

English Language Teaching:  
Theory, Research and Pedagogy

Lee McCallum *Editor*


# English Language Teaching

Policy and Practice across the  
European Union

 Springer

# English Language Teaching: Theory, Research and Pedagogy

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Lee McCallum  
Editor

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## Praise for *English Language Teaching*

“This volume provides an important contribution to contemporary research on pedagogical practices throughout the EU and the challenges faced at each level of education. I am especially impressed by the connections made between the impact of ELT policies and the classroom, and the potential role of technology in improving learning and teaching. The book represents a high-quality introduction for anyone interested in ELT in this region, and further afield.”

—Dr. Tony Clark, *Principal Research Manager, Cambridge University*

“This much-needed volume is an excellent snapshot of English Language Teaching in the European Union. The 19-chapter book takes the reader on a panoramic tour of European classrooms in a rich curation of case studies across primary, second and third-level public and private education settings, exploring policies, practices and methodologies. It is an important time capsule of the salient ELT themes of our time in the EU.”

—Dr. Anne O’Keeffe, Senior Lecturer, *Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland*

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**Part I**  
**Exploring the Impact of ELT Policies**  
**on EU Classrooms**

# Chapter 1

## English Language Teaching in the EU: An Introduction



Lee McCallum 

**Abstract** This introductory chapter sets out the rationale, aims and the theoretical tenets that ultimately shape the organization of this edited volume. The chapter begins by providing an overview of the European Union (EU) in terms of its structure, key goals and specifically its language policy position. The chapter then moves on to establishing the need for an edited volume that focuses exclusively on the English Language Teaching (ELT) that is taking place at the current time across the EU. It then presents and summarizes the core underpinnings with which ELT in the EU today appears to be shaped by as evidenced in the chapters in the volume. The chapter concludes by providing a summary of the chapters and the unique contributions they make to understanding the complex and often multidimensional concept of ELT that exists in the region at the present time.

**Keywords** ELT policy · ELT practice · Language policy · Language methodology

### Background

The EU as it is known today started out as an economic community in 1958 with six member states: Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Today, the EU has expanded to 27 member states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden (European Union 2020a). These member states play a role in following the EU's broad goals. These goals include promoting peace, its values, and the well-being of its citizens; offering freedom, security and justice without internal borders; promoting sustainable development through sensible and stable prices and economic growth, and a competitive market economy, and environmental protection;

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combating social exclusion and discrimination; promoting scientific and technological progress; enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries; respecting its rich cultural and linguistic diversity and establishing an economic/monetary union whose currency is the Euro (European Union 2020b).

To fully understand what the European Union is, and which member states are included in it, it is important to mention how notions of ‘Europe’ and the ‘Council of Europe’ fit into such an understanding (Phillipson 2008). Phillipson (2008) unpacks the fuzzy concept of ‘Europe’ and indicates how, depending on context, Europe may be taken to be several different concepts. Primarily, Europe may be considered as:

- A toponym: A territory or geography.
- An econonym: A common market with a common currency (albeit not all member states have adopted the common currency).
- A politonym: A mixture of independent states in a complex new unit (with some traits of a federation).
- An ethnonym: Cultures which share a common Christian past (some see this as a reason for excluding Islamic Turkey as a member state).

In developing an understanding of the EU, the Council of Europe needs to be separated as it includes many more member states than the EU. For example, The Council of Europe contains 47 members including Norway, Switzerland, Russia, and Turkey which are not members of the EU (Phillipson 2008; Council of Europe 2020). The Council of Europe has a specific focus on protecting democracy and human rights in Europe (Council of Europe 2020).

Underpinning the goals of the EU is the principle that member states share common ground in several ways including a common currency and cultural beliefs. Yet, at the same time, there remains a degree of independence and diversity to be promoted both within each member state and in the EU as a whole. This is made clear in the EU’s approach to setting out its policy on language.

As part of the EU’s goal to ‘respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity’ (European Union, 2020b), the EU has 24 official languages: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, and Swedish. The focus on these 24 languages makes it clear that at the forefront of the EU’s language policy is the promotion of linguistic diversity. This is set out explicitly in Article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) which states that the EU ‘shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity’. Such EU goals are also set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, legally binding by the Treaty of Lisbon, with discrimination on language grounds strictly prohibited in Article 21 and a clear obligation that the EU must respect linguistic diversity found in Article 22.

As part of its promotion for diversity, the EU language policy views foreign language competence as a basic skill that all EU citizens need to acquire to improve their educational and employment opportunities. Under this policy, member states’ citizens should learn two additional languages other than their mother tongue from an

early age (European Union 2020c). Phillipson (2008) points out that since 1945, there has been a move toward English being the most widely learned foreign language in Europe, taking over from French, German, and Russian. More recently, the expansion of English Language Teaching (ELT) has been linked, not only to the movement in the EU, but as part of a wider movement in globalization and the role English plays as a lingua franca in business and higher education (Johnson 2009; Phillipson 2008).

However, in recognition of the demand for English, the European Commission have acknowledged the potential negative consequences such a strong demand may have on national languages in member states and the influence it may have on learning other foreign languages. Phillipson (2008, p. 259) refers to the European Commission's position where they state that: "Learning one lingua franca is not enough...English alone is not enough" and they acknowledge the challenge English presents to national languages by stating: "In non-anglophone countries recent trends to provide teaching in English may have unforeseen consequences on the vitality of the national language" (The European Commission, cited by Phillipson 2008, p. 259).

Despite this recognition, there continues to be notable expansion of the use of English across levels of education in the EU. This expansion can be best illustrated with the increasing use of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) which has been broken down into two strands: CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), mostly used across primary and secondary levels of education in the EU, and the increasing use of EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) in higher education (Matthew-Graham et al. 2018). CLIL has its roots in German-Franco programmes, but it has spread to most parts of Europe with it being mentioned in EU policy (Dalton-Puffer 2008) and is also seen as a Euro-centric phenomena that is deeply embedded into the needs of the EU (Perez-Cañado 2012; Airey 2016). With regards to its widespread implementation in the EU, it has been found to have a positive correlation with learning English as a foreign country in several member states (e.g., see the review in Sylvén, 2013). As its name suggests, CLIL integrates language and content along a continuum, without an implied preference for one or the other, but it should be pointed out that the language focus is not as intense as an immersion environment where the language is often an official language (Pérez-Cañado 2012). Airey (2016) reinforces this by saying the focus on disciplinary content in CLIL is what makes it unique and that broadly CLIL is a methodology which combines the learning of a non-language subject with language learning (e.g., both content such as science or geography and English are taught together). There is also a degree of flexibility in its provision although some EU member states specifically set out how many subjects should be taught in English and from when in the curriculum they should be focused on (Sylvén 2013).

A frequently cited working definition of EMI is provided by Dearden (2014, p. 2) where EMI is defined as: "The use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English". Airey (2016) highlights that in EMI contexts, English is simply mentioned as the language which is used to teach the course content. Although the terms CLIL and EMI have somewhat blurry boundaries, it

can be pragmatically put that these approaches to instruction involve the use of a non-mother tongue language (in this case) to focus on content/and or language.

Another avenue of expansion that is pertinent to an understanding of the role of English and that of language policy in the EU is the creation of a European Higher Education Area under the ‘Bologna Process’. This process directly influences the emphasis given to the English in higher education by some EU member states (Phillipson 2008, p. 260). Airey (2016) sets out how the Bologna Process led to a framework allowing university degrees to be credited between different European countries. Airey (2016) emphasizes that such a process was driven by the fact it could help the EU achieve its aims of its citizens speaking at least two foreign languages as most students on exchange at different universities would presumably be taught in the local language. However, many universities have since taught their courses in English and therefore the Bologna Process has led to an increase in EMI at university level. Airey (2016) points out that this increase has worked against some countries as it marginalizes not only the local language but also the minority languages that exist in the country.

All the tensions mentioned between linguistic diversity and the perceived dominance of English continue to be questioned and speculated upon today because of the UK voting to leave the EU in 2016 (commonly referred to as ‘Brexit’). There has been much speculation as to the future status of English as a foreign language and an official EU language with Modiano (2017) speculating that the post-Brexit world will facilitate a recognizable variety of Euro-English within the EU. Modiano (2017) explains how such a ‘Euro-English’ involves citizens of member states taking ownership of the English being used and form or promote a non-native variety of the language that is specific to the EU. This belief is strongly opposed, discussed, and acknowledged by others (e.g., Bolton and Davis 2017; Faingold 2020; Phillipson 2017; Seargeant 2017). There are also question marks over what such a ‘Euro—English’ would ‘look’ like in spoken and written forms and how this would be markedly different from standard British or American models of the language (Phillipson 2017). Equally, there is empirical evidence to suggest that in individual member states there is still a strong preference not only for British English but also American English as well as a push for simply promoting communicative fluency (Forsberg, Mohr and Jansen 2019).

Many of the issues above are also rooted in wider discussions taking place around World and Global Englishes with past and recent work in these fields noting the politics of language use and the contextual complexity that ELT exists in as well as the need for negotiation of a ‘local’ English and one that is appropriate to local contexts of use (e.g., see Baker 2020; Canagarajah 2006; Heath and Galloway 2015, 2019). Although Heath and Galloway’s extensive work in these areas has a dominant Asian focus, the same trends and implications are equally applicable to the issues faced in the EU at the present time.

In this light, the present volume is very much inspired by and grounded in exploring existing practices, tensions, and trends in the teaching of English across all levels of education in the EU. Such a volume is much warranted at the current time in the face of the continuing popularity of English as a language worth learning and at the same time, its continuing official language status in the EU.

The volume therefore has the following aims:

- To provide an overview of current policies, practices, and issues in ELT across the EU.
- To evaluate these current policies and practices and encourage deep reflection as to what shapes teaching, learning, and assessment in individual EU member states and the EU more holistically.
- To shed light on the different and/or similar practice that occurs across the region and encourage readers to reflect on the wider implications of this.

These broad aims mean the volume has a wide intended readership spanning:

- ELT instructors with an interest in the practice of ELT across multiple language skills and areas of policy.
- ELT course designers with an interest in material and syllabi design and how these connect to wider course design decisions.
- ELT programme and course managers who have a responsibility to develop ELT programmes and/or integrate ELT into wider academic programmes.
- ELT material writers who have an interest in how pedagogic materials are designed, revised, and ultimately evaluated across the European Union context.
- Students enrolled on TESOL training courses who are required to show an understanding of TESOL methodologies, theories, and controversial aspects of teaching practice.

Since the volume cuts across the theory and practice interface as well as the interface that exists between teaching and assessment, it can function well as a reference work. Readers can use the volume to read about their respective interests in ELT or indeed their particular interest in a specific EU member state. The volume can also be used as a resource on graduate TESOL programmes to highlight existing theories and their application in teaching and assessment in real-world EU contexts.

## The Organization of the Volume

Considering these emerging themes, the volume is organized into four parts. Part I: *‘Exploring the Impact of ELT Policies on EU Classrooms’*, looks closely at policies in ELT, both through a wide-ranging holistic lens and a narrower context-specific lens. In the first chapter, **Ng Chiew Hong** and **Cheung** provide a comprehensive research review of how Englishization in tertiary education has been discussed across 11 EU member states in the *European Journal of Language Policy* from 2011 to 2020. Part 1 then focuses on a series of individual EU member states and particular theories and policies that shape practice in these contexts. **Cavalheiro, Guerra,** and **Pereira** look at how aware teachers and learners are of issues of learning and using English in a multilingual context in Portugal. **Olszewska, Coady,** and **Markowska-Manista** present a study on teacher education programmes in Poland through the lens of linguistic imperialism and question the impact of English on Polish education.

**Vandenbroucke, Bafort, and Thacker** cover the issue of using L1 in the classroom to improve English language proficiency in international schools in Belgium. **Richter** and **Weissenbaeck** explore another important policy decision in their study of the accents that Austrian students prefer. In the last chapter of Part I, **McCallum** unpacks how contextual practices and policies in language schools in Spain and teacher beliefs come together to shape teachers' identities as they teach young learners and adults in different private language schools.

Part II: *'Exploring Challenges and Practices in Primary Education'* presents a number of theoretical and empirical chapters that provide current approaches to the fundamentals of foreign language teaching. **Salomon and Dufossé Sourin** offer a broad exploration of the benefits and challenges of teaching English for pre-service teachers in France. **Kaldonek-Crnjaković** reflects on the crucially underexplored issues at play in providing English language instruction to students with ADHD in Poland. The remaining two chapters focus more exclusively on particular language skills. **Cifone Ponte's** chapter explores how textbook speaking activities play a role in building young learners' plurilinguistic and pluricultural understandings in Spain; while **Vraštilová's** chapter focuses on supplementing reading instruction and its development in the Czech Republic.

Part III: *'Exploring Pedagogic Practices and Models in Secondary and Tertiary Education'* explores innovative practices and models that are most likely to be adopted in secondary and/or tertiary level education. **Schurz and Coumel's** chapter introduces Part III by drawing attention to how teachers bring grammar and fluency under the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) to life in their classes. **Schurz and Coumel's** chapter enhances our understanding of classroom practices in these areas by comparing teachers' practices and beliefs across multiple EU member states. **Suárez and Gesa** look at the influence of videos on vocabulary development on a module on a media studies degree programme at a university in Spain. The final two chapters present broad pedagogic models and ideas. **Curry** revisits the use of contrastive analysis and shares several pedagogically motivated ideas on how this historical area of theory can be revamped to inform ELT in the EU. **Romero Muñoz** also provides a new slant on traditional theories by offering a position chapter on whether usage-based theories of language can be used in English language teaching in the EU.

As the last part of the volume, Part IV: *'Exploring Broad Applications of Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning'* sheds light on the use of technology in teaching and assessment across different contexts. **Tafazoli** investigates the views teachers working in Spain have of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. In a similar manner, **Gómez-Parra** also investigates the use of technology in Spain. Her chapter illuminates the past, present, and future technology training needs of bilingual pre-service teachers. **Burazer** and **Skela** also have an interest in the views of pre-service teachers. Their chapter uncovers the experiences of pre-service teachers in Slovenia when transitioning to online instruction at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the final chapter, **Kormpas** examines the perceptions of teachers and

language centre owners in Greece regarding their online teaching practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 18 empirical chapters in the volume draw attention to five key themes. These themes emerge across the volume and should be remembered as readers engage with both individual chapters and the volume as a whole to consider their relevance and application in their own contexts:

1. ELT stakeholders need to recognize the potentially dominating effect English may have on national languages and other viable foreign languages that could be learned.
2. ELT stakeholders need to promote teacher education and training that raises awareness of this linguistic imperialism and the expectations that this reality may present to their expected roles in the ELT classroom.
3. ELT stakeholders need to be aware of the contextual, social, and political realities that govern learning, teaching, and assessment and how these influence teachers' perceptions of their roles and their motivation to carry them out in their particular settings.
4. Teachers should be encouraged to go beyond the key tenets of a particular teaching methodology and critically analyze how it may work in their context to teach language skills and student groups.
5. Teachers should be continually encouraged to reflect on their own practices so as to be open to change and innovation. They should use this reflection to take home messages about where their teaching practice and skills sets could be enhanced to match the changing teaching environments that they find themselves in.

Overall, the chapters and the themes help illuminate multiple tensions and issues with regards to policy decisions and implementations. The chapters also shed light on how particular language skills are taught across multiple different countries and levels of education. As a volume, the chapters raise several important questions about individual contexts and practices as well as questions about how ELT in the EU will develop in the future. We hope the chapters promote wider discussions with readers and ELT stakeholders more widely.

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# Chapter 2

## Teaching and Learning English in the European Union: A Research Review



Chiew Hong Ng and Yin Ling Cheung

**Abstract** Much research has investigated the language policy of English language teaching in the European Union. However, a systematic review of research literature that focuses on the conceptual frameworks and the benefits and challenges of teaching and learning English at the tertiary level would offer a valuable means to bring together and unpack claims made in extant published research. This chapter critically reviews papers published by the *European Journal of Language Policy* from 2011 to 2020 on Englishization or English gaining importance as a lingua franca in the educational domain. Thematic discourse analysis was used on the articles related to language policy in 11 EU member states (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Sweden). Results show key benefits (e.g., the use of English as lingua franca, medium of instruction, content, and language integrated learning) and challenges (e.g., lack of clarity in language policy and language choices in practical situations). The findings reveal the prevalent conceptual frameworks used by *European Journal of Language Policy* researchers to look at teaching and learning concerns. The chapter concludes by proposing ways to strengthen English teaching in the existing curriculum such as incorporating project-based learning for content and language integrated learning.

**Keywords** Research review · ELT in the EU · Language policy

### Introduction

It is estimated that “English language (EL) is spoken by about 1.5 billion non-native speakers” (Frath 2017, p. 227). English is increasingly a code for communication without specific linkage to Great Britain or other English-speaking nation (Surmont et al. 2015). English is ubiquitous, and there is pressure on European Union (EU)

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governments to include English in the education system (Surmont, Struys and Somers 2015). This chapter reviews how the topic of Englishization in tertiary education is discussed in the literature in relation to these conceptual frameworks: EMI, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), multilingualism and plurilingualism in the context of EU. An increasing number of higher education programmes are being offered through English in the EU. This has created a dichotomy between multilingualism and English Medium Instruction (EMI) for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Lauridsen 2016). According to Dimova et al. (2015, p. 1), “scholars have explored EMI under different labels and with different objectives, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)”. However, to Jenkins (2019, p. 7), “EMI takes place most often at tertiary level, whereas CLIL is more often to be found at secondary and, increasingly, also primary level”. In the university context, research has emerged in terms of ‘Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education’ (ICLHE) (Moratinos-Johnston et al. 2019). As a systematic review of research literature that focuses on the conceptual frameworks and the benefits and challenges of teaching and learning English at the tertiary level as a research gap, three research questions are used to address this gap.

## Research Questions

Given the focus on Englishization, EMI, multilingualism and plurilingualism in the EU context, the three research questions for the present study are:

1. What are the key benefits of teaching and learning English in the HEIs in EU?
2. What are the challenges of teaching and learning English in the HEIs in EU?
3. What are the conceptual frameworks guiding research into teaching and learning English in the HEIs in EU?

The analytical approach of thematic discourse analysis is described in the methodology section before the findings are presented. The chapter concludes by proposing ways to enhance English teaching in the existing HEI curriculum for EL such as incorporating project-based learning when it comes to content and language integrated learning.

## Literature Review

### *Englishization, English as Medium of Instruction and Content and Language Integrated Learning*

Lanvers and Hultgren (2018, p. 1) define Englishization as “the increasing presence, importance and status of English at all levels in the educational domain”. It

is the spread of English as lingua franca (ELF) or *Englishization* through English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) (Kirkpatrick 2011), an increase of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) via English, or English replacing other foreign languages (Lanvers 2018). Wilkinson and Gabriëls (2021) highlight how EMI programmes in higher education in Europe is increasingly looked at from the perspective of Englishization to discuss issues such as English displacing other languages or language policy and legislation affecting Englishization. A longitudinal overview of the process of Englishization in Danish HEIs led Dimova et al. (2021) to conclude that Englishization has resulted in initiatives for better implementation of EMI. According to O'Dowd (2018, p. 553), European HEIs offering programmes in English through EMI can "support the internationalisation of universities, to make study programmes more accessible to international students and to enhance the international prestige of academic staff". This originally started in the north-western part of Europe but a survey by Wächter and Maiworm (2014, p. 36) demonstrated that for EMI programmes in Europe there are now more than 8,000-degree programmes offered in English outside the UK and Ireland or "8,089 English-Taught Programme(s)". Lauridsen (2016) reported the spread of EMI programmes in France, Germany, and Spain with a significant number of local students also enrolling in EMI programmes. Rowland and Murray (2020) interviewed six lecturers and conducted focus group with twelve students from Italy on teaching and learning using EMI for MSc programme in Biomedical Sciences to find them being positive about the benefits of EMI despite facing linguistic challenges. However, Macaro et al. (2018, p. 38) conducted an in-depth review of 83 studies in HE to highlight these issues in EMI: whether the content teachers possess the required linguistic competence to teach in English, the level of English proficiency of EMI students in HE, "the kind of 'accommodation' needs to be made for EMI students", the variety of English to be used and whether Englishisation undermines "the status of the home language and 'domain loss' of lexical items". EMI pedagogies are less concrete and consistent as they are guided by local HE policies which can vary across institutions. For instance, O'Dowd (2018) reported on the findings of a survey of 70 European universities carried out in 2014–2015 to highlight eclecticism in teacher training approaches and accreditation for teachers working in EMI: either no provision of training or the adopting of many different approaches to EMI training. O'Dowd (2018) also observed the lack of agreement among universities regarding the minimum level of English to teach ranging from B2 (43%) to C2 (13%) from the survey respondents.

EMI can involve Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and immersion programmes (Coleman 2006; Lanvers and Hultgren 2018) as well as Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE) which to Carrió-Pastor (2021) is a term used for research for European HEIs. In Spain, Arnó-Macià and Mancho-Barés (2015) reported ICLHE students being aware of their low language proficiency level causing comprehension problems and inability to express complex content knowledge in English. Moratinos-Johnston et al. (2019) compared 155 students' linguistic self-confidence and perceived level of English according to the number of ICLHE subjects taken at university. They found students taking more ICLHE courses being

accustomed to using English in their content classes and this boosted their linguistic self-confidence and perceived level of English.

Instead of EMI and CLIL, researchers have argued for “English-Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings (EMENUS)” (Dafouz and Smit 2016) to better reflect the diversity of HE contexts with English as a language of instruction and learning with languages other than English playing different roles. In relation to EMENUS, Dafouz and Smit (2020) also offer the ROAD-MAPPING framework with six dimensions: roles of English (RO), academic disciplines (AD), (language) management (M), agents (A), practices and processes (PP), and internationalisation (IN) and glocalisation (ING). Curry and Pérez-Paredes (2021) investigated how the internationalisation process by EMENUS unfolded in a Spanish university context by adopting Dafouz and Smit’s ROADMAPPING framework (2016, 2020) to analyse the practices and processes of EMENUS lecturers at a Spanish university.

### ***Multilingualism and Plurilingualism***

The European Commission (2013, p.6) has stated that “proficiency in English is de facto part of any internationalisation strategy for learners, teachers and institutions ... [but] ... multilingualism is a significant European asset ... and should be encouraged in teaching and research throughout the higher education curriculum”. The EU has promoted multilingualism since its inception. To fulfill one of the major aims of the Lisbon Strategy 2000 (Jones 2005), government leaders in the EU at the occasion of the Barcelona Council of March 2002 agreed to enhance individual multilingualism in terms of acquiring practical skills in at least two other languages besides mother tongue (Darquennes 2011).

The Council of Europe (2001, p. 168) defines plurilingualism as the ability “to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural action” while Griva and Iliadou (2011, p. 29) deem it “basic individual competence and a main prerequisite in the multilingual and multicultural European context”. Ull and Agost (2020, p. 56) make a distinction between plurilingualism as “the individual’s ability to speak more than two languages and switch between languages” and multilingualism as the coexistence of different languages used separately in society. The new CEFR too distinguishes between “multilingualism (the coexistence of different languages at the social or individual level) and plurilingualism (the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner) ... to express oneself in one language (or dialect, or variety) and understand a person speaking another” (Council of Europe 2018, p. 28). Plurilingual approaches in higher education have been through the adoption of different approaches such as English-medium Instruction (EMI), CLIL or ILCHE, Integrating Content and Language/ICL (Smit and Dafouz 2012) or EMEMUS (Dafouz and Smit 2016). Yanaprasart and Melo-Pfeifer (2021) revealed how teachers’ multilingual and plurilingual repertoires were valued by the German and Swiss university students when these students were

asked about their perceptions of expatriate nonnative teachers. However, the discussion data from Catalonia pre-service teachers in the study by Birello et al. (2021) showed how positive views about being plurilingual speakers did not translate into confidence in teaching in multilingual classrooms due to the lack of practical teaching resources and experience.

In summary, in the EU context, teaching and learning of English has led to the need to study how Englishization affects tertiary education in terms of EMI and CLIL as European HEIs offer more programmes in English to attract both EU and international students. Due to international mobility, students in the university are increasingly multilingual and necessitates English as lingua franca to enable communication between speakers of different first languages so “the relationship between multilingualism and Englishization is of a mutually perpetuating dynamics, whereby increased multilingualism also leads to increased use of English” (Dimova et al. 2015, p. 5). While internationalizing through Englishization, European HEIs also have to ensure multilingualism and plurilingualism to encourage the use of local languages for language diversity.

## Methodology

### *Data Collection*

To address the research questions, this study searched for peer-reviewed journal articles in *European Journal of Language Policy* from 2011 to 2020 as the journal looks specifically at language issues in the European context. The journal has been ranked as Q1 in 2020 for language and linguistics in Scimago Journal and Country Rank. The keyword-screening method was applied to publication titles, abstracts, keywords, and text. These were the keywords: “Englishization”, “English teaching and learning,” “English learning,” “tertiary”, “higher education”, “English as Medium of Instruction (EMI)”, “multilingualism”, “plurilingualism” or “conceptual framework”. 72 articles out of more than 160 articles from 2011 to 2020 were shortlisted for close reading. Upon reading the actual articles, only 30 articles from 11 EU member states (i.e., Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Sweden) pertaining to teaching and learning English in HEIs were selected for analysis (see Table 2.1 in Appendix for the 30 studies). This study eliminated those publications not related to HEIs though they deal with EL teaching and learning in relation to primary or secondary contexts.

**Table 2.1** Classification of the thirty studies

Conceptual framework	Benefits of teaching and learning English in the HEIs in EU	Challenges of teaching and learning English in the HEIs in EU
Englishization/ Internationalisation	Ambrósio et al. (2014) Darquennes (2011)* Frath (2017)* Hultgren (2018)*	Cabau (2011) Tomasi (2017) Zanola (2013) Karatsiori (2015) Pfungsthor et al. (2019) Graziani (2014) Hultgren (2018)* Lanvers (2018)*
EMI /CLIL	Jeffrey et al. (2019) Lanvers (2018)* Ribeiro and Coelho (2019)	Frath (2017)
Discourse analysis	Elliott et al. (2018)	Blattès (2018) Saarinen and Rontu (2018)
Multilingualism	Lauridsen (2016)*	Benedictus-van den Berg and Riemersma (2011) Darquennes (2011)* Kelly (2015a) Kelly (2015b) Lauridsen (2013) Lauridsen (2016)* Rontu (2011a) Rontu (2011b) Ull and Agost (2020)
Plurilingualism	Griva and Iliadou (2011)	
Positioning theory	Barrault-Méthy (2012)	
Project-based learning	Arno-Macia et al. (2019) Chateau et al. (2019) Helm and Acconcia (2019) Waldman et al. (2019)	

\*Studies highlighting both benefits and challenges

## ***Data Analysis***

Thematic discourse analysis was used to analyse the body of the texts. This study applied thematic analysis by identifying, analysing, and then reporting patterns (themes) within the gathered data (Braun and Clarke 2013). All the articles in the data set from *European Journal of Language Policy* (2011–2020) formed the discourse for analysis in terms of a) discourse (lower case d) of language in use, namely “verbal interactions and sequences of utterances, among people or the writers of the articles” (Gee 2015, p. 418), and b) Discourse (upper case D) which captures “the ways in which people enact and recognize socially and historically significant social identities through combinations of language, actions, interactions, objects, tools, technologies, beliefs, and values” (Gee 2015, p. 418). “Discourse” provides the broader context

(i.e., EU) for the analysis of “discourse” (Gee 2011) which pertains to expressions of views by the selected writers in relation to conceptual frameworks and perceptions of teaching and learning English in the EU.

The data were analysed in terms of the three research questions for themes: (1) key benefits (e.g., the use of English in the form of a foreign language or lingua franca, EMI, CLIL), (2) challenges (e.g., lack of clarity in language policy and language choices in practical situations) of teaching and learning English in the tertiary settings and (3) conceptual frameworks guiding existing research—thematic discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach, communicative language teaching approach, multilingualism, plurilingual approach, and positioning theory. Only excerpts that fitted the three themes of analysis were extracted from the articles as exemplification(s) of the identified themes. The publications were then grouped according to similarity or dissimilarity in terms of the three themes. The reduction process highlighted similar observations in the Discourse in classifying sample items as “belonging” to a particular group or discourse. This facilitated comparisons between the data that were similar and other observations that did not belong to the same category for discourses among researchers engaging in the larger Discourse of teaching and learning English in HEIs in EU.

## Findings

For research questions one and two, ten studies highlight mainly benefits, 15 challenges while five studies highlight both benefits and challenges (see Table 2.1 in Appendix). Table 2.1 shows more articles focusing on challenges (20 studies) in areas related to Englishization, EMI and CLIL, and multilingualism while benefits (15 studies) are related to Englishization and project-based learning promoting plurilingualism and multilingualism.

### *Key Benefits of Teaching and Learning English in the HEIs in EU*

The focus of this section is on presenting findings on research question one in relation to the 15 studies on benefits (see Table 2.1 in Appendix). Benefits are in terms of Englishization providing more degree programmes in English to attract students and access to international publications, positive perceptions of EMI and CLIL and how transnational projects promote English learning, plurilingualism and multiculturalism.

HEIs have benefited from Englishization in terms of the increased provision of degree programmes in English which can attract more international students. According to Hultgren (2018), teaching in English occurs for 10–25% of programmes



at undergraduate level and 20–40% at graduate level. Jeffrey et al. (2019) reported that 126 EMI degree programmes are offered at eight private and six public universities in Madrid predominantly in the field of business, law, engineering, international relations, and communication rather than traditional disciplines of the humanities or biomedical sciences. More EMI degrees are offered in private universities and bilingual degrees are more frequent than English-only programmes. Ambrósio et al. (2014, p. 75) conducted a study at the University of Aveiro (Portugal) through “documentary analysis (study regulations), interviews with institutional actors and student questionnaires”. The study highlighted the role of English for professional empowerment—access the job market, desired professions, and mobility. Some interviewees even suggested increasing the number of degree courses fully taught in English to promote internationalisation and attract more foreign students and teachers.

The value of internationalisation through English in HEIs is also in terms of how access to publications from all over the world is made easier because according to Frath (2017), English gives more visibility to research, while articles published in French circulate less in Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America than those published in English. In terms of Englishization for publication in English, Hultgren (2018) reported 70–95% for academic articles, and 80–90% for doctoral dissertations with the technical and natural sciences having a much greater degree of Englishization.

Englishization through EMI and CLIL is perceived positively when Lanvers (2018) investigated how the topic of Englishization in education was discussed in printed German media. Articles justifying EMI dominated the corpus in terms of “the importance of English for professional purposes (18%), demand by students (12%), importance of English generally and internationalisation” (Lanvers, 2018, p. 62). The results revealed that articles on English at the university level had few negative themes. Ribeiro and Coelho (2019) reported ongoing research on introducing the CLIL approach in Portuguese HEIs undergoing internationalisation. They have identified these common trends in internationalisation policies for Portuguese HEIs as beneficial: “partnerships, increasing or consolidating teacher and student Erasmus + mobility, attracting international students and courses taught in English or other languages” (Ribeiro and Coelho 2019, p. 85) besides the use of bilingual webpages (Portuguese and English). Barrault-Méthy (2012, p. 191) utilized positioning theory to reveal that with the globalisation of European universities, university language policies in Europe developed by various institutions are positively influenced by the Council of Europe (in terms of the humanist approach) and the European Union (in terms of free-market orientation) looking at “Common European Framework of Reference, the European Language Portfolio, lifelong learning, and CLIL”.

Internationalisation through Englishization can encourage plurilingualism. Griva and Iliadou (2011) explored to what extent Greek foreign language (FL) teachers agreed with central issues of European Language Policy. Almost all the 20 teacher interviewees (16 teaching EFL) believed that educational language policies should promote learning a variety of languages for all students to encourage plurilingualism and intercultural citizenship, develop necessary language skills and linguistic tolerance for an interactive multicultural Europe. Though all interviewees deemed English as a lingua franca as indispensable for communication purpose in Europe, they

emphasized the necessity for maintenance of diversity linguistically and culturally. Elliott et al. (2018) concluded that English has been basically connected with internationalisation, as an academic language and the main avenue to an international career and economic success though local languages are also valued. They used Fairclough's (2001) three-stage discourse analysis framework to examine the ways the linguistic environment of three Catalan universities was represented on English-medium websites, directed at (prospective) transnational students. They found Catalan listed first and mentioned nearly three times as frequently as Spanish ( $n = 101$  versus 36), which was referred to only marginally more often than English ( $n = 30$ ).

Internationalisation through Englishization is perceived as beneficial in facilitating "transnational communication within and beyond the EU" (Darquennes 2011, p. 152) in HEIs. For instance, Lauridsen (2016, p. 126) has highlighted the usefulness of MAGICC project (2011–2014) as a "conceptual framework for multilingual and multicultural communication skills and competences based on, and providing an extension to, the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR)". This conceptual framework may be used by HEIs for intended language learning outcomes definitions, and descriptions of what individual graduates are able to do.

Besides the MAGICC project, four other studies have foregrounded English learning and teaching through transnational projects while promoting plurilingualism and multiculturalism. Firstly, the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project (TAPP) is a telecollaboration network linking European and US university students for nearly two decades and offering students authentic projects to promote transversal and ELF skills. Arno-Macia et al. (2019) analysed the alignment of TAPP teaching–learning practices with language policies in terms of Englishization, multilingualism and interculturality for Belgium, France, Italy, and Spain—Belgium and Spain being bilingual or even multilingual with specific language laws. The TAPP translation classes in Belgium strengthen students' both passive knowledge of English and active EL competences in learning to communicate using English with unknown partners at an international, interdisciplinary level professionally. TAPP translation classes at Université Paris–Diderot similarly offers students opportunities to practise English through conversing with American and European counterparts in English. TAPP enables Italian students, through discussion with their US partners, to acquire mediation skills in conflict resolution and technical writing in a range of contexts. In Spain in the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), a multilingual university (Catalan, Spanish and English), TAPP is fully integrated in curricular English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses focusing on language and communication skills.

Secondly, Chateau et al. (2019) describe an ongoing project at the University of Lorraine (France) for virtual reality (VR) space—an international collaboration experimentation in ESP by the UFR Lansad—languages for the specialists of other disciplines—in charge of language teaching policy for non-specialist students. They reported how VR workshops such as 'Travel VR', offering many ready-made city tours either with a guide or a voiceover making comments in English, is one of the learners' favourite applications for learning English.

Thirdly, Helm and Acconcia (2019) reported on Erasmus + Virtual Exchange, an intercultural dialogue project, where the official languages of the project are English, French, and Arabic. In terms of attitudes to the use of English, interviews, and focus groups of 15 facilitators and 96 participants revealed the use of English as inevitable as the only possible option and valued for promoting exchange and mutual understanding for virtual exchange programme. English functions as a “glocal language” (Helm and Acconcia 2019, p. 224) serving translocal Erasmus + virtual exchanges while maintaining local characteristics.

Fourthly, Waldman et al. (2019) reviewed an extended telecollaboration practice (ETP) project taking place since 2015 between 52 and 48 pre-service teachers studying in Israel and Germany respectively to teach English as an International Language (EIL). Findings revealed that only half of the participants could apply their learning to design material and tasks to suit prospective students. Still, over three years of ETP, the authors could cautiously claim the participants’ partial acquisition of knowledge and skills to teach EIL to linguistically and ethnically diverse Israeli and German pupils.

In summary, the 15 studies have revealed how Englishization benefits HEIs in attracting more students internationally, giving publications more visibility whilst promoting transnational communication, plurilingualism and multilingualism through CEFR and project-based learning.

## ***Challenges of Teaching and Learning English in the HEIs in EU***

This section focuses on findings from 20 studies relating to research question two about the challenges of teaching and learning English in the HEIs in EU. The findings are related to issues in university language policy, multilingualism and plurilingualism, proficiency level and teacher training (see Table 2.1 in Appendix).

### **Issues Related to University Language Policy**

Lauridsen (2013, p. 131) highlights the need for HEIs to specify institutional language or languages because they have “widespread and significant implications for the language repertoire required from faculty, lecturers, students and staff, and for how the HEI communicates with internal and external stakeholders, in official documents, on its website and so on”. Lauridsen (2013, p. 131) talks about the need to ask questions such as “Is the HEI monolingual (the local language only; a major language such as English only) or bi- or tri-lingual? What is the official language(s) of the HEI?”

Rontu (2011a) examined the role of English in the language policy of Aalto University, established in 2010 and created from the merger of three Finnish universities. Rontu (2011a) reported how the policymaking process focused on the status of national languages and the use of English due to the need to define internationalisation and multilingualism for the university with Finnish, Swedish, and English as working languages. Rontu (2011b) described these multilingualism practices at Aalto University: university research publication written in English must include either a Finnish or a Swedish summary; the majority of master's degrees are solely in English whereas bachelor's degrees are mainly in Finnish and/or Swedish.

To study university language policies in Finland in the context of increasing EMI, Saarinen and Rontu (2018) looked at a monolingual (Finnish) and a bilingual (Finnish–Swedish) university. They used discourse analysis for the discursive operationalisations (Saarinen 2008) of a desired language policy. They looked at national language legislation and HE legislation as well as language policy documents and action plans; and conducted interviews with administrative and academic staff and students. Saarinen and Rontu (2018) reported primary languages of the universities as Finnish and English with Swedish as the more contested third language.

In terms language policy, Blattès (2018) used critical discourse analysis to assess differences between the initial draft of 2012 and the final version in 2013 of Article 2 of the Fioraso Law which legalised EMI in French universities with international agreements. The textual changes expressed concern about EMI as a threat to Francophonie and showed greater resistance towards EMI compared to actual parliamentary debates where politicians argued for EMI to attract international students, the promotion of Francophonie and equal opportunity.

## Issues Related to Multilingualism and Plurilingualism

Darquennes (2011, p. 141) looked at European language policy as expressed in the Commission's communications 'A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism' (2005) and 'Multilingualism: An Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment' (2008) in relation to "multilingualism and on the role academia could (or should) play in meeting these challenges". Benedictus-van den Berg and Riemersma (2011), in the introduction to the special issue of the *European Journal of Language Policy/Revue européenne politique linguistique* focusing on a selection of papers of the second EUNoM symposium, tasked EUNoM and universities to spread the value of multilingualism while reflecting on English's role in discussing multilingualism/plurilingualism. However, according to Lauridsen (2016), concerning multilingualism, at the national, regional, or institutional levels, it is quite difficult to derive an overview of specific contextual needs and gauge training requirement for any programme of study.

Kelly (2015a) discussed the need for language programmes in European universities to equip students with a range of intercultural competences, besides multilingual and multicultural strategies. Kelly (2015b) looked at the challenges of developing a multilingual approach to language teaching within higher education through the

concepts of multilingualism and plurilingualism and their translation into practice. As Kelly (2015b) sees it, the European Commission's policy on multilingualism focuses mainly on "the ability of people to use several languages, with the cultural, social and economic benefits that [multilingualism] brings" (European Commission, 2008, p. 5). In Europe, politically, the consensus is language teaching for the support and promotion of multilingualism. The challenge for educators and academic leaders is therefore to agree on what is a multilingual approach to language teaching and what objectives to adopt as it has different levels of meaning. According to Kelly (2015b), there is the need for recognising and embracing increasing language diversity at the strategic level; innovating pedagogy in terms of methods and teaching tools to prepare learners for rapid changes in the language environment at the classroom level; and responding creatively to the new social context while providing conducive educational environments for developing new pedagogies at the policy level.

To Kelly (2015b), multilingual approaches must challenge the largely monolingual ethos or language teaching using long-established pedagogies. To do so, teachers should view themselves as language teachers and not as teachers for specific languages e.g., English/French teacher. They should see themselves as transnational language teachers teaching one or more languages, moving with ease between countries and cultures, encouraging learners' reflections on language and cultural diversity, while developing effective strategies for working with diversity or intercultural approaches.

To Ull and Agost (2020), in the context of globalised language learning, plurilingualism as a concept promoted by the CEFR has a place in the L2 classroom but in practical terms, how to include L1 in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is still unclear. Still, Ull and Agost (2020) have proposed the use of L1 in CLT instead of the use of only non-native language (English in this case) even for CLIL at all educational levels based on a pilot test teaching primary school children in Spain and Norway.

## **Low Level of Proficiency in English**

A low level of proficiency in English poses challenges for HEIs. European programmes have contributed significantly to the internationalisation of higher education, with millions of students participating in Erasmus exchanges. However, according to Tomasi (2017), in the first language assessment, almost 70% of people tested did not reach C1 level to attend university in a foreign language even for English, which is the first foreign language learnt at school by most of participants in Erasmus exchanges. 12% of the Erasmus exchange participants were classified as A1/A2 basic users and a large percentage (32% for all languages and 28% for English) still scored B1 or lower (Tomasi 2017).

Cabau (2011) looked at language policy documents of two Swedish HEIs to find in Göteborg University, undergraduate studies are offered mainly in Swedish and in English to a limited extent but for postgraduate studies, English is the dominant language. In the Royal Institute of Technology, courses are taught in Swedish for the

first three years and mainly English in the subsequent two years (Cabau 2011). Given that English is generally not compulsory, in terms of EMI, the challenges are the varying proficiency levels of students and instructors while Swedish academics are pressured by the need to use English in publications with the objective of achieving academic recognition at an international level.

Though Zanola (2013) has advocated teaching both in the national and English languages to internationalise Italian higher education, it is not known in reality whether Italian or English is used in class for specialized communication especially if students or professors are not highly proficient in English. Frath (2017) is concerned about French teacher-researchers being ousted by anglophones because of EMI in HEIs as French teachers and students are on average intermediate level in English, i.e., B1 or B2 on the scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

### **Issues in Teacher Training**

In terms of training teachers to teach English, Karatsiori (2015) used the European Profile for Language Teacher Education: A Frame of Reference (Kelly et al. 2004) 40-item questionnaire on key elements in foreign language teacher courses. The findings from 112 EFL student teachers in Greece was that the existing academic curriculum should emphasize teaching practice that is school-based, active learning and enhancing communication with more universities and research institutes.

Pfingsthorn et al. (2019) asked 134 student teachers from Poland and Germany (who pursued their under-graduate degrees in English/American studies) and the Czech Republic (who worked as teachers and pursued post-graduate teacher degrees in English at the same time) via pen-and-paper questionnaires about cross-cultural telecollaboration developing their professional identity. The Polish and the German groups expressed quite high levels of interest in the idea while Czech student teachers who already had some experience in foreign language teaching tended to express slightly less optimistic views of the idea behind such virtual collaboration and more reservations regarding the value of cultural and linguistic diversity for their professional development.

### **Cost of Englishization**

According to Graziani (2014), at the beginning of 2013, there were more than 700 courses taught in English, particularly in the field of management and engineering sciences in France. The reports of the Court of Auditors on the management of Sciences Po (2012) and the major business schools (2013) showed quite clearly that the internationalisation of higher institutions, which included the establishment of training in English or foreign language, had a very significant financial cost. The university had to recruit professors with international reputation in their specialty, modernize premises and spend on promotion campaigns to attract foreign students.

Internationalisation placed these institutions in a situation of hyper-competition that benefitted only the best of them, in terms of image, quality of teaching or profitability (Graziani 2014). German media in the study by Lanvers (2018, p. 62) also expressed concerns over “poor English of staff, ... lack of training for them and extra workload, domain loss of German, institutional cost and problems for students”.

Hultgren (2018, p. 78) investigated domain loss in terms of how the increasing use of English will lead to the “official Nordic national languages (Swedish, Danish, Finnish/Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic) ceasing to develop within certain academic domains”. The findings from a questionnaire of over 200 physicists, chemists and computer scientists working at universities in Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland found that 58.7–86.1% of Nordic scientists perceived that national language is missing in Nordic higher education and research. 67–92.5% reported using lexical borrowing when faced with a missing term in their national language as a way to make communication work.

In summary, the 20 studies concerning challenges of Englishization while ensuring multilingualism and plurilingualism in practice are related to university language policies, implementation of multilingualism and plurilingualism policies, low level of proficiency in English and cost of Englishization.

## Conceptual Frameworks Guiding Research into Teaching and Learning

Findings regarding the conceptual frameworks guiding research by *European Journal of Language Policy* contributors into teaching and learning English in the HEIs in EU for research question three are presented in this section (see Table 2.1 in Appendix 1). These conceptual frameworks can be used by educators and researchers to investigate English language teaching and learning in the EU.

Most of the researchers featured in this chapter have researched language and learning in HEIs using the conceptual frameworks of *Englishization*, EMI, multilingualism, plurilingualism and issues related to loss or maintenance of national languages. Hultgren (2018) explored Englishization and domain loss in official Nordic national languages. Benedictus-van den Berg and Riemersma (2011) felt universities should advocate multilingualism; Lauridsen (2013, 2016) researched using the multilingualism framework; Darquennes (2011) talked about the role academia could play in meeting the challenges of multilingualism; and Rontu (2011a, b) looked at the status of national languages, internationalisation, and multilingualism in HEIs. Frath (2017) advocates plurilingualism to ensure learning diverse languages while Griva and Iliadou (2011) explored to what extent Greek foreign language (FL) teachers agreed with central issues of European Language Policy in terms of plurilingualism.

For university language policies in Finland and in the context of increasing EMI, Saarinen and Rontu (2018) used discourse analysis (Saarinen 2008) of a desired language policy. Using corpus linguistics methods (frequencies, concordances) and thematic discourse analysis, Lanvers (2018) investigated how Englishization was



discussed in 56 German language news articles. Elliott et al. (2018) applied Fairclough's (2001) three-stage discourse analysis framework to examine the ways the linguistic environment of three Catalan universities was represented on English-medium websites—plurilingual practices and English was basically connected with internationalisation.

Blattès (2018) used the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), part of critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach, to trace the history and trajectory of dominant discourses through an intertextual analysis and situate Article 2 within its historical and socio-political context. Barrault-Méthy (2012) utilized the analytical framework of positioning theory—language management as developed by Spolsky (2009) and the anthropological structures of the imaginary theory (Durand 1964).

However, there are also researchers looking solely at practical teaching approaches and project-based learning: the use of L1 in Communicative language teaching (Ull and Agost 2020); telecollaboration through TAPP (Arno-Macia et al. 2019); virtual reality (VR) (Chateau et al. 2019); and Erasmus + Virtual Exchange (Helm and Acconcia 2019).

## Discussion

This section discusses the teaching and research implications of the results related to perceptions about key benefits and challenges of teaching and learning English in EU. The discussion will be in terms of enhancing English teaching and teacher training. Conceptual frameworks are also looked at in terms of future research into teaching and learning.

### *Ways to Further Strengthen English Teaching in the Existing Curriculum*

The findings on challenges reflect issues Macaro et al. (2018, p. 38) have highlighted for EMI: the low level of English proficiency of EMI students in HE and the need for 'accommodation', and Englishisation undermining "the status of the home language and 'domain loss' of lexical items". The findings have shown enhancing English has to be in tandem with the promotion of multilingualism as all HEI graduates need proficiency in more languages for study and professional work (Lauridsen 2016).

