Grade 9 students because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ministry has assessed students' performance in Thai, English, mathematics and general sciences on an annual basis in the 'Ordinary National Educational Tests' (ONET). The ONET scores for Grade 6 students in 2019 showed that students scored an average of 55.9% in Thai, 37.5% in mathematics, 39.93% in general sciences and 39.24% in English (Mala, 2019). Scores for English were thus on a par with mathematics and general sciences while the score for Thai, the first language of most students, was higher but not outstanding. Externally, the results of the annual Education First 'English Proficiency Index' in 2021 showed that "Thailand's English proficiency ranking among non-native English speaking countries has been ranked a paltry 100th out of a total of 112 countries and territories" (Bangkok Post, 2021), continuing a decline in the rankings which routinely prompts declarations that education officials "would soon discuss plans to urgently develop English skills for both teachers and students" (Bangkok Post, 2020). (Though the usefulness of the English Proficiency Index as an indicator of nationwide English language proficiency has been questioned, it nonetheless figures prominently in public discourse as an indicator of national standards.)

It should be recognized that, while a general conclusion that "too many Thai students nearing the end of compulsory education are ill-prepared for further education and/or labor market entry" (Lathapipat, 2018, p. 350) may be valid, there is nonetheless considerable variation and there are also some members of the labour force who have "good or even outstanding skills" (Chalamwong & Suebnusorn, 2018, p. 184). Indeed, when the CEO of the Mercedes-Benz factory in Thailand was interviewed in 2011, "he claimed that the Thai workers at his factory in Thailand were second only to those in Germany in terms of their skills and quality" (Chalamwong & Suebnusorn, 2018, p. 184). The challenge for the country is to ensure that a much larger proportion of students in schools receive the quality of education that delivers this type of positive outcome. However, as it stands, in Thailand, the inequity across the system strengthens the chances that success in English, the subject of primary concern here, is likely to be the preserve of students from higher socio-economic groups who attend the 'advantaged' urban schools and, in addition, are much more likely to have the resources which enable them to offset any shortfalls in provision in the public system through private funding of additional educational opportunities. In this regard, the Equitable Education Fund (EEF) calculated that in Bangkok as a whole, households spent "about twice the national average on school education" and that "the difference in money spent on schooling between the poorest and richest groups of families in the capital is up to 12 times apart" (Bangkok Post, 2022).

Thailand has had significant success in expanding access to education but merely enabling all children to attend school is not sufficient to guarantee positive outcomes. Understanding the broader educational dimensions outlined here is therefore fundamental to any exploration of the degree of success that the system has in teaching a foreign language such as English. High levels of achievement for English as a subject can hardly be expected when there are poor achievement levels across the system generally, except for those who are able to access the 'advantaged' schools and can afford additional private tuition.

# 3   An Empirical Study

This chapter now turns to the investigation of life in the Thai education system, viewed through the lens of those who are charged with implementing government policies. Data gathered in a series of semi-structured interviews with teachers, school administrators and school supervisors across the country as part of the evaluation of a large-scale continuing professional development programme point to key factors which affect the effectiveness of policy implementation and, ultimately, lead to questioning whether the official goal of widespread proficiency in English is realistic in current circumstances. Details of the interviews are given in Table 1. All interviews were audio-recorded. Interviews with teachers and supervisors were conducted primarily in English, with Thai used on occasion to clarify understanding; while interviews with school administrators were conducted in Thai and translated into English by an evaluation team member proficient in both languages.

An initial coding analysis of the interviews gave rise to major categories which were then organized thematically. Those themes which appear to have a significant impact on the teaching and learning of English in Thailand are discussed here, interwoven into an analytical narrative. Where they are used, all names are pseudonyms.

**Table 1**   Number of interviews by category

| Category | Type | No. of locations | No. of interviews |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers | Focus group | 6 | 7 (29 teachers) |
| Administrators | Individual | 6 | 6 |
| Supervisors | Individual | 2 | 2 |

## 3.1  Life in Schools: A Plethora of Projects and Competitions

Thailand is notable for frequent changes in Ministers of Education—there have been 22 since 1999—which has a profound effect on the development of consistent policies as incoming ministers tend to discard their predecessor's initiatives in favour of their own preferred policies. These are then transformed into projects by the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in the Ministry of Education without consultation with the teachers and educational administrators who have to implement, monitor and evaluate them. Their powerful impact is illustrated by Ajarn Ubon ('Ajarn' is a Thai honorific for 'teacher'), a school supervisor with primary responsibility for English as a subject in her region, who recounted how supervisors are preoccupied with implementing and evaluating OBEC projects rather than monitoring and supporting teachers in the classroom.

> Most of the jobs [of a supervisor] are OBEC work. The 'Moral Schools' project, the 'Study Less and Learn More' project, the 'Anti-corruption Schools' project. Do you know this one? […] We also have the 'Honest School' which is different from the 'Anti-corruption' one. The 'World Class Standard School' project. The 'Self-sufficiency School' project, this one is to be carried on while they initiate many more Learning Centres.

The purpose of all of these projects is ostensibly to 'improve' schools in one way or another but there is little or no coherence between the projects, schools are required to participate when instructed and supervisors have to monitor the implementation of the projects which are often part of a competitive system. As Ajarn Ubon explained.

> There are competitions among these school projects. The winners would be the schools who implement activities following the success indicators. There'll be awards for that given by the Royal Family. The winning schools will become role models that others can come to visit and develop similar programmes or activities.

Monitoring projects dominates a supervisor's life. Ajarn Ubon lamented *"I've got too many on my plate, too many"* and described her function as more *"like a postman […] I am a messenger here"*, involved in relaying communications between OBEC and schools.

> There is a committee to consider and read those reports. The schools must have their own indicators and they have to report what achievements they've done based on those indicators. Our office is more like a coordination centre helping schools to communicate with OBEC and apply for OBEC awards recognitions such as the 'World-Class Standard School'.

As well as projects for schools as a whole, there are also numerous projects for individual subjects with English receiving considerable attention. For students *"We have like English contests and skills competitions"*, as Ajarn Ubon noted, and for teachers there are professional development initiatives, both large and small-scale. The importance given to the 'English contests and skills competitions' for students that Ajarn Ubon mentioned can be seen in the way that these also featured in interviews with school directors. For example, the director of a major provincial school in the north-east, Ajarn Somsak, said that.

> Our school also sends groups of students to various competitions, for example English tests. […] Our students have received a number of awards from national competitions. Our students recently went to Bangkok to compete in a storytelling competition. They have the skills, both trained by teachers as well as personal talent. […] And another good example is students attending the quiz competition and English proficiency test.

The students entered into these contests are, of course, those with high proficiency levels and the director also noted that the desire to learn English was not present across the whole school. His comment that "*Over 50% of the students are motivated to learn English in order to communicate in society in the future*" is telling as it seems to reveal that 'over 50%' is considered to be an achievement.

Projects for teachers are, again, initiated by OBEC without consultation with the teachers who have to attend. Not surprisingly, many teachers disapprove of the compulsory nature of training with Ajarn Suriya, a secondary school teacher, complaining, "*Willingness is very important for motivation, but teachers don't want to feel like they are forced to do that. That's the big point.*" Moreover, a school director from a southern province, Ajarn Kasem, discussed the lack of consistent follow-up to many of these projects for teachers. Discussing the recent 'Regional English Training Centre' (RETC) project, he recalled an earlier project which operated from 'English Resource and Instruction Centres' (ERICs) which had once been very active but now suffered from having only a limited budget from OBEC and hence could do little. Ajarn Kasem's concern was that RETC would suffer a similar fate, and "*the project will die*". His view was prescient as, since the interview, the RETC project has come to an end and its centres no longer function.

## 3.2   In-School Support for Teachers

Involvement with OBEC projects leaves supervisors with little time to make regular visits to teachers in their classrooms in a mentoring capacity which might enable them to improve outcomes for their students. Ajarn Ubon identified "*to understand the curriculum*" as an immediate need for teachers of English but noted that in the previous three months she had only visited one of the nearly 250 teachers for whom she was responsible across the region to observe classroom teaching and see if, indeed, the curriculum was understood. Many teachers also see observation as valuable, as Ajarn Suriya observed: "*One thing for me, what I want is observation and supervision. It's important for me. […] Face-to-face comments, sit in the classroom to see the real situation. I think it's really, really important.*" Unfortunately, this rarely happens. Another teacher in Ajarn Suriya's school who had been there for seven years said he had not been observed at all in that time. In a focus group with teachers from a northern city, one teacher with 34 years' experience said she had had only one supervisory visit in that whole time; others with 30, 25, 12 and 4 years' experience had never been visited. This lack of in-class support was contrasted unfavourably with experience during pre-service training by Ajarn Suriya, "*When I was in my university, practice teaching, at that time every one of my professors did supervision*

*and I improved a lot; and all of my friends said that it's fantastic"*. For her the ideal was "*meaningful supervision, once each semester*", i.e., for supervision to be effective it had to be constructive and supportive, not simply an inspection by a superior in the hierarchy.

Given the practical constraints of being responsible for so many teachers, one way to enable supervisors to observe more teachers is for it to be conducted online. As part of the RETC project, OBEC experimented with video-recording of lessons which were then viewed and commented on by their in-service teacher-trainers. Unfortunately, not many teachers were enthusiastic about this, with one stating directly "*It's fake to me to be honest*" as lessons were rehearsed before being filmed. Ajarn Kanchana, the head of the English department in a north-eastern secondary school, linked the process both to cultural views of the teacher's classroom role and the lack of connection between the observation and career progression pathways.

> You have to think about the nature of Thai people. When being filmed when they teach it's just like in the class, they have the right to teach the students as they want and then they have to be filmed, to let any other person watch what they teach. Maybe some teachers, I think many teachers feel uncomfortable to do that. That's the point, that's the nature; you have to think about this too. […] That's a very sensitive issue in this school. […] And the point is, doing this is nothing to do with the promotion of the career. If this was linked to the promotion of the career, maybe it's easier to ask the teachers to do that.

Making recorded observations part of teachers' promotion criteria could be solved in theory if supervisors were given the responsibility of watching the videos and providing commentary and support, but whether they would have the capacity to do this given their other commitments is debatable. Sadly, any potential inherent in this process was not realized as video recording and trainer feedback also came to an end with the RETC project.

## 3.3   Curriculum and Training Expectations and the Environment for English in Thailand

A recurring issue that teachers in Thailand bring up is that English is foreign to their environment and that they have a shared language with the students which makes it difficult for them to use English to the extent that policy prescriptions expect. One teacher from the north said of her students, "*They have no exposure to English outside the class*", a situation common across many parts of the country; similarly, the vice-director of a southern secondary school said "*The surrounding environment is not too stimulating to motivate students to learn*" the language. In such circumstances, it is difficult for students to take on board the value of English, no matter how often they are told this by their teachers. As a consequence, students, especially those from rural and semi-rural areas where even teachers who speak the language may be in short supply, often do not make progress according to curriculum grade expectations in primary school such that when they enter secondary school "*Many of our M1 students cannot read English*", as another teacher commented. Given that

some students "*don't speak English at all*", it is hardly surprising that teachers opt to use their shared language to support students' understanding, as Ajarn Sudarat, the head of the English department from a secondary school which served farming communities in a southern province, explained.

> We still need [to use] the Thai language in the class to make sure students understand correctly and we will repeat the sentences or words until they get used to or memorise the words in both Thai and English, plus using body language to help them understand.

Ajarn Sudarat went on to note that there was a lack of fit between what the curriculum—in the form of textbooks—and in-service training courses expected of teachers and students in school and their own reality. Of the in-service training promoting the prescribed communicative approach, Ajarn Sudarat noted that teachers "*can understand what the trainer wanted them to do; however, when they use the techniques with students, the students might not understand them all*"; and of the textbooks in use in her schools she commented:

> The contents in the textbook are too difficult, sometimes. It depends on teachers too, if they have the ability to simplify the lessons and get students to understand easily. If those textbooks are designed for very smart students, that's fine – but our students are not yet up to that standard.

Of course, Thai teachers are as receptive to change which makes learning more meaningful for their students as teachers anywhere, with a participant in a teacher focus group in the lower north-east, Ajarn Wanida, explaining that:

> One thing that changes in my class is I use more English in classroom. In the past, we used Thai language in the class and students got used to that. And we haven't communicated in English in day-to-day life with them. After the training, I use English more and more in the classroom. My students start to hear some instructions and lessons in English.

Nonetheless, in spite of tentative efforts to teach differently, she also noted that change on the scale expected and in the timeframe desired by policymakers is often unrealistic for both teachers and students in current school conditions.

> We are overloaded. We didn't have much time to prepare materials. The students, as well, don't get use to this educational system or the way to learn. Thai teachers are used to applying the traditional teaching style and one day if it's changed completely so the students might be shocked. We need to give them some time. The result is that the teachers who came [to the training course] will try to change their ways of teaching. They know and they are trying. For example, Thai teachers who used to speak in Thai, we try to use more English in the classroom. Students came and asked us after the class too. They like it.

Furthermore, the ministry expectation of students being able to speak English well by the time they leave school is not always shared by students who may just see English as an examination subject they need to pass to enter university. Ajarn Malee, from a prestigious secondary school in the north-east, illustrated this when asked about her students' motivation:

> Their purpose is further study, not only communication because in their daily life English communication is not the first factor. We are not in a tourist area, but they want to continue their further education in famous universities such as for medical sciences or engineering so they know English language is very important for them.

Student motivation also influenced her perception of the activity-based, communicative techniques introduced on her recent in-service training course. As she remarked: "*Sometimes they won't fit with our students. I didn't mean to be negative. It just didn't fit with our target audience. However, we can still apply some of the activities.*"

Data from these interviews illustrate the challenges teachers, supervisors and school administrators face in enacting government policies in schools and point to the need for policies to be based on a realistic appraisal of contextual constraints and system capacity to achieve the educational outcomes for the teaching of English that successive governments proclaim are desirable. Any educational change should be thought of as a process which takes time to become fully rooted in day-to-day classroom behaviours but a basic precondition for this process even to begin is that the change must be appropriate to the context in which it is to take place, compatible with teacher and student needs, expectations and abilities. From the views of those in the educational system who are charged with translating government policies and a curriculum which is focused on communication into classroom practice, there is a mismatch between official expectations and what is possible across Thailand in all but the most favourable teaching circumstances. Implications of this mismatch will be explored below.

## 4  Implications for Language Education Programmes

The excerpts from the interviews presented here provide individual perceptions of the Thai education system and are obviously not statistically generalizable. Nonetheless, they are important in shedding light on the impact of educational policies on practice at the classroom level and accord with previous investigations into education generally and English teaching specifically in Thailand (e.g., Fry, 2018; Hayes, 2022; Wedell, 2009). The experience of the teachers and educational administrators cited here also illustrates the failure of policy makers to consult with teachers before educational policies are announced and implemented. Indeed, it is hard to escape the conclusion that most schools are so busy implementing various projects imposed on them by the top-heavy OBEC bureaucracy that they have little time to think about how to improve outcomes in regular classroom teaching. Of course, there are instances of excellence in the education system to the extent that in international assessments such as PISA performance in some schools is as high as that of the highest-scoring countries. However, high performance is not widespread and inequity across the system is deeply entrenched (Lathapipat, 2018), illustrated by the fact that there are cases of children leaving primary school who are not able to speak or read English at all, as we have seen, even after six years of compulsory instruction. With a lockstep curriculum, these children will only get further and further behind as they progress through secondary school. The vast majority of children who are in this position come from rural or disadvantaged urban areas. The school system thus contributes to the reproduction of the prevailing social order which favours the

economic interests of powerful higher socio-economic groups while children from lower socio-economic groups do not receive the quality of education which would enable them to progress beyond the lower rungs of the occupational ladder.

In school there is also a mismatch between curriculum expectations and students' most direct needs. The curriculum focuses on English for communication, which is the perceived need in public discourse, whereas students' immediate needs—or, given the inequity in the system, the needs of those students who are in a position to apply—are to pass examinations in order to enter university. The mismatch also extends to the principles of the continuing professional development projects that teachers attend, which promote communicative, activity-based approaches which are not always appropriate to the context, whether this is for reasons of class size (as classes are too large to easily accommodate the activities), class goals (a focus on communication is subsidiary to what students need, even though it may have immediate value in making classrooms more enjoyable) or assuming a practical use for the language when little or none exists in the environment. Hence, teachers often leave their professional development programmes having enjoyed the experience and are able to see its value to their classrooms in theory but fail to implement what they learn once they return to their schools because the techniques recommended work well with other teachers but are not readily applicable in their own classroom contexts. As one secondary school teacher said:

> The techniques used in the [training course] seem to work very well. I think it's because the participants are having the same level of English and knowledge. However, when we came back and use the techniques and activities from [the training] it's quite challenging because students are having different level of English.

If any language teaching programme is to be effective, the questions put forward by Baldauf et al. (2010) for educational policy makers when considering the implementation of English language teaching programmes at the primary level, but which are equally applicable at any educational level, require positive answers.

> Generally, is the amount of time dedicated to language learning adequate?
>
> Are indigenous teachers trained to deliver successful instructional programs?
>
> Are available educational materials sufficient and appropriate?
>
> Are available educational methodology models appropriate?
>
> Are system resources adequate to the task?
>
> Is the educational system sufficiently committed to providing Primary School English in terms of resources, space, and a prospect for continuity?
>
> Are children in Primary School prepared to undertake early language instruction?
>
> Is there any evidence that the availability of such instruction actually meets community and/ or national objectives in terms of utility for participants?
>
> What is the impact of such instruction on other languages in the language ecology? Are other perspectives needed? (Baldauf et al., 2010, p. 431)

Thailand's educational experience confirms that student outcomes for the teaching of English in the education system are dependent on the complex array of factors at macro and micro levels indicated by these questions, for which answers to questions

1–8 in Thailand are negative, while the first part of question 9 does not even seem to feature in educational planning. Research indicates that as well as a basic coherence between the curriculum and instructional practices in the classroom, such things as an adequate supply of appropriately trained teachers (Hayes, 2012), teachers with the necessary levels of English language proficiency (Enever, 2011) and sufficient out of school exposure to the language (Szpotowicz & Lindgren, 2011) are clearly linked to positive learning outcomes for students. Alongside these factors, another basic requirement if language teaching in schools is to be more effective is an audit of actual instead of assumed language needs in various sectors of the economy so that language choices in schools are based on data rather than wish fulfilment. In this latter respect, the opinions of the vice-director of a southern secondary school quoted earlier, who saw the need for languages beyond English, are pertinent:

> We want our students to be able to communicate in different languages, especially English and the Chinese language. We realise that Chinese has taken more and more of an important role, just like English, so the school director is keen to promote learning and teaching of these two languages.

A policy based on universal learning of a single international language, English, for the entire 12-year duration of school education does not even respond to the linguistic diversity of the country's major trading partners let alone take advantage of regional languages which would likely have more relevance for children in many areas of the country to learn. Given the continued poor outcomes for the teaching of English across many years, it is surprising that there has not been a radical reconceptualization of language education policy in Thailand. It is greatly needed.

## 5   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

This chapter has argued that solutions to the problem of under-achievement in English in the Thai education system must go alongside solutions to the system-wide, inter-linked problems of inequity and under-achievement which the Thai government itself has recognized in successive National Development Plans. There is a need for a comprehensive re-evaluation of (English) language education in the Thai system if it is to provide a high-quality experience which promotes interest in learning other languages rather than one which leads to poor outcomes and demotivation amongst so many of the student population, particularly those from lower socio-economic groups.

The issues raised in the chapter are not, it seems, confined solely to Thailand. Hayes (2022) includes a discussion of policy and practice in Malaysia, South Korea and Sri Lanka, which suggests that there are also problems with attainment of educational objectives in these countries and that there is a case for a fundamental re-evaluation of policy and practice for foreign language learning in schools. His view is supported by Azman (2016) for Malaysia, Choi (2021) for South Korea and Little et al. (2019) for Sri Lanka. The reciprocal association between socio-economic status

and achievement in English is also found elsewhere. In Cameroon, Kuchah (2018) reports that state schools are unable to provide equitable resources to all schools and educational success is closely linked to socio-economic status. Sayer (2018) concludes that widespread English language teaching in Mexico does not alleviate structural economic inequality. Butler and Le (2018) found that in a middle school in China students' parental income and educational level positively correlated with their performance in English. Hence, the discussion of educational policy and practice in Thailand has relevance for policymakers, educational administrators and teachers in many other, similar educational systems. In particular, this chapter has argued that the economic rationale for the teaching of English (or indeed any other language) should be based on an audit of occupational language use in various sectors of the economy so that actual rather than perceived needs can inform educational policies. However, it is also important to caution against this audit as the sole basis for educational language policy, given that economic conditions are subject to change. An educational language policy which fosters an interest in learning other languages and offers students in schools opportunities to learn languages which are more readily available in the local and regional environment would build up capacity to respond to diverse language needs while developing skills for language learning in general.

In Thailand as a basic minimum, and I would contend in many other contexts too, there is an urgent need to align curriculum outcomes for English language teaching with the system capacity to attain them, without which no language education programme can be effective. In addition, there needs to be a realization that any change which is thought to be needed at the classroom level cannot be simply mandated nor will it occur overnight, but that it requires both long-term planning for change and more meaningful involvement of classroom teachers in determining directions for change and their scope. More research is also needed into the challenges that classroom teachers face as they attempt to implement ambitious directives from central governments. Research into the processes that lead to policy making is another urgent need, in the hope that this may result in (English) language programmes with improved learning and teaching experiences for students and their teachers. In an ideal world, policy makers would benefit from spending time in a cross-section of schools with their teachers and students, listening to their concerns and learning about the conditions in which they work and the nature of the communities that their schools serve, before they began to develop the policies which they expect others to implement. Until that happens, Wedell's (2009, p. 44) comment that "I find it difficult to understand how so many policy makers and their educational experts can remain so blind to their own educational cultures" is likely to continue to resonate. Nonetheless, despite its system-wide quality and equity issues, it is encouraging that Thai students continue to express high levels of satisfaction with their lives. In the 2018 PISA survey, which measured students' 'life satisfaction', 42% of Thai students said they were "very satisfied" with their lives, 31% were "moderately satisfied", 18% were "somewhat satisfied' and 9% "not satisfied". These scores compare very well with an academically high-scoring country such as Finland which reported 43% of school students as being "very satisfied" with their lives, 35% "moderately satisfied", 12% "somewhat satisfied' and 10% "not satisfied"; while students in another

academically high-scoring country, South Korea, had much lower levels of life satisfaction, with only 26% of school students reporting being "very satisfied" with their lives, 31% "moderately satisfied", 20% "somewhat satisfied' and 23% "not satisfied" (OECD, 2019). The challenge for Thailand is now to raise its overall achievement levels in (English) language teaching as well as other subjects and reduce educational inequality to match the generally high levels of life satisfaction that its students report. Educational researchers and practitioners in other countries are, of course, best placed to determine the extent to which the issues discussed here in relation to Thailand are applicable to their own educational systems, but I hope that this chapter helps to provide a stimulus for reconsideration of policy and practice in other contexts so that children's educational achievement in English, as well as in other subjects, can ultimately be delinked from their socio-economic status.

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# Language Programme Evaluation

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## 1  Introduction

The English language (EL), due to its dominance in the sectors of finance, technology, ICT and medicine, has grown to have a unique position in many educational systems across countries. These countries want their citizens to be able to use English competently so as to access the sectors abovementioned (Baldauf et al., 2011; OECD, 2014). As such, over the years, many language programs have proliferated both within the national educational systems and outside of it. As a result of international benchmark assessments, such as Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), many educational systems have embarked on reforms. However, educational reforms have rarely completely replaced existing practices (Datnow, 2020; Datnow et al., 2000; Tyack & Cuban, 1995); various studies in Singapore attest to this (Cheah, 1998; Goh & Tay, 2008; Goh et al., 2005). Hence, when reforms are enacted, it is crucial to put in place curriculum evaluation to ascertain that reforms, in the form of language programs, are being effectively used, where evaluation is the "process of systematically gathering empirical data and contextual information about an intervention program … that will assist in assessing a program's planning, implementation, and/ or effectiveness" (Chen, 2015, p. 6). To be able to verify that a language program is a good one, it is hence necessary to evaluate it.

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Consistently, a recurrent issue that has been observed in many educational systems, reforms and language programs is that of washback, where the high-stakes assessment influences teaching and learning (Cheng, 2013). Even if the language program was conceptualised and designed with sound pedagogical principles and based on rigorous research, its implementation and effectiveness may be affected as a result of washback. Hence, it is vital to evaluate language programmes to ascertain the fidelity of their implementation and effectiveness. This issue of washback posed a key challenge for the implementation of the national EL program in Singapore, encapsulated in the EL Syllabus 2001 (Goh et al., 2005), where programme is defined as "collections of materials, including a teacher's guide and student text, designed to provide guidance for daily instruction" (Remillard, 2016, p. 35). Against a backdrop where the examination culture has exerted a huge influence on teachers' instructional practice consistently over the years, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Singapore convened the English Language Curriculum and Pedagogy Review Committee (ELCPRC) in September 2005. Its primary objective was to "undertake a comprehensive review of the teaching and learning of the English Language (EL) in Singapore schools" (MOE, 2006, p. 2). Its tasks were to review the structure and content of the EL syllabus, the pedagogical approaches used, the existing instructional materials, the assessment of learning, and teacher training and development (MOE, 2006). In addition, with a notable increase in the percentage of students speaking English at home, from 35% in 1996 to 50% in 2006 (p. 4), there was a need to ensure that the EL curriculum and pedagogical approaches adequately addressed the changing profile of EL learners in Singapore. The ELCPRC recommended curricular changes which focused on a combination of "both a contextualised approach to EL learning, using rich materials, and structured, systematic and explicit grammar instruction" (p. 6). With this recommendation, the national literacy program, STELLAR (STrategies for English Language Learning And Reading), was conceived.

This study is an evaluation of a language education program, specifically assessing how "things are going," with regard to STELLAR. A sample of nine schools was studied, representing a range of socio-economic profiles. The focus of this study is to examine the current state of a change process, i.e., the extent of its use and the possible causes for its use or non-use. This chapter contributes to an understanding of daily pedagogical practice in the classroom, as this constitutes the background against which teachers make their daily classroom decisions. Furthermore, this will enable a better understanding of wider school practices and whether the language education program has been effective in enacting reform. In the next section, the existing research on curriculum implementation and curriculum materials which undergird this study will be reviewed and summarised. Thereafter, the study itself will be explicated, and the implications of the study will be shared before the chapter ends with conclusions and recommendations.

## 2 Theoretical Underpinnings and Existing Research

### 2.1 Tensions Between Fidelity and Mutual Adaptation

The importance of assessing implementation must not be underestimated when evaluating programs, because implementation outcomes provide developers with the necessary data on how the programs can be modified and improved to yield more desirable program outcomes (Proctor et al., 2011). There are eight aspects of implementation that are attended to in implementation assessment (Durlak & Du Pre, 2008): fidelity, dosage, quality, participant responsiveness, program differentiation, monitoring of control/comparison conditions, program reach and adaptation. Of the eight, Dusenbury et al. (2003) branded fidelity as the aspect of implementation which informs researchers of the reason(s) behind an innovation's success or failure. Logically, for an educational program to be successfully implemented, there needs to be congruence in the way it was conceived and the way it is being employed, i.e., fidelity. A number of definitions have been put forward over the years (e.g., Dane & Schneider, 1998; Dunst et al., 2013; Durlak & Du Pre, 2008; Dusenbury et al., 2003). In general, the various definitions of fidelity focus on the extent to which the enacted innovation corresponds with the program as originally conceived and intended by its developers.

A factor that can thwart this close correspondence required of a fidelity-oriented implementation is that of adaptation. Adaptations are considered divergences and departures from the intended innovation. Szulanski and Jensen (2008), in their study of the efficacy of exact replication, found that deviations from fidelity in the first 5 years resulted in poorer outcomes; deviations after 15 years or so improved outcomes. There seems to be value in adaptations. But there is substantial disagreement among researchers about how much adaptation is allowed without compromising the intervention. While research has found that high levels of fidelity lead to positive program outcomes (Berkel et al., 2011), researchers have also discovered that practitioners tend to adapt an innovative programme to suit their local needs (Elliott & Mihalic, 2004). It is impossible to utilize a program in its entirety and analyse the outcomes based on its supposed "fidelity" because many other factors, including sociocultural contexts, affect the implementation of the program. A solution to reduce the tension between the fidelity of implementation and adaptation, then, is to find an appropriate balance between the two (Castro et al., 2004).

There are some researchers who strongly advocate the need for local adaptation so that reforms can meet the contextual requirements (e.g., Castro et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2017; Troyer, 2019). School reforms are acknowledged to be complex and rarely linear in process. Snyder et al. (1992) surmised that variation in curriculum implementation is inevitable; they defined this process of change as mutual adaptation—a process whereby adjustments in the curriculum are made by the teachers who use it and where, in turn, they adjust their instructional practices in varying extents. In a sense, this adaptation process is a natural one. Teachers are duty-bound to do

what is needed to ensure that their students' learning needs are met. As such, adaptations of curricular reforms are not uncommon; it can be said that the adaptability of reform by teachers implies that there has been some effectiveness in the change effort (Datnow et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2017; Troyer, 2019). Even though the teachers have not implemented the innovation as originally intended, they have already made changes to their own practice by adopting some aspects of the innovation. Hence, there is mutual adaptation.

In reality, all planned curricula are altered during the implementation process. Such a transformation of the curricula is necessary to benefit students' learning, as classroom environments and situations vary from school to school, and even from class to class within the same school and level. This mutual adaptation perspective takes the view that implementation cannot and should not be stipulated specifically in advance; rather, implementation should evolve as teachers make the final decision according to their unique classroom contexts.

There are, however, other researchers who assert that "the need for and effectiveness of local adaptation […] is greatly overstated" (Elliott & Mihalic, 2004, p. 51), and that modifying a reform too much may actually reduce its effectiveness (Dusenbury et al., 2003; Elliott & Mihalic, 2004). They point out that the lack of adherence might lead to program drift, leading to an adulteration of the reform and poor academic outcomes. In fact, a number of studies (Benner et al., 2011; Berkel et al., 2011) found that the overall implementation effectiveness was inversely related to the extent to which the reform had been modified from its predefined form, with high fidelity leading to success and low fidelity resulting in a loss of reform effectiveness.

## 2.2 Balancing Fidelity and Mutual Adaptation

Regardless of the various perspectives, teachers' receptivity towards reforms is to a large degree dependent on their level of involvement and buy-in. A common response by teachers to various calls to reform is rejection and reverting to their familiar practice after an initial trial (Sikes, 1992). This resistance is due to the fact that the rhetoric of reform does not match their classroom realities. For teachers to accept and embrace reforms, they must have ownership of that change process, and making adaptations to the reform gives them that sense of ownership (Kim et al., 2017; McLaughlin, 2004; Troyer, 2019; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). This was borne out by a survey of two schools' enactment of a reform program, where "more than 90 percent of the teachers in both schools view adaptations as crucial for the acceptance and efficacy of the curriculum" (Loh & Renandya, 2015, p. 107). As such, this should really not be an "either-or" debate; rather, the prime focus should be finding the right mix of fidelity and adaptation. It is only with the right balance of fidelity and adaptation that the reform can reliably produce the intended outcomes. The issue for curriculum reformers should not be to mandate strict fidelity, but rather to find the optimum level of fidelity and adaptation. It is with adaptation that classroom practices are reformed.

Teachers will make changes to and reinterpret the curriculum plans, but they do so with the aim of delivering a curriculum that is designed to "scrupulously and rigorously" reveal to students "the actuality of the larger world in which they live" which realistically includes the high stakes examination which they are required to sit for (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 228). Hence, the key aim and challenge is to honour both fidelity and adaptation. This balance in curriculum implementation is important for innovations to be accepted and used because the goals of the innovations would have been "made concrete over time by the participants themselves" (McLaughlin, 2004, p. 172). This is done through adjustments of both the innovation and the teachers' practices; this then promotes ownership of the innovation among teachers. Dede and Honan (2005) suggest "promoting ownership" as one of the socio-cultural considerations for the successful scaling up of an innovation. This suggests that the success of the scaling up of STELLAR is dependent on the program's ability to promote ownership among its users—the teachers. Hence, adaptations are necessary for the re-contextualisation that comes with scaling up.

## 2.3   Curriculum Materials Use

The use of curriculum materials is a ubiquitous phenomenon in teachers' instructional practices (Graves & Garton, 2019; Harwood, 2021; Li & Harfitt, 2017; Remillard, 2005; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). Teachers use curriculum materials as an aid in helping them meet the curricular goals required in their instruction. No instruction is carried out without the use of curriculum materials; in a sense, they can be defined as "any pedagogical input that comprises textbooks, workbooks and teachers' guides in addition to any software and audio-visual materials, which represent an institution's formal curriculum" (Shawer, 2010, p. 175). As such, curriculum materials are often used by curriculum developers and policy makers to "influence common practice" and introduce "innovative approaches and ideas" (Brown, 2009, p. 21). Numerous studies in recent years have conclusively shown that curriculum materials mediate between the written and enacted curriculum (e.g., Brown, 2009; Li & Harfitt, 2017; Li & Li, 2021; Remillard, 2018; Shawer, 2010). Hence, studying the use of curriculum materials is a useful proxy measure to ascertain the extent of use of any educational program.

To have a deeper understanding of how teachers enact an educational program, a practical analytical tool is that of Brown's (2009) curriculum materials use framework. This framework uses three categories as a means to differentiate the extent of distributing responsibility for guiding instructional activity between the teacher and available curriculum materials: offload, adapt, and improvise. Offloading occurs when the teacher relies predominantly on the curriculum materials to support instruction, i.e., the curriculum materials are used in a literal manner. As such, the responsibility for guiding instructional activity is offloaded onto the curriculum materials. Adaptations happen when both teachers [and schools] and curriculum materials are contributing to the responsibility of guiding the instructional activities. Finally,

improvising takes place when the greater part of the responsibility in guiding the instructional activities is borne by teachers [and schools]; i.e., there is minimal reliance on the provided curriculum materials. These levels of distributed responsibility constitute a continuum, where offloading lies on the one end, improvising on the other end, and adaptations in between.

## 3   An Empirical Study

The essence of STELLAR lies in its extensive use of research-based teaching strategies and the provision of rich age-appropriate curriculum materials. Using research-based teaching strategies is not new per se; its uniqueness "lies in its adoption of a structured combination and orchestration of several research-based best practices in the teaching of reading and writing," where these teaching strategies are "systematically organized and integrated into the language curriculum to be used in coordination, building on each other's strengths" (Loh & Hu, 2018, p. 2). And instead of textbooks, STELLAR provided schools with high-interest children's books and teaching texts, accompanied by specific teaching guidelines, resource sheets, teaching slides, and audio and video recordings (Pang et al., 2015).

Nine schools participated in the study. The schools in this study need to be understood within Singapore's educational context. In Singapore, when parents register their children for Primary 1 (P1), the home-school distance is given priority (MOE, 2020a). This is reflected in the order of priority given in the admission of the student (MOE, 2020b, para. 2):

Singapore Citizens (SC) living within 1km of the school.

SCs living between 1km and 2km of the school.

SCs living outside 2km of the school.

Permanent Residents (PR) living within 1km of the school.

PRs living between 1km and 2km of the school.

PRs living outside 2km of the school.

According to the Student Placement and Services Division, MOE ensures that there are sufficient school places on a regional basis so that the majority of parents are able to enrol their children in schools near their homes. To ensure that this home-school distance priority in the P1 Registration framework is equitable, MOE's approach is to resource all schools equally according to student numbers, so that every child can receive a quality and holistic education, regardless of the school that he or she attends. In addition, other than the home-school distance, other considerations given to the P1 registration are the convenience of having the younger sibling attend the same school as the older sibling, ties that the parents have with the school, including being alumni of the school or being members endorsed by the church or clan association directly connected with the primary school. This latter consideration is to recognise the contributions of the churches and clan associations in setting up the

Government-aided schools and in maintaining the schools' traditions and ethos over the years. These considerations are reflected in the different P1 registration phases (MOE, 2020c).

Due to this emphasis on maintaining some balance between different groups of parents through the various registration phases, the conventional categories of SES (socio-economic status) profiles do not fully reflect the reality of Singapore's schools. In addition, an estimated 80% of the resident population lives in public housing, i.e., Housing Development Board (HDB) flats (HDB, n.d.); this means the majority of students in any school live in public housing. Furthermore, studies have shown that parents' differential access to resources does impact the children's educational progress (Chin & Phillips, 2004; Langenkamp & Carbonaro, 2018; OECD, 2016). As such, the schools in this study are categorised by whether they have higher, average, or lower concentrations of students from higher-income homes which thus logically accrue them more access to a wide range of resources (i.e., economic, social and cultural capital). The proxy measure of this is the estate where the schools are situated. Schools situated near private estates (e.g., landed housing, private condominiums) logically will admit students with greater access to resources due to home-school distance priority; hence, they will have higher concentrations of such students compared to schools that are situated in precincts where there are no private estates. Another proxy measure is whether the school is popular and has largely admitted students with church or clan affiliations; if so, even without the proximity of private estates, there tend to be higher concentrations of students with greater access to resources. Conversely, if the schools are situated nearer smaller-sized public housing and are not affiliated with churches or clans, there will be smaller concentrations of students with greater access to resources. Thus, schools with higher concentrations of students with more access to a wide range of resources are categorised as Higher Access; schools with average concentrations of such students are categorised as Medium Access; and schools with lower concentrations of such students are categorised as Less Access.

In this study, three were schools of Higher Access (H1-3), three were schools of Medium Access (M4-6), and three were schools of Less Access (L7-L9). Three to four teachers from each school participated in the study (see Table 1). A multiple-case study approach was adopted in this study (Stake, 2006). As the study sought to examine how STELLAR is enacted in different environments, the schools selected as cases differed in their typicality (Stake, 2006) in terms of access. These nine schools were carefully chosen to ensure theoretical replication (Yin, 2014).

The focal teachers were interviewed twice and observed six times (for the teaching of reading, grammar, vocabulary, class writing, group writing, and individual writing). Each video-recorded observation ranged between 30 min and an hour. Curriculum materials used in the teaching of EL were collected daily for a full unit of study (which spans two weeks). The curriculum materials included the resources provided by STELLAR (such as PowerPoint slides, Learning Sheets, and lesson plans), teacher/school-prepared worksheets for student practice, modified lesson plans, etc. The curriculum materials were analysed using Brown's (2009) Curriculum Use framework.

**Table 1** Profile of
participating schools

| School | Profile of school | No. of teachers |
|--------|-------------------|-----------------|
| H1 | Higher access | 4 |
| H2 | Higher access | 4 |
| H3 | Higher access | 4 |
| M4 | Medium access | 3 |
| M5 | Medium access | 4 |
| M6 | Medium access | 3 |
| L7 | Less access | 3 |
| L8 | Less access | 3 |
| L9 | Less access | 4 |
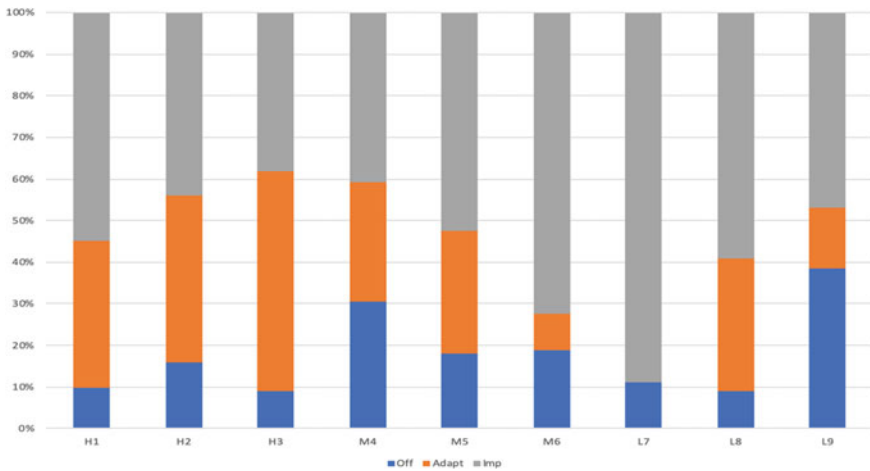


**Fig. 1** Curriculum materials use by schools

Since teachers are rooted in "their life experiences and interactions", their "responses to reform" will likely "be deeply embedded within a larger societal context" (Datnow & Castellano, 2000, p. 778). As such, the analyses focused on both the teacher and the school as units of change. The number of curriculum materials was totalled and used as the base for calculating the percentages of curriculum materials use per school. The analyses of the curriculum materials use are shown in Fig. 1.

A Kruskal–Wallis test found that the Medium Access schools approached statistical significance with regard to offloading ($H = 5.61$, $p = 0.06$), while the Higher Access schools adapted significantly more ($H = 10.68$, $p = 0.005$). The Less Access schools tended to improvise more than the other schools, especially when compared with the Higher Access schools, although overall this difference did not reach statistical significance.

A Mann–Whitney test revealed that the Higher Access schools (mean rank = 9.71) adapted significantly more than the Less Access schools (mean rank = 8.5), but the difference was not statistically significant when compared with the Medium Access schools ($U = 30$, $z = –0.491$, $p = 0.075$). The Medium Access schools significantly offloaded more than the Higher Access schools.

A possible reason that Average Access schools tend to offload more comes from Bernstein's (1973) classic argument that schooling and its curriculum are designed by and for the middle classes. Extrapolating to Singapore, as the bulk of Singaporeans can be categorised as having average access to a range of resources (Data.gov.sg, 2018), most students would be considered as belonging to that category. Logically, the national curriculum and any reform must meet the needs of the largest group of students. In this case, it would mean the students from the Average Access profile. Hence, naturally, if the reform meets the needs of this group of students, the schools would offload their instructional responsibility to the curriculum materials more than the other two groups. For Higher Access schools, they adapt from the given curriculum materials since such materials merely meet their students' basic learning needs; modifications to the curriculum materials are made to challenge and "stretch" their students' learning (Loh & Hu, 2021). Interestingly, the Less Access schools seem to improvise more through the replacement with and addition of a greater quantity of examination preparation materials.

This could possibly be attributed to the fact that STELLAR was intended to reform EL teaching at the primary level to enable the use of "language in real-world scenarios, beyond mastering its intricacies" (Teng, 2015, p. B12). In fact, by following the STELLAR program, teachers are led to change their traditional examination-driven instructional practice to "equipping pupils with thinking and communication skills" (Teng, 2015, p. B12). Recent studies (Langenkamp & Carbonaro, 2018; Lauen & Gaddis, 2013; OECD, 2016; Wang et al., 2014) have shown that students whose families have less access to resources tend to have low academic attainment due to a variety of factors, such as having less involved parents, more disruptive classroom behaviour, and lower aspirations (Lauen & Gaddis, 2013); this, in turn, creates a situation where they have great difficulty catching up with their peers who have greater access to resources. As such, a reform that focuses on communicative use and critical thinking may not fully meet the teachers' needs and expectations— to help their students with less resource access improve in their examination scores. The type of teaching that meets such an aim is decidedly different from that of schools with greater resource access, i.e., a more deductive approach vs a more open-ended inductive approach, and a greater emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills vs one which focuses on the mastery of communication and thinking skills found in the STELLAR program (Muijs et al., 2004). These instructional characteristics are substantially different from those advocated in the program. Furthermore, the instructional emphasis of the EL programs of such schools with high concentrations of students who have less access to resources is different from that of STELLAR. Hence, this could possibly explain the reason for the relatively low fidelity in Less Access schools. In contrast, the instructional emphasis of EL programs in Higher and Average Access schools is more aligned with that of the STELLAR program and,

hence, the higher fidelity. This was corroborated in the interviews with the various Heads of the EL Department (Loh & Hu, 2021).

## 4 Implications for Language Education Programs

The first implication of this study is the need for guidance in making curricular/programmatic adaptations. All teachers across the nine participating primary schools made adaptations to STELLAR, namely its curriculum materials, regardless of the school Access profile. The tendency to adapt has been widely documented in the implementation science literature (e.g., Durlak & Du Pre, 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005). It would be rare to see a teacher in any classroom stand in front of the class and read the entire STELLAR teaching guideline word for word, and use all the curriculum materials provided without any change; this study clearly confirms this. Adaptations are necessary to meet the various learning needs of the students; however, in adapting the curriculum materials, teachers must be careful to ensure that they do not reduce the integrity of the lesson/unit/program. The integrity is connected to the goals in the EL syllabus.

In the continuum of curriculum materials use, adaptation is "arguably the most difficult" (Taylor, 2013, p. 314). This is due to the fact that to make changes to an existing piece of curriculum material, the teacher needs to assess "its relevance for a particular group of students," what exactly about the material/lesson that requires changing, and then "figure out a way to make the changes in line with both the [curriculum material's] approach and his [sic] own" (p. 314); using the curriculum material as is or discarding it completely is far easier (Taylor, 2013). The first implication for good language education programs is the need to guide teachers in their adaptation of the program, i.e., its curriculum materials. Teacher education programs need to incorporate the use and analysis of the curriculum materials that are widely used in the school system; when such curriculum materials are ignored during preservice education, it leaves "new teachers ill-prepared for the realities of today's classrooms" (Valencia et al., 2006, p.117). Teachers, whether experienced or novice, need not just "the support of good curriculum materials", but also "the knowledge, resources, and support to use the materials thoughtfully and effectively" (p. 118), i.e., the ability to adapt the curriculum materials soundly, while keeping the goals of the program intact; this implies that there is a need to support the teachers in their understanding of the curriculum materials and how they should adapt them (Li, 2021; Matsumoto, 2019; Valencia et al., 2006).

The second implication is related to the first, which showed the need to support teachers in their adaptation of curriculum materials within a language program; there is a need to consider differential support for the different school profile. Conventional wisdom believes that experienced teachers are skilled and pedagogically sound, and they are able to lead in the enactment of language programs. However, the Kruskal–Wallis test found no relationship whatsoever between teaching experience and curriculum materials use. Rice (2010) found that the impact of experience

is strongest during the first few years of teaching; subsequently, marginal returns diminish after that. Hattie (2003) points out that experienced teachers may have more time but not necessarily more expertise; Hattie and Yates (2014) highlight the fact that expertise does not equate with teaching experience. In fact, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) suggest that it is the social capital, through collaborative professional development (i.e., the school context, and not the individual teacher), that will impact change faster and more effectively. The data verifies what was found in the above-mentioned literature—that the number of years of teaching experience did not affect the teachers' implementation of STELLAR in any significant way. What was found to be more impactful was the school context.

Teachers' adaptations are first and foremost the result of their location within a school, i.e., bounded context. As Coburn (2004) posits, "the environment penetrates schools in substantial ways, reaching within structures to influence teachers' world-views and practices" (p. 234); the messages from the school environment exert a regulative pressure on the teachers to construct and/or reconstruct their instructional practices in certain ways. Teachers' autonomy is hence "bounded" within institutional constraints. This can help explain why teachers, regardless of experience or teacher education program, teach in a certain way in a particular type of school. In this study, the profile of the school affects the teachers in the way they enact STELLAR. When the language program did not meet the need of the specific school population, teachers would make drastic changes to the program, to such an extent that the essence of the program is lost. This has an important implication for good language programs—language programs need to be tweaked/adjusted to match the needs of the school profile.