Instead of CLIL, in the university context, ICLHE (Carrió-Pastor 2021; Moratinos-Johnston et al. 2019) would be a better option. Though Arnó-Macià and Mancho-Barés (2015) reported ICLHE students' awareness of their low language proficiency level, to Moratinos-Johnston et al. (2019) students taking more ICLHE courses became accustomed to using English in their content classes which boosted



their linguistic self-confidence in English. Instead of EMI and CLIL, researchers have also argued for EMENUS (Dafouz and Smit 2016).

In terms of plurilingualism, Birello et al. (2021) have highlighted the lack of practical teaching resources in multilingual classrooms. A possible teaching approach is acquiring subject literacy while learning English and other languages through a “pluriliteracies approach to teaching for learning (PTL) [which] puts subject literacy development in more than one language at the core of learning” (Meyer 2016, p. 235). Learners acquire deep subject knowledge in terms of facts, concepts and procedures and subject specific strategies while deepening conceptual understanding and new ways of thinking through language. In tracking learners’ progression for language, Meyer (2016) proposes looking at learners’ ability to extract and communicate information from multiple modes and the use of genres and genre moves.

English learning can also be enhanced through project-based learning so HEIs can consider adopting these projects highlighted as beneficial: the MAGICC project based on CEFR Portfolio; virtual reality space for ESP (Chateau et al. 2019); Erasmus + Virtual Exchange (Helm and Acconcia (2019); and TAPP, a telecollaboration network linking European and US university classes (Arno-Macia et al. 2019).

## ***Teacher Training***

Macaro et al. (2018) have highlighted how in EMI, content teachers lack linguistic competence to teach in English as they are often not language teachers. There is also a lack of consensus among universities regarding the minimum level of English to teach their subjects (O’Dowd 2018). O’Dowd (2018) also reported eclecticism in EMI teacher training approaches and accreditation working in EMI. Given that teachers can play “a significant role in building a multi/plurilingual education and have an impact on “top down” policy” (Griva and Iliadou 2011, p. 28), there is a need to enhance teacher training. For instance, the ROAD-MAPPING framework can be applied to inform teacher professional development programmes like identifying areas that might require pedagogical attention in teacher education programmes such as EQUiP (Educational Quality at Universities for inclusive international Programmes) teacher education project (Dafouz and Smit 2020).

In terms of teacher training for EFL, Karatsiori (2015) has suggested incorporating the *European Language Portfolio* or *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* into a single course or teaching practice (e.g., Netherlands, Luxembourg). Karatsiori (2015, p. 156) has also suggested exchanges or providing “ICT links (video-conferencing, e-twinning, interactive forum between institutions)” to encourage linkage or collaboration with other student teachers as part of the training curriculum. Websites of research centres in “the field of language teaching and learning (e.g., Council of Europe, European Commission, European Centre for Modern Languages) and the research projects” (Karatsiori, 2015, p. 156) can also be provided.

Waldman et al. (2019) advocate for engaging in European funded projects supporting telecollaboration such as Uni-Collaboration for intercultural collaboration at the university level and at the teacher education level. Teacher education policy makers can be informed about integrating experiential learning through telecollaboration in EIL teacher education programmes to increase language teacher professionalism.

### ***Conceptual Frameworks and Future Research***

Researchers interested in teaching and learning English in the European Union HEIs can consider using the conceptual frameworks of Englishization (see Wilkinson and Gabriëls 2021 for studies on Englishization in higher education in EU), EMI, multilingualism, plurilingualism, as well as thematic discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach, communicative language teaching approach, plurilingual approach, multilingualism, and positioning theory. Besides the conceptual frameworks listed in the chapter, Dafouz and Smit (2020) have also offered the ROAD-MAPPING framework with six dimensions which can be used to study teacher training and to analyse the practices and processes of EMEMUS (see Curry and Pérez-Paredes 2021).

For EMI in universities in Madrid, Jeffrey et al. (2019, p. 106) suggest “further future research into aspects of ongoing linguistic support for students and teachers, assessment of quality in EMI classes in terms of interaction and active participation, as well as examining all aspects related to content, methodology and evaluation”. There can be longitudinal studies on the process of Englishization to derive initiatives to enhance EMI implementation (see Dimova et al. 2021).

There is also ongoing research on CLIL in Portuguese HEIs undergoing internationalisation by Ribeiro and Coelho (2019). There can also be continuing research on aligning language policies in terms of multilingualism and interculturality with teaching–learning practices through TAPP projects (e.g., Belgium, France, Italy, and Spain) or the use of virtual reality (VR) space English for ESP in France.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter used thematic discourse analysis to critically review papers published by the *European Journal of Language Policy* from 2011 to 2020. The papers as a whole form the Discourse in terms of the broader context of the EU and the selected papers are discourses illuminating conceptual frameworks and perceptions of benefits and challenges of teaching and learning English in the EU.

In the context of Englishization or the spread of English as ELF, results show key benefits of teaching and learning English in the EU HEIs in terms of the success of internationalisation in attracting students through Englishization, teaching through

EMI and CLIL/ ICLHE in the context of plurilingualism and the use of project-based learning. Key challenges of teaching and learning English in the HEIs in EU are related to university language policy, issues related to multilingualism and plurilingualism, low level of proficiency in English and cost of Englishization. The chapter also reveals these conceptual frameworks for existing research related to EL teaching in the European Union—thematic discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach, communicative language teaching approach, multilingualism, plurilingual approach, and positioning theory.

According to the European Commission (2013), proficiency in English is a de facto part of any internationalisation strategy but with the need for multilingualism and plurilingualism as advocated by the Council of Europe (2001). In terms of teaching implications, English learning can be enhanced through a pluriliteracies approach and project-based learning. Still, HEIs need to deal with issues of low proficiency in English in ensuring plurilingualism and multilingualism.

For teacher training, there can be changes such as incorporating the *European Language Portfolio or European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* (Karatsiori 2015) and *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Council of Europe 2001). The use of ICT such as video-conferencing, e-twinning, and interactive forums between institutions can be part of the training curriculum besides tele-collaborative projects.

## Appendix 1

See (Table 2.1).

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# Chapter 3

## Current Perspectives in the Multilingual EFL Classroom: A Portuguese Case Study



Lili Cavalheiro , Luis Guerra , and Ricardo Pereira 

**Abstract** Following the trend that has emerged in most European educational contexts, Portugal is no exception and has witnessed an increasing number of multilingual/multicultural classrooms. According to the Ministry of Education, students from over 180 nationalities were enrolled in Portuguese schools in 2017. Consequently, English language teachers have had to adapt to this by acknowledging a gradual shift from the notion of correctness to appropriateness and intelligibility, reassessing the traditional learning target that focuses on native speaker norms. Thus, the scope of this chapter stems from Kirkpatrick (2007, p. 194), which advocates that “in aiming to teach and learn English in ways that would allow for effective communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries the focus of the classroom moves from the acquisition of the norms associated with a standard model to a focus on learning linguistic features, cultural information, and communication strategies that will facilitate communication.” This study reports the findings of two questionnaires distributed to Basic and Secondary teachers (N = 133) and students (N = 100), as well as interviews with Basic Education students (N = 15), to ascertain their awareness of and attitudes towards English language teaching, learning and use in multilingual classrooms. Findings indicate the need for promoting teacher and learner competences that are crucial for responding to and building upon the diversity found in today’s multilingual English language classrooms.

**Keywords** Multilingualism · Basic education · Secondary education · Teachers’ attitudes · Learners’ attitudes

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## Introduction

Following the trend that has emerged in most European educational contexts, Portugal has witnessed an increasing number of multilingual/multicultural classrooms. According to the Ministry of Education, in the 2018/2019 school year, students from over 170 nationalities were enrolled in Portuguese state schools from primary, basic, and secondary education (Oliveira 2020). The ten most represented countries were Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Ukraine, Romania, São Tomé and Príncipe, China, Moldova, and France. That same year the representation of other countries also increased exponentially in comparison to the previous year, which was the case with students from Venezuela (+56.8%), Italy (+50.3%), other South American countries (+29.7%), and Nepal (+17.4%). In line with these percentages, there has been an increasing trend in the number of foreign students enrolled in Portugal. In 2018/2019 there were 52,641 foreign students enrolled in the state school system, an 18.5% increase in comparison to the previous school year, and a 44% increase in comparison to the last three years. These students were spread throughout Portugal, however, the main regions where they were integrated in were the Lisbon metropolitan area (54.4%), the north (15.3%), and the center (14.4%) regions.

As a result of this panorama, many teachers have had to adapt to the challenges of this new reality, and the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom is no exception. In fact, when many (im)migrant students arrive in their host country they do not know the local language, however, more often than not they have already started learning English in their home countries, making it often the only shared language with their teachers and classmates. Consequently, English and the EFL classroom may play a vital role in the integration of these students in the host community. In the case of Portugal, many (im)migrant students come from Portuguese-speaking countries in South America and Africa, however, this does not mean their integration is necessarily easy, as these countries are culturally very different speaking another variety of Portuguese. Regardless of the learners' backgrounds, students can benefit from the EFL classroom which may function not only as a space of social and cultural integration, but also as a setting where real intercultural interactions may be explored, hence reflecting the global use of English as an international lingua franca.

Consequently, this chapter proposes to analyze and discuss EFL teachers', teen learners', and young learners' awareness of and attitudes towards English language teaching, learning and use in multilingual classrooms in Portugal. This analysis stems from a larger study part of the 'English as a Lingua Franca Practices for Inclusive Multilingual Classrooms (ENRICH)' Erasmus+ project (2018–1-EL01-KA201-047894), of which the University of Lisbon, Hellenic Open University, Roma Tre University, Boğaziçi University, Oslo Metropolitan University, and the Computer Technology Institute and Press "Diophantus" are a part. The aim of ENRICH is essentially to promote teacher competences that are crucial for responding to and building upon the diversity found in today's multilingual classrooms across Europe, as well



as to develop a high-quality Continuous Professional Development (CPD) infrastructure which will empower EFL teachers to integrate the current role of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in multilingual classrooms. The analysis of the teachers' and learners' attitudes towards English language teaching/learning in this chapter is a result of the initial needs analysis phase, which contributed to the development of the CPD infrastructure.

## Theoretical Framework

The scope of this study stems from Kirkpatrick's work (2007, p. 194), which advocates that:

“in aiming to teach and learn English in ways that would allow for effective communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries the focus of the classroom moves from the acquisition of the norms associated with a standard model to a focus on learning linguistic features, cultural information, and communication strategies that will facilitate communication”.

Although English has taken on an international role, and the educational context in Portugal has become increasingly multilingual/multicultural, the traditional EFL paradigms are still centered on standard British and American English as well as on the British and American cultures. Consequently, it is ever more pressing that English Language Teaching (ELT) reflect real language use with both native and non-native speakers of the language, where several communicative strategies are applied, and cultures are negotiated. To illustrate, this may be done by means of diverse authentic teaching materials, either face-to-face or over the Internet via a range of different applications, as most interactions nowadays take place online, even more so after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In essence, this study evolved from the current debate on key theoretical concepts such as the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), multilingualism/multiculturalism in foreign language learning, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and the production of language learning materials. ICC may be defined as someone's ability to understand cultures, including their own, and be able to employ that understanding to communicate with people from different cultures. Put differently, it is “the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent cognitive, affective, and behavioral orientations to the world” (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009, p. 7). According to Byram (1997, p. 71), ICC considers language teaching and focuses on “the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language”, so a language learner who has developed ICC is capable of building relationships while using the foreign language, communicating effectively, taking into consideration their and the other's needs and points of view. In essence, research on ICC has aimed to construct models based on attitudes, beliefs and skills to measure successful intercultural communication (Byram and Morgan 1994; Fritz, Möllenberg and Cheng 2002; Lies 2004; Spitzberg and Changnon 2009).

One major feature of current processes of globalization is the emergence and impact of multilingualism, and the associated phenomenon of multiculturalism. Once the language classroom becomes a meaningful multilingual context by witnessing various modes and settings of language development, learners should use a variety of discourse practices and linguistic strategies to communicate more effectively (Bonnet and Siemund 2018). One such strategy is translanguaging, in the sense that it allows multilingual speakers “flexible use of their linguistic resources to make meaning of their lives and their complex worlds” (Garcia 2011, p. 1). According to Wei (2011, p. 1223), the act of translanguaging “creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment”. Canagarajah (2011, p. 401) further adds that translanguaging is “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system.”

In view of this, teachers should move towards a more flexible model of education for multilingualism and multiculturalism which necessarily implies moving beyond the classroom for the sources of language learning. Learners engage in language practices informally: playing games, watching films, listening to music, using the Internet, communicating electronically, and in the streets of our multilingual cities. Educators should, then, treat this reality as a major source of knowledge and incorporate what learners bring with them into the classroom.

In addition, in this digital age, children have had the Internet as their constant companion and, as a result, technology has become mainstream and is increasingly integrated into learning environments. Technology-enhanced classes are largely stimulating and effective ways of promoting interest in topics that students might otherwise disregard. Although language teachers have been avid users of technology for a very long time, current research has shown that innovative Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) can improve and enhance students’ language acquisition, thus motivating them to continue their learning. However, Blake (2008, p. 11) cautions that:

“Teachers inexperienced in using technology often harbour the belief that merely transforming an activity into a web or CALL Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) format will guarantee its success for students. Again, any activity without adequate pedagogical planning—technologically enhanced or not—will produce unsatisfactory results with students, even if it’s attractive from a multimedia point of view”.

This means using ICT without careful planning and well-defined objectives will more likely be a waste of time and effort and undermine the use of ICT in the EFL classroom. For this reason, EFL teachers should be able to keep an updated perspective of ICT use in the language classroom.

Ultimately, ELT materials have traditionally been circumscribed to standard monolithic representations of language, focusing mainly on the standard British and American paradigms. Consequently, they have largely neglected ‘to acknowledge the increased use of English among NNSs [non-native speakers] of English’ (Matsuda, 2012, p. 171), hence overlooking the plurality learners encounter outside the classroom. Research has also indicated that the role of ELF—as the most often

used means in international and intercultural exchanges—has been largely underrepresented in textbooks and web-based teaching materials (Matsuda 2012; Vettorel and Lopriore 2013; Guerra et al. 2020), as well as in ELF-aware teaching materials (Seidlhofer 2011). In order to bridge this gap, teachers may create their own materials, by resorting to authentic resources (e.g., television shows, movies, YouTube videos, newspapers/magazines) which reflect the current global use of English in which native and non-native speakers are represented in terms of different varieties and cultures (e.g., Guerra and Cavalheiro 2019). By doing so, learners are engaged in effective real-life language use in which different communicative strategies are employed.

## Research Questions

This study focuses on the Portuguese ELT context, more specifically on Primary Education (1st cycle, Years 1–4; 2nd cycle, Years 5–6; 3rd cycle, Years 7–9) and Secondary Education (Years 10–12). English is a compulsory subject from Year 3 to Year 11, so students will have completed at least 9 years of English before they conclude their secondary education. This, however, does not mean they may not have more years of English instruction, as it is an optional subject in pre-school, Years 1, 2, and 12.

According to the Essential Learnings document put forth by the Ministry of Education in 2018, the aim of EFL classes across all levels is to contribute to the development of a global citizen's own identity in relation to others based on attitudes and values, such as the respect for others, for the Anglo-Saxon culture, as well as for other cultures in the world. In addition, the notions of responsibility and cooperation between peoples, with individual and collective repercussions, are promoted. These objectives clearly point out that English language classes should go beyond the traditional notions of Standard British and American English as well as the cultures associated with these countries.

Considering these national guidelines put forth by the Ministry of Education and the fact that the number of foreign students enrolled in the Portuguese state school system has increased significantly these last few years, it has become crucial to focus on multilingual EFL classrooms, where both teachers and students interact with other languages and cultures on a regular basis. Therefore, the following research questions were put forth:

1. What are EFL teachers' and learners' multilingual and multicultural classroom and school contexts like?
2. What are EFL teachers' experiences, attitudes and awareness regarding language teaching policies, use of classroom materials, teaching strategies and their learners' contact with the language?

3. What are EFL teen and young learners' attitudes towards their English language learning experience, learning preferences and use of English in and outside the classroom?

## Methodology

The data collected and analyzed were based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the former case, two questionnaires were applied. One questionnaire was disseminated online via Google forms between the months of December 2018 and January 2019 and collected nationwide data from 133 Basic and Secondary EFL teachers (from Years 1–12). The other questionnaire was conducted with 100 teen learners (TLs), Portuguese as well as first or second-generation immigrant students, attending upper basic and secondary education (ages 14–18). This questionnaire was applied during the month of December 2018 in state schools in Lisbon and other cities in the center and south of Portugal, areas where there was a higher number of (im)migrant students.

In terms of the qualitative data, three focus groups with five young learners (YLS) each (ages 11–13) from state schools were conducted. Each group was comprised of Portuguese nationals as well as first and second-generation immigrants. This took place in January 2019, and the discussion was conducted in Portuguese as it was easier to obtain information with children this age rather than using questionnaires.

## Results and Discussion

### *Research Question 1: EFL Teachers' and Learners' Multilingual and Multicultural Classroom and School Contexts*

This section presents the demographics of the participants in this study (teachers, TLs and YLS) as well as their multilingual/multicultural contexts and school practices.

The 133 EFL teachers who participated in this study were overwhelmingly older than 36 years of age (91%,  $n = 121$ ). More specifically, almost half of them (42.9%,  $n = 57$ ) were between 46 and 55, while 21.8% ( $n = 29$ ) were older than 55. Moreover, the vast majority of the respondents was female (93.2%,  $n = 124$ ). These features of the participant teachers accurately reflect the current teacher demographics in Portugal. According to the OECD (2019, p. 1), "Portugal's teaching workforce has been ageing over the past decade and is among the oldest of all OECD countries." This document adds that "over 40% of teachers from primary to upper secondary education are 50 years or older (OECD average: 36%), and only 1% are under 30 (OECD average: 10%)" (p. 4).

More than half of these teachers (53.4%,  $n = 71$ ) were teaching multilingual classes at the time they replied to the questionnaire. Regarding the age range of their students, 20.3% ( $n = 27$ ) of the teachers were only teaching YLs, 38.3% ( $n = 51$ ) were only teaching TLs, and 41.4% ( $n = 55$ ) were teaching both YLs and TLs. As for the average percentage of multilingual learners in their classrooms, 87.2% of the teachers ( $n = 116$ ) referred that these learners consisted of up to 25% of the students in class, while only 9.8% ( $n = 13$ ) stated that multilingual learners comprised 26–50% of the total number of students in class. Teachers also reinforced the opinion that Portugal has become a multilingual and multicultural country as 86.5% ( $n = 115$ ) believed that people with different language backgrounds lived in Portugal. These results corroborate the evolving student demographics in Portugal in the twenty-first century due to the increasing flow of migrants from a diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (see Introduction).

However, when asked about the educational policies and practices aiming at the integration of learners of migrant backgrounds in their schools, in general, and in their English classes teachers displayed somewhat contrasting viewpoints. While 71.5% ( $n = 95$ ) agreed/strongly agreed (as opposed to 6.8% of teachers who disagreed/strongly disagreed) that their schools supported the integration of migrant learners with special programmes and/or events, 54.1% of them ( $n = 72$ ) disagreed/strongly disagreed (against 16.5% of teachers who agreed/strongly agreed) with the proposal that they had received adequate training regarding the integration of migrant learners in their English class. These results clearly point to the need for further teacher training focusing on the essential pedagogical adaptations and developments when teaching and learning English takes place in a multilingual and multicultural environment.

The second group of participants in this study was comprised of 100 TLs attending upper basic and secondary education, 60% ( $n = 60$ ) of which were female and 40% ( $n = 40$ ) were male. Half of these respondents were 14 years of age, 19% ( $n = 19$ ) were 15, and 22% ( $n = 22$ ) were 16. Older students were fewer in number as only 4% ( $n = 4$ ) were aged 17, 17.4% ( $n = 4$ ) were 18 years old, and only 1 (1%) student was over 18.

When asked if they spoke another language/dialect at home, 38% ( $n = 38$ ) responded affirmatively, identifying such languages as Chinese, Creole, French, Nepali, Punjabi, Russian, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Uzbek. A multilingual environment was in all respects perceptible in the classroom as well since 36.3% ( $n = 33$ ) of TLs revealed there were 6–10 multilingual students in their class. Another 35.2% ( $n = 32$ ) reported an even higher number seeing that they had more than 10 fellow students who were multilingual. 24.2% ( $n = 22$ ) indicated there were between 3 and 5 such students in their class whereas only 4% ( $n = 4$ ) said they had either 1 or 2 multilingual classmates.

In light of the increasing number of multilingual/multicultural classrooms in Portuguese state schools, TLs were asked whether their own school offered specific activities (e.g., social events, cultural festivals) to integrate students with different linguacultural backgrounds. While 41.4% ( $n = 41$ ) referred this was sometimes true, 39.4% ( $n = 39$ ) shared a contrasting view and stated this was rarely the case in their context. In fact, 14% (14) of TLs revealed that their schools never provided

such activities while 5% (n = 5) argued that this often or always happened in their context.

As regards their English language education, 36% (n = 36) of TLs indicated they had studied English for 8–10 years whereas 32% (n = 32) had done so for 5–7 years. Overall, these figures show that over one third (68%, n = 64) of the respondents had been learning English for at least 5 years. An additional 9% (n = 9) revealed they had been studying English for 11–13 years and 7% (n = 7) stated they had done so for over that extent of time. On the opposite side of the spectrum, only 9% (n = 9) claimed to have studied English for 2–4 years or as little as 1 year or less (7%, n = 7).

As for the YLs who participated in this study, a total of 15 students (11 boys and 4 girls) were considered, of which six were first or second-generation immigrants and eight were local Portuguese students. They were between the ages of 11 and 13 and attended years 5, 6, and 7 in school. These students came from the Lisbon metropolitan area and the center region of Portugal, and all were integrated in multi-lingual/multicultural classrooms. In view of this, they were accustomed to interacting with classmates from diverse linguacultural backgrounds.

### ***Research Question 2: EFL Teachers' Experiences, Attitudes and Awareness of Language Teaching Policies, Use of Classroom Materials, Teaching Strategies and their Learners' Contact with the Language***

Teachers were asked about their knowledge of Portuguese language education policies, the domains in which they needed the most training, the development of their own teaching materials as well as the use of authentic materials, providing students with language use tasks which reflected the type of English learners used outside the classroom, and using the Internet in class.

The overwhelming majority of teachers (96.3%, n = 128) agreed/strongly agreed that they knew about the Portuguese language education policies. Although teachers demonstrated increased awareness of and interest in English language teaching policies, it is vital to look into their perceptions of their in-service training needs considering the characteristics of the present-day English classroom in Portugal.

Therefore, teachers were also inquired about the areas they believed they needed the most training. They were given a choice of five areas of training, identifying the least needed (1) to the most needed (5). Results showed that teachers regarded 'making learners confident non-native users of English' the most relevant domain in English language teaching in which they required more training. Such preference might indicate a tendency to move away from a pedagogical model which emphasizes the native speaker and standard English. Teachers seemed to acknowledge the diversity of language users and contexts in the classroom as representative of the current role of English as an international language.

**Table 3.1** Teachers' choice of most needed areas of training

Rank	Area of training	Mean
1st	Making learners confident non-native users of English	3.50
2nd	Developing relevant and appropriate teacher-made assessments for learners	3.41
3rd	Integrating ICT (e.g., interactive digital whiteboard, smartphones, apps, tablets, etc.)	3.20
4th	Raising language awareness	3.05
5th	Raising learners' intercultural communication skills	2.61

Table 3.1 shows the order of the teachers' needs of training areas:

Regarding the multilingual and multicultural context of the English classes, teachers were prompted to react to the production of teaching materials which supported befitting pedagogical practices and the use of authentic pedagogic materials in class. Two-thirds of the teachers (66.9%,  $n = 89$ ) revealed that they often/always developed their own additional teaching materials to address the needs and wants of their multilingual students, followed closely by those who stated they sometimes did that (22.6%,  $n = 30$ ). Interestingly, a higher percentage of teachers (85.7%,  $n = 114$ ) referred that they agreed/strongly agreed with the use of authentic materials in teaching. Essentially, teachers seemed to rely on the use of authentic materials to support their language teaching meanwhile there was a growing concern with adapting and producing materials that catered for the diversity of learners' language interests and use.

With regard to language use, most teachers (72.2%,  $n = 96$ ) admitted that they often/always exposed their learners to uses of English similar to those they might be exposed to outside the classroom. It is important to note that another 25.6% ( $n = 34$ ) of the teachers referred that they sometimes did that as well. These results indicate that there is a broad consensus among teachers about the significance of bringing a diversity of contexts of language use into the classroom.

This study also attempts to identify teachers' beliefs and classroom procedures related to their learners' use of English, namely classroom opportunities to interact in English, the use of other languages in the classroom, and the use of English outside the classroom.

Almost every teacher who responded to the questionnaire (97.8%,  $n = 130$ ) claimed that they gave their learners several opportunities to interact in English. Regarding the use of other languages in the English class, teachers demonstrated divergent points of view. 37.6% ( $n = 50$ ) indicated they sometimes allowed their learners to use languages other than English during their English classes. However, while 24.8% of the teachers ( $n = 33$ ) referred that they often did the same, a similar percentage of teachers (24.1%,  $n = 32$ ) pointed out that they rarely let students use another language besides English. It is interesting to note, though, that only 9.8% ( $n = 13$ ) always allowed their learners to use other languages, while 3.8% ( $n = 5$ ) of the teachers never did so. In essence, while teachers did attach extreme importance to classroom interaction, there was no agreement among them about the

use of languages other than English. Although Portuguese classrooms have become highly multilingual and multicultural over the past years, some teachers seem to persist in fostering the traditional notion which emphasizes the use of English only in the classroom as the most effective means to promote language learning and development.

It is possible that the relevance given to the use of English only in the classroom might be related to the teachers' perception of their students' use of English outside the classroom as slightly more than half of them (56.4%,  $n = 75$ ) referred their learners sometimes used English outside class, together with 24.1% ( $n = 32$ ) who said learners rarely did so (only 15.8%,  $n = 21$  claimed their learners often used English outside the classroom).

As a rule, teachers' opinions about and use of the Internet in the English classroom might be a significant indicator of a language pedagogy which attempts to provide learners with a variety of contexts of language use outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers were asked about the engagement of students in tasks using the Internet, such as through interactive applications or social media. Results showed that 65.5% ( $n = 87$ ) agreed/strongly agreed with such use of the Internet in the classroom, confirming that teachers were willing to develop tasks which expose learners to the types of uses of English they might encounter outside the classroom.

### ***Research Question 3: EFL Teen and Young Learners' Attitudes Towards their English Language Learning Experience, Learning Preferences and Use of English in and Outside the Classroom***

Firstly, TLs were asked if their teacher made use of any activities that showed what students could do in English, and the feedback was noticeably positive. 51% ( $n = 51$ ) acknowledged that this was often true and an additional 25% ( $n = 25$ ) confirmed that the teacher always employed the aforesaid activities. To a smaller extent, 20% ( $n = 20$ ) of TLs mentioned that their teacher sometimes did so and interestingly only a minimal number of students (2%,  $n = 2$ ) claimed this rarely happened in their EFL classroom. These results seem to indicate that Portuguese EFL teachers exploit their TLs' competences purposefully with the aim of benefiting teaching and learning practices.

Considering these results, it was critical to determine the nature of the teaching materials provided to students. Thus, TL respondents were inquired whether their teacher used authentic materials, such as television series, films, and songs in the English class. Although 35% ( $n = 35$ ) of students stated their teachers sometimes used authentic materials, 22% ( $n = 22$ ) argued that this was rarely the case in their classes, while 16% ( $n = 16$ ) actually claimed this was never true. However, a quarter of all students surveyed admitted that their teachers often or always put authentic material to use (21%,  $n = 21$  and 6%,  $n = 6$ , respectively). Overall, findings indicated



that learners were largely divided in their views on whether teachers drew on the use of these materials in the EFL classroom. Curiously, results seem to contradict what schoolteachers expressed in the previous section: while the vast majority approved of the use of authentic materials to support their language teaching, over a third (38%,  $n = 38$ ) of the TLs have yet to experience this strategy on a regular basis.

Having focused on language teaching, this analysis of the multilingual EFL classroom then addressed TLs' impressions on English language learning. To begin with, participants were asked if they enjoyed learning English at school. Results were predominantly reassuring as 80% ( $n = 80$ ) of TLs said they always/often enjoyed learning English. Only 11% ( $n = 11$ ) found the activity was sometimes enjoyable whereas 8% ( $n = 8$ ) rarely/never appreciated doing so.

It is noteworthy, however, that when inquired if they learnt more English outside of school than in the class, over half (54%,  $n = 54$ ) of the participants agreed/strongly agreed as opposed to the 20% ( $n = 20$ ) who disagreed/strongly agreed. 26% ( $n = 26$ ) of them did not share strong thoughts on the matter and avoided forming an opinion.

Hence, in an attempt to uncover TLs' English learning preferences, the questionnaire provided respondents with a rank order question, namely a list of different activities involving the use of English and typically carried out by teenagers: watching YouTube videos; using social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter; playing on-line games; watching movies and television series; attending private English lessons; reading books, comics, etc.; using English with friends or family members; listening to music; and attending English classes at school. TLs were then asked to rank the three most preferred activities to learn English among those listed, and results showed that adolescents most enjoyed learning English from playing on-line games, whereas watching movies and television series ranked second. Despite the obvious screen time predisposition, the third most preferred activity was in fact attending English classes at school. Undoubtedly, television, interactive video games, and the Internet can be excellent sources of education and entertainment for English language learners, and teachers seemed aware of the preferences indicated above, which is clearly why integrating ICT in the EFL classroom was one of the areas in which teachers admitted to needing more training opportunities (see Table 3.1).

So far, this research has highlighted TLs' perceptions concerning English language teaching and learning. However, it is pressing to understand how TLs commonly use English not only inside but especially outside the classroom. TLs shared the same divergent points of view as teachers (see above) concerning the use of other languages in the English class. Although 33% ( $n = 33$ ) of the students were often or always allowed to resort to another language besides English in the classroom, almost an identical number (31%,  $n = 31$ ) was rarely/never allowed to do so. Similarly, 35% ( $n = 35$ ) of the TLs surveyed explained that they could often use another language besides English. Fundamentally, what these results clearly emphasize is the abovementioned perception that there is no set agreement among teachers regarding the use of languages in the EFL classroom other than English.

TLs' use of English outside the classroom is an additional concern of this study and as such it is important to establish how frequently these learners communicate in English when they are not in a formal learning environment. Consequently, TLs were

**Table 3.2** TLs' ranking of most common activities involving the use of English

Rank	Activity	Mean
1st	I watch TV/series in English	4.17
2nd	I use English outside the classroom	3.60
3rd	I play video/online games that use English	3.41
4th	I engage in online talk	3.29

asked to describe how often—from *never* (1) to *always* (5)—they carry out a set of different activities. Findings indicated that most students would often or even always watch series in English, which is in line with the data presented above concerning TLs most preferred activities to learn English. Remarkably, the broader option 'I use English outside the classroom' ranked second on the list seeing as most respondents claimed to sometimes or often doing so even if they failed to specify how this was carried out. This is significant, more so considering it ranked higher than the playing video/online games that use English, or engaging in online talk, which were special interests for teens as was demonstrated above. Table 3.2 ranks the activities TLs engaged in when using English outside their classroom.

Considering TLs make use of the English language in numerous ways in their everyday lives, it would be interesting to understand how successful they are when interacting with other people. When asked if they could communicate in English with others, 38% (n = 38) agreed this was true and an additional 21% (n = 21) went further and strongly agreed. Only 7% (n = 7) disagreed, while 3% (n = 3) admitted to having trouble using English successfully with others and actually strongly disagreed. Although these numbers appear to be satisfactory, it is the relatively high number (29%, n = 29) of students who neither agreed nor disagreed that poses a challenge to this study. This midpoint on satisfaction shows respondents were less inclined to share their opinion quite possibly because they were unsure about or unhappy with their proficiency in English. It stands to reason that students who have high level of anxiety and low level of self-confidence in foreign language classes may have difficulties in developing their speaking ability and this might conceivably be the case.

As explained earlier, students within the Portuguese school system will have completed at least 9 years of English before they conclude their secondary education. It is a significant investment of students' time and effort, so this study finally inquires learners about the ways they expect to use English in the future: when travelling abroad, working in another country, or any other alternative scenario. Numbers were very similar for the first two options as 68.3% (N = 67) of the respondents saw themselves using English when travelling to another country while 64.2% (N = 63) expected to do so should they choose to work abroad. When asked to provide additional possibilities for using English in the future, answers were varied but the two most common choices indicated that students would use English to study abroad or to further employment opportunities in Portugal. This carries a special meaning as it highlights TLs' awareness of the importance of and benefits that learning English may individually bring about.

Lastly, the aim of the focus groups conducted with the YLs was to explore their awareness and attitudes towards English language learning and use, both inside and outside the EFL classroom. Several questions were, therefore, put forth regarding a variety of issues. In terms of learning, the following topics were touched upon: contact with a variety of English-speaking cultures as well as the learners' own culture in school; learners' preference for English as a school subject and what they consider is the most and least appealing in the EFL classroom; and the importance of practising English beyond the classroom. As for YLs' use of the language, they were inquired about: their use of English outside school and in what situations, and how they overcome communicative difficulties that may arise.

Considering the YLs' learning experience, most mentioned the main cultures discussed in English class were the American and British cultures, which is not surprising, as the majority of the teaching materials, especially course books, tend to be UK- and US-based. Several participants pointed out, however, that some references were made to Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, all of which also belong to Kachru's inner circle (Kachru 1985). Only one student stated that other cultures had been discussed in the English class such as the cultures of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. This seems to be the exception, rather than the norm in many EFL classes. In this particular case, the YL was integrated in a class with a large number of students from South Asia, which explains the presence of those cultures.

When inquired whether they ever talked about the local culture in the English class, in this case the Portuguese culture, only one YL mentioned that it was rarely referred to, while the remaining participants stated that it was never mentioned. According to the YLs, discussions about the Portuguese culture were usually circumscribed to their Geography, History, Portuguese and Moral and Religious Education (MRE) lessons. The latter example was mentioned by YLs who were in classes with many (im)migrant students. Since MRE seeks to promote values like living together, community, love, fraternity, and similar values, it plays an important role in the social integration of foreigners in the Portuguese context.

Considering English is a compulsory subject for learners from years 3–11, this study also seeks to see if it is one of the YLs' favorite subjects at school. The responses in this case were divided, eight said that it was not their favorite subject, while six said it was. Out of the six who stated it was their favorite subject, curiously, the majority were immigrant students. This may be the case since English is the only common shared language they had with the rest of their classmates, and it was, therefore, the easiest subject to follow (even though they attended Portuguese as a foreign language classes). Regardless of the responses received, none of the YLs manifested a particularly negative attitude towards English.

To have a better understanding of what is done in their EFL classes, YLs were asked what they liked most and least about their lessons. Their responses in this case diverged greatly, which is not surprising, as learning preferences vary from one student to another. For instance, in terms of what they liked most, some mentioned that they enjoyed listening to songs, reading stories, watching movies, playing games, doing cultural activities, speaking in English and even doing exercises. As for what they enjoyed least about their English lessons, they mentioned issues such as writing,

reading course book texts, doing exercises that were many of the times repetitive and giving oral presentations. Bearing in mind their responses, it is evident that students not only have different learning preferences, but there also seems to be a tendency to dislike activities that involve more active productive skills (e.g., speaking, writing). This may perhaps reflect learners' lack of linguistic confidence or shyness regarding language production in front of their classmates. Passive receptive skills (e.g., listening, watching), on the other hand, along with ludic activities (e.g., games, cultural activities) seem to be aspects that they enjoy more, especially since English lessons at lower levels are many of the times associated with these types of activities.

YLs were additionally inquired about whether they thought they needed to practise English beyond their English classes, and if so, how. The great majority of the YLs believed they needed to practise their English outside of school, however, how they went about this varied from one learner to another. Responses ranged from looking for words in a dictionary and doing exercises, to playing games, going to social networking sites, making videos, and watching films. Many actually mentioned they had learnt English through games which they played on their smartphones on a regular basis.

When considering YLs' use of English, they were asked if they used English outside school and in what situations they were able to communicate effectively. Out of the 15 students who participated in the focus groups, only three claimed they did not use English outside school. The remaining YLs used English in a variety of situations, either face-to-face when travelling abroad, speaking with relatives or foreign classmates, and communicating with others on a daily basis (especially in the case of recently arrived immigrants who do not yet know Portuguese), or virtually when playing online video games or on social networks (e.g., Instagram). Achieving effective (face-to-face or virtual) interactions is not always clear cut, therefore, being able to apply a variety of communicative strategies is crucial to overcome any linguistic barriers that may arise. In view of this, YLs were asked about how they dealt with these issues when they did not understand something when talking with other people in English, or when someone did not fully understand what they were saying. One YL mentioned that when they did not understand something, they did nothing and let the conversation continue, hoping they would be able to understand from further context. However, the great majority applied other strategies, such as using gestures (which was the most commonly applied), repeating/asking for repetition, or translating.

## **Implications of the Findings for the Context**

The aim of this study is to take into consideration teachers' and learners' (teen and young) awareness and attitudes towards English language teaching, learning and use, within a growing multilingual and multicultural educational context in Portuguese state schools. Based on the findings discussed above, several fundamental implications involving the three groups of participants should be explored.

Firstly, although teachers affirmed to be aware of the Portuguese English language education policies, there is a need for further teacher training, both in-service and pre-service, focusing on the essential pedagogical implications of teaching English in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Moreover, the findings present direct relevance to materials writers as they indicate it is necessary to reassess and adapt textbooks to meet the needs and wants of multilingual learners, as most teachers said they often or always developed their own materials. Finally, researchers and academics should promote investigation which clearly identify and examine learners' use of English outside of classroom, as teachers acknowledged the importance of employing a diversity of contexts of language use in classroom tasks.

Secondly, regarding data obtained from TLs, although most teachers claimed to regularly develop their own materials, TLs disputed this assertion or were not entirely aware of the materials worked with in the classroom. If this is the case, awareness must be fostered so that students may reap the benefits from teachers' work. Findings also point out that learning English is not restricted to the classroom as many TLs stated they improved their English skills away from formal learning environments. Therefore, it is critical that teachers capitalize on these circumstances so that both sides may profit. Furthermore, in view of the extensive use TLs make of technology to use and improve their English language skills, it is paramount that teachers consider ICT integration as an indispensable tool in the multilingual/multicultural classroom. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, confirmed how beneficial ICT knowledge is for students and teachers. Nevertheless, a recent study (Aşık et al. 2019) shows that language teacher education programmes in Portugal seem to implement teacher education strategies so as to prepare future teachers for educational technology use *only* at a moderate level. This study also indicates limited access to resources, lack of institutional support, and qualified TEs who can successfully use and integrate technology into their teaching.

Finally, when considering which cultures are developed in the EFL classroom, YLs identified the British and American cultures as the two main ones referred to in class. Some allusions were also made to other inner circle countries; however, expanding circle countries or the local Portuguese are largely neglected. Bearing in mind that English belongs to all those who speak it, it would make sense that the EFL classroom be a space where learners can also explore and discuss their own cultures. This is even more pressing in multilingual/multicultural groups where (im)migrant students can bring their own cultures into the classroom, consequently helping break stereotypes and barriers that may exist towards what is considered "different".

Also, as far as YLs English language use outside the classroom and how they practised English outside their lessons, the common denominator in these two situations was the use of the Internet, either through social networking sites or online games. It is evident that this is a generation that uses the Internet widely, either on their computers and smartphones; hence, EFL teachers may take advantage of these circumstances and design their lessons accordingly. However, as it has been stated in this study, an overwhelming percentage of EFL teachers were above the age of 45 and believed they needed more training in terms of how ICT may be implemented in class. In view of this, it is vital that teachers receive more adequate and frequent

training regarding the use of technology in the classroom, so as to accompany not only TLs' and YLs' interests, but also their technological needs.

Fundamentally, findings indicate the need for the promotion of teacher and learner competences that are crucial for responding to and building upon the diversity found in today's multilingual/multicultural English language classrooms.

## Conclusion

Due to increasing international mobility and intra-European migration, multilingual classrooms are becoming more commonplace in Portugal. Learners from migrant backgrounds have more than one language at their disposal and the use of English as a lingua franca or an international language is key in helping to effectively establish communication in such contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to identify Portuguese EFL teachers', TLs' and YLs' awareness of and attitudes towards English language teaching, learning and use in the multilingual classroom. Overall, findings demonstrate that even if English language teachers in Portuguese schools are aware of this change, adequate teacher training is yet required so they may fully embrace this linguistic diversity given that it is crucial in promoting cultural diversity as well as achieving equality and integration. It is likewise important to develop language teaching course books and materials that adequately represent the current multilingual and multicultural use of English rather than persisting primarily on standard British and American English and cultures. Further research into learners' use of English outside of classroom is also needed so as to diversify classroom tasks. In addition to this, the study has demonstrated that teachers' knowledge of ICT integration and CALL is still a shortcoming, which is critical since learners of all ages are avid users of technology in its many forms.

In essence, there is an unequivocal need for a language education policy that improves the quality of curriculum, teaching, and learning in Portuguese state education so we may provide learners/students with the language skills and necessary sensitivity they need for an ever-growing multilingual and multicultural society.

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# Chapter 4

## Language Planning, Linguistic Imperialism, and English Language Teacher Education in Post-Soviet Poland: A Literature Review



Aleksandra Ita Olszewska , Maria Coady ,  
and Urszula Markowska-Manista 

**Abstract** Due to the increasing prominence of English learning in European post-Soviet states, English language teacher education in Poland has adapted to meet English learning needs in the post-Soviet (1989–present) era. This chapter provides a review of literature on language policy, linguistic imperialism, and English language teacher education in Poland. This work is framed in language-in-education planning and linguistic imperialism to examine English language teacher education in Poland. Linguistic imperialism suggests that certain language policies serve to reify colonial and imperialistic practices that prioritize the status of one language over another. The status ascribed to English in post-Soviet Poland contributes to English hegemony, where the language itself is a symbol of power and dominance. This chapter draws upon the existing literature in the field to examine the effects of English and English language teacher education programs on education in Poland today. Our analysis suggests that English, which is largely viewed as a unifying lingua franca and tool to achieve economic success, also reinforces an imperialist agenda. We raise questions about language policies and planning in Poland and recommend a critical re-evaluation of policies to ensure a more equitable ecology of linguistic sustainability.

**Keywords** Teacher education · Post-Soviet Poland · Linguistic imperialism · Language planning

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## Introduction

Post-Soviet Europe's political, socio-economic, and cultural scene have changed dynamically over the past three decades (Bernhard 2010; O'Loughlin and Clem 2020). The term 'post-Soviet' or 'post-communist Europe' could be defined as a geopolitical region encompassing former Soviet republics and the satellite states. These countries can be divided into three geographical regions: (1) the Baltic states, i.e., Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; (2) Central and/or Eastern European countries, such as Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic; and (3) and Southern Eastern European countries, including Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Yugoslavia, among others (Lane 2007). The former Soviet Empire consisted of Soviet countries [*Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)*] and satellite states dependent on the Soviet Union. Nine states were satellites prior to the disintegration of the socialist bloc which split into twenty-seven sovereign states in 1989–1990 (Berglund et al. 1998).

Some of the factors that contributed to the transformation were the oppositional movements in the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1980s (Bernhard 1993), which were fuelled by the Helsinki Final Act (1975). One of the crucial causes of the post-Soviet transition was collaboration between the intellectual and working classes. The result of this coalition was, for example, the Solidarity movement led by Lech Walesa in Poland, which was supported by a third of the Polish population (Berglund et al. 1998). The movement inspired changes in other Soviet Republics and satellites.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, 27 post-Soviet countries were established or re-established, and they entered into a new historical era (Berglund et al. 1998). The Soviet entity and its subsequent collapse shaped the Eastern-Central European landscape in the latter part of the twentieth century and have impacted the past and present histories of those countries (Lane 2007). According to scholars, the change that occurred in the post-Soviet countries could be legitimately denoted as a "transition" as it consisted of transformation from an authoritarian or totalitarian to a democratic system (Kideckel 1995). Notably, the transition did not take an identical path across all post-Soviet countries, nor did it result in replicating Western democratic countries (Berglund et al. 1998).

It is noteworthy that after the transition phase came the consolidation of democracy under which several conditions were established, specifically, a civil, political and economic society, state bureaucracy and the rule of law (Nelson 1994). Berglund et al. (1998) argue that the requirements that needed to be met to defeat a totalitarian regime differ from those necessary to develop and maintain democracy. Subsequently, the states have faced and continue to experience instability and uncertainty due to their geopolitical location between two cultural hegemony, while also being denoted as simultaneously saviors and demons (Pankevych and Slovská 2020). Specifically, on the Eastern side, the states have never felt safe from Russian political moves. For instance, Russia has annexed the Ukrainian Crimea in recent years without strong resistance from the democratic world.

On the Western side, post-Soviet countries experience increasingly neoliberal linguistic, cultural, and economic invasion and dependence (Johnston 2004; Phillipson 1992, 2016). Almost 30 years have passed since the historical transition, which has witnessed a number of trends and changes in post-Soviet countries. In particular, from a macro level perspective there has been economic privatization, decentralization, political pluralism, mass migration, and social and legal transformation. On the micro level there has been the formation of civil societies, changing beliefs and identities of communities, a decrease in state support, a growing sense of uncertainty, and transformation of peoples' everyday lives, mentalities, and customs (Marody 1993).

Transformations in this region have led to significant and diverse changes to educational and language policies in Eastern-Central European countries (Hogan-Brun 2008). Even though there are numerous similarities "between the Soviet past and the post-Soviet present" (Brown 2013, p. 240), research shows that there are different trajectories of language-in-education planning and policies in post-Soviet countries (Cestac 1996). For example, many of the countries described as post-Soviet nations had previously experienced attempts to replace their native languages with Russian and to embrace Russian monolingualism (Rannut 1994). However, since the Soviet collapse, the threat of Russian has decreased and the space for their own native languages has been reassured and legalized through official acts (Pavlenko 2008). Nevertheless, while the aforementioned characteristics are shared by all countries in post-Soviet Europe, they differ among each other, and it would be inaccurate to assert that they are a monolith (Godoń et al. 2004; Szmátka et al. 1993).

The focus of the present article is on Poland, a country located in Central Europe that neighbors Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, and the Baltic Sea. Its population is approximately 38 million people, which makes it the 35th most populous state in the world (Worldometers 2021). Poland is one of the Soviet satellite states that was under Soviet control from 1952 to 1989. Recently, Poland has become an example of a leading developing economy in the region and has experienced significant changes in various domains. In particular, Poland joined the European Union in 2004 and scores above average on the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) test (European Commission 2017), to name a few examples.

In terms of educational and language policy dynamics, it was mandatory to learn Russian under the Soviet regime in Poland (1945–1989). This process was often called *russification*, and Russian was described through propaganda as "the first among equals" (Desheriev 1979, p. 11). It was also declared "the language of friendship of nations" (Hogan-Brun et al. 2008, p. 469) or the lingua franca (Pavlenko 2006). Thus, Russian was taught in Polish schools as a foreign language and was considered one of the most important subjects at school (Bancroft 1975).