The implications of this study show that language programs should not just focus on the crafting of curriculum materials, with the assumption that curriculum materials can communicate the idea of reforming classroom practices; neither should language programs solely focus on developing the individual teachers' instructional capacity, with the assumption that school contexts do not play a vital role in reforming practices. There needs to be a concomitant development of both teachers' capacity and contextualised support. One cannot reform practices without the other.

## 5   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

The discussions in all schools have moved away from how to implement STELLAR to how to refine it for their local contextual needs. This is a positive sign that teachers in general want to teach well and help their students learn. They are now all on the implementation bridge. The challenge for the program developers in its next iteration in this coming decade (2020–2029) is to get the teachers moving across the bridge with greater understanding and confidence.

The formal curriculum is never identical to the enacted curriculum; instead, teachers and formal curricula interact to produce the enacted curriculum, i.e., teachers

co-construct the curriculum (Ball & Cohen, 1996; Remillard, 2005). This interaction takes place through teachers' enactment of the formal curriculum: offloading, adapting and improvising instructional activities and curriculum materials. In order for STELLAR, or any other language education program for that matter, to improve student engagement and learning, there needs to be sustained implementation; teachers can only build expertise in particular instructional strategies over time (Troyer, 2019). It is a fact that curriculum materials can never fully replace teachers or quality teaching; however, they can and do provide a strong foundation from which to draw (Remillard, 2016). As such, the training for STELLAR, or any other language education program, is critical; it is important to not only teach the basic procedures (which has been done effectively in the program's first iteration, from 2010 to 2019) but also help teachers acquire theoretical and practical understandings of the program (for the next iteration), so that they can make more informed and principled decisions when adapting it. As Leko (2015) puts it aptly, "Finding the right balance between implementation fidelity and adaptations is contingent upon having a deep understanding" (p. 83) of the reform, and this includes understanding the underlying principles that explain the program's effectiveness as well as differences between core and peripheral components.

A key recommendation would be for the program developers to articulate and communicate the core and peripheral components of STELLAR, or any other language education program, and guide teachers to adapt the program to meet the learning needs of students with differential access to resources. Research has shown that no curriculum is used as is, without adaptation; in fact, adaptation is the key process in teachers' use of curriculum materials (Ben-Peretz, 1990; Kim et al., 2017; McLaughlin, 2004; Troyer, 2019). For STELLAR, or any other language education program, to be an even more successful vehicle for improving student learning outcomes, it must consider supporting and guiding teachers in their adaptations that are aligned to the goals latent in the program within the context of the school, e.g., students' learning profiles and access to out-of-school resources. With such contextualised support, there will be a greater utilization of the critical and active components of the language education program, which will ensure that the best practices in the system become a standard practice for all (Hiebert, 2017).

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# Effective Language Teacher Education

**Zia Tajeddin** and **Kobra Tavassoli**

## 1  Introduction

The burgeoning of numerous programs for English language education has prompted the emergence of a new agenda for teacher education (Ellis, 2010; Freeman, 2016; Schön, 1983) to make teachers capable of effective implementation of these programs. As a result, professional development has gained due attention in teacher education studies (Banegas et al., 2022; Johnson & Golombek, 2011, 2016; Tedick, 2005). Over the years, approaches to teacher education have gone through significant changes (Wright, 2010), including the technicist approach, in which teachers are considered as the passive agents and transmitters of the learned knowledge to implement a language education program (Schön, 1987), the reflective approach, in which teachers are granted autonomy to contextually solve problems (Dewey, 1997; Farrell, 2022), and the transformative approach, in which teachers are considered as critical agents who bring about change (Giroux, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Complexity-driven action research has also been brought to attention since the 1980s through which the complexity brings about the desired motive for focused attention to the micro-level context of teaching/learning and leads to research and improvement in teaching/learning and professional development practices (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Zein, 2016). More recently, teacher development has been influenced by the sociocultural perspective, which regards teaching as an interactively constructed dynamic process (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). In this perspective, teachers' knowledge is pictured as the byproduct of the interaction between their background knowledge, their experience, peculiarities of the context,

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and their beliefs, among others. To make language education programs efficiently practical, teacher education is mandatory. Without proper education, teachers would not be able to either effectively deliver the content of the curriculum or efficiently interact with students (Anderson, 1989; Sharma, 2000). However, the effectiveness of teacher education programs in helping teachers transfer the curriculum and in providing the ground for teachers' voices and roles is still blurred (Freeman et al., 2019; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Mayer et al., 2017).

This chapter aims to critically review the recent views on teacher education, including Kiely's (2019) framework for evaluating English teacher education programs, which focuses on the what, when, who, and how of evaluation. This model of evaluation is adopted as it is specific to target language contexts, deals with various aspects of evaluation, and is the most recent and less explored model of evaluation of language teacher education programs. To equip teachers with the required knowledge, teacher education programs need to be discreetly designed, organized, and evaluated. According to Darling-Hammond (2006), teacher preparation programs suffer from inadequate time, fragmented modules, unreliable placements, loosely-built curricula, and traditional schooling methods. We will report on a study that evaluated the components of the current English teacher education programs in Iran and the extent to which these programs prioritize teacher development for the effective implementation of language education programs.

Certificate English language teacher education programs have been experiencing a considerable upsurge over the past few years in private language institutes in Iran. However, the investigation of the quality and effectiveness of the theoretical and practical content of these programs has received meager attention (Baniasad-Azad et al., 2016). The study reported in this chapter investigated the extent to which English language teacher education programs in Iran, in contrast to traditional expert-knows-it-all approaches (Johnson, 2009) and the packaging view (Freeman et al., 2019), reinforce the construction of the teacher knowledge base and the transformative teaching. In other words, we aim to see if these programs can help teachers feel their feet in and construct the knowledge for effective teaching. Based on these findings, implications are proposed for effective language teacher education. The chapter ends with conclusions and directions for research on teacher education as central to the effective implementation of language education programs.

## 2   Teacher Education Programs and Their Evaluation

Target language teacher education has gained mounting attention over the past few decades, as a result of which numerous books and articles have been written on the topic (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2019; Borg, 2006; Burns & Richards, 2009; Ellis, 2010; Freeman, 2002, 2016; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Johnson, 2009; Nemati & Mousazadeh, 2021; Nguyen, 2019; Richards, 1990; Schön, 1987; Ur, 2019; Walsh & Mann, 2019; Wright, 2010; Yayin Wang, 2022). In its developmental progress,

language teacher education has witnessed different approaches. In the early behavioristic approach, the aim of teacher education was to identify patterns of good teaching and what effective teachers should do. To this aim, teacher educators transmitted the knowledge of teaching and learning to teachers, and teachers were considered to be the consumers of received knowledge (Wright, 2010). Soon, this approach was criticized for its oversimplification, depersonalization, and decontextualization of teaching that ignored the complex social, cultural, and political aspects of schools (Shulman, 1986; Wright, 2010). The behavioristic approach was gradually replaced by the reflective approach to teacher education where there is a dialog between the teacher educator and the teacher, and they convey messages to each other both in words and performance (Farrell, 2022; Schön, 1987). The student teacher discloses what s/he understood and the teacher educator replies with descriptions, explanations, criticism, and above all her/his performance. There is reflection in the dialog between them in the way that the student teacher reflects on what s/he learned and how s/he performed, and the teacher educator reflects on what was learned based on the teacher's performance and provides the necessary feedback.

Another important approach to teacher education is the transformative approach, where the emphasis is on learning rather than outcomes. In this approach, practice is more important than performance (Brandt, 2006). The major aim of the transformative approach is the continued recreation of personal meaning rather than the reproduction of knowledge, which can be achieved through personal pedagogic investigation (Diamond, 1993; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Following this approach, teacher educators should help teachers formulate their own pedagogical theories. Yet, a more recent approach to teacher education is the complexity theory (Davis & Sumara, 2005, 2006), with the assumption that in any complex system, numerous forces work and interact nonlinearly (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Since education is a complex and dynamic enterprise, different human beings (e.g., learners and teachers) are interconnected to each other in various contexts (e.g., schools and universities) (Kuhn, 2008). Following the complexity theory in teacher education programs, different parties including teachers, teacher educators, and policy makers are interconnected with each other in a dynamic system, where multiple factors unite to produce learning experiences for teachers to improve the quality of their education (Zein, 2016).

Finally, the most recent and probably influential approach to language teacher education is the sociocultural approach in which the social nature of teaching and learning is underlined (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). The sociocultural approach follows the interpretative epistemological perspective with the assumption that knowledge is constructed socially and develops as people engage in different social practices (Freeman, 2002). In the sociocultural approach, knowing, thinking, and understanding occur in the social practices of teaching and learning within the context of the classroom. Educating teachers is seen as a dynamic process of reconstructing and transforming teaching practices to respond to local social needs. The role of teacher educators is mainly to scrutinize mediational tools and to use alternative approaches such as teacher research, action research, and reflective teaching to educate effective teachers. In this approach, language teachers are seen as learners

of teaching where both what they should know (the content) and how it is learned (the processes) are considered important (Johnson, 2009; Wright, 2010).

All teacher education approaches aim to enhance the teachers' professional development through appropriate teacher education programs (Banegas et al., 2022; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Nemati & Mousazadeh, 2021). In fact, unless appropriate instruction is provided to teachers, they cannot perform satisfactorily or engage with students effectively (Sharma, 2000). While the professional development of teachers was traditionally done by others for teachers, it has recently been considered self-directed, collaborative, and relevant to teachers' classrooms, where there is a continuous dialogic mediation between teachers and teacher educators to provide assisted performance to teachers. To expand their professional development, teachers should socialize with their students, colleagues, and supervisors in classrooms and schools (Banegas et al., 2022; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016). According to Wright (2010), an effective teacher education program should help beginning language teachers acquire the requisite knowledge and skills they need to run their classes successfully. Since the basis of a formal language teacher education curriculum is the program itself, which integrates the curriculum aims, learning experiences, and evaluation procedures, the effectiveness of language teacher education programs should be evaluated to ensure they prepare teachers to do their tasks appropriately (Kiely, 2019; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Peacock, 2009).

Program evaluation refers to a set of strategies that are used to document and understand a specific program. It deals with the historical, social, and cultural aspects of a program and the personal development of individual participants (Kiely, 2009). Various frameworks of program evaluation have been developed and used in the literature over the past decades. One of the earlier popular frameworks was Kirkpatrick's (1996) four-level model of evaluating training programs. In this model, level 1 deals with the participants' *reaction* to the program, level 2 refers to the amount of *learning* that took place in the program, level 3 is concerned with the extent of the participants' change in *behavior* after they returned to their jobs, and level 4 deals with the final *results* achieved by the participants after they returned to work. This is a useful framework when evaluating a training program longitudinally over a few years but may not be practical in evaluating several programs in a short period of time. Another popular program evaluation model is the context, input, process, and product (CIPP) evaluation model (Stufflebeam, 2003). Context evaluation as the first component of the model deals with needs assessment, where problems, assets, and opportunities are assessed within a context and a community (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Input evaluation addresses the targeted needs by identifying the program's strategies, action plans, staff, and budget to achieve the intended results (Zhang et al., 2011). Process evaluation checks the process of project implementation. It documents the process and provides feedback about the degree to which the planned activities are carried out and if revisions of the plan are needed (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Finally, product evaluation deals with assessing the project outcomes, similar to outcome evaluation. The purpose is to assess, interpret, and judge the outcomes by checking their merit, value, and significance (Zhang et al., 2011). However, despite its popularity, the CIPP framework is not precise for teacher education programs.

L2 scholars (e.g., Kiely, 2019; Peacock, 2009) also developed models specific to the evaluation of language teacher education programs. Peacock, following the principles of program evaluation and language teacher education, introduced an influential framework by presenting a new procedure for the evaluation of language teacher education programs. The procedure includes (a) reviewing the literature and producing a number of questions, (b) establishing suitable sources of data collection, (c) choosing and designing appropriate data collection tools, (d) collecting and analyzing data relevant to the questions, and (e) constructing an account by relating different explanations to each other. Peacock's (2009) framework has been the basis of many studies on evaluating language teacher education programs (e.g., Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Karim et al., 2019; Salihoglu, 2012). Most recently, Kiely provided another framework for evaluating language teacher education programs. Kiely argued that such evaluation should be done considering four aspects. The first aspect is related to *what* in evaluating language teacher education programs, where both pre-service and in-service teacher education programs try to equip language teachers with the most appropriate and recent theories and practices of the classroom. The second aspect is concerned with *when* to evaluate language teacher education programs, where evaluation can be done either during the program or after the whole program. The third aspect deals with *who* evaluates language teacher education programs, which can be done by either external or internal evaluators. External evaluators are usually disinterested and assumed to give an objective assessment of the situation, whereas internal evaluators use the evaluation findings for the improvement of their own program. The last aspect of the framework is related to *how* to evaluate language teacher education programs, where different techniques such as questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis can be used. In evaluating language teacher education programs in our study, we used Kiely's framework, which is the most recent and less explored framework.

In evaluating any teacher education program, regardless of the framework used, the most important point to investigate is the content of the language teacher education program as it provides the knowledge and skills that teachers need for their teaching career (Richards, 1998). However, Richards admitted that there is no agreement on the content of language teacher education programs because the field is influenced by various disciplines including linguistics, psychology, and sociology (Ong'ondo, 2017). To determine the content of teacher education programs, identifying the different components of the knowledge base of language teacher education is crucial. There have been different models categorizing the knowledge base of language teacher education in the literature. One of the first and most influential models of knowledge base was proposed by Shulman (1987), which encompassed "content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values" (p. 8). Richards (1998) also identified the knowledge base of language teacher education as consisting of "theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning and decision making, and contextual knowledge" (p. 1). In yet another pioneering work on identifying the knowledge base of language

teacher education, Freeman and Johnson (1998) attempted to answer the question: Who teaches what to whom, where? In responding to this question, they addressed three important issues including the teacher as the learner of teaching, the social context of schools where teaching occurs, and the teaching/learning process which encompasses the subject matter and the content. Later, Shulman and Shulman (2004) introduced a revised model of Shulman (1987) consisting of "disciplinary/content/ interdisciplinary knowledge, curriculum, classroom management and organization, assessment, and learners" (p. 262). Further, Darling-Hammond (2006) introduced a brief model which subsumes three components: knowledge of learners and how learning happens, knowledge of curriculum goals and content, and understanding of teaching notified by evaluation and backed by the classroom environment. The teacher education knowledge base was also categorized as professional, procedural, and personal knowledge by Kumaravadivelu (2012). According to him, professional knowledge is the knowledge about what and how to teach, procedural knowledge refers to how to manage a classroom to ensure better learning and personal knowledge is related to a teacher's instincts and reflections.

The most recent model of language teacher education knowledge base has been presented by Freeman (2020), who provided a revised model of Freeman and Johnson (1998). He shifted the work-driven definition of the knowledge base of language teachers in 1998 to a field-driven definition in 2020. The 1998 model centered on the activity of teaching, with the teacher-as-learner dimension focusing on the language teachers' background knowledge and experiences, the social context of schooling dimension focusing on the sociocultural contexts and processes of schooling, and the activity of teaching and learning dimension focusing on who teaches what to whom where. On the other hand, the 2020 field-driven model reshaped the knowledge base of language teacher education programs by addressing "the content (what is taught), the teaching force (who is teaching it), learners (who are learning it and why), pedagogy (how it is being taught), and teacher education (how teachers are being prepared and supported in teaching)" (Freeman, 2020, p. 9). The knowledge base in 1998 focused on pedagogy and content while in 2020, it focused on changes in English as the classroom content, in addition to who language teachers and learners are. There were four areas of change in the 2020 model: the content, who teaches it, who learns it and why, and how it is being taught. English is no more seen as a thing to be taught and learned in schools; rather, it is considered a means to an end. Freeman (2020) further argued that contrary to the common belief that the key in language teacher education programs is to improve the teachers' knowledge of general English, there should be an insistence on the professional development of teachers in such programs by encouraging them to participate in various activities. In this study, we evaluated the content of language teacher education programs following Freeman's (2020) model, which is the newest knowledge base model.

In language teacher education programs, integrating theory and practice is a vital point as language teachers do not want to be confused with excessive theories and wish they can receive practical ideas to take them to the classroom (Ur, 2019; Yayin Wang, 2022). Ur (2019) argued that theory and practice in L2 teaching are not opposites, but are points on a continuum, where any statement about teaching/learning

can be theoretical or practical. The assumption that there is a distinction between theory and practice is wrong as they are complementary rather than opposites (Ellis, 2010; Widdowson, 2003; Yayin Wang, 2022). Teacher education programs should therefore combine theories and practical tips to bring about optimal learning for novice teachers and more expertise for experienced teachers. A good technique to sync theory and practice in teacher education programs is to bring about a theoretical concept in the classroom, explain it through discussion, challenge teachers to utilize it in different contexts, and then talk about the results (Ur, 2019).

## 3   An Empirical Study

### 3.1   Context of the Study

This was a small-scale document analysis in which we sought to answer whether and how much language teacher education programs in Iran effectively feature the teacher knowledge base. The focus was on private language institutes, not the public sector, because their policy, curriculum, education, staff, materials, and all related issues are completely different from each other. Also, in Iran, the majority of students learn English as a foreign language in private language institutes to meet their needs due to the pitfalls of language education in public schools. Potential language teachers enter a private language institute based on their performance on an entry English proficiency test selected or developed by the institute which assesses their general knowledge of English. Candidates may skip this proficiency test if they have a valid certificate showing their score on a standardized test such as FCE, CAE, IELTS, or TOEFL. Next, an oral interview is conducted by the institute supervisor or a recruitment team who decides whether the candidate is eligible for teaching in the institute or not. Successful candidates then participate in a language teacher education program designed and developed by the institute (by the supervisor, the recruitment team, or the teacher educator) for 1–2 sessions a week for a period of one month to three months. Candidates having a CELTA or DELTA certificate are privileged in some institutes but not all. Language teacher education programs in the context of Iranian private language institutes are basically pre-service to equip potential teachers with the necessary knowledge they need to handle their classes successfully in the future. At the end of most language teacher education programs in different institutes, prospective teachers present a demo of how they would run a class in the near future and they receive feedback from the teacher educator or the recruitment team on their performance. If the teacher educator or the recruitment team is satisfied with the potential language teacher's performance, the candidate will be accepted to teach in the institute.

## 3.2 Evaluating Language Teacher Education Programs in Iran

Since the language teacher education program is the gate into the teaching world in private language institutes in Iran, it is utterly important to evaluate the effectiveness of such programs. To do this, we followed Kiely's (2019) framework of evaluating language teacher education programs, where the focus is on the what, when, who, and how of evaluating language teacher education programs. Table 1 shows how we implemented this framework in evaluating these programs.

Regarding the *what* component of Kiely's evaluation framework, the syllabi of 18 pre-service language teacher education programs from private language institutes in two large cities of Iran were selected based on convenience sampling, and their contents were analyzed. Considering the *when* component of the evaluation framework, we evaluated the programs at the end of each program when instruction was completed and before potential teachers started their actual teaching. Regarding the *who* component of the evaluation framework, we were not directly involved in these programs and thus did an external evaluation to have as objective an assessment of the programs as possible. Finally, for the *how* component of the evaluation framework, we collected the required data by gathering the syllabi of 18 pre-service language teacher education programs in 2022 based on convenience sampling.

We conducted a document analysis of the syllabi to evaluate their content in terms of the components of the language teacher education knowledge base they covered. For this, we analyzed and evaluated the content of the syllabi following Freeman's (2020) model of the knowledge base of language teacher education programs to investigate whether and how much such programs prioritize teacher development and effectiveness in their future classes. Content analysis of course documents is a common technique for this purpose, which has been utilized in different studies such as Bagherzadeh and Tajeddin (2021) and Edge and Mann (2013). Freeman's (2020) model addresses the knowledge base of language teacher education programs, including what is taught (the content or the target language), who teaches it (the teaching force), who learns it and why (the learners), how it is taught (the pedagogy), and how teachers get prepared to teach (the teacher education). Tables 2–5 present the sub-categories of the five components of Freeman's (2020) knowledge

**Table 1** The components of Kiely's (2019) framework for evaluating language teacher education programs

| Component | The implementation in this study |
|---|---|
| What | The syllabi of 18 pre-service language teacher education programs |
| When | At the end of each program |
| Who | External evaluation by the researchers |
| How | Conducting document analysis of the 18 syllabi based on Freeman's (2020) model of the knowledge base of language teacher education programs |

base model and their frequency of occurrence in the syllabi of 18 Iranian private language institutes.

The first component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model of language teacher education programs is "content," which refers to what language teachers teach in their classes or the English language. However, none of the teacher education programs covered this component. In recruiting language teachers, the assumption is that they have a threshold level of the English language to start their teaching career.

**Table 2** The Sub-categories of the teaching force component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model in English language institutes

| Sub-categories | English language institutes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R |
| Class management | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lesson planning | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Assessment | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Error correction | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Feedback | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Classroom phases | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Using technology | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Elicitation techniques | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | |
| Giving instructions | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Using pair work and group work | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Using games | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Using songs | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Using various types of tasks | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| Using various types of materials | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | |
| Using different types of questions | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Peer observation | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Teacher roles | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Teacher types | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| TTT (teacher talk time) | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Classroom language | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | |
| Language awareness | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | |
| Professional code of ethics | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Creating positive classroom atmosphere | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | |

This is ensured by the teachers' performance on a language proficiency test before they enter the institute. Therefore, in these programs, the proficiency aspect of the content component receives no attention from teacher educators.

The "teaching force" component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model is related to who teaches the language, and its sub-categories embody what teacher characteristics are and what teachers do in their classes. The most frequent sub-categories of teaching force are class management, lesson planning, and assessment, which were included in more than half of the programs (Table 2). A few of the sub-categories here appeared in several programs (e.g., feedback) while most of them were included only in one, two, or three programs (e.g., language awareness). This shows that there is not ample consistency in Iranian teacher education programs regarding the teaching force component of Freeman's model.

The "learners" component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model focuses on who learns the language and why, and its sub-categories include learner characteristics. Regarding this component, its sub-categories were not sufficiently covered in most Iranian teacher education programs, which shows the under-specification of this component (Table 3). Among them, young learners, learning strategies, and learner characteristics were addressed in 5–6, out of 18, institutes, whereas other sub-categories such as learner motivation and psychology of learners were included in the programs of only one institute or two.

The "pedagogy" component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model addresses how language should be taught, and its sub-categories cover how teachers should teach different language skills and components in their classes and what theoretical issues they should know. The "pedagogy" component, which is one of the long-established components of the teacher knowledge base in different models such as Shulman (1987) and Richards (1998), received the highest attention in Iranian teacher education programs (Table 4). The most frequent sub-categories here include how to teach the language skills and components, which were covered in all teacher

**Table 3** The sub-categories of the learners component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model in English language institutes

| Sub-categories | English language institutes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R |
| Young learners | √ | | | √ | √ | | √ | | | | | | | | √ | | | √ |
| Teens and adults | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| Learning styles | | | | | | √ | | √ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Learning strategies | | | | √ | | | √ | | √ | √ | | | | | | | √ | |
| Learner styles | | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | √ | | | |
| Learner characteristics | √ | | | √ | | √ | | | | | | | | | √ | | √ | |
| Learner proficiency levels | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| Psychology of learners | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| Learner motivation | √ | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table 4** The sub-categories of the pedagogy component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model in English language institutes

| Sub-categories | English language institutes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R |
| How to teach listening | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| How to teach reading | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| How to teach speaking | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| How to teach writing | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| How to teach vocabulary | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| How to teach grammar | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| How to teach pronunciation | √ | √ | | | √ | | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | | | √ |
| How to teach conversation | | | | √ | | √ | | | √ | √ | | | | | | | | |
| How to teach functions | | | √ | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| How to teach the alphabet | | √ | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching methods | | √ | | √ | | √ | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | |
| Approaches to teaching | √ | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | |
| CLT and TBLT | | | | √ | | √ | √ | | | | | | | | | | √ | |
| History of ELT | | | | | | | | | | √ | √ | √ | | | | | √ | |
| Teaching models | | | | √ | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching techniques | | | | | | | | | √ | | | √ | | | | | | |
| Teaching principles | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ |
| Effective teaching | | | | | | | | | √ | | | √ | | | | | | |
| Issues in language learning | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | √ | | | | | |
| Acquisition vs. learning | | √ | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | |
| First and second language acquisition | | | | | | √ | | | √ | | | | | | | | | |
| Contextualization | | √ | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | √ | |
| Online teaching | √ | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CBI (content-based instruction) | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CLIL (content and language integrated learning) | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | √ | |
| Participatory approach | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Collaborative teaching | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | |
| Cooperative learning | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table 4** (continued)

| Sub-categories | English language institutes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R |
| ESA (engagement, study, activation) | | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| ZPD (zone of proximal development) | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | |
| PPP (presentation, practice, production) | | | | √ | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Accuracy vs. fluency | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Interaction patterns | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | |
| Input and output | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | √ | |
| Syllabus design | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | |
| Materials design | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | |
| Curriculum design | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | √ | |
| Psycholinguistics | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | |
| Sociolinguistics | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | |
| Corpus linguistics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | |
| Phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | |
| ESP and EAP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | |
| Certification criteria and scoring | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | |
| Various teaching certificates (e.g., CELTA, DELTA, TKT, TESOL) | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | |
| Political dimension of language teaching | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | |

education programs. This shows the importance of the knowledge of language in English language education as the primary purpose of education is to improve the learners' language ability. As to the theoretical issues that teachers should be familiar with, the most common sub-category was teaching methods, which was covered in 11 programs. A few theoretical issues appeared in some teacher education programs (e.g., history of ELT) while most of these issues were observed in only one program or two (e.g., psycholinguistics). This indicates the inconsistency in the theoretical issues included in these programs.

The last component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model is "teacher education," which refers to how teachers get prepared to teach in teacher education programs. Some of the programs included a session on course orientation and

**Table 5** The sub-categories of the teacher education component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model in English language institutes

| Sub-categories | English language institutes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R |
| Course orientation | | √ | √ | | √ | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | |
| Introduction to the course book | | √ | √ | | √ | | | √ | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| Continuing professional development | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | | √ | |
| Teacher reflection | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teacher identity | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teacher autonomy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | |
| Demos and feedback on demos | | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | √ |
| Classroom observation | | | | | | | √ | | √ | | | √ | | | | | | √ |

an introduction to the course book to get the pre-service teachers prepared for their teaching career (Table 5). Only a few of them covered topics related to teacher development such as continuing professional development, teacher reflection, teacher identity, and teacher autonomy. However, 11 teacher education programs focused on practical aspects of teacher education including demos and feedback on demos through which prospective teachers could receive the support they needed to start their teaching. Another common practical issue is classroom observation where pre-service teachers are required to observe the classes of in-service teachers in the same institute and provide a report of their observations to get prepared for their actual teaching. Despite the significance of classroom observation, only a few teacher education programs included it in their syllabi. While classroom observations occur during the language teacher education programs, demos are usually placed in the last sessions of the programs based on which the recruitment team or the teacher educators decide whether each candidate is capable of teaching actual classes in the upcoming semester and what support they need in this regard.

Overall, it appears that the primary focus of most language teacher education programs in Iran is first on pedagogy and then on teaching force, while none of them prioritize content (which is the English language). This gap is most probably because it is assumed that prospective teachers should have an acceptable level of English proficiency to start their teaching career. Regarding the sub-categories of the pedagogy component of Freeman's (2020) model, there was a gradual decline in the common core of the topics covered, moving from the most traditional topic in ELT course books on how to teach language skills and components, which was presented in all programs, to the latest topics in ELT sources such as CBI, CLIL, collaborative teaching, and cooperative learning, which were present sporadically in a few programs. Further, the practical focus of most language teacher education programs in the institutes was on presenting demos and receiving feedback on demos

as a sub-category of the teacher education component, which underscored how to prepare teachers for actual teaching and how to provide them with the necessary support they may need.

Overall, as the findings indicate, language teacher education programs in Iran do not seem to be very effective in one important respect since they mainly focus on traditional theoretical issues and do not prioritize teacher development.

## 4 Implications for Language Education Programs

The study reported above aimed to show how teacher education programs at work in Iranian language institutes represented the components of effective teacher education in terms of the what, when, who, and how of evaluating language teacher education programs (Kiely, 2019) and the content, the teaching force, the learners, the pedagogy, and the teacher education (Freeman, 2020). While great attention was paid to the pedagogy dimension in all programs analyzed in this study, most of the other dimensions were underspecified. One underspecified dimension is the teacher knowledge of the content. Pedagogical content knowledge cannot be enacted effectively in language education without its foundational content knowledge. Content knowledge, i.e., knowledge of language, in language education is one of the main components of the teacher knowledge base. Effective language education programs entail the education of teachers for the construction of their knowledge of language. The exigency of this knowledge has been reiterated in recent studies on language awareness as an index of good teachers and quality assurance in language education (Andrews 2007; Andrews & Lin, 2018). As Andrews (2007) stated, it refers to "explicit knowledge about language and the role of such knowledge in language learning, language teaching, and language use" (p. 946). This knowledge is tied to the second role of teachers' three roles: language user, language analyst, and language teacher (Edge, 1988). Competence as a language analyst requires the teacher's ability to understand the uses of the target language, which depends on the teacher's knowledge base of language systems. The underrepresentation of this knowledge base in teacher education programs implies that teachers are not adequately educated for their role as language analysts. This can have an adverse effect on teachers' instructional practice and its impact on learners' gains. Thus, teacher education programs should help teachers enhance their language awareness in pre-service programs.

Another dimension underrepresented in the programs analyzed in this study related to who learns the language and why (the learner dimension). This dimension is part of the knowledge of the context in Roberts' (1998) model of the knowledge base. Learners are the main agents of learning and hence understanding learner variables, or who the learners are, and their needs and motivation for language learning, or why they learn it, greatly contributes to effective language education. There is a wide range of learners' cognitive and affective factors, in conjunction with learners' age, proficiency levels, and gender, which implicate in language learning. Teachers' knowledge of the learner factor can greatly contribute to more effective teaching and,

in turn, learners' achievement. In view of this, teacher education programs need to embody a module on learner variables to raise teachers' awareness about these variables. By knowing about these variables, teachers can plan and implement lessons aligned with learner variables. Also, they can make their teaching strategies tailored to these variables. As such, teachers can create spaces for more inclusive learner engagement.

Teacher education was another component of effective teacher education programs, which was addressed insufficiently in most teacher education programs. This component encompasses, among others, aspects of teacher professional learning and development such as teacher autonomy, reflection, motivation, and identity. Recent studies clearly indicate that these teacher variables impact professional development, cognition, and instructional practices (e.g., Banegas et al., 2022; Barkhuizen, 2019; Farrell, 2020, 2022; Manzano Vázquez, 2018; Noonan, 2019; Pacheco, 2011; Yazan, 2022). Effective teacher education programs, seeking to educate teachers for effective language education, should consider teacher variables in pre-service education. Although the teacher knowledge base is key to effective teaching, these teacher variables can affect both the development and enactment of this knowledge base in practice. An exclusive focus on the pedagogy dimension, at the expense of overlooking teacher variables, fails to raise teacher awareness of themselves as one of the key agents in language education. Against this backdrop, the teacher education dimension of effective teacher education programs, as proposed in Freeman's (2020) model, needs to be featured strongly in the preparation of language teachers for effective instruction.

## 5 Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

In this chapter, we reviewed teacher education programs and models for the evaluation of these programs. This functioned as a springboard to conduct a study on numerous teacher education programs in action in private language institutes based on the categorizations proposed by Kiely (2019) and Freeman (2020). The findings showed that the pedagogy dimension of teacher education was given more weight than the other dimensions. It can be concluded that there is no balanced embodiment of these components in teacher education programs. The pedagogy dimension has long been the main concern of teacher education in most of these programs as the dominant belief is that teachers primarily need to learn how to teach the four language skills and their components. This overemphasis has resulted in the under-specification of learner variables and teacher variables. From these findings, we understand that the inclusion of the five dimensions of content, teaching force, learners, pedagogy, and teacher education can turn a teacher education program into an effective space for teachers' knowledge base construction and professional development.

The study reported in this chapter had a few limitations that could be addressed in further studies. As the programs evaluated in this study were aimed at the education

of general English teachers, one important area for studies is to analyze and evaluate teacher education programs for the education of EMI, CBI, and dual language education teachers. Second, the programs we evaluated were targeted at pre-service teachers. Kiely's (2019) and Freeman's (2020) models could be used to evaluate in-service teacher education programs to explore to what extent they meet the requirements for effective teacher education. Third, whereas the programs included in this study were developed for use in a local or national context, certificate programs used globally like CELTA and DELTA could be investigated for their coverage of the dimensions of effective teacher education. Finally, as the data source in this study was limited to document analysis, further research could be directed at the triangulation of the findings by observing teacher education programs in action and interviewing stakeholders like teacher educators and participating teachers.

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# Language Policy and Planning for Multilingual Educator Preparation

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Sarah C. K. Moore

## 1 Introduction

Too often, language education programs are focused on students learning a world, foreign, non-native language, external to a community's majority language—which may be a noncolonial, 'heritage', mother tongue, and/or Tribal, Indigenous, or Native language. To counteract the remnants of coloniality, language education program goals should instead involve the preservation of students' familial and community languages. One example of mother tongue programs is those which include two media of instruction—dual language or bilingual education programs. As communities strive to ensure a well-qualified multilingual, dual language, and mother tongue educator workforce, it is vital that preparation confront issues of power, prejudice, and hegemony to promote pedagogically sound language programs. This chapter addresses two core issues. The first issue is the creation and retaining of pathways for multilingual educator identification and employment in response to the critical educator shortage in mother tongue and multilingual programs. Examples include postgraduate fellowships, the Grow You Own model, and the recruitment of paraeducators already placed in multilingual educational settings. These respectively may be implemented at macro, meso, and micro language policymaking levels, such that fellowships would be appropriate for large-scale educator preparation conducted for an entire region or nation-state through governing structures. Similarly, Grow Your Own programs are beneficial for development on a regional or state-based scale. Recruitment of paraeducators to serve in mother tongue and multilingual settings is suitable in smaller measure to fulfill localized community or school-based needs. The second issue involves ensuring that educator programs produce graduates who favor equity, social justice, and community solidarity as fundamental to the implementation of mother tongue and multilingual education. Research is situated within

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discussions pertinent to language policy and planning, language policy implementation, and educator preparation as an example of broader fields concerned with language educational policymaking.

## 2  Theoretical Underpinnings: Multilingual Educator Preparation

Underlying the need for the establishment, expansion, and enhancement of multilingual education is the long-standing agreement among rights activists, linguists, anthropologists, and global policymakers (among myriad others) that maintenance of one's home language is a sacred human right. One movement in pursuit of native language preservation is mother tongue education. Language policy and planning efforts are a key mechanism for accomplishing the development of new language education programs, educators, curricula, resources, and other materials. Implementation of language policymaking necessitates interrogation of hegemonies inherent to language program development—by employing *critical* and *sociopolitical* consciousness to decolonize—confront and overcome injustices and inequities in schooling.

### 2.1  Language as a Human Right

About three decades ago, the United Nations and UNESCO identified *language* as a human right. As early as 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt played a leading role in the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as Chair of its drafting committee, "recognized as a pioneer behind the document" (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015, p. 27). It created two treaties, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the latter focuses on food, education, health, and shelter. The United Declaration of Human Rights (1948) delineated a series of basic rights shared by all humans on earth. It was "unanimously adopted on December 10, 1948 (although 8 nations did abstain)" and reaffirmed in 1993 by 171 nation-states "representing 99% of the world's population" (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015, p. 27). Its two recommendations include "States should take appropriate measure so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunity to learn their mother tongue" (UNDHR, 1948, as cited by Babaci-Wilhite, 2015, p. 28).

In addition to promoting Indigenous languages and indigeneity to decolonize dominant 'majority' languages and for the preservation of local and regional languages and varieties, Weber (2014) highlights "an urgent need to move towards multilingual pedagogies and teaching methods that are more tolerant of linguistic variation" (p. 20). It is essential that Indigenous knowledge and ways of being

be central to the local curriculum development and educative systems because "indigenous language is critical to the preservations and development of indigenous knowledge" (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015, p. 38)—the latter impossible without the former.

## 2.2 Mother Tongue Education

Section II, Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1998) reads, "Within the context of the foregoing principles, everyone has the right to learn any language" (p. 28). In its implementation guide, UNESCO sets forth activities to be conducted by nation-states' systems of public education to uphold minority language rights

> Where there is a sufficiently high numerical demand, public education services must be provided in a minority language to the appropriate degree, broadly following a proportional approach. This includes all levels of public education from kindergarten to university. If demand, the concentration of speakers or other factors make this not feasible, state authorities should as far as practicable at least ensure availability of minority language teaching. In addition, all children must have an opportunity to learn the official language(s). (UNESCO, 2017, p. 16)

Further, its Principles of Language and Education recommend the use of mother tongue education "be extended to as late a stage in education as possible" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 18). Twenty years ago, in 2003, it published guidelines on language education in support of mother tongue instruction, bilingual and/or multilingual education, and inter-cultural education, stating, "every pupil should begin his (or her) formal education in his (or her) mother tongue" (UNESCO, 2003, p. 31). Further, UNESCO (2003) "supports *bilingual* and/or *multilingual education* at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies" (p. 32). Mother tongue language education policies are designed to promote indigenous, home, and local language maintenance for positive identity construction and to prevent intergenerational loss among language minority communities, particularly for those of Indigenous backgrounds, for whom cultural traditions are especially tied with ethnolinguistic knowledge mediation.

Lin and Martin (2005, p. 24) describe the role of colonized countries, their people, and postcolonial schooling:

> The basic premise of constructing knowledge about the colonized country and its people was the dichotomy of the self and the other. The colonized people were the other and the purpose of the colonial education was to reduce this otherness in the people…. Postcolonial education has the task of reversing this perspective process.

UNESCO (2017) recommends the use of mother tongue languages in education, asserting that the effectiveness of these educative approaches is "fairly well established scientifically through studies of minority children in different parts of the
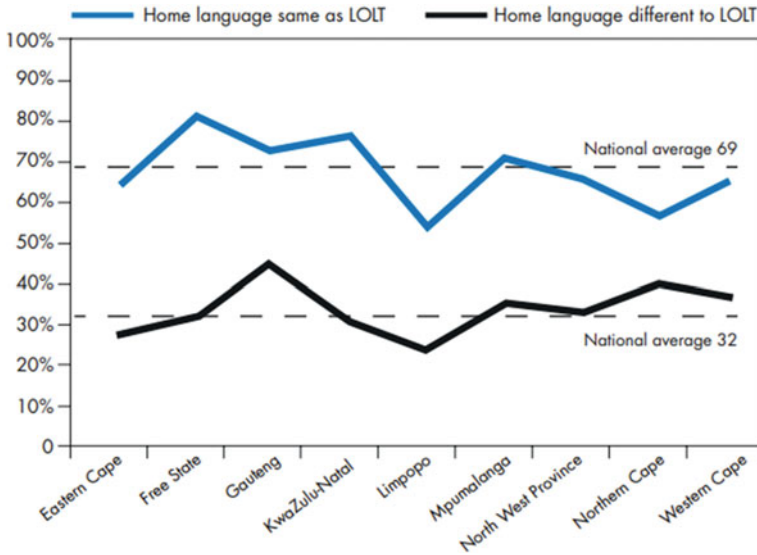
**Fig. 1** Level 6 Language Achievement by Province in South Africa, Where the Home Language Is the Same as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) and the Home Language Is Different from the LOLT (*Note* The blue line indicates the much better academic performance of children taught in their home language in the first years of education, as opposed to those taught in a language that is not their own [black line])

world" (p. 16). Figure 1 from its guide below shows results from a study of sixth-grade national averages when comparing instances where home languages are the same or different than the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT).

## 2.3   Language Policy and Planning

The development and implementation of systems and structures governing societal language use, particularly through systems of schooling, has been described as Language Policy and Planning (LPP) (Spolsky, 2004; Spolsky & Hult, 2010; Tollefson, 2006). LPP has been conceptualized in terms of three factors "instrumental in shaping the field" (Ricento, 2000, p. 196): macro sociopolitical; epistemological; and strategic. The first set involves "state formation (or disintegration), wars…population migrations, globalization of capital and communications" (p. 196). The second series concerns "paradigms of knowledge and research, such as structuralism and postmodernism in the social sciences and humanities, rational choice theory and neo-Marxism in economics and political science" (p. 196). The third factor involves "the ends for which research is conducted: they are the explicit or implicit reasons for which researchers undertake particular kinds of research" (p. 197). Spolsky (2004) describes three components of a speech community's language policies:

> Its language practices – the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire; its language beliefs or ideology—the beliefs bout language and language use; and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning, or management. (p. 5)

Spolsky's view of LPP aligns more closely to issues of language management, that is, the attempts, whether successful or not, implicit or explicit, to shape how a particular community, nation-state or other governed group situates, accepts, or denies the use of a particular language and/or variety of language. A key socially constructed mechanism for managing languages in society is schooling, which at its core involves ensuring proper adherence to established norms that favor a linguistic majority while hindering and obscuring languages of the minority (minoritized) by value ascription or rejection.

Wiley (2019) cites evidence (Fairclough, 2014; Leibowitz, 1974; Tollefson, 1995, 2013) that "there is often a deeper problem behind language in motivations for language policies (LPs) and their implementation," noting that "it is necessary to consider the relationship between language background as a potentially marked status and other marked statuses such as race, class, or creed" (p. 137). Reviewing lessons from global models of language policy, Lo Bianco (2002) describes LPP as "the field where scholarly reflection can indeed contribute to bringing about the kinds of goals that language planning typically has: national capability planning for languages, social justice for marginalized communities, revitalization of marginalized and dying languages" (p. 26).

## 2.4   Critical Language Policy

Critical Language Policy (CLP) (Tollefson, 1991) has been defined as "work that is aimed at social change" (Tollefson, 2006, p. 42) and contributes to new directions in multilingual language education programs and policies. Centralized around the second definition of CLP, research "examines the role of language policies in social, political, and economic inequality, with the aim of developing policies that reduce various forms of inequality (Tollefson, 2006, p. 42)." To properly situate discussions of multilingual educator preparation, the present study utilizes a CLP-informed perspective on real-world implications for language policymaking. Moriarty (2015) uses CLP to globally position LPP in the examination of Irish language contexts. She notes that it "called for an implicit critique of traditional approaches to LPP" and describes CLP as enabling researchers to "enact social change through the reduction of inequality…[and] to analyse hegemonic discourses of power that allow for ideologies of language value to circulate" (p. 16).

Lin and Martin (2005) frame language education policies within postcolonialism and globalization, asserting "positive bi- and multilingual pedagogical and curriculum practices do not simply jump out of the pages of educational theorists or critical deconstructionists, but are the hard-gained results of careful, situated classroom and curriculum studies in different sociocultural and institutional contexts"

(p. 13). Similarly, in her seminal article sounding 'a cautionary note' for implementation of dual language education, Guadalupe Valdés (1997) references that "Tollefson (1991) argues…policy is a mechanism that can either support or oppose existing hierarchies of power…language planning, because its focus is on language, is never neutral" (1997, p. 413). As such, multilingual educator preparation must fundamentally integrate notions of critical (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Henderson & Palmer, 2020) and sociopolitical (Freire, 2016) consciousness, which intend to disrupt dominant discourses and ideologies unfavorable toward the minority, marginalized, and/or minoritized language communities involved in dual language, multilingual, and mother tongue education.

Macías (2016, p. 180) describes three different 'phases' of policy: formation, implementation, and evaluation. The present research concerns a combination of the first two—interrogation of language policy formation and implementation for the development of multilingual educator pipelines. The primary focus involves the implementation phase, during which various systems are 'enacted' (Johnson, 2012; Varghese, 2008) in real-world, practical settings. Johnson (2012) investigated teachers' enactment of policies in restrictive English-only settings and the resulting "patterns of student activity and interaction" (p. 60). Varghese (2008) studied novice Latinx teachers' enactment of language policies in their classrooms and elsewhere, as they shared a cultural model in dual language education. Similarly, LPP related to language educator preparation may initiate the types of programs essential for entire systems' critical (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Henderson & Palmer, 2020) and sociopolitical (Freire, 2016) consciousness-raising.

# 3   An Empirical Study

## 3.1   *Multilingual and Bilingual Education*

As Sherris and Penfield (2020, p. 1) assert, "With dominant languacultures often comes erasure of Indigenous languages." Amanti (2019, p. 676) describes dual language education in the U.S. as a "highly specialized field that requires both advanced levels of language proficiency as well as pedagogical knowledge and the ability to work with and meet the needs of students from wide ranges of cultural and linguistic backgrounds." In the United States, programs are often referred to as Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE) to specifically name bilingualism, a framing that "connects DLE to international scholarship on bilingual/multilingual education and new understandings of how multilingualism functions in a globalized world and a neoliberal economy" (Sánchez et al., 2018, pp. 40–41).

The present study reports on findings from analyses of a combination of socio-historical and contemporaneous extant data regarding mechanisms for identifying, preparing, and placing well-qualified educators in multilingual educational settings. Three approaches to increasing and enhancing educators sufficiently equipped to

work in multilingual educational settings are described: fellowship funding, GYO programs, and paraeducator recruitment. In the United States, bilingual education legislation from the mid-1970s through the early 1990s codified funding streams and structures for DLBE educator preparation under the Bilingual Education Act. More recently, Grow Your Own programs have targeted high school students, other community members, non-certified staff, and other personnel in an effort to foster localized school settings, leverage communities' cultural and linguistic capital, and ensure long-term presence among teachers, particularly those in marginalized ethnolinguistic communities. Another important target population for GYO programs are paraeducators, who may be among the most viable untapped staffing pool for filling the critical need for educators in dual language, multilingual, and mother tongue educational settings.

## 3.2   Language Program Educator Preparation: Archival Data, IHE-Supported Fellowship

A study was conducted in the early 1980s to assess the implementation of fellowships offered through grants to Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) in the U.S. for the preparation of educators to support the language learning needs of multilingual students in public schools operating language education programs funded by Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Researchers employed mixed methods to collect descriptive data regarding program development, maintenance, characteristics, variance, staffing, outcomes, challenges, and replicability through site visits that included interviews, reporting analysis and follow-up questioning, as necessary (InterAmerica Research Associates, 1984). In the analysis conducted for this secondary, contemporary analysis of extant data (InterAmerica Research Associates, 1984), a grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) approach identified salient results pertinent to prospective language educator preparation programs. Although archival in nature, this formerly thriving language educator conduit or core factors that characterized its effectiveness could be replicated for present and future programs. For example, program goals included producing well-qualified graduates prepared to teach in DLBE settings and institutionalizing programs within IHEs to promote long-term viability and sustainability by universities themselves without reliance on additional external funding. Programs with high levels of student enrollment and graduation rates typically included the strong presence of target language native speakers in overall enrollment populations. In addition, universities with larger enrollment figures were more likely to confer funds for faculty appointments to support various programmatic factors. Findings for language educator program enrichment included the need for both improved student recruitment activities, as well as incorporating additional efforts "to enhance articulation with community colleges and high schools" (InterAmerica Research Associates, 1984, p. 4).

Data regarding the extent to which program graduates were equipped to serve in bilingual/multilingual settings showed that state-based certification requirements and basic qualifications delineated by the federal government function as important baseline standards. In terms of overall programs, data analysis revealed that those with "broadly based required curriculum and provide exposure to several different faculty members appear to offer better preparation than those with heavy emphasis in one or two curricular areas taught by a small number of faculty members" (Inter-America Research Associates, 1984, p. 5). In other words, programs with more generalized and less specific curricula and those that connected educators in preparation to university faculty from diverse backgrounds were better prepared to teach after program completion. Ultimately, findings suggested that governing agencies could improve program outcomes through an increased variety of curricula, rather than restricted course offerings and "strongly encourage participation of several faculty from relevant academic departments" (InterAmerica Research Associates, 1984, p. 5).

Data sampled represented 66% from language educator preparation programs in states with a bilingual teaching certificate. In addition to programs including ESL models, Spanish was the target partner language in 57% of programs; 22% targeted Spanish and other language(s); and 21% targeted non-Spanish languages. Findings from programs preparing graduates to work in multiple media of instruction, rather than a single target language, reported "difficulty in achieving the same level of preparation for all ethnolinguistic groups represented in the program" (Inter-America Research Associates, 1984, p. 6). Results, therefore, suggest that in instances where university programs offered coursework for multiple ethnolinguistic groups, "resources tend to be stretched too thin" (InterAmerica Research Associates, 1984, p. 6). Data analysis suggests that collaboration among several universities in a particular region may better ensure more robust course offerings for multiple languages where necessary.

Data showed a range of factors associated with the extent to which programs were 'institutionalized' within the larger university system and were therefore more likely to remain sustainable in the long term. These included active administration support; positive attitudes among faculty not involved in the language educator preparation program; a portion of program faculty compensation provided through institutional funding; a portion of program faculty on tenure-line; involvement of numerous administrative support staff; established program priorities aligned to university-wide priorities; and sufficient student enrollments to merit program maintenance independent of federally provided monies.

## 3.3 Language Program Educator Preparation: Data-Driven Alternative Routes to Teaching

Alternative Routes to Teaching (ART) have in recent years become popular in the United States due to critical teacher shortages and, importantly, a lack of teachers whose cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds mirror those of schools and communities. Often based on school district-university partnerships, ART are designed to be flexible and intend to adapt to prospective educators' backgrounds, needs, time, and budget constraints. While each state administers strict oversight of teacher credentialing, ART programs ensure that candidates and graduates meet these guidelines. Although a commonly known example, Teach for America, has endured intense scrutiny for its practice of recruiting recent college graduates without adequate preparation in pedagogy and placing undeveloped teachers in among the most challenging urban school settings, other programs are well warranted and have proven highly successful.

### 3.3.1 Grow Your Own Programs

Data from a national scan of Grow Your Own programs in the U.S. conducted by the New America Foundation found only three states did not administer some sort of Grow Your Own option (Garcia, 2020). Findings indicate that these are "being leveraged as a strategy to address teacher shortages" (p. 10). Grow Your Own program data provide a valuable opportunity, especially for mother tongue and multilingual settings. Programs like these position local minoritized teachers and learners in the center of curriculum and instruction, therefore presenting opportunities to confront covert settler-colonial hegemonies active in systems of schooling. Evidence suggests that they produce higher retention rates than traditional educator preparation programs (Gist et al., 2019). Garcia (2020) notes that "The highly local nature of GYO programs is precisely what makes them effective" (p. 11).

Gist et al. (2019) collected data regarding Grow Your Own programs designed for recruiting Teachers of Color (TOC) and recommend integration of the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework (Yosso, 2005), which "offers a strong critique of Bourdieu's widely utilized construct of cultural capital because of the way in which it normalizes white middle-class cultural values while pathologizing other ways of knowing" (p. 14). They argue that GYO programs may offset racial and structural barriers and describe one example in Chicago, the Model Support System for Paraprofessionals, which held Saturday "seminars that focused on the familial, social, and linguistic capital of bilingual, bicultural paraprofessionals by encouraging them to develop their voices about their experiences in the educational system" (p. 16). Sessions were grounded in Freirean pedagogies in which literacy is positioned as "a humanizing means of empowerment" (Gist et al., 2019, p. 16). Grow Your Own programs, as described here, represent feasible opportunities for meso-scale language

educator identification, preparation, and placement in multilingual settings, as well as to interrogate hegemonies inherent to marginalized language speaker communities.

### 3.3.2   Paraeducators

Paraeducators may represent a particularly robust available source for feeding multilingual educator pathways. It is not uncommon for paraeducators to be a primary target audience for GYO programs as both the educators and programs themselves represent a worthwhile potential for employing language policymaking for educator recruitment, especially on micro and meso levels. Creative Initiatives in Teacher Education (CITE) is a successful paraeducator placement program administered in partnership between the University of Maryland College Park and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in the U.S. state of Maryland. Students in the program must already be permanent MCPS employees and demonstrate an interest in a teaching career. They complete 43 graduate credits, obtain either a Master's in Education degree or Upper Division Certificate, and earn a grades 1–6 teaching credential in either Special Education or English for Speakers of Other Languages. MCPS provides substantive tuition reimbursement to CITE students, who in return must work in MCPS for at least three years following program completion. Applicant screening is conducted in close consultation between university faculty and MCPS specialists; university faculty provide all course instruction. Educators in the CITE program are incredibly motivated and committed to professional growth, and especially to the communities and students in which they work and already serve as language educators. The CITE model presents a real-world example of how programs might recruit, prepare, and place highly qualified language educators in educational settings to support learners in societally marginalized contexts on a smaller scale.

## 4   Implications for Language Education Programs

Data show that each of the three approaches described can meaningfully generate workforces of language educators properly prepared for teaching in dual language, multilingual, or mother tongue settings. Development and implementation of suitable language policymaking to produce viable language educator workforces could be conducted across layers or societal strata at the macro, meso, or micro levels. Models can be administered by nation-state or state-based governing systems, regionally, through multiple university-school-district partnerships for GYO programs or on a smaller scale by individual schools or language communities as localized paraeducator recruitment and development.

## 4.1 Fellowships

Fellowships funded under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in the U.S. produced an entrenched multilingual program educator preparation system. Between 1977 and 1980, roughly 7,000 educators attended postgraduate programs funded under the ESEA (Johnson, 1985). Placement of graduates was sweeping; they worked extensively in language minority programs throughout the country—at universities where language educator preparation occurred; in leadership roles at local and regional levels; and embedded in non-profit organizations and other advocacy agencies—very often in teacher training capacities (Coballes-Vega et al., 1979; Johnson, 1985). Fellowships included payment for full tuition, as well as the cost of living—students were limited to the work appointment of only 25 percent time equivalent to maintain attention on academics.

## 4.2 Grow Your Own Programs

One approach to operationalizing GYO programs for multilingual educators was modeled in the state of Washington. In 2015, its legislature passed a $5 million program to fund partnerships between university programs and local school districts. Similar to the required criteria and characteristics from the BEA historical example of educator fellowships, these monies distributed grants to universities, which in turn, funded student scholarships and provided financial support for program administration (see Garcia et al., 2019). As in the previous example,

> candidates were eligible to receive scholarships of $8,000 per year on the condition that they maintain enrollment, make progress in the program, and agree to teach in public school in the state for 2 years for each year of grant funding. (Garcia et al., 2019, p. 73)

University grant recipients were awarded $420,000 per year for two years. They were required to meet the following program design elements (Garcia et al., 2019, p. 73):

> collaborative recruitment and candidate selection,
>
> flexible program design to meet districts' needs,
>
> provision of extensive support services to candidates,
>
> commitment by candidates to teach for 2 years in a high-need area in the state, and
>
> job-embedded learning (e.g., through a residency model).

In a partnership between Western Washington University and Highline Public Schools, educator recruitment targeted paraeducators, native speakers of bilingual programs' partner language (Spanish), who were already employed by the district and working in classrooms. The district is highly multilingual, representing 101 languages; 25% of students classified as 'English Learners', meaning their home language is not English.

## *4.3   Paraeducators*

Returning again to the notion of CCW, a departure from the Bourdieuan construct of various forms of 'capital', that "affords individuals from underrepresented backgrounds strength to persist and succeed" (p. 3), Ernst-Slavit et al. (2022) conducted an in-depth study of six Latinx paraeducators' 'lived stories'. The CCW framework (Yosso, 2005) "rejects dominant ideology and White privilege, and instead affirms the lived experiences of People of Color" (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2022, p. 3) and recognizes six forms of capital or cultural wealth, which are mutually supportive of one another. Study participants were enrolled in an ART certification program "offered on two campuses of a large research-intensive university in the Pacific Northwest" and part of a cohort of 26 teacher candidates. Findings reveal systemic and programmatic challenges that impede and obfuscate educator preparation pathways, particularly for paraeducators. Research also illustrates program characteristics that ameliorate hindrances and improve access to routes for educator certification.

## 5   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

This chapter explicates potential mechanisms and sources to fulfill the critical shortage of adequately prepared language educators in the U.S. and other locales around the world through language policymaking for current and future dual language, multilingual, and mother tongue education programs. Orchestration of language educator preparation is functionally engaging in a form of language policy, planning, and management—endeavors that have shown to be fundamentally political in nature and driven by language ideologies that privilege dominant settler-colonial and other larger regional languages and varieties at the expense of smaller, local, minority and often minoritized languages and varieties. As such, it is critical for strong language educator programs to expose and confront hegemonies inherent to any language-in-contact setting. Perhaps the most viable macro-level approach to the development and implementation of language policies to address language educator scarcity is the creation of large-scale, university-led fellowship programs for the preparation of not only multilingual educators, but importantly teacher trainers prepared to work in leadership positions in ways that counteract language domination as advocates for language minoritized learners, schools, and communities. A historical example of such a language educator pipeline is fellowships funded to staff bilingual education programs in the United States, which focused monies on IHEs serving a range of language communities through policy codification enacted by national-scale congressional legislation. Other nation-states could develop comparable infrastructural supports for the creation of macro level conduits for language educator preparation. Similarly, Grow Your Own programs are equally viable means of producing regionally localized sources of language teachers who share ethnolinguistic ties with minoritized speakers in dual language, multilingual,

and mother tongue education settings. Paraeducators are frequently the educator population targeted by Grow Your Own programs, who are often already individuals embedded in localized communities and schools and who may have similar linguistic backgrounds to students in multilingual settings.

Further research regarding effective models for the creation of sustainable pathways for language educator preparation should focus on a combination of both traditional teacher training and ART pathways. Because language education programs are often developed top-down by parties peripheral to local communities, identification of mechanisms through which to identify, prepare, place, and provide long-term support for new language educators should be centered on heritage, Indigenous, and mother tongue communities themselves, rather than imposed upon by external stakeholders. To confront the ongoing trauma of colonialism and employ decoloniality-oriented strategies, programs should recruit and invite educators with shared linguistic and ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Future research should seek out models for designing programs that not only integrate new language educators but also support their redevelopment of curricula, knowledge construction and ways of being that counteract dominant Western hegemonies and instead foster language use and development that are culturally sustaining and derive from language minoritized communities themselves—learning *for* the community and *by* the community. Additional research documenting details regarding the development and expansion of Grow Your Own programs would be especially valuable for schools and districts in which these may be of potential value. It would be instructive and may generate new funding sources to record the numerous benefits associated with preparing paraeducators already employed at school districts to become certified language teachers. The most notable potential for language educator preparation pathways will be generated by new scholarship that both interrogates and leverages established programs through centering the stories, traditions, and cultural wealth of local and regional language speakers and communities.

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# Intercultural Language Teaching

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## 1 Introduction

Designing an effective intercultural language program entails properly-designed and well-founded language teaching policies (see Faas et al., 2014; Liddicoat, 2013). Policymakers who decide upon such educational policies play critical roles, as they design programs aimed at developing learners' target intercultural competence needed for interactions in today's globalized world. Over the past two decades, as an offspring of more recent communicative competence models and the globalization movements, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has received mounting attention as one of the core components of target language education (see Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2008) and has become a main goal of language practitioners (e.g., Byram & Wagner, 2018; Kohler, 2020; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Interculturally-informed programs can create spaces for language learners to constantly engage in an iterative process of moving beyond the boundaries of their cultural beliefs and critically compare their first language culture with the target culture in order to increase their intercultural awareness and ethnorelativism through critical reflection (Liddicoat, 2011). Thus, different language teaching and assessment organizations have begun promoting ICC by considering it in their plans and programs (e.g., American Council on International Intercultural Education, 1996; Bologna Declaration, 1999; Council of Europe, 2002, 2014, 2017). Consequently, several language policymakers embarked upon including it in their programs at local and national levels around the world (e.g., Díaz-Rico, 2008; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016; Liddicoat & Díaz, 2008; Ministry of Education of New Zealand, 2007; Zhao et al., 2016).

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This chapter critically reviews the theories and research on ICC and its development, followed by the explication of the existing language teaching policies which aim at its enhancement in different international contexts. Next, the chapter reports on a study on Iranian macro-level policymakers' perceptions of the significance of ICC for good language education programs. So far, developing language learners' ICC has been neglected in target language teaching in Iran, and the actions that have been taken for its development by either micro or macro-level policymakers have remained unnoticed. Against this backdrop, in the present study, eight Iranian macro-level policymakers who have been involved in developing English Language Teaching (ELT) programs and materials at the national level were interviewed to investigate their conceptions of well-developed intercultural language education. Furthermore, the participants' attitudes regarding the current ELT program in Iran and its potentials for enhancing individuals' ICC were explored and discussed. The results of the study could not only shed light on the status of Iranian policymakers' stands regarding intercultural pedagogy and pave the way for innovations in this area but also have substantial implications for materials developers, teachers, and other stakeholders in different international contexts who are involved in developing and implementing good intercultural language education programs. The chapter ends with directions for further research needed to explore different stakeholders' stances on intercultural language teaching in order to design more effective ICC language education programs.

## 2   Background

### 2.1   Intercultural Pedagogy

As a reaction to communicative competence models which idealized native speakers' communication, intercultural language learning has grown into a greatly appreciated approach within the realms of education and additional language pedagogy (Byram, 1997, 2014; Byram & Golubeva, 2020). It mainly refers to an approach that entails the development of learners' understanding of "their own language and culture in relation to an additional language and culture" and is perceived to be a dialog that creates spaces for "reaching a common ground for negotiation to take place, and where variable points of view are recognized, mediated and accepted" (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 43). The tenets of the ICC approach require learners to attain the ability to mediate between various languages and cultures (Byram, 1997; Byram & Wagner, 2018). Thus, whereas the majority of the approaches to teaching culture focused on transferring cultural information to language learners, proponents of the intercultural approach underscore the "meaning-making" process and intercultural identity development that learners go through by active engagement with language and cultures (see Byram & Wagner, 2018; Kramsch & Nolden, 1994).

To date, several influential frameworks have been proposed for conceptualizing and assessing ICC in foreign language education including the models proposed by Byram (1997), Risager (2007), Bennett et al. (1999), and Deardorff (2006). Notwithstanding the different focuses of these models, they all attempt to explicate the skills, dispositions, and processes involved in ICC as well as the ability to engage in successful intercultural communications. Despite its critiques and limitations (e.g., Hoff, 2014; Houghton, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Orsini-Jones & Lee, 2018; Sercu, 2004), Byram's model is believed to be the most influential ICC framework in language education and has provided great insight for numerous language education policies, including the Council of Europe (Dervin, 2010; Hoff, 2020). This model is composed of five main components: Savoir, Savoir être, Savoir comprendre, Savoir apprendre/faire, Savoir s'engager. It signifies a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions toward one's own and others' cultures. Savoirs includes knowledge of cultures and their products and practices. Savoir être involves curiosity as well as openness and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about one's own. Savoir comprendre refers to one's ability to understand and interpret other cultural events and facts while relating them to one's own cultural norms. Savoir apprendre/ Savoir faire deals with recognizing and acquiring new cultural knowledge and practices and drawing out their meanings and relationships to other sets of knowledge. Savoir s'engager is the knowledge of critical cultural awareness and political education; it describes one's ability to evaluate critically from one's own and others' cultural perspectives (Byram, 1997).

Over the past two decades, several ELT researchers have offered sets of principles for the effective implementation of ICC in language classrooms and presented more tangible pedagogical guidelines (e.g., Corbett, 2003; Liddicoat et al., 2003; Newton, 2016; Tran & Duong, 2018). Liddicoat et al. (2003) and Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) proposed four interrelated processes for ICC development of language learners: noticing, comparing, reflecting, and interacting. According to Liddicoat (2008), through these processes, learners need to notice the new cultural information, perform cultural comparisons by highlighting the existing similarities and differences between cultures, interpret their experiences and create personal meanings from such experiences, and finally express their experiences of language and culture as well as the current state of their learning. Newton (2016) revisited his earlier intercultural teaching principles (Newton et al., 2010) and suggested three main principles and several classroom applications to guide teachers in the teaching of intercultural spoken communications. His main principles include: (a) "Mine the social context of learning", (b) "Focus on intercultural learning objectives", and (c) "Adopt intercultural classroom practices" (Newton, 2016, p. 165). A number of techniques, activities, and teaching materials have been put forward for the implementation of successful ICC practices. For example, Corbett (2003) suggested communicative tasks for practicing ICC in classes. Inspired by Nunan's (1989) framework of communicative activities, he discussed the designs of intercultural tasks and explicated six main factors in designing intercultural tasks: goal, input, activities, learner's roles, teacher's role, and setting. Likewise, East (2012) discussed the potential of task-based language teaching in developing language learners' intercultural and linguistic competence.

He believed that teachers could increase learners' ICC by designing appropriate tasks and communicative competence-based language teaching methods.

Others assumed ethnographic orientations such as studying abroad or interviewing native speakers to be effective as they put learners directly in contact with other cultures (Goldstein, 2022; Liddicoat, 2011). Previous research has shown that language learners with the experience of studying abroad could boost their overall understanding of the target country through daily exposure to other cultures and social interaction with native speakers from the target culture (Czerwionka et al., 2015; Lenkaitis, 2019; Neff & Apple, 2020; Nguyen & Hajek, 2021). Moreover, technological instruments and online platforms which could facilitate cultural exchanges between learners from different countries proved to be effective tools in developing ICC (Avgousti, 2018; Freiermuth & Huang, 2021; Jin, 2015). Some researchers further analyzed the effects of the integration of technology and study abroad on learners' ICC development. Lee and Song (2019) found that both study abroad and the use of technology (telecollaboration groups) were influential in the perceived cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of learners' ICC; however, the study abroad group displayed higher levels of improvement in their intercultural knowledge. Furthermore, some other scholars believe that exposing the same learners to different approaches, for example, complementing study abroad with networked and mobile technologies (Dubridge, 2019; Godwin-Jones, 2016; Lomicka & Ducate, 2021) or combining study abroad with interventions (Bruna, et al., 2020; Jackson, 2018) can optimize the effects of each teaching approach. There have been a number of other approaches employed so far to improve individuals' ICC. They include the use of text analysis or reading (Porto & Byram, 2017; Rodríguez & Puyal, 2012), cooperative learning (Busse & Krause, 2015), translation (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), and watching movies (Chaya & Inpin, 2020; Ismaili, 2013; Yang & Fleming, 2013).

## 2.2   Intercultural Language Teaching Policies

The growth of the intercultural approach to language teaching and education policy during the 1990s led to numerous radical language policies and actions in different countries. The American Council on International and Intercultural Education (ACIIE), as a division of the American Council, highlighted ICC as one of its main developmental stages required for obtaining global competence in 1996 and underscored the significance of this competence in the USA. Later, as one of the main policy-making organizations, the Council of Europe pioneered the consideration of ICC in teaching and assessment of learners' language competencies and influenced the foreign language teaching policies of numerous countries (Council of Europe, 2002).

Along the same line, in 2006, Australia's Department of Education, Science, and Training (2006) initiated the *Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice* project through a Quality Teacher Program to increase the teachers'

knowledge of ICC approaches. Moreover, the South Australian government developed the National Statement of Languages Education in Australian Schools (2005–2008), which emphasized the significance of ICC by discussing the necessity of the learners' understanding of their own and others' languages, intercultural negotiation, critical thinking, etc. (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs, 2008). In 2007, in New Zealand, the Ministry of Education also remarked on the importance of preparing intercultural language learners for surviving in a multicultural and multilingual world (Ministry of Education, 2007). These reforms are not limited to European and English-speaking countries. Several Asian countries gradually began developing new language teaching policies accentuating intercultural communication skills for the sake of fulfilling business and economic motives besides linguistic purposes (e.g., HEC, 2010; Liddicoat, 2007; Newton et al., 2010; Nguyen, 2014). During the past two decades, China has initiated a cultural reform in its English education. In 2006, by developing a framework of New Standards for English Course, Chinese policymakers attempted to redirect the focus of English courses from mere linguistic knowledge to cultural awareness which could increase EFL learners' cultural competence and intercultural communication (Newton et al., 2010). Furthermore, in 2008, the Vietnamese government adopted the CEFR by including the CEFR's six-level framework for foreign language competence (Nguyen & Hamid, 2021). Later, numerous scholars embarked on examining national education documents of different countries around the globe in order to identify the status of culture and intercultural language teaching in their curricula (e.g., Faas et al., 2014; Parmenter, 2010; Siregar, 2016). For instance, Lavrenteva and Orland-Barak (2015) analyzed the language curriculum documents of 14 countries in order to identify how the sociocultural component is treated in their curricula. According to their findings, the analyzed curricula reflect the significance of culture in additional language pedagogy and promote an integrative view of teaching language and culture.

So far, the investigation of language policies of various countries has revealed that while the teaching of language has been used as a tool for increasing intercultural communication, the social context of the countries plays a predominant role in shaping such policies (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017; Siregar, 2016). For example, Liddicoat (2007) explored the policies of Japan and found that the ICC language teaching policies there are shaped by a set of ideologies; thus, language teaching and learning are considered as a tool for communicating Japanese values and perspectives to the people of other countries. Similarly, the results of Siregar's (2016) analysis of Indonesian national documents on ELT revealed that Indonesia's political situation greatly affects language pedagogy and that English holds a special role in these policies. The analysis of national language education documents can reveal policymakers' stances toward different educational movements and decisions, including intercultural language teaching. Liddicoat et al. (2003), as a part of their report on intercultural language learning in Australia, conducted a survey on different Australian policymakers' and teachers' attitudes and understanding of key concepts in language and culture education. Their findings revealed policymakers' positive attitudes toward intercultural language teaching and an optimum

level of understanding of the concepts of language and culture. In a comprehensive study, Parmenter (2010) reviewed the intercultural policies of 65 countries as represented in their national education policy and curriculum documents. She found that, in general, education policymakers held positive attitudes toward intercultural pedagogy; however, she believed that these policies were still new and that further investigations were required to indicate how these policies are being implemented at schools (Parmenter, 2010). Peiser (2012) investigated the perspectives of different stakeholders, including two key policymakers, on intercultural understanding in the Key Stage 3 Modem Foreign Languages curriculum (for pupils in Year 7, Year 8, and Year 9) in the UK. The result of her interview with policymakers indicated that although the reference to intercultural understanding in this program was adopted with well-meaning intentions, policymakers' lack of awareness and knowledge regarding this term resulted in ambiguity in their policy documents.

Most of the studies on language policies considered policy documents as their primary sources of data; however, it is important to note that the development and interpretation of policies are dialogic as multiple voices are present in their formulation. In fact, policies grow from a plurality of positions, while policy texts are presented as monologs and authoritative statements (Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2021). Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech believe that viewing policy as text undermines agencies involved in its development and obscures the sense that certain policies are chosen from amongst multiple alternatives. This highlights the value of individual policymakers' role and proves that inquiring about individual policymakers' views on an educational matter can provide us with more comprehensive results. Meanwhile, language policy documents have not always been explicit and detailed about their statements, and this is the case regarding ICC pedagogy in many education policy documents (Baker, 2015). So far, many studies have indicated that the concept of ICC in national curriculums and language policies has been ambiguous, as there is a lack of consensus over the conceptualization of this competence (e.g., Baker, 2015; Peiser, 2012; Pitzl, 2015); therefore, further delving into policymakers' views can be beneficial and help clarify ambiguous issues.

## 3 An Empirical Study

Given the unknown status of ICC in the EFL context of Iran, the present study sought to explore Iranian macro-level language policymakers' perceptions and suggestions regarding intercultural language pedagogy. To this end, an interview protocol (see Appendix), including 11 questions on intercultural language teaching policies in Iran and policymakers' cognition in this respect, was developed by the researchers. The participants of the study included eight Iranian macro-level policymakers (referred to by pseudonyms PM1-PM8 throughout the study) who had worked in the area of language teaching and learning in several major educational organizations. They were language teaching experts who had been in charge of developing and evaluating language teaching materials at the national level in Iran. The participants' responses

to the interview questions were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. In order to analyze the data a constant comparative method of coding, including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, was utilized (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Scott & Medaugh, 2017). Finally, the frequency of the emerged codes was calculated for the clear presentation of the findings. Furthermore, the cross-validation of coding the interview transcripts was sought by calculating inter-rater reliability, to which end, 20% of the data were randomly selected, content analyzed, and coded by a second coder who was a professional in the field. The analysis of Cohen's Kappa measurement of agreement between the two sets of codes showed a value of 0.72, which signifies a good level of agreement (Peat, 2001).

## 3.1  Policymakers' Perspectives on ICC

At the beginning of the interview sessions, policymakers were asked to present a definition of the concept of culture, and their responses were categorized based on (a) the National Standards' (2006) model, which included perspective (the underlying ideas, attitudes, and values), practice (social norms and accepted behaviors), and product (cultural artifacts e.g., music, literature, rituals); and (b) Tomalin and Stempleski's (1993 well-known definition of culture and its components of big C and little c cultures. All the participants presented acceptable definitions of culture and referred to most of the categories of culture. Five of them referred to both big and small c cultures, and four of them highlighted perspective, practice, and product aspects of culture. The remaining participants focused on small c culture or practice and perspective aspects, as they highlighted the less visible aspects of culture. They all believed that culture and language are so deeply entangled with one another that it could be a difficult task, if not impossible, to separate them for educational purposes. However, most of them (n = 5) stated that incorporating culture into additional language education should be done with great care so that it does not violate learners' L1 culture. As one of the participants highlighted:

> *How we treat the target culture and teach it to our learners is a very critical matter. Everything that is believed in another society should not be taught simply because it is part of the culture of that language.* (PM6)

They were also familiar with the concept of ICC and accepted it as an optimal and reasonable approach to teaching culture in additional language pedagogy. Furthermore, the participants claimed that they constantly considered cultural issues in their decisions and tried to develop teaching and learning materials with special attention to L1 culture, the new culture, and international cultures without any bias.

Nonetheless, the policymakers believed that the current status of language education in Iran, including the way cultural content was treated in materials, was unsatisfying and failed to prepare learners for effective cross-cultural interactions. The following excerpts from the interview sessions reflect the policymakers' opinions on language teaching practice and policy in Iran.

*The national macro-level policy documents on culture education are so general and abstract that their incorporation into the field of L2 teaching requires separate committees. They mainly focus on the indigenous culture, national culture, and Islamic culture, but no one knows exactly what they mean by these terms.* (PM1)

   *The purposes of the existing national education documents are not clear. There are one or two slogans like conveying the revolutionary ideologies which have nothing to do with language classes.* (PM3)

   *In my opinion, there is a lack of clear policies for teaching foreign languages here. A group of people who are specialized in this work and understand what would be beneficial for the country is needed so that people would not run away from the formal education system.* (PM8)

As the above excerpts show, to Iranian policymakers, the existing language policies seem vague and uninformative and need to be reconsidered by policymakers who are experts in the field of language teaching and learning.

Referring to several main national documents in Iran, such as The National Curriculum Document, The 20-year National Vision, and The Comprehensive Science Roadmap, the policymakers considered them to be deficient and most of them (n = 7) did not hold positive attitudes toward these macro-level policies. The following are the pitfalls of the national educational policies and policy documents recounted by the policymakers and their frequency as highlighted during the interview session.

1. Lack of enough language teaching-related policies (n = 6)
2. Imposing ideological views and overemphasis on L1 cultural and religious values (n = 6)
3. Ambiguity of the existing policies (n = 5)
4. Lack of language teaching experts in the process of policy development (n = 3)

## 3.2 Ideal Intercultural Language Programs

In addition to highlighting the deficiencies of the existing national language policies, the policymakers expressed their conceptions of an ideal intercultural language program, which is absent in the current language practice in Iran. According to their responses to the interview questions, several factors and educational goals should be considered for developing an effective intercultural language program:

1. Familiarizing learners with the realities of other cultures (n = 4)
2. Preparing the learners for successful intercultural communication (n = 4)
3. Developing critical thinking among learners (n = 3)
4. Familiarizing learners with pragmatics and sociolinguistic knowledge (n = 3)
5. Developing teaching programs that are independent of political ideologies (n = 3)

They believed that the majority of the textbooks published outside of Iran are concerned with Western cultural values and try to promote Western social norms by

solely focusing on their positive aspects and concealing their negative points. Thus, they expressed the necessity of developing appropriate materials which can familiarize learners with the realities of other cultures without any bias. It was highlighted by them that the national English textbooks which are being taught at schools are far from reality and that they will not help learners have successful communication with foreigners as these textbooks are devoid of pragmatics. The following excerpts capture the policymakers' opinions in their own words:

> *English language teaching should not be bounded by political situations but by scientific facts. Culture education should not be done according to individuals' a taste, but based on scientific views … We should address the details of our culture without any discrimination. Instead of concealing or highlighting some cultural points, depending on the existing political situation.* (PM1)
>
> *The ideal situation would be that L2 learners, as global citizens, communicate with people around the world.* (PM5)

These comments imply important aspects of ICC pedagogy, such as global citizenship and highlighting cultures without bias, which are missing in current Iranian EFL textbooks and pedagogy.

Additionally, the policymakers proposed several suggestions and solutions for implementing a successful intercultural program. Their suggestions involved both specific teaching techniques and general language policies. The list of the suggestions and the number of policymakers who suggested them are given below.

1. Motivating learners by showing cultural similarities at the beginner levels (n = 3)
2. Showing similarities and differences between cultures (n = 4)
3. Careful grading of the cultural content according to learners' levels and age (n = 3)
4. Valuing and protecting learners' religion and L1 cultural norms (n = 3)
5. Educating the teachers (n = 2)

## 4   Implications for Language Education Programs

Incorporating (inter)cultural competence into the language curriculum has been widely debated over the past few decades, and, as the literature suggests, many countries all over the world have embarked on implementing it. In so doing, language policymakers have made radical changes in educational policies in order to incorporate ICC into their language teaching practice. However, the result of the present study indicated that language pedagogy in Iran has not been treated as it is meant to be, and this has left different stakeholders, including micro-level policymakers, material developers, teachers, and learners, baffled. According to the participants, there is a lack of specified language policy in Iran and national documents did not explicate them comprehensively; thus, they remained ambiguous and it is "difficult to depict a clear image of what is to be achieved by the policy" (Mirhosseni & Khodakarami,

2016, p. 295). Similarly, Kiany et al. (2011) criticized the current national education documents due to their lack of clarity, as they do not include or specify any language and learning theories and methodologies. Atai and Mazlum (2013) referred to the same issues when they reported the lack of ELT-specific documents for developing materials and the absence of systematic needs assessment for the curricula.

In addition, our participants believed that the education policies in Iran are mostly concerned with Iranian religious, social, and political values and barely consider others' cultures. This is quite in line with what was found formerly in other studies (Aghagolzadeh & Davari, 2017; Atai & Mazlum, 2013; Borjian, 2013; Peyman et al., 2016; Rashidi & Hosseini, 2019). According to Mirhosseini and Khodakarami (2016), the main aim of language teaching in Iran is the development of learners' linguistic skills with a focus on Islamic-Iranian identity, L1 culture, and local beliefs. Even compared with other non-English speaking Asian countries and, in some cases, Muslim countries, where English is taught as the main foreign language, Iran's L2 language policies seem biased toward its own religious values (see Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017). As it is evidenced in Iranian educational policies and the policymakers' responses to the interview questions, the chief focus of the education system, including language education, in Iran is on protecting the country's social and religious values. In fact, as reported by Kirkpatrick (2017) and Kirkpatrick and Liddicoat (2017), the main issue in English teaching and learning pedagogy in Association of South East Asian Nations' (ASEAN) L2 policies is the excessive emphasis on English as a foreign language at the expense of neglecting the learners' native languages or L1 cultures. However, it should be noted that being biased toward one's cultural and social values is not limited to the context of Iran, as the reflections of political ideologies in target language planning and policies have been observed in other contexts as well (see Hadjisoteriou et al., 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Liddicoat, 2007, 2009; Munandar & Newton, 2021; Pan, 2011; Siregar, 2016).

Regarding the policymakers' knowledge and attitude toward intercultural pedagogy, it was found that all the policymakers were familiar with the principles of ICC and in favor of implementing it. Policymakers' tendency toward ICC education is evidenced in many countries in their established policies (e.g., Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2015); however, as highlighted by the participants, such policies are absent in Iran's national education documents. In the meantime, it is important to note that developing comprehensive language policies which include specific guidelines for teachers to follow is believed to be a demanding task that could not be achieved even in countries where ICC is among their educational agendas (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat et al., 2003; Peiser, 2012; Siregar, 2016).

Since the participants recounted the limitations of the current education policies and suggested a number of solutions for enhancing ICC pedagogy, the findings of the study shed light on several practical implications for policymakers, materials developers, and teacher educators. First, the high-level macro policymakers who are developing the current language education policies can be informed about experts' opinions on language education, including ICC pedagogy. They could take advantage of the opinions of the policymakers who are experts in ELT in order to spot the deficiencies of the language policies and formulate constructive policies inspired by

recent movements in target language acquisition. Second, national materials developers can become familiar with the significance of ICC in today's globalized world and consider including them in their textbooks, as, apparently, the existing textbooks developed in countries like Iran lack this important competence or have not been successful in reflecting it (Peyman et al., 2016; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015). Finally, teacher educators need to introduce ICC and its teaching methods to language teachers. As EFL teachers may not be able to practice ICC in their classes, they could benefit from teacher education courses that could increase their knowledge and pedagogical practice of ICC.

## 5 Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

Acquiring ICC is critical for language learners who wish to communicate with people of other cultures. One of the prerequisites of a successful intercultural pedagogy is developing appropriate sets of policies that could specify the necessary guidelines for materials developers and teachers. Therefore, it is especially important to investigate the attitudes and knowledge of people who establish these policies and rules. Through this study, Iranian policymakers' intercultural perspective was explored and their conceptions of an effective intercultural language teaching program were examined. Evidently, the macro-level policymakers who are experts in the field are in favor of intercultural education and consider cultural issues in their programs; however, so far, the higher-level national education policy documents have not been successful in realizing this goal. They believe the policy guidelines provided in the current policy documents regarding language teaching and learning are ambiguous and do not include any information on ICC pedagogy. Moreover, they proposed several suggestions for practicing ICC in language classes which require radical changes in the current education policies.

Implementing intercultural pedagogy is in its infancy stages and several issues about its policymaking remain unnoticed. The present study can be a catalyst to invite further investigation regarding additional language education policies in other international contexts, especially the policies concerning cultural issues and intercultural language teaching. Analyzing the intercultural policies in private sectors and national documents can further reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the current language policies in these contexts. Finally, observing the intercultural practice in classrooms as implemented by language teachers can illuminate teachers' and students' challenges and help policymakers set more realistic goals and establish language policies that are in line with the realities of language classes.

## Appendix: Macro-Level Policy-Makers' Interview Protocol

1. What is your perception of the concept of culture? (What are its components?)
2. What is your opinion about the role of culture in L2 (EFL) teaching?
3. Which culture (first language, target language, and global culture) is the most important one in language teaching and learning?
4. What is your opinion about teaching L2 (EFL) using intercultural approaches (considering cultural issues—the first, target language culture, and global culture—in EFL teaching and learning)?
5. How much do you consider cultural issues (first language, target language, and global culture) in your language teaching and learning policies and programs?
6. What are the evidences and data that inspire your L2 teaching cultural policies and programs?
7. What goals do you wish to achieve out of the foreign language teaching and learning cultural policies and programs? What steps have been taken to achieve these goals?
8. What has been mentioned in official policy-documents regarding the role of culture in L2 teaching and learning?
9. How much do you agree with these policies? Explain your reasons, please.
10. Have you provided the authors, teachers, and other stakeholders with any policy documents, frameworks or principles on the use of culture (first language, target language, and global culture) in their books and curricula? If yes, explain it, please.
11. Is there any other point that you would like to share?

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# Minority Students' English-Learning Experience

**Eun Sung Park** ⓘ

## 1  Introduction

Diversity is an inherent characteristic of English as a second language (ESL) class-rooms where a typical class is often composed of students from different countries with various first languages. This is not the case for English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms in countries like Korea or Japan, where most, if not all, students share the same first language (L1). However, a recent surge of globalization has brought several changes to English language programs in EFL settings. In South Korean universities, for example, the freshman population no longer comprises a homogeneous group of L1 Korean-speaking students who come with uniform years (typically 10 years) of English instruction prior to attending college. Instead, the freshman population nowadays includes a sizeable number of international students from neighboring countries like China, Vietnam, Mongolia, and Japan, among others. In addition, we are also witnessing a growing number of Korean heritage students who were born and/or raised in English-speaking countries such as the USA or Canada. These international students are easily recognizable because of the different languages they speak with each other. Unbeknownst to many people, however, there is yet another group of students who adds to the diversity of the freshman profile in South Korean tertiary institutions. These students do not particularly stand out in terms of appearance; on the surface, they tend to blend in quite well with the conventional freshman population since they look Korean and also speak Korean (i.e., a Korean variety) as their L1. These are North Korean refugee-background students who have defected to South Korea. They may not be recognizable at first glance, but they are strikingly different from mainstream South Korean students as they often come with unique academic training and upbringing and enter college with varying degrees of interrupted and disrupted education.

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The current chapter outlines North Korean refugee-background students' experiences of learning English at a South Korean university with a view to better understand these students' unique English-learning experiences and needs. The data were collected as part of a larger project which examined students' struggles with mandatory English classes at the tertiary level (see Park, 2020). For the purpose of this chapter, I draw on qualitative data collected from North Korean students and two English instructors who have taught and mentored these students. The results are discussed in light of students' efforts to acquire English as a valuable asset to successfully integrate into South Korean society, and the ramifications that ensue as the students experience challenges in their efforts to learn English. The chapter concludes with implications that may be extended to other groups of minority students in various institutional settings around the world.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Refugee-Background Students in Tertiary Settings

South Korea has witnessed a rapid increase in North Korean refugees since 2001[1]. In the past, most defectors came from privileged groups who were educated with social skills and were capable of successfully adjusting to South Korean society. However, from the mid-1990s, North Korean defectors comprised far less privileged groups, that most likely resemble "the actual composition of the North Korean populace, and who experience serious problems related to education and social adjustment" (Lankov, 2006, p. 107). Given the change in the number and characteristics of North Korean defectors during the past three decades, their adjustment to South Korea has been a frequent topic of research. Most research, however, has targeted adolescent students, focusing on their (mal)adjustment from social and psychological viewpoints (e.g., Kim & Jang, 2007; Lee, 2007). The academic experience of North Korean refugees in higher educational settings has generally received little attention. The paucity of research in tertiary settings is not limited to North Korean refugees in South Korea but also extends to other groups of refugee-background students around the world.

As Hirano (2014) notes, the educational experience of refugees in tertiary settings has remained largely unexplored. Citing Ferede (2010), she ascribes the dearth of research to the fact that only a small number of refugee-background students can afford to pursue tertiary education, owing to financial and academic challenges, among other factors. The majority of existing research on refugees in higher education, albeit limited, has been conducted in ESL settings including the U.S. and Canada (Blanton, 2005; Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010; Hirano, 2014; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017). Such studies have reported that the refugee-background students' education is often interrupted during the process of relocation and resettlement. Likewise, many North Korean defectors also experience a

hiatus in education as they do not directly enter South Korea during the defection process. Instead, they typically pass through neighboring countries, such as China and Mongolia, where they stay illegally before arriving in South Korea. Because of their illegal status in the transit country, they are unable to attend school during this period and reach South Korea with varying degrees of disrupted education (Park, 2020). In addition, given the lack of proper education in North Korea and *en route* to South Korea, North Korean students' dropout rate from major four-year colleges and universities reportedly reached 28.4% in 2010 (Hong, 2010), seven times higher than the mean rate (4.1%) of the entire student population from four-year colleges and universities (Ministry of Education, 2013). Moreover, recent studies investigating young North Korean defectors' socialization process in the South Korean academic system have reported that many of these students fail to finish school due to their struggles with English (e.g., Lee, 2014; Paek & Yoo, 2011; Park, 2020; Shin & Park, 2019).

## 2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings and Prior Research

I draw on Bourdieu's framework of capital, field and habitus to examine North Korean students' experiences with college English classes in South Korea. According to Bourdieu, people draw on different kinds of capital or resources in order to secure an advantage in particular fields. Cultural capital comprises different kinds of knowledge and skills including educational qualifications that are highly valued in a specific social field (Bourdieu, 1991). It also includes linguistic capital or competence in a socially powerful language. Cultural capital is closely related to other forms of capital such as economic capital (money and property); social capital (social networks and connections); and symbolic capital (status and legitimacy). In order for the various forms of capital to have value, they must exist in a *field* where they are recognized and practiced; and it is from the individuals' experiences in particular fields that one's *habitus* develops. In this regard, habitus refers to the culturally and situationally embedded structures that shape how one interacts with the world. The notion of habitus is useful in explaining the impact of refugee-background students' access to education as it describes "processes of socialization that align aspirations with the conditions in which refugee young people find themselves and adapt what they see as possible to the logic of their surroundings" (Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010, p. 4). In other words, our habitus derives from our social background and upbringing so that when we are in a social environment, of which we are a product, we are unaware of the tacit rules and traditions that govern our actions (Bourdieu, 1977, 1998).

Adopting Bourdieu's framework, Kanno and Varghese (2010) examined immigrant and refugee ESL students' challenges in accessing college education in the U.S. By analyzing the linguistic and structural challenges experienced by the students, they conclude that immigrant and refugee students have a distinct disadvantage compared with their peers because "they lack the linguistic capital central to educational success" (p. 313). The same may be argued for North Korean refugee students

in South Korea, who have been thrown into a society where 'English fever' is prevalent, and where a good command of English has become a requisite for educational advancement and socioeconomic success (Kim, 2016; Lee & Ahn, 2016). Similar to Kanno and Varghese's participants, North Koreans typically arrive in South Korea with low cultural capital owing to their interrupted education. They also come with minimal economic capital since many of them have fled from North Korea to escape poverty, without money or possessions in South Korea. Further, their social network in South Korea is necessarily quite limited, which indicates minimal social capital. Thus, their refugee habitus (i.e., their embodied history) and their lack of desirable capital essentially place these students into symbolic structures of inequality and disadvantage as they begin their college education with considerable challenges compared to mainstream South Korean peers (Park, 2020).

Accumulated research examining North Korean refugee-background students in South Korean tertiary schools has shown that these students experience considerable challenges with mandatory English requirements. Moreover, any prior English education they received is likely to be qualitatively different from that received by South Korean students (Park, 2020; Park & Lee, 2022; Park & Shin, 2016; Shin & Park, 2019)[2]. In an attempt to provide these students with English classes that can cater to their needs, Park (2020) examined the North Korean defector students' struggles with English and reported on the implementation of special "foundation" English classes that have been specifically developed to meet these students' needs. Her findings showed that creating level-appropriate foundational English courses was helpful in furnishing them with the foundations of English; however, it was still inadequate in equipping them with the type of linguistic capital needed to successfully complete their college English classes. Her findings also revealed that some school policies and practices play a key role in maintaining domination and social inequality among students.

## 3   An Empirical Study

### 3.1   Method

The current study zeros in on the qualitative data from Park (2020) to gain a deeper understanding of the refugee-background students' perceptions and views of English and to further examine the kinds of efforts they invested in acquiring the linguistic capital needed to graduate from a tertiary-level institution in South Korea. Interviews with two faculty members were also examined to obtain the teachers' perspectives on the students' classroom interactions and their language-learning needs.

In Park (2020), questionnaire data were collected from 32 participants. Of the 32 students, 19 of them participated in one-on-one interviews aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the type of difficulties they face in their English classes, including their experiences with the foundational courses that have been created

specifically for them (see Park, 2020, for a description of the General Education English Program at the University and data collection procedures). Prioritizing the participants' voices, the current analysis focuses on examining the one-on-one interview data (each lasting for about 45–60 min) from the 19 students. The interviews were administered in Korean, the participants' L1, which were transcribed and then translated into English. In addition to the students' interviews, two faculty members who had taught and mentored these students for the past five years were interviewed: One was a male teacher from Australia, and the other was a bilingual female teacher of Korean heritage. The interview was conducted in English, in the form of a focus group interview wherein the two faculty members, a teaching assistant and the researcher, were present. The interview questions inquired about the general characteristics of North Korean students, their interactions and behaviors in English classes, and the kinds of help or support offered by the program to help these students.

At the time of data collection, all the enrolled students at the University had to take two mandatory English courses as part of their graduation requirement. Given the "English-only" policy enforced by the program, all the English courses are taught entirely in English by native English-speaking (or bilingual) teachers with at least a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Typically, it is in these English classes that the North Korean students' low language skills conspicuously stand out as the lessons are quite interactive, with lots of small group activities and pair work. The interview transcripts were reviewed to identify some of the most salient and frequent themes that are directly concerned with the participants' efforts to gain access to the linguistic and cultural capital needed to successfully integrate into South Korean society. The results are discussed in light of the students' increasing awareness of English as a necessary asset to successfully acclimatize to their new field; the fluctuating motivation that ensued as the students encountered struggles in their efforts to learn English; and the importance of highlighting their unique refugee-background habitus as an asset rather than a deficit.

## 3.2 Findings and Discussion

### 3.2.1 English as Desirable (but Inaccessible) Linguistic Capital

The results showed that most participants had experienced taking English classes in North Korea as a required subject, but most did not remember much of what they had learned, recalling ABCs and formulaic phrases like "thank you" as the only aspects that they remembered. However, upon arriving in South Korea, these students quickly noticed the value and prevalence of English not just in academic settings, but for everyday use as well. One participant mentioned: "In North Korea, even if you don't know English, it does not affect your life in any way... But here, I really feel the need to learn English... English is used everywhere. It's difficult to carry a conversation even in Korean if you don't know English words."

The same applied to classes at the university. The participants mentioned that they were surprised to see their English classes being conducted entirely in English, and that, to add to their astonishment, English was necessary for other seemingly unrelated subjects as well. For example, one student stated that she was "shocked" when a professor in the History Department assigned articles written in English for an Introduction to Western History class, which was conducted in Korean. Given the prevalent use of English at the University, the students quickly recognized the value of English as a necessary linguistic capital to successfully graduate from South Korean tertiary school settings. The value of English as a desirable asset was all the more elevated as they learned later that a high score on Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) was a decisive factor in securing a decent job after graduation. This realization has significant ramifications for the students since their ultimate goal is to secure a stable job in South Korea, which can help them access the economic capital needed to live comfortably.