Currently, a large section of the Polish population learns English as a foreign language, beginning in kindergarten or elementary school (Nazaruk et al. 2017). This phenomenon constitutes an important topic to explore because, despite the nation's political independence and guaranteed democracy, people in these countries are still required to learn languages that are imposed by external forces. Thus, the

requirement might be considered a political tool of power used to realize an imperialist agenda (Phillipson 1992, 2016). The purpose of this paper is to examine English language teacher education programs in the post-Soviet era (1989–now) in Poland in the context of linguistic ideologies. This study contributes to the literature by advocating for sustainable state and international linguistic ecologies.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This chapter follows Kaplan and Baldauf's (1997, 2005) language-in-education planning and Phillipson's (1992) linguistic imperialism as theories that undergird our work. This critical perspective is compatible with the goal of this paper, which is to examine English in the context of post-Soviet Poland, and the political and cultural hegemonies related to it.

### ***Language-in-Education Planning***

Following Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, 2005), language-in-education planning, which is also referred to by scholars as acquisition planning (Cooper 1989, as cited in Kaplan and Baldauf 2005), is the process of organizing and managing language policies and practices to influence language use and ideologies. One key aspect of language planning is the role of schools and educational policies (Kaplan and Baldauf 2005), and these two areas are often interrelated, for instance, in language maintenance, revival, and revitalization.

Language planning and educational policy implementation are highly dependent on educators and teacher education, educational curriculum, and resources. Seven interdependent policy goals were described by Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) and include: (1) access policy (who learns what and when); (2) personnel policy (teachers and how are they trained); (3) curriculum policy (objectives in language learning); (4) methodology and materials policy (the methods and materials employed over a certain duration); (5) resourcing policy (how the policies are funded); (6) community policy (those consulted and involved); and (7) evaluation policy (the connection between assessment, and methods and materials that define the educational objectives). Taking into consideration the geopolitical, historic, and sociolinguistic context of post-Soviet Poland, we examine the language-in-education planning goals in Poland in reference to English in the post-Soviet era.

## *Linguistic Imperialism*

The second area of our theoretical framework is linguistic imperialism. Linguistic imperialism demonstrates how majoritarian cultural and political powers realize their imperial agenda of imposing and implementing dominant ideologies through language-in-education policies and planning. The process is supported through official and structural institutions. Linguistic imperialism as a theoretical lens was originally developed in the context of English language (Phillipson 1992). Phillipson defines linguistic imperialism as “the dominance of English [...] asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (p. 47). As such, it constitutes a sub-type of ‘linguicism,’ a term coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, p. 13), an overarching theory of linguistic discrimination that refers to all majoritarian languages and could be described further as “ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language”. This framework aligns well with the purpose of this chapter, as it shows how English perpetuates inequalities and replicates unequal power division.

Current policies in Poland continue to prioritize English learning for economic and global purposes, and English, as a form of hegemony and linguistic imperialism, is demonstrated through the ways that English is positioned in educational policies and in teacher education programs (Ministry of National Education 2017). Another example is the importance of students starting English education at a very early stage, specifically as a second language or first foreign language for all children in public schools. In addition, teacher preparation programs in language teaching in Poland today are mainly focused on English Language Teaching (ELT).

## **Methodology**

To conduct our examination and analysis, we reviewed historical documents and articles written by sociologists, historians, linguists, and political scientists. We also examined educational policies that related directly to language policies and planning for English in Poland. Those were similarly examined in historical context.

In this research synthesis, we employed ProQuest, EBSCO, and Google Scholar as primary academic search engines and databases to find relevant peer-reviewed empirical research and conceptual literature in English and Polish. We also used reference sections of articles, book chapters, and books located in the searched databases. Furthermore, the search was narrowed to studies published between 2000 and 2021, as this synthesis intended to encompass recent works.

The literature search was conducted in English and composed of two rounds. The first search included limited search terms, and it was initiated by applying notions such as ‘Kaplan & Baldauf,’ ‘language-in-education planning,’ ‘Phillipson,’ and

'linguistic imperialism' in combination with Poland, Europe, and Central-Eastern Europe. The second search entailed the use of additional terms related to teachers, teaching, and teacher education (inclusive of teacher preparation and in-service education), Polish or English as a Second Language, and English as a foreign or additional language in combination with Poland.

As a result of the search, we identified 34 empirical studies and 31 theoretical articles, which addressed the issue of linguistic imperialism, language planning and English language teacher education. We divide the findings below into key areas: the historical context of language planning in Poland, Russian language, from Russian to English, English as the door to the western world, and current status of English language teacher education in Poland.

## **Findings from the Literature**

### ***Historical Context of Language Planning in Poland***

Polish language policy and planning has been deeply shaped by Poland's history as a victim of invasions, 123 year period of partitions from 1795 to 1918, and the Soviet regime (Kuźniak and Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2017). Recent data suggest that the Polish language is currently used by "98% of the Polish population in Poland" (Kuźniak and Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2017, p. 63), which is estimated to be approximately 38 million Polish users in Poland and 10 million Polish speakers worldwide. This makes Polish the 25th most widely spoken language in the world. Similar to many countries worldwide, Poland has unified language learning policies and follows a centralized national curriculum of schooling. Poland declares Polish as its official language of instruction.

During the Communist Era (1945–1989), in 1945 a new law was passed which ruled that Polish would be the sole official language, as Poland transformed from a multi-ethnic country to a monolithic state following the Soviet propaganda (Kuźniak and Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2017). There were two distinct phases of this rhetoric noted by linguists after World War II. The first phase (1945–1970) indicated the importance of linguistic purity and resistance toward semantic and syntactic borrowings and regionalisms, especially from the German and Russian languages. The second phase was characterized by tolerance toward linguistic flexibility and the organic nature of language (Nettmann-Multanowska 2003). During the second half of the 20th century, increasing importance and influence of English was observed in Poland (Graddol 2006).

## *Russian Language*

Language planning for Russian in Poland followed a different trajectory. For instance, during the Soviet era in Poland and following World War II, the Russian language became a compulsory subject at school, and students started learning Russian as a second language at the age of 11 or in fifth grade. In the late 1980s, although all Polish students learned Russian at school (Komorowska 2014), the motivation to study the language was extremely low as a result of resentment toward Soviet political propaganda. In short, learning Russian was largely an unsuccessful endeavor. In this context, Figarski (2008) writes that education at all levels in Polish People's Republic served to produce young generations imbued with Marxist-Leninist ideology manifested first in communism and later Marxist-Leninist socialism. Not only education, but also mass media, culture, youth organizations and even (at times) the church were utilized to achieve this goal.

The goal of russification (Pavlenko 2013), however, was to align people's identities with the Soviet ideology. Rashidov (1979) described this as the "development of a single Soviet Socialist culture, which represents a higher stage of the contemporary cultural progress of mankind" (as quoted in Bilinsky 1981, p. 318). Until 1990, Russian remained a compulsory subject in Polish language-in-education policy (Fodor and Pelau 2003; Komorowska 2000). Since the 1960s, additional Western European languages were added to high school curricula (Enever 2007). Nevertheless, only 15% of secondary general school (4-year high school) students learned a second foreign language such as English, German, French, or Latin. Vocational schools rarely offered foreign languages as a subject (Komorowska 2014). At the university level, students had to complete three semesters of Russian as well as two years of a Western European foreign language with classes twice per week.

## *From Russian to English*

By 1975, more than half of all Polish high school students selected English in addition to Russian, the latter being a mandatory language in high school (British Council 1975). English was considered as "a language of liberty and of reliable information" (Hagège 1992, p. 46, cited in Fodor and Pelau 2003, p. 88) in intellectual circles in Soviet countries. It was also seen as the most popular language among young Poles (Bancroft 1975) and symbolized a "better future and demand for English in trade, tourism, science and technology" (Kielar 1972, cited in Reichelt 2005b) as opposed to Russian, which was associated with the painful Polish past (Bancroft 1975). Thus, in the 1980s there was a growing number of English language classes outside of public schools.

By the late 1980s the ratio of teachers of Russian to teachers of English was 18,000–1200 (Johnston 2004). Almost half a century of mandatory teaching of Russian as an enactment of the language-in-education policy failed to attain Russian

proficiency among Poles. It is noteworthy that the government did not pay sufficient attention to teaching practices and effectiveness, as it promoted grammatical and audiolingual teaching methods as opposed to communicative practices more commonly used today (Komorowska 2014). In the 1990s, despite a growing popularity of English—65% of the surveyed Polish society prioritized English, especially in cities—there was a documented gap of qualified teacher of English.

During the post-Soviet era (1989-present), with the growing use of English in the sciences as well as in everyday life, following global and capitalist Western trends (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2004), there has been a growing concern about English becoming a lingua franca. Even though this belief was not shared universally—some thought that Polish had been enriched and westernized through English (Kołodziejek 2008)—the threat of English becoming overly influential led to the establishment of the Council for the Polish Language (*Rada Języka Polskiego*) in 1996. The Council had a prescriptive role of advising on the use of Polish language to the public. The Polish Language Act was passed in 1999 with the goal of protecting Polish from external forces (Kuźniak and Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2017). In 2004, Poland became a member of the European Union, and several amendments to the aforementioned Act were passed, among which was the promotion of bilingualism, the appreciation of regional dialects or languages and the use of other languages for commercial purposes. Thus, after 1989, language policy and planning in Poland has focused on raising awareness of the Polish language, both among Poles and outside of Poland. Language planning also advocated for minoritized groups of Polish citizens in countries on the Polish Eastern border: Lithuania and Belarus. In addition, it aimed to mediate tensions in the area of Polish-Ukrainian borderline (Kuźniak and Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2017).

### ***English as the Door to the Western World***

Motivated to quickly develop the country and to follow the privileges and innovations of the Western world, Poles believed that the English language would open their doors to worker and student mobility as well as to a thriving economy and international trade (Enever 2007). As a country located in the center of Europe with a turbulent history of invasions and partitions, Poland has always acknowledged the importance of knowing foreign languages. Since 1989, Poland has experienced several education and language-in-education policy reforms and has prioritized “Western European languages in education as a statement both of new alliances and of newly acquired independence” (Enever 2007, p. 212). In the early 1990s, for example, students were required to start learning a foreign language in grade 4 at the age of 10 or earlier, depending on the available funds of the local authorities or parents. Trends in learning English have been continuously changing. In a survey conducted at the beginning of 2000, Russian was the most popular language among the population over age 15, whereas English was the most commonly spoken language among respondents between the ages of 15 and 24 (European Commission 2016).



Since Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, the country's language-in-education policy has become strongly influenced by the EU, and the importance of English has increased (European Commission 2017). Since Poland was willing to meet all of the requirements of becoming "fully European" after the period of political and cultural separation, it was ready to commit to all EU's recommendations. One of these recommendations was to begin foreign language education as early as possible (European Commission 2004). Polish parents also played a role by supporting and advocating for teaching English through local initiatives. This phenomenon was referred to as 'parentocracy' (Enever 2007).

### ***Current Status of English Language Teacher Education in Poland***

Currently, Poland is a country in which children commence learning English as a compulsory subject in kindergarten at the age of 5 (Eurydice 2017). This reform in language policy was implemented in 2014 (European Commission 2017). Learning a second foreign language, such as German, French, Russian, Spanish, or Italian, is mandatory for all pupils from seventh grade or about 13 years old (European Commission 2017; Komorowska 2014). It is noteworthy that after the school reform in 1999, Polish schools (1999–2016) followed a more Western European and US educational model (6+3+3: elementary, middle and high school). Pre-school (*Przedszkole*) was planned for children from the age of three to six or seven. Elementary school (*Szkoła Podstawowa*) started at the age of six or seven (OECD 2015). In December 2016, the Polish Ministry of Education passed another national reform that changed the educational structure again, including eight years of elementary school and four years of high school or five years of vocational school.

One of the main obstacles to designing language-in-education policies was meeting the demand for the increasing interest in learning English instead of Russian in the post-Soviet era. Another challenge lay in changing the teaching and learning methods by moving away from the Soviet standards and turning to more communicative methods applied in the Western world (Enever 2007). Many Russian teachers had to be retrained as English or German teachers (Council of Europe 2005–2007; Reichelt 2005a). As noted above, in the late 1980s there were approximately 18,000 teachers of Russian and only 1200 teachers of English. Therefore, 70 colleges were established in Poland to train 20,000 language teachers of English and other languages. Ten years later, the number of teachers had increased to 36,289 teachers of English; 20,182 teachers of German; 6914 teachers of Russian; and 2929 teachers of French (Council of Europe 2005–2007). These numbers, a reverse in trend of English and Russian teachers, signify an important shift in language in education planning in Poland. Nevertheless, Poland still faces difficulties in recruiting and training teachers, due to low salaries and the low social status of teachers (Gębal and Nawracka 2019).

Currently, teachers must hold various credentials to teach English in Poland. According to the act on teaching qualifications passed on 1 August 2017 (*Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 1 sierpnia 2017 r. w sprawie szczegółowych kwalifikacji wymaganych od nauczycieli*), foreign language teachers are required to hold a teaching certificate and: (a) a BA or MA degree in English Philology or English Applied Linguistics; (b) a BA or MA degree in any field with either an English certificate confirming an advanced level of proficiency, or with a national teacher certificate showing English proficiency at level 2, (c) a degree from the Teacher Training College of Foreign Languages (*NKJO*) with a specialization in English with an English certificate confirming an advanced or fluent level of proficiency or with a national teacher certificate showing English proficiency at level 1 and 2; or (d) a high school degree and a national teacher certificate showing English proficiency at level 1 or 2.

## Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to describe language policies that occurred in post-Soviet Poland after the collapse of Soviet Union and to examine state English language teacher education in the context of language-in-education planning. Political and cultural hegemonies continue to reinforce imperialistic goals by supporting majority and dominant languages through language-in-education planning and policies (Canagarajah 1999; Phillipson 1992, 2016). Currently, this occurs by prioritizing English through national policies and educational language learning policies and teacher education training. Despite international trends in education that challenge the status of English by supporting minoritized language use through, for example, translanguaging practices (Garcia and Kleyn 2016), English remains a language of power and access to global economy and technology.

Moreover, over the past 30 years, language-in-education planning and policies have played an important role in shaping language practices in post-Soviet Europe, particularly in Poland. They influence internal and external political relations as well as potential intranational and international tensions. The crucial role of the Russian language, which was inseparable from Soviet identity, was replaced by the increasing global role of English in the post-Soviet states. This process raises a question about the need for critical evaluations of language-in-education planning and policies implemented in Eastern, Central, and Northern European post-communist countries such as Poland.

From a critical perspective, the dominance of Russian in the post-war era and the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca in Europe and worldwide is undoubtedly hegemonic (Odrowąż-Coates 2019; Phillipson 2008; Śliwa 2008, 2010). Language planning in post-Soviet countries results from political dynamics that determined Russian as a tool of uniformity, power, propagandist unity, and oppression (Rannut 1994). In contrast, English can be considered as a hegemonic tool of economic, political, and cultural soft power in Poland (Krawczyk 2018; Odrowąż-Coates 2019).

Russian was used as a tool of colonization, oppression, and control by the Soviet Union through the process described above as ‘russification’. Russification consisted of “internationalizing Russian language and culture within the Soviet Union” (Aspaturian 1968, as quoted in Silver 1974, p. 46). Hence as a school subject, ‘the language of Pushkin’ was a politically marked tool since the very moment it was introduced into Polish schools (Figarski 2008). As it was compulsory to study and use Russian in the Soviet era, which reified political and geographical dependence (Bilinsky 1981; Grenoble 2003; Pavlenko 2006), it could be asserted that russification was a form of linguicism in the satellite states. At the same time, russification objectified teachers of Russian language, who were entrusted the task of indoctrinating young Polish people in line with Marxist-Leninist ideology.

In terms of English, Macedo et al. (2003, p. 45) claim that “linguistic hegemony in Europe has been assisted in the past by language education planning and is aided at present by curricular practices in European schools”. In particular, the EU recommended that “[a]ll European citizens should be proficient in three languages: the mother tongue, plus two others” (European Commission 1995) to support diversity and unity at the same time. Thus, although both Russian and English played hegemonic roles, the objectives for language learning differed. As this chapter demonstrates, learning English in Poland underlies a promise that its speakers will gain access to trade and business, freedom, and, thus, a better life. Scholars continue to highlight how Poland acknowledges the importance of English as an international language (Bhatia and Ritchie 2004; Odrowąż-Coates 2019). Nevertheless, the benefits of knowledge of and access to English do not excuse the oppressive structures of political and economic powers perpetuated through English. There remains popularization and growing significance of English among individuals in post-Soviet states through structural ideologies and powers of neoliberalism, social transformation, linguistic imperialism and neo-imperialism, as well as postcolonialism (Śliwa 2008, 2010). As a dominant language, English, disguised as a language of union and friendship, has become the tool of an imperialist agenda with the markings of neo-colonization (Odrowąż-Coates 2019; Phillipson, 2008; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1996; Rannut 2009).

### *Shifting Paradigms*

A slow paradigm shift can be observed in terms of English language teacher education in Poland. For instance, in her study on English teachers’ language awareness, Otwinowska (2017) advocates for moving away from monolingual bias in preparing English language teachers toward multilingual models where the full linguistic repertoire of students is leveraged and valued for learning. Other scholars such as Komorowska (2013), Czura and Papala (2013), and Romanowski (2019) discuss the hidden agendas of multilingualism while examining pedagogies to improve English learning in schools.

The potential risk of English hegemony and imperialism is in the imbalance of the linguistic ecology, especially at the expense of minoritized languages. However, in the case of national minority languages at school, the situation is more complex. On a policy level, Poland enables members of national and ethnic minorities to preserve their national and linguistic identity through lessons of minority language. The basic document regulating the education of minority languages is the order of the Minister of National Education from 18th August 2017. This stipulates the conditions and manner in which preschools, schools, and public institutions perform tasks for students belonging to national and ethnic minorities to preserve their national, ethnic and linguistic identity. Polish autonomic schools decide what modern languages are taught within their curriculum.

Thus, students belonging to minorities or communities using regional languages have the right to learn the language, as well as their history and culture. This education must be provided if the student's parents apply for these lessons (Płoszajska 2014). The catalogue of modern languages the students can select to take exams in (such as eighth grade and Matura exams) is defined by education law. The following modern languages can be part of the eighth grade: English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, Ukrainian and Italian. Despite the broad linguistic offering, English retains primacy over other languages in preschool, school, and university linguistic education.

It is noteworthy that in the context of European politics of didactic and research collaboration, the majority of university courses offered to students are conducted in English (Urbanik 2011, 2012). This fits into the university's language policy, in conjunction with the internationalisation strategy of the university. In addition, according to "Constitution for Science," a scientific program launched in Poland in 2018 by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Ministry of Higher Education and Science 2018), one of the principal obligations of researchers has become to publish in English to meet the goal of international politics. On one hand, such language policy has its strengths as English language serves as an academic *lingua franca* and thereby enables international scholars to join an ongoing scientific dialogue, as well as exchange ideas and share their research in prestigious and global venues. On the other hand, this policy poses a threat to publishing in Polish and minoritized languages, as English hegemony and neoliberal politics lead to marginalisation and suppression of certain groups due to limited access to and profitability of studies and knowledge in researchers' native languages. Unsettlingly, there are no studies in Polish analysing the trends related to the linguistic internalization of higher education in Poland. Ultimately, higher education may be a risky endeavour in Polish, and only those with knowledge of English can potentially participate in such academic discussion on the international scene.

## Conclusion

This chapter aimed to review the literature surrounding language-in-education planning in Poland, with an emphasis on the post-Soviet era and English as a foreign

or additional language. Both the English and Russian languages served as tools to advance certain social, political, or economic agendas. An analysis of language policies, earlier oriented toward the primacy of Russian and currently English, allows us to understand how hard and soft power can utilize language and language policy of particular countries and its broader area of influence to create a new socio-educational reality. One way that governments do so is through the teaching workforce and curricular mandates in schools (Coady 2001; Coady Kim and Marichal 2021; Phillipson 2016; Wallas and Hordecki 2021). Currently, language policies in Poland heavily promote English through student learning English as a foreign language and through mandated teacher education. The hegemony of English today is difficult to counter. However, we caution that the risk of English as lingua franca is at the expense of other, specifically minoritized languages, as it leads to linguisticism and opportunity gaps (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981). It is well reflected in the offer of foreign language education dominated by English. This policy is a response to the growing status of English in public, academic, professional and private spheres. For Poles, the knowledge of English—despite being a foreign, non-national language—is increasingly a factor deciding about their academic and professional “to be or not to be” in the global village.

We suggest that language policies and planning in Poland and other post-Soviet countries be regularly and critically examined, questioned, and reshaped to guarantee linguistic equity to all by respecting and celebrating all language users in Poland, including immigrants, refugees, and ethnic minorities. This process should take place not only in English but also in Polish and national minoritized languages. Critical questions can be aligned to future scholarship in the fields of linguistics, bilingual education, and sociology. Vigilance and action are necessary to counter the hegemony of English and linguistically-constructed power relations in the increasingly globalized world of education.

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# Chapter 5

## Mother Tongue Support as a Scaffold to English Language Proficiency: An Ideological Analysis of a Belgian International School's Language Policy



Anne-Sophie Bafort , Kerrilyn Thacker, and Mieke Vandenbroucke 

**Abstract** International schools have become more prominent globally since the 1950s. This is a result of globalization and an increased demand to cater to expatriate families' children's need for transnational forms of education (Heyward 2002; Hayden 2011). In this chapter, we critically analyze the language policy of an international school located in Flanders, Belgium. In this school, English is the official language for primary and secondary levels and the continuous enrollment of new students who are not necessarily fluent in English forms an ongoing opportunity and challenge for the school. Our analysis of the school's language policy is participatory and self-reflexive as the chapter's co-authors combine the experience of the school's coordinator of the "English as an Additional Language" program and "Mother Tongue" program with academic expertise on educational language policies. Based on linguistic ethnographic fieldwork, our analysis addresses the language ideological underpinnings of the language policy and the curriculum in place at the school. Our analysis of the school's language policy uncovers how it aims to develop English language proficiency for all pupils and to guarantee access to rigorous grade-level content while acquiring the academic language of instruction. This is done with attention to the active deployment of the students' mother tongues and translanguaging as a scaffold/pedagogy in classroom practices. We finish our analysis with a reflection on the implications and potential best practices of the school's language policy for other educational contexts in Europe.

**Keywords** School policy · Mother tongue support · International schools

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## Introduction

In this chapter, we focus on the teaching of English in an International Baccalaureate accredited international school located in Flanders, Belgium. Compared to other educational contexts, this international school with English as a medium of instruction (hereafter EMI) is an idiosyncratic context, as its students (and teachers) come from a broad variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, throughout all grade levels, there is a continuous enrollment of students that are not necessarily fluent in the school's official language. In addition, the school is an elite and prestigious form of education and to a great extent exempt from local governmental regulatory influence. As a consequence, the international school is met with the challenging opportunity of simultaneously providing an inclusive education in English while teaching this same language to students with various proficiency levels.

In the literature, international schools remain a relatively understudied institution, especially from a sociolinguistic and language policy perspective (Bunnell 2008), and in comparison to the wealth of studies which have examined national education and public schools. Studies on educational language policy and linguistic diversity in educational contexts have thus far also mostly focused on institutional monolingualism in schools and its effects on multilingual students in national education systems (e.g. Heller 1995; Martín-Rojo 2010; Jaspers 2015). Related or similar research on international schools is comparatively scarce, even though it holds the potential to add interesting insights to the existing body of research. Against this background, the analysis reported on in this chapter is based on linguistic ethnographic fieldwork and will focus explicitly on an international school's language policy and its practices of inclusion to facilitate the use of English as the medium of instruction in a context where the enrolment of students not fluent in English is continuous.

We commence the chapter by providing the necessary theoretical background by defining and situating the type of school and outlining the relevant theoretical concepts to capture the use of language within a school context. Subsequently, the research questions and linguistic ethnographic methodology are outlined, which is followed by a discussion of the results and analysis. We conclude this chapter with a reflection on the implications and potential best practices of the school's language policy for other educational contexts in Europe.

## International Schools and Language Policy

### *International Schools and the International Baccalaureate*

International schools came into existence in the second half of the twentieth century as a direct consequence of migration and globalization and the need for an overarching transnational education for children of expat families (Heyward 2002; Hayden

2011). Originally, these schools catered to the needs of children of expatriate diplomats and transnational employees. More recently, they have also been attracting local students seeking distinguishing educational credentials (Hayden 2011). On the grounds of these developments, international schools have been met with the challenge to further distinguish themselves from traditional national forms of education. Many international schools have done this by means of introducing a substantial focus on viewing the linguistic and cultural diversity in the school as an asset that should be celebrated (Sunyol and Codó 2020). Other schools, such as the school studied in this chapter, even embrace this diversity holistically in their curriculum.

With the rise of more and more independent international schools in the 1960s, a need arose to create overarching institutions which standardize the practices of international schools worldwide (Sunyol and Codó 2020). The example par excellence of such institutionalized undertaking is the International Baccalaureate Organization (hereafter IB), which was founded in 1967 by a cohort of teachers in Geneva. The IB is one of the largest of these overarching international school organizations, as no less than 5.402 schools in 158 countries have received IB accreditation (About the IB). Schools that are part of the IB all have an international curriculum, and English, Spanish, or French as official language(s). The self-declared purpose of the IB is to provide international pupils with a common form of education overarching all of the global, national and local needs of transnational students (Peterson 2003). The international school discussed in this chapter is IB-accredited and employs the three curricula:

- The Primary Years Program [PYP] (ages 3–12),
- The Middle Years Program [MYP] (ages 11–16), and
- The Diploma Program [DP], designed for the final two years of secondary education (ages 16–19).

Thus, many of the choices pertaining to language learning activities in IB international schools are based on this general international curriculum.

As noted above, many international schools, and especially those with IB-accreditation, adopt a celebratory stance toward diversity and multilingualism (Sunyol and Codó 2020). This stems from IB-accredited international schools' overarching aim of creating 'global citizens' with an international mindset (Peterson 2003). This is also reflected in the mission statement on the website of the IB, which reads as follows: "The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect" (About the IB).

## ***Language Policy and Multilingualism in (International) Education***

The language policy of any school—international or not—will profoundly shape and influence the school’s practices of language use and teaching. Language policy is typically defined as “refer[ing] to and [...] concerned with decisions made about languages and their uses in society” (Shohamy 2007: 119). Specific to the context of education, then, language education policy (hereafter LEP) refers to such (pedagogical) decisions regarding which languages are for example denoted to be the ‘home language’, a ‘foreign language’, or a ‘global language’ and receive a respective place in the school curriculum, or not (Shohamy 2006, 2007; see also De Galbert 2021). In his monograph titled *Language Policy*, Spolsky (2004) proposed one of the first overarching theoretical models of language policy, in which he describes how the language policy of a community can be studied by examining three of its main aspects: (i) the members of a certain community’s ideology or beliefs concerning language practices and their appropriacy, e.g. when certain languages, constructions, or words can or cannot be used in certain contexts; (ii) (concrete) language management efforts to influence such practices based on certain beliefs, and (iii) the actual language practices of the members in the community, i.e. the particular manners in which members of a community speak and which languages, constructions, or words they tend to choose in which contexts.

It has been well established that a difference can be found between explicit and implicit (Schiffman 1996) or overt and covert (Shohamy 2006) (elements of) language policy. Overt or explicit elements of language policy in a school or classroom, for example, are a monolingual language policy which stipulates the school’s official language should be used on the premises and signs in the hallways of the schools which remind students of the school’s mandated language use. An example of a covert or implicit aspect of LEP is how teachers function as “main agents” delivering policies made at a higher level in the classroom, and thus becoming embodied “servants” of a system in which they do not necessarily have a say (Shohamy 2006: 79).

As briefly touched upon in the introduction, studies of language policy and linguistic diversity in (national) educational contexts have thus far mostly focused on an existing dichotomy between monolingualism and monolingual school policies, on the one hand, and multilingualism and multilingual student populations on the other (see for example Heller 1995; Jaspers 2015). Similarly, IB schools generally employ a lingua franca as the official language for ‘inclusive’ communication and as the language of instruction (Peterson 2003). Such a monolingual policy provides a challenge to be reckoned with in such schools’ everyday functioning, especially in light of the diversity characterizing their student body and the generally positive appraising ideology diversity reflected in the IB mission statement. Several (socio)linguistic case studies on international schools have focused on precisely this issue. In general, these studies are critical in nature, documenting for example that at an international school, and especially an IB school, the positive appraisal of diversity can be merely

performative (Solano-Campos 2017). Other studies specifically criticize the IB, such as Sunyol & Codó (2020: 134) who criticize the IB curriculum for its focus on turning the students into “neoliberal subjects”. Other studies, such as Jonsson (2013) found the opposite: some international schools adhere to a strictly monolingual policy, whilst students’ practices are multilingual in nature. Similar observations were made by Ochs (1993) and Nørreby and Madsen (2019). With this chapter, we aim to add to this body of research by topicalizing one aspect which to date has not been examined in depth: how an international school aims to harmonize the pedagogic use of English as the inclusive medium of instruction with a diverse, multilingual student population both practically and language ideologically.

## Context, Research Questions and Methodology

### *The Ethnographic Context*

The international school which forms the object of this linguistic ethnographic case study is a small international school located in a highly diverse urban context in Flanders. On its website, the international school defines itself as “an intercultural hub, reflecting its cosmopolitan and multilingual surroundings”. Even though the school is small in scale, it houses students of no less than 47 different nationalities. The school was founded in the 1960s in a large city in Flanders, characterized by a high degree of superdiversity as a result of globalization and migration. On its website, the school describes its pedagogic vision as “holistic-empowering-intercultural” (or HEI), which entails that “[s]tudents from varying cultural and economic backgrounds are welcomed and actively supported by our warm and caring community”. This translates into the holistic and personal approach to teaching which the school claims to adopt. It also translates into the large faculty body which comprises 90 members. Enrollment of students in both primary and secondary levels is continuous throughout the school year. The official language of communication and instruction at the school is English. Among the L1s spoken by the largest number of students in the school in 2021, are the school’s official language and local Belgian languages: English (38%), Dutch (26%), and also French (4%). The school also houses speakers of Hindi (5%), Gujarati (4%), German (3%) and Japanese (3%). Other languages represented (with lower percentages) include Finnish, Russian, Chinese and Portuguese.

Against this background, in this chapter we address the following research questions:

- (1) How does this specific international school organize English-medium instruction and facilitate English language learning for students who are not necessarily proficient enough yet to follow the general curriculum?
- (2) How are English as the official medium of instruction and the IB philosophy of celebrating (multilingual) diversity ideologically reconciled in this international school’s practices?

## ***Data Collection: Linguistic Ethnography***

In answering the questions formulated above, we adopt a linguistic ethnographic approach (Copland and Creese 2015) which combines empirical data collection through fieldwork with a situated analysis of the data within the institutional context. The fieldwork and data collection was carried out by the first author on the school's premises in the Spring of 2020. In addition, we draw on first-hand experience of the second author as the school's coordinator of the "English as an Additional Language" program and the "Mother Tongue" program of the school. The fieldwork entailed the collection of the following data on the use of language within the school:

- (1) The school's public website;
- (2) The school's language policy and educational language policy documents which were not publicly available and retrieved as part of the data collection;
- (3) On-site fieldwork documenting the educational linguistic landscape (Gorter 2018) of all classrooms on the school premises. Specifically, any signage in the school hallways, including the playground and the bistro, the Arts classrooms, and the PYP and MYP classrooms were examined. A total of 455 photographs were taken;
- (4) Interviews with 3 school staff members: 2 MYP science teachers and 1 MYP principal.

Due to COVID-19 no classroom observations were included in the data collection. The collected data was selected as to encompass both the school's overt language policy and more covert embodiments of the language policy. The triangulation of these data and insider/outsider perspectives enable us to provide a self-reflexive and critical overview of how the school attempts to harmonize EMI with a celebratory stance on cultural and linguistic diversity in the school.

## ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis was diverse in terms of the methodology applied for each source of materials. The school's official language policy document and the school's website were assessed through document analysis (i.e., a content analysis phase followed by a thematic analysis phase in which any mentions of language, multilingualism, multilingual learning or linguistic diversity were categorized by means of color-based coding and subsequently grouped into thematic nodes (Bowen 2009)). Concretely, our analysis focused on distinguishing expressions concerning language in terms of their covert and/or overt nature and in terms of what is stated explicitly and/or implicitly. The educational linguistic landscape (hereafter ELL) was documented through on-site fieldwork (Gorter and Cenoz 2015; Laihonon and Szabó 2018) during which the school premises were broken down into specific location categories, which were analyzed per category in terms of how present languages other than English were in the surroundings.

The findings from the analysis of the language policy document and website data were compared for similarities or differences in practices reflected in the ELL of the different spaces of the school. Language policy data found in official documents tends to be more explicit in nature, and practices as conveyed in the ELL give us insight into actual activities. By combining the analysis of themes in the school's official language policy with the analysis of the school's website, ELL and interview statements, we will be able to gauge how the policy is put into practice and the extent to which the language policy coincides with the reality of the practices.

## Results and Discussion

### *EMI and English as an Additional Language in the School's Official Language Policy*

As mentioned before, the school employs English as the official language of instruction, and all teaching and testing in the school is generally and officially done in English. As a result of the fact that the school uses English as the medium of instruction, the language policy explicitly tackles the challenge of how to integrate the continuous influx of students with various levels of English language proficiency. English is namely not the L1 of most of the school's international and local students. To ensure curriculum access for all students, the official language policy states that there is a supporting program in place, called English as an Additional Language (EAL) support.

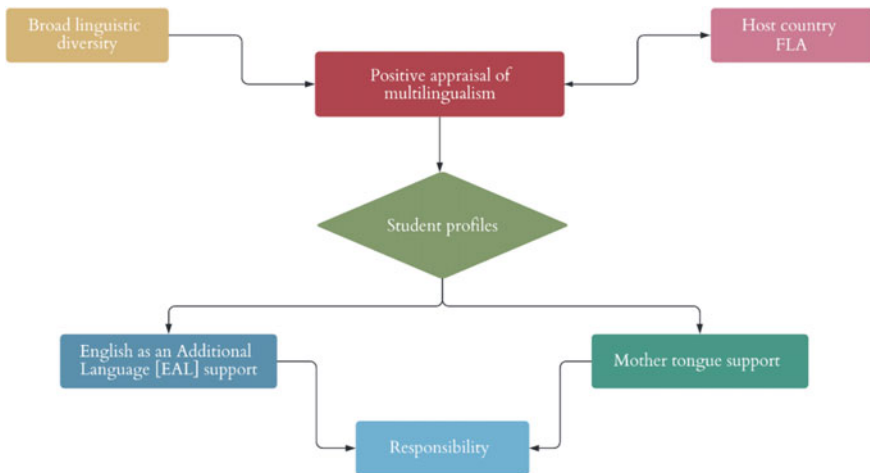
Concretely, our analysis of the school's language policy document shows how EAL Support in this school's policy takes several forms, depending on students' individual linguistic needs. For the MYP, for example, the system is as follows: students who dispose of little to no English proficiency when starting at the school, receive EAL Support in the form of an individual class. This class is taken instead of language acquisition of a third language, which is French (next to Dutch and English). At the time of the fieldwork in 2020, different phases of EAL classes were in place to facilitate English language acquisition by students: phases 1 and 2 are the 'emerging proficiency' phases in which EAL takes precedence over third language courses for students in Grades 6 through 9, up until students have reached phase 3, 'developing proficiency', and then EAL Support is provided through collaboration with content teachers. For those students in Grade 9 who still require EAL Support, additional EAL classes are provided instead of third language classes and this through phase 4, the 'expanding' phase up until the students reach phase 5, 'bridging-WIDA levels'. After this, they can take up a third language acquisition class with their peers. They may, however, receive continued support through collaboration between the content teachers and EAL specialist teachers. This includes co-planning and, especially in the PYP, co-teaching.



### *The School’s Language (Education) Policy and Mother Tongue Support*

While the school’s medium of instruction is English, the outcome of the content and thematic analysis of the school’s official language policy documented a clear celebratory, appreciative mindset when it comes to multilingualism and cultural diversity. Moreover, our analysis of the website together with the official policy document yielded a clear overview of the school’s intricate systematic rationale of language education. Both in the document and on the website, the identified positive appraisal of multilingualism played a central role. The general outcome of the overarching thematic analysis of the LP document is shown in Fig. 5.1. Here, the seven dominant themes are represented in a structural overview which shows how they relate to one another in the school’s ideological position vis-à-vis multilingualism and cultural diversity.

In general, the school’s positive appraisal of linguistic and cultural diversity is presented as the reasoning behind any and all policy decisions. Such elements include Mother Tongue Support and other carefully thought-out structures for EAL Support for those students who require extra help to gain full access to the EMI curriculum. These two forms of linguistic support, in turn, are supported by a certain responsibility transferred to the school’s teachers. That is, according to the language policy of the school, all teachers are expected to act as language teachers. This for example entails that an MYP Science teacher should carry the responsibility for their students acquiring Science-related vocabulary in English and the specific ways of using language in Science. In the next sections, we tackle and discuss each dimension of the language policy as it emerged from the analysis.



**Fig. 5.1** Structural analytic overview of the school’s officially stated language (education) policy

## Positive Appraisal of Multilingualism

In the LP document itself, the school's language policy is briefly summarized as follows:

At [school name], we welcome students with many different language backgrounds. These languages and cultures are considered valuable resources and form a foundation for all learning. Therefore, we recognise and support the importance of mother-tongue development in all areas of learning and believe that all sections of the community are responsible for language development. (p. 1)

English, however, remains of great importance as well, which becomes clear from the sentence immediately following this summary: "English is the school's language of instruction and communication. Academic mastery of English enables students to realize their learning potential at our school" (p. 1). In addition to English being the school's language of instruction and communication, the language policy documents convey that English is also ideologically considered a language of inclusion.

The school's policy document can be considered the official, overt documentation of the school's language education policy (and not its language policy per se), because it refers solely to the employment of language for purely educational purposes. However, one comment slightly deviates from this standard and mentions that "[s]tudents may use their mother tongue/first language to enhance and demonstrate their learning and understanding when necessary and if practical" (p. 1). This encouragement of employing the L1 as a scaffold for learning together with the encouragement of students to converse in their L1s outside the classroom is directly related to the school's belief that EMI and multilingual pedagogy are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In the school's policy, this decision is explicitly based on Nordmeyer et al.'s (2021) observation that EMI does not necessarily mean having only one language of learning.

The school's overall appraising ideology regarding multilingualism and language learning is directly related to the overall IB mission of creating 'global citizens'. The following excerpt from the language policy exemplifies this:

The ability to communicate in more than one language facilitates an individual's movement beyond the first language and home culture, increases awareness of the world and ultimately enables students to participate more fully as international citizens. (p.1)

The international schools' multilingual learning focused language policy is largely based on the benefits of using the L1, which have been thoroughly documented in language learning studies. In brief, the most eminent findings of L1 support in L2 learning (environments) have demonstrated how the L1 in these contexts can be employed not only to engage learners and foster confidence and positive multilingual identities, but also to strengthen knowledge through transfer between languages and translation exercises (see: Cummins 1981; Garcia and Torres 2009). In the language policy of the school under scrutiny, this specifically takes the form of this "movement beyond the first language and home culture". Concretely, the school proclaims to not believe in subtractive bilingualism, where an L1 is solely employed in learning and teaching to strengthen the learning of the L2, but more so in achieving a form of

additive bilingualism, which entails that the learning and teaching of the L1 and the L2 are equally important (Lambert 1981). As explicitly stated in the policy document: “[s]tudents should be provided the opportunity to develop a cognitive and culturally enriching form of additive multilingualism” (p. 1). This positive appraisal of multilingualism can be seen as motivated by the school setting. In particular, the school’s language policy refers to both linguistic diversity in general and the languages spoken in the host country (Belgium) as positive, contributing factors in their pedagogy (cf. Fig. 5.1).

## **Student Profiles**

One of the direct results of the positive appraisal of multilingualism are the development of individual student profiles. In brief, these are individual linguistic profiles in which students’ language learning developments and needs are mapped. These profiles are built up using the WIDA model for English proficiency assessment (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment 2020) in combination with an assessment of their levels in other languages and understanding of the course matter in their classroom and EAL performance. The profiles are created in consultation of parents and teachers. The importance of consulting parents arguably lies in the fact that the majority of the families in the school community are transnational and thus per definition highly mobile. As a result, not only is each student’s linguistic background different, but also their needs.

Information on students’ linguistic backgrounds is initially gathered through the school’s admissions procedures. Here, both information about the languages spoken by the parents as well as languages spoken in the home environment is requested. Parents also provide information about previous education, the language(s) of instruction, and experience with any additional languages. This aids not only in determining students’ ideal placement in language classes, but also in establishing which form of language support may be beneficial for the student. Moreover, it provides classroom teachers with vital information about each student’s linguistic profile. The school management system and reporting system track progress through language acquisition phases and the level of EAL Support provided. Placement testing is conducted for English, Dutch and French as required. Creating these individual profiles, although time-consuming, ensures that each student will leave the school, before graduation or not, with the linguistic tools needed for their further education.

## **EAL and Mother Tongue Support**

In addition to EAL and student profiles, one other highly central aspect of the school’s positive appraisal of multilingualism is its ‘Mother Tongue Support’ program. This dimension of the school’s functioning is elaborately addressed in the school’s overt language policy document and is explicitly based in the aforementioned belief that additive bilingualism is the preferred goal. The school overtly reports encouragement

of using multilingual practices as a pedagogical tool to enhance EAL. Such Mother Tongue Support in the school takes on an abundance of forms. For one, it can be most easily done if students' L1s are already present in the school's curriculum. The IB states that students should receive a multilingual education in the sense that they ought to be studying two or three languages at a time – depending on whether they are in the PYP or MYP program. Given how many of the students are Dutch-speaking, these students can simply take the host country language and literature classes as a form of Mother Tongue Support. However, specific support classes for languages are also a possibility in the curriculum, but some come at an additional cost for parents. In the academic year 2021–2022 Portuguese, Swedish, Chinese and German will be offered in the PYP/MYP. In the past, Finnish, Japanese, Korean, Russian and Spanish were also offered.

The school's adoption of the EAL and Mother Tongue Support program and student profiles are not only practically but also ideologically interconnected. Practically, among the direct positive results of individualized student profiles are the facilitation of class placement and the fact that the profiles can be employed as a tool for monitoring English proficiency development and determining the appropriate support for language learning obstacles (e.g., Mother Tongue Support to build up a student's proficiency level in EAL classes and thereby their understanding of and access to the general curriculum). As such, the class placement aspect of student profiles can be considered directly related to both EAL Support and Mother Tongue Support. Significantly, the EAL Support and Mother Tongue Support classes are co-curricular, which means they take place during regular curricular activities and replace the Dutch or French language class blocks. Ideologically, the formal overt expression of the school's language policy proclaims to actively employ multilingual pedagogical strategies for the benefit of the student. The policy underwrites the pedagogical importance of supporting the mother tongue and the simultaneous acquisition of the official school language by its students. In doing so, and thus in attempting to harmonize the school's positive ideology of multilingualism with the heavy importance placed on English, the school demonstrates attention to students' individual linguistic needs. Interestingly, by means of composing a linguistic profile for each student, the school manages to avoid placing an overall greater importance on either element but makes such decisions for each student individually.

The general ideology concerning language also clearly coincides with contemporary sociolinguistic insights, and explicitly refers to these, which suggests that the school is well aware of the importance of and actively working on accommodating to their students' individual linguistic needs. An example of this is an implicit referral to translanguaging. Translanguaging as a pedagogy entails the employment of students' L1s, or students' entire linguistic repertoires, as a form of support for the learning of a target language, which in the case of this international school is English (Garcia and Wei 2014; Wei 2021). Moreover, it also implies a recognition that students draw from various, differing linguistic-semiotic, cultural, and historical repertoires and that for this reason, it is beneficial to not necessarily consider languages as bounded entities (Garcia et al. 2021). In brief, the diversity of students' linguistic repertoires in the school is seen as a self-evident reality, which is claimed to be dealt with positively.

The school's linguistic functioning is thus characterized by an overall belief that L1 learning is not something which should solely take place at home, but also at school. Apart from the dynamic and flexible curriculum, the school thus provides various physical and virtual learning tools to support and develop L1s. It also provides students with opportunities to use their L1 by using the diverse school community to its advantage. Due to the smaller size of the school community, extracurricular activities are an ideal situation in which students and families from similar backgrounds can meet each other. This ensures the social aspect of remaining in touch with their L1 and offers opportunities to put specific vocabulary acquired through Mother Tongue Support into use. It also facilitates the crossing of knowledge from one language to another and thus solidifies their knowledge.

## **Responsibility**

Our analysis uncovered that the language policy document of the schools dedicates a significant role to the element of responsibility, which lies in between EAL Support and Mother Tongue Support (cf. Fig. 5.1). The school explicitly emphasizes that even though the responsibility of their students' linguistic development to a large extent lies within the realm of the school, the families and the home context of the student are also important factors. The importance of this shared responsibility is overtly based in the fact that meaning and knowledge are created through language, and that language for that reason could be defined as the major connector of all elements of the curriculum.

At the level of the school's teaching staff, the effect of this importance can be seen in the policy statement that it considers all teachers to be language teachers: "[w]e believe that all teachers are language teachers, and that language is the major connecting element across the curriculum". The school thus expects, say, science teachers to explicitly teach specific Science-related vocabulary over the course of their classes. The school also goes beyond vocabulary teaching, e.g. by addressing specific text-types and ways in which language functions in a Science classroom (sentence structures, use of tense) is specific and different to the way that language functions in a History class. Additionally, the school's language policy states that professional development in this regard is required for all staff members. Course-specific teachers also receive support from EAL teachers inside and outside of class. This ensures the quality of the specific courses to not be endangered by the added focus on linguistic support. Also, the content teachers are responsible for encouraging making connections to home languages and previous languages of education, as well as scaffolding instruction to make it accessible to all students in their class.

## ***Ideological Reconciliation of EMI with Multilingual Diversity in Everyday Practice***

In this section, we present examples of the language use on the school's premises and how multilingual diversity and mother tongues are incorporated in the school's everyday practice next to the official language of communication and instruction. As such, we aim to address and answer our second formulated research question. In particular, this section looks at (1) how the EMI functioning of the school is reflected in the public signage, and how such functioning and signage co-exists with (2) public signage and displays of appreciations of linguistic diversity and students' mother tongues. In doing so, we examine the public space of the school and the signs which are displayed in it as an ELL, which is typically defined as the physical and social setting of teaching and learning where students meet with teachers. As such, ELLs are material spaces in which schooling curricula are implemented and which also shape the practices and activities corresponding to the ideologies and social norms of the school (Laihonen and Szabó 2018). Consequently, ELLs not only reflect, but also shape the linguistic practices in these spaces. Finally, this section also looks at how the ELL reflects how (3) translanguaging as a pedagogy takes form in this specific international school in Belgium.

The fact that English is both the school's official language of instruction and the language of inclusion is strongly reflected in the school's public space, which is very dense and highly visual with numerous signs, posters, etc. displayed for every passerby to see. Hallways and classrooms are filled with such signs, most of which are in English (see Fig. 5.2 for an example). These signs often reflect characterizing elements of the IB curriculum, and most posters are the result of students' inquiry-based learning projects. As specific elements of the IB curriculum are taught in English, and as all ultimate project reports or posters are required to be in English (i.e. the language of assessment), it is not surprising that the majority of visually represented linguistic elements in the school are in the official language.