The participants' awareness of the necessity of English served well in fueling their motivation to study English; however, their motivation quickly turned to distress as they realized that their efforts did not necessarily bring desirable outcomes. Since most participants experienced a hiatus in education during their illegal sojourn in the process of defection[3], they were not as academically ready as their South Korean peers. Unsurprisingly, they experienced challenges in other courses as well, but their struggle was most evident in English classes. One participant commented, "If you know 80% of the words, and are unfamiliar with 20% of the words, you can sort of figure out the meaning, but for me, I know maybe 20% of the words, and I need to figure out the rest of 80% from that... this is just too difficult." He further commented that he was determined to do his best, but felt devastated when the professor called him after class and asked why he failed to submit some assignments: "The truth is that I didn't even know there was an assignment," he explained.

Aside from the sense of despair that resulted from not being able to catch up with the class, the participants also reported a tremendous amount of emotional strain. One student mentioned: "I really need to learn it [English], but I am always stressed in class, and the pressure intensifies with each passing day... We often do group work, and because I can't understand much, I am fearful about attending English class." Likewise, many participants described how helpless they felt and how they stayed "completely mute" in English classes.

The sense of inadequacy and pressure stemming from the gap between their English skills and those of mainstream South Korean students rendered them passive and voiceless in class, further marginalizing them. Another particularly frustrating experience for the participants was the fact that despite the enormous amount of time and effort invested in learning English, it did not seem to reap visible results. One student mentioned: "I don't know the basics, so I need to fill in the basics on my own somehow… I'm struggling in other courses too, but I can get by in those courses, but English is different; it's difficult to keep up." Indeed, most students lacked the 'basics' of English, leading them to struggle on their own to fill in the basics as the semester progressed. However, as some participants noted, English is different from other subjects in that it takes a lot more time to digest the newly learned material

and put it to use. Although the students were keenly aware of the value of learning English and desperately wanted to learn it, closing the gap between their level and that of the mainstream South Korean students proved to be a daunting task, which further demotivated them: "I tried my best to catch up in the beginning… but it was just a lot of wasted time and labor. I can't afford to waste my time on something that is unattainable." It seemed that for some students, just a few weeks of English class was enough to convince them that their time and efforts would not yield the desired results, consequently prompting them to give up studying English or look for alternative measures—an issue that is addressed in the next section.

### 3.2.2 English as an Obstacle to Accessing Other Desirable Cultural Capital

As discussed, the current participants recognized the symbolic value of English and expressed their desire to acquire this capital; however, many of them quickly realized that English was what got in the way of accessing other desirable assets, including good grades. The results showed that all of the participants were determined to get good grades and maintain a high grade point average (GPA), which constitutes vital capital that could help them secure a decent job. Regarding English classes, the participants were explicitly concerned about occupying the lowest percentile on the grading curve. The university, as a measure against grade inflation, enforces a grading curve system, in which the bottom 30 percent of the enrolled students must receive a "C" or lower grade[4]. Since North Korean students lag behind their South Korean peers in the core English classes, most, if not all, end up in the lowest 30 percent of the grading curve. One student lamented: "There is no way I can compete with them. I'm just there to fill up the lowest percentile on the grading curve." Interviews with faculty members who have worked with these students also revealed their dismay over the situation since they were well aware of the time and effort these students put into studying English. One instructor commented: "I could see that they were trying very hard, but they were just really struggling in class." He further mentioned that he really felt bad for these students and wanted to give them some credit based on effort; however, since the assessment criteria mandated by the program only allowed limited credit for effort, the North Korean students inevitably ended up receiving the lowest grades regardless of the time and effort they invested in studying English.

The participants' preoccupation with good grades and a high GPA may be attributed to a number of reasons, one of which pertains to financial issues. Most North Koreans lack economic capital since they typically defect with no money. They enter college hoping that a college degree (cultural capital) from a reputable university could help them secure stable jobs (economic capital). Upon entering college, most students rely on scholarships and stipends which are awarded based on academic performance. One student explained, "I am scared of taking English classes because of the fear of getting bad grades. If I get a C, I won't be able to get the scholarship." Without scholarships, many will be forced to take leave of absence

in order to work and earn tuition money for the subsequent semester. Thus, maintaining a high GPA is crucial not only in securing a good job but also in securing the scholarship they need to graduate from school. Some participants confessed that they deliberately avoided taking English classes during the regular semester, opting to take them in the summer when the professors tend to be "more lenient" with grades. In fact, several participants reported that they plan to take English courses in the summer, while others said they plan to postpone taking English courses until their senior year. Although the university curriculum stipulates that students take all the required English classes in the first year, postponing English classes until their final year seemed to be a commonly practiced strategy for these students.

According to Goldstein (2007), linguistic capital can help secure educational qualifications (e.g., good grades) or cultural capital, which in turn can give way to economic capital (e.g., lucrative jobs). In the current study, the students were well aware of the symbolic value of accessing English as linguistic capital, but they quickly realized the magnitude of the challenge and difficulty in accessing this capital. This prompted them to look for alternative ways (avoidance, postponement) in their attempt to get good grades that could help them access the much sought-after cultural capital, which in this case is a college degree (with a high GPA) from a renowned university. This cultural capital could in turn help them secure decent jobs and access to economic capital—arguably the most important prerequisite to their successful integration into South Korean society.

### 3.2.3   North Korean Refugee-Background Student Habitus: Asset or Deficit?

Prior research on North Korean students has generally reported that these students expend significant efforts to hide their North Korean identity by appropriating a South Korean accent and by devaluing their own North Korean accent (e.g., Lee et al., 2016; Park & Lee, 2022; Shin & Park, 2019). This tactic is perhaps not surprising since there exists an implicit discrimination against North Koreans who are viewed as "second-class citizens" who are ineligible for decent jobs (Lee, 2014, p. 1; also see Han et al., 2011). The focus group interview with two faculty members shed some insights on the issue of how the participants viewed their North Korean refugee-background habitus. One of the instructors cautioned that most students are extremely sensitive about disclosing their North Korean status. He recalled the first time he noticed the presence of North Korean students in his class. The class was engaged in one of the usual first-day activities where the students introduced themselves to their partners. The instructor noticed two students who looked very nervous and uncomfortable. "They were sort of sticking together… When I asked one of them where he was from, he hesitated and said either *Masan* or *Geoje Island,* I can't remember, but I do remember that he had this strange guilty look on his face." The instructor later discovered that the two students were from North Korea. He added that from then on, he learned to never openly ask any of his students for their hometown since there may be students who are uncomfortable about sharing their origins.

Another instructor shared a different episode in her English class (for lower-level students) which had one student from North Korea, two from China, one from Nepal, and 13 South Korean students (note that the instructor was aware that one of her students was from North Korea). For one class, she asked the students to bring some pictures for a 'show and tell' activity. The North Korean student brought a photo of a family where everyone was dressed up for a fancy occasion. The student showed his picture to the class and asked them to guess the event in the photo. His classmates tried, but no one could guess correctly. The student then revealed that the photo was of his family dressed up in celebration of Kim Jong Il's birthday. Since none of his classmates were aware of his origin, it came as a big surprise to the instructor that the student openly disclosed his North Korean origin. She commented: "Imagine everyone's surprise when he said the picture was taken at a celebratory event for Kim Jong Il's birthday! I was so impressed that this student opened up about his past. My students were intrigued just like me, and we had a wonderful time asking questions about Kim Jong Il's birthday."

The instructor described the English class as a small, intimate class for lower-level students, which included students from other neighboring Asian countries. She added that the small secure environment seemed to have helped him to open up and share his past and described that instance as a "memorable moment where the students were engaged in a real exchange of meaning." Indeed, it was clear that the students were using English to ask the North Korean student questions out of genuine curiosity, and the North Korean student was exercising his agency as an insider providing answers and sharing his experiences. This incident seemed to have served as an important step to exercising agency in his learning where he had transformed his North Korean refugee habitus into a cultural asset that he could share with his peers. This anecdote illustrates that not all North Korean students want to hide their origin and "avoid North Korean-related topics" (Lee & Ahn, 2016, p. 51); some are willing to open up and share their experiences provided that the classroom atmosphere is safe and supportive.

## 4   Implications for Language Education Programs

The current findings showed that placing North Korean students in the same English class as South Korean students can unintentionally underscore their low linguistic capital and their North Korean habitus, which in turn can cause emotional strain and further marginalize them. This can trigger negative consequences where students are forced to resort to alternative strategies to complete their graduation requirements. The use of such strategies stems in part from the university's "English-only" or "grading on a curve" policies that work against the minority students' needs and goals. Thus, there is a discrepancy between the target students' needs and desires and the institutional systems and supports provided for them, necessitating a need to develop a language program specifically catered to these students. The focus of the program should be on providing these students with a curriculum specifically designed to meet

their needs and levels; and ensuring that materials used in these students' English classes are appropriate for their backgrounds (Nelson & Appleby, 2015). Creating level-appropriate classes where these students can experience success in achieving their English-learning goals would enhance their motivation and help them feel more secure in their endeavor to access English as valuable linguistic capital that can help them achieve their goals.

As Nunan (2001) argued, one of the most crucial characteristics of a curriculum's success is "contextualization." In other words, the school should contextualize the English curriculum for a particular group of students to reflect the students' needs and goals. Circumstances and budget permitting, a curriculum designed with the target students' unique habitus in mind would be desirable. A participatory EFL curriculum would be a viable option in that it could empower and promote agency for minority students (see Lee, 2014). As seen in the current results, at least one participant was able to exercise his agency and share his experience and knowledge about North Korea with his classmates in a small classroom environment where he felt safe and was a legitimate member of the class. This is meaningful in that the student was able to take an important step to transform his North Korean habitus as capital instead of viewing it as an aspect of his past that needs to be hidden. Similarly, a recent study by Park and Lee (2022) reported on a North Korean participant who was keen on keeping his North Korean accent and advancing his English skills based on the belief that these resources and assets could help him become an important person who can play a critical role in reuniting the two Koreas. With the increasing diversity of students in South Korean tertiary settings, we are witnessing more instances where refugee-background students are exercising their agency and becoming more proactive about transforming their minority student habitus as an asset that they can draw on in their new social field—a welcome change in this era of globalization and super-diversity.

## 5    Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

I would like to conclude with one important take-away which is applicable not only to the North Korean student population but also to other minority groups around the world; namely, the importance of helping these students see their unique backgrounds as an asset, rather than a deficit to hide. In this attempt, it is important that we help both students and L2 practitioners to dispel stereotyped assumptions about minority students as marginalized and deficient learners. This type of deficit-oriented perspective can put an unwanted emphasis on the students' limited resources and capital and view them as helpless victims rather than competent agents. It can also induce teachers to overlook individual students' strengths and their capacity to become leaders in their respective fields (Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017). Instead, we should adopt an asset-based approach (Krutkowski, 2017) in which teachers empower these students by raising their awareness of the assets and capabilities that they come equipped with based on their unique but invaluable experiences (Park &

Lee, 2022). By adopting an asset-based approach, we can help minority and nontraditional students to appreciate and value the experiences they have undergone (i.e., their habitus), and enable them to draw on the knowledge and insight that they have acquired from their lived experiences, which in turn can form different assets and capitals that they can bring and contribute to the classroom. To that end, it is important for concerned practitioners involved in the design of English programs for refugee-background students to focus on the students' resources and life experiences, so as to encourage them to relate their learning to their own lives.

As noted, the materials used in educational programs for nontraditional students' English classes should be appropriate for their backgrounds and competencies to enhance the practical value of such instructional programs. To gain a sound understanding of the target students' backgrounds and experiences and to accurately assess their competencies, we should do our best to hear their voices, which can inform the educational programs and materials we design for these students (Nelson & Appleby, 2015). Further research should then focus on hearing the students' voices as well as the voices of L2 practitioners who have worked and mentored these students. Each group of students is unique in terms of their experiences and needs, and subsequent research should directly hear from the parties involved. By focusing on students' habitus and needs that have led them to their goals and by openly talking about their goals and aspirations, we can help shift the focus from a deficit-oriented to a more asset-oriented discourse and pedagogy.

## Notes

1. Between 1995 and 2001, the annual number of defectors reportedly increased from 41 to 1,043. The annual mean number remained high (ranging from 2,000-3,000) between 2003 and 2011, but it has steadily decreased since 2012 (Ministry of Unification, 2022).
2. Research examining the goals and contents of North Korean English textbooks has shown that English education in North Korea mostly focuses on inculcating the Juche ideology (i.e., Kim Il Sung's version of idolatry-based Marxism-Leninism) and promoting communist values (see Park & Shin, 2016 ).
3. Their Length of Study in Trespassing Countries Ranged from One week to 12 years (Mean = 3.2 years).
4. It should be noted that the university has recently revised the "grading on a curve" policy for North Korean students and other international students. As of 2021, this policy is enforced only for mainstream South Korean students.

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# Teachers' Online Language Assessment Literacy

**Akram Nayernia and Hassan Mohebbi** 

## 1  Introduction

Assessment is one of the most critical aspects of the teaching and learning process, as its results directly affect this process. Therefore, teachers are expected to be sufficiently literate in assessment to accomplish educational goals. The ability to evaluate and trace the advancement of learners' performance is a requirement for teachers in any teaching profession (Eyal, 2012). Broadly speaking, language assessment literacy is a repertoire of competencies, knowledge of different assessment methods, and applying the right tools at the right time, which assists a practitioner in achieving a complete and accurate understanding of a test, constructing and carrying out language tests, and interpreting the test results as accurately as possible (Coombe et al., 2020). While previous studies on assessment literacy (AL) have shaped the literature on AL by addressing important aspects of assessment (e.g., Brookhart, 2011; Fulcher, 2012; Fulcher et al., 2022; Khan, 2023; Mohammadkhah et al., 2022; Sadeghi & Douglas, 2023; Stiggins, 1991, 1995, 1999; Tajeddin et al., 2018, 2022; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014), the type of assessment literacy that the teachers are expected to possess these days is totally different from the traditional one. It should be appropriate for the twenty-first century's online environment and educational approaches (Eyal, 2012). The teachers' online assessment literacy level can be considered an indication of their professional development level. This level can be expanded via interaction with the environment, particularly the digital environment (Eyal, 2012).

The current century is experiencing an innovative paradigm that has resulted in the emergence of new forms of education, including online education and unique

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teaching, learning, and assessment methods (Barber et al., 2013). Online education is considered a type of distance education that requires the use of the Internet, modern technological devices such as computers, tablets, or smartphones, and current technological resources such as videoconferencing, teleconferencing, or virtual learning environments (Ferreira et al., 2018). The impact of technology on the teaching and learning process is largely becoming the subject of discussion in almost any field of study, particularly second and foreign language learning. A large number of education experts (e.g., Jelfs & Richardson, 2013; Miah & Omar, 2012) believe that innovative technologies have a considerable potential to promote instructional and learning practices if they are appropriately employed. One advantage of online education is having interaction and communication with other learners. Unlike other forms of distance education, it helps the learners feel attached to a virtual group rather than secluded and isolated (Ferreira et al., 2018).

As a result of this quick evolution in educational technology and the condition resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, there seems to be an increasing need for training teachers in technology and online instruction and assessment. These advances in teaching and assessment methods require the teachers to be prepared for the related challenges and encourage them to pursue their professional development, which enables them to deal with these new forms of education and facilitate their learners' ability to learn how to learn and become autonomous learners in online education environments (Ferreira et al., 2018). The teachers should be able to utilize technological devices independently and troubleshoot common relevant problems ranging from elementary problems of operating computer hardware and software and fixing Internet connection failures to more advanced ones such as working with virtual learning environments and online assessment platforms, designing computer-based and web-based assessment tasks for the learners, and providing them with instant and formative feedback (Baser et al., 2016; Eyal, 2012). However, there is a gap in the literature in the investigation of online assessment knowledge and skills of EFL teachers. This chapter aims to shed light on the online assessment literacy that English language teachers need for their assessment practices. In particular, it seeks to explore the perceptions of English language teachers about their online assessment literacy and uncover the training they need to implement online assessment practices in their teaching profession.

## 2 Theoretical Underpinnings and Existing Research

### 2.1 An Overview

The underpinning theories supporting the use of computers and technology in language instruction are constructivism and social constructivism. Constructivism is a learning theory (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978) that identifies the

learners' prior knowledge and understanding gained from social and cultural environments as predictors of their future knowledge construction (Kanselaar, 2002). As Brooks and Brooks (1993, p. vii) pointed out, "constructivism is not a theory about teaching…it is a theory about knowledge and learning…the theory defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated, and thus, non-objective". According to social constructivism, knowledge is co-constructed by individuals rather than reproduced or imitated. Some scholars (e.g., Duffy & Jonassen, 1992; Salomon, 1998) have related the use of innovative technologies to a constructivist approach where learning takes place through interaction with others. Kanselaar (2002) described constructivist learning practices as authentic, real-world, meaningful, contextualized, and collaborative knowledge construction that occurs through social interaction rather than competition with peers.

The literature related to the use of interactive technologies in language teaching and assessment shows that these technologies can facilitate and promote learner interaction and engagement by mediating and regulating learning in an interactive and constructivist environment where the learners can cooperatively construct their knowledge based on their prior experiences and be the co-constructors of knowledge and meaning (Eyal, 2012) in collaboration with their peers and instructors (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). According to Vygotsky (1978), constructivism asserts that the cognitive development of an individual is characterized by the extent to which they interact with the environment, society, and other community members.

As discussed by Lesnick et al. (2004), online learning environments create spaces for teachers to combine the principles of the constructivist approach, learner-centeredness, and authentic materials in education. Constructivism, promoting a learner-centered approach where learning is achieved through communication with others (Vygotsky, 1978), can be compared with other teacher-centered paradigms such as behaviorism, where the learners are passive recipients and reproducers of the knowledge transferred to them by the teacher (Herrington & Standen, 2000). This is the reason why these teacher-centered approaches are not favorable in online learning environments, in which the key focus is learner engagement and participation in the "co-construction" of knowledge and learning, as stated by Eyal (2012).

Quite a number of assessment literacy (AL) frameworks have been developed and proposed. One of these frameworks is put forward by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), and National Education Association (NEA) (1990), which consists of seven standards for teacher competence in the educational assessment of students. A large body of quantitative research conducted on teachers' approaches to assessment has resorted to assessment literacy measures based on these standards (DeLuca et al., 2016; Gotch & French, 2014).

## 2.2 Assessment Literacy

According to the definition of assessment literacy by Davies (2008), teachers are expected to have the necessary knowledge base, skills, and principles to assess their learners. These assessment attributes were present in American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), and National Education Association's (NEA) (1990) seven standards. The standards include the skills in (1) selecting assessment methods proper for instructional decisions; (2) developing assessment methods proper for instructional decisions; (3) administering, scoring, and elucidating the results of external and teacher-made assessments; (4) utilizing the assessment data in adopting decisions about students, teaching process, curriculum, and school; (5) establishing valid grade assignment procedures; (6) communicating assessment results to the students, parents, and any other audience; and (7) identifying unethical, illegal, and improper assessment methods and uses (AFT et al., 1990). This definition proposed by AFT et al. (1990) was, according to Fulcher (2012), the first definition of assessment literacy, and a large number of studies in the literature on AL have been based upon this seminal definition in some way (e.g., Brookhart, 2011; Mertler, 2009; Xu & Brown, 2017; Yamtim & Wongwanich, 2014). Although these standards could not completely evaluate teachers' approaches to assessment concerning the current context of classroom assessment (Brookhart, 2011; DeLuca et al., 2016; Gotch & French, 2014) and they progressed before the accountability and standard-based reforms, they have significantly shaped the assessment literacy research. However, no similar document has been developed for language teachers since the introduction of the 1990 standards. Inbar-Lourie (2016) attributed this to the scarcity of data available on the language assessment literacy needs of language teachers and the evolutionary nature of theoretical underpinnings of language assessment literacy, which go through constant changes and make the field of language teaching and learning unpredictable. The assessment literacy required of language instructors is referred to as language assessment literacy (LAL), as detailed in the following section.

## 2.3 Language Assessment Literacy

Language teachers, like other teachers, are involved in assessing their students for instructional decision-making. According to Inbar-Lourie (2013), LAL is a unique complex entity different from general assessment literacy despite some similarities. One additional component which is present in LAL is *language*, meaning that LAL entails knowledge of the language and language teaching (Davies, 2008). Therefore, having LAL presupposes having the skills required for assessing linguistic competence, including the skills for test construction, evaluation, and use of statistics (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2013).

LAL for teachers can cover a wide scope ranging from a primary level of measurement understanding and assessment skills to an advanced level of being able to critically analyze the goals of assessment, the appropriateness of the used tools, the conditions of testing, and the decisions adopted based on the assessment results (Inbar-Lourie, 2013). Davies (2008) identified three main components of LAL: knowledge, skills, and language assessment principles. Knowledge refers to the awareness of theoretical concepts of testing and assessment, such as different testing approaches (communicative vs. task-based), reliability, validity, use, and interpretation of statistics, purposes of assessment (proficiency, achievement, and placement), and types of assessment (traditional vs. alternative, norm-referenced vs. criterion-referenced, etc.). Assessment skills are the practical manifestations of assessment knowledge, such as developing tests and assessment tasks, designing rubrics, interpreting the assessment data, making judgments on the basis of the results, and providing feedback to learners. The last component is language assessment principles, which deal with critical and political aspects of assessment, such as ethical issues in using test results, fairness, and transparent and democratic assessment practices.

Debate on the nature of assessment literacy, a notion presented with respect to the knowledge the assessors need to possess (Stiggins, 1991), displays a continuing discussion on the nature of professional knowledge in the field of language testing. Further, it shows that teachers' LTA literacy and, more importantly, their training needs should be examined more.

## 2.4   Online Assessment Literacy

With the advent of technology and digital tools and their use in every facet of daily life including, but not limited to, learning, there has been "an interesting and powerful confluence among theory, research, technology, and practice, especially when it comes to the integration of curriculum, instruction, and assessment" (Pellegrino & Quellmalz, 2010, p. 130). This growing use of technology, which has identified different roles for instructors and learners and has required them to have digital literacy (Cirit, 2015), has, in turn, made the learners take part in the process of online learning more collaboratively. This trend, together with the interest of politicians and academics in the "transformative" nature of e-learning, has resulted in the integration of technology into assessment, the introduction of e-assessment or technology-enhanced assessment, and subsequent revolutions in assessment practices (Oldfield et al., 2012, p. 3). According to Gikandi et al. (2011), since online education is in vogue these days, teachers should reconsider the main aspects of their teaching and assessment practices.

Coombe (2018) defined online/digital assessment as any assessment practice performed by means of digital tools such as computers, laptops, and smartphones that can be employed in physical classroom settings as well as online synchronous or asynchronous platforms with the aim of linking the teachers, students, and assessment practices. Digital assessment methods could be of different types and formats

and may cover various purposes ranging from short polls and fast surveys to longer tasks such as essays and collaborative projects and productions of the students.

Oldfield et al., (2012, p. 7) provided a general definition for e-assessment as "any use of digital technology for the purposes of formal educational assessment" and stated that while online assessment is sometimes considered as solely on-screen testing, automated rating, and online feedback, we should know that these practices called "computer-assisted assessment" and "computer-based testing" are only some of the basic subsets of the online assessment.

Although the implementation of recent forms of assessment, including online assessment, seems necessary and unavoidable, the challenges in so doing, which entail applying transformations in pedagogy, make it a difficult objective to achieve (Bennett, 2006). According to Fjørtoft (2020), one of the main challenges of teachers in the development of digital classroom assessment practices is guaranteeing their validity, reliability, and manageability. The use of digital tools (e.g., computers, tablets, or smartphones) and multiple modalities for the presentation of materials (e.g., images, audios, videos, animations, etc.) increases the number of factors that the teacher should handle and thus undermines the manageability of digital multi-modal assessment practices. Furthermore, since digital assessment tasks require the learners to have an acceptable level of digital literacy, their approach to performance assessment becomes "task-driven" rather than "construct-driven," which is considered a risk for validity and, consequently, reliability of these tasks (Fjørtoft, 2020, p. 3). It may also introduce bias into the assessment process in that some students may be less technology-savvy.

## *2.5   Empirical Studies on Online Assessment Literacy*

While the empirical research literature related to assessment literacy is very rich, and a large number of studies in different parts of the world have addressed AL from different perspectives, the literature related to the investigation of online and digital assessment literacy is very limited. However, the following are instances of the most related studies on the topic of online assessment literacy. In an attempt to examine the attitudes of preservice English language teachers towards three assessment methods, i.e., traditional, alternative, and online assessment, Cirit (2015) conducted a 14-week study with 40 undergraduate students of ELT in Turkey. The researcher identified six tasks (designing a range of different things such as an avatar, a quiz, a mind map, a class task, a poster, and a presentation video file) and asked the participants to perform these tasks using seven various Web 2.0 tools (Voki, Testmoz, Mindomo, Facebook, Glogster, Prezi, and Screencast-O-Matic, respectively). The data concerning partici-pants' attitudes towards assessment and technology were collected using pre-surveys before task completion (at the beginning of the study), reflection papers right after the completion of each task, and post-surveys and interviews after the implementa-tion of all six tasks. The results showed that although the participants did not have prior experience with online assessment tools and technologies, they had positive

perceptions about alternative and online assessments and found alternative assessments the most useful among the others. In a mixed-methods study conducted by Cephe and Balcikanli (2012), 139 preservice ELT teachers in Turkey received a 3-week course on Web 2.0 technologies in which a number of interactive web-based applications such as Ted and Storybird were introduced, and their potential use in language teaching was discussed. After three months, the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire that was designed to investigate their attitudes towards the use of the said applications in language teaching, followed by an interview with 20 participants. The findings showed that the participating preservice teachers found these technologies to boost cooperation, collaboration, motivation, learner engagement and participation, digital literacy awareness, and professional knowledge base for their future job as teachers.

In exploring the Australian academics' assessment of learners' Web 2.0 assignments, Gray et al. (2012) invited the academics to participate in an online survey to which 64 participants answered. The research findings revealed that academics considered assessment with Web 2.0 technologies as valuable and necessary; however, they reported some challenges and risks for this type of assessment. Kumar and Vigil (2010) studied the views of preservice teachers from a private university in the U.S. on the usefulness of Web 2.0 technologies and tools in teacher education programs. The participants believed that these technologies are valuable and important in their careers as teachers. They found SmartBoards, Podcasts, online videos, Google Calendar, and social bookmarking sites the most important ones to be included in teacher education courses. To address one of the main faults of assessment literacy development, i.e., faults in teacher education programs, Wang et al. (2008) generated a web-based assessment literacy development framework called "P2R-WATA" with the aim of enhancing preservice teachers' assessment knowledge and perspectives and then examined the extent to which this framework was successful in so doing. The researchers developed two instruments named "Assessment Knowledge Test (AKT)" and "Survey of Assessment Perspectives (SAP)" and administered them to the participants in three phases, pre-test, mid-test, and post-test, to examine the differences in initial performance and post-treatment behaviors between the experimental group and the control group. The results indicated that the treatment, i.e. the "P2R WATA" program was effective in that it allowed the integration of assessment knowledge and practices for the experimental group participants, which facilitated the enhancement of their assessment literacy. In a mixed-methods study conducted by Rowley (2019), the mechanisms and efficiency of online formative assessment in an academic module, as well as learners' and teachers' perceptions about it, were examined through the use of "Blackboard" as a learning management system (LMS) and "Turnitin" as an electronic tool used for handing the assignments, scoring, and feedback provision. Most of the participants found these tools to be efficient, while only a few of them reported dissatisfaction due to poor digital literacy and weak Internet connection. The findings of the study also suggested that the participants required the training needed to operate properly within these tools/ systems.

## 3   An Empirical Study

The present study examined the online self-assessment literacy levels and needs of Iranian EFL teachers. More specifically, this study was an attempt to find an answer to the following research questions:

1. What are EFL teachers' perceptions of their online assessment literacy?
2. In what aspects of online assessment literacy do EFL teachers need training?

To this aim, since there was no readily-available instrument in the literature for investigating the online assessment literacy of EFL teachers, the researchers developed and validated the related instrument. After pilot-testing the instrument with a group of 200 participants and ensuring its validity and reliability through confirmatory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha, respectively, data were collected from 105 Iranian preservice and in-service EFL teachers, composed of women (61.9%) and men (38.1%), all of whom were non-native speakers of English with different years of experience in teaching English ranging from 1 to 20 years. They were teaching at school (n = 7), university (n = 8), language institute (n = 67), and private classes (n = 23). They were BA graduates (1.9%), MA students (48.6%), MA graduates (33.3%), PhD students (12.4%), and PhD graduates (3.8%) of TEFL with an age range of 20–30 (46.7%), 31–40 (48.5%) and above 40 (4.8%). The sampling method was convenience sampling as the participants voluntarily responded to the survey instrument of the study shared with them on Telegram and WhatsApp. In the course of gathering the data needed for the present study, the researchers developed one questionnaire through an extensive review of the related literature. It was validated using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The first part of the questionnaire was designed to collect the participants' demographic data, including their age, sex, first language, city of residence, educational background, teaching experience, and the place they were teaching, to better understand the participants' characteristics. The next parts, composed of several five-point Likert-scale items, elicited the participants' opinions about their online assessment literacy. The construct under investigation was online assessment literacy, comprising assessment and digital literacy. Therefore, to explore the teachers' online assessment literacy, the researcher decided to develop an instrument that investigated the participants' assessment literacy, digital literacy, and a combination of both, i.e., online assessment literacy. To answer the research questions, the five-point Likert-scale survey questionnaire was shared with the participants, to which 105 EFL teachers responded voluntarily. The frequency and percentage of responses were calculated in SPSS using descriptive statistics. The results related to the second part of the instrument, i.e., participants' perceptions of their assessment literacy, are shown in Table 1. To investigate the positive and negative perceptions, the sum of percentages of responses with values of 4 (very knowledgeable) and 5 (extremely knowledgeable) was considered positive, and the sum of the ones with values of 1 (not knowledgeable at all) and 2 (slightly knowledgeable) was considered as negative perceptions.

The third part of the survey instrument measured the participants' perceived digital literacy. Table 1 shows the participants' perceptions of their digital literacy.

**Table 1** Percentages of responses for digital literacy items

| Item | Nothing/ None | Very little | Some | Quite a bit | A great deal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I know how to use computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies (e.g., email and chat) | 0 | 2.9 | 15.2 | 34.3 | 47.6 |
| 2. I can troubleshoot common computer problems (e.g., internet connection problems) independently | 1.9 | 4.8 | 30.5 | 32.4 | 30.5 |
| 3. I can use digital classroom equipment such as projectors and smart boards | 1.0 | 7.6 | 34.3 | 35.2 | 21.9 |
| 4. I know how to use online learning environments (e.g., Moodle, Blackboard, and VLE) | 2.9 | 24.8 | 31.4 | 22.9 | 18.1 |
| 5. I can create multimedia (e.g., video, web pages, etc.) using texts, pictures, sounds, videos, and animation | 0 | 18.1 | 40.0 | 19.0 | 22.9 |
| 6. I can use collaboration tools (e.g., wiki, Edmodo, 3D virtual environments, etc.) in accordance with my objectives | 5.7 | 21.9 | 49.5 | 15.2 | 7.6 |
| 7. I know how to use Web 2.0 technologies (e.g., blogs, social networks, and wikis) | 1.0 | 13.3 | 44.8 | 24.8 | 16.2 |
| 8. I can participate in a Listserv formed for a specific purpose in order to exchange ideas | 21.0 | 27.6 | 36.2 | 10.5 | 4.8 |

Table 1 indicates that the participants perceived themselves as highly knowledgeable in the following items. Item 1 (81.9%), item 2 (62.9%), and item 3 (57.1%). These are the domains in which the participants considered themselves as very knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable. However, the following items received the highest rate of negative responses. Item 8 (48.6%), item 4 (27.7%), and item 6 (27.6%). This shows that the English teachers participating in the present study had very little knowledge in the said areas of digital literacy. The last part of the questionnaire measured the online assessment literacy of English language teachers. The results of this part are represented in Table 2.

As is shown in Table 2, only three items received partially considerable positive responses, which are item 8 (48.5%); item 9 (51.4%); and item 11 (51.5%). In the remaining items, the following were those with the highest percentage of negative responses. Item 6 (51.4%), item 10 (51.4%), and item 4 (42.8%). This indicates that the participants had a low level of knowledge in the said domains of online assessment literacy.

The results of the data analysis mentioned above were used to answer the second research question. In findings pertaining to each part of the questionnaire, depicted in Tables 1 and 2, those items that have received the highest rate of negative responses

**Table 2** Percentages of responses for online assessment literacy items

| Item | Nothing/None | Very little | Some | Quite a bit | A great deal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am familiar with various technology types and the role they may play in language assessment | 0 | 14.3 | 51.4 | 20.0 | 14.3 |
| 2. I can choose appropriate technologies to be used in the assessment | 1.0 | 22.9 | 52.4 | 14.3 | 9.5 |
| 3. I can evaluate the appropriateness of technology for testing a lesson | 1.0 | 24.8 | 41.0 | 25.7 | 7.6 |
| 4. I am familiar with online assessment tools like Blackboard and Turnitin | 15.2 | 27.6 | 37.1 | 14.3 | 5.7 |
| 5. I am familiar with computer-adaptive and internet-based tests | 5.7 | 17.1 | 37.1 | 31.4 | 8.6 |
| 6. I can design a computer-adaptive test | 34.3 | 17.1 | 30.5 | 13.3 | 4.8 |
| 7. I can use computers to develop, deliver, and score tests | 12.4 | 21.9 | 36.2 | 19.0 | 10.5 |
| 8. I can use technology effectively to communicate relevant information to students and peers | 1.9 | 9.5 | 40.0 | 29.5 | 19.0 |
| 9. I can provide learners with useful feedback in an online class | 1.9 | 13.3 | 33.3 | 36.2 | 15.2 |
| 10. I can teach my students how to develop e-portfolios for assessment purposes | 16.2 | 35.2 | 32.4 | 12.4 | 3.8 |
| 11. I can support my professional development by using technological tools and resources to continuously improve my language teaching practice | 0 | 6.7 | 41.9 | 30.5 | 21.0 |

from the participants can be considered as those aspects of the knowledge and practical skill in which the EFL teachers need further professional development and training. The findings presented in Table 1 suggest that the participants need further digital literacy training in the following items. Item 8 (48.6%), Item 4 (27.7%), and Item 6 (27.6%). Concerning those areas of online assessment in which the English language teachers need more training, the contents of Table 2 are explored, and the following items are found to have elicited the highest rate of negative responses from the participants: Item 6 (51.4%), Item 10 (51.4%); and Item 4 (42.8%). These aspects of online assessment literacy are the ones less paid to in the preservice EFL teacher training courses.

As the above report on this study shows, the findings revealed that the participants perceived themselves as knowledgeable and competent in most language assessment areas, except for a few aspects such as portfolio and dynamic assessment, rubric design, and test validation. However, they perceived themselves as less knowledgeable when it came to digital literacy and online assessment literacy needed

for online teaching. A considerable percentage of the participants (59%) had very little/moderate knowledge about well-known online learning environments such as Moodle and Blackboard. This was also the case with the knowledge of online assessment tools (80%); using collaboration tools such as wikis and other virtual environments on which they can produce content and collaborate with other users (77%); using computers to design, administer, and score tests (70%); and creating online portfolios for assessment purposes (83.8%).

Concerning the digital literacy and online assessment literacy required of EFL teachers, given the findings of the study, the areas of strength and confidence for the participants included using computer-mediated communication technologies such as email and chat, solving common problems when using a computer such as Internet connection problems, using digital classroom equipment such as projectors and smart boards, and creating multimedia for educational purposes, in which the participant teachers reported a high level of knowledge and thus a low level of training need. These findings are consistent with those of Alharbi (2020) and Sarıçoban et al. (2019). They found that EFL teachers were proficient in some technological knowledge areas, including the items mentioned earlier. The participants also agreed that they could support their professional development using technological tools and resources, which aligns with Sarıçoban et al. (2019). In respect of using collaboration tools, the findings showed that the participant EFL teachers reported moderate knowledge (mean = 2.97), which is in line with those of Alharbi (2020) and Sarıçoban et al. (2019).

Considering the online assessment literacy needed by EFL teachers, the participants perceived a training need for the knowledge of online assessment tools, the use of computers in online test construction, and how to prepare and develop a portfolio on an online platform. This indicates that the participants had little knowledge about the online and virtual platforms in general and online environments and tools specific for assessment purposes. The areas of strength in online assessment literacy were using technology for communicating the assessment data to the stakeholders and providing the students with useful feedback in an online class. These findings resemble those obtained in the second part of the survey questionnaire of the present study, i.e., the assessment literacy item. This suggests that since the participants felt the required confidence in feedback provision and assessment data communication in normal face-to-face classes, they tended to overgeneralize it to any learning environment, including an online course. However, since no similar study has been conducted using the items of the survey questionnaire in this section, i.e., online assessment literacy items, the findings of the study in this part cannot be compared with other studies.

## 4    Implications for Language Education Programs

Different stakeholders can benefit from the current study's findings, including online language teachers, learners, teacher educators, language institutes, higher education administrators, and policy-makers. Language teachers need to consider using online assessment environments and tools and become familiar with the potential these tools can bring about in their online and face-to-face classes. According to Eyal (2012), online assessment can save class time and lighten the teachers' workload. In addition, online language learners need to raise their knowledge about different types of online assessment practices and the tools and environments used for this purpose to get prepared for the challenges in dealing with such settings, particularly in cases they are asked to take a high-stakes one-shot summative test on an online platform they may have no prior knowledge about.

Given that some EFL teachers lack digital and online literacy needed for assessment purposes, teacher educators need to reconsider their materials and methods for training teachers in language assessment and try to include online assessment sessions in the language teacher practicum they offer in teacher education institutes to provide the prospective EFL teachers with the opportunities to become familiar with online assessment and use it in their future online classes. The administrators of language institutes and universities may also benefit from the present study's findings when recruiting language teachers. In the current century, online learning is largely becoming an inevitable trend, and teachers are expected to know how to do the job of online teaching and testing. Therefore, language institutes and higher education centers should evaluate their prospective teachers' online assessment knowledge base and skills. Due to the dynamic and evolutionary nature of technologies, new online assessment tools and platforms are introduced at a quick pace. Therefore, all the related stakeholders should be receptive to the use of different technologies in language assessment and select the one that best fits their contextual factors, teachers' and learners' needs, and institutional considerations such as Internet connection speed, financial issues, and the needed equipment available to them.

## 5    Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

In recent years, with the advent of technology and the increasing number of language institutes and higher education centers offering online language courses, the need to recruit competent teachers in online teaching and testing has become evident. Therefore, teachers are expected to possess a considerable level of knowledge and skill when working with online learning environments. Based on the findings presented in this chapter, the EFL teachers working in universities, language institutes, schools, and even those who hold private classes have reported low and medium levels of online and digital literacy in language assessment in online classes. This may suggest a gap in the teacher training courses and teacher education programs offered by

the Iranian language institutes and universities regarding the online EFL teachers' knowledge and skills in online testing and assessment. To compensate for this gap, teacher educators can consider integrating digital technology and online assessment courses into the teacher education programs they offer the preservice teachers. The in-service teachers, who have already passed teacher training courses and currently practice English language teaching, can also consider attending the ongoing professional development courses and workshops to enhance their qualifications as online teachers and assess their learners' progress in the process of online language learning.

There are some gaps in the existing literature on language assessment literacy, particularly in online assessment literacy. Therefore, some suggestions are provided for the researchers wishing to conduct studies on the online assessment literacy of English language teachers. The present study was conducted as a mere quantitative study. Triangulating the quantitative data with qualitative data gathered through interviews or focus group discussions in future studies can lead to thicker descriptions, produce deeper insights into the variables under investigation, and compensate for the weaknesses of the quantitative data. This study could be conducted as a correlational one investigating the relationships of online assessment literacy with teachers' teaching experience, academic degree, age, or sex. Another recommendation is to conduct an experimental study on online assessment literacy. Future researchers are encouraged to design short-term training courses of online assessment for preservice English language teachers and evaluate the effectiveness of their treatment on their participants using pre-tests and post-tests concerning online assessment knowledge and skills.

## Appendix: Survey Instrument

Dear respondent;

This questionnaire, composed of four parts, is developed for an MA Thesis project and aims to investigate your assessment literacy, digital literacy, and online assessment literacy as an English teacher. Please note that your information will be kept confidential and will be used for academic research purposes only.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

### Part 1: Demographic Data

1. Your name (optional):
2. Your sex:

    Female.
    Male.

3. Your age:

Below 20.
20–30
30–40
Above 40.

4. Your major:

Teaching English as a Foreign Language.
English Translation.
English Literature.
Linguistics.
Other.

5. Your degree:

B.A. Student.
B.A. Graduate.
M.A. Student.
M.A. Graduate.
Ph.D. Student.
Ph.D. Graduate.

6. Your teaching experience (years):
7. Where do you teach?

School.
University.
Language institute.
Private classes.

8. Your first language:
9. Your current city/town:

## Part 2: Assessment Literacy

How knowledgeable are you in each of the following aspects of language assessment? Select the option that best describes your opinion by placing a check mark (✔) next to the corresponding number.

1. **Not knowledgeable at all**
2. **Slightly knowledgeable**
3. **Moderately knowledgeable**
4. **Very knowledgeable**
5. **Extremely knowledgeable**

1) Knowing basic concepts in language testing including test, assessment, measurement, evaluation, functions of tests, test formats, and theories of testing.

1 2 3 4 5

2) Writing good quality items or tasks for language assessment.
   1 2 3 4 5

3) Identifying and estimating characteristics of items (i.e. item facility, item discrimination, and choice distribution).
   1 2 3 4 5

4) Using traditional item formats (multiple-choice, true or false, matching, short answer, and filling the gap).
   1 2 3 4 5

5) Confirming the practicality of tests (ease of administration, scoring, and interpretation, and availability of resources).
   1 2 3 4 5

6) Knowing how to validate tests.
   1 2 3 4 5

7) Knowing how testing may lead to learning.
   1 2 3 4 5

8) Recognizing the relationship between teaching and testing.
   1 2 3 4 5

9) Using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning teaching, developing curriculum, and school improvement.
   1 2 3 4 5

10) Communicating assessment results to students, parents, other lay audience, and other educators.
    1 2 3 4 5

11) Placing students into courses, programs, etc. based on the assessment results.
    1 2 3 4 5

12) Knowing how to use assessments to diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses.
    1 2 3 4 5

13) Knowing how to interpret what a particular score says about an individual's language ability.
    1 2 3 4 5

14) Knowing how to give useful feedback on the basis of an assessment.
    1 2 3 4 5

15) The concept of reliability (how accurate or consistent an assessment is).
    1 2 3 4 5

16) The concept of validity (how well an assessment measures what it claims to measure).
    1 2 3 4 5

17) How to use self-assessment.
    1 2 3 4 5

18) How to use peer-assessment.
    1 2 3 4 5

19) How to use portfolio assessment.
       1 2 3 4 5
20) How to implement dynamic assessment.
       1 2 3 4 5
21) Identifying different types of language assessment purposes (e.g., proficiency, achievement, diagnostic).
       1 2 3 4 5
22) Selecting appropriate rating scales (rubrics).
       1 2 3 4 5
23) Designing rating scales (rubrics) for assessment tasks.
       1 2 3 4 5
24) Selecting appropriate items or tasks for a particular assessment purpose.
       1 2 3 4 5
25) Learning how one's own knowledge of language assessment might be further developed.
       1 2 3 4 5

## Part 3: Digital Literacy

Please indicate how much you know about each of the statements below. Select the option that best describes your opinion by placing a check mark (✔) next to the corresponding number.

1. **Nothing/None**
2. **Very little**
3. **Some**
4. **Quite a bit**
5. **A great deal**

1) I know how to use computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies (e.g. email and chat).
       1 2 3 4 5
2) I can troubleshoot common computer problems (e.g. internet connection problems) independently.
       1 2 3 4 5
3) I can use digital classroom equipment such as projectors and smart boards.
       1 2 3 4 5
4) I know how to use online learning environments (e.g. Moodle, Blackboard, and VLE).
       1 2 3 4 5
5) I can create multimedia (e.g. video, web pages, etc.) using texts, pictures, sounds, videos, and animation.
       1 2 3 4 5

6) I can use collaboration tools (e.g. wiki, Edmodo, 3D virtual environments, etc.) in accordance with my objectives.
   1 2 3 4 5
7) I know how to use Web 2.0 technologies (e.g. blogs, social networks, and wikis).
   1 2 3 4 5
8) I can participate in a Listserv formed for a specific purpose in order to exchange ideas.
   1 2 3 4 5

## Part 4: Online Assessment Literacy

Please indicate how much you know about each of the statements below. Select the option that best describes your opinion by placing a check mark (✔) next to the corresponding number.

1. **Nothing/None**
2. **Very little**
3. **Some**
4. **Quite a bit**
5. **A great deal**

1) I am familiar with various technology types and the role they may play in language assessment.
   1 2 3 4 5
2) I can choose appropriate technologies to be used in assessment.
   1 2 3 4 5
3) I can evaluate the appropriateness of a technology for testing a lesson.
   1 2 3 4 5
4) I am familiar with online assessment tools like Blackboard and Turnitin.
   1 2 3 4 5
5) I am familiar with computer-adaptive and internet-based tests.
   1 2 3 4 5
6) I can design a computer-adaptive test.
   1 2 3 4 5
7) I can use computers to develop, deliver, and score tests.
   1 2 3 4 5
8) I can use technology effectively to communicate relevant information to students and peers.
   1 2 3 4 5
9) I can provide the learners with useful feedback in an online class.
   1 2 3 4 5
10) I can teach my students how to develop e-portfolios for assessment purposes.
    1 2 3 4 5

11)  I can support my professional development by using technological tools
     and resources to continuously improve my language teaching practice.
        1 2 3 4 5

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# Practices and Language Education Programs

# ESP Programmes: Educating Teachers to Address Learner Needs

**Yasemin Kırkgöz** and **Carol Griffiths**

## 1  Introduction

Although programmes broadly known as "General English" are probably the most common in the English teaching and learning field, these courses do not suit everyone. In order to meet the requirements of those with widely varying needs and desires, English for Specific Purposes programmes have been developed, defined in a variety of ways over the years. According to Widdowson (1983, pp. 108–109), "In ESP we are dealing with students for whom the learning of English is auxiliary to some other primary professional or academic purpose. It is clearly a means for achieving something else and is not an end in itself". Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 54) agree that it is the "target situation [which] distinguishes the ESP learner from the learner of General English". Robinson (1989, p. 395), also agrees that ESP is "goal-oriented language learning". In addition to being goal-oriented, ESP has traditionally been focused towards learner needs, which is a defining characteristic of ESP programmes (Belcher, 2006). According to Paltridge and Starfield (2013, p. 2), "a key feature of an ESP course is that the content and aims of the course are oriented to the specific needs of the learners", and Woodrow (2018) concurs that ESP programmes are designed to meet learner needs. Also, in accord with ESP's focus on learner needs, Kırkgöz and Dikilitaş (2018, p. 2) note that ESP is "tailored to the needs and demands of people." More recently, Basturkmen (2021, p. 498) has defined ESP as a theoretically and empirically based field of inquiry that aims to identify the linguistic features of specialist English varieties, the nature of ESP teaching, and to understand how specialist English can be acquired in instructed ESP and naturalistic contexts.

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In ESP, English is studied not principally for its own sake, but because it is needed for some other specific objective, such as business (Business English/BE), the pursuit of an academic goal (Academic English/EAP) or a host of other needs such as travel, medicine, science, internet technology, and so on. Each of these specific goals may well have specific associated vocabulary, grammar and functions, but as Brinton et al. (1989, p. 2) suggest, merely organizing programmes around specific linguistic features is insufficient; therefore, "proponents of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) note that for successful language learning to occur, the language syllabus must take into account the eventual uses the learner will make of the target language." According to Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991, p. 305), English for Specific Purposes has "specialized or unique" characteristics which set it apart from other English language courses. According to these definitions, then, it is the focus that sets English for Specific Purposes apart from other English programmes. Rather than focusing directly on language development per se, ESP programmes focus on the particular purpose for which the language is needed. This provides an immediately useful motivation for language learning, even though the language is not ostensibly the central objective of the programme.

This chapter begins with a definition of ESP and a description of the main characteristics which distinguish ESP courses from other language programmes. The study involves an ESP teacher education course in Turkey which used a problem-solving approach. The student teachers' perceptions of the course are presented and discussed along with practical implications for such courses and suggestions for further research.

## 2 Background: Characteristics of English for Specific Purposes

There are several characteristics that are commonly believed to distinguish ESP programmes from others. For instance, Strevens (1988, p. 1) includes among the "absolute" characteristics of ESP courses that they are.

- designed to meet specified needs of the learner
- related in content (i.e., in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities
- centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse

Of these key characteristics, needs are listed first, and it has remained a common theme throughout ESP literature. According to Schmidt (1981), it is desirable to begin with needs assessment. Robinson (1989, p. 401) agrees that "the first stage of ESP course design is needs analysis". Indeed, "Throughout its history, ESP practitioners have been preoccupied with learner needs" (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991, p. 299). According to Hyland (2006, p. 72):

needs is actually an umbrella term that embraces many aspects, incorporating learners' goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in. Needs can involve what learners know, don't know or want to know.

The ESP emphasis on satisfying learner needs continues into the present (e.g., Arias-Contreras & Moore, 2022; Flowerdew, 2013; Woodrow, 2018). The issue of the content of ESP programmes can create difficulties for the teacher, since few language specialists are also specialists in the content areas of the course (e.g., business, tourism, medicine, and so on). In terms of the content, it is quite possible that the students will know more than the teacher, which can be threatening. In order to deal with this potentially problematic relationship, Robinson (1989, pp. 410–411) recommends that rather than emphasizing the end product of an ESP programme, "attention is directed to helping students adopt suitable strategies for learning language". Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 70) likewise suggest that for ESP programmes, the emphasis should not be so much "on achieving a particular set of goals, but on ….. helping learners to develop skills and strategies which will continue to develop after the ESP course itself". Reassuringly, according to Pinto da Silva (1993, p. 40), "it is now widely accepted that the ESP teacher should not be expected to be an expert in the student's specialty". In other words, it is important to keep in mind that rather than a subject-specific course that is being taught in English, an ESP programme is essentially an English course employing specialist material to convey the language (Dikilitaş & Griffiths, 2017).

Many ESP programmes have been designed on the premise that specific language is needed to prepare students for specific purposes. As Robinson (1991, p. 27), for instance, notes: "for many people vocabulary, particularly specialist vocabulary (or terminology) is a key element of ESP", and students who choose ESP courses frequently give anxiety over vocabulary as a determining reason for their choice. The concern with language use has led to functions being given a central place in many ESP syllabi, since specific language functions (e.g. being polite, introducing others, giving directions, asking for help) are sometimes believed to be more important in some contexts than in others; an inspection of a textbook such as *International Business English* (Jones & Alexander, 1989), for instance, reveals that functions such as "meeting people", "requesting", "complaining", and "apologizing" are included.

But perhaps the main reason for students to choose an ESP programme rather than a more general language course relates to motivation, which is widely recognised as perhaps the most important factor in successful learning (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1980; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Ushioda, 2008). ESP has been criticized because many of its characteristics are no more unique to ESP than to any other language course, and many ESP courses only include fundamental language skills (Çelik et al., 2018). However, "subject-specific materials look relevant…[and]…these factors should not be discounted. They are very important to the learners" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 166). This suggests that students who believe that what they are studying relates to their ultimate objectives will potentially be more motivated to succeed than if their programme seems irrelevant to what it is they are aiming to achieve, and they are likely to be more willing to be actively

engaged (e.g., Mačianskienė & Bijeikienė, 2018). In other words, although it may be superficial, face validity is important.

A study that investigated the issues noted above is reported in Dikilitaş and Griffiths (2017). The study was conducted with a Business English class studying at a private language school in Auckland, New Zealand. The 12 participants included Koreans, Taiwanese and Japanese, of whom 6 were male and 6 female, and all were aged over 20. At the beginning of the 12-week course, students were asked about their motivation for choosing the course and how they viewed their needs. At the end of the course, they were asked whether they felt their needs had been met and what were the positive and negative aspects of the course. Motivating reasons for choosing the course included the need to improve their English to pass exams or enter other courses, to improve their business prospects, to qualify for better jobs, to provide for their families, or to avoid General English classes, which they considered "boring". Students viewed their needs mainly as requiring them to improve their language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), to expand their knowledge of business terminology and to develop a knowledge of idiomatic English. In response to the question of whether they felt their needs had been met, 10 students replied positively, 2 were neutral, and none actually disagreed, suggesting a reasonably high level of satisfaction. They included among the positive aspects that the Business English class was more interesting than General English classes and it was more useful and related to their eventual goals (some of them were already operating businesses). A negative comment, however, was that the BE class was really no different from GE—it was actually only General English with business topics (a similar comment to that noted above by Çelik et al., 2018).

Overall, the study described above was mostly positive in terms of the value of the ESP course reported. An aspect that was not investigated in this study, however, was the teacher's role. How, we might ask, should teachers approach ESP? Do they need different knowledge, materials, methodology, and assessment procedures? Do they need special training for such courses? İf so, what should be included in this training? These questions will now be considered in the following section of this chapter.

## 3   An Empirical Study

The increasing importance of global English has led to the rise of ESP teaching, particularly in the context of higher education, resulting in a corresponding rise in teachers who are qualified to teach ESP. Despite the concurrently increasing demand for ESP teachers, pre-service teacher education programmes have largely neglected to prepare prospective teachers for the ESP teaching profession (Pirsl & Popovska, 2016). A review of existing studies related to teacher education programmes in Türkiye and international contexts reveals that teacher education programmes do not always prepare prospective teachers with adequate knowledge and skills of how to teach learners with specific purposes. As highlighted by many scholars, most ESP

teachers start teaching ESP without prior training in this specific domain. As a result, they may encounter numerous challenges since teaching ESP is a highly demanding task as it requires the teacher to be equipped with multiple skills including identifying learner needs and developing course materials. Preparing pre-service teachers for the ESP profession remains an under-explored area.

In Türkiye one of the first ESP teacher education courses was designed by Kırkgöz (2019). The theory-informed part of the ESP course, which covered topics such as needs analysis, materials development and lesson planning, preceded a practice-oriented approach in which participants conducted a collaborative project. Each group designed an example ESP course on their preferred ESP field, developed a lesson plan, and presented it via micro-teaching. Content analysis of the pre-and post-test, open-ended questionnaires and student journals collected from 32 ESP course participants demonstrated that the ESP course had been highly useful in increasing the participants' confidence in conducting needs analysis, developing materials (adapting and/or producing materials), preparing a lesson plan, and micro-teaching it.

## 3.1 An ESP Teacher Education Course

This section presents the preparation and implementation of an ESP course at a teacher education department of a state university in Türkiye. In this study, the ESP course was offered as a two-credit course during the spring semester of an undergraduate teacher education programme to 32 third-year pre-service teacher candidates (aged 21–22). The participants had previously received various courses such as Teaching English to Young Learners, Teaching Language Skills and Approaches to ELT, but they had received no course to prepare them for their future ESP teaching profession.

## 3.2 The Framework of the ESP Course

The theoretical framework of the ESP course was informed by the constructivist perspective to help pre-service English teacher candidates to familiarise them with ESP-related topics which included needs analysis, ESP course design, ESP materials development, lesson planning, course evaluation, and the role of an ESP teacher. The course materials included a compilation of articles and ESP books to achieve course objectives including *English for specific purposes* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), *Ideas and options in English for specific purposes* (Basturkmen, 2006), *Developing courses in English for specific purposes* (Basturkmen, 2010). In addition, to support the theoretical part of the course, some videos were used related to the topics covered such as needs analysis, materials development and course design principles from YouTube or the British Council websites.

## 3.3   Incorporating Problem-Based Scenarios

Following the completion of each of the course units, problem-based scenarios were introduced relevant to the content of that particular unit to give pre-service teachers experiential learning opportunities. Problem-based learning (PBL) is an instructional approach that challenges students to learn through their involvement in solving a real problem (Kırkgöz, 2015, 2017; Stover, 1998). Working cooperatively in groups, students are engaged in solving challenging, open-ended problems resembling the kind of problem they are likely to encounter in their professional context. It has been found that PBL helps to enhance students' longer-term knowledge retention (Yew & Goh, 2016), raise student motivation (Gvardjancic, 2001) and interest in the subject matter (Stover, 1998), and develop students' problem-solving strategies and disciplinary knowledge simultaneously (Park & Peggy, 2007).

In consideration of the above benefits of using PBL, teacher candidates were given ESP-related problem scenarios after the completion of each topic in the ESP course. Care was taken to ensure that problem scenarios corresponded to the content of the topic completed, encouraging them to think critically and analytically. In developing problem scenarios, the characteristics that good problems should have, as proposed by Duch (1996), were taken into consideration. Accordingly, good problems must engage students' interest and motivate them to probe for a deeper understanding of the concepts and issues being investigated. In addition, good problems require students to make judgments based on factual information (Scott, 2014). Another essential feature of the good problems is that they should be related to the course objectives, and help students to link prior knowledge to new concepts of the discipline.

The following is an illustration of a problem scenario that is presented after the completion of the needs analysis unit in the ESP course:

> Bankers who work in an international bank are having trouble communicating with the headquarters. They are expected to write reports every month. The headquarters decided that the Turkish branch of this bank needs a course to help them communicate easily with each other. The teacher of this course aims for the students to write and understand reports. In the middle of the course, the teacher conducts an evaluation and sees that 70% of the students can not communicate in the target language.

The following is another illustration of a problem scenario that is presented after the unit on materials development has been completed in the ESP course:

> A couple of actors want English lessons because they want to work in international movies. They want to improve their pronunciation and speaking skills. The teacher who is giving the lessons to the students decides to follow a course book. This does not work out because although the students do not need reading skills, the book is mostly about them. Improving the reading and listening skills does not help the students. When the actors want to talk with some directors in England by phone, they cannot seem to communicate.

## 3.4  ESP Course Evaluation

In order to determine the perceptions of pre-service teachers in using problem-based scenarios and to find out what benefits, if any, they gain when the topics are complemented with problem scenarios, they were given an open-ended questionnaire after completing the 14-week programme. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data (Creswell, 2013). Initially, the qualitative data were coded by the first author of the study, which was checked independently by the second author to enhance credibility and validity. It was found that there was an agreement between the researchers' thematic analysis of the data, and any disagreement was resolved through a discussion. Each participant in the study is labelled as P1-P32. The findings are presented in the following section.

### 3.4.1  The Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Using Problem-Based Scenarios in ESP

All participants welcomed the idea of incorporating problem scenarios into the ESP course. They unanimously agreed that as potential ESP teachers, they found the experience of engaging with ESP-related issues and thinking about solutions very useful. They also had a positive opinion about the sequencing of the problem scenarios. The fact that the theoretical part of the course (how to prepare a needs analysis and what to take into account while preparing it, such as target needs, learning needs, and materials design) preceded the problem scenarios was thought to be very helpful in providing them with sufficient theoretical knowledge, which they could relate to solving the problems. The following extract illustrates the opinion of participants:

> The problem scenarios the teacher is using can be adapted to the student's level. When you are working with ESP students, you are working with adults. Giving them complex and life-like scenarios will boost their motivation because they will start seeing that the course is related to their life. It is undeniably better than teaching in traditional ways which drain the student's energy and is teacher-centred. Problem-based learning engages students in the classroom and the lesson. (P3)

### 3.4.2  Benefits of Incorporating Problem Scenarios in ESP

From the analysis of the open-ended questionnaires four main benefits emerged from using problem scenarios in the ESP programme. These include enhancing self-confidence and self-learning and increasing creativity and critical thinking skills, authenticity, and theory into practice.

**Enhancing self-confidence and self-learning**: Analysing and solving ESP-focused real-life problems boosted the participants' self-confidence. They felt that they have more of an understanding of what they are studying. It made them feel that

if they come across these problems in the future, they could be able to analyse the situations and deal with whether the problem lies in the area of materials development, needs analysis, or any other aspect of ESP covered in the course.

It has been also seen that problem-based learning contributed to self-learning, as underlined by the following participant:

> When we are given a problem to solve individually or as a group, we feel more responsibility on our shoulders and we are more eager to take action on those responsibilities. We are more likely to search for information to solve the problem. Naturally, this process has led to self-learning for us. (P14)

This is confirmed by other participants who highlighted that:

> Encountering these situations, being able to analyse them, and then provide some sort of solution really makes me feel satisfied. It also makes me feel confident that if I were to encounter these problems in real-life ESP contexts, I will be equipped with the tools and knowledge to do my analysis and offer solutions. (P1)

> It made me feel satisfied and confident in my skills. It also put what I have learned in a practical context so that I can be ready for problems to come. This way, we can use our knowledge to analyse the situation and act accordingly. For example, a student who has taken an ESP course that involves problem-related scenarios might recognize the same things that he/she encounters in real life. They can think back to the scenarios they have analysed; this can serve as a model for their circumstances. For these reasons I think problem-based scenarios could and should be implemented in an ESP course. (P6).

**Increasing creativity and critical thinking skills**: Using problem-based scenarios for prospective ESP students made them think creatively in finding solutions as each scenario was unique with multiple solutions. The participants found that working through the problem scenarios made them create relevant and meaningful solutions to each problem. As stated by one participant:

> We focused on each scenario and looked at it from the perspective of needs analysis or material design. (P3)

Preservice teacher candidates also reported that scenarios helped foster their critical thinking skills which are higher-order thinking skills involving analysing, evaluating, and synthesizing by integrating the theoretical part of the ESP course with the real-life situations which are peculiar to the ESP contexts. As one participant mentioned:

> I improved my critical thinking skills as we used problem scenarios to reinforce what we have learned. (P2).

Another participant noted that:

> We went deeper into each scenario, we analysed problems and evaluated them to decide what each problem stems from and come up with solutions. This process made us think more critically. (P3)

Another reported:

> As a future ESP teacher, I found the experience of delving into the ESP-related issues and thinking of solutions helpful because it activated my mind to think critically by employing the knowledge and solution-provoking ideas we attained in the discussions of ESP course. (P13)

### 3.4.3   Authenticity

Participants agreed that the scenarios are aligned with real-world ESP issues and problems; as a result, they gained real-life problem-solving skills that they could use to improve the learning process of their future ESP students, as seen in the following excerpts:

> We, as future ESP teachers, will at some point, come across one or more of these scenarios in our professional life. It is for this reason that the way we analyse and come up with solutions to problems would make our future teaching more beneficial to students. (P3).

> Solving problem scenarios helped us to link the classroom to the real world. I mean it helped us to develop life skills. For instance, it made me think beforehand about possible future situations in my ESP career and helped me come up with ideas on how to solve these possible situations. In other words, it helped us develop lifelong skills. (P13)

> It gives you a better idea of what you are dealing with. You can learn all you want about ESP from the course, but at the end of the day experience is what matters. I cannot have the experience of teaching an ESP class at the moment but I can imagine that these kinds of situations are somewhat common for ESP. (P1).

Additionally, most preservice teachers reported that problem scenarios added an element of fun, as seen in the excerpt below:

> The problem scenarios don't have to be serious ones. You can change the atmosphere of the classroom by giving funny scenarios and using humour as a tool for teaching. The students are used to traditional classrooms and giving funny problem scenarios and asking them to come up with a solution can show the students that learning a new language doesn't have to be boring. (P11)

This is supported by Gvardjancic (2001), who suggests that ESP teachers sometimes find it difficult to motivate their students for language learning. Even carefully designed curricula, which follow needs analysis, do not always meet the real interests of students. Updated textbooks soon become boring and obsolete since new information is easily accessible on the internet. So, a real-life problem raises motivation.

### 3.4.4   Theory into Practice

Participants agreed that problem scenarios helped them connect the theoretical knowledge they gained in the course into practice hence reinforcing their knowledge, as illustrated in the following extract:

These scenarios solidify what we've learned in the course. Reading about something is very different from actual real-life situations. If we only teach our students ideal and theoretical concepts, they may find it difficult to adapt them to their teaching circumstances. So, I think that studying these scenarios helps avoid problems like these. (P23)

It felt nice to be able to put what you've learned in class into practice. It gave us a better idea of what we are dealing with. You can learn ESP from course books. All you want but at the end of the day, experience is what matters. (P1)

To summarize, the results suggest that pre-service English teachers have a positive perception towards using problem scenarios in the ESP course. It is evident that ESP could be more interesting if problem-based scenarios are introduced in the teaching process. Analysing problem scenarios had a positive effect on strengthening pre-service teachers' critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills, and provided them an opportunity for closing the theory–practice divide. It can therefore be stated that PBL has the potential to create a rich foundation for prospective teacher candidates to solve similar or more serious issues in their future ESP teaching by equipping them with the necessary problem-solving abilities.

## 4   Discussion

Given that demand for ESP courses continues into the present (e.g., Woodrow, 2022) to help prepare students for purposes such as business, medicine, aviation, tourism and a host of other special needs, it follows that it is essential to prepare teachers, who may not be experts in the specific field themselves, to deliver such courses. The study reported above describes one such attempt to provide pre-service teachers with the skills they need to deliver effective ESP courses.

According to the results of this study, ESP teacher candidates need to be given not only theoretical input in the essential topics related to the field of ESP, they also need to be provided with opportunities to engage in ESP-related real-life problems so that they can enhance confidence and self-learning, develop their problem-solving skills, and creativity. In this respect, findings from the present study align with other studies (Gvardjancic, 2001; Stover, 1998), demonstrating that problem-based learning can raise student motivation and interest in the subject matter and develop concurrently students' problem-solving strategies and disciplinary knowledge (Park & Peggy, 2007). Additionally, the results of the present study confirm the previous study (see Kırkgöz, 2019), which underlines the fact that ESP teacher candidates need to be given hands-on practical experience to help them relate theory with practice in order to prepare them more effectively for the field of teaching ESP.

## 5   Implications for Language Education Programmes

In terms of practical implications for ESP teacher education programmes, we might suggest that problem-based scenarios can be incorporated into ESP programmes to familiarize prospective teacher candidates with potential real-life ESP-related problems and to enhance the learning outcomes. It is essential that the problems are engaging and motivating for the ESP students in order to maintain their interest, and, as noted by Duch (1996), problems should be open-ended and incorporate the learning objectives of the course.

It is pointed out by Iglesias (2002) that the major vision required for the twenty-first century should be to develop professionals who are problem solvers and self-directed teachers. Incorporating problem-based scenarios into ESP teacher programmes, therefore, becomes indispensable for preparing prospective teacher candidates so that they can become problem solvers and critical and creative thinkers (Barell, 2010). As the demand for more highly skilled and qualified 21st-century professionals is increasing and vast numbers of people are moving from one place to another worldwide, the number of ESP courses is constantly growing (Papadima-Sophocleous et al., 2019). Learners nowadays need various courses such as Business English, Medical English, Engineering English and many others to cater to their specific needs dictated by the demands of the labour market (Jendrych, 2013). In this constantly changing context, demand for ESP courses has led to an increase in the number of ESP teachers. In order to meet the ever-growing demand for qualified ESP teachers, we need to incorporate an ESP course at the teacher education level. Hence, ESP courses are valuable for satisfying the professional needs of future ESP teachers who are capable of catering to the specific needs of their ESP students and able to serve the demands of society more effectively. Findings gained from the implementation of this ESP course at a Turkish university suggest that the approach used in this study could fruitfully be adapted to other teacher education programmes in different contexts.

## 6   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

This study has reported an ESP programme incorporating ESP-related problem scenarios to complement the course content of a teacher education programme for prospective teachers of English. The study has demonstrated that ESP learning could be more effective when complemented with problem scenarios in the learning process. According to the results of the study, such courses develop self-confidence, as well as creativity and critical thinking, which are all important attributes for effective teachers.

Further research can be conducted to find out the extent to which teacher candidates use PBL strategies when they are in practice as ESP professionals. Similarly, a longitudinal study can be done by tracing a group of ESP teacher candidates through

several years of language instruction to determine any long-term impact of the use of problem-based learning in ESP classes. Studies are needed to explore ways of delivering ESP pedagogy to in-service teachers in addition to pre-service teachers (such as those in this study). Finally, further research can be conducted using questionnaires and observation to complement findings from qualitative data to capture the complex nature of ESP learning with problem scenarios.

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# Content and Language Integrated Learning

**Ronald Kemsies** and **Georg Hellmayr**

## 1 Introduction

Content and language naturally depend on each other: without content, there is nothing to talk about; without language, no content can be discussed. Yet, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) exceeds this natural union, which, in turn, affects many different levels of planning and teaching (Nikula et al., 2016). In contrast to traditional language learners, who usually deal with general world knowledge, CLIL learners acquire more detailed and structured subject-specific content together with their respective language constructions (Ball et al., 2015; Coyle et al., 2010; Mehisto et al., 2008). This dual-focused teaching approach has conquered more and more language classrooms around the globe owing to several practical aspects, of which we will discuss the following three:

First, its dual focus makes CLIL an attractive concept for stakeholders and policy makers who typically regard it as a two-for-one deal. Consequently, many seek to implement CLIL across the board. It is more than doubtful, however, whether the approach works in every teaching context. Another question is whether CLIL programs must meet a set of felicity conditions to be successful. Second, alongside purported content learning, CLIL is generally believed to produce greater language learning gains. Yet, in many practical contexts, it is implemented in addition to regular language classes, led by language teachers and/or non-language teachers in multiple configurations (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). This increased amount of target language exposure makes the real cause of any discernible language progress on

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the part of learners debatable. Third, CLIL has been conceptualized as an evolution of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in that it promotes the natural use of the additional language in authentic communicative situations (Coyle et al., 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Gilmore, 2007; Graddol, 2006). However, putting this into practice in an adequate way can be daunting as the interdisciplinary nature of CLIL entails numerous linguistic challenges, especially for non-native teachers and materials writers, which frequently result in incorrect or inauthentic language use. Against this background, this chapter seeks to investigate the following three questions: (1) Which characteristics do successful CLIL programs exhibit?, (2) What is the role of CLIL in learning an additional language?, and (3) How can we reach a greater level of authenticity in CLIL classrooms?

## 2   Characteristics of Successful CLIL Programs

To begin with, terms such as 'successful' or 'effective' require further scrutiny. These adjectives can potentially describe different aspects of CLIL programs, for instance, in terms of learning outcomes, classroom methodology, organizational implementation at educational institutions, or stakeholder satisfaction, just to mention a few. We will interpret an effective CLIL program as one that has been successfully implemented at educational institutions because this seems to be the most comprehensive view subsuming all aforementioned factors.

The implementation of CLIL takes many forms owing to the different requirements of teaching contexts across Europe and beyond (Bland, 2015; European Commission, 2006). Determining factors of successful programs are therefore not always identical and cannot easily be measured using quantitative methods. In addition, regional conditions and expectations may also differ and language proficiency acquired in CLIL programs may not always be objectively comparable. As a result, most related investigations in the analyzed corpus take the form of qualitative case studies (Ellison, 2018; Gefaell & Unterberger, 2010; Siqueira et al., 2018; Soler et al., 2017) or literature reviews (Banegas, 2012; Lancaster, 2018; Paran, 2013; San Isidro, 2018; Siqueira et al., 2018). Another issue is that many studies either report on effective characteristics of CLIL 'between the lines' or, if they do so more explicitly, mainly present experiential data which have not been subject to statistical hypothesis testing. For instance, Navés (2009), although focusing explicitly on the question what makes CLIL programs successful, presents admittedly plausible suggestions which stem from a cross-sectional report on implementing CLIL, originally culled from Spain's autonomous education departments ten years prior (Marsh, 1999). In this report, however, the author does not reveal her research design either, other than that she "enquired" about said departments (Marsh, 1999, p. 2), which certainly weakens the validity of her propositions from a methodological stance. In addition, she also acknowledges that her account may be incomplete because of missing information. With that said, the characteristics of effective CLIL programs discussed in this section

**Table 1** Top ten characteristics of effective CLIL programs

| Codes | Documents with code (in %) | Category affiliation |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher training | 88.9 | External |
| Cooperation of stakeholders | 66.7 | External |
| Suitable materials | 66.7 | External |
| Collaboration of content and language teachers | 55.6 | Internal |
| Suitable teacher profiles | 44.4 | Internal |
| Assessment | 44.4 | Internal |
| Contextualized instruction in the target language | 33.3 | Internal |
| Context-sensitive program design | 33.3 | Organizational |
| Parental involvement | 33.3 | External |
| CLIL methodology | 33.3 | Internal |

must be viewed critically and cannot, from an empirical standpoint, be considered universal.

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic coding with the help of the qualitative software MaxQDA. Afterwards, the resulting code tree was reorganized to subsume codes that share a common theme. The current analysis yielded 30 potential characteristics. To reduce this list, we will only report on the 10 most relevant features (Table 1). Relevance was determined by the percentage of documents in which each characteristic occurred. This gave rise to three categories, which will be discussed in turn.

## 2.1 Organizational Factors

The successful implementation of CLIL is a result of several organizational features which fall into two main categories: recommended features of a CLIL program and a specific manner of leadership. As for the former, the studies listed above point out that CLIL programs should ideally be context-sensitive, integrated into the curriculum and optional. A gradual implementation long-term seems most beneficial for all stakeholders, which can, for instance, be put into practice using "modular CLIL" (Ellison, 2018, p. 46), i.e. when CLIL is introduced in smaller increments as parts of lessons. From a leadership perspective, it has been recommended to install a CLIL coordinator who oversees the entire implementation process together with "distributed leadership" in which several stakeholders share different responsibilities (Ellison, 2018, p. 48). Continuous monitoring and repeated evaluation of the CLIL program are also crucial.

## 2.2 External Factors

Looking at Table 1 afresh, external factors occupy the top three ranks of the hierarchy, which suggest their particular significance for effective CLIL programs. The importance of CLIL teacher training is the most frequently mentioned external factor, followed by the cooperation of all stakeholders as well as suitable teaching materials. Yet, several studies reported on the paucity of such training opportunities and materials (Banegas, 2012; Lancaster, 2018; Navés, 2009; Siqueira et al., 2018) so that "teacher preparation is often left to in-service moments" (Siqueira et al., 2018, p. 200). To remedy this situation, it has been suggested that CLIL teachers create their own materials to cater to the needs of their individual teaching contexts. However, this is frequently not possible because of their workload as well as time constraints. Another proposal was that suitable materials should be provided by the school management (Soler et al., 2017). As for the role of stakeholders, it is not always made explicit what their support should ideally consist of, other than providing teachers with the appropriate CLIL training. In addition, one study deplored existing time constraints and the resulting inefficiency of school schedules, which should be taken care of by educational authorities (Lancaster, 2018).

Parental involvement represents the last external factor and is repeatedly described as indispensable for successful CLIL programs. For instance, the parents' role may involve post-teaching reflections on contents in the L1 or they may serve as "informants in ongoing monitoring of CLIL programmes via questionnaires, interviews or focus groups" (Ellison, 2018, p. 50).

## 2.3 Internal Factors

The collaboration of content and language teachers is also described as a crucial internal factor for successful CLIL programs. Teachers could, for instance, engage in:

> observation of each other teaching regular lessons in order to gain awareness of subject literacy, methodology, cognitive challenge, language use and classroom management; planning CLIL lessons together where both content and language are accounted for, and tasks and materials are designed and appropriately scaffolded; and team teaching or observation of CLIL lessons. (Ellison, 2018, p. 47)

At the same time, it is acknowledged that this can also be a challenge. Another important factor is the selection of suitable teachers for a CLIL program. Ideally, they should be multilingual and bring the required openness, team-spirit and commitment to the table, among other things (Navés, 2009). Furthermore, the significance of assessment is of equal importance. Also, most studies do not elaborate on this matter in more detail. In this context, a discrepancy between national exams and assessment in CLIL programs has been pointed out.

Interestingly, CLIL methodology, together with contextualized target language instruction and a context-sensitive program design, occupies a comparatively low rank in the list of relevant characteristics. One would be inclined to think that it should be one of the top priorities for successful CLIL programs.

## 3   The Role of CLIL in Learning an Additional Language

Even though CLIL is defined as having a dual focus, many educational institutions primarily participate in such programs because of alleged language gains. However, as for the latter, the research literature leaves a rather equivocal impression with a host of sometimes converging but also contradictory results. There are numerous studies attesting to language gains in areas such as oral productive skills (especially regarding fluency and spontaneous interaction), receptive and productive vocabulary, morphosyntax, writing skills, pragmatic and strategic competence and other fields (e.g., Admiraal et al., 2006; Cimermanová, 2020; Dalton-Puffer, 2008, 2011; de Zarobe, 2010; Pérez Cañado, 2018). On the other hand, there are also several research reports in which no statistically significant effects could be observed. For instance, Goris et al., (2019, p. 692) conclude in their rigorous meta-study of longitudinal research on alleged language gains through CLIL that their findings "do not provide unequivocal support for the hypothesis that learners in a CLIL class will develop more EFL proficiency over a certain period than their mainstream counterparts; the majority of studies produced null effects". Moreover, Bruton (2011, 2013) also voiced a note of caution regarding the research methodology employed in many pro-CLIL studies which did not always control for crucial variables such as initial target language proficiency, an equal amount of instruction time in experimental and control groups as well as other factors. With these limitations in mind, the overall interpretation of positive results certainly remains debatable and the central question of whether CLIL is the actual cause of any perceived language gains cannot be answered satisfactorily yet. This is due to several interacting factors, some of which we will elaborate on below.

One major confounding variable in many studies is that CLIL lessons usually take place in addition to regular language classes, which increases the total amount of hours spent on the target language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). With that said, the question arises whether any purported language gains stem from CLIL or from the greater target language exposure and, therefore, more opportunities to practice. For instance, would learners exhibit a comparable amount of progress if only the hours of language teaching were increased? Verspoor et al. (2015), pondering the same question, believe that this may indeed be a possibility that cannot be denied. As long as we do not have convincing empirical evidence on language gains caused by CLIL and nothing else, we must assume, for the time being, that more is more.

Yet, increased exposure to the additional language represents only one factor that may contribute to the language progress of CLIL learners. In conjunction with other relevant learner variables such as scholastic aptitude, individual motivation

as well as their initial target language proficiency, another influencing factor is an effective teaching methodology applied by qualified teachers. Without these relevant ingredients, no CLIL program is likely to succeed. However, CLIL methodologies and practices vary strongly and so do teacher qualifications (Goris et al., 2019). What is more, these aspects are difficult to operationalize in experimental research. Any positive study results in favor of CLIL, therefore, have to be taken with a grain of salt, which has also been acknowledged by Verspoor et al. (2015, p. 20):

> [W]e do not know if the bilinguals perform better because of the amount of exposure to the L2, […] CLIL pedagogy with its teaching modes to encourage language use, the extra hours of English instruction only […], the attention that is paid to language form in especially the English classes, or as we would suspect, the interaction over time amongst all these factors. And it may be difficult to ever tease the amount of exposure and the pedagogy apart […].

Another issue mentioned by Goris et al., (2019, p. 694) is that the nature of different subjects impacts target language acquisition in different ways: "It is difficult to imagine that a language-rich subject, such as history, influences the target language to the same degree as a subject that depends on complex cognitive explanations, such as mathematics". This suggests that any comparative CLIL studies should ideally be based on the same non-language subject to minimize the linguistic bias inherent in a particular subject, an aspect that must be taken into consideration especially when cumulative evidence is used to justify a pro-CLIL stance. Furthermore, the linguistic properties of different disciplines may be relevant for stakeholders and/or policy makers when it comes down to the question of which subjects should and which ones should not be taught using CLIL.

A final point that must be considered regarding the role of CLIL in language learning is the fact that it is not holistic in nature. Ideally, regular CLT classes address the domains of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Most of these aspects are unlikely (although not impossible) to occur in CLIL lessons, which are frequently more dominated by factual lexis and subject-specific structures, to the same extent. Consequently, the construal of CLIL as an evolution of CLT (Coyle et al., 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Gilmore, 2007; Graddol, 2006) needs to be considered carefully. For instance, the claim that CLIL entails real-life topics facilitating real communication "where natural use of the target language is possible" (Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p. 3) also applies to CLT. In their seminal article, Canale and Swain (1980, pp. 29, 31) already stipulated the "use of real (as opposed to textbook-contrived) language" and demanded that "authentic texts be used in the language classroom from the very beginning". Even earlier than that, Clarke and Silberstein (1977, p. 51) had made this desideratum explicit: "Classroom activities should parallel the 'real world' as closely as possible". It follows that we must ask ourselves where we draw the line between CLT and CLIL in the face of these commonalities regarding language use. One may, for instance, argue that contemporary CLT also includes elements such as structural accuracy training (Richards, 2006), which are typically absent from CLIL lessons. Yet, such activities are frequently stepping stones to more complex language. CLIL would certainly not be possible without a certain "threshold of language competence" (Paran, 2013, p. 327) which is usually

acquired in regular language classes. Again, this circumstance makes it difficult to differentiate both approaches from one another in terms of language. A tangible difference between both approaches mainly lies in the nature of the content that is being taught and perhaps in the respective methodologies applied: CLT focuses on general content mainly based on world knowledge applying what we may call a 'communicative methodology' (e.g., Richards, 2006) whereas CLIL is based on subject-specific content conveyed through its corresponding methodology together with any of the proposed CLIL techniques (e.g., Ball et al., 2015; Coyle et al., 2010; Mehisto et al., 2008), which are largely derived from or inspired by CLT, however, and can therefore not be easily subsumed into a discrete methodology alongside CLT (Fig. 1). Because of this, we advocate the view that CLIL constitutes a specific facet of CLT, but it cannot replace the latter without major linguistic trade-offs in the long run.

All things considered, it can be maintained that the implementation of CLIL classes in addition to regular CLT classes seems to produce positive effects on language learning, especially regarding vocabulary growth and oral production skills (fluency). However, it remains debatable how these positive effects come about. Whether the nature of CLIL is responsible or whether it is the increased exposure to the additional language or other potential factors is still not sufficiently clear and requires further research. In any case, good quality teaching based on a high competence in content as well as language is a pre-condition for any kind of linguistic gains in both teaching scenarios, CLT and CLIL. Furthermore, it must be maintained that the use of authentic language as well as real-life tasks is inherent in both approaches, only their different orientations towards general content (CLT) as



CLT
•General content
•Authentic language
•Authentic tasks
•Communicative methodology

CLIL
•Subject-specific content
•Authentic language (subject-
  specific)
•Authentic tasks (subject-
  specific)
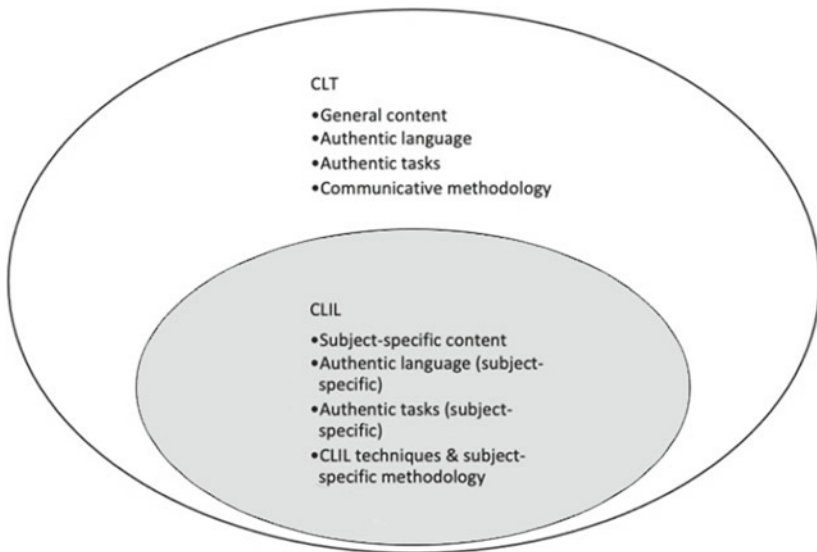•CLIL techniques & subject-
  specific methodology

**Fig. 1** The interdependence of CLT and CLIL

opposed to subject-specific content (CLIL) remain a striking feature. Owing to these observations, we propose that CLIL be viewed as a valuable educational principle constituting a significant element of communicative language teaching.

## 4    An Empirical Study

### 4.1    Method

The study which we will present in this section was motivated by several first-hand observations as well as numerous personal accounts from international colleagues of how CLIL is frequently put into practice at regular public secondary schools. When attempting to teach CLIL, many non-native teachers, especially when they are not language teachers themselves, often struggle to find an appropriate approach to an adequate language level and authentic, subject-specific language use. Because of linguistic limitations, many extrapolate target language lexis and syntax based on their own L1, which can be misleading and ultimately have a negative impact on potential language gains (Bruton, 2013), irrespective of possible content gains.

Furthermore, many CLIL teachers use native speaker resources if specific CLIL materials are not available. To match the language level of these native-speaker materials with the target language proficiency of learners, teachers frequently use lower-level native materials in higher-level CLIL classes. However, owing to their learners' restricted (i.e., non-native) language capabilities, authentic materials will not automatically cater to learners' actual content needs unless such materials are carefully adapted and linguistically scaffolded.

To counterbalance these issues, we have tried to identify authentic patterns of language use through an empirical study of a select corpus of Keystage 2 Science materials for native-speaker learners published between 2014 and 2016. Science is a frequent subject choice for CLIL lessons, and the selected materials should be reasonably recent regarding content, language, and methodology. The purpose was to find underlying trends of presentation, preferred language functions, and common language use.

The texts were coded so that language tokens could be retrieved, and clusters of features could be identified. Altogether, 52,900 tokens were assembled representing 3,900 types of language patterns for further analysis. At the outset, there was no fixed set of criteria for the tagging process. Following a grounded-theory approach, the types of language patterns were created during the coding process. Coding was conducted at the sentence level to create a consistent set of data falling into two categories: language functions and select grammatical features. As for the latter, we distinguished between the various types of questions, wh-questions and yes/no questions.

On the one hand, this process was carried out as a computer-assisted qualitative analysis with the help of MaxQDA, enabling us to organize and visualize the various

functions and their distribution across the corpus. In addition, the concordancing software AntConc was used to sort content and action words, to get an overview of frequently used lexical items as well as common collocations, which constitute a practical toolkit when writing subject-related content.

## *4.2   Findings*

Altogether, 6,289 coded segments within 29 topic areas were created, covering 69 code types and 27 language functions. The various codes were analyzed on three different levels from the overall corpus level to the specific patterns used for specialized topics within a subject area to provide more detailed insights into the language use of native-speaker materials writers.

Table 2 shows that the most common individual function was *instructing* with a frequency of 16.04%, closely followed by *wh-questions*, which were either used as parts of the task rubric or as rhetorical questions to introduce an explanation of science phenomena (15.03%). Altogether, *describing states or facts* (12.77%), *describing cause and/or effect* (12.02%) and *describing (factual) actions and processes* (8.42%) were the next three categories in the ranking, which together with the aforementioned two major categories make up almost two-thirds of all identified functions (64.28%).

When the various functions were grouped in clusters, two major trends emerged: The most frequently used functions were descriptions of various sorts. The three respective categories mentioned above (*describing states or facts*, *describing cause and/or effect*, and *describing (factual) actions and processes*) together with *describing appearance* (2.65%) and *describing (biological) needs* (1.19%) form a cluster of functions with a distribution of more than one third (37.05%). A second cluster emerged when questions of various kinds were analyzed. *Asking wh-questions* amounted to 15.03%, constituting the most frequent structure in this field, with interrogative sentences with *to be* (2.14%), interrogative sentences with *to do* (1.67%), and interrogative sentences with *modal verbs* (1.09%) falling far behind. Overall, *asking questions* was the second-most frequent structure with an occurrence of almost one-fifth (19.93%).

To evaluate the use of functions in a specific field, Physics was chosen as it is a popular topic in CLIL. Here the ranking is slightly overturned compared to the overall frequency across all fields of Science (Table 3). *Describing cause and effect* emerged as the most frequently used function (16.15%), ranking above the function *instructing* with 15.22%, followed closely by *wh-questions* at 15.11%.

When looking at the structures which were used to express these functions concrete linguistic constructions became apparent. To illustrate, Table 4 showcases commonly used constructions to *describe cause and/or effect*.

These examples show a clear preference of the authors for certain structures which are deemed to be appropriate for the age group and the cognitive level of learners in Keystage 2. As can be seen in the examples above, for instance, the construction using the conjunction *because* is by far the most common one to express the communicative

**Table 2** Overall distribution of language functions

| Codes: language functions | Frequency in the entire corpus (in %) |
|---|---|
| Instructing | 16.04 |
| Asking wh-questions | 15.03 |
| Describing states or facts | 12.77 |
| Describing cause and/or effect | 12.02 |
| Describing (factual) actions and processes | 8.42 |
| Expressing a purpose | 5.00 |
| Introducing new lexis | 4.45 |
| Identifying/defining | 4.27 |
| Demonstrating | 2.99 |
| Describing appearance | 2.65 |
| Giving examples | 2.35 |
| Expressing ability | 2.28 |
| Asking questions with 'to be' | 2.14 |
| Expressing possibility | 1.80 |
| Asking questions with 'to do' | 1.67 |
| Giving advice | 1.19 |
| Describing (biological) needs | 1.19 |
| Asking questions with modal verbs | 1.09 |

function of *describing cause and/or effect*. This is presumably because this linguistic expression is cognitively more accessible for learners of that age group. Furthermore, note that potentially more complex structures (e.g., if-sentences) also remain at a very basal level; constructions expressing different probabilities (e.g., conditional II, conditional III) which would require higher-level thinking skills seem to have been omitted deliberately by the materials writers.

Finally, with the help of the concordancing software AntConc, the frequency of content and action words could be established (Table 5, 6).

As can be seen from these tables, the lexical items used in the context of Physics also remain at a comparatively basic level. It can be assumed that the materials writers carefully selected these language items on purpose to match them with the cognitive abilities of the learners in focus. What seems like an obvious strategy frequently poses problems in CLIL classes, however, especially when materials for native speakers are used (see above). Typically, the language in such materials is too complex for learners of the same age group. To avoid mere rote learning of contents by language learners, it is, therefore, advisable to be sensitive to this issue when designing CLIL materials. Frequency lists like the two above can be useful in this regard.

**Table 3**  Distribution of language functions for the subject physics

| Codes: language functions | Frequency in Physics (in %) |
| --- | --- |
| Describing cause and/or effect | 16.15 |
| Instructing | 15.22 |
| Asking wh-questions | 15.11 |
| Describing states or facts | 11.51 |
| Describing (factual) actions and processes | 7.47 |
| Identifying/defining | 4.75 |
| Expressing ability | 2.89 |
| Demonstrating | 2.67 |
| Introducing new lexis | 2.56 |
| Expressing possibility | 2.51 |
| Describing appearance | 1.96 |
| Giving examples | 1.75 |
| Expressing a purpose | 1.69 |
| Asking questions with 'to be' | 1.47 |
| Giving advice | 1.15 |
| Asking questions with modal verbs | 1.15 |
| Asking questions with 'to do' | 0.71 |
| Describing (biological) needs | 0.33 |
| Expressing probability | 0.27 |
| Asking questions with 'have' or 'will' | 0.11 |
| Suggesting | 0.05 |
| Expressing obligation | 0.05 |
| Expressing degrees of certainty | 0.05 |

**Table 4**  Common constructions to describe cause and/or effect

| Constructions & frequency | Linguistic examples |
| --- | --- |
| Sth. behaves in a certain way because… (39 occurrences) | *Magnets push and pull each other because they have a force called magnetism* |
| When sth. happens to sth., it reacts in a certain way. (14 occurrences) | *When ice is warmed, it melts to form water* |
| Sth. will happen because… (11 occurrences) | *The water in this pan will evaporate faster because it is warmer* |
| If you do sth., sth. happens (10 occurrences) | *If you heat liquid water to 100 degrees C, it boils* |

**Table 5** Top 15 content words in physics

| Rank | Content words (frequency) |
|------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Water (626) |
| 2 | Light (445) |
| 3 | Science (404) |
| 4 | Materials (330) |
| 5 | Make (297) |
| 6 | Earth (274) |
| 7 | Sun (254) |
| 8 | See (211) |
| 9 | Air (205) |
| 10 | Liquid (183) |
| 11 | Circuit (182) |
| 12 | Change (176) |
| 13 | Sound (169) |
| 14 | Moon (160) |
| 15 | Electricity (156) |

**Table 6** Top 15 action words in physics

| Rank | Action words (frequency) |
|------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Write (37) |
| 2 | Use (25) |
| 3 | Draw (23) |
| 4 | Explain (20) |
| 5 | Make (11) |
| 6 | Put (9) |
| 7 | Try (9) |
| 8 | Complete (9) |
| 9 | Ask (6) |
| 10 | Describe (5) |
| 11 | Find (4) |
| 12 | Do (3) |
| 13 | Fll (3) |
| 14 | Hold (3) |
| 15 | Show (2) |

# 5    Implications for Language Education Programs

Our findings can serve as a model for prospective materials writers – be they native or non-native—to reflect on their own resources and potentially to adapt them so that a more judicious use of the additional language can be achieved. This way, more authentic CLIL materials can be created. It goes without saying that the materials were all in written form and therefore do not allow valid conclusions regarding oral language use in the classroom. Let us now consider the practical implications of our study for good language education programs in some detail.

To begin with, our results show that writers of materials for native-speaker learners prefer a certain number of structures that are appropriate for Keystage 2. The linguistic functions which are used in these materials correspond to the level of thinking skills according to the English National Curriculum, which, in turn, reflects Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) in its various guises. Consequently, the analyzed materials mainly exhibit basic cognitive functions like remembering or understanding. Higher thinking skills like analyzing or evaluating are not represented because they require more complex language which may not be readily accessible at that stage. These characteristics should therefore be considered when designing CLIL materials as they impact the kind of language which is supposed to be used and hence the cognitive complexity of the content.