Even though there is a clear predominance of English, we do find public signs which convey the other dimension of the school's language (educational) beliefs both explicitly and implicitly. The positive appraisal of multilingual diversity is visually represented in the school's ELL in various manners. Explicitly, specific types of signs are sometimes provided in Dutch and French (the local languages), and implicitly, multiculturalism and multilingualism are visually represented. Figure 5.3 is an example from the Kindergarten/PYP hallway and shows a bilingual poster in appreciation of mother tongues. The poster on the left is in Dutch, while the poster on the right is in English and reads:

When you/enter this/loving school/consider yourself/one of the special/members of an/  
extraordinary family

The graphic design of the poster also conveys the poster's message explicitly, as the first letters of each line form the word "Welcome". In the Dutch version, the text reads:

**Fig. 5.2** General ELL of the PYP premises (Grade 4): English only



Weet je wel waarom/ er zoveel zalige talen/ liefdevol lachend luid/ klip en klaar als een klontje/ op (school name) worden gesproken? / Tel je mee: Moedertaal hoezee!

(Our English translation: Do you know why/so many awesome languages/lovingly, laughing, loud/are being spoken/plain as day at (school name)?/Do count along: Mother tongue hooray!).

Again, the first letters in the Dutch version of the poster spell the word “Welkom” (i.e. “Welcome” in Dutch). These posters are framed by flags from countries all over the world and accompanied by smaller signs containing pictures of teachers and students with a self-portrait and “hello, welcome” in the mother tongue of the person displayed.

This second part of the poster is shown in Fig. 5.4. These drawings are part of an assignment designed by the teacher and implied a small task for the students to self-identify: to draw a self-portrait and make use of their mother tongue. By means of these self-portraits, the students and their individual cultural and linguistic backgrounds are not only explicitly welcomed in a visual manner, students are also actively involved in this process.

In the ELL, various signs clearly illustrate some more concrete manners in which Mother Tongue Support takes form in different classroom contexts. In an MYP Science classroom, for example, a poster was provided on which all IB command





Fig. 5.3 Mother tongue appreciation posters in kindergarten/PYP hallway I



Fig. 5.4 Mother tongue appreciation posters in kindergarten/PYP hallway II

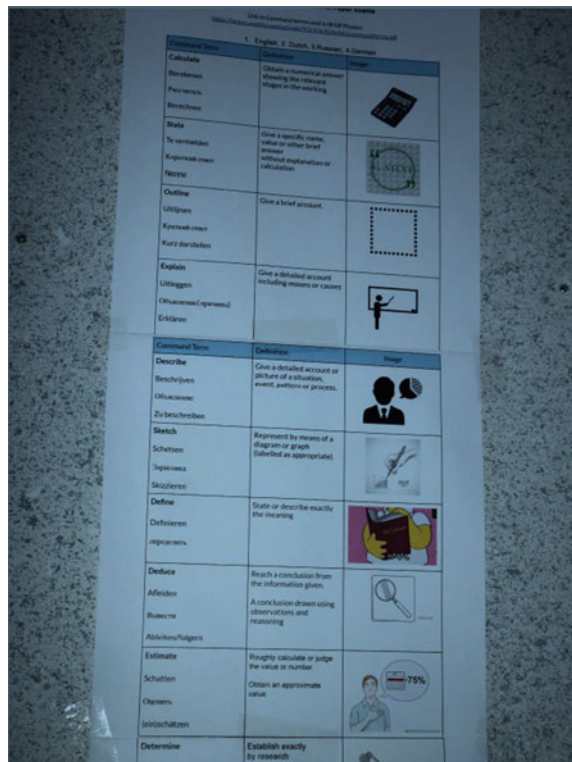


terms (for Physics) were translated into four other languages: English, Dutch, German and Russian (see Fig. 5.5 for a photo of the poster). To aid students and teachers in achieving inquiry-based learning, specific terms related to inquiry and research are provided as guidelines for students’ projects. Apart from overarching terms, there are also command terms for each specific course. These are partially in place to ensure that IB students have the same background knowledge going into the central final exams. At the school studied, these terms were present in poster form in all classrooms.

Arguably, these four languages displayed on the sign are the majority languages of a certain class in terms of mother tongue, or the specific native languages of students with a low proficiency in English. This poster provides evidence of a practice that was also explained in an interview with an MYP science teacher. In this interview, the teacher explained that they personally perform their role as a language teacher by displaying and providing L1 translations of the necessary command terms in the classroom. In this example, the students’ predominant L1s are thus employed as a pedagogical tool for EAL enhancement and to access the curriculum.

The most prominent form of Mother Tongue Support present in the public space of the school, was the visible presence of translanguaging pedagogical practices. Translanguaging as a pedagogy arguably functions as the link between Mother

**Fig. 5.5** In-classroom mother tongue support (MYP)—English, Dutch, German and Russian



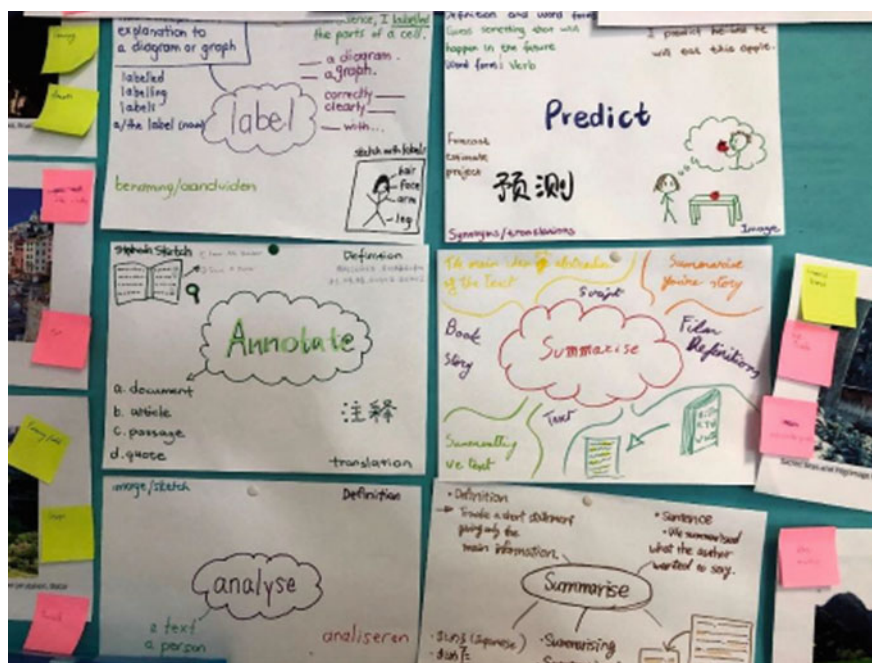


Fig. 5.6 Translanguaging in the EAL classroom

Tongue Support and EAL: as an explicit means by which to ensure transfer of knowledge from one language to another. In the EAL classrooms especially, Mother Tongue Support was not only found in the more implicit form of translations as illustrated in the Science classroom example above. Certain translanguaging pedagogical exercises with the goal of learning the terms for specific IB curriculum skills were also presented on the walls, as illustrated by the example in Fig. 5.6.

From these examples—which remind of Carbonara’s (2021) findings regarding the main teaching strategies for engaging multilingual repertoires as found in an Italian public preschool—it becomes clear how the school’s public space not only reflects the school’s language policy but also how the school concretely manages to reconcile the importance of EMI and English as a language of inclusion with a positive ideology of multilingualism in practice. Diversity is explicitly and implicitly welcomed at the school, and students acquire English as an Additional Language through Mother Tongue Support. In addition, by virtue of the student profile system in place, those students who—in addition to EMI—require instruction in their L1 (for possible further studies or a return to the home country), can easily do so as well.

In sum, we find that this particular school does indeed apply its positive ideology regarding multilingualism into practice. Such practice does not even remain at the informal level, i.e. students being allowed to use other languages than English outside the classroom. The positive ideology trickles down into teaching practices. Yet,

there is clearly still an imbalance between the prevalence of English as opposed to other mother tongues at the school. Mother Tongue Support sometimes even seems secondary to EAL Support, or in turn, supportive of EAL Support. Based on our analysis of additional data, this is arguably a result of the fact that English remains the language of assessment and ‘inclusion’.

## **Implications for the Context and Recommendations**

This case study of the international school focused on how it attempts to harmonize a positive ideological stance toward linguistic diversity and language learning with an English-dominated curriculum and school structure. This analysis can prove useful and insightful for other English-learning educational contexts in Europe. The school does not simply see its cultural and linguistic diversity as a problem or challenge. Rather, it views the diversity in students’ linguistic competences and needs as a resource.

Of course, this international school is largely able to achieve this policy of individualistic student profiles on the grounds of their prestigious nature and the corresponding financial strength and possibilities. Yet, the language policy in this school can offer exemplary solutions for other educational settings with a large amount of students with differing proficiencies in the local language. This includes working with individual student profiles, not for the entire student population, but simply for those students who are most linguistically vulnerable or require the most support. Moreover, all elements of the international school’s language policy underlying and supporting the system of student profiles (i.e. EAL Support, Mother Tongue Support, and shared linguistic responsibility) carry separate recommendations for the more general European educational context. Based on specific issues faced by schools in cosmopolitan, highly-diverse settings, some of these elements could be carefully selected and implemented. For example, in any school which experiences similar linguistically challenging student populations, Mother Tongue Support in various forms can aid in processes of (linguistic) inclusion. Concrete examples of this include letting students translate from their L1 to the language of instruction, or letting students converse in a common tongue when information is unclear. Such practices namely ensure and support the further development of the L2 whilst at the same time providing an equitable form of education for all students in the school.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we focused on the teaching of English in an international school in Flanders, with a focus on how the school harmonizes an ideology and overt language policy of linguistic and cultural diversity with having but one official language of instruction. The school ideologically approaches the diversity in the student body’s

linguistic needs and competences not as a problem or a challenge, but as an opportunity and even a resource. This concretely takes form in the creation of individual linguistic profiles for each student—and thus assessment of each student’s specific needs—in combination with a dynamic and flexible—multilingualism-focused—curriculum. This, in turn, is supported by various linguistic support mechanisms, of which Mother Tongue Support forms one of many scaffolding tools. Mother Tongue Support is intrinsically tied to English as an Additional Language support. Even though both types of support essentially differ, they have the same end-goal. Both desire equitable access to the curriculum and for students to access their entire linguistic repertoire to become proficient multilingual students.

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# Chapter 6

## “British English” or “American English”? Investigating Austrian English Language Students’ Choice of a Model Accent



**Karin Richter and Andreas Weissenböck**

**Abstract** This chapter investigates the factors which affect English language students’ choice of a pronunciation model. Two groups of students enrolled either in the B.Ed. or B.A. programme “English and American Studies” at the University of Vienna took part in a survey at the beginning of a course providing explicit pronunciation instruction. One group took what is commonly referred to as “American English” as their pronunciation model and the second group opted for “British English”. Overall, the findings show that the majority found the decision effortless and straightforward. The default option for those who were initially undecided across both groups was American English. Among the key factors which seem to have influenced the decision were media exposure and the students’ own experience with the respective accent at school. While many claimed that the American accent seems to be easier to learn, they also agreed that British English appears to sound better. If they were offered a different model apart from British English and American English, their preferred accents would be Australian English or English as a Lingua Franca.

**Keywords** Model accents · EFL teaching · L2 pronunciation

### Introduction

In recent decades, an increasing number of researchers (e.g., Dziubalska-Kolaczyk and Przedlacka 2005; Kopperoinen 2011; Mompean 2004) have been re-examining goals and models for pronunciation teaching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This growing scientific interest has triggered what Sewell (2016) calls the “models debate” surrounding the question: What do models consist of and why? Sewell (2016) suggests different types of models depending on whether the term is viewed from a narrow or broad perspective. While a model can be seen as the accent presented in

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class for imitation in a narrow sense, the accent heard in class by peers or outside class on television could also be considered a type of model in a very broad sense. This means that the term model can actually assume the role of input the learners receive during the learning process. Considering the diverse nature of input learners are exposed to, the question arises if a reference model in a narrow sense is actually imperative in EFL teaching. Although some instructors believe that no model should be used (e.g., Trim 1961), the majority of EFL teachers appreciate having a model as a useful tool to guarantee pedagogical consistency and clarity (e.g., Mompean 2004; Henderson et al. 2012; Young and Walsh 2010).

There are numerous native and non-native speaker accents which can be selected as a pronunciation model; yet the two varieties which are commonly known as “British English” (BE) and “American English” (AE) still top the list (e.g., Henderson et al. 2012; Moyer 2013). It must be noted here that the status and phonetic inventory of these two admittedly dynamic varieties have been the subject of many heated discussions (e.g., Kretzschmar and Meyer 2012; Lindsey 2019; Preston 2008). According to the Oxford English Dictionary (“Pronunciation Model British English” n.d.), “British English” is a system rooted in the model of Received Pronunciation (RP), and “American English” or “US English” is its counterpart, which has its origins in General American (“Pronunciation Model American English”, n.d.). In this chapter, the two terms “British English” and “American English” respectively will be used to denote the region-less, assumed standard variety of the two accents. At the same time, it is clear that these labels nowadays encompass a considerable amount of variation and can therefore only serve as a general orientation.

In recent years, the legitimacy of these two native-speaker models has been put to question owing to the fact that only few learners ever achieve native-speaker competence in second language (L2) pronunciation (e.g., Ortega 2009). Therefore, non-native speaker models, such as Jenkins’ (2000) *Lingua Franca Core* within the paradigm of English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF), have been proposed as more realistic targets (e.g., Thir 2016; Walker 2010). Nevertheless, a myriad of empirical studies exploring the role of pronunciation in today’s EFL language classrooms have shown that EFL teachers and learners all over the world believe in the rightful dominance of native-speaker pronunciation models (e.g., Brabcova and Skarnitzl 2018; Buckingham 2015; Henderson et al. 2012; Richter 2021).

In the European context, the English Pronunciation Teaching in Europe Survey (Henderson et al. 2012) revealed that British English and American English were still the most preferred models in countries like Finland, France, Germany, Macedonia, Poland, Spain, and Switzerland. In their data, the third most frequent response was what the authors referred to as “a type of International English” (Henderson et al. 2012, p. 132).

In Austria, as in many other European countries, EFL learners can usually choose between British English and American English as a model accent. So far, no empirical study has tackled the question of why and how Austrian students in the twenty-first century choose a particular variety. The aim of our research is therefore to fill this gap by examining student perceptions about factors influencing this decision-making process.



## Literature Review

By and large, the main criteria for choosing a model accent most frequently mentioned in the literature can be assigned to four broad categories, namely geo-political, linguistic, pedagogical, and socio-psychological (e.g., Mompean 2004). Although these criteria will be discussed individually below, this is an organisational convention that does not deny their inherent interconnectedness. Instead, these variables should be seen as an intricate web of factors which impact an EFL learner’s decision to choose a model accent.

What underlies and connects each one of these variables is the notion of exposure to the target language. In fact, research has shown that exposure may even be more important than explicit pronunciation instruction (e.g., Saito 2013; Trofimovich and Baker 2006). Now more than ever, EFL learners all over the world find it much easier to immerse themselves in a wide range of different varieties of English. This occurs not only inside the EFL classroom (through the teacher, their peers, or teaching materials) but also outside (through television, video games, or internet content). This means that increased exposure can then be a key factor in motivating individual learners to adopt a certain model accent, no matter where in the world they are located, what their first language is, or what model accent is taught in school.

### *Geo-political Criteria*

Undoubtedly, a decisive role in the decision as to what reference accent a learner chooses is played by the geographical proximity and political ties to countries where English is spoken as the first language (L1). Therefore, it could be assumed that European learners are generally more inclined to travel to study or work in the UK, and, therefore, they are also more interested in learning a British accent. Indeed, for a long time British English was seen as the main pronunciation model in Europe (e.g., Gimson 1980; Mompean 2004), whereas American English was generally preferred in South America and Asia (e.g., Gimson 1980; Mompean 2004). However, recent technical and economic advancements triggered by globalisation and internationalisation endeavours have substantially diminished the relevance of physical distances. At the same time, the increasingly important role of the United States as a major global player in politics, economics but also in pop culture has led to an extensive exposure of European learners to American English through the internet and the media. This trend seems to be leading to what Henderson et al. (2012) already observed in their survey in 2012, namely a growing interest in learning American English rather than British English.



### *Linguistic Criteria*

A second aspect which merits further examination when choosing a model accent focuses on the linguistic proximity of the L1 and the L2 of the EFL learners and the ease or difficulty with which a certain learner acquires a certain L2 accent. In this context, Brown (1991) asserts that in contrast to British English, the phonology of American English is usually less challenging to learn for European EFL students since it has fewer diphthongs and closer orthographic links. These findings are also confirmed by a study conducted by Mompean (2004) in Spain who points out that for most Europeans, rhotic accents tend to be easier to learn than non-rhotic accents.

### *Pedagogical Criteria*

The third criterion commonly listed as decisive in choosing a model accent is related to the availability of teaching materials as well as the qualification of EFL teachers. When looking at research into accents featured in published EFL coursebooks and teaching materials, the picture is unanimous: British English and American English are the two most commonly used accents (e.g., Astrand 2021; Hasenberger 2012). While this may be attributed to the fact that these two are the variants which are claimed to have been most carefully and most fully described in the literature (e.g., Gimson 1980; Roach 1995), it is interesting to note that in the last few decades little has changed. In his analysis of materials offered by online bookshops such as Amazon, Mompean (2004) showed that 95% of the EFL books and audio materials sold were based on American English or British English, or both.

Another crucial aspect which deserves closer scrutiny is the question of human resources available in educational institutions and teacher education. In many European EFL classrooms, this means that the teacher is not a native speaker of English despite having studied British English or American English at university and so the learners are exposed to educated teachers who also bring along a local colouring of the accent, which indicates that input is diverse but has a certain tendency. It comes as no surprise that most European universities which provide English language teacher training programmes also seem to favour the two options British English and American English. To the best of our knowledge, there is no tertiary study programme in Europe which provides pronunciation training focusing on English as a *Lingua Franca*.

### *Socio-psychological Criteria*

This category encompasses personal attitudes as well as goals for learning a particular accent. Ufomata (1990), for instance, suggests that learners should individually

choose a model accent which they admire the most. In this respect, a great number of scholars have investigated students’ attitudes toward different varieties of English (e.g., Bikeliene 2015; Carrie 2017; Ladegaard and Sachdev 2006; Pöcksteiner 2018; Rindal 2010). Their findings yield a clear picture: British English is often associated with prestige, competence, and status (e.g., Coupland and Bishop 2007; Ladegaard and Sachdev 2006), whereas American English is commonly seen as more modern and influential (e.g., Ladegaard and Sachdev 2006; Mompean 2004).

## The Present Study

In our research project, we decided to explore the criteria university students of English consider when they are asked to select a model accent. Against the backdrop of having taught pronunciation courses at the University of Vienna for more than twenty years, we aim to shed light on the question what drives the students’ cognitive process of making this decision. The focus on tertiary learners appears to be particularly relevant since they are—in contrast to young learners—able to make a conscious decision and this decision may then have far-reaching ramifications since many of them will be using spoken English in their professional lives, in most cases as teachers in the EFL classroom. Therefore, it can be assumed that their choice is of particular relevance not only for their own development but also for future generations of EFL learners.

## Research Questions

The main research question this project seeks to answer is the following: How do English language university students choose a model accent for their pronunciation class?

More precisely, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. How difficult do the students find the decision?
2. What are the main reasons for choosing either BE or AE?
3. What is the default option if students are undecided?
4. Which model accents in addition to BE and AE should be offered?

To address these questions, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. This means that quantitative data was complemented by the qualitative analysis of a selected number of open questions in the survey. Data were collected in the form of a purposefully designed survey which was given to two groups of English language students (N = 105) taking a pronunciation class as part of their bachelor’s degree in English and American Studies or in the teacher training programme. The anonymous survey was administered online using the web-based software Unipark (Unipark 2021). On

the first page of this survey, the students were informed about the project, and they explicitly agreed to take part in the research. Participation was encouraged by the respective lecturers but voluntary. For the qualitative part of the study, the key terms the participants associated with BE and AE served as a basis for a close analysis of the frequency and patterning of the given answers.

## Methodology

### Setting and Participants

As this project seeks to investigate factors affecting English language students' choice of a model accent, the participants were all undergraduate students enrolled in one of the two bachelor's programmes (B.A. and B.Ed.) at the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Vienna. According to the requirements for admission into the programme, their level of English language competence is expected to be B2 in line with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2018). At the time of data collection, they were all enrolled in the course Practical Phonetics and Oral Communication Skills 1 (PPOCS 1). This course aims to equip the students with advanced knowledge of English pronunciation at both the segmental and suprasegmental level. At the time of data collection, 4 parallel courses of BE (with roughly 80 students) and 5 parallel courses of AE (with roughly 125 students) were offered. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the demographic composition of the participants who completed and returned the survey.

In total, 105 students completed the survey and participated in this study, of whom 76 (72.4%) were enrolled in American English and 29 in British English (27.6%). The overwhelming majority were female (86%), had enrolled in the teacher education programme (B.Ed.) (79%) and were—on average—23 years old. This generally reflects the standard student population of a PPOCS 1 class. The Mann-Whitney-U-Test showed no significant differences between the BE and AE groups regarding age ( $M_{AE} = 23.03$ ;  $M_{BE} = 23.93$ ;  $p = 0.816$ ), gender ( $M_{AE} = 1.88$ ;  $M_{BE} = 1.86$ ;  $p = 0.818$ ) or degree programme ( $M_{AE} = 1.24$ ;  $M_{BE} = 1.14$ ;  $p = 0.268$ ).

**Table 6.1** Study Participants

	British English	American English	Total
Respondents	29	76	105
Average age	23.93	23.03	23.28
Female	25	65	85.7%
Male	4	10	13.3%
3rd gender/n/a	0	1	1%
BEd	25	58	79%
BA	4	18	21%

## **Instruments and Procedure**

In the first two weeks of the PPOCS 1 course at the University of Vienna, an online survey was administered to examine the students’ decision to choose American English or British English as their pronunciation model. More precisely, this survey consisted of three main parts: In Part 1, the participants were asked to provide information regarding their socio-demographic background. Part 2 included questions about the difficulty of choosing an accent, the main reasons for their choice and questions about other accents that they would like to be offered. Finally, Part 3 intended to gauge the students’ attitudes toward AE and BE. In this section, different statements about these two model accents were given and the answers were to be marked on a six-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (2) disagree, (3) slightly disagree, (4) slightly agree, (5) agree and (6) strongly agree. These statements were complemented with open questions asking the students to provide three key words they associated with BE and three key words they associated with AE. All pronunciation teachers were contacted at the beginning of the project and asked to send the link to the survey to their students. Anonymity of all the students and their lecturers was guaranteed.

## **Analysis**

Data corresponding to the four research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics and SPSS Statistics 22. For the qualitative part, the open questions were subjected to closer scrutiny. For inferential statistical analysis and for capturing the differences between participants enrolled in British English and participants enrolled in American English or correlations between two variables, a Mann-Whitney-U-Test was used since the data was not normally distributed, as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed.

## **Findings**

### ***Decision Difficulty***

As stated above, students in PPOCS 1 choose their pronunciation model by registering for the course that offers their preferred model accent. Figure 6.1 sums up that this decision-making process was simple and straightforward. Students from both BE and AE experienced similar levels of decision difficulty ( $M_{AE} = 2.32$ ;  $M_{BE} = 2.34$ ). As illustrated in Fig. 6.1, almost half of AE respondents (48.2%) and more than one third of BE respondents (34.4%) found the decision “very easy”.

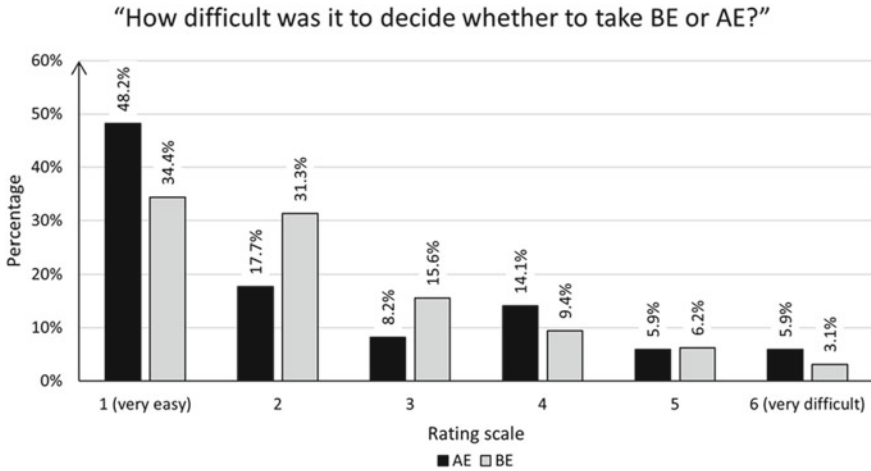


Fig. 6.1 Decision difficulty

### Reasons for Choosing a Particular Model Accent

To prompt students’ specific motives when choosing BE or AE (“Why did you take BE/AE for this course?”), participants were first presented with a series of Yes/No statements, which are shown in Fig. 6.2.

Results in Fig. 6.2 suggest that BE and AE respondents choose their model accent for different reasons. Significant differences in motives between BE and AE appeared in six areas, which are described in turn: First, the most significant BE and AE respondents in their choice of model accent concerned their beliefs which accent (BE or AE) was easier to learn. An overwhelming 73.7% of AE respondents were convinced that AE was easier to learn, while only 13.8% of BE respondents thought that BE was easier. A second discrepancy between BE and AE respondents related to their culture-specific media consumption (“watch a lot of American/British movies/series”). A staggering 97.4% of AE participants said that they chose AE because of their viewing habits, whereas only 55.2% of BE participants ascribed their choice to this reason. A third difference related to participants’ sound preference for AE or BE (“AE sounds better than BE”). Results revealed that 50% of AE respondents believed that AE sounded better than BE and that this perception had impacted their decision. Conversely, only 10.3% of BE respondents maintained that their decision to take BE rested on their sound preference for BE. A fourth divergence applied to US/UK family relations or acquaintances and their influence on deciding for BE or AE. More than half of AE respondents (53.9%) confirmed that they had family / friends in the US, while only one fifth of BE respondents (20.7%) confirmed that they had family / friends in the UK. At the same time, more than twice as many BE respondents (62.1%) had spent time in the UK than their AE colleagues (30.3%) had spent time in America. A final significant difference related to participants’ contact with AE or BE via their teachers in school. Here, findings showed that an overall majority had

### “Why did you take BE / AE for this course?”

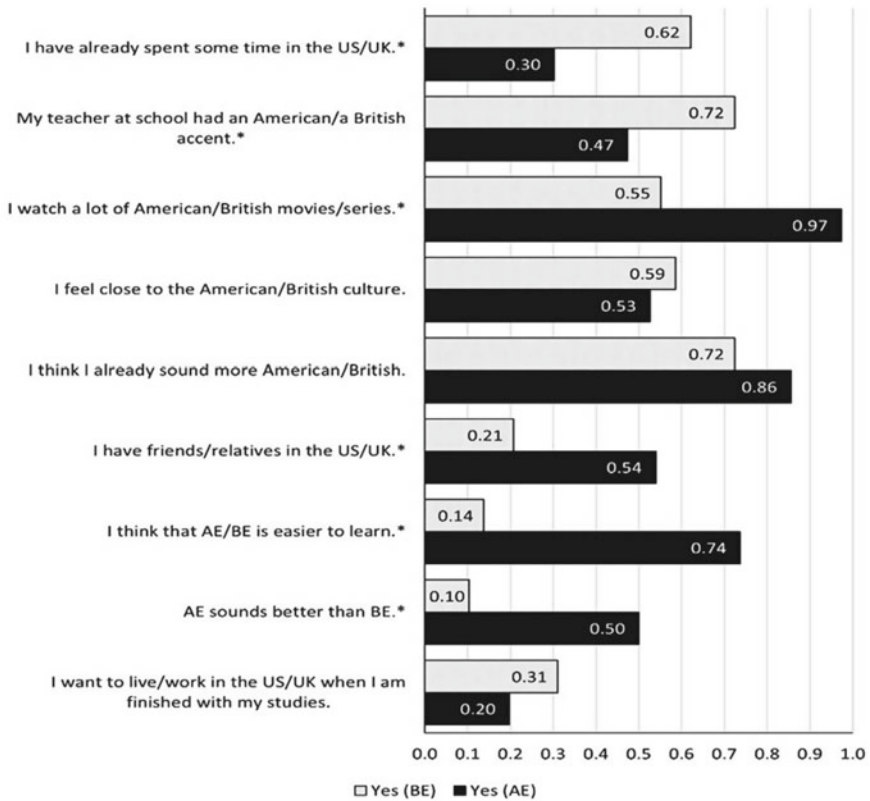


Fig. 6.2 Main reason for choosing BE or AE

had a teacher with a British accent. More precisely, 72.4% of BE respondents had a teacher with a British accent while 47.4% of AE respondents learned English from a teacher with an American accent.

To further explore students’ motives in their choice of a model accent, two items in the survey invited participants to write down their associations with their accent of choice. Participants were asked to give three keywords that best characterize BE and AE, which were then clustered into categories of frequency. The results for each model accent are shown in two separate bar charts in Figs. 6.3 and 6.4.

With regards to British English, 35.2% of all terms mentioned revolved around the idea of “Education”. Words often mentioned were “sophisticate/d” or “sophistication”, followed by “educate/d” and “formal/ity”. The second most frequent category was termed “High Social Class” (29.5%), including words like “posh”, “classy” and “prestige”. A related category was named “Monarchy” (17.3%) with key terms

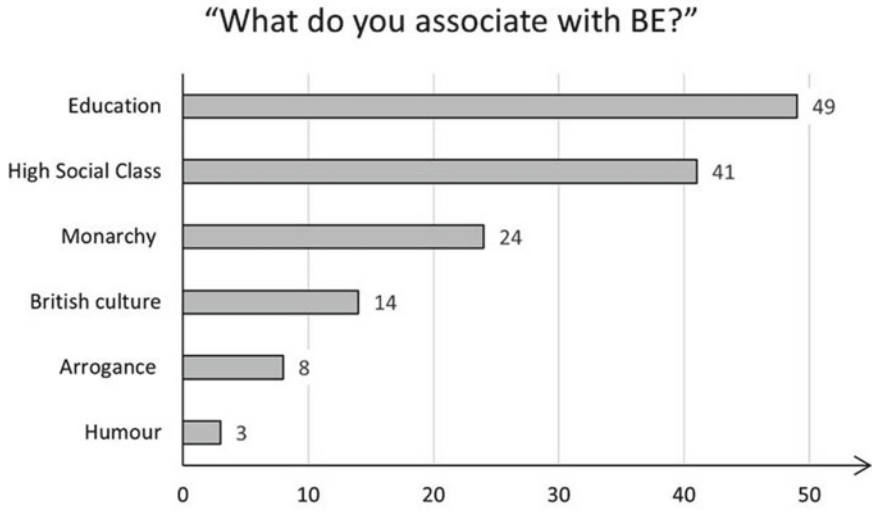


Fig. 6.3 Associations with British English

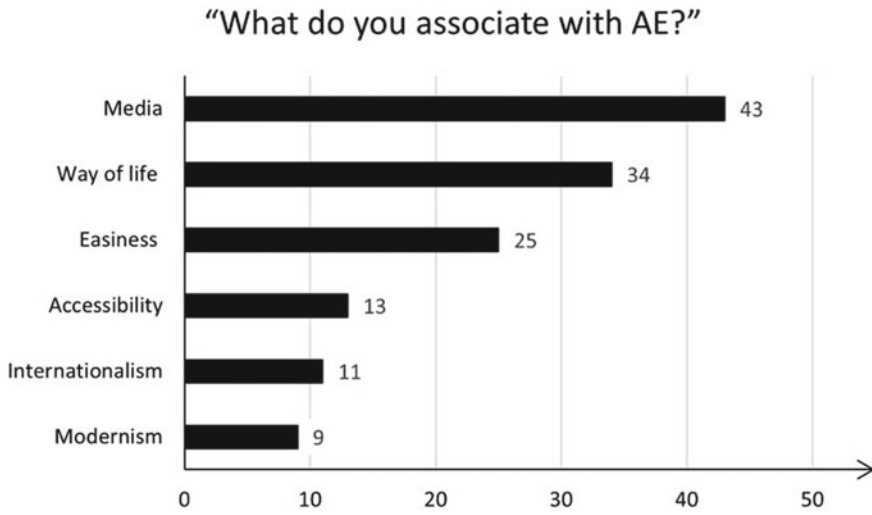


Fig. 6.4 Associations with American English

like “Queen”, “royal” and “noble”. Another category considered “British culture” (10.1%) in terms of national symbols such as “Harry Potter”, “Fish and Chips”, “BBC”, and “London”. More categories could be clustered on keywords describing “arrogance” (5.7%) and “humour” (2.2%).

In terms of AE as a model accent, most associations related to “Media” (31.9%), with “movies”, “TV” and “Hollywood” being the most prominent keywords. The

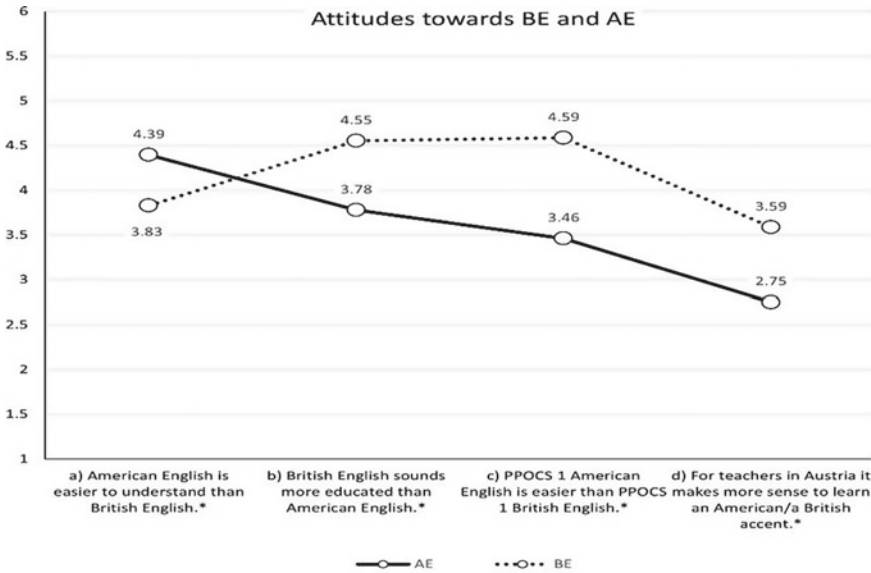


Fig. 6.5 Attitudes towards British English and American English

second most frequent category “Way of Life” (25.2%) summarized keywords such as “cool”, “casual”, relaxed”. The third category (18.5%) was linked to the (somewhat elusive) idea of “Easiness”. with keywords like “easy/easier”, “natural” and “common”. Further categories pooled associations around “Accessibility” (9.6%), “Internationalism” (8.1%) and “Modernism” (6.7%). A final effort to investigate the students’ reasons for choosing a particular model accent centred on differences in attitude regarding British English and American English.

To this end, participants were asked to respond to statements, again on a six-part rating scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Figure 6.5 shows a summary of the responses as a line graph.

First, there was general agreement among participants that “American English is easier to understand than British English”. It could be observed that AE participants advocated this opinion to a greater extent than BE respondents ( $M_{AE} = 4.39$ ;  $M_{BE} = 3.88$ ). The majority of participants also agreed to the statement “British English sounds more educated than American English”, BE respondents more so than AE respondents ( $M_{BE} = 4.55$ ;  $M_{AE} = 3.78$ ). The next item asked participants whether “PPOCS 1 American English is easier than PPOCS 1 British English”. Only BE respondents tended towards this view ( $M_{BE} = 4.59$ ), whereas AE responses were close to the scale means 3 ( $M_{AE} = 3.56$ ). A final item addressed the issue of employability: “For teachers in Austria it makes more sense to learn an American / a British accent”. Overall, approval rates for this item were average at best. BE respondents championed the relevance of the British accent to a greater extent ( $M_{BE} = 3.59$ ) than



AE respondents favoured the American accent ( $M_{AE} = 2.75$ ). All four items outlined here displayed significant differences.

### *Default Option*

A further objective of the survey was to identify if there is a standard or default pronunciation model in the perspective of students. When asked whether students who were uncertain about their pronunciation model would tend towards BE or AE, a clear majority (77.1%) respondents maintained that undecided students would be inclined to opt for AE. Thus, there is a clear indication that AE is perceived as the default model accent for PPOCS 1.

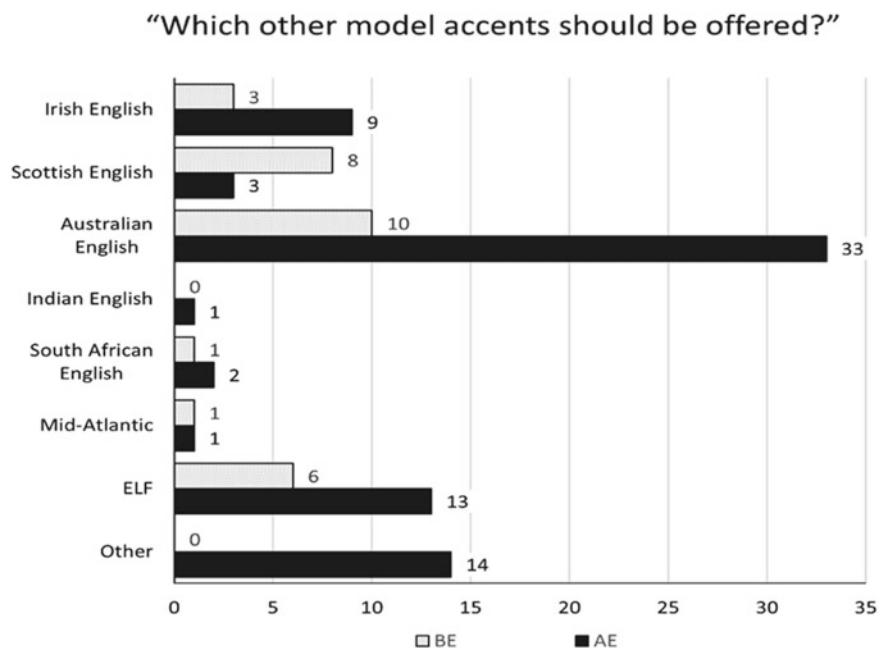
### *Other Pronunciation Models*

The survey also attempted to investigate students' acceptance of pronunciation models that were not geared towards BE or AE. After eliciting students' general interest in other pronunciation models, they were asked to specify their preference from a set of given accents. The results are shown in Fig. 6.6.

It emerged that a clear majority would be interested in the Australian accent (41%), followed by ELF (18.1%) and Irish English (11.4%). Figure 6.6 also shows that AE participants were generally more open to other accents than their BE colleagues. A final note on ELF: With respect to students' knowledge and interest in ELF (a definition was not given), responses demonstrated that 36.2% did not know what ELF is, 34.3% took an interest in "learning ELF", while 8.6% were not interested.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study convincingly show that most of the university students participating in this project quickly and effortlessly decided on whether to opt for a British English or American English pronunciation class. In fact, only a handful of all the participants stated that the decision was very difficult. This also coincides with many informal observations we have made in PPOCS 1 where only very few students express doubts about their choice. Since PPOCS 1 is commonly taken in their 3rd or 4th semester, it can be assumed that the students are already familiar with the requirements of the curriculum, and they have had plenty of time to ponder over this decision. On the other hand, it could also mean that they did not need to make a decision at all since they have always felt an inkling of what their model accent should be. This observation is further substantiated when analysing the responses to the statement: "I think I already sound more American" (for AE) and "I think I



**Fig. 6.6** Other pronunciation models

already sound more British” (for BE) respectively: 85.5% of the AE learners and 72.4% of the BE learners agreed. Clearly, most of the students acknowledged that their past experience with the accent has already been manifested in their accent.

When considering the main reasons why the students choose a particular model accent, it is evident that media exposure plays a decisive role. Among those students who opted for American English, a staggering 97.4% claimed that American movies and TV series affected their decision-making. Although only half of the students enrolled in the BE course said the same about British movies, this aspect still ranked among the top four criteria. Taken together, however, the influence of the media is quite remarkable. Clearly, the advancement of streaming technology, which is dominated by American English, has left its imprint on the learners’ pronunciation. This observation has also been made in other European countries, in particular in Sweden (e.g., Axelsson 2002) and Norway (Rindal 2015).

Our data also shows that geographical proximity to the country where the target language is spoken as an L1 is still an important factor. While 62.1% of the BE students have already spent time in the UK, this figure is considerably lower within the AE group (30.3%). The most likely explanation for this relates to the socio-economic background of the students. A stay in the US—whether it be private or educational—is certainly more costly than one in the UK. However, when looking into the future and career prospects, the answers regarding a planned stay abroad are more similar across both groups, with 19.7% of the AE students and 31% of the

BE students claiming that they would like to live and work in the US/UK when they are finished with their studies. This finding evidently indicates a very high degree of identification with the country where the accent is spoken as the first language.

Another interesting result concerns the experience of our students with their chosen accent at school. While 72.4% of the BE students claimed that their teachers at school spoke with a British accent, only 47.4% of the AE learners acknowledged the effect their teachers' American accent had on their decision. To a great extent, this confirms earlier findings in Austrian educational settings. Already in 1997, Dalton et al. found that PPOCS 1 students preferred British English, which they attributed to the traditional preferences and models taught in Austrian schools. As far as Austrian EFL school coursebooks are concerned, Hasenberger (2012) in his analysis found that the materials he analysed were based on British English. The preponderance of British English as the language of education in Austrian schools is further illustrated by answers our students gave concerning the question whether it makes more sense for a teacher in Austria to speak with a British or American accent. Again, the answer was British English rather than American English. Evidently, there is still a strong belief among Austrian learners of English that the language of instruction should be British English.

A further observation worth commenting on concerns the ease or difficulty of learning the chosen accent. 73.7% of the AE students subscribed to the statement that "American English is easier to learn" whereas this figure was considerably lower at 13.8% for the BE students claiming that British English is easier to learn. This finding confirms previous research according to which for European learners, American English pronunciation seems to be easier to acquire than British English (e.g., Mompean 2004). Similar results were found by Rindal's (2015) in her study of Norwegian learners' pronunciation. In fact, she found that the most common motivation of her learners to choose American English was that this accent felt easier. In order to delineate our participants' understanding of "easier", they were asked to comment on two additional statements. The first sought to elicit which one of the two varieties is easier to understand and the second focused on which one of the two is easier to learn. Our data show that both groups asserted that American English is both easier to understand and also easier to learn in the offered pronunciation classes.

In the qualitative part of this study, the participants were asked to provide key words they associated with the two accents. Again, the analysis of the data largely confirms previous studies in the field. In this respect, the semantic fields of education, social status (high social class and monarchy) ranked highest for British English. For American English, however, the top scores were media, way of life, easiness as well as accessibility and internationalism. To a great extent, this finding is consistent with results of a plethora of attitudinal studies conducted in various countries like Denmark (Ladegaard and Sachdev 2006), Finland (Hartikainen 2000), Spain (Carrie 2017; Mompean 2004), Sweden (Alftberg 2009), Norway (Rindal 2015), or Austria (Dalton-Puffer et al. 1997).

What this project has also revealed is that the default option for those students who are undecided today is American English. This can also be seen in the historical development of the number of courses offered for BE and AE at the Department of

English and American Studies in Vienna. When we both started teaching there at the turn of the twenty-first century, the department offered six sections of British English and only three sections of American English. About 10 years later, 4 parallel courses in BE and 4 courses in AE were on offer. Tables have turned and in the summer semester 2021, there are more American English courses offered than BE courses.

By and large, these findings support previous research that despite a trend towards AE, the students still insist on learning a native-speaker accent rather than ELF which is not considered a viable alternative to native-speaker models.

## **Pedagogical Implications of the Findings**

The question which model accent university students of English aim for has major implications for teaching and learning. Perhaps the main finding of this study in this respect is that most of the students have a very clear idea what their model accent should be, namely a native-speaker variety. The long-standing tradition of British English as the most popular model accent in Europe is currently being challenged by American English. This observation parallels findings throughout Europe advocating that British English remains the variety of English which school teachers claim to use, while American English seems to be the preferred option of an increasing number of learners. This means that while most practising teachers in European EFL classrooms aim at a British accent, their learners are increasingly socialised in American English through TV and movies. Clearly, the influence of media exposure outside class on the choice of accent outweighs the experience in class. This leads to a clear discrepancy between what is taught in class and what is learned outside class. EFL pedagogy will have to grapple with the consequences in terms of teacher education but also materials design. Teachers need to be made aware of this trend and also come to terms with the fact that their students' accent may not be the accent they themselves learned at university.

## **Conclusion**

The present study set out to explore how and why Vienna University students of English decide on a particular model accent for their pronunciation course. To this end, a mixed-methods approach combining yes/no-questions with Likert-type statements and word associations was adopted. The findings have shown that most of the learners found the decision between British English and American English quick and effortless. The main reasons for their choice were related to media exposure (in particular TV shows and movies) but also their own personal learning history. In this respect their teachers at school as well as their own evaluation of their foreign accent played a major role. Participants who were initially undecided opted for American English, a variety which clearly seems to be increasing in popularity. Owing to the

dominance of American English in popular media we have found that the most prestigious accent (British English) is no longer the most desired model accent (American English). If the university offered varieties other than British English and American English, the students would be interested in learning Australian English or English as a Lingua Franca.

Since the reasons for choosing a model accent are manifold, dynamic and ultimately very personal, this study can only provide a snapshot of what happens in the mind of adult EFL learners. Nevertheless, we hope that the findings can encourage reflection about and consideration of role of model accents in the EFL classrooms.

Naturally, the findings presented here have to be seen in the light of their limitations. Perhaps the most crucial one concerns the specific L2 learning context, namely highly motivated university students of English. This entails that the findings are not generalisable to any other group of learners. Further research in Austria but also in other European countries would aid the interpretation of the data presented here. Another limitation concerns the fact that the focus of the project is on BE and AE since these are the only two options available to the participants. It would be interesting to find out if a wider range of model accents offered to the students—perhaps including Australian English or ELF—would indeed meet with the expected demand on the side of the students. These potential limitations clearly make room for further discussion and scientific research to improve our understanding of the role of a model accent in pronunciation teaching. In particular, the tendency towards a greater demand for American English triggered by pop-culture and the use of the internet inside but also outside class certainly merits further examination. Hence further research could explore if this shift is currently also taking place in other European countries. In addition, it will have to be seen whether this trend will also eventually find its way into European EFL coursebooks and teacher training programmes.