Furthermore, our findings can serve as linguistic springboards to express content using authentic language and help adapt it to the conceptual as well as linguistic level of learners. They suggest concrete linguistic structures which must be pre-taught to ascertain an approximation to authentic language. The selection and production of linguistically sound, near-authentic materials largely depend on the language skills of CLIL teachers. Focusing on a corpus-based approach will counterbalance possible language shortfalls on the part of non-native, potentially non-language CLIL teachers. Through the study at hand, these processes will become less arbitrary and reduce the workload while planning lessons. In this way, it will be possible to bridge the gap between the content and the learners' and teachers' required language proficiency.

Furthermore, our study can also have a knock-on effect on language teaching strategies of non-native teachers who are not familiar with the specific approaches favored by the English National Curriculum, in our case, and the teaching traditions in England. Subject-specific teaching strategies as well as authentic language structures could also be conveyed in pre-service as well as in-service teacher education courses. The insights gained can also be seen as methodological models to finetune teacher performance in CLIL classes. On a larger scale, our results can also inform an integrated syllabus design that has been described by Nikula et al. (2016), e.g. typical language structures could be assigned to their respective topics.

# 6   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss (1) the characteristics of successful CLIL programs, (2) the role of CLIL in learning an additional language, and (3) the way we can achieve a greater level of authenticity in CLIL classrooms. It has been shown that successful CLIL programs rely on the interplay of organizational, external, and internal factors like questions of leadership, suitable teacher training opportunities, or the cooperation of content and language teachers. Above all, it has become apparent that teacher training, the cooperation of stakeholders, and suitable materials represent the most relevant factors in this context. Furthermore, several studies suggest that CLIL enhances overall language proficiency. However, it is still not clear whether this is due to specific CLIL techniques or the increased amount of target language exposure, among other factors which we illustrated too. Despite these uncertainties, it can be maintained that the addition of CLIL to regular language programs influences learning an additional language in a positive way. Finally, to improve the linguistic quality of CLIL materials, we have presented insights from our corpus study, which yielded possible linguistic models for materials writers and CLIL teachers alike. This could be particularly helpful to bridge the gap between language proficiency and the complexity of subject content so that both objectives, language learning and subject learning, can be achieved at an acceptable level.

Future research should therefore further explore the three dimensions discussed in this chapter. In addition to cross-sectional studies and experiential accounts of successful implementations of CLIL programs, empirical investigations would be desirable to identify determining factors in this matter. More research is equally required regarding the role of CLIL in learning an additional language. The question to which extent CLIL can generate progress in the additional language or whether this effect only occurs in conjunction with regular language programs needs to be explored more thoroughly. If language gains were the result of the increased target language exposure and could not be stringently delineated from language gains achieved with the help of CLIL, the dual approach would have to be reassessed, re-contextualized and/or modified to justify future political and personal investments as well as methodological changes. In any case, to ensure high-quality CLIL promoting additional corpus studies to compile a solid database of authentic linguistic constructions and lexis related to different subjects, topics, and levels is essential. This way CLIL materials, and subsequently CLIL teaching, can be enhanced in the long run.

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# English-Medium Instruction

**Vildan İnci Kavak** and **Yasemin Kırkgöz**

## 1 Introduction

Global competition and the internationalisation of higher education have created a growing tendency for universities to offer programmes in English as the medium of instruction (EMI), and more international students have been lured into programmes taught solely in English (Doiz et al., 2012). EMI plays a key role in students' comprehension of content, perception of educational standards as well as the efficiency of academic tasks, thus shaping students' overall experience in an academic degree (Rose et al., 2019). In the EMI context, university students are expected to learn the field-specific subject matter that is packed with field-specific terminology in a language they are solely exposed to in the classroom (Lasagabastar & Doiz, 2021). Due to the perception of prestige attached to English, universities tend to insist on English-only teaching models and restrict their lecturers with strict language policies. Nevertheless, such policies create problems such as students' missing critical information, participating less in courses and spending extra effort to catch up with fast-flowing and challenging subject delivery (Coleman, 2006). Students have problems with technical vocabulary (Yip et al., 2003), and they are often left alone to deal with their own problems related to their lack of knowledge in the medium of instruction. Although language development is not seen as "a curricular focus for EMI, it is often a hoped-for or expected outcome." (Pecorari & Malmström, 2018, p. 501). In other words, in their settings, "English is not taught but is nonetheless expected to be learned" (Pecorari & Malmström, 2018, p. 511). Although the role of language competence in the success of EMI policies is stressed in many studies (see

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Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020; Macaro, 2018), many lecturers and tutors acknowledge responsibility for the course content only and reject their role in elucidating language components and linguistic forms (Basturkmen, 2018; Costa, 2012) for reasons such as "their inability to deal with language problems" (Doiz et al., 2012, p. 169). All the above-mentioned factors give rise to cynicism, low motivation and poor academic performance among learners.

To cope with language-based challenges and avoid superficial learning, university students and lecturers make on-the-spot or critical decisions to enrich their practices by adopting new and complementary strategies. These are episodes that are mutually or unilaterally constructed between the parties. Lecturers thus extend their roles beyond delivering the subject matter by positioning themselves as language instructors to prevent problems in language-related episodes (LREs). Even though a large volume of research has been carried out to define learners' problems and their solutions in the EMI context (e.g., Evans & Morrison, 2011; Hellekjær, 2010; Macdonald, 1990; Tatzl, 2011), there is still scarce attention to classroom interaction to unravel how lecturers make decisions for better language practices in tertiary EMI contexts (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020). Classroom interaction, in this respect, provides us with crucial information to understand the reasons for students' (in)comprehension and potential actions taken by the lecturer (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015; Inci-Kavak & Kırkgöz, 2021; Kırkgöz & Kücük, 2022; Kırkgöz et al., 2023; Macaro, 2018; McLaughlin & Parkinson, 2018; Schleppegrell, 2009).

In order to contribute to the existing knowledge of EMI practices and to suggest solutions to the challenges, this chapter reports on a four-month classroom-based investigation at a university where EMI has been adopted for the last fifty years. There is a gap in the research that focuses on "comparative studies amongst institutions and/or amongst countries" (Macaro et al., 2018, p. 64). Although some studies have provided comparisons in different EMI settings (Dafouz & Smit, 2016; Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Jenkins & Mauranen, 2019), more research is needed to draw conclusions about policy and practice-based strategies in various educational settings. The limited data about the incidental attention to language and LREs in EMI classes in different university disciplines have motivated the present study. In this respect, it examines classroom interactions and the extent to which university EMI instructors and students incidentally attended language episodes in two classes at a Turkish public university. The study focuses on the construction of language-related episodes (LREs) defined as incidentally arising instances where teachers and students discuss the language they are using during disciplinary classes (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015). In EMI classes, learners can potentially learn academic English in its field-specific context. Although the primary orientation of classroom discussion is on the academic disciplinary content; unplanned, impromptu interludes come up for highlighting or correcting the language knowledge (Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, 2018).

## 2 Language-Related Episodes in University EMI Classes

Language-Related Episodes (LREs) occur when the focus of the lesson shifts from the lesson content to the target language as part of the classroom interaction (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). LREs offer "brief attention, either planned or incidental, to (problematic) language items within a larger communicative context" (Loewen, 2011, p. 579). This can happen when participants comment, ask/answer questions and ask/give feedback (Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p. 326). For instance, a learner can ask about an element of the language such as the meaning/use/spelling or pronunciation of a word in an LRE (Leeser, 2004). Mackey (2006) defines it as interactional feedback that centres around lexical or, less frequently, morphosyntactic structures. These episodes are considered to be pedagogically effective because students' attention is directed to the language in the process of content learning (Ellis et al., 2001).

In an EMI context, successful learning of disciplinary content knowledge is the sole explicit goal (Airey, 2016). However, teaching in the EMI classroom may include some language support as students are still in the process of language learning by being exposed to English continuously (Coleman, 2006). All the studies about LREs demonstrate that students are still developing their L2 skills (Gass & Mackey, 2007; LaPierre, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Williams, 2001). As a meaning-centered activity, LREs trigger learners' attention to linguistic forms which may otherwise be neglected in a meaning-focused context. LREs can be initiated by the teacher or the student. As for the episode type, it is pre-emptive when a linguistic form has been put into practice before it occurs or reactive when a linguistic form/problem occurs and feedback is given in response. In these episodes, the focus can be on lexis, grammar or discourse. Even though there have been studies focusing on form in EMI settings (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015; Costa, 2012; Shegar et al., 2013), there is none in the Turkish tertiary context. This study covers all of these aforementioned components of LREs in EMI university classes and their possible interrelationship.

As shown in Table 1, there have been a few studies focusing on how lecturers and students attend to interaction in EMI settings.

Basturkmen and Shackleford (2015) and Basturkmen (2018) found few language-related episodes in the university accounting classroom interaction, which were mostly in relation to technical vocabulary. McLaughlin and Parkinson's (2018) study was conducted in a high school where the teachers provided support for technical words in most cases. By analysing the corpus of lectures on EMI science subjects, Costa (2012) found a very limited number of focus-on-form episodes. Considering the traditional lecture format, not many of these were responding to the students' lack of comprehension, but they were about possible language problems pre-empted by the teacher. They showed that lecturers/teachers generally initiate the episodes to warn their students to prevent a potential problem. The LREs are mostly vocabulary-focused as they help convey the meaning of field-specific academic and technical content. The study by An et al. (2019) found that LREs in EMI science classes in the Chinese context are in accord with those in previous contexts since the LREs were again vocabulary-focused but on non-technical vocabulary. Finally, Hong and

**Table 1** Recent studies about LREs in EMI settings

| Study | The focus | The context | Method | Results |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Costa (2012) | The extent to which Focus on Form (FonF) is present in Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education lectures | Italian EMI university setting | Observations, recordings and transcriptions | Mostly, teacher-initiated, pre-emptive episodes |
| Basturkmen and Shackleford (2015) | LREs identified in both the lecturer's talk and the student–lecturer interaction | The first-year accounting classes in a HE institution in New Zealand | Observation, audio-recording | Mostly, teacher-initiated, pre-emptive episodes, disciplinary uses of vocabulary (46%) and conventional forms of expression in the accounting register (41%) |
| Basturkmen (2018) | Perspectives of the lecturers, their interpretations of LREs, and recall of strategies used to draw attention to language | The first-year accounting teaching in the tertiary education setting in New Zealand | Interview and video recording through stimulated recall | Strategies used: paraphrasing and repetition, Lecturers perceived helping students with terminology was an important function of their role |
| McLaughlin and Parkinson (2018) | The construct of LREs and a similar approach in an investigation into unplanned attention to language in tutor talk and learner-tutor interaction | Vocational training in carpentry classes | Observation and audio-recording | Mostly teacher-initiated pre-emptive episodes, vocabulary-related episodes |
| An et al. (2019) | The language-focused-episodes (LFEs) | EMI setting in a high school context in China (science lessons) | Video recording | Very limited explicit language instruction, with non-technical vocabulary being the main type of LFEs |
| Hong and Basturkmen (2020) | Language-related episodes (LREs) to investigate incidental instances during classroom interaction | Two high schools in South Korea | Recordings of classroom interactions and observation notes | Mostly teacher-initiated pre-emptive episodes, vocabulary-related episodes |

Basturkmen's (2020) study in politics and economics courses at an EMI high school found similarities between the LREs occurring in the interaction in terms of form, type, and focus.

## 3 An Empirical Study

In view of the literature reviewed above, our study features two EMI university classrooms from two different fields (Humanities/Social Sciences versus Natural Sciences/Engineering) and explores the extent to which LREs occur and the language aspects are addressed. In line with a recent study (Hong & Basturkmen, 2020), the following research questions were particularly addressed:

1. What are the frequency, linguistic focus and types of LREs in two different university EMI classes?
2. How do LREs occur in the literature and food science classes in the university setting?

### 3.1 Method

The study was conducted in two departments, Food Engineering (Food Sciences [FS] programme) and Western Languages and Literatures (English Language and Literature [ELL] programme) of a public university in southeast Turkey (see Tables 2 and 3). These two departments were selected for two reasons: they run several programmes via English and one of the researchers is affiliated with the institution. Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were utilized for the selection of participants. Convenience sampling was employed as one of the researchers affiliated with the institution had direct access to the research sites. Purposive sampling was used as students in EMI programmes participated in the study. As for the selection of the departments, we attempted to represent different branches of sciences in the sample. Thus, we included participants from the Food-Engineering Department to represent natural sciences and participants from the English Language and Literature Department to represent humanities/social sciences. The details of the selection criteria for these departments were as follows:

**Table 2** Information about the English language and literature settings

|  | Class 1 | Class 2 | Class 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Course | Analysis of Poetry II | 19th Century British Novel | Postcolonial Literature |
| Student's Grade | Year 1 | Year 3 | Year 4 |
| Number of students | 60 | 60 | 60 |

**Table 3** Information about the food science settings

|                    | Class 1            | Class 2                          |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Course             | Organic Chemistry  | Introduction to Food Engineering |
| Student's Grade    | Year 1             | Year 1                           |
| Number of students | 45                 | 45                               |

These two departments enabled us to analyse the occurrences of LREs in a comparative manner. There were many similar factors that helped us make the comparison possible such as the number of students, the distribution of student sex (not male- or female-dominated), the size of classes (medium-sized), type of courses (lecture and content-based, not language-focused courses), assessment methods (paper-based exams), and EMI language policy.

These departments had a large number of students and members of teaching staff compared with other departments. Accordingly, it conferred an advantage for reaching more participants, helping us analyse the issues at greater length.

These departments were widely run in English across similar state and foundation universities in Turkey. This was an advantage for the researchers to offer some resonance for similar groups of participants at different institutions.

Two lecturers from each department responded positively to taking part in the study. Neither of the lecturers had had professional training in EMI teaching. Around 25–45 students attend each class, most of whom have Turkish as their L1. Both classes are taught by experienced content teachers (see Table 4 for the profile of the lecturers participating in the study).

The data were collected during the spring semester of the 2019–2020 academic year through audio recordings and class observations. While the audio recordings provided the primary share of the data, the observations were used to complement the information gathered from the audio data.

As the primary data source, a total of 12 (6 h each) lesson hours (273 min in ELL and 270 min in FS classrooms) were audio-recorded, transcribed, and studied to answer the research questions. Another data collection tool was the non-participant observations in both departments, for which the classrooms were visited and observed for 24 lesson hours (12 h in ELL, 12 h in FS classrooms). A total of 55 LREs were identified in the recordings. The identified LREs were coded for three characteristics as shown in Table 5.

To transcribe the data, the researchers secured member-checking and peer debriefing from time to time before coming to a decision (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 1998). The transcription was checked by three colleagues in the field and the participants (students and lecturers) by email. To ensure inter-rater reliability, the data were studied by three external raters. They analysed the transcribed data, ranked and identified the LREs depending on the three main criteria above. Apart from the three broad headings, they were not given any checklists so as not to interfere in their assessment. In this way, interrater reliability was ensured by using Cohen Kappa's degree of agreement. When more than half of the raters (2 out of 3 for this

**Table 4** The profile of the lecturers

| Lecturers | Gender | Department | Education | Nationality | Experience | L1 | L2 | Language teaching experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lecturer 1 | Female | ELL | Ph.D. Grad | Turkish | 21 years | Turkish | English | No |
| Lecturer 2 | Male | ELL | Ph.D. Grad | Turkish | 16 years | Turkish | English | Yes |
| Lecturer 3 | Male | FS | Ph.D. Grad | Turkish | 30 years | Turkish | English | No |
| Lecturer 4 | Female | FS | Ph.D. Grad | Turkish | 15 years | Turkish | English | No |

**Table 5** Coding of the LREs

| Initiator of the episode | Teacher |
|---|---|
| | Student |
| Interactional type | Pre-emptive |
| | Reactive |
| Language category | Vocabulary |
| | Grammar |
| | Discourse |

case) ranked an instance in the same way (e.g., Rater 1 pre-emptive, Rater 2 reactive, Rater 3 pre-emptive, Final Ranking pre-emptive), it was accepted as reliable. A consistency of 90% was reached for the coding of all three characteristics of LREs. Those that were contradictory and were not agreed upon were eliminated. All of these techniques that were used for the qualitative data improved the trustworthiness and credibility of this study (Creswell, 2012; Janesick, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Spall, 1998; Spillett, 2003).

## 3.2   Findings

### 3.2.1   Audio Recordings

**Frequency and initiator of LREs**. A total of 56 episodes were identified in 543 min of recording. However, the number, kind and initiators were different in each classroom as the nature of interaction in these classes is distinctive to its kind. LREs occurred in both of these EMI classes but appeared more often in ELL classes, the details of which are provided in the observation section. As shown in Tables 6 and 7, 41 episodes in ELL and 15 episodes in FS classes were identified. In both classes, the teacher-initiated episodes are more than the student-initiated ones (83% in ELL, 67% in FS classes). In the FS department, student-initiated episodes form a third of the total number of episodes.

**Table 6** Initiator of LREs in English literature & language interaction

| | Postcolonial literature | 19th Century British novel | 19th Century British novel | Analysis of poetry II | Analysis of poetry II | Analysis of poetry II | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher-initiated | 0 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 7 | 17 | 34 (83%) |
| Student-initiated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 (17%) |
| Total | 0 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 9 | 18 | 41 |

**Table 7** Initiator of LREs in Food Science interaction

|  | Organic chemistry | Organic chemistry | Organic chemistry | Organic chemistry | Organic chemistry | Introduction to food engineering | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher-initiated | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 (67%) |
| Student-initiated | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 (33%) |
| Total | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 15 |

**Interactional Type: Reactive/pre-emptive**. While most of the teacher-initiated episodes were pre-emptive, those initiated by students were reactive (Table 8).

In ELL classes, 12% of LREs are student-initiated (see Table 8), of which 88% are pre-emptive. In FS lessons, there are not many LREs and the difference between pre-emptive (67%) and reactive episodes (33%) is quite low. The reactive episodes form a third of the total LREs.

**Linguistic focus of LREs**. Tables 9 and 10 show a similar pattern in the linguistic categories of the LREs across the two disciplines because the episodes focusing on vocabulary, most of which is discipline-specific and serves the general aim of the class, are quite high in number in both classes.

The words that become the focus of the LREs in both departments are illustrated in Table 11 for understanding how lecturers help students with the meaning of unknown vocabulary.

**Table 8** The proportion of pre-emptive and reactive episodes

|  | Pre-emptive | Reactive |
|---|---|---|
| ELL courses | 36 (88%) | 5 (12%) |
| FS courses | 10 (67%) | 5 (33%) |

**Table 9** The linguistic focus of English for literature & language LREs

|  | Postcolonial literature (1) | 19th Century British novel (1) | 19th Century British novel (2) | Analysis of poetry II (1) | Analysis of poetry II (2) | Analysis of poetry II (3) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocabulary | 0 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 7 | 14 | 35 (85%) |
| Pronunciation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 (10%) |
| Grammar | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 (2.5%) |
| Discourse | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 (2.5%) |
| Total | 0 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 9 | 18 | 41 |

**Table 10**  The linguistic focus of food science LREs

|  | Organic chemistry (1) | Organic chemistry (2) | Organic chemistry (3) | Organic chemistry (4) | Organic chemistry (5) | Introduction to food engineering (1) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocabulary | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 15 (100%) |
| Pronunciation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grammar | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 15 |

**Table 11**  The proportion of technical/non-technical words in vocabulary-focused episodes

|  | Technical | Examples from the data | Non-technical | Examples from the data |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ELL courses | 8 (23%) | Onomatopoeia, couplet, scheme, rhyme, connotation, symbol | 27 (77%) | Bare bodkin, pampered, woo, mortal coil, consummation, whip, grunting, current |
| FS courses | 12 (80%) | Propane, propylene, methane, cyclo-alkanes, stoichiometry, coefficient, radius, sucrose | 3 (20%) | Sugar cane, beans, boiled grape juice |

In FS LREs, the lecturer mostly covers technical vocabulary (80%) and the given examples were recorded in an Organic Chemistry class. In ELL classroom interactions, the words the class study mostly come up in the literary texts read in the lesson. Thus, non-technical vocabulary use is much more common (77%) in these interactions. These results also show the architecture of interaction in the two departments which are different and distinct to the field. In the ELL Department, the students tend to have lengthy discussions about even a single phrase (e.g., mortal coil), what it represents, and how it contributes to the text literally, figuratively and contextually. The words can be frequently used/common words but the meaning created in the text will be taken as the actual meaning and checked whether that meaning is common or not. However, in the FS department, the students are supposed to read, comprehend, and use these technical field-specific terms for future reference and understand their functions in real life, in an equation, or in a scientific experiment.

**Sample Extracts**. In light of the quantitative data and the distinctive architecture of interactional patterns in the ELL and FS departments, these extracts will illustrate how LREs are constructed:

- Who initiates them?
- What is the interactional type? (pre-emptive/reactive & language focus: vocabulary/pronunciation/grammar.

**Extract 1** (Poetry, teacher-initiated, reactive, pronunciation).

L:      Patterns of rhymes in a poem.
S2:    Scheme. (/ˈʃ iːm/).
L:      Scheme (/ˈʃ iːm/) *diye bir sözcük yok İngilizcede ona göre. Sizin o scheduledan geliyor galiba. Kesinlikle scheme*/ˈʃ iːm/) *diye söylenen bir sözcük yok. Scheme* /skiːm/ *(laughing together) Scheme* /skiːm/ Ok, *yes. Hep yapıyorsunuz*, *kulak alışıyor*, *o yüzden lütfen doğru söyleyin.* [tr: There is no word called (/ˈʃ iːm/ ) in English. You link it with schedule, I think. There is certainly no word pronounced (/ˈʃ iːm/), it is scheme /skiːm/, you always do that, you get used to it, so please pronounce it correctly.] …
L:      A complete thought written in two-line with rhyming ends.
S:      Couplet. (/ˈkʌplt/).
L:      *Couplet /ˈkʌplət/ evet. Couplet (/ˈkʌplt/) değil. Couplet (/ˈkʌplt/) derseniz couple'a -d koyarsınız. O da bir sözcük çünkü coupled (/ˈkʌplt/).* [tr: couplet yes not coupled, if you say coupled, you are adding –d to the couple, that's another word so couplet] Okay, couplet */ˈkʌplət/* good.

Extract 1 belongs to the first-year Analysis of Poetry II class that focuses on the meaning and use of figurative speech in poetry. The extract starts with the lecturer's definitions and elicitations of selected poetic terms. Student 2 (S2) finds the correct term (rhyme scheme) but pronounces it inaccurately. At this point, the lecturer pauses the lesson by making an on-the-spot decision to initiate an episode on the phonology of a term reactively in the shared L1 (Turkish). EMI studies show that content lecturers use the language shared between the lecturer and the students in EMI classes unwillingly and clandestinely as it makes them feel they are violating the language policy of the institute (Bahous et al., 2014). Thus, considering students' lack of experience in multilingual contexts, "L1 use here is tolerated rather than celebrated." (Breeze & Roothooft, 2021, p. 211). Teachers employ students' mother tongue in their university EMI classes for reasons such as preventing communication breakdowns (Costa, 2012; Söderlundh, 2012), or for 'fringe' or off-task activities (Ljosland, 2017). The lecturer assumes a language teacher's role in this metalinguistic episode by focusing on a very common pronunciation error and he anticipates the source of the problem as the students' confusion with another word (schedule), which indicates their tendency to overgeneralise the pronunciation of unknown vocabulary.

In this ELL lesson, not the grammar but pronunciation errors are more frequently corrected as the students are expected to use the language communicatively more in classes and most of them hope to be language teachers in Turkey after graduation. As the mispronounced words come up in the flow of the lesson (e.g., couplet), they often get corrected by the lecturer. The mispronounced words interrupt the participants' successful communication. Otherwise, the message they convey could be misunderstood due to confusion about the mispronounced target word (e.g., couplet/ coupled).

**Extract 2** (Poetry, student-initiated, reactive, pronunciation).

L:      Use of words that sound like the noises they describe.
S1:     Onomatopoeia ( /ˌɒnɒˌmɒtɒˈpɔːə/). *Hocam nasıl okuyoruz?* [tr: how do we say it?].
L:      Onomatopoeia ( /ˌɒnəˌmætəˈpiːə/) (laughter).

As the correction of pronunciation becomes the norm in this poetry class, even the students demand to be corrected when they are unsure about the right pronunciation (e.g., onomatopoeia). Extract 2 thus presents student-initiated, pronunciation-focused reactive episodes, in which the lecturer checks the terminology at the end of a lesson. S1 knows the correct word but a lack of phonological knowledge of the word leads to asking the lecturer. In the second line, translanguaging is employed by asking the question in L1 in order to get understood correctly and receive confirmation from the lecturer.

**Extract 3** (Poetry, teacher-initiated, pre-emptive, vocabulary).

**'tis a consummation devoutly to be wish'd**. (This line is read aloud for a class analysis).

L:      Consummation. *Consumption falan arada öyle kelimeler geldi ama o consum-mationdı. Okurken arada çıkıyor çünkü öyle.* [tr: some of you said.
              consumption but it was actually consummation] What is consummation?
S1:     *Tamamlama, amaç.* [tr: completion, aim].
L:      *Evet consummate dan geliyor. Consume ne?* [tr: yes it comes from consummate, what is consume?].
S1:     *Tüketmek.* [tr: to consume].
L:      *Tüketmek demi?* [tr: to consume, isn't it?] Consummation is finishing something, a final goal or final achievement.

It is a common practice among ELL lecturers to anticipate the linguistics and content-based problems students can encounter and initiate pre-emptive episodes as seen in Extract 3. In this extract taken from the poetry class, the class analyses and interprets "To be, or not to be", which is the opening phrase of a soliloquy by Hamlet in William Shakespeare's play. The lecturer anticipates that the students could possibly get confused about the words "consummation" and "consumption". While the word "consummation" becomes the focus of this episode, the lecturer checks whether the students know the difference between the two words.

**Extract 4** (Poetry, student-initiated, pre-emptive, vocabulary).

L:      What stops him? Or what stops people doing this?
S1:     Consciousness.
L:      Hahaha (laughter) consciousness. *Neyin bilinçliliği o zaman?* [tr: consciousness of what, then?].
S:      *Var olmanın bilinçliliği bence.* [tr: consciousness of existence, I think].

L:  *Tamam*, *güzel olabilir niye olmasın tabi orada conscience kullanıyor ama consciousness da olabilir*, *farkındalık yani. Öbürü ne conscience?* [tr: ok good, why not? But (the poet) he uses conscience there but it can also be consciousness, in other words, awareness, what does the other mean?].

S:  *Vicdan* [tr: conscience].

Extract 4 is another example of a vocabulary-focused episode but this is initiated by a student. This session focuses on the final lines of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which the lecturer asks questions to check whether the students have understood or not. S1 comes up with the word "consciousness" and the lecturer enquires about whether s/he means "conscious" or "conscience" by eliciting more information. This episode is initiated by the student, but the lecturer takes this opportunity to clarify another commonly confused word pair: "conscious" and "conscience" and make the students more aware of their vocabulary choices.

**Extract 5** (Organic Chemistry, teacher-initiated, pre-emptive, vocabulary).

L:  Now I will continue with a new part, which is the cycloalkanes. Cycloalkanes, *halkalı alkanlar arkadaşlar.* [tr: cyclo alkanes guys] Cyclo means "*halkalı*". And you have to know that (writing simultaneously) these are compounds with ring of carbon atoms.

In interactions in Food Science classes, we typically witness vocabulary-focused episodes (100%), in which grammar, pronunciation and discourse-related issues are ignored. The episodes are initiated mostly by the lecturer (2/3) and less frequently by the students (1/3). Teacher-initiated episodes are generally pre-emptive, but those initiated by the students are reactive including questions about field-specific vocabulary. Extract 5 is taken from an Organic Chemistry lesson and the lecturer introduces the topic by breaking up the word "cycloalkanes" (cyclo-alkanes) and provides it in L1 and L2. Thus, the students are expected to link this new word with the alkanes they have studied before. The lecturer repeats the word in L1 twice to make sure that they will remember it for later use.

**Extract 6** (Organic Chemistry, student-initiated, pre-emptive, vocabulary).

S2:  Teacher, I couldn't understand why there is four "e".

L:  "e" Why? Because as you know, if you attend the previous lecture we told about how we'll give the name of the alkene structure. If you check your notes you will see that in the alkene structure, as we know in the IUPAC system, we have the prefix, parent and suffix. In the alkene as a suffix, we are using "e". In the alkane we are using "a". OK?

Extract 6 is an example of a student-initiated, vocabulary-focused episode. S2 has a problem with the naming of the compound structure and is confused between "alkene" and "alkyl", so she interrupts the lesson flow to get feedback from the lecturer. The lecturer reminds the students that the topic has been covered before, but she still explains how compounds are named with different prefixes and suffixes and

clarifies between two structures "alkane" and "alkene" by referring to the standardised element naming system on the periodic table (IUPAC, The International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry).

**Extract 7** (Organic Chemistry, teacher-initiated, pre-emptive, vocabulary).

L:  *Şimdi arkadaşlar biz sınavda böyle sorular soruyoruz. Mesela from üç-methyl-pentan demişim, onu yazamıyorsunuz. "Ne tarafa, sağa mı?" onu yazacaksınız?* From *ne demek? Bundan demek. Üç-metil -pentan' dan ne üreteceksiniz? Üç-metil-pentil üreteceksiniz tamam mı? Neyden neyi üreteceğizi anlamazsanız, soruyu çözemezsiniz. Onun için yani hala öyle sıkıntılar olabiliyor. Yani* "from", "to" *ne demek*, "*nereden*", "*nereye*" *demek onu bilmeniz lazım.* [tr: ok guys we ask such questions in the exam for example from three-methyl-pentane, but you can't do it, where, on the right? What does from mean? It means from (in L1). What are you going to produce from three-methyl-pentane? You will produce three-methyl-pentyl, ok? If you don't understand what you are going to produce from what, we still have these (language-related) problems. I mean, you need to know what "from", "to" mean]

Extract 7 is taken from the week before the final exams and at the end of the lesson, the lecturer wants to warn the students about the most common mistakes. This extract also reveals that some students lose points not because of their lack of content knowledge but because of their lack of linguistic knowledge. In the previous exam, it could be understood that they could not answer some questions because they did not comprehend the wording of it. Here, the lecturer mentions the problem that the questions are not asked as numbers or formulas directly, but are embedded in a text, so they have to understand some key vocabulary such as "from", "to" and so on to be able to proceed with the question and answer it correctly.

### 3.2.2   Observational Data

The nature of interaction and the strategies of content delivery are unique to each field, which highlights the fundamental differences between the natural sciences and humanities/social sciences. In English Language and Literature, primary and secondary sources (such as a novel and a theory book) are used extensively to deliver new content (Gee, 2012). During the lectures, a resource book or an article on a specific theory is read aloud by the lecturer or students, which is followed by a class discussion featuring frequent translanguaging as a common practice. The students tend to get support from their L1 when they must express themselves clearly because translanguaging boosts students' self-confidence (Xhemaili, 2017). According to Baker (2011), reading a text in one language and discussing it in another language allows students to digest the subject matter gradually but deeply. In other words, students are expected to discuss, interact, criticise and express opinions in one way or another.

The Food Science programme offers a different teaching and learning atmosphere. Smartboards and PowerPoint presentations are frequently used in the delivery of

the content. Teacher talk in science is more prevalent as lecturers need to explain, show and solve an equation about a substance, an element (e.g., hexane), a process (e.g., crystallisation) or an apparatus (e.g., exchanger) (Miller, 2009). Thus, these students are expected to listen, take notes, solve questions, draw diagrams and do experiments during class time. The interaction only emerges when the students are required to answer a question. Furthermore, the data reveal that FS students are less often expected to make full, long, or complex sentences. They generally use and need the language receptively and they listen and read the information to understand the content. In the cases they have to explain a point, their lecturers do not seek grammatically correct and complex sentences. Translanguaging practices are particularly observed in student-to-student interactions and private dialogues with the lecturers.

## 3.3   Discussion

The study reported in this chapter has examined the language-related episodes during EMI classroom interaction in university courses. In these episodes, the lecturer takes a break from teaching disciplinary content, and the medium language (English) becomes the focus of attention. The dynamics of the interaction change remarkably from ELL classrooms to FS classrooms, which represent two different fields: humanities/social sciences and natural sciences. This directly affects the architecture of the interaction and the episodes that occurred in the lessons. Recent studies have shown that LREs are common practices in EMI university classrooms (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015; Costa, 2012; Hong & Basturkmen, 2020; McLaughlin & Parkinson, 2018). This study of LREs in two different departments of a Turkish public university has found that LREs are ubiquitous practices, but their frequency is closely linked with variables such as learner interaction (Basterrechea & Leeser, 2019), which leads to more LREs. To exemplify, the number of LREs in the ELL classroom is about three times higher than those in the FS classroom interaction. This increases with the rise of interactivity in the lesson. LREs are common practices, but they are clearly affected by the lesson content. In other words, while LREs are more common in some lessons, they are non-existent in some recorded and observed classes. For example, while no LREs occurred in the Postcolonial Literature class, LREs become the norm of instruction in the recorded Poetry class.

The study has found that the majority of LREs in both the literature and language and food science classes focused on vocabulary, contributing to the findings of recent studies conducted in pre-tertiary settings (An et al., 2019) and tertiary settings (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015; McLaughlin & Parkinson, 2018). However, contrary to An et al.'s (2019) study, LREs in both classroom interactions do not only concentrate on discipline-related technical vocabulary (consummation: non-technical, onomatopoeia: technical). In the ELL classroom, the students are expected to use the language both receptively and productively, so this leads them to focus on not only vocabulary but also pronunciation. Thus, there are instances in which the students step up to ask for the correct pronunciation of a term or the right word for

a literary concept. This has also been documented in other studies (Aguilar, 2017; Pecorari et al., 2011). The vocabulary-related episodes are "where teachers draw the distinction between vocabulary learning and learning new concepts" (Hüttner et al., 2013, p. 277). However, it can be stated that it is hard to differentiate between when lecturers' vocabulary teaching helps to teach a new field-specific concept or new vocabulary for students' general English knowledge since it often serves both purposes.

It must be noted that the lecturers in the literature department generally come from language-oriented educational backgrounds and some of them have previous language teaching experience (e.g., Lecturer 2). Therefore, this lecturer selects an essential teaching role more flexibly and effectively by justifying the students' needs and the pedagogical content focus of the course. For example, he takes on the role of a language teacher, goes back to the EMI content expert role, and then shifts between the two in a lesson. Costa (2012) argues that lecturers' use of pre-emptive focus on form shows "some degree of linguistic interest and awareness" (p. 30). Especially the first-year poetry students need a lot more support while interpreting and analysing the selected poems. In the episodes when their language competence proves to be insufficient, they need some linguistic support, especially for abstract, discipline-specific words, or they adopt translanguaging practices, which become the norm of the course. They continuously use L1 for negotiating meaning with their peers and teachers as translanguaging allows students and lecturers not only to expand their linguistic repertoire (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015) but also to "expropriate the language of content to make meaning in acceptable forms" (Barwell, 2016, p. 108). In this way, students take charge of their academic learning and are oriented into the specific discourse community of their discipline (García, 2009).

Interestingly, in the Postcolonial Literature classroom, no LREs were spotted. The reason could be that this course is offered to final-year students, who do not need language-related support as much as freshman students do. Another reason can be that the lecturer has no official language teaching experience. Even if she has a foreign language-focused literature background, having no experience in language teaching can prevent her from taking up this role in her lessons. She identifies herself as a lecturer in the literature department, an EMI content teacher just like the lecturers in the FS department. Lecturers can consider their role as "content-specific and language free; because self-assessed English is insufficient" (Aguilar, 2017, p. 732). The EMI-lecturer role does not specify language teaching as the main or co-objective of the courses.

The language use of ELL and FS students was also different. FS students tend to make their points as economically as possible with fewer and simple words (especially when they interact with other international students). They avoid any items that do not carry meaning (prepositions, grammar parts, etc.). However, ELL students tend to use the language much more creatively and artfully rather than expressing themselves directly. There are instances when they play with the language by making new words, using translanguaging, or making interesting interpretations of the collected data.

All the lecturers in the selected departments use multiple language resources (spoken and written) and other "semiotic assemblages" (Pennycook, 2017, p. 269) as teaching aids. ELL lecturers prefer whiteboards and use primary or secondary texts while FS lecturers benefit highly from smartboards, PowerPoint presentations, diagrams, images, and formulas. In this way, they provide the content through multimodal and multimedia means of presenting information textually, aurally, linguistically, spatially, and visually (Wei, 2018).

Another shared characteristic of teaching in ELL and FS programmes is the lecturers' use of L1 as an effective and strategic resource to convey the content information. Especially ELL lecturers use the unsolicited translation of lexical terms, which shows that they intend to make their students know content-related terms in both English and L1. In light of this, the results of the ELL classroom interaction draw parallels with classroom interaction in Economics, Politics (Hong & Basturkmen, 2020), Accounting (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015), and Carpentry (McLaughlin & Parkinson, 2018) courses, which shows the centrality of language component of the lessons within humanities and social sciences fields as they are often taught in arts, humanities, and social science schools/faculties in Turkey.

All in all, it would not be wrong to conclude that the use and nature of LREs in university classrooms depend on three central variables: the student's field-related language proficiency, the course content and requirements as well as lecturers' prior educational experiences and proficiency levels.

## 4 Implications for Language Education Programmes

This study can be seen as a preliminary work to further research on the use of English-medium instruction (EMI), which is a burgeoning concept in theory and practice. Though having been hailed widely, EMI practices are not without problems. In settings where students and lecturers have low proficiency levels, language support or training offered by the university is inadequate or arbitrary, superficial learning and low student attendance rates emerge as an immediate outcome. These prerequisites are critical for the implementation of EMI (Cammarata & Ó Ceallaigh, 2018). If the needs of EMI lecturers and students are not addressed, a well-functioning EMI policy cannot materialise and failure of the system becomes ineluctable. Even if lecturers do not consider language within their remit and do not assume the role of a language teacher, they have to see the connection between language proficiency and content learning in the EMI context (Morton, 2016).

The implications can be analysed at three levels: Micro, meso and macro (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020). Issues related to teachers' and students' language proficiency levels, reflection and professional development are encompassed in the micro level of EMI. In EMI programmes, students are expected to improve their language proficiency during content learning. In other words, students' disciplinary literacy should be developed (Airey, 2016). Ament and Pérez-Vidal (2015) evidenced that integrated models of EMI (content plus language support) work much better than the sole EMI

model (only content) as focus on form and language together helps students' linguistic abilities.

Kuteeva (2020) and Inbar-Lourie and Donitsa-Schmidt (2020) state that LREs and student and lecturer reflections about LREs belong to the meso level. This paper reveals that even if LREs are not well-planned, they appear to have some pedagogical value and help students with content mastery. As LREs centre around gaps or holes in the learners' interlanguage (Leeser, 2004), "learners need to be developmentally ready to gain metalinguistic, explicit knowledge that LREs may afford them" (Leeser, 2004, p. 74). Rose et al.'s (2019) study got our attention to subject-specific language. However, students with low language levels need more focused language support such as LREs. Thus, lecturers should be metalinguistically aware of and decide how they can help their students by using students' linguistic repertoire through translanguaging practices and consider how these can affect their learning. Thus, the EMI lecturers should be trained and competent enough to be able to help students with vocabulary, syntax and discourse features. However, recent research reveals that discipline-specific vocabulary gets all the attention of lecturers (Basturkmen, 2018, p. 697), the other points are generally neglected as they directly feed into the learners' content mastery (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015; Costa, 2012).

Finally, language-related issues can also be dealt with by educational curriculum and material developers by implementing language placement exams before registering students into EMI classes, providing language support classes throughout the EMI education, and giving the lecturers necessary training, which is the macro language issues and relates to a wider perspective of the EMI experience. Even if lecturers feel solely responsible for their field of specialization (be it engineering, literature, maths), not as language teachers (Airey, 2012; Costa, 2012; Lasagabaster, 2018), they are the key to a successful EMI education (Cammarata & Ó Ceallaigh, 2018). Therefore, not only training EMI lecturers but also the accreditation of the EMI institutions should be considered. Studies (e.g., Dafouz & Smit, 2020; O'Dowd, 2018) show that lecturers in the EMI contexts are not willing to provide language support in their courses even though they often complain about students and inadequate support from the universities. When lecturers' language assistance demands for students and themselves are not responded from the universities, they are likely to fail to assist students with learning the academic subject matter (Airey, 2016; Macaro, 2018).

Taken together, the picture of the efficiently-operating EMI programme in action appears to be a far-fetched idea. All these problems should be carefully considered and properly addressed at three levels. A language-integrated EMI education is a need, but a piecemeal approach can only provide disappointing results. Such new practices need trained and language-aware teaching staff who can deal with problems systematically and run the teaching smoothly (Schmidt-Unterberger, 2018). Thus, the onus and responsibility should be not only on lecturers but on all stakeholders of the education system (e.g. programme designers, teaching staff, students, and university administrators). Determining the kind of support that is urgent and the best ways of providing it can only be possible with further academic research that offers practical remedies for the aforementioned problems.

# 5 Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

Responding to Hong and Basturkmen's (2020) call for more research on language-related episodes (LREs) across a broader range of disciplines, this chapter presents an observational study into the extent and ways EMI content lecturers engaged in language-related interaction with their students in two EMI classes of a public university in Turkey. Given the studies focusing on the incidental attention to language in classroom interaction in various EMI classes across a range of disciplines are scarce, this study has set out to study the dynamics of LREs in classroom interaction by looking at language-related episodes, interactional types (pre-emptive or reactive), and linguistic focus of these episodes in two different university-level EMI settings (Literature and Food Science).

It was concluded that language can become the focus of courses in EMI classroom interaction. However, its frequency, efficacy, and functionality depend on various factors. While no LREs occurred in Postcolonial Literature classroom interaction offered for final-year students, in a Poetry class, offered to freshman students, LREs were frequent. Shifts of attention from content to language and back to content were common practices, and language support appeared to be a part of the courses as an accepted and routine component of classroom talk. In the Food Science classroom, LREs were sporadic as student–lecturer and student–student interactions were limited. The study showed that three out of four EMI university lecturers in this study proactively initiated LREs to highlight disciplinary (field-specific) uses of vocabulary.

The existence of LREs indicates that EMI lecturers provide support to their students, in classroom interaction, yet the amount of support the lecturer provides can be rather limited. As presented in the previous section, while the Food Science lecturers tend to give vocabulary support, the English Language and Literature lecturers provide support for pronunciation, usage and vocabulary. The lecturers help their students when LREs are essential to the specific course and they teach them what they are trained to teach. For example, there was no attention to discourse as it is undervalued or not seen as necessary for the course.

Concerning the limitations of the study, it involved only four lecturers from two different disciplines, two of them delivering the content in natural science, and the other two in social sciences, but further research is needed to investigate the language practices of more university lecturers and across a broader range of disciplines and contexts. Even in the same field, the interactions can differ from each other (e.g., theoretical and applied courses). Another interesting research question would be whether language-related episodes are context-, lecturer- or course-sensitive.

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# A Reflexive Account of an English as a Lingua Franca Program

**Glenn Toh** and **Paul McBride**

## 1 Introduction

This chapter concerns the planning of a campus-wide English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) program and the establishment of an ELF language center (hereafter, the Center for English as a Lingua Franca or CELF) at a Japanese university in Tokyo. In writing this chapter, we kept in the forefront of our minds the question, 'What procedures are used to determine the (linguistic and intercultural) content of a good language program in terms of local needs and global values?' Our contention as we write is that language programs are not successful by happenstance but are a result of principled conceptualization and careful planning. The arguments we offer here are borne of (1) our joint narrative as colleagues in the CELF at the crucial time of its planning, inception, and establishment; and (2) our affirmed commitment as reflexive language educators toward achieving equitable outcomes for both the students and the language programs designed to educate them. In similar regard, it is also our contention that the types of problems and dilemmas encountered in setting up language programs that have the potential to empower, emancipate and transform, such as the one that is now being discussed, are not of a happenstantial nature, but are indeed ones which enact situated histories, reflexivities, professional discourses, and ideologies. In our present account, these situated histories and ideologies relate to influential discourses involving ELT in Japan.

As part of facilitating the discussion, we duly recognize at this early point the discursive and ideological nature of language teaching, borne out particularly in the

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inherently situated nature of its so-called principles and the practices. Such recognition, in our view, is a necessary part of acknowledging the fact that sound institutional and conceptual frameworks sought by those in charge to be put in place to complement the principled and conscientious planning of good language programs are also outcomes of critical contestations and struggles over professional beliefs, attendant practices, and power relations. The discursivities characterizing these professional struggles are reflexive and experiential in one respect but also subject to contextual and systemic influences in other respects. Such struggles, moreover, are characterizable as ones that involve understandings and contestations of not only the nature of language itself and its implications for the planning of the curriculum but also the identities and subjectivities of teachers and learners. This would be especially so in situations like Japan where contestations over language and ideology have been also ones that involve the cultural politics of power and identity.

As part of accounting for the planning of the ELF program and the establishment of the center, the following issues will be attended to (1) professional conversations based or centered on monolithic or monocultural, particularly native-speakerist, conceptualizations of English in relation to broader considerations of English's plural and translingual identities; and (2) professional discourses and pedagogies which revolve around essentializing conceptualizations of language vis-à-vis the difficulties they present for the planning of a program conceived on more reflexive and transformative ideals, including those affirming diversity and heterogeneity. As will become apparent, these ideals pertain to the need for Japanese learners to develop more imaginative subjective identities beyond just their being learners of English as a foreign language, monolithically, as speakers of (an)other language—and correspondingly, for their English teachers to be active and reflexive facilitators of the same. The next section is a review of current literature on the cultural politics of English teaching in Japan and will be followed by a description of an empirical study that takes the form of a questionnaire and follow-up interviews with CELF's participating full-time teachers. The questioning of normalizing worldviews and referencing English to ELF rather than to native-speakerist practices is envisaged to provide fresh viewpoints which will support (1) humanizing and emancipatory classroom practices and (2) program development that takes into account the importance of linguistic and intercultural content sensitive to local needs and shared global values.

## 2   Theoretical Underpinnings and Existing Research

The suggestion that the attributional qualities of good English teaching programs are ideals to be struggled for on grounds of principle is one that deserves some attention. That the involvement and upholding of sound principles entails some form of struggle with oppositional forces of oppression is a reality that is no less true of the inner workings of similar forces in educational undertakings (see Freire, 2000), in this case, in ELT in Japan. In terms of their nature, these oppositional forces have been seen by

scholars to exert narrowing or essentializing influences on the way English is taught in Japan, principally through correspondingly essentializing understandings of the nature of language. For example, where English is taught monolingually, scholars have observed that this is not incidental to particularized conceptualizations of the discreteness of language, its reductionist associations with bounded notions of culture as well as to narrow understandings of teacher and student subjectivities (Holliday, 2005; Lee, 2021; Rivers, 2013; Seargeant, 2009). In the Japanese context, English has been conceptualized narrowly as a language that is linked culturally to its white native speakers, even (or particularly) among policy makers and administrators in education (Aspinall, 2013; Kubota, 2002; Rivers, 2013; Seargeant, 2009), supporting professional and ideological discourses which reify its discursive positioning as a *foreign* language. The foreignness of English as such naturalizes the enactment of professional practices which capitalize on and reinforce this very foreignness. Hashimoto (2007) notes that practices which legitimate the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) have indeed been convenient to a cultural-political agenda within which Japan is able to maintain 'its cultural values and identity' (p. 34). In this regard, TEFL becomes a way of teaching English without fears of the erosion of Japaneseness, by allowing English to be kept extraneous to the core fabric of Japanese society (Aspinall, 2013; Kubota, 2002; Rivers, 2013; Seargeant, 2009). Within a TEFL-oriented pedagogical enclave, the belief that 'students are not exposed to English outside the English language class' reinforces the narrative that 'English is not used in everyday life' in Japan (Iino, 2019, p. 82). Such a narrative potentially undermines Japanese government initiatives to introduce English-medium instruction (EMI) in Japanese universities, with its concerted attempts to encourage 'educational institutions to prepare for the globalized economy by improving English education' (Iino, 2019, p. 80). If EMI is to have a realistic chance of success in Japanese institutions, narrow conceptualizations of the teaching of English as a foreign language to speakers of other languages may need to make way for more inclusive and imaginative conceptualizations of English teaching, particularly with regard to teacher and learner subjectivities.

## 2.1 Good Programs that Register and Recognize Current Realities

With respect to the call for improvements in English education and the planning and implementation of good English language programs, the problematizing of monolingual native-speakerist identities relates to the manner in which the language is more to be identified with its being a lingua franca among a diversity of English speakers in higher education (Jenkins, 2014), or increasingly, as a contact language of choice in multilingual communicative contexts (Iino, 2019; Iino & Murata, 2016;

Jenkins, 2015; Lee, 2021). An EFL approach to the teaching of English that emphasizes native speaker norms, according to Iino and Murata (2016) can be constraining on students when they communicate in ELF situations, while such students remain vulnerable to feeling self-conscious due to their inability to express themselves like native speakers. The ethical dimension of these concerns extends to the question of learner subjectivities (Iino & Murata, 2016; Toh, 2019) and teacher identities (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011), particularly with respect to how English can be used for constructing and representing localized ontologies and specificities. Concerns over meaning-making and representation are especially relevant where they relate to (higher) education where students are required to engage in the negotiation of academic and disciplinary meanings (Lillis, 2003), in this case, in English.

The gauntlet for administering good English language programs in Japanese institutions, given current challenges, is that they would have to be supportive of the need for English to function as a language for academic inquiry and the representation of academic meanings among its users in Japanese institutions. In this regard, one is duly reminded of Lillis' (2003) observation that academic meanings are enactments and reflections of student ontologies and negotiated identity positionings, a matter which Iino and Murata (2016) are very much aware of in their fine-grained study of an EMI situation in a Japanese university where the student interactants' prior exposure to English and ELT are carefully analyzed for the epistemological differences they enact. A good number of Iino and Murata's (2016) students came into university having been exposed to a staple of EFL classes. According to the authors, these students were good at test-taking, but due to their prior exposure to native-speakerist ideologies within EFL teaching (see Lee, 2021) showed a tendency to compare themselves unfavorably with their classmates who were exchange students from USA and Europe, overseas students from Asia, returnee Japanese students whose parents had been posted overseas, and Japanese students who had studied in international schools. All of these students had been exposed to English communication and to a wider repertoire of Englishes and other languages. As will be seen next, what can perhaps be drawn from Iino and Murata (2016) in terms of program planning and conceptualization are the benefits of preparing students to (1) use English alongside people of different backgrounds, and (2) be confident and flexible enough to accommodate different ways in which English is used in a diversity of contact situations reflecting a range of socio-interactional realities.

## 2.2   Understanding English as a Lingua Franca

The teaching of ELF represents a paradigm that attempts to be responsive to fast-evolving global situations where English is used for communication among both native and nonnative speakers, and is based on the idea that ELF can be possessed as an additional resource in a user's language repertoire. The following characterizations of ELF distilled from discussions in Jenkins (2007, 2011, 2014, 2015) demonstrate

the way in which ELF is potentially supportive of richer and more transformative ideas, particularly with respect to the way language programs may be envisioned.

1. By adopting a 'difference' as opposed to a 'deficit' perspective (Jenkins, 2011), ELF considers different varieties of English to be sui generis instead of being departures from a 'preexistent' native variety. Differences from native-speaker English are deemed to be legitimate variations and not aberrations or errors.
2. Consequently, ELF considers code-mixing and switching as legitimate pragmatic strategies of bi/multilingual speakers. In affirming the attributes of fluidity, contingency and flexibility, language contact, evolution and innovation are at once valued as metaphors to contrast with notions of pre-existence.
3. ELF admits and recognizes the creativity of its multilingual users, who, on account of their multilingual repertoires (Jenkins, 2015), are seen as being able to innovate in English by drawing naturally on the linguistic resources available to them, including code-switching, accommodation, and negotiation to achieve effective communication. Jenkins (2011, p. 928) recognizes that 'their use of English is fluid and flexible'.

In contrast to the criticisms of ELF as described, for example, in Jenkins (2007, 2015), the experience of the authors as English teachers has alerted them to the sorts of negotiations of language and meaning which characterize the fluidity of ELF interactions, a commonly occurring reality that English programs will need to address. In author one's case, his return to Singapore's global and cultural crossroads after years of teaching in Hong Kong and Japan (including at CELF) has only served to bear out the fact that English is used in a widening variety of contact situations. In author two's case, the growing presence of international students in EMI courses in Japan, for example, has meant that English programs have had to respond in kind to the hybridized situations described in Iino and Murata (2016).

Jenkins (2014) supports the opinion that a good English language program is one that sets out meaningfully to improve students' communication skills and raise their confidence to interact in a variety of situations, rather than for them to only 'conform to norms of native English' (p. 133). Our concurrence with this viewpoint leads us to also argue that such forms of conformity may mean too that students are unduly deprived of a rightful exposure to variety and variation in terms of English's pluralities. In this regard, it is our opinion that ELF-aware programming potentially supports interactions between students of different English language (learning) backgrounds, enabling communication to take place in recognizably hybridized environments without any felt need for speakers to be homogenized into one monolingual native speakerist mode. Unlike EFL, 'the traditional, if to a great extent anachronistic' label for English in non-English speaking contexts 'whose goal is in reality […] English as a Native Language', ELF is not primarily (if also narrowly) about communication between native and nonnative speakers of English (Jenkins, 2007, p. 4).

## 3 An Empirical Study

### 3.1 Method

The motivation for this empirical study can, to no small extent, be traced to the way in which struggles over the establishment of an ELF-oriented program came about because of the university's history of having based its English curriculum on TEFL-oriented assumptions. Not surprisingly, the specific nature of these struggles centered around 'the determination of what might count as norms, boundaries and capital' (Toh, 2019, p. 120), in this case, with respect to English teaching at a well-established Japanese university, which, in 2011, was looking to reinvigorate and reimagine its English program. According to Toh (2016), the initial group of English teachers were incumbents of a long-existing TEFL-cum-TESOL program delivered through the university's various schools (including Agriculture, Tourism and Hospitality, etc.). The center's founding Director's hope and vision for more imaginative and transformative conversations around the establishment of an ELF center did not go unchallenged in terms of professional ideology and/or inertia.

Most teachers involved in this study were familiar with at least one previous study (Toh, 2016) which examined sources and causes of inertia in their new program's curriculum development. They have since had time to progress in their critical evaluation of the workings of reductionism and essentialism in language teaching towards conceptualizing and spearheading ELF-oriented curricular change. The study here focuses on the questions of (1) how and how much ELF-aware pedagogy has developed at the center, and (2) in what ways such development may be observable. After receiving approval from the relevant university ethics committee (application dated 19 April 2021), we asked teachers on a voluntary basis to complete a survey questionnaire comprising purely qualitative items in keeping with the discursive and reflexive nature of the issue at hand concerning ELF-aware pedagogy (see Appendix). Follow-up interviews were done where necessary for purposes of clarification and elaboration of key ideas and suggestions, following which the written responses were analyzed for their thematic patterns (see Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This thematic analysis was first performed independently by each author before the findings were compiled, compared, and corroborated with particular attention being given to the concerns highlighted in (1) and (2). Thematic analysis as a method was chosen principally for its versatility in a diversity of educational contexts (see Maguire & Delahunt, 2017) and also the way the themes so identified would quickly shed light on recurring areas of salience, concern or interest with respect to respondents. Understandings gained from the teachers' responses formed a basis for the inferences drawn, covering measures for teachers to consider when developing localized, socially placed classroom activities. The process of questioning normalizing worldviews, moreover, and referencing English to ELF rather than to native-speakerist orientations resulted in lessons learnt (see next section and conclusion) for pursuing hybridized and at the same time humanizing classroom practices and program development.

## *3.2 Results*

The survey was conducted over a period of two weeks in January 2022. Written responses were received from a total of six participants (teachers T1–T6), all colleagues at CELF. Though not identified as such in the responses for reasons of confidentiality, CELF staff come from different countries including Australia, South Korea, Thailand, the UK, the USA, and Japan and have post-graduate qualifications as a condition for their employment. Among its full-time staff, the average number of years spent teaching in the center since its inception in April 2014 is in the region of 5.9.

The survey responses drew attention to the following areas of thematic interest: native English, teacher identities, materials, activities, challenges, suggestions and feedback, as well as 'multi-'and 'trans-' perspectives.

### 3.2.1   Native English

In conceptualizing language teaching, all questionnaire respondents espoused ELF-aware approaches, clearly distinguishing, for example, between the attainment of "native-like English skills" (T5) as a primary objective and "a critical approach to language, culture, and identity that challenges dominant established discourses and recognizes …English …for transcultural communication" (T6). In comments broadly representative of perspectives taken by all respondents, T6 delineated ELF-aware pedagogy as fostering "intercultural communicative competence and awareness, including pragmatic competence… (and) processes of communication and adaptable use of communicative resources, including the awareness of English-within-multilingualism". As T4 affirmed, there is "no one 'correct' form of English" and the goal of language learning should not necessarily be to "become like native English speakers". Concomitantly, to focus exclusively on native English users and their cultures, according to T2, is to portray English as "a monolithic entity", risking presenting learners with a "narrow and idealized representation of English [which] may lead to feelings of alienation and/or otherness, and even a sense of resentment (since English is a requirement in their studies)".

### 3.2.2   Teacher Identities

Not unexpectedly, the notion of global citizenship was raised. Global citizens were regarded by T6 as models for students. International travel and ELF-related teaching experiences were perceived by T2 as having led to their own, "reinforced and heightened … sense of being a global citizen as opposed to being a 'native speaker'". Such responses draw attention to teacher identity positioning.

T4 reported that ELF awareness has helped to "expand [their] perspectives about being a 'non-native English speaker'" and has had "numerous positive impacts on

[their] goal orientations and performance both as a learner and teacher of English". Being less restrained now by deficit views of teaching and learning, and therefore not being compelled to "gain as much knowledge and skills as possible so that I can be like [native speakers]", T4 reported being able to accept their identity as a Japanese learner and teacher of English "with certain confidence and pride". For T4, ELF awareness was influential in helping to "ease the pressure and burden of pursuing such unrealistic goals and negative [effects] associated with the feeling of inferiority". Similarly, T5 remarked, "I can feel more confident being a nonnative speaker of English and teacher at the same time".

T6 further observed that "in academia, I tend to think of myself as an English-speaking applied linguist with a multilingual, multicultural, and multimodal repertoire". Correspondingly, T2 regarded ELF as having been instrumental in providing a sense of freedom to use the students' first language, and reported using languages other than English or Japanese "on occasions for demonstrative purposes". The 'multis-' highlighted by T6 can be contrasted with T3's acknowledgement that a white Anglo-Saxon identity may, for someone self-identifying with this position, be regarded as a 'privileged' one. Although T3 described their own identity repertoire as having been broad before encountering ELF pedagogy, a healthy consciousness of such privilege may admittedly not always be sufficient incentive for identification as an active member of a community of ELF users, which according to Jenkins (2011), comprises both native and nonnative speakers.

### 3.2.3   Materials

Regarding the development and selection of classroom materials, T5 mentioned developing and selecting materials according to student interests. T6 said that materials should encourage transcultural comparisons. T2 placed value on materials that facilitated task completion while tapping on students' "current linguistic and non-linguistic repertoires". T6 mentioned using "traditional cross-cultural stories to invite a critical approach to language, culture, and identity through student discussion". Both T5 and T6 commented that existing ELT materials might still be useful, although textbooks should not be used uncritically or without modification and supplementation to suit local requirements. Whether or not existing materials are adapted, or new ones created, according to T2, "it just requires time [and] often multiple attempts".

### 3.2.4   Activities

While we do not entirely support the theory/practice dichotomy objected to in Pennycook (2001) and played out when writers are asked or 'pushed by editors and reviewers to write that section that explains the pedagogical implications of our work' (p. 172), one question in our survey was included to give respondents the opportunity to highlight the types of activities which they thought might reflect ELF-oriented pedagogy. Deliberately not having these activities placed customarily

in a final section, and notwithstanding some attention to practical implications in a section to come, the activities include:

1. Listening comprehension involving short interviews with a variety of non-native English speakers, during or after which learners complete cloze exercises. (TI)
2. Listening comprehension activities requiring students (a) to work together in 'expert' groups to understand the content of one of several transcripts of monologues produced by nonnative speakers, and (b) to read their transcript to a learner from a different 'expert' group, using communication strategies when appropriate to check for understanding, and responding to requests for clarification. (T2)
3. Short listening dictation activities from an online archival resource, followed by activities focusing on the meaning of the speakers and the nature of the communication strategies they used. (T3)
4. Communication strategy instruction, involving students engaging with texts in the form of communication gap activities which necessitate the use of communication strategies such as paraphrasing, checking for understanding, and circumlocution. (T2)
5. Role-play activities incorporating communication strategies for negotiation or recovery of meaning. (T2)
6. Videos to help students understand translanguaging followed by discussion activities designed to encourage thinking about how translanguaging might influence language use in Japan (by facilitating communication, for example, rather than being an indication of 'deficiency' in language learning); this is followed by students planning a lesson in groups utilizing translanguaging to teach a subject they are interested in. (T5)
7. Experiences of communication in which English is, "available as a contact language of choice, but is not necessarily chosen" (Jenkins, 2015, p. 73), and activities to promote "proactive discussion, debate, or presentation about language and culture based on students' individual experiences." (T6)
8. Activities emphasizing communication rather than language form, including presentations during which students share cultural and historical information about places where English is not spoken as a first language. (T2)

### 3.2.5 Challenges

When asked whether there were any challenges with implementing ELF-oriented teaching activities, T1 commented on student motivation: while some students were proactive in their consideration of language issues, others took a more instrumental approach towards studying for the purpose of completing university courses or finding a job. T2's consciousness of the importance of linguistic and cultural adaptation and accommodation between interactants during ELF communication meant, however, that judging intelligibility and comprehensibility during assessment tasks became somewhat of a dilemma. T3 acknowledged the need for assessment rubrics to reflect ELF communication but expressed concern about the need to pay attention to standardized test preparation. This suggests that some forms of conflict may

still exist between ELF-aware assessment and standardized testing, and curricular artifacts like textbooks which T3 felt obligated to cover.

Reminiscent of Suzuki's (2019, p. 158) description of the 'slow and even vague' progress of innovation, reference was made to the perceived difficulty of making the conversion from EFL to ELF. With only Japanese students in class, T4 found that it was challenging to create learning opportunities for students to experience linguacultural diversity. T5 noted some difficulty in teaching about linguistic diversity, having been exposed mainly to American English as a school and university student.

Among several respondents, the obligation to consider the expectations of stakeholders, including students, administrators, ELF researchers, and the Japanese Ministry of Education (see Ishikawa & McBride, 2019) was highlighted as a challenge.

### 3.2.6   Suggestions and Feedback

Given these challenges, the question on the preference for an ELF orientation and how such preference might be made possible became an interesting one. Apart from a comment from T1 that students' end-of-term feedback reflected their satisfaction with the current degree of ELF orientation, expressions of preference among teachers were implicit, reflected in the range of suggestions on how the program could be further developed.

Respondents T2 and T4 emphasized the importance of teachers being familiar with developments in ELF research and having, as T2 put it, "a willingness (and courage) to try and test new ideas". T4 said that attending ELF faculty development workshops was a way "to gain more ideas about ELF approaches". T5 recalled the process of trial and error in implementing suitable activities. Wanting to enhance the ELF-oriented aspects of their teaching, T6 commented that "ELF-oriented pedagogy is not just about language teaching, but also about centering human agency and action in education". Resonating Garcia and Li (2014) on the importance of maintaining an interest in areas such as social justice, linguistic human rights, and critical pedagogy, T6 referred to the inseparability of language and broader social issues.

In response to the question of whether teachers would like more assistance to become ELF-oriented, and how they thought this might be achieved, T2 thought that teachers in the program could benefit by learning from each other and, importantly, for a relatively new area, "keeping an open mind". T2 noted that "none of us has all the answers, but all of us have some of the answers", expressing satisfaction with the collegial support available. The importance of organizing workshops and lectures addressing ELF pedagogy was emphasized (T2).

With noticeable conviction, T6 highlighted the need to facilitate the teaching and learning of English "within multilingualism and from 'trans-' perspectives". Such a prospect, according to T6, is "not reducible to a single teaching methodology" or to acontextual generalizations. Accordingly, T6 offered some guidelines for teachers to think about ELF.

The first was about having a critical approach to communication. Taking such an approach would challenge dominant, essentialist, nationalist discourses through an awareness of ELF. It would provide students with a range of ELF scenarios and encourage their critical thinking about language, culture, and identity vis-à-vis their own experiences of English. The second involved having teachers and students develop a greater awareness of symbolic and performative competence: becoming sensitive to linguistic, cultural, and multimodal resources; developing flexible practices to adapt to different situations; and taking an interest in diversity among different users of English and other languages. The third drew attention to the real-life processes of communication and the adaptable use of communicative resources. These resources could be translingual, transmodal, transcultural, or otherwise accommodative in nature. For T6, being accommodative involved being flexible and creative in language use, besides having the openness to make room for a wide range of representations of cultures beyond stereotypes and generalizations. ELF for T6 was also about being ready to adjust to teaching in local contexts and to recognize ultimately that the suitability of any set of guidelines depends on its relevance to unique local conditions, cultures, and needs.

## 4    Implications for Language Education Programs

Curricular and pedagogical, especially native speakerist, demarcations within TEFL/TESOL have been said to reinforce racial and cultural demarcations within the Japanese societal ethos, ones which in the Japanese situation reify boundaries between Japaneseness and foreignness (see Befu, 2001), and consequently, between Japanese and a putatively foreign language like English (see Iino & Murata, 2016). Within such an ethos, 'a pedagogical discourse of pathology and linguistic deficit' may position students haplessly as 'third party objects' (Toh, 2019, p. 123). Students might show varying degrees of disengagement due to the 'foreignness' of English (see Iino & Murata, 2016). As for the teachers like T4 and T5, ELF awareness allows them not to feel restrained or less confident (as they put it) as nonnative speakers when they identify themselves as English teachers.

In terms of practical implications, one is reminded that the engendering of 'learning conditions that allow students to engage with a language in interactive environments that accord respect and dignity' (Toh, 2019, p. 133; see interactive activities suggested by T2, T5, and T6) would be seen by scholars such as Kumaravadivelu (2009) to be more of a priority than a set of 'ideal' methods. T6, in this regard, is realistic in raising the point that ELF-aware pedagogy is not supposed to be reducible to "a single teaching methodology", much less one based on learner deficits (see T4's concern over deficit views of teaching and learning). In his work on post-method pedagogy, Kumaravadivelu (2009) argues not (again) for a new or alternative *teaching method* as such, but for an alternative to method that supports the facilitation of learning conditions that are conducive to language learning as a reflexive experience (see activity number 7, T6). For Kumaravadivelu (2009, p. 200),

the notion of method while residing in seemingly 'ahistorical, asocial, and apolitical space[s]' belies its neo-colonial constituencies and location in 'interested Western knowledge' which, in English-teaching circles at least, must be kept 'dominant over subjugated local knowledge' (p. 218; see T5's and T6's comments about materials being adapted to local requirements). In this regard, our position here is that language programs need to be ones that can combine the benefits of a multilingual (as opposed to monolingual) lingua franca characterization of language with the facilitation of an equitable post-method pedagogical position (see Toh, 2016; T6's point about embedding English within multilingualism; T4's and T5's thoughts concerning diversity). Such a position acknowledges the value of particularity, or flexibility and adaptability as T6 would put it, while rejecting the very idea that 'method-based pedagogies are founded upon', which is that 'there can be one set of teaching aims and objectives realizable through one set of teaching principles and procedures' (Kumaravadivelu, 2009, p. 171). Acknowledgement that no one has all the answers (T2) when teachers themselves are learning through trial-and-error (T5), and the suggestion that teachers keep up to date with the latest research (T4) are (healthy) expressions of openness to new ideas and approaches. Such openness will also likely allow teachers to be in a position to reimagine what can be achieved in the classroom by way of having more imaginative activities, like those outlined above.

## 5   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

As noted in the beginning, we have been guided by the question, "What procedures are used to determine the (linguistic and intercultural) content of a good language program in terms of local needs and global values?" We began the chapter with an acknowledgement that the setting up of CELF marked a crucial time of transition when our university was looking to replace its EFL program taught within individual schools with a campus-wide ELF program. This new arrangement meant or mandated that some attention had to be given to (1) English's plural attributes as acknowledged by ELF researchers, (2) the need for learners to be given opportunities to develop more imaginative identities beyond merely being learners of EFL and ESOL, and (3) teachers' roles as facilitators of such opportunities aimed at fostering more humanizing and imaginative ideals. More specifically in relation to our study, we sought answers to the two-part question of (1) how (much) ELF-aware pedagogy had developed at the ELF center, and (2) in what ways such development might be observable.

The survey findings showed that over the seven years of the program, teachers were earnestly finding ways to adapt their language teaching practices towards reflecting English's plural nature. The findings also suggested not just a consciousness of the benefits of but also a growing adeptness at developing localized, socially placed classroom activities. This was despite the understandable fact that the work of questioning EFL practices and referencing English teaching to ELF involved different amounts of struggle on any individual teacher's part. Valuable lessons learned were

moreover evident in the pursuit of 'trans-', 'multi-', and hybridized perspectives which were appreciated for their potential in engendering new teaching and course delivery practices—as part of the program renewal that the university was eagerly seeking.

Finally, that ELF is not in any responsible manner amenable to being reduced to discrete or formulistic teaching methods or to acontextual generalizations of teaching and learning styles augurs well for pedagogies that are more grounded in uniquely local contexts. Future research will no doubt promise to encompass the pluricentric contexts in which English is taught, pay due attention to post-method pedagogies, and overdue tribute to the largely unsung efforts of local teachers as they try to make English teaching and learning a less homogenizing and more imaginative endeavor.

## Appendix: Survey on ELF-Oriented Pedagogy and Good Language Programs

Kindly provide your responses in the spaces provided. This survey is voluntary and kept anonymous. The answers, which are solely for research purposes, will be deleted following the university's guidelines on confidentiality and safe handling of research data.

1. How would you differentiate between ELF and EFL/TESOL approaches to teaching English?
2. Has ELF in any way helped you as an English-speaker and teacher to expand on your identity repertoires, beyond simple identity positionings like 'native speaker' or 'nonnative speaker' of English?
3. How does ELF influence the way you conceptualize and implement the curriculum for your classes?
4. How do you develop and select materials? (Do you find it easy to conceptualize, locate, or design materials which reflect the use of ELF?)
5. Could you describe any classroom activities you use which reflect the (diverse, variable) nature of ELF?
6. Holliday (2005) described teaching English as an international language as a 'struggle'.

    Are there any factors which you feel might challenge your ability to implement ELF-oriented teaching activities? Why do you think so?

    In your answer, you might like to consider various contextual, systemic, and discursive influences:

    – Challenges over professional ideals and practices
    – The nature of language and its implications for curriculum planning
    – Identities and subjectivities of teachers and learners
    – Professional conversations and pedagogies based on different conceptualizations of English, and

– The possibility for Japanese learners to develop different learner identities.

7. Would you prefer to be more ELF-oriented in your teaching?
   If so, how do you think this might be achieved?
8. Would you like more assistance to become ELF-oriented?
   If so, how do you think this might be achieved?
9. Would you prefer the curriculum to be more ELF-oriented?
   If so, how do you think this might be achieved?
10. What other recommendations would you have for the curriculum?
11. Are there any related thoughts which you would like to share?

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# Learner Agency Empowerment

**Thuy Thi Ngoc Bui**⬤ **and Thi Thom Thom Nguyen**⬤

## 1  Introduction

Global inter-connectedness has brought about wide-ranging interpretations, re-conceptualizations, and discussions regarding the efficacy of language acquisition (Davis et al., 2013). A number of researchers have called for increased attention to social constructions such as gender, class, race, equity, and multiple actors' agency in language education research. Student agency, in particular, is positioned at the center of language practices (Block, 2007; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2019; Norton & Gao, 2008; Wenger & Lave, 1991). It is argued that students have abilities to act as thoughtful, comprehensive, and responsible stakeholders when we place their agency at the heart of language policies (LP) and practices (Hornberger & McCarty, 2012; Morrell, 2008). Scholars advocating for student agency in language acquisition (Block, 2007; Davis, 2009; Deters et al., 2015) further believe in students' ability to work collaboratively with other agents such as teachers to create positive changes. In Asia, research on youth agency has started to proliferate, advocating for shifting more power to students to give them a democratically empowering space to define, practice, and create positive pedagogical and social changes (Appadurai, 2006; Deters et al., 2015; Phyak & Bui, 2014). However, such work is still sparsely investigated in the context of Vietnam. A review of the literature on student agency in Vietnam suggests that this research area is extremely under-explored against the backdrop of multi-faceted reforms of foreign language teaching (Phung & Hamid, 2015).

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In Vietnam, the mosaic of socialization of education strongly reflects the state's effort to become a knowledge society guided by diverse transnational collaborations and multi-education models. The reform process further elucidates the government's great emphasis on educating young generations with high morality, life skills, and creativity for industrializing and modernizing the country. Parallel with education reform, the field of language education has experienced the most impressive English language policy shift as part of the National Foreign Languages Project 2020. The project mandated students to be equipped with English language skills, among other languages, for national and regional employability in the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) economic integration (Decision 1400/QD-TTg, 2008). English is a compulsory subject for students nationwide from Grade 3 onwards and becomes a main subject across levels. Starting in 2017, English has become the most taught foreign language (Thanh Hung, 2016), and utilizing English as a medium of instruction has been strongly promoted.

Although textbooks, teacher training, and evaluation frameworks are increasingly reproduced, restructured, and promoted in the current Vietnam language policy (LP) reforms, such reforms are not free from debate, tensions, and challenges (Bui, 2016). Researchers report various obstacles including students' limited English abilities, insufficient support to students from diverse learning levels, and inadequate resources that result from macro policy decisions (Vu & Burns, 2014). Moreover, the quick fix solution to enhance English education quality generally ignores important aspects of responsive teaching and learning (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015). Yet, an inappropriate curriculum is argued to add to the hindrances to the success of the LP reforms when it is culturally divergent to teaching and fails to address students' needs (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015). Consequently, students often show their lack of interest or even display resistance to learning English (Bui, 2013, 2016). The challenges of LP reforms presented above regarding curriculum, teaching approaches, and inadequacy of addressing students' needs resulted in students' increasingly limited learning outcomes. Therefore, this current chapter argues that these deleterious challenges could gradually affect students' access to quality and equity in language education and their equal socio-economic participation and educational advancement (Bui, 2016). While there could be approaches to ameliorate the quality of the current LP reforms, addressing student agency is suggested to be at the center of effective language policies and practices (e.g., Bakewell, 2010; Block, 2015; Hall, 2004). However, the notion of students as change agents has not yet been fully capitalized, mobilized, and practiced rigorously in Vietnam (Bui, 2016; Nguyen & Bui, 2016).

Building on the increasing emphasis on agency in language education in the recent research trend and the backdrop of English language education reforms in Vietnam which are largely ineffective and controversial, the chapter argues that there is a pressing need to re-conceptualize and incorporate student agency as essential for more effective and responsive language teaching. This approach may further assist in the state's aforementioned missions in English language education. Therefore, the chapter aims to demonstrate capitalizing on student agency in English teaching in a high school for more effective learning while safeguarding and empowering student

agency. The chapter begins with a discussion of student agency and postmodern theories in language acquisition, then follows with the methodology employed to study student agency. The remaining sections present examples as well as providing discussion and conclusions to promote youth agency in language acquisition and educational transformations.

## 2 Agency and Postmodern Theories in Language Acquisition

### 2.1 Agency in Language Learning

Moving away from viewing language learning as internal, linear, and psychological (Duff, 2012), the last two decades have seen increased scholarship on identity and agency in language acquisition (Block, 2007; Kramsch, 2009; Larsen-Freeman, 2019, 2020; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2008; Vaughn, 2020; Wiliams, 2017). As language learning manifests human interaction with others, human behavior, and society at large, Hall (2004, p. 5) views agency as at "the centre of discussions of subjectivity" or "one of the most deep-seated problems in social sciences." Acknowledging the interrelationship between the interaction of language learners with others and the social world, various scholars (e.g., Duff, 2012; Norton, 2000) observe that language learners have to negotiate for educational and socio-political space and experience struggles in language learning. Therefore, the notion of agency is highly complex and adheres to multiple definitions (Block, 2012, 2015; Deters et al., 2015; Duff, 2012). Holland et al., (1998, p. 42) argue that "agency is the realized capacity of people to act upon their world and not only to know about or give personal or inter-subjective significance to it. The capacity is the power of people to act purposely and reflectively." Ahearn (2001, p. 112) corroborates Holland et al.'s view that agency is an important theoretical construct that reflects "the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act." In other words, agency rejects learners simply as passive participants and instead emphasizes their capability to create choices and transformations and to demonstrate resistance to unjust matters in their social circumstances. As Duff (2012, p. 417) states, "agency refers to people's ability to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal and social transformation." Holland et al. (1998) further stress the learner's capacity to exercise agency which builds on the cultural and linguistic wealth they possess.

Language and the process of language learning are an intrinsically and socially mediated space for students to exercise their agency. The socio-cultural perspective regards agency as a complex interaction between individuals and communities, human cognition, and experience. Agency is developed within a social group where individuals are engaged with other human beings with purposeful actions because language itself is always embedded in a certain discourse, power relationship, and

structure (Norton, 2000; Toohey & Norton, 2003). In light of the socio-cultural perspective, agency is grounded, constructed, and negotiated when the individual interacts with the social space (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Through such complex and dynamic interactions, learners are given a space to make choices, exercise their power, and control their struggles to gain success in language learning (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). Wenger and Lave (1991) maintain that learners could exercise their agency and seek, realize, and negotiate their identities to become a member of a real community. Their linguistic, symbolic, and material resources will also be enhanced in the imagined community.

As the process of learning is a constant negotiation of language learners with themselves and their social world (Duff, 2012), Norton (2000) links agency in language acquisition with the concept of investment. According to Norton (2000, p. 10), "if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and materials recourses, which will increase the value of their cultural capital." In brief, the concept of investment manifests learners' ranges of investments (symbolic, material, and other resources) in light of their desires and hopes to increase the value of their cultural and linguistic capital.

## 2.2 Studies on Agency in Language Learning and Why It Matters

A large number of studies have investigated the connections between language learning and identity and agency (e.g., Annan, 2016; Giroir, 2014; Larsen-Freeman, 2019; Lee, 2008; Miller, 2003; Moses et al., 2020; Vaughn, 2020; Warriner, 2004). Centering on the concept of investment to study language learners' agency, Norton (1995) documented how an immigrant English language learner strived to alter her feeling as an "illegitimate" English speaker to exercise her right to speak. Rather than blaming her identity as an Italian, the participant actively participated in her workplace to improve her English skills. Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) claim that agency is constantly negotiated and reconstructed within the learners' social world. They further confirm learners' ability to analyze the circumstances in their life critically, make claims, or take actions by documenting how an immigrant student actively sought to gain access to the new community. Vitanova (2005) documents the process of losing voice for eight educated immigrants from Eastern Europe in the United States as they endeavored to exercise their agency to re-position themselves in the new social realities. Instead of accepting the language constraints and various struggles in the workplace, the study acknowledged that "the participants' ability to analyze their contexts and to interpret their new socio-linguistic realities establishes a necessary foundation for agency" (p. 160). Such agency helped the participants creatively "re-establish their voices" (p. 166) in their everyday practice regardless of their lack of English skills and language resources in their new land. Similarly, researchers who studied Korean heritage (Park, 2011) and international

university students in Hawaii (Davis, 2009) and Thai and Burmese children in the U.S. mainland (Duran, 2014) consistently acknowledged students' ability to reinvent themselves and create meaningful transformations in language learning. The learners also successfully mingled into society when their agency was validated and empowered. The researchers further highlighted learners' efforts to take charge of the learning process, which helped them voice their concerns and better negotiate language learning (Gao, 2013; Larsen-Freeman, 2020).

While enacting agency in the above contexts is reported to create meaningful linguistic and educational transformations, agency does not always imply active participation in language classrooms. Instead, agency in the process of language learning further highlights learners' resistance to certain behaviors, practices, and positioning in situations of unequal treatment. Studies in Canada, Hawaii, and the U.S mainland (Canagarajah, 1999; Davis, 2009; Fogle, 2012; Morita, 2004; Park, 2011) show students' various forms of resistance when they encountered certain disrespectful perceptions, insensitive content knowledge, and being positioned in unjust ways. Such norms reject students' identities, abilities, and potential, which limits the opportunity to choose to shape their actions in language learning.

Generally speaking, the studies reviewed above acknowledge agency as a vital social construct that manifests the capacity of both individuals and groups to improvise and to redirect themselves within their current situation. Moreover, although such studies document agency in various spaces and times, they show participants' exercising their agency in negotiating for educational, occupational, and social spaces. The participants further face various kinds of interpersonal, internal, and social struggles in the process of claiming their identity (Duff, 2012; Sacchi, 2014). The findings further show agency as a creative, reflective, and even ethical response and demonstrate learners' deep understanding of their socio-cultural realities. Furthermore, reviewing studies on how learner agency is constantly constructed and negotiated suggests that it was often documented in the context of language learning for immigrant learners in new environments most frequently in Canada, the U.S., and Australia. The participants in such new learning environments were largely marginalized or silenced due to the power relation and the privileged notion of native speakers (Sacchi, 2014). All these give rise to the need for students to exercise their agency. The current chapter suggests that many more studies outside of the English-speaking countries are needed and should be expanded to include non-immigrant learners which would further enrich research on agency. Therefore, the chapter wishes to fill this gap by portraying how agency is cultivated and empowered in an English as a foreign language teaching environment such as Vietnam.

Surveying research on agency further suggests that agency research matters as it serves as a critical foundation to give learners the power to influence social reality (Larsen-Freeman, 2019; Moses et al., 2020). Block (2015), Duff (2012), and Mick (2015) contend that learning a language is about negotiating access to a language community. Therefore, learning a language is critically and centrally linked to agency. Agency becomes a focal point in language learning as it highlights learners' control over their language learning to mobilise strategic practice and opportunities to become successful language learners. Successful language learning will

help students actively engage in and sustain educational, linguistic, and economic capital resources and power (Flowerdew & Miller, 2008). Dumenden (2011) further argues that learners' agency constructs learners' authority, possibility, and potential to create social change. Thus, since language is always embedded in a certain educational discourse and is "the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (Norton, 2000, p. 9), it is essential for students to address power relations through language. Agency plays a crucial role in framing the success of language learners because language is inextricably linked to identity and agency. Empowering agency in language learning helps people to believe in their ability and to strive to take actions that enable them to gain access to social dispositions and educational and other opportunities. Agency draws implications about the participants' linguistic competence. According to Bourdieu (1991, p. 55), participants' linguistic capital is considered "illegitimate" when "they are de facto excluded from the social domains" because "what speaks is not the utterance, the language, but the whole social person" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 653). In brief, agency in language learning matters as it serves as a powerful tool for a full and complete self who is highly capable of self-regulating and mobilizing his/her historical, cultural, and linguistic resources as well as interpreting and mediating educational and social realities. Possessing strong agency in language learning further helps learners empower their consciousness and fosters actions, opportunities and critical resistance in the process of gaining language competence (Deters et al., 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2019). Language competence and strong agency solidly enrich and secure one's socio-cultural, linguistic, and educational capital for language learning, more equitable social standing, and socio-economic and educational revitalizations.

## 2.3 Postmodern Approaches to Empowering Learner Agency in Language Acquisition

Besides the theoretical construct of agency, the chapter further employs postmodern perspectives as a pedagogical tool to guide the researchers to foster agentive teaching with the students. Grounded in social practice, according to postmodern scholars, rather than a set of static, de-contextualized, and discrete skills, language acquisition is always instantiated, dynamic, situated, and multifaceted through local practices that are "embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles" (Street, 2003, p. 1). This reality prompts postmodern researchers to seek "new models of truth, method, and (multimodal) presentation" (Davis et al., 2013, p. 403) while advocating for situating language education and research with discourses of gender, class, race, and agency. Therefore, postmodern theorists advocate for re-conceptualizing what counts as resources in agentive teaching and effective language acquisition. Rich learning materials reflect the vitality of cultural and linguistic diversity, which include "multiple communication channels, hybrid text forms, new social relations" (Hull & Schultz, 2002, p. 26). Furthermore, a variety of modalities, such as speech, writing,

image, gesture, and sound (Hull & Nelson, 2005), crucially create different forms of meaning for language learners. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers become familiar with and embed students' language acquisition and experiences into the students' own cultural epistemologies in order to address students' needs adequately and build strong linguistic repertoires (Hélot & O'Laoire, 2011; Larsen-Freeman, 2020; McLean et al., 2009; Wiliams, 2017).

Postmodern theories also consider the essential aspect of the active engagement of learners in discourse. As language discourse is formulated by a certain ideological milieu, Bhabha (1994) creates the idea of "third space"—a discursive space to engage students in analyses of the dominant discourse, which vitally affirms students' own linguistic abilities and agencies. This democratized "third space" empowers students as active and critical change agents and researchers of their literacy learning. Through the third space, students further gain expertise in English as an academic language, along with the multiple skills necessary to prepare them to successfully occupy socio-political spaces. In order to effectively offer students a third space, it is essential for them to establish critical connections rooted in their literacy and language learning and socio-political and educational issues (Gee, 2000; Luke, 2008; Street & Leung, 2010). Such an approach not only enriches students' linguistic skills but also empowers their agency to delve into deep and complex issues related to the meanings of literacy in different places, times, and contexts (Appadurai, 2006; Morrell, 2007). This approach further prepares students to contribute to improving social services in their neighborhoods and society at large. Generally speaking, the above approaches to empowering learner agency support students' academic revitalizations and language learning while respecting them as unique individuals with rich linguistic, social, and cultural strengths. These approaches fruitfully foster pedagogical approaches for the researcher to work collaboratively with the students for their agentive empowerment and English language proficiency improvement.

## 3   An Empirical Study

The study reported in this chapter employs engaged ethnography (EE) (Bui, 2013; Davis & Phyak, 2015). Engaged ethnography is evolved from critical and participatory research approaches to create a collective forum and to reposition all participants at the heart of identifying their teaching and learning challenges. All involved create meaningful educational interventions (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2008). In doing so, EE capitalizes on the notion of full citizenship (Appadurai, 2006) where students are researchers to advocate for voicing participants' desires and calling for sustainable and effective policies and teaching practices. Consequently, EE helps in nurturing participants to gain essential socio-political, educational, and linguistic knowledge and skills needed in a globalized world. Bui further builds on another essence of EE, which emphasizes the researcher's positionality, together with the participants at the locus of language policies and practices. This research method was undertaken because Bui desired to engage with multiple students with the intention of creating

meaningful pedagogical changes that reflected greater effective language learning, student agency development, and social activism (Grinwright et al., 2005).

Bui has worked as an English teacher and a researcher of language policy and practices and learner agency in different settings for more than a decade. Her long-term research focuses on engaging students, teachers, and multiple stakeholders to unravel the realities of language education policies while working respectfully with them for academic and language transformations (Bui, 2016). In this study, she taught students aged 16–18 in a gifted high school for over 10 years. Her passion and consistent research focus, the youth agency and practice in promoting quality language teaching and socio-economic welfare inspired her to empower and cultivate learner agency for effective teaching and learning. She positions students as epicenters throughout the continuum of language policy and practices. Her intervention of youth agency in English language teaching is demonstrated later in the study.

## 3.1 The Case Study Setting and Data Collection

The following case study provides examples to promote learner agency for effective language learning and academic and agentive transformations. The case study comprised Bui's large socio-cultural learning project with 27 students aged 17 in a high school from September 2014 to May 2015 (Bui, 2016). Bui engaged high school students in promoting themselves as creative and critical agents and emphasized the strong links between learning and social and educational matters (Gee, 2000). Bui taught English to these 17-year-old high school students for 90 minutes a day, four days a week. The students' specialization was English and their English proficiency was intermediate. Although students possessed fairly good English comprehension, she realized that they never had a chance to activate their agency in learning. Bui's role as a "participant observer" (Angrosino, 2007) for the first month of working with the students helped her understand that students were largely uninterested in learning English because of unresponsive teaching approaches and a curriculum that often hindered their needs and multiple creativities. Moreover, regardless of their skepticism about learning English in an interesting and agentive way, many of them were highly active, creative, and excited when we discussed a teaching method that would nurture their agency and make a strong connection between learning English and their real lives. Thus, the current situation and the students' needs set a solid foundation for the researcher to apply agency and postmodern perspectives in working with the students. The students were invited to participate in an eight-week socio-cultural learning unit and encouraged to select topics that concerned them most in current Vietnamese society. Bui functioned as a consultant and facilitator to guide students to select their topics of interest (Bui, 2016).

The case study comprises multiple data types, including Bui's classroom observation notes, videos of students' presentations, student posters, and their final written reflections. Moreover, Bui utilized her reflections on students' linguistic and cultural settings, their abilities, and their needs both inside and outside the classroom.

In particular, while teaching she paid special attention to students' preparations, reactions, collaborations, and performance. All these areas were reflected in her journal. Bui gathered students' collaborative presentations which were each filmed during the final presentations in order to subsequently analyze the students' language transformations and agency. Finally, besides collecting students' handouts, cultural artifacts, and posters, she elicited students' written reflections at the end of the course. Having centered the course on learner agency, students were asked to reflect on their view of the course and how the course helped them increase their agency.

## 3.2   Data Analysis

As engaged ethnography is a collaborative and active research method, Delamont and Atkinson (2004) suggest that it is crucial to demonstrate the data as a method of social presentation rather than as solely data analysis in a conventional manner. This insight enabled the researcher to actively portray students' participation, activism, and transformations when she positioned and cultivated their agency in learning. All the journal notes on observations of students' participation and their behavior were taken into careful consideration. Thus, Bui read and reread these notes and coded for emerging themes (Maxwell, 2013). Bui spent hours watching and taking notes on the content contained in student video presentations, and roles students took during the presentations and their verbal responses to their classmates. Such a careful process allowed her to create an initial set of themes for the data (Delamont & Atkinson, 2004). These were checked several times, along with the classroom notes and reflections, to identify final themes with multiple values that portrayed students' agentive actions and outcomes. These data were combined to enable a rich description that portrayed agency interventions with the students. In this study, Bui's data collection and depiction went through a process of careful data analysis and reflexivity (Madison, 2012) to ensure her intervention and students' voices, and actions were highly interwoven, reflective, and represented an accurate portrayal (Morrell, 2007). What follows is Bui's demonstration of empowering learner agency in an English classroom.

## 3.3   Agency as Making Choice, Resistance, Taking Action, and Driving Transformations

As discussed above in the case setting, within the eight-week socio-cultural learning unit, students were asked to select topics that concerned them most in current Vietnamese society. Students worked in groups of four and explored the topics that each group selected by using newspapers, the Internet, and other media sources. Impressively, they generated various interesting and radical themes, namely school conflict,

family violence, gender inequality, homosexuality, media, and multiculturalism and diversity. Bui demonstrates the activation of learner agency of two of the student groups who delved into burning socio-cultural topics related to youth such as school violence and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights in this section.

Through students' mini-presentation projects, it became evident that students exhibited their agency as active and creative learners and researchers of their own learning (Davis, 2009; Park, 2011). They created the topic of their interest and narrowed it down before researching their topics. Students further generated different methods to diversify their presentations and offered responsible and highly applicable suggestions for their project. For instance, the students' presentation on the school violence topic started asking questions such as: "Do you like our school?" or "Do you think our school environment is good?" Students then introduced the topic as well as the outline for their presentation. While presenting, they incorporated pictures and videos about school violence. Students then talked about the psychological and physical consequences of school violence. They used sources such as the Statistics of Education Department of Vietnam, which indicated that school violence had increased dramatically, and many students were expelled from school. Students further talked about reasons for school violence, listing issues of parenting punishments, influences of entertainment facilities, failures in understanding people's differences, and more. They further investigated and presented information on the effects of school violence ranging from limited academic achievement, committing suicide, bullying, and violent behaviors. They showed how school violence affected the future of not only the individuals but also the development of the country.

The students who presented on LGBT rights displayed the flag for their peers to guess their topic. They shared the statistics that in 2013 there were 90% LGBT students being bullied because of their sexual preferences. They then explored the topic by describing cases of homosexuality in Vietnam. Students of this particular group interviewed other students in school about their views of LGBT. In order to affirm LGBT rights, students offered various examples such as Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, to demonstrate that homosexual people are actually intelligent, successful, and even good at parenting. They cited a speech by Hillary Clinton, who emphasized that LGBT is a reality, not a crime.

Throughout the project above, it was clear that students well understood and critically mobilize existing resources for their own learning (Street, 2003) such as multiple communication methods, hybrid text forms, genres, and writing (Street & Leung, 2010) rather than solely relying on the current curriculum. Students on school violence enriched and diversified their presentations by incorporating short films, conducting interviews with other teachers and students in school, and using cultural artifacts. Their work was further interwoven with facts, figures, videos, interviews, and cultural artifacts or hand-made products. With the topic of school violence, Bui saw that the students prepared the topic on violence well. They closed their presentation by calling for stopping school violence and hanging the posters they designed on the classroom walls. Finally, they showed a short video of how students who got involved in serious conflict could become good friends again and performed

a song calling for choosing peace and stopping violence. Similarly, the students who presented on LGBT rights questioned why their peers discriminate against LGBT people and then showed a symbol saying I am what I am. We can see that the high school project groups described above exemplify students' agency to take meaningful action, voice their needs, and negotiate for themselves the classroom and social space to enhance their linguistic, symbolic, and academic resources.

Throughout the project, student agency emerged significantly when the researcher offered the creative space for them to reflect on their own learning. Two major themes related to learner agency emerged: Students' individual agency and social agency significantly turned English language learning into a means for their inner self-development as well as social criticism and social transformations.