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# Chapter 7

## How Discourses Shape Teacher Identity: Evidence from EFL Teachers in Spain



Lee McCallum 

**Abstract** The study of an English language teacher's identity represents a complex construct that is influenced by various contextual factors and shaped by the exposure and use of ideological discourses. However, research on English teacher identity has largely focussed on examining the identities of Non-Native Speaker (NNS) teachers of English or native teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) in English speaking countries such as the USA, Australia and Canada with little attention paid to the identities of native expatriate teachers living in foreign countries. The present study addresses this gap by examining the professional identities of native expatriate teachers who work at private language schools in northern Spain. The study draws on Gee's (2011) approach to discourse analysis by placing a central focus on how language use helps us understand how teachers view themselves, those around them and their teaching practices. This study used the narrative teacher stories of three teachers to reveal how discourses shaped their identities. Analysis revealed their struggles in entering the profession, their daily responsibilities and their views on the longevity of English Language Teaching (ELT) as a permanent career. The study concludes by discussing findings for the implications of ELT in northern Spain.

**Keywords** Teacher identity · ELT · Spain · Discourse analysis

### Introduction

The study of English language teacher identity continues to receive attention, most notably in the form of various published works including TESOL Quarterly's (1997) special issue on language identity, dedicated edited book length collections on identity (e.g., Barkhuizen 2017; Cheung et al. 2014; Howarth and Craig 2016; Yazan and Lindahl 2010) and critically-oriented studies (Vitanova 2016). Day (2011, p. 48) defines identity as: "The way we make sense of ourselves and the image of ourselves

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that we present to others”, where this identity and its continuous creation helps teachers understand ‘how to be’, ‘how to act’ and ‘how to understand’ their work and role in society (Sachs 2005). Sachs (2005) also highlights how teachers’ professional identities are attributes that are imposed upon teachers from within themselves, and by those connected to the profession.

One of the reasons for sustained interest in the study of English language teacher identity is that it has great importance for understanding the ELT profession as well as acting as a resource that teachers use to explain their professional selves in relation to others and other professions (Maclure 1993; Sachs 2001). The study of this identity can also help understand other features of the profession including teachers’ professional development and incentives for following certain teaching paths (Johnston et al. 2004; Tsui 2007).

Alongside its importance, identity has been recognized as complex. Norton (2000), like Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), views identity through a poststructuralist lens as being multiple, changing and a site of struggle. The socio-political and socio-cultural contexts that teachers work under have a significant influence on the identities they adopt, identities they are assigned by others and how these identities compete against each other (Johnston et al. 2004). Previous ELT teacher identity research has attempted to illuminate this struggle by focussing on the identities of Non-Native Speaker (NNS<sup>1</sup>) teachers in different countries including Sri Lanka and Poland (Johnston 1997; Hayes 2005). However, two observations can be made within these previous studies. First, most studies have adopted a perception of identity that is focussed on narrating teacher stories through experience-based analysis where the central focus is on the experiences teachers discuss. Secondly, this focus has meant that the role of discourse or language has largely been overlooked in these previous studies. In keeping with views of language acting as a key cornerstone of unravelling the complexity of identity, there is, therefore, a need to look at how the language teachers use facilitates an understanding of the events they discuss and the identities they adopt.

Whilst the approaches adopted above may limit understandings of identity, our understanding of identity is also limited given the fact there has been little attention paid to cases of native speaker (NS) expatriate EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers who work in foreign countries. This is perhaps surprising given Johnston’s (1999) acknowledgement that the NS expatriate EFL teacher is a ‘post-modern paladin’ who experiences conflict because, on the one hand, they are seen as eager to share their knowledge but, on the other hand, are also equally seen as restless travellers who make a quick impact on a country before seeking adventures elsewhere. This image means their work is seen as temporary and that entry and exit into ELT is, as Maley (1992) notes, ‘permeable’. Lorimer and Schulte (2012) also highlight how the NS image is further deteriorated by young graduates from

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<sup>1</sup> There is an appreciation that the terms native and non-native speaker are widely contested as value-laden terms in the literature (e.g., Dewaele, 2018) however they remain popular with scholars when distinguishing between the two groups of professionals with most of the studies cited here using these terms.

English-speaking countries who are willing to work long hours for low pay and little job security.

Given this literature gap, the present study investigates NS teacher identity and aims to identify and explore the competing, dominant and underlying discourses that shape teachers' identities. The study illuminates NS teachers' identities in Spanish language academies at a time when the Spanish economic climate is challenging, unemployment rates are high and the ELT industry seeks to provide instruction for a variety of students under these constraints.

The sections that follow explore the literature base on which this study is based, explain the methodological approach of the study, its key findings and implications for its context.

## Literature Review

### *Relationships Between Teacher Identity, Life Stories and Discourses*

This study places value on employing narrative teacher stories as a way of unearthing how identity manifests itself through the experiences teachers have had and may continue to have in the present and future. The study also sees language as playing an integral part in telling these stories but also explores how the language used by the teachers shapes their identities by shedding light on the competing discourses that produce, transform, reinforce and contest social meanings and social relations in their ongoing teacher identities. The literature review that follows unpacks these two factors further and looks at gaps in how they have been used in past research.

### *Uncovering Teacher Identity Through Teacher Life Stories*

Narrative life story research looks through a poststructuralist and postmodernist lens to value person-centred accounts that emphasize individual voices and favour multiple equal truths over one single objective truth (Bruner 1990; Polkinghorne 1988). Narrative research is not a unidimensional research tool, instead, a theoretical distinction is made between event-centred and experience-centred narratives, whereby events-centred work focuses on spoken past events and experience-centred work draws on life events and things the narrator has only heard about. Both approaches deal with individual representations of events and thoughts and feelings through which the narrative allows these representations external expression. Some key differences exist in making this distinction where experience-centred work assumes that these representations vary over time with a person capable of producing different stories at different times. In TESOL/ELT research, most narrative teacher

stories have focussed on experience-centred narratives with individual teacher journeys that focus on the inquiry (e.g., Johnston 1997; 1999; Hayes 2005; Kocabaş-Gedik and Ortaçtepe 2021, Tsui 2007; Yuwono and Harbon 2010). The construction of an experience-based narrative story can focus on past, present and future modalities, however, the researcher is allowed to flexibly present the story in themes rather than points in time with these themes more spread out across interviews than those found in events-based narratives. This is also supported by Watson (2007) who notes that not all narrative stories fit into neat beginning, middle and end expected patterns but instead take a number of possible formats and dimensions.

In taking such an approach to experience-based stories, TESOL researchers draw on supporting narrative literature which presumes that narratives can help us understand the actions taken by teachers and students as well as uncover and present life experiences in 'relevant and meaningful ways' (Bruner 1990; Connelly and Clandinin 1990). In uncovering teachers' identities, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and Watson (2007) view telling stories through a narrative as a way of uncovering the multiple identities a teacher may exhibit. Søreide (2006) and Watson (2007) both point out that the expression of the multiple identities a teacher may have is uncovered through a teacher's narrative position. Watson (2007) equates telling stories to 'doing identity work'.

Several studies on NNS teacher identity have used narrative teacher stories to uncover aspects of teacher identity which can be multiple and change over time (e.g., Ben Said 2014; Riordan and Farr 2014; Yayli 2014; Zhang and Zhang 2014). Johnston's (1997, 1999) study of non-native and native teachers in Poland notes the multiplicity of teacher's identity with political, social and economic discourses coming together to show how teacher identity is partly governed by economic, political and social circumstances. In his analysis, Johnston (1997, 1999) notes that collectively their teacher stories lacked a sense of career or progression with many of the teachers unsure of their future plans or intentions to continue teaching.

Since Johnston's studies, there have been a plethora of NNS teacher identity studies focussing on the struggles of NNS teachers as they deal with different levels of discrimination compared to their NS counterparts (e.g., Alsop 2006; Hayes 2005; Yuwono and Harbon 2010). However, the number of studies on NS teacher identity stands in stark contrast with some scholars now interested in redressing this balance. Among the most recent NS teacher studies, Shi (2017) highlights how native speakers are also 'authorized' along the same discriminatory light as their non-native counterparts because they are viewed as 'forever foreign' in their host countries. Shi (2017) also highlights how the two native Canadian university lecturers in their study felt confused and disadvantaged because they adopted different takes on the 'Chinese way' of teaching. This issue of not being aware of and meeting expectations in their local contexts highlights the need for both native and non-native staff to work together to bridge gaps in understandings and approaches in the classroom so as to avoid the kinds of identity conflicts being experienced by these professionals.

In a more recent yet rare take on the issue of native speaker identity, Leung Ho-Cheong and Yip (2020) highlight how little is known about native teachers' identities or the lives they navigate through in foreign host countries. The review

above highlights the paucity of up-to-date literature surrounding the issue of native-speaker teacher identity whilst living and working in their host countries. The review now turns to consider how the language used in the stories teachers tell can be a vehicle for establishing and also restricting their identities.

### ***The Role of Language in Shaping and Understanding Teacher Identity***

Like the paucity of research into native speaker teacher identity, there is also a paucity of research into recognizing the role language plays in constructing and communicating teachers' identities. Martin (2018) is a novel study that illuminates this. In his study of U.S teachers, he emphasizes how language functions to construct teacher identities. In this sense, language is not merely a communication tool to communicate an identity or tell a narrative about teachers' life stories, but is instead a tool that facilitates or may even restrict the identities a teacher adopts or aligns with. In doing so, Martin (2018) directly applies Gee's (2011) views that language builds and destroys the reality that humans experience. Martin's (2018) work attempts to thematically present teacher identities whilst at the same time analyze the language behind how teachers present their identities.

The present study draws on the ideas expressed in Martin (2018) and uses several theoretical and practical cornerstones of Gee's (2011) approach to discourse analysis. Gee (2011) champions analyzing language in use on the understanding that language has been used to allow individuals to take on certain identities and show how these identities are affected by the building and sustaining of relationships between people internal and external to the identities we have.

The study is also informed by Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) principles of dialogism and heteroglossia in theorizing teachers' lives. The principles of dialogism and heteroglossia assume that discourses are seen as ideologically motivated, and they compete and dominate in dialogues or interactions between speakers and listeners. The principle of heteroglossia focuses on the belief that listeners and speakers are faced with multiple competing worldviews. Bakhtin (1981, 1986) notes that the use of these dialogues takes centre stage in creating meaning and, in the case of teachers, this meaning is the sense they make of their professional lives.

This struggle to create meaning is evident in the conflict teachers feel as the identity they claim for themselves, and the identity others assign to them come into contact. Alsup (2006) is an important example of how Bakhtin's heteroglossia appears with her teachers who show conflict between their professional and personal selves. Her teachers highlighted how their families' expectations and their social class played a key role in them becoming teachers and influenced if they viewed teaching as a worthy profession or not. These findings highlight how the multiple worldviews teachers are exposed to compete and how certain views dominate others in shaping teachers' paths.

## Research Questions

The present study, therefore, addresses the following research questions:

1. What discourses do EFL teachers draw on in constructing their identities?
2. How do these discourses contribute to the notion that identities are multiple, conflicting and dominant in an EFL teacher's life story narrative?

## Methodology

### *English Language Teaching in Spain*

Spain has traditionally represented a European country that attracts native speakers of English who seek flexible employment and a balanced lifestyle (Griffith 2012). However, Spain has contributed to the ELT industry being seen as a 'non-profession' as it attracts young graduates with no or little teaching experience who see ELT as a short-term financially viable option that allows them to travel (Griffith, 2012). Johnston (1997, 1999) notes that in Poland, a context sharing similar economic and social characteristics to Spain, some employers further contribute to this low-level status by offering part-time contracts with long hours, low salaries and few employment benefits. In addition to this, Spain has poor English language proficiency rates, especially when compared to neighbouring Portugal (Comparing countries' English language proficiency, 2018). These circumstances take on increased significance when the country's high unemployment rate is considered because proficiency in a second language could be a potentially key skill sought by employers and prospective employees (Kinglesey 2011).

Despite this, Spain has extensive British Council teaching and training centres and independent privately-owned language schools which compete with the British Council (Griffith 2012). However, to an extent, these private schools fill a market and instructional gap because as Reichelt (2006) highlights some universities do not provide English language instruction or support to students studying non-language majors. These schools are often British Council accredited and function as Cambridge English examination centres. Officially, they offer recognized language proficiency exams in general and Business English, and English for university study abroad (Griffith 2012). Spain also offers professional development opportunities with TESOL Spain holding the biggest events in the country (TESOL Spain Convention 2018).

### *Research Participants*

I chose teachers to participate in the study through convenience sampling because it allowed me to choose individuals who were readily available and willing to take part

in the study (Cohen et al. 2011). This was important for study feasibility because many teachers were already on a summer holiday in mid-June when the study began. The chosen teachers were former colleagues of mine or teachers who my former colleagues believed would have insightful stories to tell. Three teachers agreed to take part in the study. They worked in three different language schools in two different regions of northern Spain. Teachers were given a pseudonym and the names of places they referred to were altered to ensure that the teachers and the schools they discuss could not be identified. The information in Sections “Peter”, “Jane” and “Pamela” explains each teacher’s teaching experience and qualifications. Their qualification range was quite narrow, in that, all had a bachelor’s degree from a UK university as well as a recognized TEFL qualification. Apart from Jane, all had a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) and in Peter’s case, he also held a DELTA (Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults). The former certificate was seen as a TEFL industry benchmark that employers require for most jobs, whilst the latter is a more advanced qualification that prepares teachers to deal with administrative aspects of teaching and to undertake managerial positions such as Director of Studies (DOS) roles or senior teaching positions involving leadership responsibilities.

### **Peter**

Peter was the most experienced of the teachers with more than twenty years of teaching experience. Peter had held teaching and managerial posts in France and the UK at a range of different institutions. In addition to his experience, Peter was also most qualified by holding both a Cambridge CELTA and a DELTA as well as a Bachelor’s degree in a natural science subject. Unlike the other teachers, Peter had never taught very young learners and most of his teaching was with learners aged ten or above.

### **Jane**

Jane was the DOS at the medium to large-sized private language school that Peter worked at. At the time of the interview, she had held the DOS position for almost as long as she had been teaching (more than ten years) having been quickly promoted after her first year at the school. She was generally responsible for all teaching-related administration but also taught classes in ‘Baby English’ (English for children aged from six months) as well as general and exam preparation classes to adults, teenagers and young learners of primary school age (from age 5 to 12). Unlike the other teachers, she had completed an online TEFL course and a DOS preparation course at International House Barcelona.

## **Pamela**

Pamela had been teaching for more than six years at the time of interview with most of this experience gained at one language school. She had recently left this school to take up a teaching position in a small town in the same region of Spain. Pamela has a CELTA and had recently gained qualified examiner status for the Cambridge English exams at the time of interview. These exams required her to examine mostly children but also a number of teenagers and adults hoping to gain official certifications at CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) B1–B2 proficiency levels so they could apply for jobs, enrol at more prestigious schools or gain entry to university.

### ***Capturing the Teacher Stories in Interviews***

Before conducting interviews in Spain, I conducted a pilot interview with a native speaker teacher who had previously taught in Spain to ensure questions were clear and logically sequenced. This piloting helped shape a coherent narrative whilst ensuring the data collected were trustworthy (Baker 1994). After piloting, I changed some of the questions to clear up any misunderstandings and encourage teachers to speak as freely as possible.

The narrative stories were constructed with a semi-structured interview schedule which featured questions such as: “How did you become involved in teaching English?” (Interview 1: Peter) as well as questions that sought clarification: “What do you mean by the book?” (Interview 3: Pamela) and elaboration: “Why do you think it’s more professional now?” (Interview 2: Jane). Since narratives operate as a way of seeing often contradictory and different layers of meaning, the narratives were created in a cyclical manner with teachers referring to previous experiences which helped shape the present they were working in or the future they envisaged (Andrews et al. 2008).

### ***Analyzing the Teacher Stories: Use of Gee’s (2011) Toolbox***

A key aim of the study was to examine discourse and its role in identity however before an analysis of language took place, the narratives were analyzed to identify themes that could be used to structure the narrative retelling and subsequent language analysis. Narratives were firstly analyzed by following the ‘identity building tool’ from Gee (2011). Following how Martin (2018) applied this tool, my analysis started with a detailed reading of the transcripts to note patterns in each narrative and then this was repeated across narratives to identify common themes in all narratives. These themes were then analyzed to separate broader themes into sub-themes. For example,

the common theme of ‘restrictions placed on teaching’ (see Section “[Restrictions on Teaching: Current and Past Experiences](#)”), was separated into external and internal influences that altered the type of teaching teachers wanted to do.

However, there were numerous rich instances where the teachers share different experiences, decisions and reflections and these were also selected to highlight the richness and uniqueness of each teacher’s identity. This cyclical analysis helped, as Ricoeur (1991) emphasizes, bring together understandings between the researcher and the participants as well as ensure coherent narratives are presented in a way that readers can resonate with.

In analyzing the language in the narrative interviews, I used several tools outlined in Gee’s (2011) toolbox. These tools allowed me to focus on particular language items/structures whilst at the same time, their combined use allowed me to undertake a detailed examination of the language being used to construct the narratives and subsequently the identities being communicated by the teachers. I used (1): The ‘Vocabulary’ tool, (2): The ‘Why This Way and Not That Way’ tool and (3): The ‘Significance Building’ tool. The description and application of these tools is discussed in the next section.

### **The Vocabulary Tool**

Gee’s (2011) vocabulary tool encourages analysts to look closely at the kinds of words being used and to think about how these words function to achieve the purpose of communication. I used this advice from Gee (2011) and approached the analysis of language in the narratives by asking myself three questions whilst reading: (1) What words were frequently or infrequently being used? (2) what words were missing and (3) How does the presence or absence of particular types of words affect the communication/presentation of the stories and identities that teachers attempt to tell?

### **The Way This Way and not that Way Tool**

With this tool, Gee (2011) encourages analysts to question why the speaker uses particular grammatical structures in the way(s) they do and why these particular structures and not others. I applied this tool by looking at the use of tenses and particular grammatical constructions and how these were used in the narratives to give a sense of past, present and future self.

### **The Significance Building Tool**

Gee (2011) encourages analysts to consider how a speaker’s choice of vocabulary and grammar might be being used to build up or lessen the significance of certain things and not others. I applied this advice when looking at the actual events that teachers



narrated and analyzed how particular evaluative words emphasized or downplayed particular experiences and how this might impact on their identity construction.

### ***Recognizing Researcher Positionality and Maximizing Reliability and Validity***

Narrative research aligns closely with the qualitative research principles of validity and dependability (Hayes 2005; Loh 2013). In narratives, dependability of the data centres on the care taken throughout the research whereas validity concerns the strength of the data analysis, the trustworthiness of the data and its accessibility (Polkinghorne 1988).

However, Polkinghorne (1988) has strongly encouraged dialogue between researchers to create specific quality criteria for narrative research. This dialogue has led to narrative researchers emphasizing the principles of verisimilitude, access, honesty, authenticity and transferability. Verisimilitude is where the narrative must be believable where readers experience congruence with their own similar experiences and so they understand the decisions the narrator made and the emotions they felt (Loh 2013). Verisimilitude was maximized in this study by sharing contextual details such as participants' teaching experience and class demographics. Authenticity and transferability are connected to verisimilitude and mean that enough details must be provided so readers are convinced that the stories were obtained in a serious and honest manner. Authenticity is linked to transferability whereby these details allow readers to make parallels with their own teaching contexts and experiences (Webster and Mertova 2007). Access is the availability of the data including the narrative transcripts and accompanying notes to the research participants. Honesty is also stressed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who deem the true mark of validity as the checking of what was said by the participants themselves and that this 'member checking' affords the researcher an extra opportunity to clarify meaning and ensure their interpretation is accurate (Fielding and Fielding 1986). In adhering to these principles, I sent the transcripts to the teachers after the narratives were recorded and they were asked to suggest changes before the data analysis started. Teachers were also sent a final copy of the study.

These checks ensured that, as the researcher, my interpretation of the narratives was not overly subjective given that I play a role in what stories are told and how they are told. Taking a reflexive approach to the research meant that at every stage interpretations were checked by the teachers themselves (Hayes 2005; Tedder 2013).

## Findings and Discussion

Several themes emerged as important to teachers' past, present and future identities, and lives as EFL teachers in a foreign country. These themes were broadly divided into topics covering their entry, progression and future in ELT, their current and past teaching experiences, their professional development and how their views on professionalism were influenced by their previous employment experiences. Teachers drew on economic, political and social discourses in their narratives. Economic discourse was a dominant driver in shaping their teaching and their entry into, continuation and exit from the field. Professional and restrictive discourse also dominated with teachers believing the pressures from official organizations such as the UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2018) made teaching bureaucratic. School management and Spain's political stance on second language learning also featured with the teaching context heavily driven by the need for students to pass exams. These discourses competed with some teachers' personal interests as they remained in their positions because of the lifestyle the area could give them, whilst other teachers felt that how they taught, where they worked and their career choices were influenced by their future plans and past experiences as teachers or students.

### *Entering, Moving Around and Leaving ELT*

The teachers became involved in ELT because they wanted to travel (Peter) or had an interest in languages (Peter) or wanted to leave the UK (Jane), however, for Pamela her decision to teach abroad was deeply personal.

#### **Entry into TEFL**

Pamela strongly identified herself as a native speaker having been born and raised in London to Spanish parents. However, Pamela felt a strong connection to Spain which led to her teaching there. She expressed the strongest belief that teaching was vocational because she wanted to help people living in her parents' home country:

Pamela: Ok well, at uni I studied Hispanic studies and French so for that I had to do a year abroad in one of the countries and I chose Spain and I really loved it. So, when I finished my degree I thought what job could I do in Spain that you know where I could use my skills like my English skills so I did a CELTA course... It was more because I wanted to use something that I had which was a native English speaker and that I could work in Spain which has been my dream to live here and also my parents are originally from there so it was like going back to my roots seeing something was calling me here. ...I wasn't entirely sure of leaving London yet because I was 23 but I knew that I had to I knew that eventually I had to leave and live in Spain because that was my dream really.

Pamela's repeated use of 'I' highlights the personal nature of the decisions she has made. The repeated use of 'I' highlights that these decisions are made by her with

the use of ‘my’ also reinforces the personal nature of her decisions and the strength of her own feelings which drive her choices.

Peter’s narrative highlights first his decision to enter ELT as he was interested in languages and secondly he wanted to travel. Peter explains clearly through his repeated fronting of “I was interested in languages” and “I decided two things: I was interested in languages and I wanted the opportunity to travel”. Peter also makes it clear in his use of “I” that his decisions are personal and made by him:

Peter: It was a decision I made in my early twenties and I was interested in languages and uh I’d followed a scientific degree course and so my background was in sciences but I decided two things: I was interested in languages and I wanted the opportunity to travel and that’s why I decided to take the eh CELTA in 1990.

Jane also noted her desire to travel but compared to Pamela and Peter, her desire to travel is more of a key factor and is also influenced by others. She is influenced by her Spanish boyfriend returning to Spain:

Jane: I wanted a way to leave the UK and so I heard about TEFL so I did an online TEFL course then I ended up getting a Spanish boyfriend who moved back to Spain and so then I decided to move with him and that’s how I started working in TEFL.

## Changing Positions

Pamela’s close personal connection to the area again becomes apparent when she discusses leaving a long-standing role and taking up a new position closer to her father’s village:

Pamela: For me it was I lived in S which is a beautiful city but from the on start it wasn’t where I saw myself living long term because I love the south of G I’m in love with it because when I was a child I was brought here in summer and I would play with people from my father’s village and so I had a kind of romantic notion of this area so that’s where my heart was but when I was 23 I thought well I need to get some experience so that’s why I went to S. So, after 5 years I thought right now it’s time for me to try another place preferably the south of G. Also, where I was the academy where I was, it was becoming so big so I felt that I don’t know how to describe it but things were it was like more business-oriented and I felt that made teaching a lot more serious than it needed to be, especially in TEFL, ok?

Pamela’s decision to change jobs was fuelled, like her decision to move to Spain, by the strong connection she feels to the area. Pamela shows that the professional decisions she makes have a close connection to her personal self in line with the decisions made by Alsop (2006)’s teachers who also became involved in teaching through family connections, expectations and commitments. However, Pamela shows that the business direction her school was taking was a secondary reason why she changed jobs. As the school became bigger and more serious, this conflicted with her preference for teaching to remain fun and interactive. When Pamela is asked to explain why she said “a lot more serious than it needed to be especially in TEFL” she realizes she sees TEFL as distinct from the public school system and how she as a teacher likes to keep classes light-hearted during exam preparation:

Pamela: Yeah because I think learning English as a foreign language in Spain is more of a either you've got to do it as an extracurricular activity for kids or you've got to get an exam, you've got to get a grade for your university in an exam...so I felt in each of these cases it wasn't like extremely serious ...it wasn't like a school school you know so because well maybe the way I see TEFL is it's seen as like you can have fun in the classroom and you're just trying to improve someone's English skills ok? If it's an exam class fair enough you've got to be a bit more serious but you can still have a bit of fun as well.

There is an interesting contrast in Pamela's narrative where she lists reasons for students needing English with her recognizing that students need the language for qualifications and university degrees but she contrasts this with the view that ELT is not that serious for her and many others.

There is also an interesting contrast to the use of 'I' from Pamela's decision-making earlier in her narrative when compared with how she describes English language teaching. She frequently uses 'you' to describe what she feels she is expected to do but she switches to 'I' to communicate how she views TEFL 'the way I see TEFL' but interestingly she brings in outside influence by her use of 'it's seen as' and 'you can have fun in the classroom' suggesting her views on ELT are influenced by how others might see the profession or lack of professionalism around the teaching.

To some extent, Peter's views and experiences differ from Pamela's. Peter's thoughts on moving from the UK highlight how attitudes to TEFL in the UK may have made him feel more appreciated abroad and that his work was more valuable to those in foreign countries. He mentions that he felt resistance when working alongside mainstream subject teachers in the UK. His narrative does, however, align somewhat with Pamela's because he found his UK peers looked down on what he was doing:

Peter: In the UK yes TEFL is viewed it has a very low...particularly among state school teachers whom I had dealings with when I was working at a school in the UK, a language school in the UK. We were providing classes to help maintain students, whose first language wasn't English and we were contracted to provide support for them to keep them in the mainstream classes... one of the schools, a girls school was very positive about what we did, the boys school I went because I was the DOS so I went to talk about setting up this programme with a teacher from the boys school and she made it perfectly clear that she thought that anyone involved in TEFL was dust beneath her feet.

Peter's use of 'perfectly clear' emphasizes the strong negative views held by the subject teachers in the UK. His use of 'anyone' also stresses that all TEFL teachers were being treated in the same disapproving manner by his colleagues, irrespective of their efforts. Both Pamela and Peter's comments illuminate how their experiences and identities are influenced by how others see them, and at least in Pamela's case, the views of outsiders creep into her views on how she teaches and her philosophy underpinning it.

## Leaving ELT

When asked if she would leave ELT, Pamela explains that she enjoys teaching but would like to pursue her love for dancing even though she feels unable to do so:

Interviewer: Ok, but what stops you from doing what you want to do?

Pamela: Well, dancing doesn't really earn you money unless you are fantastic at it and for me I'm ok at it I wouldn't say brilliant so yeah but I'm really interested in how that's another form of expressing yourself...you know if I could have another turn from a young age I would say right mum get me into flamenco course and singing because you know if I had developed it from a young age maybe I wouldn't be shy about it now and I would have pursued it as a career.

Pamela's regret is clear with her repeated use of the conditional 'if' and 'I would have' signalling her regret at not pursuing a passion of hers earlier. It is here in this passage that we see financial discourse constraining Pamela's decision-making.

Pamela had similar reasons to Hayes' (2005) teachers in Sri Lanka for becoming involved in ELT in that teaching was not their first career choice. Equally like Yuwono and Harbon (2010), Pamela was the only one whose personal and professional selves clashed strongly regarding her commitment, entry, movement and exit in ELT. Pamela's narrative clearly shows how her choice of discourse makes her realize the different feelings she has regarding her philosophy of TEFL.

## *Restrictions on Teaching: Current and Past Experiences*

Jane believed her teaching was dominated by focussing on Cambridge English examinations. When Jane was asked about restrictions on her teaching, she cited student and school pressure to focus on exam preparation as a key driver in shaping her teaching and role as DOS:

Jane: Restricted in a sense that now because of the demands of the students, mostly about the exams with teenagers and adults and that wouldn't be something that would be my preference. I'd rather, if it were up to me, to just teach them English not just ticking boxes to pass an exam but I understand why we need to do that and that's another problem that we have with the teachers maybe the teachers don't see it as much but like you do do what students want because they are the ones coming through the door and paying the money that's what you have to give them you know we've experimented with not giving them what they want giving them what they need and you know we get complaints.

Jane's use of 'that wouldn't be something that would be my preference' and 'if it were up to me' show that what she teaches is largely predetermined by school management and what students want as opposed to what she feels they need. Jane accepts the situation because the students are paying, and the school prospers financially. However, we also see Jane's conflict with her own beliefs and those of management, and the fact that she aligns with management in stating 'we've experimented' and 'we get complaints', indicating that part of her identifies with her school on a business level.

Jane elaborated on her role and discussed how it was also influenced by trying to balance teacher demands, management expectations and the declining economic climate in Spain:

Jane: I guess it happens in lots of industries, lots of workplaces that negativity spreads more than positivity... so for example a low point would be that at the moment we're sort of suffering with a dip so we had a peak where we had lots of students lots of teachers I think it was a thing nationwide you know when the B1 became necessary then B2 became necessary there was a massive influx of students trying to get those levels now it's kind of plateaued...so...the business doesn't have as much money so you can't pay people money you haven't got and that's what's difficult making people understand from a business point of view why things can't be as rosy as they would like them to be.

It is interesting to note that we see a different identity here in the sections where Jane discusses restrictions on teaching and when she describes her managerial role. In contrast to the clear personal decisions, she made in joining ELT, indicated often through the use of the first person pronoun 'I', she shows complex identities here by using multiple functions of 'you' and 'we' when discussing the relationships between herself, the teachers and school owners. The use of the general 'you' indicates that she adopts a more distant position but her use of 'we' also indicates that she recognizes that she is part of the management group making decisions that impact on teachers and students.

Jane highlights how her role balances top-down government decisions in terms of needing certain proficiency levels for study and job opportunities and how these decisions affect student enrolment and ultimately the salaries the school can offer teachers. Jane feels conflicted trying to balance these interests because she wants to support teachers but sees how the school management operates with a business mindset:

Jane: ... You're very much the middle man if you having been a teacher yourself and having been in the classroom you understand the pains of the teachers but you also see the business side and that's one of the hardest things about being a DOS because you're trying to balance the two the two sides.

Jane was not alone in experiencing restrictions. External restrictions were also felt by Peter who referred to the type of English he teaches, and he remembers how his Spanish student attempted to use the Irish English she had learnt whilst studying there:

Peter: ...She speaks English she's 15 and she speaks English like a girl who's spent a year in Ireland. She came up with something a word I mean it's Hibernio-English in Irish I mean I spent a lot of my childhood in Ireland but I had never heard this expression 'grind'. A grind is a private tutor and she said for this essay she was doing about the best ways to learn a language... one solution is to have a grind and I said Carmen what in the name of god is that? And she said oh don't you know this word grind? I'm thinking here I am with my Irish passport and I didn't know what she was talking about and I thought to myself would that be acceptable in a Cambridge exam? No it wouldn't British English yes American English yes Irish English no way.

Peter's narrative highlights the dominance of testing bodies in promoting standard varieties of English that are spoken in politically powerful countries which is akin to

linguistic imperialism where certain languages are favoured over others (Phillipson 1997). In this case, Peter feels standard British or American English is promoted, but not others like Irish English. Peter's observation of this is also steeped in his social background because he grew up in Ireland where he was exposed to standard English and local versions and so he resonates with perfectly correct forms of communication that are not supported in his teaching duties.

Pamela provides interesting insight into how her teaching approach has changed as she has gained experience. She notes a strong sense of obligation to do things 'by the book' and work through a prescribed syllabus:

Pamela: By the book would be like following the course book the centre gave us and making sure I gave them lots of homework the adults students this is what I'm referring to and you know if we had to cover a page I would make sure we did all of it because I thought that was I wanted to make sure they were getting all aspects in but as I went through the years I realized that not everything is relevant you can pick and choose and I became much more flexible much more open and the classes became more about talking speaking than anything else.

Pamela's further insights into her evolving teacher identity and general approach to teaching provides us with an interesting contrast to the restrictions felt by Peter and Jane because she feels more aware of providing balanced lessons in classes where there is a clear exam-driven focus:

Pamela: Even when I did exam groups I always tried to make it you know they knew they had to do the homework and we had to work but at the same time I didn't want them to think well this is the be all and end all of life you know? I wanted them to have perspective and laugh about it as well.

Like Jane's conflict with management, Pamela shows a clash here between understanding what is expected of her: 'we had to work' but also recognizes the strength of her own beliefs about how language teaching should be: 'I wanted them to have perspective and laugh about it as well'.

Jane and Peter's narratives show how their exposure to multiple discourses or worldviews impact on their daily teaching. Their narratives highlight the nature of Bakhtin's heteroglossia whereby the different economic, managerial and political stances come into contact, and in this case, institutional and external discourses dominate over Jane and Peter's personal beliefs about what and how to teach (Duff and Uchida 1997). Whilst Johnston's (1997) teachers in Poland expressed many 'aporias' or contradictions about Cambridge English exams, for teachers here in Spain, the discourse was at times negative.

## ***Professionalism***

Pamela's views on professionalism put students at the front of doing her job and doing it well. She places less importance on dress code and personal appearance:

Pamela: Right being professional to me is about giving you know all you can to your students and doing whatever you can to make sure you know they're getting the most out of their class that's one thing because that's you know why you're there really. These are more important than maybe how you dress than maybe if you brush your hair or not, these are the main things for me.

These views on professionalization and professionalism highlight their conflict because on one hand, they value some aspects of other established professions whilst expressing dissatisfaction with other aspects such as administrative duties and the prescriptive exam content they teach. This supports Burbules and Densmore (1991) and Vu (2016)'s beliefs that teaching will never be a true profession because it lacks the social and political group unity of all its members unlike established professions like medicine and law. It also experiences conflict because of the inclusion of young NS teachers in TEFL who accept below-par working conditions to suit their agendas further impedes TEFL's efforts to professionalize (Lorimer and Schulte 2012).

When Peter discusses the level of professionalism in ELT, he notes the influence of exam preparation courses:

Peter: I think TEFL has become much more professional, much more academic....Since the 1990s yeah and I think that's been under the impact of exams, higher demands from the students and uh the ability of employers and universities to have that bit of paper from Cambridge University or IELTS that they can ask for. So, I think it has become much more exam focused and consequently much more professional.

Jane also highlights the increasing professionalization of ELT with formal qualifications, training and teachers thinking about where their careers are headed:

Jane: Other things as the DOS, I think now there's a lot more emphasis on professional development certainly in my context in. When we started everybody sort of came in, they taught their classes, we did a few workshops, but it wasn't really about you know where you were going, what are your options and that kind of thing. Now, they've become examiners, oral examiners, they're doing the DELTA, lots of our teachers are looking at being promoted to other positions in the company so that's probably one of the highlights is seeing people come up through the business and develop professionally.

Pamela also notes how she has benefitted from examining opportunities and attending development sessions delivered via her previous institutions:

Pamela: I was given the opportunity to examine, be an official examiner. For Cambridge that was a big quite a big thing for me. what I learnt more from was when they would bring in a speaker ok? I learnt a lot from the speaker that came one Christmas and he showed us how to structure a class on an image or a video and I thought wow this can be so much more flexible than using by just going by the structure in the book yeah I mean sometimes I feel that maybe I am too focussed on following the guide of the book and maybe I don't do enough of those activities you know based on images and videos but I really thought that was really beneficial when that speaker came to the academy and showed us that.

There is quite an interesting contrast in that earlier all of the teachers noted the restrictions exam-based courses can place on their teaching practice, however, Peter and Jane also recognize the value that exam preparation and formal qualifications have had on the field. This conflict is another interesting area where we see teacher identities become fluid as they weigh up the pros and cons of particular shifts in the field, both for themselves and for those around them.



## Conclusion and Implications for the Context

This study investigated the different discourses teachers used in forging their professional identities whilst teaching in Spain. Teachers used many discourses in their narratives as well as displayed the dominant and conflicting influence of the economic and political realities of teaching in Spain. They note the impact that policies at both classroom and governmental level have on their teaching. Although findings resonate with some previous studies, teachers showed how their teaching was increasingly affected by institutional and external demands such as exam focussed teaching. However, teachers also appeared to be conflicted as they recognized that this exam-based teaching and affiliation with prestigious examination bodies had led to both the ELT industry professionalizing itself and at the same time, had allowed them to professionally grow through development opportunities. This latter point is a continuing theme in the work of many of the contributors in Coombe et al. (2020), emphasizing the continuous need for teachers to take up initiatives but to also be drivers of professionalism themselves.

The narratives in the study and the language used helps illuminate the multiple identities that the teachers adopt. The narratives and the events and experiences they contain also illuminate how teachers' identities are shaped by many other internal and external sources to them. These sources include family, the schools they work in and the management in those schools. There is also evidence of external parties, such as other teachers, playing a role in how the three teachers in this study view themselves, what they do and how their activities are viewed. Teachers' use of personal pronouns to indicate the different decisions they make on their own and also with others was also a central feature of unpacking their current identities, roles and responsibilities and thoughts on ELT as a profession. The use of particular pronouns such as 'I', 'you' and 'we' helped further understand the struggles and complexities behind their decisions but also the struggles and complexities that underpin their daily responsibilities as teachers.

Whilst illuminating, this study was limited to one interview with each teacher which provided only a snapshot of their identity. Future research could involve multiple interviews to track changes in identity over time and in the case of Pamela, it would be valuable to track how her identity evolves in a new job. In this way, a follow-up study that looks at identity development and other discourse influences over time would be invaluable with this teacher group as would identity construction in more informal group settings. These are avenues that future research is encouraged to explore further.

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**Part II**  
**Exploring Challenges and Practices**  
**in Primary Education**

# Chapter 8

## Benefits and Challenges of Learning and Teaching English: The Case of Student Teachers in France



Jill Kay Partridge Salomon  and Sophie Dufossé Sournin 

**Abstract** The teaching of a foreign language in French primary schools became mandatory for all pupils from the age of six upwards, from September 2016. The consequence of this reform was that primary school teachers, irrespective of their L2 language skills, were to teach a foreign language for one and a half hours per week. This new official framework also had an impact on the curriculum in Teacher Training Institutes throughout France. In order to qualify as a primary school teacher and be given tenure, students must obtain a Master's degree in Teaching and Education, pass a highly competitive examination and validate a CEFR B2 level in a foreign language, although English is predominantly taught. With the introduction of this framework, student teachers now had to be trained to teach this new 'subject.' This chapter will be concerned with the benefits and challenges of learning and teaching English in primary schools in France, focusing primarily on the training of future primary teachers.

**Keywords** Primary education · Teacher training · EFL · Student teachers

### Introduction

Since 2016, the teaching of a foreign language in French primary schools has been compulsory for pupils from the age of 6 upwards. The result of this reform has meant that primary school teachers, whatever their foreign language skills, have to teach a foreign language for one and a half hours per week. With the introduction of this new framework, Teacher Training Institutes have had to adapt to the situation. Despite the obvious benefits of learning a foreign language from an early age, the main challenges involve the foreign language proficiency of primary school teachers and their ability to teach this new 'subject'. This theoretical chapter aims to take

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stock of the teaching of English in primary schools in France. It will primarily focus on the training of future primary teachers with the particular example of the Teacher Training Institute of Limoges in the light of a reform set to be put in place in Student Teacher Institutes from September 2021. We posit that the government measures put in place do not provide adequate preparation in student education as far as the teaching of English at the primary level is concerned. This chapter is of particular interest as very little research has been carried out in France on foreign language learning in student education at the primary level. This is partly due to the lack of interest in the domain by both the French government and academia. After a brief history of foreign language teaching in primary schools in France, we will present the hurdles of the French system and the ways we endeavour to overcome these hurdles.

## **Background to Foreign Language Teaching in French Primary Schools**

The teaching of a foreign language in secondary education has been compulsory for many years in France, however, foreign language teaching in primary schools is relatively recent. A foreign language experiment was put in place on a voluntary basis in 1989, but only a few schools actually took part. Resistance to foreign language learning had always been the norm in France, with the concept of national monolingualism and linguistic protectionism (Duverger 2007). Gradually, France's lack of foreign language skills was seen as a setback, especially from an economic point of view.

In 2001, in order to counter this situation, the socialist Minister of Education in France of the time, Jack Lang, gave a memorable speech on the teaching of foreign languages in primary schools, in which he stated:

In the future, our objective is for each child to learn two modern languages, at an age when the quality of his/her musical ear is at its peak. (Lang 2001)

Lang proposed two major reasons for the teaching of foreign languages in primary schools. Firstly, he was convinced that starting at an early age was the route to improved language proficiency with the notion of 'the younger the better.' This concept was initially put forward by Penfield and Roberts (1959) with the Critical Period Hypothesis. Other researchers, however, also posit the relevance of factors such as motivation and environment (Larson-Hall 2008; Myles 2017). Lang's second reason was his desire to reinforce the French language so as to preserve it in a multi-lingual Europe. He believed that through learning foreign languages, one develops greater language skills in one's native language.

Lang's foreign and regional language reform for primary schools was published in the official education framework of 2002 published by the Ministry of Education (*Bulletin Officiel N°4, 2002*). It was the first time in the institutional history of France that the teaching of foreign languages had been made compulsory for primary education (Duverger 2007). In order to facilitate the implementation of this reform,

professional development was to be put in place for primary school teachers with a system of accreditation and from 2003 student teachers were to receive training in language proficiency to enable them to teach a foreign language in school. During this transition period, foreign language assistants and native speakers were to be recruited massively. Secondary school teachers were also brought in to fill any gaps. The new reform also generously financed the introduction of foreign language teaching in primary schools from a logistic aspect. Local authorities, in charge of the running costs of primary schools in France, were to equip classrooms for the new subject. Publishing houses were to create new pedagogic material, including textbooks and multimedia and a new government website (EDUSCOL) was to be set up to provide ideas for lesson plans and possible teaching activities (Partridge Salomon 2018).

For Lang, EFL should be compulsory during a pupil's schooling, however, he also promoted other European languages along with regional languages of France in order to promote France's rich linguistic diversity. At the time of Lang's speech, only 24% of pupils were studying a language other than English at the primary level, and only 10% at the lower secondary level (Lang 2001). When introduced in 2003, Lang's reform only concerned Year 5 pupils (age 10–11), then the following year, Years 4 and 5 and so on. One of the consequences of Lang's reform was that many older teachers, who did not speak a foreign language, chose lower grades dreading the day they too would have to teach a foreign language (Ribierre-Dubile 2017). It was not until the official framework of 8th July 2013 that foreign language learning was made compulsory from Year 1 upwards, from September 2016.

Unfortunately, the Ministers of Education that followed Lang did not appreciate the importance of foreign language learning at the primary level, and the generous budget put in place was greatly reduced. The subsequent governments imposed new reforms. However, there were a number of institutional failures, ranging from a lack of clear objectives to the totally inadequate preparation of student teachers in the teaching of a foreign language even in the same government (Duverger 2007). Modifications to the curricula were put in place with each new Education Minister without real guidelines as how to implement them given the human and material resources. According to Enever (2018), different policies have been set up worldwide, in order to reinforce foreign language acquisition at the primary level but these often do not take into account 'the complex nature of teaching English to children [...]' (Bland 2019, p. 80). Cameron (2003, p. 11) asserts that increasing the oral foreign language standards of primary school teachers may not be in tune with government policies in certain countries. In France, this is very much the case as such measures would be too expensive to put in place, nonetheless, curricula remain as ambitious as before. For Cameron 'Where the resources to undertake such retraining are not available, it would seem important for policy makers to be realistic about what can be achieved at primary level.'

From September 2010, a new system of specialised Master's was set up in France for student teacher education in the University Institutes of Teacher Training (IUFM). These were replaced by Advanced Schools of Teaching, Training and Education (ESPE) in 2015. These specialised institutes integrate university and teacher education with vocational teaching practice in primary schools. In 2019, the ESPE was



changed into INSPE or Advanced Institutes of Teaching Practice. With this new measure, the Ministry of Education sought more cohesion in teacher education nationwide, with a reinforcement of the foreign language skills of student teachers as well as more structured vocational work experience over the two years of MEEF (Teaching, Education and Teacher Training) Master's.

To enrol in this Master's degree (MEEF), students must hold a Bachelor's degree that is not necessarily related to teaching. At the end of the first year of the Master's course, students sit a competitive examination in order to become a student teacher in year 2. In order to validate their Master's and qualify as a primary school teacher with tenure, students are required to obtain a B2 level in a foreign language. The guidance and planning law for the future of schools (the Fillon Act) of 2006 introduced oral assessment in a foreign language in the competitive exam. This was abolished in 2009 with the introduction of the MEEF degree and also because the assessment was considered too costly to organise (Duverger 2007). Henceforth, students were obliged to take certifications to prove their language level in order to enrol. From September 2016, with the introduction of the new framework (Ministerial Decree '*arrêté du 27 août 2013*') the validation of student teachers' language proficiency was to be incorporated into the Master's course alongside the English teaching methodology.

## The Present Situation

The competitive examination, therefore, no longer included assessment of a foreign language from 2009 onwards. However, following a report published by the General Inspectorate (Manès-Bonnisseau and Taylor 2018, p. 2) exposing the deplorable results of the French as far as foreign language proficiency is concerned, a foreign language was made available as a possible subject to present at the oral part of the competitive examination from 2019. Beforehand, only the following subjects had been possible for this examination: history, geography, music, art, physics and biology. What was surprising was the fact that a generous number of hours was made available for this preparation, even though the groups were relatively small. This assessment involved the presentation of a didactic analysis of a theme related to the teaching of English and a detailed lesson plan related to the theme. This part of the examination was in French and it was followed by questions in English related to teaching. This specialised oral in English teaching did not take place in 2020 due to the pandemic.

This year, in Limoges, 14 students chose to take English for this examination out of a total of 151 students. Four of the 14 students had a Bachelor's degree in English and three others had spent a year in an English-speaking country as a language assistant or an au-pair. Out of the 14 students, only 6 got over the hurdle of the written exam which enabled them to take the oral exams, 3 of those students had a Bachelor's degree in English. Five of those students passed the competitive examination with marks ranging from 45 to 100%. The student who failed the overall examination nevertheless scored 80% for the English examination. This year was the first and

only year this assessment took place as a new reform will come into effect from September 2021. From next year, students will be able to take a foreign language option for the competitive exam, however, no preparation for this exam will be made available at the institute. It is worth noting that only fifty-four students passed the competitive examination due to the limited number of posts made available in the district of Limoges.

In 2015, the newly implemented Institute of Teaching Practice introduced a new curriculum made up of four learning units. Unit one is composed of school subject teaching methods such as French, mathematics, PE and minors such as science, history and geography or art. Learning unit two deals with vocational work and internship observation. Learning unit three aims at developing social sciences, whereas unit four is dedicated to English. This means that a student has to pass the English language examination to validate the learning unit and pass his or her Master's.