First, regarding students' individual agency, students actively and enthusiastically provided reflections on how their language learning helped increase their inner agency as strong, courageous, and responsible individuals. As a student shared:

> *The project makes me who I am now. It gives me courage to confidently present my opinions in public, and it works in many other situations in my life. I learned to be a leader and cooperate with others to achieve a better result. I also learned to be patient and make better decisions, not panic as I am used to be.*

Another female student shared:

> *I think our project is very helpful, and this is the first time I have learned meaningful English lessons. The project helped me be responsible for myself and other classmates, brave, and patient. For example, I knew my speaking was not very good but reminded myself to say all that I wanted to say and say it as clearly as possible. Gradually, I did it better and felt very calm even when I made mistakes. I think that you have made a revolution in teaching in this mountainous area.*

Similarly, a male student remarked:

> *Thanks to our class, I have been much braver than ever before and always willing to motivate people to do good things. For example, last week, we had to do an assignment on starting a fundraising activity. When it came to choosing who [was] gonna [be] the leader to be in charge of the activity, I, with no hesitation, volunteered. I consider this act as brave because I didn't have much background knowledge and experience about this activity. But, I lead the whole team to success so far and we've collected quite a significant amount of money.*

The agentive teaching, moreover, empowered students to find a way to raise their voices to protect themselves in some challenging situations. For instance, a male student shared the following example with the researcher. He said:

> *As matter of fact, your class helped me to speak up for me and speak up for what is right. For example, just the other day, I was blamed for other people's crimes. To be more specific, I live in the dormitory with a group of peers. The thing was all of my roommates lost their money, and in some way, I was the only one who didn't. And, all of them assumed I was the thief. This drove me insanely angry. So, I decided to gather everyone and talked it out. After the talk, although, we couldn't find out the money, or who was the thief, at least I could justify myself and turn the suspicion away from me.*

Obviously, the sociocultural learning project served as a linguistically mediated social space for student inner agency to be constructed, negotiated, and empowered

(Norton, 2000). In other words, the students' reflections indicated that the project, in fact, created a student inner agency revolution: they came to believe or increased their belief in themselves and their abilities; they were empowered to challenge themselves to become better and more creative learners; and they spoke up and affirmed their voices, roles, and rights in various circumstances. Such qualities directly respond to the core notion of agency presented in the earlier part of the paper and critically set a solid foundation for their meaningful social actions.

Second, the agentive language teaching in this study not only increased students' inner agency as being strong, critical, brave, responsible, and resilient, but students' social agency also strongly emerged in the students' reflections. In essence, the project signaled a meaningful gravitation of student agency from their inner and ideological transformations to their social activism, which correlates well with observations that learner agency is not complete but will evolve throughout life (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). Students in this study became more critical and inquired into meaningful enactments in their daily life. For instance, when the researcher and students discussed in class the new school year's opening ceremony in which they had participated a few weeks prior to the discussion, many showed their unfavorable opinions about it and called for reimagining their new school year's opening ceremony that "should exclude long and boring speeches" from authorities (which is a normal occurrence in this province). As one student argued: "the ceremony should primarily be for every student, [not for provincial authorities to make many long speeches]". They proposed ideas to re-imagine a meaningful ceremony through "organizing a second-hand textbook exchange activity to save costs, having guest speakers be former successful students, and offering more activities to help newcomers."

Moreover, agentive language teaching in this study greatly signified meaningful social activism whereby students become mobilized to fight against social injustice and create positive changes. According to one student:

> I feel a lot stronger thanks to our agentive learning. I now have guts to speak up for the rights to protect my friends from whatever kinds of bullying in our school. I ask them to speak up for themselves and their own rights. I have nothing to be afraid of something like that [e.g., bullying].

Moreover, the following reflection of a female student demonstrated movement beyond the notion of classroom learning to resist, unite, inform, and take action toward sexual assault on children—a sensitive and not yet widely publicized topic in modern Vietnam. She said:

> I think that our project really helped me to be more courageous in affirming my ideas. Although I am not a deep thinker at all times, I still realize what is appropriate and want to protect my ideas. For example, sexual assault on children is a big issue now. The reason is one little girl was assaulted by an old man, and some organizations have been involved in protecting the girl's rights and calling for the guy to be seriously punished. From this problem, many other similar situations were found when parents started asking their children at home. Facebookers and many others strongly criticize that old guy and other criminals of sexual assault but have not talked about what to do to eliminate this issue.

She emphasized:

*I myself, on the other hand, think more about how to protect my friends, both male and female. I told my friends: "don't let strange people touch you." I don't think that criticizing something like sexual assault is enough. I talked to my old secondary teachers and suggested their schools to have more practical actions such as organizing talks on gender and sexuality, self-protection, and more. Hopefully things like these will help gradually eliminate children sexual assault and other social issues in our society.*

Such reflections assert students as whole social persons (Bourdieu, 1977) whose agency is developed more fully and completely when they turn their inner agency into meaningful social agency. These were their reflections which showed their ability to interpret social realities which are embedded in their language learning and surroundings. Moreover, they took pressing and meaningful actions, responsibly protecting friends and families, creating consciousness-raising for others about social issues, and suggesting more people to take action to address social injustice (Holland et al., 1998; Vitanova, 2005).

In terms of the students' academic achievement, the students' positive language learning outcomes (see also Bui, 2016) strongly reflect the notion of linguistic investment (Norton, 2000) and "legitimate" linguistic capital, using Bourdieu's (1977) perspective. In other words, repositioning students' agency in this context contributes to creating individuals with fuller potential when their concrete language capital, related skills, and strong agentive stance serve as a foundation for securing their socio-economic, educational, and symbolic power in the future.

## 4   Implications for Language Education Programs

The examples above suggest that cultivating students' agency and engaging them in language acquisition in the EFL context empower and sustain students' inner, ideological and agentive strengths, which these students had hardly ever experienced. First, students were given an empowering space to reinvent their senses of self and nurture their inner agency. They came to believe more in themselves and in their abilities and stance while participating in various agentive activities that greatly nurtured them as creative, responsible, and resilient individuals. Second, fostering learner agency in English classrooms in the context of the study, in fact, underlined and legitimized their roles and rights to help develop their social agency and deep and critical thinking (Norton, 2000), critical resistance to, and awareness of, educational and socio-political issues in their learning environment and society (Davis, 2009; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Moses et al., 2020). Repositioning students at the heart of learning helps cultivate their agentive action to tackle social issues so that they can inform, take purposeful actions, and persuade others on many issues for more equitable and forward-looking outcomes (Wenger & Lave, 1991). In this chapter, we can see that students informed each other about their worldviews regarding LGBT, meaningful school activities, school violence, bullying, or sexual assault. They further took

purposeful action by mobilizing multiple methods such as speaking up for themselves and helping others be conscious about these issues while offering various solutions to protect themselves and others. As Block (2007) and Wenger (1998, p. 3) contend, when students are respected as "human beings capable of knowing", their agency is activated, empowered, and fully mobilized as unique individuals with rich linguistic social, cultural, and potential. The examples above assert that rather than assuming students to be passive learners, they possessed their inner and social agency as responsible, active, and highly critical individuals who were capable of participating in democratizing materials for their own learning, resisting inequities, and mobilizing many concerned others to tackle social matters, and in transforming their language learning landscape and academic outcomes (Davis, 2009; Park, 2011). Third, the study argues that promoting learner agency in this context is a form of positive investment (Norton, 2000) whereby the researcher and students worked collaboratively to foster linguistic transformation for students in order to enhance their language competency and achieve other socio-cultural, and educational dispositions (Norton, 2000; Wenger & Lave, 1991). Positive investment here reflects students' enhancement of their English competence in order to negotiate and participate well in the imagined community in the future. Learner agency involvement, moreover, served as an impetus for students to inquire into and improve their new interdisciplinary knowledge (e.g., politics, women's rights, gender issues) to which they had little exposure within the main curriculum. The study strongly corroborates critical youth research (e.g., Appadurai, 2006; Davis et al., 2013; Morrell, 2008, Phyak & Bui, 2014) to argue that rather than holding skeptical expectations of students and continuing with teacher-dominant practices in many settings, student-centered and agentive learning help develop student academic competency, meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive knowledge, and their social actions, which is essential for them to become active and confident actors in language acquisition and beyond. Furthermore, besides positive linguistic and academic investment, students' various skills that they desperately need in the modern world are enriched. Throughout the examples, it is evident from student reflections that their interpersonal and civic skills, such as group work, responsibility, sharing, and respecting each other's viewpoints, become enhanced. These skills provide them with a solid foundation to perform as active and versatile citizens in transnational working environments. They were further offered a democratic space to exercise their rights to research (Appadurai, 2006) by scrutinizing relevant and meaningful materials, organizing their presentations, and providing recommendations for changes. The study argues that the notion of positive investment which emerges from agentive teaching helps improve not only their language and academic knowledge but also their skills, which eventually assists them in negotiating for more equitable social welfare at large (Appadurai, 2006). Generally speaking, respecting student full agency is a great pedagogical tool to develop students as potential intellectuals and responsible and critical citizens who possess a rich stock of skills pivotal for development, both for themselves individually and at a national level.

The chapter not only shows the positive outcome of capitalizing on learner agency but also offers some recommendations for teachers and other stakeholders to foster

the notion of agency in language teaching. In order to promote effective literacy and language learning, it is strongly recommended that educators re-conceptualize their view of students' power and abilities. Students and their agency have to be repositioned at the epicenter of the teaching and learning process. This suggestion emphasizes educators' responsibility to reposition students in a central role (Block, 2015; Morrell, 2008) if teachers are interested in improving language and education quality. Student voices and their rich potential have to be recognized, respected, and mobilized in creating educational changes. In this study, students were respected and empowered as active and responsible change agents. They were able to exercise their needs, voices, and actions to collaboratively work with the researcher for effective and meaningful language learning. Positioning learner agency at the heart of language learning offers students "the autonomy to pursue their interests and passions" (Morrell, 2008, p. 161) to learn language through their natural curiosity and agentive potential and provides the possibility of more appropriate teaching practices. Generally speaking, the study concurs with Davis et al. (2013), Hopma and Sergeant (2015), and Morrell (2008), who argue that we desperately need to cultivate and nurture students' passion, creativity, and unique positioning to truly work toward responsive and quality language learning and socio-educational transformations.

Since learner agency is complex and "is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated" with other individuals and the society at large (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 148), it is recommended that students be provided with abundant resources and strategies in order to fully and formally cultivate their agency. Mercer (2012, p. 56) suggests teachers create "a range of conditions and learning environments (in and out of class)" to foster and empower learner agency. Students have to be offered a third space to democratically and fully participate in the continuum of teaching and learning (Bui, 2016; Hopma & Sergeant, 2015). They should be provided with ample opportunities and guidance to try, challenge themselves, and learn from their experiences. The current study further recommends that learners' beliefs, desires, and needs have to be treated seriously and scaffolded into the students' contexts of language learning (Flowerdew & Miller, 2008). Furthermore, it is suggested that students' multiple strengths and rich resources be deployed to foster their literacy and their ontological and epistemological transformations.

## 5   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

Based on the successful outcomes of these case studies, the approaches for mobilizing learner agency demonstrated here contribute further insights into the scholarship of learner agency empowerment in language acquisition. These insights may well apply beyond the context of the current study reported in this chapter. This research concurs with inspiring youth agency work in other settings (e.g., Davis, 2009; Larsen-Freeman, 2020; Mercer, 2012; Morrell, 2008; Moses et al., 2020) to portray and confirm how students can participate as resourceful and critical agents

in their classrooms, schools, and communities, especially in the light of teacher-centered teaching and top-down education discourses that are still dominant in many contexts. The study hopefully contributes more insights into pedagogical and practical adaptations of learner agency in teaching in the EFL context. We recommend similar studies to be taken in other contexts in Asia in order to document how youth critically resist inappropriate education or policy orientations while exercising their agentive actions for effective adaptations. Such adaptations celebrate, safeguard, and mobilize the rich linguistic and cultural epistemologies of students for democratic and meaningful learning, multilingualism, and greater equality and equity. Cultivating and repositioning learner agency in language acquisition is crucial and gradually prepares students to be competent, critical, and responsible actors in the modern world.

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# Effective Remote Language Teaching

**I. G. A. Lokita Purnamika Utami** and **Sarah Prestridge**

## 1 Introduction

The advancement of information and communications technology (ICT) heralds the focus shift from the teacher to the learner (Hadadnia & Shahidi, 2012) suggesting greater opportunities for learner control. Technologies also enable opportunities for a shift in the learning model away from face-to-face instruction and toward online instruction (Engzell et al., 2021). These shifts have recently been evidenced to impact engaging teaching and learning activities, including English teaching as a second or foreign language (Engin, 2014; Sumardi & Nugrahani, 2021; Yusnilita, 2020; Zakarneh, 2018). There are vast complexities associated with teaching and learning in second language studies and, as such, this chapter will focus on one learning context: online remote teaching.

The relationship with technology is well established within language instruction signified by long-used teaching approaches such as Computer-Aided Language Instruction/CALI, Computer-assisted language learning/CALL, and Technology-Enhanced Language Learning/TELL that is characterized by the utilization of various language learning apps such as Memrise, LinguaLift, Rosetta Stone, Duolingo, HelloTalk, Mindsnacks. Language instruction has recently been extended into teaching and learning processes outside the classroom through online learning, blended learning and remote teaching (Bušelić, 2012). Online learning is defined as learning that takes place online through the use of a specific application, platform, or gadget (Ekmekçi, 2015). One way to describe online learning is to focus on the

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synchronous aspect and the more traditional approach where the teacher delivers the content through internet access and the use of specific technological devices or applications (Oliphant & Branch-mueller, 2016). Alternatively, online learning has been described as a mix of asynchronous and synchronous technologies that provide opportunities for teachers and students to collaborate, co-create and critique (Coker, 2021). It has been suggested that online learning provides a more flexible learning experience in terms of time and space than face-to-face educational experiences (Ansong & Boateng, 2017; Berridge & Wells, 2012; Cho, 2012). When conducting online learning, teachers and students can be in the same or different locations (Bušelić, 2012; Ekmekçi, 2015), however, flexibility comes not from timetabling a synchronous lesson at the same time that a classroom lesson would be delivered. The difference is that it is online. Flexibility comes from the learning design and mix of synchronous and asynchronous activities. This will be explored further in this chapter.

This chapter now turns to critical literature and research reviewed on remote teaching. It discusses aspects of remote online English language teaching and reports on an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study conducted in an Indonesian secondary state school. Finally, conclusions are made suggesting implications for online remote teaching in second language teaching.

## 2   Theoretical Underpinning and Existing Research

The literature will explore two aspects of Remote online English language teaching. These include (1) designing effective remote English teaching; and (2) digital technologies in remote English teaching;

### 2.1   Designing Effective Remote English Teaching

During the 2020–2021 pandemic when teachers and students were not always physically present, remote teaching became the only solution (Taguchi, 2020; Winters, 2021). Simply explained, in remote teaching, the teacher and students log in at predetermined times to participate in synchronous learning activities (Sencer Corlu, 2014), or at different times to experience asynchronous learning activities.

Scholars found that remote teaching makes possible flexible delivery and learning opportunities that require self-directed learning for deep engagement with the concepts being explored (Bušelić, 2012; Ekmekçi, 2015). These benefits can be supported by the way online learning is designed. For example, there is the opportunity for greater choice of time allocations that comes from an increase in the use of asynchronous activities and anytime collaborative activities (Larbi-Siaw & Owusu-Agyeman, 2017). In other words, it has been found that the benefits of online learning have a significant relationship with learning design (Barbour et al., 2020).

Despite the benefits, there have been challenges associated with remote teaching for English teachers, such as lesson planning (see Young, 2010); lack of emotional connection between teacher and students (Lai & Xue, 2012); lack of appropriate digital materials, lack of learners' attention to internet access and lack of support from the institution. The need for connectivity and technical tools is foundational; however, consideration is needed of the pedagogical challenges teachers face with students' disengagement, learning competencies and dispositions for online learning. Ertmer's (1999) conceptualization of barriers to digital technology use applies here to online teaching as first-order (technology access) and second-order barriers (shift in pedagogy) with second-order being more difficult for teachers to grasp.

To achieve the effectiveness of a systematic process, such as remote teaching, a systematic design is required. A study conducted by Means et al. (2014) may be the most precise yet complex one in terms of providing insight into online remote teaching and its designs (Stewart, 2016). They propose nine dimensions to be considered in designing remote teaching, namely (1) modality, (2) pacing, (3) student-instructor ratio, (4) pedagogy, (5) instructor role online, (6) student role online, (7) online communication synchrony, (8) role of online assessments, and (9) source of feedback. In remote teaching, besides a synchronous mode, an asynchronous mode of learning could be an option where the interaction between teachers and students occur intermittently and with a time lag between interactions (Larbi-Siaw & Owusu-Agyeman, 2017). English teachers should identify which material can be taught without their guidance but rather with clear instruction (*self-paced* learning), and which material necessitates class-paced learning that allows for direct engagement with the students. They can also combine self-paced and class-paced learning, as demonstrated by flipped learning models where students complete asynchronous tasks before engaging in the synchronous lesson.

In designing remote teaching, English teachers specifically design teaching and learning activities that allow (1) expository, (2) practice, (3) exploratory, and (4) collaborative learning environments (Means et al., 2014). This design is critical because language learners must improve their four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Learning the four language skills works best when students have the opportunity to practice them all at once (Harmer, 2007). English teachers who teach remotely may use a variety of apps to accomplish this. However, in an emergency remote teaching context, the challenges of providing this opportunity are more apparent, particularly for students with accessibility issues, low motivation for online students' engagement and little to no option for face-to-face interaction (Subekti, 2020). In this context, teachers must consider what tools/apps students can use to provide opportunities for the use of these four language skills aspects in an integrated manner.

Managing feedback is critical for student engagement processes, quality teaching and for assessment outcomes, especially in online learning environments where many educators are unfamiliar with the terrain. In remote teaching contexts, feedback can be provided digitally. For instance, instructors can record audio or video clips with transcription so that students can hear the instructor's tone and read the transcribed comments. Using digital media-delivered feedback, teachers can create

a personal connection that is more authentic allowing for an interactive feedback process (Brearley & Rod Cullen, 2012).

Additionally, teachers may invite students to give peer feedback. This corresponds to the online learning system being a socially networked rather than a one-to-one (teacher-to-student) system. When students consult each other's work, they have the opportunity to reflect on their work, how it can be improved, and how it meets assignment criteria (Meeks et al., 2021). Teachers and other students can guide a course or assignment. This is seen as more effective as students are given specific directions while working, and consequently, students can make immediate changes or adjustments (Hirsch, 2017). However, the teacher plays a central role here in managing and engineering students' engagement and feedback with each other.

In summary, the need for connectivity and technical tools is foundational; however, consideration needs also to be focused on the pedagogical challenges teachers face with students' disengagement, learning competencies and dispositions for online learning. As a reflection of these dimensions, English teachers should identify which concepts and skills can be taught without their specific guidance (self-paced learning), which material can be taught through class-paced learning and how these two approaches work together. In addition, English teachers need to consider the learning needs of students, the content requirements, timeframes and assessment to make pedagogically informed decisions about the relationships between synchronous and asynchronous learning engagements so that students are given opportunities to engage in the four areas of language learning together.

## *2.2 Digital Technologies in Remote English Teaching*

In this section, several digital technologies will be critically discussed that have impacts on how teachers of the English language design remote teaching sessions. These digital technologies include Learning Management Systems (LMS), blended synchronous and asynchronous learning, digital set-up, digital tools, virtual exchange and virtual reality.

The first innovation to be discussed is an LMS. These platforms provide an extensive range of pedagogical and course administration tools which can assist in the creation of learning content, the tracking or monitoring of students' activities, and the administration of assessments (Mtebe, 2015; Yakubu, 2019).

English teachers may utilize Zoom for synchronous learning allowing real-time interaction and Google Classroom as a place for classwork with a set deadline for asynchronous learning (Gill, 2020). However, as mentioned before, which tool to use at which time in the learning process is an important part of designing online learning especially in language learning as vocabulary is needed before students can be engaging in speaking, writing, reading or listening.

There are some digital tools that English language teachers have adopted during remote teaching periods. One such tool is *Kahoot!* This tool allows the teacher to create grammar or vocabulary quizzes. Kaur and Naderajan (2019) found a Kahoot!

quiz to be an adaptive software to engage students to participate actively allowing for a more meaningful and rich language learning experience. *Lyrics Training* is a platform that combines audio and video from YouTube with song lyrics as a game to improve students' listening skills. Azhari and Adnan (2018) found Lyrics training provided an enjoyable and immersive way of listening practices. Teachers can also use *Quizlet* to select sets of flashcards or to create their flashcard and share it via a link on their Google Classroom. Setiawan and Wiedarti (2020) provide evidence of the effectiveness of the Quizlet Application in learning vocabulary. To engage students in reading and writing activities, the English teacher may want to use the S*torybird* website. The teacher and students can create their own books online and share them with other users to create a storytelling group (Abdullah et al., 2020).

The next digital tool is Virtual Exchange. VE can be considered the best possible use of communication technology to convert and transfer language learning from the confines of the classroom to global interactions with other geographically dispersed learners (Dooly & Vinagre, 2021). Dooly and Vinagre examined the role of Virtual Exchange interaction in language learning and identified three roles: facilitating meaning negotiation, supporting focus on form (typically through self and peer corrective feedback), and assisting the development of socio-pragmatic competence through target language use.

Finally, Virtual Reality is another innovation in remote teaching that refers to any platform that digitally places students in a real-world setting, a fictional scenario or a simulation (Healy & Kennedy, 2020). Prestridge et al. (2021) examined a 3D virtual world where pre-service teachers taught lessons. The virtual world enabled a feeling of presence, where participants could interact easily with each other and have greater choice in their learning while interacting in a 'place'.

Numerous digital technologies have been established and developed to help English teachers with their tasks, ranging from the most common, such as an LMS, to the most unusual in an English classroom, such as Virtual Reality. These technologies are constantly evolving, and teachers must improve their digital literacy in order to use them effectively when the situation calls for it.

## 3   An Empirical Study

In this section, we present an empirical study that investigated teachers' and students' acceptance of emergency remote English teaching in an Indonesian state high school. As the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) impacted the continuity of the educational system in Indonesia, the government at the time decided on several protocols to keep the continuity of the educational process. One of them was to provide opportunities for students to learn from home. This required all school-aged students to both access and engages in online remote teaching and learning for an indefinite period. Teachers were charged with re-designing lessons for fully online delivery.

Although several studies on online learning have been conducted, the majority of them focused on the effectiveness of online learning (Young, 2010), the evaluation of

online learning (Bušelić, 2012; Ekmekçi, 2015) and online learning challenges (Rana et al., 2014). In the context of these previous studies, online learning is a viable option. However, little is known about how English teachers and students were affected by a sudden emergency remote teaching situation. Furthermore, in a context where online learning has never been a part of the national compulsory educational approach, the acceptance of the value of learning in this manner by teachers and students was significant and influential. As a response, this study sought to investigate learning English in a fully remote mode, its challenges, the acceptance of the approach and its complexities for learning a new language.

## 3.1  Method

An explanatory sequential mixed-method design was used in this study. Data were gathered systematically: firstly, through a questionnaire that focused on the perceived usefulness (PU) of remote teaching and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of remote teaching. It is important to explain that in this study perceived usefulness (PU) is the extent to which a person believes that remote teaching will improve his or her job performance (as a teacher or a student). Meanwhile perceived ease of use (PEOU) means the degree to which a person believes that remote teaching would be adopted easily. Second, specific participants were interviewed. There were 1120 students and 7 English teachers in one Indonesian school. The study included all English teachers and some students as a sample, which was selected at random using Slovin's formula (Ryan, 2013) at 5% significance, yielding 296 students. The research questions were:

1. How can the acceptance of remote English teaching by English teachers and students be described?
2. What are the challenges encountered by English teachers and students during remote English teaching?

The school was chosen because, prior to the pandemic, no one required and thus no one administered online learning. This situation provided an ideal setting for the study to investigate English teachers' and students' acceptance of remote teaching, as well as the challenges they encountered during teaching and learning remotely.

The study used Davis's (1989) technology acceptance model (TAM) to both frame the questionnaire and the interview questions as well as to categorize data. This theory assumes that determining perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) can identify user acceptance of technology (Davis, 1989). This new technological system in this study refers to remote English teaching.

As a data collection tool, two Likert-scale questionnaires, one for teachers and one for students, were developed. To elicit teachers' and students' acceptance of remote teaching, the questionnaire involved 26 statements for teachers (14 PU statements and 12 PEOU statements) and 20 statements for students (12 PU statements and 8 PEOU statements).

PU statements for teachers, for example: *Teaching would be difficult to perform without remote teaching.* For students, for example*: Learning would be difficult to perform without remote teaching.* Meanwhile, PEOU statements for teachers, for example: *I find it easy to recover from errors encountered while using remote teaching.* For students, for example*: I often become confused when I use the remote teaching system.* The participants answered the questions in the form of scale, "5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree".

Before distributing the questionnaires to the participants, two experts validated the instruments, and their decisions were analyzed using Gregory's (2000) cross-tabulation formula. Both questionnaires were considered to have a very high validity.

In addition to content validity, an empirical validity and reliability test of the questionnaires was performed using Cronbach alpha and Pearson product-moment formulas, and they were found to be valid and reliable and suitable for data collection. In addition to the questionnaire, an unstructured interview schedule was used in the study to examine the challenges both teachers and students encountered during teaching and learning remotely.

Following data collection, the data from the questionnaire were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The data of the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, central tendency measurement (median), and dispersion measurement (range). To analyze data, the data conversion from Koyan (2012) was used. The interval scores were determined as follows:

Mi = Ideal central tendency = 1/2 (Ideal Maximum Score + Ideal Minimum Score). For teacher questionnaire
SDi = Ideal dispersion measurement = 1/6 (Ideal Maximum Score + Ideal Minimum Score)

For the teacher questionnaire the ideal central tendency was 75.5, and the ideal dispersion was 3.83. Meanwhile, for the student questionnaire the ideal central tendency was 62, and the ideal dispersion was 12.6

Thus, the interval score could be determined as follows (Table 1):

Finally, to analyze qualitative data from the interviews, the study followed the procedure of qualitative data analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994). This procedure involved data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification. Themes such as teachers' and students' acceptance of remote teaching and the challenges they encountered during remote teaching emerged. These will be discussed in the following section to provide an in-depth understanding of teaching English as a second language remotely online. Pseudonyms for participants are used for the presentation of findings.

**Table 1** The guidelines for data conversion

| No | Interval formula | Intervals for teachers' questionnaires | Intervals for students' questionnaire | Categorization |
|----|------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Mi + 1.5 SDi $\leq$ M $\leq$ Mi + 3.0 SDi | 81.24 < M < 87 | 80.9 < M < 100 | Very high acceptance |
| 2 | Mi + 0.5 SDi $\leq$ M < Mi + 1.5 SDi | 77.41 < M < 81.24 | 68.3 < M < 80.9 | High acceptance |
| 3 | Mi − 0.5 SDi $\leq$ M < Mi + 0.5 SDi | 73.59 < M < 77.41 | 55.7 < M < 68.3 | Neutral |
| 4 | Mi − 1.5 SDi $\leq$ M < Mi − 0.5 SDi | 69.76 < M < 73.59 | 43.1 < M < 55.7 | Low acceptance |
| 5 | Mi − 3.0 SDi $\leq \overline{X} <$ Mi − 1.5 SDi | 64 < M < 69.76 | 24.2 < M < 43.1 | Very low acceptance |

**Table 2** Results of teacher and student questionnaires

| Teachers | | Students | |
|----------|---|----------|---|
| Median of questionnaire | 81.00 | Median of questionnaire | 62.00 |
| Range | 23 | Range | 76.00 |
| Median of PU items | 48 | Median of PU items | 37 |
| Median of PEOU items | 33 | Median of PEOU items | 25 |

## 3.2 Findings and Discussion

### 3.2.1 Teachers' and Students' Acceptance of Technology in Remote Teaching

By looking at the median, the technology acceptance of English teachers was 81.00 within an interval of 77.41 < M < 81.24 and fell in the high acceptance category (Table 2). The median score of the PU dimension (48 in interval 46.65 < M < 55) fell in a high acceptance interval however the median score of PEOU dimension (33 in interval 32 < M < 40) was in the neutral interval. It means that English teachers perceived remote English instruction as a technology that can improve their teaching performance but it can either make their teaching effortless or burden their teaching.

Unlike teachers' acceptance, the student questionnaire's median score was 62 within the neutral interval (55.7 < M < 68.3). In more specific measurement, the median score of the PU dimension (37 in interval 33.75 < M < 41.25.) and PEOU dimension (25 in interval 21.35 < M < 26.65) were both within neutral interval. This means they perceive remote teaching as either a useful or useless learning system that can ease or burden their learning.

Qualitative data provided a further examination of PU of remote teaching. Both teachers and students believed that Distance learning can make the users feel flexible

and convenient, which means that they can do their job as a teacher at any time and in any location as convenient as they want with the help of technology. Nyoman, one of the teachers, said that "*Remote teaching helps me improve my ability and agility when using technology. It allows for greater flexibility in terms of time and location, for example, I can reschedule lessons as needed.*" This is in line with what was previously found by Abed (2019) that remote teaching could provide several advantages for teachers, including easy access to teaching (from anywhere and at any time), reduced administrative tasks and the possibility of multi-tasking. Furthermore, Komang said that "*I think technology helps me much in teaching, for example I can post material for multiple classes at once.*" This admission can be inferred that remote teaching can ease their job or task by increasing opportunities for flexibility and multi-tasking (Yuen & Ma, 2008).

Students demonstrated positive acceptance. During the interview session, Swari, a student, expressed her belief that "*Learning English through remote teaching is far more accessible. It forces me to be an autonomous learner and is more convenient because I can learn from anywhere.*" These ideas are in accordance with findings from a study by Bušelić (2012), which suggested that remote teaching provides flexibility and freedom and triggers self-directed learning. Related to the PU dimension, students reported that remote English teaching can increase their autonomous learning instinctually and allow flexibility in learning.

To determine users' technology acceptance, Davis (1989) believes in identifying users' behavior towards the new technology use (remote English teaching). As a result of comparing the survey and interview results, it is possible to conclude that both English teachers' and students' acceptance of technology in remote English teaching was overall positive. These data were derived from a situation in which emergency remote teaching was nationally mandated to be used at all levels of education due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

### 3.2.2 Challenges Encountered by English Teachers and Students During Remote Teaching

There were many challenges expressed by teachers and students for English language learning remotely. The following sub-themes will be discussed respectively. For teachers, there were six sub-themes: (1) Accessibility issues, (2) Learning Design, (3) Effective feedback and student engagement, (4) Playing multiple roles, (5) Students' characteristics and learning needs, and (6) Social-emotional pressure. For students, there were four sub-themes: (1) Accessibility issues, (2) Student technological capabilities, (3) Learning environment, and (4) Subject complexities.

**Teachers' challenge 1: Accessibility issue**. From the teaching perspective, the majority of issues encountered by teachers were a lack of student learning participation as a result of poor internet connection. Made, a teacher of grade 10, responded that the connectivity issue interfered with students learning, "…*students frequently experience connectivity issues…The connection issue also reduces the number of students who respond during learning activities.*"

Furthermore, a poor internet connection limits the number of applications that can be used for teaching. Aside from considering applications that students are familiar with or can run on a device, teachers must also consider which applications consume the least amount of internet data. All seven teachers mentioned that they utilize a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities to try to create a seamless learning experience for accessibility issues (Bezhovski, 2016; Coker, 2021). These teachers used Google Classroom, Google Forms, and WhatsApp as learning tools or platforms because the students were able to easily access them.

**Teacher challenge 2: Learning design**. The combination of synchronous and asynchronous modes can provide the sense of communicating in the language while staying on track (Coker, 2021). Nyoman mentioned that "*To greet students and mention the topic of the lesson, I use WhatsApp chats. To share materials and assignments, I use Google Classroom. Then for assessment purposes I used Google Form.*" Video conferencing tools like Zoom, Webex, and Google Meet, which are used for real-time communication between teachers and students (Lai & Xue, 2012), were not an option because they required more data and a stable connection, which many students could not afford. To solve this problem Putu provided asynchronous material, which could be a solution for issues encountered by students regarding internet access and excessive screen time (Gill, 2020). He reported "*I once used Zoom for teaching, and only 7 of 30 students attended the meeting. Now, I prefer to record my presentation, save it to Google Drive, and share the link.*"

One of the most challenging aspects of asynchronous lessons was providing students with the opportunity to practice language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing. These teachers used YouTube videos, voice recorder apps, and WhatsApp voice note features. Teachers reported that students' engagement in speaking practice had significantly decreased, particularly during impromptu practice. Nyoman mentioned "*When I asked students to use voice notes in WhatsApp to comment on their peers' writing, they mostly hesitated and preferred to comment by writing text in the chat room…*" Real-time communication in a foreign language is difficult. When students had time to prepare their speeches, for example by making a video of their speaking activity, they seemed to participate more. Young (2010) mentioned that through video making, students could practice presentational speaking, encourage planning before speaking, review and self-evaluate, revise and re-record to produce the best version. Komang, a teacher of the 12th grade, said that "*To enhance speaking skill, I asked my students to watch my video of me describing a place and asked them to make a video of their own.*" Asynchronous oral communication, such as recorded video and audio interviews, can help language learners (Gill, 2020). In fact, recording and analyzing speech asynchronously increased language accuracy, fluency and pronunciation quality (see Engin, 2014; Gromik, 2012; Lepore, 2014).

Teachers also mentioned the challenge of designing materials and adapting their content in presentations for remote learning. Despite the difficulties, there is a silver lining to the pandemic situation, as Putu stated, "*if there hadn't been a pandemic, I would never have known how to use Google Classroom or record my material presentation.*"

**Teachers' challenges 3: Effective feedback and students' engagement**. All teacher participants stated that they were unable to provide feedback as effectively as they could in the traditional classroom. The difficulty in providing feedback was exacerbated by students' lack of engagement in learning activities. Teachers perceived those students as less motivated to learn when they are exposed to remote learning. There are an array of reasons why students are inclined to be less motivated in an online foreign language class, such as fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension and accessibility issues (Subekti, 2020; Sumardi & Nugrahani, 2021). Students were afraid of receiving negative feedback from their classmates or teachers for their mistakes or errors when speaking in a second language. They were also afraid of communicating because they lack confidence in spoken fluency due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge. There has also been a report of a failure to provide equal feedback. These teachers admitted that providing feedback to each student is difficult. As a result, they provided general feedback on the students' performance quality in completing specific assignments.

**Teachers' challenge 4: Playing multiple roles**. Teachers reported that they were exhausted, and many were perplexed because they were unfamiliar with online learning platforms, and learning about them through an online workshop added to their burden. Nyoman said that "*I attended several workshops to learn more about teaching online classes. It was difficult for me to adjust to the new learning method.*" This demonstrates that teachers must be both learners and teachers at the same time. This is consistent with the findings of Rana et al.'s (2014) study, which indicated that the challenges of remote English instruction include teacher unpreparedness to use an online learning platform and issues with access to an internet connection. Many schools in Indonesia were not ready to apply emergency remote teaching (Angdhiri, 2020) as online learning was a novel concept, let alone remote teaching.

**Teachers' challenge 5: Students' characteristics and learning needs**. Teachers reported that remote teaching made identifying students' true characteristics and personalities difficult. This unidentified personality makes assessing students' learning progress difficult, for example, whether the students were passive because of their personality or because of the challenging learning materials.

Students usually share a device with their parents, and in the morning, the parents would take the device to work. Their learning was also hampered by the delay in access. Putu said "… *there are always reasons why students are not present. Students who are unable to attend class frequently ask questions outside of class hours.*" Teachers reported that they often had to modify their teaching for students who could not join the online class. Nyoman mentioned "*I frequently asked students to come to school by adhering to all necessary health protocols to get the assignment they needed to complete…*" By doing this, Nyoman hoped all students know what materials to learn. He admitted that this was far from ideal.

**Teachers' challenge 6: Social-emotional pressure**. Some teachers emphasized that society believed that teachers did not do their jobs because the school was closed during the pandemic. Putu said "*People are unaware that teachers now work 24 hours a day, and I still need to explain a specific material to a student at 10 p.m.*"

To summarize, teachers encountered six challenges: accessibility issues, learning design, providing effective feedback and students' engagement, playing multiple roles, students' characteristics and learning needs, and social-emotional pressure. This study demonstrates that the difficulties are not only pedagogical in nature but also psychological. Therefore, during emergency remote teaching, teachers needed to exercise their pedagogical, technological skill as well as their emotional stability. The next section discusses student challenges.

**Students' challenge 1: Accessibility issue**. Students complained about poor internet connection, which was discouraging. Tari, an 11th-grade student, described how difficult it is to learn with a poor internet connection, saying, "*During my lessons, I frequently experienced connection issues at home I am unable to open the videos/ materials provided in Google Classroom. I have to wait several minutes, if not an hour, to send assignments in Google Classroom.*" Students also mentioned that they only have a limited number of devices with which to access learning platforms. Sita explained that "*I only have access to the learning platform through my father's cellphone…. Furthermore, the phone screen is so small, and there are so many annoying notifications that pop up during the learning process.*" This finding resonates with Angdhiri (2020), who highlights that many students had no appropriate devices.

**Students' challenge 2: Student technological capabilities**. Many students were unprepared to use digital tools for learning. Dewi, a 10th-grade student, stated, "*I only encountered the problem the first time I used Google Classroom…At first, I struggled with Google Classroom, but I grew accustomed to it over time.*"

When asked what they think about remote learning, many students said they learn a lot of things they didn't know before. "*This distance learning is actually taxing*," Prabha said, "*…but it has taught me new skills outside of the subject, such as how to use Google Classroom and Google Forms.*"

Online meetings necessitate a high-speed internet connection, which many students cannot afford. Furthermore, there were technological distractions such as lagging Wi-Fi, internet freezes, video buffering, and so on. Despite its challenges, students unanimously agreed that remote learning was beneficial.

**Students' challenge 3: Home learning environment**. Students reported an unsupported environment for remote learning. "*My nephew occasionally interferes with my learning, he asks for attention, and makes noises when I am in class,*" Ngurah said. "*My neighbors can be a nuisance when I'm studying,*" Rani added. "*They frequently brawl and listen to loud music. I need a quiet environment to study in.*" These reports emphasize how external factors such as an unsupported environment can make learning difficult for students.

**Students' challenge 4: Subject complexities**. Students also acknowledged that English is a difficult subject. Few students are interested in learning English, even in a traditional classroom setting, let alone through remote learning. English becomes difficult to learn, as it is a foreign language. As a result, students do not have much exposure to the English language (Rintaningrum, 2018). Dara explained "*… I sometimes struggle to understand the material, especially English material, which I don't always understand. To avoid falling behind, I need to study more outside of class.*"

From the students' perspectives, the challenges of remote English instruction varied; connection issues, for example, arose more frequently. Furthermore, even though many challenges were raised during the interview, both English teachers and students appear to view remote English instruction favorably. It seems that teachers and students overlooked this accessibility issue as it was the only option during the pandemic. With the findings of the study indicating positive acceptance of remote teaching from both the perspective of the teacher and the student, the integration of some online tools and environments may be an opportunity upon return to classroom settings.

## 4    Implications for Language Education Programs

The acceptance of technology in remote English instruction among study participants was high for teachers and neutral for students. The interview data demonstrated a positive perception of remote English instruction in terms of perceived use and perceived ease of use. This finding suggested that both teachers and students were open to remote teaching during the pandemic, which may be influenced by there being no other approach. According to this study, remote learning had an impact on the way English teaching and learning was conducted. Although the participants' acceptance of learning remotely was found to be positive, there were some challenges in how English teaching was designed and delivered and if it had an impact on language learning.

One of the problems was the lack of student engagement and the instructor's ability to provide effective feedback. This study also showed that there was little student-to-student engagement, which is key to learning. This finding on the lack of interaction and student engagement is in line with findings from studies of teacher practice worldwide during this time (Ewing & Cooper, 2021; Howard et al., 2021). In addition, specific to language learning online, findings from Xie and Ke (2020) and Kusuma (2021) suggest that despite challenges, many language learners have been open to and positive about online language learning during the pandemic. Xie and Ke found that Chinese international students generally viewed online learning's usefulness in maintaining learning progress during the pandemic. However, some participants expressed concerns about the quality of online teaching and the lack of opportunities for interaction. Kusuma similarly found that, while Indonesian students mostly enjoyed the flexibility of online language learning, some also reported a lack of social interaction with peers and teachers. Other problems were internet connection and providing effective feedback. Meanwhile, in the current study, the teachers' main challenge was not technical difficulties, but rather teaching with poor internet connection and providing effective feedback. Hence, with the shift to online learning, some students experienced a decrease in their speaking engagement due to a variety of reasons such as technological limitations, lack of in-person interaction, and reduced opportunities for practicing English with their peers.

Remote teaching necessitates the integration of new technologies as well as the optimization of the effectiveness of technology use. To successfully implement remote learning, English teachers must be skilled, knowledgeable about the most effective innovations, perceptive, and adaptable in their work (Desai, 2020; Utami, 2018; Yundayani et al., 2021). Furthermore, the enhancement of teachers' skills in their profession can be in terms of attitude, knowledge, and competency for online pedagogies. By enhancing teachers' skills, teachers can simplify the process of remote teaching so that teaching and learning becomes more flexible and meaningful. Teachers encountered difficulties in engaging students in spontaneous speaking activities in this study due to insufficient vocabulary knowledge and teachers' lack of knowledge in designing online activities that can engage students in speaking activities. As a result, the creation of digital materials that students can use right away to help them build their vocabulary should be the first step. Furthermore, teachers must build students' capabilities as they feel more confident to engage in online speaking activities.

The need for professional development programs to improve language teachers' digital skills is obvious. To be prepared to teach remotely, English teachers must have knowledge and skills in the use of language applications and online language learning tools. They need to be familiar with various applications that may be used in language instruction such as Canva, YouTube, Fluent U, Duolingo, Rosetta Stone, etc., and they need to be comfortable with using them (Mahdi, 2020). The school interventions, for example organizing workshops for English teachers that provide rich and meaningful hands-on learning activities in the use of applications that can facilitate English learning activities and assessment, need to be on the school agenda. Schools must also foster a culture of sharing among teachers so that English teachers with different digital competencies can learn from one another's best practices (Miftach, 2020). Teachers need to collaborate and share their experiences and best practices to improve their digital competencies and effectively use technology in English language teaching. Some collaborative practices that teacher can do are peer mentoring through professional learning communities. This can support English teachers in sharing and learning from each other's experiences. In short, English teachers should be able to plan instruction, design language learning activities, administer various language assessments to students, and provide effective feedback in their context of remote teaching. To achieve this, the role of the school manager is essential, especially in making policy that allows teachers to be competent language teachers.

For students, this study found that they were flabbergasted when they first encountered remote learning. Bao's (2020) study also found this. The sudden transition to online teaching caused initial difficulties for students, but with time and effort, they were able to adapt and find effective ways to maintain their education and receive learning tasks in a virtual environment. Besides proper instructional strategies and technological support to make effective online language learning, students' motivation, self-regulation, and willingness to participate in online learning were evident. These are important factors in determining the success of learning online (Ha & Lee, 2021).

Finally, remote learning necessitates not only teachers' readiness, but also students, families, schools, and government readiness. Remote teaching, which necessitates the use of advanced technology, adds another challenge for teachers, students, schools, and even parents who must adhere to continuing educational requirements. Students must be equipped with the ability to learn independently as well as with digital competencies to know how to learn. They should know what to do and take the initiative to learn, such as learning by exploring any available sources, learning from the information provided by these sources, and making progress on their learning. They should be accountable for making progress in their learning for example by completing assignments or projects that assist them in meeting the learning objectives. They must be disciplined in managing their time to complete all learning assignments effectively.

## 5   Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

Remote teaching has been viewed from a variety of perspectives. Teachers face challenges in various aspects, such as lesson planning (Young, 2010); lack of emotional connection between teacher and students (Lai & Xue, 2012); accessibility issues, lack of interest in online student participation and limited opportunities for in-person communication (Subekti, 2020). These challenges prevent them from performing their jobs effectively during classroom activities. Remote teaching activities necessitate a substantial amount of stressful time to teach, access, and evaluate the lesson.

As language learning is a complex process that requires students to engage in all four language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—remote learning can present unique challenges, particularly in an EFL context with limited English language exposure available (Rintaningrum, 2018). In fact, studies have shown that students may become demotivated to learn in such circumstances (Rintaningrum, 2018). Students were also dealing with a wide range of issues, including internet connectivity (Gill, 2020; Rana et al., 2014), unsupported learning materials and appropriate devices (Angdhiri, 2020), digital competency issues (Kusuma, 2021), and lesson material comprehension (Subekti, 2020; Sumardi & Nugrahani, 2021). Despite these challenges, remote learning was viewed to have several advantages. Both teachers and students benefitted from emergency remote English teaching, which incorporated online media into the learning activity. Teachers and learners learned to use technology and incorporated concepts they explored for conducting remote teaching and learning (Bušelić, 2012; Ekmekçi, 2015). As a result, a divergence of digital tools and resources plus an increase in digital literacy is one of effect of remote teaching on English language education.

From the perspectives of both teachers and students, remote teaching unquestionably caused a variety of changes in English teaching and learning activities. To address the issue of accessibility, teachers attempted to provide an asynchronous

learning environment (Gill, 2020). However, students' ability to interact and collaborate effectively was hampered, once again due to accessibility issues, as well as the discomfort and capabilities to engage in online learning within the context of learning and speaking a foreign language (Rintaningrum, 2018). WhatsApp chat or voice notes were used to mediate interactions between teachers and students or between students. Students' lack of motivation in learning English remotely adds to the list of reasons why effective interaction is difficult to design (Kusuma, 2021; Xie & Ke, 2020). This motivation may be due to the complex nature of learning a foreign language especially as speaking, writing, reading and listening needs to be practiced through an integrated approach. Remote teaching necessitates not only skilled and innovative English teachers who are perceptive and adaptable in their work, but also students who have a well-developed autonomous learning capacity, strong learning motivation (Ha & Lee, 2021) as well as digital competence (Ekmekçi, 2015). These capabilities were developed from the remote experience and will need to be continuously developed with the return to classrooms. This study does show that teachers will try anything to support the learning of their students, by nature teachers want to teach and students want to learn.

This study was conducted in an EFL setting where English is taught as a foreign language. While the results provide valuable insights into technology acceptance during remote teaching, similar research conducted in other contexts, such as ESL, could improve teachers' and students' understanding of how to design remote teaching and online teaching for more complex disciplines. Additionally, it is important to consider how teachers are now incorporating synchronous and asynchronous digital tools into classroom-based design models and continuing to develop students' learning capabilities with these tools and environments. Moving forward, it is essential for students to learn how to learn online. As such, further research could explore effective strategies for developing these skills and integrating them into both remote and in-person teaching models. In addition, one of the major positive outcomes of remote teaching on English language education is an increase in digital literacy and the availability of a variety of digital tools and resources. As a result, there are several potential areas for further research in this field. For instance, studies could investigate the effectiveness of video materials in facilitating remote learning or analyze best practices for creating such materials in the context of remote teaching. Additionally, exploring how video materials can be effectively used in blended learning environments or assessing their impact on student outcomes in English classes could provide valuable insights into the advantages and limitations of this digital teaching tool.

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