From September 2021, yet another reform will be implemented in teacher training institutes across France. In this new reform, despite the recommendations of the General Inspectorate Report (Manès-Bonnisseau and Taylor 2018), the number of hours of English and English teaching methodology will be greatly reduced. At Limoges, the hours will be halved, from 81 to 40 over the two-year period of the Master's. In a move to reinforce the level of mathematics and French in primary schools, 55% of the lectures at the Teaching Institutes must be devoted to those subjects. Out of 1,039 teaching hours of the Master's course, only 40 are reserved for English. Nonetheless, the students will still be required to validate a B2 level on the CEFR scale and teach English in their classes.

To bridge the gap between language and teaching methods, we work on texts and videos in the target language dealing with primary school teaching methods in England, for example. Our lessons are designed to practice both English language and teaching skills. The cultural aspect of learning English is also prominent in our classes and these cultural references feed the linguistic activities in class. As aforementioned, our student teachers are required to validate a CEFR B2 level to pass their Master's and qualify as a teacher. Despite the limited number of hours available, we endeavour to assess our students in the five language competences using topics related to teaching in primary education. These can include Total Physical Response, flexible classrooms, Religious Education, school uniforms, Information Technology, Special Educational Needs and Inclusion and literacy. Furthermore, students are required to prepare a mini-teaching session which they carry out with their peers acting as primary school pupils. These sessions must be action-oriented and designed according to the official curricula. An in-depth teaching sequence must be handed in detailing the various teaching activities which should follow in logical order. These sessions are always followed by a class discussion in order to give immediate feedback on their mini-teaching.

## Challenges: Language Proficiency

In the primary schools in and around Limoges, only English is taught, therefore, only English (EFL) is available at the Teacher Training Institute. One of the underlying problems is to overcome the lack of proficiency of our students in foreign languages. Although two foreign languages are compulsory in French secondary schools, the first one (generally English) being taught from at least Year 6 through to Year 13, only 24.74% of pupils obtain a CEFR level of B2 technically required to pass the baccalauréat (quoted in Stunell 2017). In addition, only 37.44% of students reach a B2 level at the end of their Bachelor's degree despite mandatory foreign language tuition (Observatoire TOEIC 2009). Only between 10 and 15% of the students have majored in English at the Bachelor's level (Manès-Bonnisseau and Taylor 2018), therefore, a great many of our students do not have the necessary foreign language skills when enrolling in the teaching institute. According to Cambridge Assessment English (2018), '[i]t takes approximately 200 guided learning hours for a language learner to progress from one level of the Common European Framework of Reference to the next'. With the constant reduction in the teaching hours for English, our students only receive forty-eight hours over the two years of their Master's programme. In addition, they receive 14 h of English teaching methodology in Year 1 and nine in Year 2.

With their insufficient English language skills, it is extremely difficult to train our students to actually teach a subject they do not master. For Stunell (2017), even if students have attained the B2 level in English, actually teaching it requires skills other than foreign language proficiency. According to Hayes (2014, p. 17), 'teachers need not only to have the necessary pedagogical skills to teach primary-age children, but also a high degree of competence in the language, with C1 on the CEFR descriptors as the target level.' Cameron (2003, p. 111) affirms that teaching English at the primary level can be more challenging than at the secondary level due to the emphasis on oral language. Indeed, it requires 'a high level of fluency and a wide knowledge of vocabulary.' She adds that 'since children reproduce the accent of their teachers with deadly accuracy, pronunciation skills are also vitally important at the early stages.' Rich (2018, p. 49) posits that it is more difficult to teach young children to speak English, '[it] is a demanding and skilled process, particularly with children in the early grades of primary school.' Bland (2019, p. 79) states that the primary teacher's role in teaching English is 'pivotal.' She also posits that self-efficacy in primary school teachers is 'undermined by the widespread societal attitude that undervalues the work of primary school teachers in many countries and the lack of status of' teaching English to primary level pupils (2019, p. 87).

According to Arnold (2011, p. 1), when learning a foreign language, our self-image is 'more vulnerable when we do not have mastery of our vehicle for expression—language.' For Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128) '[...] any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic.' Our students are well aware of their own language deficiencies. As future role models for their pupils, they feel

inadequately equipped to teach English. One could evoke the notion of self-efficacy put forward by Bandura (1997). MA and Cavanagh (2018, p. 134) posit that ‘teacher self-efficacy [...] is the extent to which teachers, including pre-service teachers [...], believe they are capable of achieving certain specific teaching goals’. For Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), it is defined as ‘the teacher’s belief in his or her capability to organise and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context.’

As part of a survey for her Master’s dissertation, one of my former students interviewed her fellow student teachers on the difficulties of teaching English (Manach 2017). It is interesting to note that students were more concerned with their lack of language skills than with actual teaching issues. Some of the answers to the survey include: *‘I’m embarrassed and I haven’t got a good accent’, ‘I haven’t got the necessary skills, especially in pronunciation.’* For 40.9% of students, teaching English at the primary level was motivating or a challenge, 36.4% felt ill at ease and 22.7% dreaded having to teach English at all.

A senior lecturer at the Teacher Education Institute of Bordeaux carried out research on her first-year Master’s students (Stunell 2017). She was concerned with the new measures which had been introduced from September 2016, whereby those students who had successfully passed the competitive exam at the end of Year 1 of the Master’s had to work part-time in a primary school and potentially teach English in their classes while finishing off their Master’s and completing their teacher education. Stunell strove to find solutions on how to conciliate the reinforcement of her students’ English language skills while giving them the necessary didactic knowledge and know-how in order to prepare them for their future roles, in the limited hours available (which correspond to the hours at Limoges). She contends that the introduction of micro-teaching sessions can be the solution to this dilemma.

Well aware of the lack of confidence felt by a great many of her students, Stunell (2017, p.62) evokes the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura 1997) quoting Tschannen and Woolfolk Hoy (2007, p. 948) ‘Self-efficacy is a motivation construct based on self-perception of competence rather than actual level of competence.’ This is reflected in our students’ self-evaluation of their linguistic capacities which stem, therefore, not necessarily from their actual linguistic level but from their perception of their level and capabilities of teaching English in the primary classroom. The level of perceived self-efficacy thus greatly influences one’s agency, therefore, the more a person believes in their capacities, the more this person is prepared to strive to improve them. However, the opposite is equally true. We could then affirm that perceived efficacy influences real efficacy.

Stunell refers to the three factors which contribute to teacher efficacy: engagement with pupils, classroom management and pedagogic strategies (Tschannen and Woolfolk Hoy 2007). Stunell adds the efficacy of using a foreign language. Stunell posits that student teachers with a high level of self-efficacy are more able to confront classroom issues and find solutions. Similar to the findings of Partridge Salomon and Simon (2020), Stunell observed that encouraging a feeling of self-efficacy considerably helped the students overcome their linguistic deficiencies.

Stunell's research project consisted of a questionnaire with 23 questions composed of three parts, 'Speaking English', 'Teaching English in English' and 'Past experiences learning English'. This survey took place after 18 h of English lessons centred on listening and written comprehension training at a B2 level. The survey questions were concerned with the students' level of confidence in teaching practices, classroom management and their capacity to handle both the linguistic and pedagogic and didactic elements. When answering the question: 'How do you feel about the idea of teaching English in English?' only six of the students felt comfortable, eleven answered negatively and six were neutral. For the vast majority, therefore, the idea of teaching English in English seemed difficult. 21% of the students spoke of 'a lack of self-confidence', 7% of 'being afraid' and 14% were 'stressed' or 'worried.' The reasons these students gave were their level of English (oral English, their accent, making mistakes, lack of fluidity in spoken English and the difficulty of giving clear classroom instructions); the idea of teaching English ('it's complicated', 'I've never done it before'); and the effects on their pupils ('they don't understand'). Stunell explains that this lack of efficacy regarding their English skills and their capacity to teach English can be demotivating and needs to be taken into account during their training.

For Stunell, these feelings of inadequacy are related to the students' past experiences with English as they had not yet experienced teaching English in school and has only carried out one two-week work placement before the study began. Their experience of teaching, therefore, had been shaped by their English lessons at the primary but especially the secondary level. Stunell found a correlation between those students who had answered negatively or neutrally to the question 'How do you feel about the idea of teaching English in English?' Most of those students had had a negative experience of learning English at school.

These findings encouraged Stunell to increase the practical teaching experiences of her students by introducing micro-teaching sessions into her classes. Research in experiential learning (Kolb 1984) puts forward that '[a]ttitude and value change is liable to be promoted if authentic experience is used to define and raise awareness of attitude and values not previously recognised by the holder' (Anderson et al. 2000, p. 5). Experiential learning places experience at the centre of the learning process, contrary to more cognitive approaches which '[g]ive primary emphasis to acquisition, manipulation, to recall of abstract symbols' (Kolb 1984, p. 21). The micro-teaching sessions enable students to practice the teaching skills required for primary school pupils, with their peers playing the role of the children (see above). The students are thus able to teach but also to experience the teaching sessions 'performed' by their peers. In addition, they are able to comment on their own teaching session and those of their fellow students. This experience not only has a positive effect on the students' sense of self-efficacy, but it also prepares them for future classroom strategies and management (e.g. using flashcards, giving clear instructions in English, using appropriate language and pedagogic tools for young beginners).

Even when they have qualified, teachers are unlikely to have continued support as foreign languages are practically never included in the eighteen hours of annual professional development, and primary school inspectors rarely inspect English

classes due to their own lack of foreign language skills. Furthermore, since 2016, the equivalent of Key stage 3 (ages 9–12), now includes the first year of lower secondary level (*Programmes pour l'école primaire, BO n°11, 26 novembre 2015*). With no real national pedagogic continuity between primary and secondary schools, many lower secondary school EFL teachers start their English lessons from a beginner's level, which is far from motivating for pupils fortunate enough to have had good quality English classes in primary school.

## **Overcoming the Hurdles**

In order to offer our students the best possible training in teaching English despite the situation, several measures have been put in place at Limoges: the introduction of English teaching methodology at the undergraduate level for potential future teachers; our holistic approach to our lessons; the opportunity to carry out a work placement in schools in the UK, Spain and Belgium.

### ***Undergraduate Introduction to Teaching and Education***

Second and third-year undergraduate students at the University of Limoges interested in becoming teachers are now offered a minor called *i-MEEF* (Introduction to Master's in Teaching and Education). The curriculum develops different topics concerning various aspects of teaching in primary and secondary school education in France. Two sessions of two-week placements are part of the syllabus. At the end of the internship, undergraduates are required to write a short collective detailed report describing their experiences with their in-service tutors. In order to reinforce consistency between primary and secondary education, they work together in small groups.

The minor programme is mainly focused on this internship with observation preparation and feedback classes. It also provides sessions in teaching science, physics, history or geography and EFL. Topics such as inclusion and drama are tackled as well as IT. Undergraduates also have to choose classes ranging from yoga or meditation (Mindfulness) or how to use films or comics in the classroom. This course helps *i-MEEF* students understand the progressivity of learning between the 3 levels of primary and year 1 of lower secondary education in France. It is an ideal way for them to prepare the specialised MEEF Master's. These students receive twenty-four hours of EFL tuition per academic year but feel uncomfortable about their language skills asking for additional lessons even though there is no required assessment of English in the course.

## ***English Language and English Methodology Lessons at the Teacher Training Institute of Limoges***

At Limoges, both the EFL language and methodology lessons lay great importance on the well-being of our students. We strive to reduce the level of stress during the lessons (Horwitz et al. 1986) by fostering an atmosphere of trust and incorporating the idea that mistakes are part of the learning process (Williams et al. 2015). With so few teaching hours, our students rapidly need to understand that they do not need to be bilingual to teach English (Marchois and Delmote 2015).

We use techniques inspired by Gardner's (1983) Multiple Intelligence Theory, integrating sport, dance, singing, role play, etc. into our lessons. These activities are not only important from a linguistic, didactic and pedagogic point of view (working on pronunciation, the rhythm and stress of English with Nursery Rhymes, skipping songs, and reinforcing oral skills), but they also help to put our students at ease (Partridge Salomon and Simon 2020, p. 95). The students are active during these lessons, which helps to alleviate their stress and anxiety. They alternate between the roles of student and teacher, following the principle of '*learning by teaching*' (Roscoe and Chi 2007; Karimi 2011; Gomez 2017; Wozniak 2018).

In September 2019, action research was set up at the Institute of Limoges to ascertain the extent to which teacher education based on the stimulation of emotions could play a role in the ways student teachers viewed themselves as future teachers (Partridge Salomon and Simon 2020, p. 95). Before their first EFL lessons, students were asked to fill out a questionnaire on the following items: the number of years they had been learning English, their feelings about the idea of teaching English and the influence of their past English lessons on their attitude concerning their future role. This was followed by a one-and-a-half-hour lesson which involved singing in a canon, a clapping song, role play, playing games, etc. and multi-sensory activities. A second questionnaire was then filled in by the students. In the first questionnaire, only 27.7% of the students felt capable of teaching English to Years 4 or 5, whereas after the lesson this had risen to 44.4%. This demonstrated that even a very short session at the beginning of the year could radically modify students' opinions and feelings about their ability to teach English (Partridge Salomon and Simon 2020, p. 96).

While filling in the first questionnaire, a great many students expressed their feelings of anxiety and stress, feelings of being ill at ease with negative recollections of past English lessons at secondary school when answering the question: 'How do you feel before your first lesson of English teaching methodology?' The second questionnaire showed very different comments. Students wrote that they felt 'confident as the teacher trainer encouraged everyone to join in without judgement,' 'safe, because the activities were simple and unthreatening'. 'The lesson was dynamic and played down their obsession with [their] level.' This exemplifies the importance of '[c]reating an atmosphere of trust and confidence and taking into account students' emotional needs [...]' (Partridge Salomon and Simon 2020, p. 97). In order to further the self-confidence of our students, we actively encourage follow-up

metacognition discussions. These are often in the form of translanguaging interaction as both French and English are used depending on student preference and the activities discussed. Very little research has been carried out on positive emotions as opposed to negative emotions. Krashen (1985) was one of the first researchers to be interested in the role of affect in language learning with the affective filter. He posited that negative emotions limited the learner's ability to learn new language, while positive emotions facilitated language acquisition. While, Fredrickson (2009, 2013) has worked on the theory of positive emotions 'broaden and build.' For Williams et al. (2015, p. 91), '[...] individuals with more positive emotions are able to think in more diverse, creative ways and are more likely to actively explore and approach a topic or area [...]'.

### ***Student Placements Abroad***

For more than twenty years now, our year 1 Master's students have had the opportunity to carry out work placements in primary schools in the United Kingdom. From 2015 to 2020, students were able to do a three-week placement in and around Newcastle-Under-Lyme, thanks to the partnership between Limoges University and Keele and North Staffordshire University Department of Teacher Education (Partridge Salomon 2018; Dufossé-Sournin 2018). During these placements, students were encouraged to teach the class in the target language. The obvious benefits of these placements were linguistic reinforcement and new approaches to teaching. Unfortunately, due to the cut in funding of foreign languages at the primary level in Keele, plus the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, this partnership has now come to an end. Other placements are available in Belgium and Spain.

### **Implications of the Findings for the Context**

As we have seen in this overview of teaching and learning English in primary schools in France, the situation remains particularly uncomfortable for the vast majority of primary school teachers. The latter experience a feeling of language insecurity regarding their role as EFL teachers in their classes. Their apprehension reflects the specific nature of this 'subject' (Marchois and Delmote 2015, p. 6). Indeed, foreign languages are 'the object of study and the medium in which they are studied' (Partridge Salomon 2018, p. 8). Many experienced primary teachers regard the obligation to teach a foreign language as an extra burden, using up valuable time which could be used for more 'important' subjects, such as maths or French. When our Year 1 Master's students carry out their work placements in primary schools, they are often disconcerted at the fact that they can observe very few English lessons. This situation seems to be in stark contrast with the 2016 CEDRE survey which reported that 99.4% of primary school pupils have access to foreign language classes. It would,



therefore, seem that not all pupils are entitled to foreign language learning and as a consequence, not all student teachers are able to observe or practice a foreign language during their placements (Behra 2019, p. 4).

Not only are experienced teachers ill-prepared to teach a foreign language, student teachers do not receive adequate preparation either (Behra 2019, p. 10), despite the current requirement of passing a Master's degree. As we have seen, the hours of foreign language teaching available at teaching institutes are not adequate for them to reach a B2 level. Furthermore, assessment for these hours is dominated by foreign language practice, whereas assessment of the actual professional competences related to the teaching of a foreign language remain relatively vague in university curricula (Behra 2019, p. 2). Generally speaking, there are few teacher educators and applied linguists specialised in the primary level, which is blatant if one regards governmental decisions as far as foreign language teaching is concerned. For Bland (2019, p. 86), Second Language Acquisition specialists lack understanding of teaching English to young learners, which in turn, leads to a lack of respect in the field. She adds 'a lack of supervisors for students keen to write MEd and PhD theses in areas of T[eaching] E[nglish]Y[oung]L[earners] perpetuates the vicious circle of only few researchers specialising in this area in the foreseeable future' (Bland 2019, p. 86). At Limoges, between ten and twenty student teachers take up a subject for their Master's dissertation related to the teaching of EFL at the primary level each year.

## Conclusion

On a more positive final note, various attempts to improve the situation of foreign language teaching have been put in place locally. In Brive, a town just south of Limoges, a group of primary and lower secondary teachers took part in a project to make authentic English picturebooks accessible to their colleagues and their pupils. They created ready-to-use lesson plans for classes ranging from nursery to Year 6, their ultimate objective being to help homogenise the EFL language skills of pupils entering secondary school (Partridge Salomon 2019, p. 27–31). Unfortunately, funding for this project ended last year. The government is also encouraging local initiatives, such as bilingual primary schools and the setting up of CLIL classes, e.g. teaching maths in English. These initiatives, however, seem to cover up the fundamental failures of the system towards teachers and future teachers in the primary level.

If student teachers are to take foreign language teaching seriously, a compulsory language should be introduced in the competitive examination along with an increase in the number of EFL language and teaching practice hours. A thorough revalorisation of the teaching profession should also be envisaged in order to tempt higher achieving students into the teaching profession.

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# Chapter 9

## How Do ADHD-Type Behaviours Affect Language Learning? Voices of In-Service EFL Teachers in Poland



Agnieszka Kałdonek-Crnjaković

**Abstract** Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD may affect learning an additional language since attention plays a significant role in the second language acquisition; however, no research so far has investigated how ADHD-type behaviours may impact language learning. Thus, this study aimed at exploring this issue from the teacher's perspective. The participants were nine primary and secondary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Poland, who were experienced in working with students with ADHD-type behaviours. Data were collected using a questionnaire with open-ended questions that referred to ADHD presentations and their manifestations in different language skills and subskills. Participants were subsequently interviewed to complement the questionnaire data. Findings suggest that ADHD presentations occurred in various EFL learning and teaching situations; however, there were differences between the effect of inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity on specific language skills and subskills. Pedagogical implications have been discussed.

**Keywords** ADHD · EFL · Primary and secondary education

### Introduction

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a frequent specific learning difficulty that may affect the second language (L2) acquisition in many ways (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018; Kormos and Smith 2012; Liontou 2019); however, there is little empirical evidence of its effect on specific L2 skills from the perspective of language teachers.

However, teachers have been frequent participants in studies on ADHD in the educational context conducted in the last two decades. The studies mainly focused on teachers' knowledge of ADHD and attitudes towards students with ADHD and pointed at variables that may influence these points of interest. The findings are

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inconclusive, though. Overall, studies found that teachers were aware of the symptoms and diagnosis of ADHD but had poorer knowledge of its treatment and held many misconceptions that might stem either from a lack of knowledge or a teacher's personal experience in teaching students with ADHD (Bekle 2004; Frigerio et al. 2014; Greenway and Rees Edwards 2020; Jerome et al. 1994, 1999; Liang and Gao 2016; Mulholland et al. 2015; Sciutto et al. 2000). Furthermore, some studies reported that general teaching experience and prior experience with students with ADHD were salient for correct knowledge of ADHD (e.g., Bekle 2004; Kos et al. 2004; Sciutto et al. 2000). By contrast, many other studies did not find this relationship between teaching experience and the knowledge of ADHD (e.g., Frigerio et al. 2014; Jerome et al. 1999; Liang and Gao 2016). Similarly, it was found that higher knowledge of the disorder positively correlated with teacher positive attitudes (Bekle 2004; Bornman and Donohue 2013; Greenway and Rees Edwards 2020); other studies found no such relation (e.g., Liang and Gao 2016). Research findings also indicated that most teacher participants considered ADHD a problematic educational issue (e.g., Bekle 2004; Bornman and Donohue 2013; Greenway and Rees Edwards 2020; Liang and Gao 2016; Mulholland et al. 2015). For example, participants in Bornman and Donohue's study (2013) reported that the behaviour of students with ADHD might be highly disruptive with a negative effect on the classroom atmosphere.

The current study builds on my previous work on ADHD and L2 learning (i.e., Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018). The impact of ADHD-type behaviours on language learning has not been empirically researched yet; therefore, I hope the current article will provide potential readers with some evidence on how specific presentations of ADHD may affect L2 acquisition. I believe exploring this topic from a teacher's perspective is important given extensive research on the effect of the other common specific difficulty, that is dyslexia (e.g., Fišer 2019; Kormos and Kontra 2008; Kormos and Nijakowska 2017; Nijakowska et al. 2018), which frequently occurs with ADHD (Pennington et al. 2009). Teachers' voices also matter considering that ADHD is complex and thus difficult to diagnose. Teachers are likely to be first to recognise its effect from the micro-level perspective, that is the development of specific language skills of a student that exhibits ADHD-type behaviours, and the macro level, that is the effect of such behaviours on the classroom dynamics.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *Characteristics and Manifestations of ADHD*

ADHD is a specific learning difficulty that presents itself with inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. In brief, as summarised in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders or DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association 2013), the symptoms of inattention include a lack of attention to details, inability

to keep attention for a longer time or follow instructions, poor organisational strategies, forgetfulness, and being easily distracted by an external stimulus. Hyperactivity may cause, for example, frequent hands and legs movement, walking or running, and fidgeting. Impulsivity, on the other hand, is associated with lower self-control, impatience, extensive talking, unintentional destruction, and disturbing others. Therefore, an individual with ADHD can exhibit either a combined presentation of inattention and hyperactivity–impulsivity, predominately inattentive or predominately hyperactive–impulsive presentation. Symptoms can be either severe, moderate, or mild affecting social and occupational functioning to different degrees. Due to these symptoms, an individual may find it difficult to automatise behavioural rules, experience emotional oversensitivity, appear intolerant, and lack motivation for learning (Barkley 1997, 2006). It needs to be noted though that the presence and intensity of ADHD manifestations may depend on the context. In new situations, with interesting activities, under close supervision, and frequent rewards for good behaviour, some symptoms may be minimal or even absent (American Psychiatric Association 2013). Also, ADHD may be difficult to diagnose because inattention, for example, is present in other disorders, such as depression or anxiety (American Psychiatric Association 2013), its manifestations may be age- (Biederman 2011; Schwartz 2002) and gender-dependent (Quinn and Madhoo 2014), or its diagnosis may be influenced by perceptions of different members of an individual’s surrounding (Hamed et al. 2015), and cultural influences and societal burden (Asherson et al. 2014).

ADHD-type behaviours may significantly affect one’s functioning in society. Individuals with ADHD may experience social rejection or interpersonal conflicts (American Psychiatric Association 2013), and perform poorer academically compared to their peers (Frazier et al. 2007). Language learning in the school setting may be challenging for an individual with ADHD-type behaviours because of a high level of interaction with others and attention one needs to pay to acquire specific language patterns, for example.

### ***How ADHD Characteristics Influence L2 Skills***

Attention allows an individual, voluntarily, and involuntarily, to select appropriate stimuli to focus on, focus when stimuli are absent, and perform a few activities simultaneously (Pashler 1998). It is related to an ability to store information, that is short-term memory, and an ability to manipulate this information for a short time, that is working memory (Gathercole and Alloway 2008). The central executive of the working memory model (Baddeley 1996) allows reducing distractions, using effective strategies for planning and task completion with appropriate attention and in a methodological way (Wu 2014).

Drawing on the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt 1990), to learn a given linguistic form or pattern, one needs to notice, that is to give appropriate attention to this form or pattern. Attention thus plays a vital role in additional language learning (Leow and Bowles 2005; Robinson 2003; Schmidt 1995; Skehan 2002). Since studies found

that implicit learning depended on selective information (Jiang and Chun 2001) and working memory was essential for learning incidentally or intentionally (Robinson 1997, 2002; Williams 1999), individuals with ADHD may experience difficulty in acquiring new information because their executive control processes are weaker. In other words, their verbal and visual information memorisation and processing will be affected, and thus they may experience difficulties in developing different L2 skills (Kormos 2017), especially in languages with low phoneme–grapheme correspondence and many exceptions, such as English (Turketti 2010 cited in Liontou 2019, p. 222).

### **ADHD's Potential Impact on Receptive Skills**

Studies have reported that students with ADHD may struggle with single-word reading (Cain and Bignell 2014) and reading comprehension (Cain and Bignell 2014; Miller et al. 2013). Thus, they may experience similar difficulties in L2 (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018). Reading in L2 is a complex mental activity that engages different aspects of working memory, especially at the proficient level. The reader needs to focus on the meaning and apply a range of metacognitive strategies to gradually develop comprehension of what they are reading. With increased language proficiency, reading engages in identifying main ideas and conclusions, noticing details, and scanning. Besides, the reader needs to be intrinsically motivated and ready to make mental efforts for a longer time (Anderson 2014). Due to weaker working memory, students with ADHD may find L2 reading challenging. More specifically, studies found that these students frequently skipped letters, words, or entire sentences, especially in longer texts (Turketti 2010 and Williams 2000 cited in Liontou 2019, p. 222). Consequently, such omissions may detrimentally affect text understanding and the completion of reading comprehension tasks.

Similarly, impaired executive control may lead to difficulty in processing verbal material (Andreou et al. 2005; Cain and Bignell 2014), and consequently affect L2 listening comprehension skills (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018). When performing listening tasks, one needs to engage in processes that will allow them to understand the message conveyed. This includes sounds, grammar, lexis, and discourse structure, as well as context, that interlocutors, and the purpose of communication (Goh 2014). Students with ADHD may struggle with completing L2 listening tasks, especially those that require them to focus for a longer time, select specific information, and process this information in a particular context (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018).

Finally, the weaker capacity for information storing from different stimuli in individuals with ADHD (Alloway et al. 2010; Martinussen and Tannock 2006) may significantly affect grammar and vocabulary learning. A learner with ADHD may find it challenging to memorise more complex grammatical and lexical patterns, for example, question structures in different tenses, multisyllabic words, or phrasal verbs (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018). Eventually, lower vocabulary size and limited or incorrect acquisition of grammatical structures, along with the difficulties in reading and listening comprehension, may detrimentally affect L2 productive skills.



## ADHD's Potential Impact on Productive Skills

A great deal of attention control is necessary for writing processes in L2. As pointed out by Cushing Weigle (2014), these processes involve a set of cognitive and socio-cultural abilities frequently engaged simultaneously, which allow the writer to convey the overall message for the target audience and organise major points and subpoints. To do it appropriately and effectively, the writer needs to engage a range of metacognitive strategies, including planning and monitoring the writing process, and proofreading for cohesion, coherence, and language use. Therefore, writing processes are less automatic and create a greater load on working memory (Kormos 2017).

Because of weaker executive control, students with ADHD may employ ineffective L2 writing strategies. They may find it difficult to plan their writing, maintaining coherence at the sentence level, paragraph and throughout the text, writing in detail, and proofreading their work (Každonek-Crnjaković 2018). Furthermore, Sparks et al. (2008) found many misspellings in the writings of students with ADHD. Misspellings made by these students are often in the form of letter insertion, substitution, and omission because of a lack of paying proper attention (Adi-Japha et al. 2007).

Since students with ADHD were found to have lower verbal skills (Andreou et al. 2005), and as 'The act of speaking is staggeringly complex' (Lazaraton 2014, p. 106), they may struggle with different aspects of L2 speaking. Due to inattention, keeping the speech coherent may be a struggle for ADHD students. They may employ incorrect sentence structure and add irrelevant information, for example (Každonek-Crnjaković 2018). They may also mispronounce words, especially those with complex patterns and those sounding alike.

L2 productive skills may be also affected by hyperactivity and impulsivity manifestations. In speaking, for example, politeness, directness, and formality matter, and interlocutors sometimes need to rely on nonverbal communication (Ishihara and Cohen 2010). Similarly in writing, the writer needs to be aware of the audience, considering the reader's characteristics (Williams 2012). Because individuals with ADHD tend to misinterpret emotions (Cadesky et al. 2000), and their reactions may be impulsive, consequently they may struggle to develop socio-pragmatic skills that would help them attain a proficient level of L2 speaking and writing competencies (Každonek-Crnjaković 2018).

## Research Questions

This study aimed at exploring the effect of ADHD-type behaviours on EFL from the teacher's perspective. The following central question directed this study:

1. How do inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity affect EFL learning?

**Table 9.1** Participant information

Pseudonym	Place of work	Teaching experience	No. of students officially stated with ADHD	No. of students exhibiting ADHD
Alicja	Primary school	15 years	8	30
Anna	Secondary school	8 years	3	20 or even more
Barbara	Secondary school	12 years	1	A lot
Julia	Secondary school	3 years	2	About 10
Karolina	Primary school	4 years	2	About 10
Magda	Primary school	about 1 year	0	3/4
Monika	Secondary school	10 years	5	More than 20
Sylwia	Secondary school	9 years	3	At least 20
Zofia	Primary school	1 year and 8 months	1	A lot

## Methodology

### *Participants*

Nine female Polish EFL teachers participated in the study. Potential participants were contacted via email, in which they were informed about the purpose of the study and what was expected from them. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary and anonymous. In order to maximise anonymity pseudonyms were used.

The participants' teaching experience ranged from 1 to 15 years. Four participants worked in primary schools, and five worked in secondary schools in different regions of Poland. In Poland, students' age in primary school ranges from 7 to 15 years old, and in secondary school from 16 to 19 years old. All but one participant taught students that had an official statement of ADHD. All participants stated that they had taught a number of students that exhibited ADHD-type behaviours. The information about the participants is summarised in Table 9.1.

### *Data Collection*

Data were collected by means of a questionnaire with open-ended questions and an interview. The questionnaire was piloted on one primary school teacher. She was asked to fill out the questionnaire and make comments on the questionnaire's layout and items. The questionnaire was amended accordingly; this included the simplification of the layout and reformulation of some questions to enhance their understanding. She reported that it took her about one hour and a half to fill out the

questionnaire and give comments. Based on this information, potential participants were informed that filling out the questionnaire might take about one hour.

In the first part of the questionnaire, participants provided information on their educational background, the length of teaching experience, the place of work, the number of students with an official statement and those who exhibit ADHD they have taught so far, the source of information on ADHD, and whether they had attended a course on ADHD.

The second part included 17 open-ended questions about participants' attitudes, beliefs, concerns, and emotions. The third part of the questionnaire, which is the focus of the analysis in the present paper, listed the diagnostic criteria for ADHD according to DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association 2013), modified to refer strictly to the primary and secondary school setting. The first criterion for inattention was split into two items to distinguish the lack of close attention to details and careless mistakes (see Table 9.2). Participants were asked to mark the inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity characteristics that they had noticed in their students and tell how they manifested in specific L2 skills and subskills, apart from the item h and j in the inattention part where participants had to mark only the occurrence of the given manifestation.

Seven out of nine participants agreed to give an interview. The interview lasted between 30 min and 1 h. The questions for the interview were based on each participant's responses to the questionnaire.

## ***Data Analysis***

The data were analysed using NVIVO 12 program. First, the marked manifestations of inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity were calculated for each skill and subskill. The potential significance of the difference between skills and subskills for specific ADHD presentations was calculated using a *t*-test for independent samples and Cohen's *d* to describe the standardised mean difference of an effect. The quantitative data analysis also included the calculation of the frequency of specific inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations. The mean (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*), and sample variance ( $S^2$ ) were reported. Subsequently, this analysis was complemented by qualitative data generated from the responses to the questionnaire's open questions and interviews.

## **Results and Discussion**

As illustrated in Table 9.3, teacher participants reported inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations for all skills and subskills. The total of the reported inattention manifestations was 196 compared with 245 of hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations. This difference was significant with a large effect size ( $t = -2.30, p$

**Table 9.2** Data collection tool: the symptoms of inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity based on the diagnostic criteria for ADHD according to DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association 2013)

(1) Inattention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Often fails to give close attention to details</li> <li>(b) Often makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or with other activities</li> <li>(c) Often has difficulty in sustaining attention in tasks or play activities (e.g., has difficulty remaining focused during lessons, conversations, lengthy reading)</li> <li>(d) Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly</li> <li>(e) Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork</li> <li>(f) Often has trouble organising tasks and activities</li> <li>(g) Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort</li> <li>(h) Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g., school materials, pencils, books)</li> <li>(i) Is often distracted by extraneous stimuli</li> <li>(j) Is often forgetful in daily activities</li> </ul>
(2) Hyperactivity–impulsivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Often fidgets with or taps hands or feet, or squirms in seat</li> <li>(b) Often leaves seats in situations when remaining seated is expected (e.g., leaves his or her place in the classroom)</li> <li>(c) Often runs about or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate (note: in adolescents may be limited to feeling restless)</li> <li>(d) Often unable to play or engage in leisure activities quietly</li> <li>(e) Is often “on the go” as if driven by a motor (e.g., is unable to be or uncomfortable being still for an extended time; may be experienced by others as being restless or difficult to keep up with)</li> <li>(f) Often talks excessively</li> <li>(g) Often blurts out an answer before a question has been completed (e.g., completes people’s sentences; cannot wait for turn in conversation)</li> <li>(h) Often has difficulty waiting for his or her turn (e.g., while waiting in line)</li> <li>(i) Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations, games, or activities; may start using other people’s things without asking or receiving permission; for adolescents, may intrude into or take over what others are doing)</li> </ul>

**Table 9.3** Inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations in specific language skills

Skills/subskills	Inattention	Hyperactivity/impulsivity
Listening	38	38
Speaking	25	46
Reading	41	39
Writing	41	40
Vocabulary	26	43
Grammar	25	39
Total	196	245

= 0.02,  $d = 1.33$ ), which may suggest that teacher participant associated hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations with disruptive behaviour that might have a detrimental effect on the classroom management as in Bornman and Donohue's study (2013). Inappropriate behaviour is often associated with ADHD; therefore, advice on how to effectively manage such behaviour in the classroom can be found in many publications for teachers (e.g., Kormos and Smith 2012; O'Regan 2019; Rief 2012). However, it needs to be noted that the reported significance of the difference may be affected by the number of the items in the questionnaire; there were eight items in the inattention and nine in the hyperactivity/impulsivity part.

More specifically, teacher participants reported that hyperactivity/impulsivity affected all skills and subskills ( $M = 40.83$ ,  $S^2 = 9.36$ ,  $SD = 3.06$ ), whereas inattention was most present in listening, writing, and reading and significantly less in speaking and the subskills ( $M = 32.66$ ,  $S^2 = 65.86$ ,  $SD = 8.11$ ). These results are consistent with previous research findings and presumptions in the literature on the topic. A great deal of attention is needed to effectively perform expressive and comprehensive tasks. One needs to direct focus and disregard distractions and irrelevant information to complete a task methodologically using effective strategies (Wu 2014). Therefore, inattention may affect L2 reading (Turketti 2010; Williams 2000 cited in Lontou 2019, p. 222) and listening comprehension (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018), as well as extensive writing (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018; Kormos 2017). As for subskills, drawing on the research findings of Alloway et al. (2010) and Martinnussen and Tannock (2006) that suggest that learners with ADHD may struggle with memorisation of visuospatial information but not when the information is presented verbally, teacher participants did not find inattention having a significant effect on grammar and vocabulary because they might use appropriate L2 teaching techniques for learners with SpLDs, recommended in the literature (e.g., Kormos and Smith 2012; Nijakowska 2010).

Furthermore, the difference between the inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations was statistically significant in case of speaking skills ( $t = -1.82$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ,  $d = 0.87$ ). This finding is in line with my earlier assumptions (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018); hyperactivity/impulsivity might affect spoken interaction and production due to 'lack of self-control, impatience, extensive talking, and unexpected utterances (p. 220). For vocabulary and grammar, the results of the  $t$ -test showed no difference ( $t = -1.56$ ,  $p = 0.07$  and  $t = -1.47$ ,  $p = 0.08$ , respectively), but the effect size was large ( $d = 0.77$  and  $0.72$ , respectively). This lack of consistency between the results of the tests may be due to the low number of items. Drawing on the explanation by Larson-Hall (2016), the results of the effect size tests and tests calculating significance differed as they considered different values.

Regarding inattention manifestations, all teacher participants noticed that the students often lost things necessary for tasks or activities; in contrast, only three reported forgetfulness. As shown in Table 9.4, the most frequent inattention manifestations indicated by teacher participants were 'Is often distracted by extraneous stimuli' and 'often makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or with other activities'

**Table 9.4** The frequency of reported inattention manifestations

Inattention manifestations	Reported frequency
Often fails to give close attention to details	23
Often makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or with other activities	30
Often has difficulty in sustaining attention in tasks or play activities	25
Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly	26
Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork	24
Often has trouble organising tasks and activities	17
Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to encourage in tasks that require sustained mental effort	15
Is often distracted by extraneous stimuli	36

(36 and 30, respectively), whereas the least reported were ‘often has trouble organising tasks and activities’ and ‘often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to encourage in tasks that require sustained mental effort’ (17 and 15, respectively).

For many participants, inattention manifested as an inability to focus on the task as stressed by Julia, Karolina, Magda, and Zofia (‘Getting the student focused when we do different exercises in the classroom is really challenging.’, ‘Focusing on what we do in the class, like grammar tasks or exercises, is really difficult for them’, ‘They can’t focus, for example, on reading in the coursebook.’, ‘Doing exercises like all students do in the class is a big issue; those students cannot simply concentrate.’, respectively). Magda further said that her student usually ‘focuses on less important things’ and ‘cannot focus on the details’. He also ‘makes a lot of comments off topic’ or ‘makes a lot of digressions’, which eventually takes him more time to do the task. The lack of task completion and time management were also reported by Alicja, Monika, and Sylwia.

As for reading, participants’ narrative accounts were in line with the findings of Cain and Bignell (2014), Miller et al. (2013), Turketi (2010 in Liontou 2019, p. 222) and Williams (2000 in Liontou 2019, p. 222), which reported difficulties with reading comprehension in children with ADHD. For example, Zofia and Karolina said that their students with ADHD had difficulty understanding what is expected of them. As Karolina put it, ‘When I explain the reading task, they look at you, and you think they did understand what you were talking about, but not really. Then they do something different.’ In a similar vein, Alicja noticed that her students’ ‘reading ability is rarely fluent’ and they don’t often ‘understand the gist of a text, sometimes only specific questions.’, whereas Magda said that when she asked her student about a text, he ‘doesn’t usually know the answer and has to read it again.’ Sylwia and Monika had a similar experience. Monika said that she often needed to ‘explain reading tasks over and over. Sometimes, it was not enough.’

Magda also added that ‘although the information we are looking for is clearly written and often bolded student still has a problem with finding it.’ Julia also seemed surprised that her students could not find the correct information when reading: ‘When reading a text, and it is not a very difficult text, these students got lost very easily, and I don’t know why. The text was not difficult, the information was there’.

While doing listening tasks, Magda noticed that her student ‘listens selectively’ and ‘has difficulties with focusing on longer recordings’ because the student ‘may get easily distracted by everything’ and ‘usually is focused on something else than the recording’. As Alicja put it, ‘they cannot concentrate and skip the message of the task.’ In a similar vein, Karolina said that her student ‘often looks around and doesn’t pay attention to the listening task in the book’, whereas Julia and Zofia reported that her students sometimes start talking to other students while listening to a recording. As predicted (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018), the reported difficulties may detrimentally affect listening comprehension in students with ADHD-type behaviours, which may be due to poorer processing of verbal material (Andreou et al. 2005; Cain and Bignell 2014).

This lack of focus was also reported in grammar. Alicja, Monika, and Sylwia noticed that their students often misapplied grammatical rules. Alicja added that her students tended ‘to forget an element of a grammar rule such as the verb to be in tenses or skip the question word in sentences.’ Anna said that her students seemed not to pay attention to the differences in patterns: ‘It looks like all is the same for them. Details don’t matter.’ In this regard, Barbara described a situation when she practised grammatical patterns with her student: ‘Usually we practised patterns, and when I changed a pronoun it didn’t make any difference for him.’

The above narrative accounts for evidence that the inattention presentation of ADHD, in reference to the findings of Alloway et al. (2010) and Martinussen and Tannock (2006), may weaken grammar acquisition in EFL. However, considering the study’s quantitative data and the findings of Sparks et al. (2004, 2005), performing grammatical tasks may be affected only to some extent. Yet, it needs to be noted that the participants in Spark et al.’s studies (2004, 2005) were university students with ADHD, whereas, in the present study, teacher participants described primary and secondary school students. This means, considering the age-dependency of ADHD manifestations (Biederman 2011; Schwartz 2002), that difficulties in L2 grammar may be more present in younger learners.

On the other hand, many participants reported specific writing difficulties. The narrative accounts of participants corroborate the findings of Sparks et al. (2008) and Adi-Japha et al. (2007), as well as my initial predictions (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018).

Alicja, Monika, and Sylwia reported handwriting difficulties. ‘The work is usually untidy, messy. Or I should say always messy. I can’t read all the words.’ as reported by Monika, whereas Alicja said, ‘It’s very often illegible and there are parts of loosely connected words.’ She added that her students’ writing was ‘chaotic and full of mistakes’. Sylwia said that ‘it doesn’t make sense sometimes. I need to read it a few times to understand what the student wanted to say.’, whereas Monika explained that ‘I try to understand their writing, and it is difficult with the first reading. But then I read it again. It does make sense, the text lacks organisation, structure. There are many mistakes.’ In this regard, Barbara said that her student ‘skipped words, sentences or even paragraphs’. Sylwia tried to explain word omission by saying, ‘I read it, and I notice that a word is missing. It looks like he was in a hurry and didn’t have time to write all the words’. Anna also noticed letter omission: ‘Sentences are written ok.

**Table 9.5** The frequency of reported hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations

Hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations	Reported frequency
Often fidgets with or taps hands or feet, or squirms in seat	37
Often leaves seats in situations when remaining seated is expected	38
Often runs about or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate	38
Often unable to play or engage in leisure activities quietly	37
Is often “on the go” as if driven by a motor	38
Often talks excessively	7
Often blurts out an answer before a question has been completed	12
Often has difficulty waiting for his or her turn	26
Often interrupts or intrudes on others	12

They have a structure, but I noticed that he doesn't write the whole word, I mean he sometimes skips letters. They aren't like mistakes but just the word is incomplete, especially in longer words.' Misspellings were also reported by Alicja, Barbara, Julia, Monika, and Sylwia. Barbara said that her student 'confused words. He used words with similar pronunciation, sometimes he made up words.' The incorrect spelling affected vocabulary learning as stressed by Alicja and Sylwia. Alicja also said that some of her students seemed not to 'notice words.'

Similar difficulties were reported in speaking, which provides evidence for my predictions (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2018) in reference to the study of Andreou et al. (2005) that found poorer verbal skills in children with ADHD. Alicja said that when her students spoke, 'It's difficult to understand.' On the other hand, Sylwia praised her students' fluency in speaking but stressed a lack of organisation: 'When they speak, it is ok. It is very competent, fluent. But, it is sometimes difficult to understand what they want to say. What the main message is. They talk but it's a bit disorganised, and this is why it is difficult to understand.' Anna added, 'their speech is like, how to say, interrupted. They say something. Sometimes don't finish a sentence. And then they stop.'

Table 9.5 presents the reported frequency of hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations. The most frequent were 'often leaves seats in situations when remaining seated', 'often runs about or climbs in situations when remaining seated is expected', and 'is often “on the go” as if driven by a motor' (38), followed by 'often fidgets with or taps hands or feet, or squirms in seat' and 'often unable to play or engage in leisure activities quietly' (37). The least frequently reported were 'often talks excessively' (7), 'often blurts out an answer before a question has been completed' and 'often interrupts or intrudes on others' (12).

Alicja, Julia, Karolina, Magda, Monika, Sylwia, and Zofia noticed that their students needed to move constantly. Magda said, 'They feel the urgency to be in a constant movement; it doesn't matter what kind of activity it is, they will always find a way to move, tap, clap.' More specifically, Zofia said that 'Fidgeting happens a lot when they need to do some seating activity like reading. Not in writing because then they would use their pen and do some scribbles. I think that is movement for them.', whereas Karolina commented on the legs' movements of one of her students: 'I noticed he moves his legs a lot, not much hands. For example, when we do writing.



I think it helps him concentrate. The same when he needs to listen for a longer time, for example when we listen to the recording, or I give instructions.’ Julia, on the other hand, commented on moving around the classroom: ‘For example, we are about to do some writing exercises and he stands up and walks, stretches, and then sits down. It is quite often but it doesn’t last long and I think it doesn’t disturb other students.’ Many other participants stressed that the need for movement in students with ADHD does not affect other students and the classroom atmosphere; however, some participants commented on interrupting and intruding on others. Magda, for example, said, ‘From what I’ve observed it doesn’t depend on the subskills, but it is very unconscious and they don’t really control it. If they like something they just take it or they take it and then ask if they may.’ Whereas Sylwia commented on butting into conversations: ‘When students talk in pairs, I noticed that [a student’s name] dominates the conversation. He often interrupts or comments on what the other person said.’ Also, Karolina noticed that her students try to dominate the situation: ‘They can play nicely, but suddenly it becomes so intense that they start to take over the game. Or when we do some speaking in the class on one topic, [a student’s name] start talking about something different or having one-to-one conversation with the student who is seating with him.’

To conclude, Alicja gave an overview of the difficulties related to inattention, stressing individual differences among students:

‘I think it’s more or less similar in all the skills and subskills. A person is lost, disoriented and avoids doing the task if they’re aware that they are lost and don’t know the answers. However, the students do not always realise they are not paying attention and are very often eager to answer the questions.’ Some students constantly interrupt, do not raise their hand while speaking, they are very noisy and fidget, squirm. They do not finish tasks and avoid exercise that requires mental effort. On the other hand, there are students who daydream, ignore the external world.’

## **Implications of the Findings for the Context**

### ***The Student Experiencing ADHD-Type Behaviours May Struggle to Learn EFL***

The present study found that ADHD might affect all aspects of EFL learning. Teacher participants reported the effect of inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity on all language skills and subskills. However, it needs to be noted that listening, writing, and reading were significantly more affected by the inattention presentation. It may suggest that listening, reading, and writing tasks require a higher level of attention due to their complexity. To perform these tasks, a student needs to concentrate for a longer time and manipulate information from different sources and perform a few activities simultaneously. For example, in a typical listening task, one needs to listen attentively to respond to questions in detail. They need to read the questions correctly and comprehend them appropriately in the context of the recording. Then,

the responses to the questions are often made in writing, which requires processing complex verbal information correctly while performing a physical activity of writing. Similarly, in reading comprehension tasks, a student needs to understand the questions about the text and then locate the correct answer. While in writing, a student is expected to write concisely and coherently with correct spelling; this requires good planning and proofreading skills. In sum, to perform listening, reading, and writing tasks up to standard, one needs to accept a sustained mental effort, focus, select information appropriately in a given context, connect information logically, and ignore irrelevancy.

The above considerations concern an individual student, which means that the effect of the inattention presentation is micro-levelled. Yet, it needs to be remembered that the specific manifestations of the inattention presentation in L2 learning and use will depend on the learner's diverse cognitive and linguistic profile. Unfortunately, many educators are unaware of their students' diverse profiles and the barriers to learning that stem from such a profile; therefore, it is paramount that teachers are trained in their capacity and critical approach to be able to create equal opportunities for all in the classroom (Kangas 2021).

### ***ADHD-Type Behaviours May Affect Language Classroom Dynamics***

Unlike inattention, the hyperactivity/impulsivity presentation may have a macro-level effect. Teacher participants reported an equal impact of hyperactivity/impulsivity manifestations on all language skills and subskills; thus drawing on previous research findings and publications for teachers concerning behavioural difficulties in the context of ADHD (Bornman and Donohue 2013; Kormos and Smith 2012; O'Regan 2019; Rief 2012), it may be suggested that the hyperactivity/impulsivity presentation may affect the classroom dynamics.

On the other hand, previous research also found that students with ADHD performed similarly to their peers in a language classroom (Sparks et al. 2004, 2005, 2008) and that teachers had a positive attitude towards these students and did not object to having them in their classroom (Bornman and Donohue 2013; Liang and Gao 2016). Thus, students with ADHD may successfully learn in the mainstream language classroom, provided their specific needs need to be adequately accommodated (Kormos and Smith 2012; Liontou 2019) so that their behaviour does not detrimentally affect their and others' learning or well-being of their teachers.

The specific needs of students with ADHD-type behaviours can be accommodated in the classroom setting using self-management approaches, and antecedent- and consequent-based strategies, which include choice-making, modification of the assigned task, active and regular teaching classroom rules, a verbal reprimand, removal from the classroom, usage token reinforcement, self-monitoring, reinforcement, and evaluation (DuPaul and Weyandt 2006). It is important, however, that

the teacher is not solely responsible for implementing these strategies. The whole school staff, other students, and the student's parents or carers should be involved (Kałdonek-Crnjaković 2020).

## Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the possible effect of ADHD on EFL from the teacher's perspective. Its results corroborated with previous research findings and theoretical considerations. However, this study has some limitations, and its findings need to be considered with caution.

The data were collected by means of a questionnaire with open-ended questions and a subsequent interview, which yielded findings that allowed to answer the research question of the study. However, the questionnaire was lengthy and discouraged many potential participants. Future research on the topic may use a revised version of the questionnaire with closed-ended items. In this way, the instrument will be more user-friendly, ensuring full completion (Rose et al. 2020); consequently, more teachers will be willing to participate in the study. A larger sample would allow for a more complex statistical analysis.

On the other hand, collecting data through in-depth interviews provided an insight into the difficulties that students with ADHD-type behaviours may experience in different language skills and subskills. However, it needs to be noted that not every participant gave an interview, which may be considered as a drawback of the study.

Studying ADHD in the context of L2 learning is important because, among others, as Kangas (2021, p. 673) put it, to avoid reinforcing 'a deficit mindset rooted in ableism'. As this study showed, inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity may affect language skills development, but students with ADHD-type behaviours can be successful language learners. Teachers' knowledge of ADHD and how to manage students with ADHD-type behaviours are central for learning outcomes of these students and their peers, inclusive atmosphere in the classroom, and teacher well-being. Therefore, future studies, concerning recent studies on language teachers and the other common SpLD (e.g., Fišer 2019; Kałdonek-Crnjaković and Fišer 2021; Fišer and Kałdonek-Crnjaković, under review; Kormos and Nijakowska 2017; Nijakowska et al. 2018) should investigate teacher knowledge, inclusive practices, concerns, self-efficacy beliefs, and affective matters.

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# Chapter 10

## Building Young Learners' Plurilingual and Pluricultural Repertoire: An Analysis of EFL Textbooks' Speaking Activities



**Maria Daniela Cifone Ponte**

**Abstract** Beyond the relevance given to the plurilingual and pluricultural competence in the context of Europe and English as a foreign language, there has been surprisingly little research into how this competence is integrated into the content of EFL textbooks. In this chapter, we attempt to describe whether oral production activities within EFL textbooks for young learners: (i) develop an awareness of socio-cultural aspects by including a wide range of cultural topics and (ii) foster the plurilingual and pluricultural competence by meeting the CEFR Companion Volume's new descriptors. To accomplish the above objectives, this study examines three of the most used 6th year of Primary Education EFL textbooks by employing a list of seven cultural categories developed by the CEFR (Council of Europe (2001) and a checklist based on the CEFR Companion Volume's (Council of Europe (2018)) new descriptors. This will allow us to delve into the speaking activities where plurilingual and pluricultural competence should be prioritized to avoid misconceptions and promote intercultural communication through mediation. This chapter has educational implications for EFL teaching and learning in multilingual contexts, textbooks publishers and syllabus design.

**Keywords** Plurilingual competence · Pluricultural competence · EFL textbooks · Speaking activities · Cross-cultural communication

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## Introduction

In the past decades, Europe has witnessed massive migratory movements within its borders (Hoskins and Sallah 2011). Thus, fostering intercultural dialogue has become a necessity across the continent. Although intercultural competence has held an important status within the context of language teaching; its relevance has become more evident within European policies concerning education (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013; Culture Council 2008; Hoskins and Sallah 2011). The notions of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism have recently emerged as an answer to this need by promoting learners as social agents (Council of Europe 2018). The ‘ideal native speaker’ is no longer the ultimate model; learners are now instructed to achieve a linguistic repertoire by including all linguistics abilities. In this respect, oral production skills seem to play an essential role in avoiding misconceptions and misunderstandings in communication, and mediating abilities are some of the main goals of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (Council of Europe 2018; Galante 2020). Moreover, the level descriptors provided by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) have been widely used across European curricula and language programmes (Figueras 2012). These descriptors have served as insightful instruments to design language materials. In this case, they allow us to look into the treatment that the pluricultural competence is receiving in EFL textbooks and describe how the CEFR’s criteria have been adapted to EFL materials for Spanish young learners.

Although numerous studies have been published on the impact of intercultural competence in EFL textbooks’ content, nothing has been published regarding the role of EFL materials in promoting the so-called plurilingual and pluricultural competence in their oral production activities. In this respect, historically, EFL materials have focused on preparing students for speaking the language in a fictional monolingual and monocultural community. However, with the growing need of training learner as social agents who can communicate in multilingual and multicultural contexts, a textbook should provide learners with enough tools and practice for this type of communication.

The aim of this chapter is twofold: to examine oral production activities contained in three of the most used 6<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education EFL textbooks in La Rioja, Spain, to determine how the cultural component is represented. Secondly, the activities will be examined in terms of a list of descriptors extracted from the CEFR’s Companion Volume (2018) to determine if plurilingual and pluricultural competence is fostered. This study thus broadens new perspectives concerning EFL teaching and plurilingual learners in two ways: (i) it gives a broad view of the cultural component in speaking activities in EFL textbooks for young learners as oral skills are key to achieve an efficient communication in intercultural encounters and (ii) it provides a description of these activities in terms of the plurilingual and pluricultural approach to determine EFL textbooks are addressing this essential competence for the European context.

This chapter comprises four sections. The first section provides the reader with a broad vision of plurilingual Europe and the plurilingual and pluricultural competence in the European context. The second section deals with the methodology implemented where the sample, the context of the study and the data analysis are described. The results will be displayed and discussed in the third section and the last section will unveil the main conclusions as well as the main implications of this study.

## Theoretical Framework

### *Plurilingualism in Europe*

Plurilingualism is a complex concept that first appeared in the European context as an answer to its linguistic diversity and interculturality (Marshall and Moore 2018; Lau and van Viegen 2020). It emerged as an attempt to improve the quality of communication among European citizens, and it represents the linguistic and cultural practices where plurilingual speakers participate (Marshall and Moore 2018). Note, also, that its definition also encompasses the term *pluriculturalism* which refers to the speaker's ability to participate in intercultural encounters by adapting to the social situation, understanding different cultural practices and norms and being aware of Otherness by drawing on their personal experiences with other cultures (Galante 2020; Council of Europe 2018). The plurilingual and pluricultural competence was included in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001). Additionally, it has been further developed and articulated in the CEFR Companion Volume by means of the inclusion of descriptors for each level of proficiency (Council of Europe 2018). Competence has been put at the forefront in Europe as a result of nowadays' political climate where nationalism is on the rise and the European project seems to be suffering a setback (Piccardo et al. 2019). Only recently, has its incorporation in language learning policies and its materialization in the classroom been considered of urgent need in a post-globalized world where diversity is present in every community (Lau and van Viegen 2020; Council of Europe 2018; Trim 2007).

Europe has been a plurilingual continent for most of its history. In its beginnings, neighbouring villages were able to coexist and communicate despite significant linguistic differences (Wright 2000). Initially, the main purpose of language teaching in the European context was to make cultural artefacts such as literature accessible. Plurilingualism was common among educated people as learning languages was linked to certain sociocultural traditions such as the grand tour to Mediterranean countries (Wright 2000). This approach laid the focus on written skills and mastering the native speaker model (Byram and Zarate 1996). However, since the Second World War, Europe has witnessed significant changes in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. An example of these changes was the shift from the plurilingualism described above to nationalism since "cross-nurturing of languages and cultures [were] seen increasingly as a problem rather than an asset"

(Piccardo and North 2020, p. 281). This turning point had direct consequences in language teaching whose approaches started to focus on languages as separated entities instead of considering languages as interrelated (Piccardo et al. 2019).

When English started to spread across post-war Europe, the capacity to communicate gained priority (Hoffman 2000). This tendency led to a societal bilingualism (or multilingualism in the case of already bilingual communities) that resulted in the coexistence of English and other European languages in most European societies (Cenoz and Jessner 2000). Nowadays, English is the second language for a lot of Europeans, and it is also learnt as a third language in some communities. In the case of Spain, we find native speakers of minority autochthonous languages such as Catalan or Euskera whose second language is usually Spanish, so they learn English as a foreign language at school. Moreover, immigration and second-generation immigrants learn the official language of their new country and study English at school (Cenoz and Jessner 2000). In this respect, migration and population movements within the European borders are the cause of farreaching changes in European education policies which have been adapted to these demographic changes (Vasileva 2009; Hoskins and Sallah 2011). This fact has had major implications regarding language usage and education policies whose focus has switched now to promote intercultural dialogue across Europe (Hoskins and Sallah 2011). The CEFR has attempted to foster “valorisation of the plurilingual profile of learners with an immigrant background” (Piccardo and North 2020, p. 283). Additionally, the ideal native speaker is no longer the ultimate model; learners are now instructed to achieve a linguistic repertoire by including all linguistics abilities and acting as cultural mediators (Byram and Zarate 1996; Zarate 2004; Council of Europe 2018).

### ***The CEFR and Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence (PPC)***

In 2001, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was published commercially. The purpose of this document was to provide Europe with a common framework for language teaching in order to unify criteria and improve communication within its borders. Its main goal was to allow Europeans to communicate effectively despite their mother tongue and cultural background. Since its publication,

EFL textbooks and European countries’ syllabi, and curricula along with teacher education and official examinations have suffered considerable modifications (Council of Europe 2003).

The plurilingual approach emerged in the late 90s in a study published by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe 2009a, b). Its definition introduced controversial notions such as the fact that plurilingual individuals’ characteristics are unique as their competence in their languages may vary depending on the context they are immersed and the experiences they have undergone (Council of Europe 2009a, b).

In fact, this competence caused major paradigmatic shifts. Firstly, language skills, identity and culture were considered as a whole rather than separated entities (Coste 2010). It also placed an emphasis on the existence of partial competences; for the first time, the notion of competence was described as dynamic since it was believed that each individual's competences are dependent on their biography (Piccardo et al. 2019). According to Piccardo et al. (2019), the notion of partial competences was considered revolutionary when they first appeared, so their aim was to encourage learners and society's linguistic diversity. In this regard, this competence promoted learners as 'social agents' so that they were able to take advantage of their linguistic knowledge, cultures and their past experiences to participate in diverse social and educational contexts (Council of Europe 2018; Piccardo et al. 2019). More specifically, learners were encouraged to avoid keeping languages and cultures separated; quite the opposite, they were provided tools to maximize their linguistic knowledge in other languages and use it to achieve better communication in multilingual and multicultural contexts. The plurilingual approach also advocated for the integration and interaction of cultures whilst agreeing there is no such a thing called cultural ethnocentrism (Alves and Mendes 2006; Kasztalska and Swatek 2020). In other words, the main objective was to create citizens with the ability to overcome barriers and establish relationships in plurilingual and pluricultural contexts.

It seems important to note that it was not the first time the notion of culture was emphasized in the field of foreign language teaching (FLT). In fact, it was in the 70s with the arrival of the term Communicative Competence when the culture became increasingly important in FLT (Hymes 1966). Language and culture started to be regarded as inseparable entities (Byram 1997; Alptekin 2002; Bush 2007; Baker 2011). According to Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), the concept of culture played an important role in the communication process between speakers from various cultures because it entailed accepting a set of assumptions and practices embedded in a particular cultural context. The cultural component had become a vital element in education, particularly in FLT, where communication and understanding became a priority (Cifone Ponte 2019).

### ***Intercultural Communication in EFL***

In nowadays society, intercultural encounters are frequent due to globalization, and English as a lingua franca has become the language to interact with them (Chang 2014).

As it was published in *The Economist*, "in central Europe, as in much of the world, knowledge of English has become a basic skill of modern life comparable with the ability to drive a car or use a personal computer" (*The Economist* 2004, August 7). The question of whether speakers will be successful during these communicative encounters does not exclusively depend on their level of fluency but on their capacity to solve and dodge misunderstandings caused by linguistic conventions, interaction management, vocabulary, or politeness (Lustig and Koester 1991).

Intercultural competence is a key approach within the CEFR as speakers are intended to build bridges that assist the construction or conveyance of meaning (Council of Europe 2018). What is more, the intercultural competence is encompassed by the plurilingual and pluricultural competence as the latter works as an umbrella term (Robles Ávila and Palmer 2020). One might note that learners are no longer looking for having an excellent level regarding linguistic competences but are active participants who master linguistic resources and sociocultural knowledge in authentic linguistic exchanges (Council of Europe 2001). Foreign language learners, no matter their level of proficiency, add the new language to their linguistic repertoire, becoming a plurilingual speaker who constantly develops and improves their intercultural competence (Robles Ávila and Palmer 2020).

Regarding the above, every speaker owns a set of resources that vary in terms of their social, educational and professional interaction and help them make sense of the world. These resources are strongly linked to the interconnection of languages and cultures they have been in contact with. According to Galante (2020), there is a series of plurilingual practices found in most plurilinguals; they are related to their repertoire and the limitless possibilities it has when it comes to using their cultural and linguistic resources. Some of the practices Galante (2020, p.4) refers to are: (i) translanguaging, which refers to switching and mixing languages; (ii) intercomprehension, referring to meaning-making of a new language by using one's own repertoire; (iii) *comparons nos langues* the comparison of languages for learning purposes; and (iv) cross-cultural awareness; being aware of social and cultural conventions when using a language what includes knowledge of values, customs and behaviours. This last practice is of great importance for the present study as cross-cultural awareness requires practice so that students can distinguish cultural similarities and differences to adapt their behaviour by using their cultural repertoire. Although cultural awareness can be successfully achieved in the contexts of linguistic immersion (Piccardo and North 2020), in those countries where English is taught as a foreign language and linguistic immersion is not possible (as it is the case of Spain), training in cross-cultural awareness acquires a relevant role.

From a sociocultural perspective, language learning is anchored in interaction and mediation among individuals who have different cultural and linguistic experiences (Lantolf 2011). Learners carry with themselves a series of visible and invisible elements from those cultures they have contact with (Zarate 2004). From a young age, collective and individual representations are built; these representations allow speakers to create their own mental representations and shape meanings (Zarate 2004). They are influenced by experiences with individuals, events and even institutions (e.g. school). In FLT, it is crucial to raise awareness and openness to other cultures from early age as learners' mental representations will be malleable (Zarate 2004). Training learners on cultural mediation seems to be the most effective solution to the rigidity of collective and individual representations in cross-linguistic communication. Cultural mediation makes it possible to help participants in an intercultural encounter to use their cultural repertoire to understand each other more efficiently (Zarate 2004; North and Piccardo 2017).

In the foreign language classroom, mediation is possible when spaces and activities that contribute to creativity, openness and mutual understanding are provided to the learner. Additionally, mediation is inherent to the notion of plurilingualism as its main goal is to facilitate communication between learners who do not share their sociocultural or sociolinguistic background (Piccardo et al. 2019). In this respect, the two concepts appear together in the CEFR. What is more, mediation was first introduced in the earliest versions of the CEFR as one of the fourth modes of communicative language activity. This notion deals with the construction of new meaning where reception and production skills during the interaction are both involved. Speakers draw on mediation to get access to unknown knowledge and concepts and to achieve successful communication during cross-linguistic/cultural encounters (Piccardo et al. 2019). Backus et al. (2013) suggest that cross-linguistic mediation gains importance in contexts where diversity is significant. We partly agree with Backus et al. (2013) as mediation can contribute to the solution of communicative issues that emerged among speakers from different languages; yet, mediation may also solve misunderstandings related to different cultural backgrounds even when speakers share high proficiency levels of the language. This may be the case in this study as EFL classrooms in Spain are characterized by their linguistic and cultural diversity (Turell 2000). Despite its relevance, cultural mediation has been a rather neglected area in FLT (see, for instance, Zarate 2004). Little research has focused on how mediation is currently addressed in the classroom and by textbooks.

When it comes to developing intercultural communication within the plurilingual and pluricultural competence, EFL textbooks may be key in their development as teaching materials are not just a simple source of linguistic knowledge, but their activities may be oriented to work on sociocultural aspects of the language (Cortazzi and Jin 1999). What is more, EFL materials can contribute to raise awareness of learners' own cultural repertoire so they can make use of it and communicate more efficiently. Numerous scholars working on intercultural competence have explored its role in EFL textbooks and have noted that this component has been neglected for decades (see, for instance, Cifone Ponte 2019; Wu 2010; Risager 1990). Broadly, these studies have been focused on cultural references in reading comprehension activities and lexicon of EFL materials. Some of their most relevant findings suggested that their pages are dominated by an ethnocentric view where the target language's culture is emphasized and students' own culture or their cultural baggage is not considered (Kramsch 1993; Weninger and Kiss 2013; Clavel-Arroitia and Fuster-Marquéz 2014; Bahrami 2015; Robles Ávila and Palmer 2020; Canga Alonso and Cifone Ponte 2021; Cifone Ponte and Mora Guarín 2021).

To our knowledge, no papers have been published on the role of plurilingual and pluricultural competence in EFL materials. However, Robles Ávila and Palmer (2020) conducted research on pluricultural competence in Spanish as a foreign language (SFL). They analyzed a series of recently published SFL textbooks to define if this competence has been considered in their content. Some of their main concerns were the lack of pluricultural awareness in textbooks for learners of Spanish although on some of their pages, they had space for cultural glimpses. Our angle here is

slightly different: we do not look at the whole textbook but rather at the oral production sections since the plurilingual and pluricultural awareness seems to be strongly linked to the speakers' ability to communicate efficiently in cross-cultural contexts. Additionally, we follow the CEFR's descriptors according to the level of the textbook to describe its deficiencies.

Although it is not until 2018 when descriptors have been defined with the inclusion of further guidelines for the treatment of this competence (Council of Europe 2018), we should bear in mind that plurilingual and pluricultural competence has been emphasized by the CEFR as a crucial competence in communication across Europe since it was first published (CEFR 2001). As mentioned previously, English has been part of the linguistic landscape of Europe for more than eighty years. Subsequently, we expect this competence to be fostered in EFL textbooks published before 2018 to some extent, and to be noticeable in recently published materials.

## Research Questions

As abovementioned, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the speaking activities of EFL textbooks used by 6<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education students in terms of the plurilingual and pluricultural components. Our analysis was driven by the following research questions:

1. Do EFL materials include speaking activities that develop an awareness of interculturality by covering a variety of cultural topics?
2. To what extent do 6<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education EFL textbooks foster pluricultural competence through oral production activities by meeting the CEFR's new descriptors?

## Methodology

### *Sample*

Regarding the materials analyzed, our sample comprised three of the most used 6<sup>th</sup> year of Primary Education EFL textbooks in La Rioja, Spain: *Big Questions* (BQ), *New Tiger* (NT) and *Wonder 6* (W6). These materials were published by well-known international publishing houses specifically specialized in foreign language teaching. The selection of these textbooks was made according to the following criteria: (i) they were used by students who were part of a national research project where the productive lexical competence and the role of creativity and culture in lexical availability were assessed, (ii) they were designed by following the national legislation, the local legislation, and its curriculum and the CEFR. Moreover, all the textbooks covered the A2 level in the CEFR's scale. For the sake of clarity, textbooks



will be referred to by their full names throughout the chapter except for the tables and figures where their acronym will be used.

### ***The Context of La Rioja***

As previously elicited, the present study focused on the analysis of the construction of the pluricultural competence through oral production activities in EFL materials used in La Rioja, Spain. This region is located in the north of Spain and it is adjacent to the Basque Country and Navarre where Spanish and Euskera coexist as official languages. Numerous families, whose job is in La Rioja, decide to take their children to schools located within this Autonomous Community. Similarly, La Rioja receives a significant number of immigrants per year which directly influences the diversity within its classrooms. In this sense, more than 12% of students between 6 and 11 are immigrants, being Rumanian, Chinese, Moroccan and Latin American the main nationalities (Ayuntamiento de Logroño 2018). These facts make the context of La Rioja of great interest in terms of plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Its classrooms are enriched with different nationalities, languages and cultural experiences where this competence can be beneficial to overcome prejudices, misunderstandings and promote acceptance among the students from a very early age.

### ***Data Analysis and Management***

Regarding the first research question, each textbook was analyzed separately by focusing exclusively on the oral production activities. Considering that plurilingual and pluricultural competence can be fostered when the language use is flexible and creative (Galante 2020), only those activities that foster creativity and allow students to provide flexible answers were selected.

Each activity was evaluated in terms of its cultural focus and was tagged as 'cultural' or 'not cultural'. To consider an activity as 'cultural' they should cover at least one of the cultural topics included in the full version of the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001). The topics were the following: (1) *everyday living*, this category encompasses food and drink and behaviours related to food, public holidays, the world of work and leisure activities; (2) *living conditions*, which refers to living standards, housing conditions and welfare; (3) *interpersonal relations*, which are related to relationships within a community such as relations between generations and family structures; (4) *values, beliefs and attitudes* deal with social class, wealth, traditions, history, politics, arts and religion; (5) *body language* that refers to knowledge of the conventions related to this behaviour form; (6) *social conventions*, a category concerned with punctuality, clothing and dress codes, or taboos; and (7) *ritual behaviour* that describes areas such as religious rites, birth and death, ceremonies, festivals and celebrations (2001, pp. 102–103).



In terms of the second research question, the new descriptors included in the companion version of the CEFR (2018) were considered for the analysis of the speaking activities (see Table 10.2). A checklist for each speaking activity that met the previous criteria was used. The checklist consists of seven items extracted or adapted from the sections *facilitating pluricultural space (mediating communication)* and *plurilingual and pluricultural competence* from the CEFR (Council of Europe 2018, pp. 122–123; 157–160). Firstly, we considered the key concepts related to a speaker’s pluricultural repertoire highlighted by the document. These ideas included the fact of the speaker being able to recognize and act on cultural conventions, recognizing and interpreting similarities and differences between their and others’ cultures and evaluating neutrally and critically. In relation to the descriptors, we selected those which addressed A1 and A2 levels.

Data management and analysis were performed using Microsoft Excel where each speaking activity was classified related to its purpose, the topic it covered and the fulfilment of each descriptor.

## Results and Discussion

The first research question aimed to determine whether EFL textbooks used by 6<sup>th</sup> of Primary Education students in La Rioja include oral production activities that foster intercultural awareness and cover different cultural topics. Our data revealed that the three textbooks include a similar quantity of speaking activities that seek to work on cultural topics (see Table 10.1). However, in terms of their representation over the total quantity of oral production activities, *New Tiger* seemed to be more balanced as almost half of the speaking activities focused on cultural topics. This finding demonstrated that EFL materials do promote intercultural awareness in their content as it is suggested by the CEFR (2001) and the curriculum of La Rioja (Decree 24/2014). Our findings did not agree with previous research on intercultural competence in EFL textbooks that established the cultural component is usually neglected in reading comprehension activities and vocabulary input (Risager 1990; Wu 2010; Canga Alonso and Cifone Ponte 2015, 2021). In contrast, our data indicated that, in the case of speaking activities, EFL textbooks provide students with a balanced practice between regular activities and those focused on intercultural competence. This may be explained by the fact that intercultural competence is considered as a

**Table 10.1** Representation of oral production activities in EFL textbooks

Textbook	Total of speaking activities	Speaking activities focused on culture	Representation (%)
Wonder 6	50	16	32
Big questions	69	18	26.08
New tiger	46	20	43.48

**Table 10.2** Oral production activities classified by the CEFR's cultural categories (2001)

Cultural category	Textbooks		
	W6	BQ	NT
Everyday living	3	3	5
Living conditions	5	2	6
Interpersonal relations	0	1	1
Values, beliefs and attitudes	2	3	1
Body language	0	4	0
Social conventions	3	2	0
Ritual behaviors	3	3	7

tool for efficient communication (Cortazzi and Jin 1999). As a result, EFL materials may be using the speaking activities to promote this competence.

However, not all the materials addressed these activities in the same way. For instance, *Big Questions* and *New Tiger* provide the students with questions that may arise cultural awareness related to Otherness but also to their own cultures whereas *Wonder 6's* approach was exclusively centred on Otherness. Take as an example the following activities extracted from the former materials:

Have you ever eaten any of these foods? (*Big Questions*, extracted from an extension activity from a reading comprehension task focused on Christmas in England where words such as mince pies were included).

Which foods does Jamaica produce? Now, ask and talk about your country (*New Tiger*)

In order to promote learners as social agents, activities offered by textbooks should provide learners with diverse social contexts and encourage them to use their previous linguistic and cultural knowledge (Alves and Mendes 2006). As suggested by scholars and previous research, *Big Questions* and *New Tiger* do not keep languages and cultures separated (Galante 2020; Alves and Mendes 2006). This can have a positive result on learners' plurilingual and pluricultural competence since making aware students of the deep connection between cultures helps develop learners' resources and make their repertoire more accessible in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural encounters (Galante 2020; Lau and van Viegen 2020). On the other hand, for learners to successfully handle misunderstanding and develop modes of intervention and mediation, they should be open to other cultures as well as knowing their own (Zarate 2004).

As for the cultural topics addressed by the activities, Table 10.2 shows the list of cultural categories from the CEFR (2001) and it includes the number of activities that focused on those topics. Broadly, the data reported that the three textbooks have similar approaches when it comes to the cultural topics that lead their speaking activities. In this respect, *everyday living*, *living conditions* and *ritual behaviours* were widely recurrent. At the same time, other essential areas for the development of the learners' pluricultural repertoire and intercultural awareness were neglected (see *body language* or *interpersonal relationships*) (Byram 1997; Zarate 2004). In consonance with Cifone Ponte (2019) and Sercu et al. (2005), our results suggested that

festivities and everyday topics are the centre of cultural content in EFL textbooks. In this respect, Sercu et al. (2005) found learners in Spain are familiar with cultural topics concerning daily habits, food and some traditions such as Halloween. Nevertheless, they are barely aware of other cultural issues such as folklore, institutions, geography or international status or relations. This fact may be hindering the capacity of students to acquire knowledge on different cultural topics and practice the use of their cultural repertoire to communicate in situations they are not familiar with. It should be noted that cross-cultural awareness is one of the plurilingual practices that plurilinguals can access to create meaning (Galante 2020). It is essential then EFL learners can engage in discussions related to values, customs and behaviours (Byram 1997; Galante 2020).

The recurrence of these topics in EFL materials may also find an explanation in the curriculum of La Rioja (Decree 24/2014) that established that young learners at this stage of education should be able to talk about everyday activities and habits such as hobbies and free-time activities. Additionally, when interculturality is mentioned, the curriculum regulates the topics students should be familiarized with: celebrations, traditions and customs from the target culture. However, the practice of limiting cultural topics because of learners' ages is not wise. Teachers and curriculum and textbooks designers should be aware that students' collective and individual representations are started to be built at very young ages and become rigid as the speaker become an adult (Zarate 2004). Since these representations can be influenced not only by experiences, but also by education, it is crucial to provide learners with engaging speaking activities that cover different cultural topics to develop a better awareness of their own culture and that of others (Zarate 2004). Additionally, to train cultural mediators, students should be exposed to different communicative situations (Lau and van Viegen 2020).

The purpose of the second research question was to determine if the speaking activities focused on interculturality meet any descriptor referring to the plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Table 10.3 shows a list of seven descriptors related to the plurilingual and pluricultural competence extracted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2018) along with the number of activities that met each criterion. Our data reflected that most activities analyzed did not follow any recommendation from the CEFR (2018). Our findings purported that some oral production activities aimed to promote the recognition and interpretation of similarities and differences in perspective, practices and events (see descriptor 1, Table 10.3) and some of them also fostered mediation as they facilitated intercultural exchange by providing the learner with tools to be able to question and show interest in cultures (see descriptor 7). Descriptors related to the capacity of students to switch their behaviour considering the cultural situation they are dealing with were totally overlooked. Moreover, in concordance with previous studies (Wu 2010; Weninger and Kiss 2013) EFL textbooks promoted an ethnocentric and monolingual view of the English language where students are required to find an equivalent to any cultural term they need to include in their speech. This is an unnatural approach to culture since lexicon, especially cultural words, convey deep meanings that can get lost in translation (consider, for instance, *Easter* and *Semana Santa* in Spanish) (Porto and Byram 2016; Cifone Ponte 2019).

**Table 10.3** Descriptors met by the oral production activities

Descriptors	Textbooks		
	W6	BQ	NT
Help learners recognize and interpret similarities and differences in perspectives, practices and events	4	5	12
Help learners recognize and apply basic cultural conventions associated with everyday social exchanges	1	3	4
Help learners act appropriately in everyday greetings, farewells and expressions of thanks and apology, although he/she has difficulty coping with any departure from the routine	0	0	0
Help learners recognize that his/her behaviour in an everyday transaction may convey a message different from the one he/she intends, and be able to try to explain this simply	0	0	0
Help learners recognize when difficulties occur in interaction with members of other cultures, even though he/she may well not be sure how to behave in the situation	0	1	0
Help learners to use words from their plurilingual repertoire to make him/herself understood in a routine everyday situation when he/she cannot think of an adequate word Or expression in the language being spoken	0	2	0
Fosters the capacity of contributing to an intercultural exchange by providing the learner with tools so they are able to use questions and show interest to promote understanding of cultural norms and perspectives	4	7	14

Despite the fact that cultural component was present in a great number of oral production activities, our findings revealed that they did not help young learners build their pluricultural repertoire. Most activities were exclusively centred on the cultural component and overlooked the plurilingual and pluricultural competence. This approach was not different from the one reported by Robles Ávila and Palmer (2020). Their analysis of Spanish as foreign language (SFL) materials showed that culture was superficially addressed whilst the pluricultural component was forgotten in most of the textbooks examined. In the case of our study, this tendency may be explained by the fact that two of the three textbooks analyzed were published before the publication of the CEFR Companion Volume (2018), where the plurilingual and pluricultural competence's descriptors were first published. This may have had direct consequences on its integration in EFL materials as the lack of descriptors complicated its incorporation in terms of language levels. However, as it has been mentioned in the literature review, this competence has been on the horizon for decades and its relevance in the linguistic landscape has been constantly emphasized by research (Trim 2007; Piccardo et al. 2019).

## Conclusion and Implications for the Context

The main aim of this study was to define how EFL textbooks for young learners build their pluricultural repertoire by analyzing the oral production activities. Our results may prove that EFL textbooks incorporate the cultural component in their speaking activities in a more balanced way than in the rest of their content. However, they restrict their content to cultural topics that are adapted to the age of the learner.

Broadly, the speaking activities do not meet the descriptors included by the CEFR Companion Volume (2018) that define how the plurilingual and pluricultural competence should be addressed at different levels. This may demonstrate that the inclusion of this competence in previous versions and explanatory documents of the CEFR has not been enough to promote its instruction in the EFL classroom. The lack of descriptors until 2018 has posed some challenges when it comes to designing EFL textbooks since publishers cannot adapt their content and its level to foster this competence in a gradual way. This finding is relevant for research as it points to the lack of investigation on the plurilingual and pluricultural competence in the EFL classroom.

As for the educational implications of the present study, it contributes to the field of EFL in the European context, and more specifically, in Spain, in three ways. First, since most textbooks used in Spain are designed to fulfil the requirements of local and national legislation, our results suggest the need to reconsider the role given to culture by the curriculum of La Rioja. Due to its location, this Autonomous Community benefits from great diversity in its classrooms. Therefore, culture should be attributed to a more dynamic position and the cultural topics should be wide to permit the development of our students' plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire. We need to keep in mind that rigid content may put in danger the capacity of the learner to develop as a social agent and to be able to mediate in cross-linguistic encounters by using their repertoire as their individual and collective representations need to nurture from different sociocultural contexts and diverse situations (Zarate 2004). Secondly, the present study suggests intercultural competence is being integrated into EFL materials for young learners through speaking activities. In this respect, some of these activities are raising awareness of students' own culture and Otherness. This is good news, as previous research has reported intercultural competence is usually neglected in the rest of EFL textbooks' content. However, we need further research to see whether this is a tendency at other levels of primary and secondary education. Thirdly, our results may have direct implications for bilingual and multilingual EFL learners as the absence of plurilingual and pluricultural competence may create difficulties for cross-linguistic communication not only within the Spanish territory but within European borders.

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# Chapter 11

## Supplementing Reading in EFL at Primary School Level in the Czech Republic



Olga Vraštilová

**Abstract** Teaching English as a foreign language has a long tradition in the Czech Republic, but it only started spreading widely after 1989. After over thirty years, there are still some quite serious drawbacks in this field of education one of them being access to up-to-date teaching materials, particularly at some small or regional schools. While the market is full of new and attractive teaching materials, there are still schools or parents who cannot afford them. With respect to this fact, the chapter will focus on reading and how it is presented in textbooks used in teaching English to young learners. The positives and negatives of such textbook supplementing will be discussed. Suggestions on how to make reading more attractive for young learners will be made.

**Keywords** ELT · Primary education · L2 reading

### Introduction

Reading literacy has been the centre of attention for educational authorities for quite a long period of time. Regular PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) research is being carried out periodically to “*provide the most comprehensive and rigorous international assessment of student learning outcomes*” (PISA 2018, p. 424) in reading, mathematics and science. In the field of reading literacy, the Czech Republic has always been around average or even below-average placement. The most recent PISA research (PISA 2018) in the field of reading literacy proved that the level of Czech pupils has not improved. The overall level of Czech results is seemingly higher compared to the average, but as the document states, many outstanding countries have become worse and the average level has got lowered. Therefore, the Czech results seemed to be average in 2018 even though they were slightly worse than in 2000 when they were below the average (PISA 2018, p. 16). These are quite alarming findings. If children are not good readers in their mother tongue, we cannot

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expect them to be good readers in a foreign language. As Krashen (2004, p.37) asserts “*Reading is good for you. The research, however, supports a stronger conclusion: Reading is the only way, the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammatical competence, and the only way we become good spellers.*” Reading in this way is seen as a versatile skill that develops many facets of language learning—whether talking about the mother tongue or a foreign language (FL). Therefore, it should be cultivated and developed. It is the family which plays the most important role in introducing reading to children (as Pinter (2006, p.66) states, reading to pre-schoolers may “*prepare children for their own reading*”) and only then the school can build on what has been planted by the parents. As Ellis and Brewster (2002, p. 1) affirm “*Children enjoy listening to stories in their mother tongue and are familiar with narrative conventions*”. This is generally considered an initial step to book and reading appreciation which may be transferred from the mother tongue to a foreign language. There are numerous reasons to expose young children to reading, one of them being the shared experience with an adult reader. It is quite unfortunate that, in some cases, it is the school that introduces systematic reading to pupils and the shared reading experience with a reading parent is absent.

Our experience with almost all ages of learners brings us to the conclusion that reading as perceived by the public is connected mostly with voluntary free time. Reading as a tool for gaining and understanding information is somehow ignored although it is the ability to process an informative text or even to understand instructions of individual tasks which cause problems in non-linguistic subjects at all school levels. Though being monitored, reading literacy in the Czech Republic apparently has not improved, in this chapter, we would like to look into the problem in English language teaching at primary school level pupils and determine potential causes of the situation.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Teaching English as a foreign language has a long tradition in the Czech Republic, but it only started spreading widely after 1989. Compulsory foreign language education has been institutionalized in the Czech Republic from the age of 8 (3rd grade of the primary school level). English has been considered to be the number one foreign language and due to its importance in the contemporary world as a lingua franca, it is also offered by the vast majority of schools in the country. Compulsory second foreign language education begins at the age of 13 or 14 and due to the geography of the country, it is mostly German though French or Spanish are also offered where qualified teachers are available. Quite a few ambitious plans for the foreign language development of the country have been designed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Education, but mostly they have limped behind the reality and have not been fully implemented because of a lack of qualified English teachers at all school levels (Vraštilová 2014, p. 77). After 1989, when the call for especially English

language learning at all levels arose, language schools, courses and classes appeared rapidly. All ages and all levels were covered, fluent English was promised to be gained in three months or even in six weeks. Young and very young learners became one of the target groups of this business. The country has gone through *the-earlier-the-better* period when English courses for toddlers or infants were offered; even pregnant mothers could attend courses in which their foetuses could perceive English. Fortunately, this trend has now been outweighed by reasonable voices of primary FL education specialists [e.g., Fenclová (2004/2005)]. She claims that it is not the age that plays the most important role in beginning the FL education with young learners, but it is the time it is devoted to it, regularity of the exposure and primarily the qualified teacher. Quoting Butstall (1966), she even claims that a ten-year-old child learns the language much faster than a six-year-old learner (Fenclová 2004/2005, pp. 40–41).

As the Czech School Inspection report for the 2019–20 school year mentions, at 56% of primary and lower-secondary school levels (ages of learners 6–15) foreign language is not provided by qualified teachers (p. 56). The lack of proper qualification undoubtedly severely affects the level of the teaching process. Therefore, especially young learners can be taught English by teachers who are just a few steps ahead of their learners and do not have proper foreign language methodology education. With the lack of qualified teachers, the foreign language teaching process gets into a vicious circle. Although the time devoted to teaching English at Czech primary and secondary schools has been extended, almost no progress has been apparent at the language level of applicants for university English studies (as has been witnessed during our 28 year-long university teaching practice). In our opinion, proper qualification of English teachers is one of the pillars of effective education. If the teachers are not properly qualified, among other things, they are not able to judge the quality of teaching materials professionally from which the situation in which some schools have been educating their learners stems—they have been using outdated and old-fashioned materials which are being followed slavishly. Our own experience from English teacher training as well as from primary and lower-secondary English education together with the data about the level of reading literacy in the country mentioned above have led us to closely examine some primary school teaching materials and how reading is presented in them. Whether this skill is presented in accordance with curricular documents and whether it is presented in an interesting, motivating and challenging way for the learners.

Czech educational documents (Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education) (FEP) determine the level of the reading comprehension skill in a foreign language for primary school level learners as “*the ability to look up necessary information in a simple text which relates to the topics acquired*” and understanding “*of simple short texts from ordinary life, especially with the visual support at the disposal*” (FEP 2015, p. 26). The recommended curriculum of English (2011) for primary school level does not distinguish between receptive and productive skills, and concerning reading, it determines that the pupil in the 1st year of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) “*reads and pronounces comprehensibly individual words; ...*”, text types appropriate for this age and language level are, according to the document, greetings, instructions, simple requests, dialogues, questions and short

answers, riddles, rhymes and songs, picture books and comics; in the 2nd year (where receptive and productive skills are already distinguished) the pupil “*reads comprehensibly in a loud voice a short text containing familiar vocabulary*”, text types include greetings, simple requests and thanks, simple school instructions, simple descriptions, postcards, e-mails, letters, SMS, simple questions, riddles, rhymes and songs, simple picture books, simple manuals and comics; and in the 3rd year the pupil “*comprehensibly pronounces a simple text with familiar vocabulary*”, text types being greetings, congratulations, summer holiday postcards, leaflets and posters, short informal letters, simple e-mails, letters, SMS, simple requests, simple instructions in the text, riddles, rhymes and songs, simple picture books, simple manuals and comics (pp. AJ3–AJ5). The required language level of the first foreign language at the end of primary-level education (age 11–12) is A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Foreign language education at primary school level should start with an audio-oral course to provide children with time necessary for internalization of the new language. Reading and writing skills should be introduced to young learners later than listening and speaking. As Pinter (2006) argues, there are many factors influencing teaching reading to young learners in a foreign language. Together with other scholars (e.g., Phillips 1993; Scott and Ytreberg 1994; Cameron 2001), she promotes the idea of learning to read in the pupil’s mother tongue before teaching them reading in a foreign language. She further notes that reading experience from their mother tongue establishes useful strategies in young learners that can be used for reading in a foreign language. This fully corresponds with the linguistic interdependence hypothesis which argues that mother tongue and foreign language literacy skills are inter-related. According to this hypothesis, reading skills and strategies from the mother tongue are transferred to foreign language reading. Therefore, poor reading in a foreign language is often the result of reading difficulties in the mother tongue reading (Kormos and Ratajczak 2019, p. 5). With the linguistic interdependence hypothesis, the threshold hypothesis is connected—it assumes that below a certain foreign language proficiency level reading in the foreign language cannot rely on the mother tongue reading skills (Kormos and Ratajczak 2019, p. 5). Unfortunately, there has been no unified opinion or evidence of what the threshold for the linguistic transfer might be.

Scott and Ytreberg (1994) argue that initial reading with young learners may be a kind of recognition of known words, phrases, or sentences. The words, phrases or sentences known from audio-oral course are shown to young learners on, for example, flashcards, they recognize them and seemingly they read them. This approach is used in some coursebooks published in the UK and available at the Czech book market (e.g. *i-Wonder*, Express Publishing 2018) where phonics is used in language teaching. None of the Czech coursebooks published for teaching English to young learners works with phonics, nor does it introduce the reading technique of recognizing known language chunks. Very few such coursebooks work with teaching pronunciation to young learners even though proper pronunciation and understanding the bonds between pronunciation rules and reading go hand in hand.

With reference to the level of reading literacy of Czech learners (as researched by PISA) and the number of schools where English is not taught by qualified specialists, we decided to take a close look at the situation through a small-scale research. Our assumption based on our teaching experience is that some English coursebooks do not present the reading skill in an attractive and motivating way and that supplementing is necessary if we want to cope with these drawbacks of the materials in use. We also presume that families nowadays do not develop a positive attitude toward reading in their children and hence the problems with reading literacy.

## Research Questions

Referring to the ongoing low level of reading literacy of Czech children (based on PISA research outcomes mentioned above), we decided to look closely at how reading in English is presented to young learners. The following research questions guided our inquiry:

1. How is reading skill presented in coursebooks intended for primary-level pupils?
2. What is the attitude of young learners to free voluntary reading in Czech?

We have chosen a mixed methods research design, comprising of a qualitative data collection and analysis stage and then a quantitative data collection and analysis stage. For research question one, the qualitative analysis focused on analyzing and comparing teaching materials for young learners with special attention given to how reading was presented. For research question two, the quantitative focused on administering a short questionnaire to young learners focusing on their background in voluntary reading in Czech.

## Methodology

Research participants were a mixed-ability class of 24 Czech fourth-graders (aged 9–11) with three pupils diagnosed with special educational needs. The class consisted of thirteen girls and eleven boys. The school focused on teaching physical education. A typical lesson lasted 45 min, there were between twenty and twenty-two lessons in a week. The subjects taught included, besides Czech language and mathematics, natural science, national history and geography, music, art, physical education and IT.

For research question 1, we analyzed two coursebooks—one that has been used at our school—*Start with Click 2* (Fraus 2007), and one that has been used quite frequently at other city schools by our colleagues—*Happy Street 2* (Maidment and Roberts 2009). We focused on whether required text formats are represented adequately in the coursebooks (see Table 11.1).

**Table 11.1** Text formats represented in the examined teaching materials

	Start with click 2	Happy street 2
Greetings	✓	✓
Simple requests and thanks		✓
Simple school instructions	✓	✓
Simple descriptions	✓	✓
Postcards/e-mails/letters/SMS		✓
Simple questions	✓	✓
Riddles, rhymes, songs	✓	✓
Simple picture books		
Simple manuals		
Comics	✓	✓

Table 11.1 shows that almost all required text formats have been included in both examined coursebooks. What is not included in either of them are simple manuals or simple picture books. From the point of view of Carlisle's (2000) differentiation (he distinguishes two reading transactions—efferent and aesthetic, in a simplified way, reading for information and reading for the pleasure of reading), we face here a format for efferent reading and a format for aesthetic reading.

Besides the required text formats, *Start with Click 2* includes sections *Do you know that...?* which are mostly devoted to cultural issues (e.g. English breakfast, ways of expressing time in English or Scottish kilts), and throughout the whole book they are presented in Czech. *Happy Street 2* includes sections *Cross-curricular links* and *Our world*, where texts with growing complexity (from comic strips through picture descriptions of extending length to a whole story at the end of the book) are presented in English.

Both coursebooks often combine reading and listening skills together. Both coursebooks are also topic-based and the topics revolve around everyday life situations. None of the coursebooks introduces any authentic literary material though. *Happy Street 2* brings up the topic of books but only in an informative way—discussing the topic of what information a cover of the book provides and how to judge a book according to this information (p. 44).

*Happy Street 2* has a clear layout and is more attractive visually. It is full of activities and interesting topics, and it is well supplemented by the activity book. *Start with Click 2* on the contrary does not contain up-to-date visual materials, the illustrations are dull and the layout is sometimes chaotic (e.g. pictures are sometimes poorly arranged and distract the attention from the language chunks that are to be learned and immediately practised), some dialogues or comic stories sound quite artificial and do not reflect real-life situations. The activity book does not provide enough recycling or reinforcing material (Fig. 11.1).

As we can see from Table 11.1, both teaching materials present reading skills in a way that fits with the Czech curricular documents, but *Happy Street 2* does so in a

Surfing is very popular in Australia. Young people go surfing in summer. This sport is sometimes dangerous. (Šádek, Karásková, 2007, p. 18)

MIREK: Do you play the piano, Luboš?

LUBOŠ: Yes, I do.

MIREK: When do you play the piano?

LUBOŠ: On Wednesday.

MIREK: What time do you play the piano?

LUBOŠ: From half past two to four o'clock. (Šádek, Karásková, 2007, p. 41)

This is Laura. She lives with her mum and dad at 8 Woodland Road. Laura has breakfast at seven o'clock. She always has an egg, toast and milk. She sometimes has cereal and sometimes has yoghurt. She never has tea or coffee. (Maidment, Roberts, 2009, p. 21)

Good morning!

Hello!

The station, please.

The station? That's 95p.

Sorry, how much?

95p, please.

Here you are!

Thank you... and here's your ticket. (Maidment, Roberts, 2009, p. 35)

**Fig. 11.1** Extract from books

more attractive way. *Start with Click 2* does not include longer than a-few-sentence descriptions, and therefore, does not motivate the learners for reading longer texts appropriate to their age and level.

Since the school recruits children from socially weaker neighbourhoods and new materials are usually quite expensive (*Happy Street* components are available at the Czech book market for almost twice as much as *Start with Click* materials), which means that some families cannot afford them, our school usually does not use the latest English teaching materials for young learners.

Drawing on our experience with the teaching materials offered by our school, we think that our pupils are disadvantaged compared to some other schools within the region. Outdated materials cannot arouse motivation for the subject and may be a serious hindrance to the teaching process. Therefore, in our opinion, it is necessary

to compensate for the teaching material drawbacks with suitable and appropriate supplementary materials.

To answer research question two, children were asked two questions in the questionnaire:

1. Do you like reading books in your free time?
2. Did your parents read to you when you were little and could not read yourself?

With regards to voluntary reading, 73% of the respondents answered that they liked reading books in their free time. The repertoire ranged from storybooks through fairytales to books about animals and even Harry Potter books. The frequency of reading ranged from daily reading (67% of the respondents) to one book in a month (33% of the respondents). The remaining 27% expressed their dislike about reading books in their free time. The reasons were simply they did not like it or that they had other hobbies.

As for the second question, all respondents stated that they were read to by their parents when they were little and could not read themselves. This implies that all respondents of the research group have gone through the shared reading experience with their parents.

## **Results and Discussion**

To sum up the findings of our small-scale research, here are the answers to the research questions posed:

### ***How is Reading Presented in Coursebooks Intended for Primary-Level Pupils?***

Both teaching materials analyzed include most of the required formats of texts, though they differ in the level of attractivity for the learners—*Happy Street 2* is more attractive visually and the topics engaged are more closely related to everyday life situations. On the contrary, *Start with Click 2* is an outdated material with little visual attractivity and to some extent artificial real-life situations. We have to admit that, though both materials introduce reading formats that are required for young learners at this school level, the level of presenting the texts (as for the topics) differs, which in our opinion, may influence the attractivity of the materials for children.



## ***What is the Attitude of Young Learners to Free Voluntary Reading in Czech?***

From the questionnaire results, we can conclude that around three quarters of the respondents encounter free voluntary reading in their mother tongue in some regular way. Around one quarter of the respondents expressed their dislike of reading in their free time. To unearth the real reasons for such a situation (although it may not seem so bad) would require a much more extensive study of this kind but our latest teaching experience may indicate that children have not been aware of the actual potential of reading—they perceive it as a waste of time and efforts they need to spend on it. In our opinion, one of the ways to take the children back on the route to free voluntary reading is introducing more literary texts in the learning materials, giving teachers tools to show children how such reading can be rewarding and entertaining and, last but not least, useful for the development of all their personalities.

Based on the data gained from the coursebook analysis and comparing them to the curricular requirements, we think it is highly necessary to supplement the coursebook we have been using. We do not consider the texts presented in the book as sufficiently developing the reading skill of our learners. The texts used are neither motivating, nor challenging. They are quite brief and fragmentary. To cater to the drawback shown in the table above (texts for efferent as well as for aesthetic reading are missing), we decided to supplement our coursebook with one informative and one literary text. We worked with a magazine intended for primary-level learners of English (Jump into Your English) and with a picture book by Walliams (2016). Both materials were intended for two lessons.

### ***Magazine Jump***

In the December volume of the magazine, the topic of nuts was presented. The first part follows the *What is your favourite...?* format of this year and the second part (*Where are nuts from?*) explains the origin of nuts, how they are grown and which parts of the world they are grown in. Both parts have their own glossary of new words. Part one has a labelling activity and part two has comprehension questions. Both parts are richly illustrated by pictures of nuts some of which children knew and some of which were new to them. The biggest surprise for them was the fact that peanuts are grown in the ground. In the *What are your favourite nuts?* Part, children spontaneously expressed their preferences enjoying the new pronunciation of the nuts they already knew in Czech. The topic nicely fitted into the pre-Christmas time period. It also corresponded with the grammar part of the coursebook which deals with expressing likes and dislikes and *What is your favourite...?* was a key question in this grammar part. Both materials could be used straight from the magazine without any necessary editing and recycling of *What is your favourite...?* sounded

more natural than the dialogues from the coursebook. Children joined the discussion spontaneously and presented their own real preferences. They also encountered different reading materials with photos which were new and attractive to them. In our opinion, such text types can prepare children also for CLIL lessons at higher school levels where processing the text, gaining information and highlighting important data are crucial skills. What we consider the biggest drawback is the fact that the school does not subscribe to the magazine to make it accessible for the teachers.

### ***Picture Book***

Since we hold the view that children's literature can be an endless source of supplementary texts for children of all ages [*"Books open up other worlds to young learners, and making reading an enjoyable activity is a very important part of the language learning experience"* (Scott and Ytreberg 1994, p. 49)], we chose a picture book as a second piece of learning material which is in accordance with the Czech school educational documents (picture books are types of texts children of primary school level should be able to read and understand). Due to the topic of pets, our children should be familiar with we chose a text covering this topic. We spent two lessons with the book. The first lesson was devoted mostly to observing the pictures in the book supported by some questions. New words for pets were elicited and children tried to judge people and animals involved in the story according to their facial expressions or situations they were in. Then the teacher read the story and the children watched the pictures. In the middle of the story (pets locked in the lost property cupboard and the python in a headmistress's bin), the lesson was over and for homework, children had to think over what would happen next. Next lesson after the review of the first half of the story and some pupils' predictions of the story development, the teacher continued reading and the children followed the pictures. Then comprehension questions followed and for homework, the children were supposed to find pictures that showed what had happened to the headmistress of the school. Everybody judged from the bulge in the python's tummy. Interactive homework (labelling a picture with the story characters) was designed at the *wordwall.net* website. For homework, children also answered questions about the new teaching material. Out of the submitted answers (58% of the pupils), 90% answered in a positive way (they liked the story, e.g., because it was about animals, Miranda set the pets free, because of the pictures, it was interesting, it was crazy, it was funny, it ended well, etc.). Almost 82% of the respondents expressed their wish to read more stories like this, the remaining 18% did not want more such stories because they are too long or this one was too difficult for them.

The aim of the supplementing was to provide children with two different texts aimed at different reading purposes. The magazine text about nuts was meant to provide children with additional information about what they had been familiar already about nuts. They read short texts about different nuts, their description,

growing conditions and use. After reading, the children had to look for the information in the text and use it in the activity matching sentence parts according to the text. This reinforced their knowledge (old or gained from the text) about the topic and supported the sub-skill of scanning the text. The picture book, on the other hand, is meant to provide children with the experience of shared reading (Krashen 2004) and enhance their aesthetic perception of a literary text through the story itself, illustrations as well as their own experience. The children had to look for the comprehension support in the illustrations, predicted the ending of the story and judged story characters through the text description supported by the illustrations. They all had a word to say since almost all of them have a pet of some kind which made the context familiar for them.

Both supplementary materials fitted into the curriculum and brought up familiar language in new contexts. Since this was the first time supplementing of the course-book was realized, some pupils may have felt hesitant at the beginning because none of the lessons with the supplementary materials followed the usual lesson routines. This situation could be avoided by establishing a new routine of supplementing lessons in an agreed time interval within the school year.

## **Implications of the Findings for the Context**

Based on the data from the Czech School Inspection report, the Czech educational system does not have enough qualified teachers of English. This fact has two sides—the language level and the specialist knowledge of the teachers. Both are of utmost importance, especially at the primary school level, where the teachers not only form the learners' attitude to English, but also their language knowledge and skills. If the beginning is not smooth and correct, the whole process of learning English then can be very strenuous, demotivating and discouraging. Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Education of the Czech Republic should pay closer attention to the qualification of the English teachers at schools. Attention should be also paid to the teaching materials used and to the length of period for which these materials obtain approval for legal use at Czech schools. If this approval is extended several times, outdated and uninteresting materials can be used with the stale potential for language learning motivation. Funding for socially weak regions should also be reconsidered since, without financial support, families in such neighbourhoods cannot afford better learning materials for their children who are then disadvantaged in comparison to children from better-off regions and families. Last but not least, a reader of texts for appropriate age and language levels could be designed to bridge the gap and provide teachers of English with supplementary materials which could add to used teaching materials.

## Conclusion

This chapter aimed to investigate the field of reading as presented by coursebooks of English for primary school pupils. Czech book market does not suffer from the lack of quality English teaching materials for primary school level pupils but there are still schools which cannot afford expensive materials and therefore depend on the price of the coursebooks which is the most decisive factor for them. The quality of the material is then neglected. In that way a great deal of responsibility for proper education is devolved to teachers who in quite a high percentage may not be properly qualified.

Supplementing English lessons can be one way of how to deal with the situation at such schools, but it is a time-consuming activity which should be carried out by specialists who are aware not only of the curriculum but the language itself as such.

Our small-scale research is limited to just a little research sample and the conclusions cannot be generalized to the situation in the whole country. It can only highlight that if we want to improve reading literacy, we need to pay closer attention to teaching materials used at schools. Materials which contain interesting reading topics in different formats including, e.g., extracts from children's literature can arouse curiosity and motivate learners for further reading in English. Reading contests, school libraries with English books, wider spectrum of graded readers for primary school level learners or guides for teachers with samples of reading materials could improve the situation not only at these schools. Questions covering these fields have not been asked in this small-scale research. Knowing the answers from a wider spectrum of respondents may bring a deeper insight into the issue of reading skills in English and show us where we could focus our efforts with the aim to improve the situation.

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**Part III**  
**Exploring Pedagogic Practices and Models**  
**in Secondary and Tertiary Education**

# Chapter 12

## Instructed EFL Learning in Austria, France, and Sweden: Hearing Teachers' Voices



Alexandra Schurz  and Marion Coumel 

**Abstract** Today, the Common European Framework of Reference (2009) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) underpins English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula throughout Europe. However, given cross-national differences such as ones related to educational policies and students' engagement in extramural English (EE), one could expect ELT to vary across countries. We investigated Austrian, French, and Swedish teachers' types of instruction as well as how and why they resort to the reported practices by conducting semi-structured interviews with twenty lower secondary teachers. Our results show that ELT in all countries seems to largely rely on CLT, but Austrian and French teachers appear to attribute a greater role to teaching form than do teachers from Sweden. Swedish teachers provide primarily meaning-focused, fluency-based teaching. Moreover, Austrian and French teachers reported applying rather predetermined grammar teaching, whereas ELT in Sweden seems to cater more to individual student needs. This cross-country comparison provides a detailed picture of how multiple factors such as curricula, EE, practical constraints (e.g., class size) and student needs influence pedagogical choices and extends our understanding of how grammar teaching practices are related to the teaching context.

**Keywords** English language teaching · Accuracy versus fluency · Focus-on-meaning · Focus-on-form · Extramural english

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## Introduction

Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth CLT) is the most recently adopted paradigm underlying foreign language teaching and learning in Europe. CLT stipulates that form-based teaching should occur in meaningful, communicative tasks. This should allow the learner to develop communicative ability, an amalgam of linguistic (or grammatical), sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences (see Hedge 2008; Cook 2016). The Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2009)(henceforth CEFR) endorses the CLT principles and, with its level descriptors, facilitates the comparability of language courses and qualifications across schools and national borders. Even though national curricula and course-books of foreign language teaching throughout Europe evoke the basic principles of CLT and the CEFR, assuming that language teaching practices across the region reflect these methods is a premature conclusion. A variety of contextual variables may lead to significant cross-national differences in language instruction and can also influence the suitability of a given method (Pawlak 2021). Examples of such context-based factors are language and educational policies, both influenced by ideologies held within national borders or cultural spheres. Language policies, on the one hand, regulate a population's recreational use of English, i.e., extramural English (henceforth EE) (Sundqvist 2009), which can aid language acquisition and arguably influence the type of instruction (Sundqvist 2021). On the other hand, educational policies stipulate for instance the nature of teacher education, the number of hours of English instruction, class size, and proficiency diversity within classes (influenced primarily through the presence or absence of a comprehensive school system and grade repetition). Teaching practices adopted within a geo-cultural context as a result of such language and educational policies seem to be perpetuated cross-generationally based on the teachers' own experiences as students (Borg 2006).

Indeed, in comparing ELT practices in Austria, France, and Sweden, Schurz and Coumel (2020) revealed cross-national differences. They asked teachers of the three countries to indicate on Likert scales to which extent statements describing teaching practices reflected their own pedagogical approaches (e.g., "I discuss grammar rules explicitly in my English classes."). Based on the teachers' reports, lower secondary school teachers in Austria and France appear to teach grammar significantly more explicitly than Swedish teachers, who, conversely, seem to teach more implicit fluency-based. Additionally, the Austrian teachers apparently teach grammar more systematically than the teachers of the other countries. In the present study, we collected qualitative data from the interviews of teachers to further explore these cross-national differences. We enquired six to seven teachers from each country as to (i) the focus they apply in ELT (accuracy-based vs. fluency-based, form-focused vs. meaning-focused instruction) and (ii) their degree of forward planning in grammar teaching (incidental vs. planned instruction). The qualitative interview data allowed us to zoom in on *how* exactly teachers implement the reported teaching methods or techniques in the classroom and on what seem to be underlying *reasons* for



these didactic choices. This should provide a better understanding of cross-country variation in ELT practices in Europe.

## A Categorization of Teaching Practices

Although there exist several theoretical conceptualizations to categorize the type of instruction (see for instance Pawlak 2021; Loewen and Sato 2018; Spada 2011), this chapter focuses on accuracy-based versus fluency-based (e.g., see Richards 2015), form-focused versus meaning-focused (Long 1988, 1991), and planned versus incidental instruction (Ellis 2001). The members of these dichotomies are considered the poles of continua.

Accuracy-based teaching is geared towards reducing the number of errors in learner language whereas fluency-based instruction is often conceptualized as fostering learners' ability to speak continuously, in order to facilitate comprehension and uninterrupted communication (Richards 2015, p. 266). Hence, this first distinction is used first and foremost in relation to language production (cf. Nation, 2007). Contrarily, form-focused versus meaning-focused instruction can characterize any kind of activity, thus perhaps being more apt to classify overall instructional approaches. Meaning-focused instruction prohibits attention to grammatical forms and relies on incidental, implicit second language learning (Long and Robinson 1998). Form-focused instruction encompasses a continuum extending from focus-on-form $S$  to focus-on-form. Focus-on-form $S$  typically entails traditional language teaching, where isolated forms are introduced in an additive manner while largely ignoring the meaning and context of the form (Ellis 2001, 2016). This systematic introduction of grammar as determined a priori is also designated as planned instruction (Ellis 2001), and, for instance, can be based on the curriculum or a coursebook. In focus-on-form, by contrast, tasks tend to be more meaning-focused and contextualized, and attention is directed to features primarily when comprehension or production problems arise. This corresponds to incidental grammar teaching, occurring either pre-emptively—e.g., in preparation for a task requiring a given structure—or reactively—i.e., in response to learner errors, in the form of implicit or explicit feedback (Ellis 2001). Thus, incidental instruction implies more learner-centred teaching, in which students' needs rather than a predefined list of grammatical features guide teaching (Harmer 2001, p. 56).

The CEFR (Council of Europe 2009) lists both accuracy and fluency as performance categories in its common reference levels for spoken and written production. Errors are acceptable until level B1, potentially beyond if the message remains clear (Council of Europe 2009, p. 114). This concurs with CLT, in which accuracy and fluency are taught in a balanced way and errors are considered part of the learning process (Hedge 2008; Richards 2006). Here, the function of accuracy-based activities is to aid learners in fluency activities (Richards 2006, p. 15), as system-based linguistic knowledge (i.e., “in-the-head” knowledge” (Scrivener 2011) of grammar, lexis, and phonology) is just one aspect of communicative competence (Hedge 2008,

see 1.). Likewise, in the CEFR, skills-based learning and learning how to carry out an action with language are the most central underlying principles (Council of Europe 2009). The functional, communicative purpose of grammar teaching in focus-on-form makes it the approach on the form-focused to meaning-focused spectrum that reflects CLT the most (Hedge 2008, p. 47). Accordingly, grammar should not be taught in isolation, and teaching a given grammatical feature should not be predetermined but emerge incidentally, e.g., out of communicative tasks. This, again, is in line with the CEFR, which considers the learner (rather than the teacher) and their individual needs as being at the centre of teaching (Richards 2006).

## **Intra- and Extramural English in Austria, France, and Sweden**

In Austria, France, and Sweden, English is the number one first foreign language students learn. In the EF Proficiency Index (2020), a worldwide annual ranking of 100 countries by the populations' English proficiency, Sweden ranks fourth, Austria seventh, and France 28th. Besides the factor of cross-linguistic differences between learners' first and second languages, which are certainly larger for the French context, we estimate ELT and EE to be among the most influential factors in language attainment.

### ***English Instruction Per Country***

In Austria, already after primary school, i.e., at age 10, the student population is split into Middle School and Academic High School students. The latter school type is selective, i.e., primary school grades or entrance exams determine admission (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education [AME] 2018a). In contrast, in France, students follow a common educational path until they enter upper secondary school at the age of 14/15 (French Ministry of National Education [FMNE] 2020a, b). Sweden relies on a comprehensive school system, encompassing years 1–9, only at the end of which the students, aged 15/16, can apply to different branches of upper secondary school (The Swedish National Agency for Education [SNAE] 2020a, b). Although students in France attend the same school type (which is non-selective in the case of public schools), grade retention might function as a countermeasure to ability differences within classes. For instance, in 2009, 36.5% of 15-year-old students participating in PISA in France indicated they had repeated a school year in primary and/or lower secondary education, compared to 9.3% in Austria and 4.5% in Sweden (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency 2012). Another important factor that varies across the three countries and that affects in-class diversity and thus potentially the type of instruction as well is class size. In lower secondary school,

Austrian classes count 21.1 students on average, French classes 25.3, and Swedish classes 21.8 (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2018).

The amount of English instruction per country is difficult to compare because it varies across school types and according to whether it is picked as a first or second foreign language. A comparison of ELT curricula seems more telling (see Schurz and Coumel 2020). In each of the three countries, the curricula are in line with the CEFR (Council of Europe 2009) and purport CLT, while at the same time expressing the importance of grammar teaching (AME 2018b, 2020; FMNE 2015, 2016; SNAE 2017). Yet, only the Austrian (AME 2018b) and French (FMNE 2015, 2016) Middle School curricula list specific target grammatical features, whereas the Swedish curriculum (SNAE 2017) points out that individual needs, based for instance on the learners' L1 and the way they pick up the language, should determine teaching content.

### ***Extramural English Per Country***

EE plays an increasingly important role in language learning pathways (Sundqvist 2021). In subtitled countries (i.e., where soundtracks of movies are kept in the original language but transcribed with captions in the country's official language), such as Sweden, even young children are frequently exposed to the English language (Sundqvist 2019). Dubbing countries (i.e., where soundtracks of movies in a foreign language are replaced by ones in the country's official language), such as Austria and France, are currently experiencing a major surge in the use of spare time English among teenagers (Centre National d'Étude des Systèmes Scolaires 2019; Federal Institute for Education Research, Innovation and Development 2020). This is the result of ubiquitous access to the internet and the abundance of online services such as online games, social media apps, and streaming platforms. In Austria, 15- to 16-year-old students in the capital city of Vienna experience a daily average of EE engagement of 4 hours and 7 minutes (Schwarz 2020). In Sweden, 15 to 19-year-old teenagers have been found to use English on average for at least 5 hours a day (Olsson and Sylvé 2015). We found no such information for France.

### **Research Questions**

The present study was a qualitative follow-up to the quantitative study reported in Schurz and Coumel (2020), representing an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. In this follow-up, we further explored the significant disparities across the three countries reported in the previous study (see Section "Introduction") to obtain more specific information regarding the focus in lower secondary ELT and the way lesson content is selected. More precisely, we aimed to understand *how* and *why* teachers resorted to the teaching practices they reported on in the questionnaire.

Thus, for each of the three teacher groups, we addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent is ELT geared towards accuracy and grammatical forms, as opposed to fluency and meaning?
  - 1.1 How is the given approach implemented?
  - 1.2 Why do teachers resort to this approach?
2. To what degree is grammar instruction planned and systematic, as opposed to happening incidentally?
  - 2.1 What factors influence teachers' sequencing of instructional content?
  - 2.2 Why do teachers resort to the given approach?

Given that the Austrian and French curricula are more explicit regarding which aspects of grammar should be taught and how (see Section “[English Instruction Per Country](#)” and Schurz and Coumel 2020), we had two hypotheses. First, we hypothesized that in these countries the focus in ELT would lie more heavily on grammar than in Sweden. This would corroborate the more implicit fluency-based type of instruction reported for Sweden (Schurz and Coumel 2020). Second, we expected grammar teaching to occur more incidentally—i.e., based on student needs and interests—in Sweden than in the other countries. Although Sweden and France seemed to be similarly incidental in their approach in Schurz and Coumel (2020), we expected that French teachers would report teaching grammar rather systematically as suggested by the French curriculum (see Section “[English Instruction Per Country](#)”). The questions of how and why teachers resorted to the teaching practices they reported were exploratory.

## Methodology

### *Recruitment and Participants*

We conducted interviews with 20 English teachers in November 2019–2020, six from Austria, seven from France, and seven from Sweden. In the case of Austria and Sweden, this formed part of a larger data collection for an ongoing PhD study. Teachers were recruited via the researchers' social network, social media, and contact information provided by interested participants from the previous study (Schurz and Coumel 2020). All participants were teaching in lower secondary school, i.e., *Mittelschule* (Middle School) or *Gymnasium Unterstufe* (Lower level of Academic High School) for Austria (age 11–14), *Collège* (Middle School) for France (age 11–15), and *Högstadiet* (Upper Stage Comprehensive School) for Sweden (age 13–15). For Austria and Sweden, the interviews were conducted while focusing in particular on students at the age of 13–14 years. For France, due to recruitment constraints, teachers answered the questions while focusing on a larger age range of 11 to 15 years

(see Table 12.1 for more details about the grade levels). All teachers, except one in Sweden (Magnus) and one in Austria (Lukas), were female. The mean age was 40.2, 48.4, and 43.7 years for Austria, France, and Sweden, respectively, and the mean experience in teaching was 16.8, 22.7, and 14.9 years, respectively. Eighteen teachers taught in a public school, while Lucie and Lise reported teaching at private institutions. The teachers in Austria and Sweden taught at least one additional subject (except Magnus), which was Swedish or a different language for Sweden, and a great variety of subjects in Austria, but this was not the case for France. For the teachers'

**Table 12.1** Overview of the teacher sample

		Pseudonym	Age	Teaching experience (in years)	Interview based on	
					Grade(s)	Class size
Austria	Academic high	Julia	32	7	Grade 8 Age 13–14	17
		Elena	28	6		16
		Andrea	30	5		NA
	Middle school	Barbara	62	42		24
		Veronika	60	37		21
		Lukas	29	4		16
France	Middle school	Marie	60	28	Grades 6, 8, 9 Age 11–15	NA
		Lucie	61	41	Grades 6, 8, 9 Age 11–15	NA
		Sophie	46	22	Grade 6, 7 Age 11–13	24–28
		Laure	39	15	Grades 7, 8, 9 Age 12–15	25–30
		Anne	47	20	Grades 8, 9 Age 14–15	25–30
		Charlotte	44	15	Grades 6, 8, 9 Age 11–15	17–28
		Lise	42	18	Grade 6 Age 11–12	25
Sweden	Comprehensive school	Magnus	28	1	Grade 7 Age 13–14	20
		Christine	35	7		23
		Pia	55	30		19
		Emma	50	22		25
		Sara	52	20		24
		Eva	44	15		25
		Karin	42	9		25

Note NA = not available

**Table 12.2** Outline of the teacher interviews

1. Introductory question, e.g., <i>What do you currently work on in your English classes with the participating group(s) of students?</i>
2. <i>What do you find most important when teaching English?</i>
Prompts
• Language areas/skills
• Accuracy/fluency
3. <i>According to which factor(s) do you plan a school year?</i>
Prompts
• Syllabus structure based on...
• Role of textbook
• Level-dependency

pseudonyms and their age, the number of years of teaching experience, and the grade(s) and class size they reported on, see Table 12.1.

### *The Interviews*

The semi-structured interviews were based on an outline featuring full-length overarching questions (see 1–3 in Table 12.2) and prompts for sub-topics (see bullet points). The first question was an icebreaker used to explore the most recent topics discussed in class. The subsequent questions sought to investigate (2) the focus applied in ELT (accuracy-based vs. fluency-based, form-focused vs. meaning-focused instruction) and (3) the degree of forward planning in grammar teaching (incidental vs. planned instruction). The interviewers did not necessarily address all sub-topics but raised individual ones to elicit answers regarding how teachers implemented their methodological choices and why they opted for them. This way, the sequence of questions and sub-topics remained flexible, and the interviews flowed fairly naturally. The interviews were voice-recorded and lasted about 10–25 min. They were carried out on-site in the case of Austria and Sweden and via video-call for France, by the researchers themselves and in the participants' native language, i.e., German, French or Swedish. The teachers provided informed consent before participating in the interview.

### *Data Analysis*

The interviews were transcribed to prepare the data for analysis. The transcription was outsourced to native speakers of the given language, and the subsequent translation

into English was carried out by the researchers themselves and a native speaker of English. In the first step of the analysis, the data was coded according to broad categories using MAXQDA. These categories were (1) the focus applied in ELT and (2) the degree and nature of forward planning in grammar teaching. Secondly, these coded segments were synthesized for each teacher and country by adding more fine-tuned labels, such as “communication” or “grammar” for category (1) and based on “coursebook”, “curriculum”, “current events”, and “student needs” for category (2).

## Results and Discussion

### *The Focus in ELT*

#### **ELT in Austria**

Although overall, communication appears to be one of the central aspects of ELT in Austria, there was a key difference between Academic High School and Middle School. When asked what they found most important when teaching English, the Academic High School teachers reported focusing on communication in terms of speaking and the negotiation of meaning. This was expressed in utterances such as “having the courage to talk ... that they [the students] just talk, talk, talk” (Julia), and “Speaking and listening ... the most important thing for me is that they kind of leave the fourth grade and can just cope in the world” (Andrea). Following this initial indication, the two teachers claimed grammatical accuracy to be secondary (e.g., “it doesn’t matter how many grammar mistakes you make”, Andrea) and that writing (Andrea, Julia) and vocabulary (Julia) were important as well.

The three Middle School teachers seem to focus more heavily on accuracy in their classes. For instance, Veronika indicated the frequent need to teach grammar: “Sometimes I get the feeling, if I notice that their grammar isn’t so solid, that you just have to ... invest too much time in grammar”. Similarly, Lukas underscored the relevance for students to understand the mechanics of and correctly use grammatical features. Although teaching communicative skills seems to be somewhat less prioritized, the same teachers expressed the importance of teaching speaking and listening (e.g., Veronika: “we do make sure that they get the chance to speak, too”), which was then again followed by reading and writing in the case of Lukas. Interestingly, though, when elaborating on the relevance of speaking, Veronika mentioned as examples “role playing dialogues” and “learn[ing] dialogues off by heart to start off with” and indicated that this is important “because then they have structures so that they can use [them], too”. This utterance may mirror the traditional approach to grammar teaching in which teachers first select a target grammatical feature and then choose the most appropriate content or context to practice the form (Richards 2006, p. 28). This approach of “grammar-first” reflects that grammar is seen as a major building block that needs to be taught and mastered before introducing a more communicative

focus (Ortega 2008; Sato and Oyanedel 2019; Thornbury 1999; Uysal and Bardakci 2014). Possible reasons for the difference across school types could be the nature of the training teachers receive, their expectations as to the learners' attitudes towards a given teaching approach (e.g., see Daloglu 2020), and the lower English proficiency level of Middle School students as compared to Academic High School students (e.g., FIERID 2020). Importantly, however, it is difficult to establish whether these lower proficiency levels are a reason for or a consequence of the type of instruction.

### **ELT in France**

The picture emerging from English classrooms in France is equally mixed as in Austria, but communication does surface as a primary focus in ELT for most teachers. While three teachers initially mentioned speaking (Marie, Sophie, Lise), others indicated reading skills (Lucie), learner autonomy, and (mostly oral) productive skills (Laure), a balance of "all competences" (Anne), and learner motivation (Charlotte) in the first position. The reference to speaking conveys a communicative, fluency-based approach for Lise ("for me the priority really is that they talk without inhibition, at the risk of sometimes making mistakes because it [English] has to remain a communication tool"). Along similar lines, Charlotte explained that since French students commonly experience learner anxiety such as the fear of making mistakes ("Ah no, no, I can't, I will make a mistake"), encouraging students to express themselves is of utmost importance. However, Marie appears to attribute equal importance to accuracy ("[what is important] to me is that they talk and that they still master grammar"). Lucie also mentioned grammatical accuracy and perceived reading as the main source for the acquisition of lexis and morphosyntax: "starting from the basis [reading], one acquires their own vocabulary, one learns sentence structures ... prior to the 'phase out', there must be a 'phase in'. And the 'phase in' happens much more easily through reading". This explanation somewhat reflects the traditional focus on system-based teaching of vocabulary and grammar supported by skills practice, rather than vice versa (Scrivener 2011), with language input primarily serving the purpose of exposing students to grammar (Richards 2006). Conversely, Anne mentioned communication as a priority, with "the rest being in support of communication". In particular, she indicated speaking being the focus in Middle School, especially when teachers have the opportunity to teach smaller groups of students. Indeed, judging from the teacher reports, class size is strikingly higher in France as compared to Austria and Sweden (see Table 12.1), which is likely to determine methodological choices and influence learning outcomes.

### **ELT in Sweden**

In Sweden, the teachers almost unanimously conveyed a clear picture of communication-first and thus primarily meaning-based instruction. When asked about their main foci in ELT, three teachers explicitly mentioned: "communication"



or “communicative skills” (Christine, Emma, Karin). In line with the latter term, the remainder of the teachers listed the four skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading, which they try to teach in a balanced way (Pia, Eva), and this also applied to Christine. However, Magnus indicated to “mostly ... end up ... doing reading comprehensions” but trying to always at least include “both production and comprehension in the same lesson”. Similarly to Austrian and French teachers, Emma and Karin underlined the importance of encouraging learners and installing a positive error culture: “We are here to learn. Make as many mistakes as you want because we help each other.” (Emma). Although Karin did evoke grammar, she did so to further illustrate that when focusing on accuracy, “students don’t dare because they are afraid of making mistakes”. The overall more meaning-based instruction in Sweden might reflect the conditions in which young Swedes acquire English through their everyday life exposure to the language (Schurz and Coumel 2020). Only Christine also explained that when teaching so-called base groups with lower performance students, grammar is taught in isolation, as based on the students’ needs. Here, a parallel to Middle School students in Austria becomes apparent (see Section “[ELT in Austria](#)”).

In sum, across countries, communicative language teaching seems to be pervasive. In particular, the three contexts were most similar in the reference to the role of a positive error culture, in line with CLT, and learner encouragement. However, compared to Sweden, accuracy appears to be attributed a greater role in lower secondary ELT in Austria and France. This allows us to confirm our first hypothesis in response to research question 1. Considering the question of how these approaches are implemented (research question 1.1), a particularly form-based type of instruction based on linguistic systems reinforced by skills practice (Scrivener 2011, p. 28) emanated from the interviews with two Austrian Middle School teachers and a teacher in France. Contrarily, ELT in Sweden seems widely fluency-based, more meaning-focused, and first and foremost focused on skills, with the sole exception of one teacher and her base group. These results corroborate the ones in Schurz and Coumel (2020), where secondary school teachers from all countries indicated teaching strongly implicitly fluency-based, but with respondents from Sweden reporting doing so more significantly than teachers from Austria and France ( $p < 0.001$ ). Regarding the question of why teachers may implement the respective approach (research question 1.2), more traditional views may linger in Austrian and French ELT classrooms due to factors such as teachers’ received training, their attitudes towards learners’ expectations and abilities, class size, and implicit learning opportunities outside class.

### ***Incidental Versus Planned Grammar Teaching***

The differences in terms of meaning-focused versus form-focused instruction across countries observed in the first part of the analysis seem to coincide with the degree to which teachers introduce pre-selected content, in particular, grammatical aspects.

This information can be deduced from the material based on which teachers make choices on course content and the role attributed to student needs.

### **The Role of the Curriculum and the Coursebook**

In Austria, only one teacher (Elena) referred to the national curriculum as a guideline. Teaching otherwise seems to be largely based on the coursebook, thus functioning as a “hidden curriculum” (Schmidt 2015) in that it guides teachers’ pedagogy, possibly without them directly consulting the national curriculum itself. All teachers in Austria stated that they proceed according to the coursebook, mentioning advantages, such as them being “a good foundation” (Julia) and providing “an overview” of course content (Elena). However, they also listed caveats, including discarding units because of time constraints or the topics being boring or irrelevant, and the order of units and/or grammar chapters sometimes being altered to match circumstances, e.g., teaching a unit on jobs after the student trainee week (Lukas). One teacher underscored the importance of adding supplementary authentic material, e.g., watching a movie on a current societal issue (Andrea). This progression that follows the coursebook with only minor deviations applies not only to topic areas, but also to grammar aspects that are presented alongside, e.g., “in the first grade [age 11], the book stops ... at the past tense. So, there we say no, we’ll put that in the second grade and start with that, because it makes sense if you talk about the holidays” (Veronika). When enquired about the list of grammatical features taught in grade 8 (age 13–14), the teachers (Julia, Elena, Andrea, and Barbara) readily listed them, focusing in particular on the revision of tenses and aspect.

In France, most but not all teachers reported using coursebooks, but mainly in combination with additional material. For three teachers, in particular, the coursebook guides pedagogical choices (Marie, Sophie, Laure), although current events and topical issues (e.g., the American elections) also influence course content (Marie, Lucie, Anne, Charlotte). Sophie explained using additional material in certain grades because of the coursebook being “outdated”, and the order and/or nature of tasks seems to be flexible at least in the case of Laure, who claimed that “none of [her] sequences integrally follow a coursebook”. Likewise, Anne and Charlotte use coursebooks only partially, depending on their quality and the grade. Even more dissatisfied with coursebooks, Lucie does not rely on them and instead creates her own material because of frequent reforms and hence new, possibly unsatisfactory, coursebooks.

Although the French teachers appear to use coursebooks less systematically than Austrian teachers, teaching nevertheless appears rather planned in the entire French sample. The target topics and grammar aspects in each school year are widely pre-selected, as expressed for instance by Sophie: “We made a plan over the four years of Middle School with the colleagues teaching English, so we split up what we want to do across years.” Some teachers explicitly mentioned that the curriculum determined this progression, e.g., “the instructions provide us with a list of structures or grammar aspects or linguistic facts that we should discuss with the students” (Lise). Similar to Austria, Lucie, Anne, and Charlotte provided seemingly pre-selected target features

per grade, with present continuous for instance being one of the foci in grade 7 (age 12–13). However, two teachers (Anne, Charlotte) clarified they pick themes first, followed by the integration of grammar aspects, e.g., “we think that this sequence allows [us] to address that specific grammar aspect, that we do, but we do not decide based on grammar ... I don’t ask myself with which cultural element [we] could work on past tense, for example” (Charlotte). In this respect, even though grammatical features are pre-selected, the themes or topics are of interest in and of themselves, rather than functioning as a mere vehicle to address form.

Contrary to Austria and partly France, the teachers in Sweden reported picking only selected content from coursebooks. For each topic, the teachers typically assort classroom material from various sources, namely the internet, fiction books and, to a somewhat smaller degree, coursebooks, e.g., “I wanted to do a topic and then I would find ... from different sites and things like that and different maybe movies or TV series or ... some short video clip, and then in order to introduce something of substance, ... so I would maybe use a couple of texts that were fitting from a coursebook.” (Magnus). In addition, two teachers evoked the disadvantages of coursebooks, them being “too boring”, including “too many different things” (Sara) and “get[ting] old quite quickly” (Karin). Magnus even affirmed that he does not proceed according to a predefined plan and that lessons are often based on topical issues. In spite of four other teachers agreeing they did have a plan for the semester or year (Emma, Sara, Eva, and Karin), they continued by explaining that the sequencing and selection of course content depends on student needs: “I often do have a plan of how more or less I’m going to proceed, but it can depend a lot on what I notice that they need, and even on what they’re interested in” (Eva). Quite different from Austria and France, just one teacher in Sweden (Emma) tried to list the grammar features she teaches in a given grade, while still insisting on the need to individualize.

### **The Role of Student Needs**

As specified previously, the Swedish context appears to cater to individual student needs the most. In Austria, in response to the question of how course content is selected and sequenced, only one teacher, Barbara, indicated that “if I notice there’s something ... that hasn’t really stuck, well then I put something in”. The other teachers did not spontaneously evoke reactive teaching in response to learner deficiencies, but Lukas did so after explicit enquiry. In contrast, in France, three of the teachers raised the issue of student needs by their own means (Anne, Charlotte, and Lise). While there seems to be a syllabus for a given school year, its implementation can vary according to student needs, which might require changing the teaching pace (Anne) or re-working on an aspect (Lise). Notwithstanding the systematic teaching purported by the French curriculum, the precise way of proceeding is not automatically “set in stone” (Lise): “If we feel like a student or the class suddenly needs a structure that wasn’t planned, I think one must feel free to introduce it. After all this is common sense”. This quote reflects incidental teaching in reaction to student needs.

In Sweden, adapting to student needs seems to go hand in hand with the much greater leeway granted by the curriculum (see Sect. 2.1), e.g., “here you have so many years to do that in order to achieve that level, and it is not specific at all” (Karin). In part, teachers perceive this leeway positively since it gives them the freedom to teach content based on what “[they] feel like” (Christine) and “what the group is interested in ... because English can be used with almost anything actually” (Eva). However, the actual need for individualization (also referred to in the curriculum, see 2.1) given major proficiency differences within classes can become a heavy burden in teaching: “In my grade eight class I have beginners, total beginners, and other students maybe of upper secondary level. ... I get to do four plans per class” (Emma). In-class level disparities seem to be common in Sweden, evidently primarily due to the comprehensive school system and grade retention not being very common (see Sect. 2.1). Differences in learners’ type and amount of EE use may additionally increase performance diversity (Sundqvist, 2021). The resulting need for incidental teaching is met by addressing form reactively, i.e., based on learner deficiencies: “I did notice in their stuff that they have deficiencies ... So I already decided that when we’ll discuss these topics I will teach those grammar aspects” (Karin). Furthermore, the learners’ interest can also spark the teaching of the form (Christine, Karin), such as when learners encounter problems in carrying out a communicative task, thus representing opportunities to establish a “form-function mapping” (Ellis 2002, p. 225). As shown by Magnus, reactive grammar teaching is not necessarily teacher-fronted, i.e., with the teacher explaining grammar to all students simultaneously on the whiteboard: “after ... they produced something, I go in and give individual feedback instead, because they have different parts that they master or do not master”. Another form of incidental teaching, pre-emptive instruction, emanated from the interview with Christine, “I start from like the idea that this is going to be a written task. ... And what tools do they need in order to write a good newspaper article?”. In this way of proceeding, grammar is not in focus but rather approached functionally to allow students to fulfil communicative tasks (see ‘grammar last’, Richards 2015, p. 280). These findings appear to mirror the results of a teacher cognition and classroom observation study conducted in Norway (Askland 2020), a country providing comparably high levels of EE as Sweden. In that context, lower and upper secondary teachers seemed not to dedicate much time to systematic explicit grammar instruction.

In sum, lower secondary teachers in Austria and France reported to teach grammar mostly systematically, whereas instruction appeared more incidental in the Swedish sample. This supports our second hypothesis in response to research question 2. The results also partly converge with Schurz and Coumel’s study (2020), where Austrian teachers reported teaching grammar significantly more systematically than French and Swedish teachers ( $p < 0.001$ ). Considering factors that influence teachers’ sequencing of lesson content (research question 2.1), the Austrian and French teachers reported relying on predefined features listed in the coursebook and/or the curriculum. Minor deviations from these guidelines do occur in both contexts, although possibly more in France, to discard units due to time constraints or irrelevance, to include topical issues and additional, perhaps more authentic material, and

to cater to student needs. Indeed, as the literature shows, coursebooks still function as a hidden curriculum in education (Schmidt 2015), despite the rise of technological tools (Bezemer and Kress 2015). By contrast, Swedish teachers were found to teach more strongly according to student needs. The observed way of proceeding appears to be prototypical focus-on-form, in which attention is shifted to form incidentally despite the overriding focus of classes being on meaning (Long 1991, quoted in Ellis 2001, p. 15). Potential reasons for the adoption of a more systematic or incidental type of instruction (research question 2.2) may be curriculum constraints and level diversity in classrooms as dependent on a school system's selectiveness and learners' EE use.

## Implications of the Findings for the Context

The results reported in this study, if solidified by further research, can be of relevance to educational authorities. With growing EE throughout Europe, teachers may need to redefine their role to accommodate the new learning experiences students face outside of the classroom. Moreover, more engagement in EE will likely increase proficiency level diversity within classes, which will in turn require teachers to adapt their ELT practices and material. For instance, students may require a more individualized and incidental approach in ELT particularly in countries like Austria and France, where to date the teacher-centred classroom seems to prevail. A more learner-centred classroom, however, may require small class sizes. Individualization in classrooms in Sweden and elsewhere could be facilitated by means of course books offering multiple versions of a given task or text, each corresponding to a different difficulty level and possibly also targeting a different skill. Moreover, to prevent high EE users from experiencing instruction as inauthentic (see 'authenticity gap' in Henry 2013), teaching material could benefit from becoming increasingly web-based. This would ensure that its content is regularly updated and includes authentic texts that, if possible, are of interest to the target audience. Importantly, such material should also target (formal) writing skills and grammar, i.e., language areas students may not (fully) acquire through EE.

## Conclusion

This study shows that although the CEFR and CLT underlie curricula and coursebooks across Europe, lower secondary teachers from Austria, France, and Sweden seem to differ in their ELT practices. Austrian and French teachers reported teaching form more systematically and to rely more on systematic teaching—as based on the coursebook and/or the curriculum—than Swedish teachers. The latter, by contrast, primarily adopt a meaning-focused, fluency-based approach and adapt classes to individual student needs. Contextual factors certainly influence teachers' instructional

choices and the suitability of a given method (Pawlak 2021). Our results suggest that the observed disparities may arise from cross-national differences in the learners' use of spare time in English, proficiency diversity within classes, and class size. However, the limited sample size of this study as well as participant self-selection imply that our results are not fully representative of each country. This study opens new questions regarding typical fluency- and accuracy-based activities in the given countries, how methodological differences relate to students' learning achievements and motivation, and in what way ELT is and should be influenced by EE.

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# Chapter 13

## Integrating Foreign Language Vocabulary Research into the Curriculum: Extensive Video Viewing in the University Classroom



Maria del Mar Suárez  and Ferran Gesa 

**Abstract** Experimental research, if incorporated into any regular course, can result in intrusive practice. One way to prevent this is blending research tests into the regular curricular activities and exploiting them pedagogically. This chapter aims to explain how the data collection for a research project on vocabulary learning through extensive viewing was integrated into the English language subject of the Media Studies degree. The core of the research experiment consisted of watching eight episodes of *I Love Lucy* (Oppenheimer and Arnaz, 1951), and then completing vocabulary-related activities. The research design required the administration of pre- and post-vocabulary tests, a set of cognitive and proficiency measures administered only at the beginning of the project, along with a survey on viewing habits. Several instances of metacognitive reflection on students' performance on questionnaires and tests were integrated into the students' e-portfolio for the subject, including a reflection on their foreign language progress, and how it could relate to their in-class viewing experience and their viewing habits at home. Results suggest that vocabulary learning took place, although watching the episodes did not result in greater vocabulary gains. The students' reflections showed that the integration of the episodes and tests in the reflective e-portfolio was successful and that they were eye-openers as to their actual foreign language learning experience through extensive video viewing.

**Keywords** E-portfolio · Extensive viewing · Language-focused instruction · Vocabulary learning

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The original version of this chapter was revised. The corresponding author name is updated correctly. The correction to this chapter can be found at [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-2152-0\\_20](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-2152-0_20)

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## Theoretical Framework

Vocabulary knowledge is essential for Foreign Language (FL) development and is at the heart of most types of communicative acts. In other words, without lexical knowledge, there is virtually no chance of mastering an advanced proficiency level (Nation 2013). However, vocabulary research was neglected until the late twentieth century (Meara 1980) and its teaching has typically followed a rather traditional style, which has mainly meant using vocabulary lists or First Language (L1)–Second Language (L2) translations (Mediha and Enisa 2014). Thus, more contextualized innovative teaching practices like extensive reading or flashcards are not mainstream in vocabulary teaching although they could motivate students and, in turn, lead to higher levels of engagement (Nakata 2020; Webb and Nation 2017).

One of these more innovative practices can certainly be extensive viewing (Webb 2015), according to which learners are regularly exposed to television viewing with a clear language learning goal. The potential of television viewing has been shown to positively impact different areas of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Vanderplank 2016), namely vocabulary acquisition (e.g., Rodgers and Webb 2020) and audiovisual comprehension (e.g., Pujadas and Muñoz 2020). This can be in part explained thanks to the large amounts of verbal and pictorial input that learners are exposed to, which can be processed simultaneously by our cognitive system and might lead to a more enduring and deeper learning, as outlined by the Dual Coding Theory (Paivio 1986, 2007) and the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer 2014). Moreover, television viewing has the possibility of being more effective if textual support (in the form of L1 subtitles or captions) is added. These can help learners in making form-meaning connections (Chen et al. 2018; Danan 2004) and segmenting word forms if at the right proficiency level (Charles and Trenkic 2015). Moreover, textual support can also assist low-level learners in understanding authentic audiovisual materials (Kang 2019; Koolstra et al. 1997) and learning vocabulary, especially if they are exposed to genres such as documentaries and sitcoms, where imagery and co-occurrence play a greater role than in other genres (Suárez et al. 2021).

Regarding vocabulary learning, which is the focus of the intervention presented here, research has mainly used short clips, rather than full-length television programmes, and planned short-term interventions (e.g., Hsieh 2020; Teng 2019), probably because of the invasive nature of classroom-based longitudinal studies, with very few exceptions. First, Rodgers and Webb (2020) managed to show that the viewing of ten episodes of an American TV series was beneficial for the learning of vocabulary compared to test-taking among intermediate Japanese undergraduates. However, they did not find any significant differences between watching the episodes captioned or uncaptioned. Similarly, when Sinyashina (2020) compared five hours of extensive television viewing at home to a one-hour session of in-class intentional teaching of vocabulary, the effects of television viewing lessened. Moreover, no significant differences were found in this same study between extensive viewing and a control condition, not exposed to the TWs. With a different aim, Frumuselu (2015)

had English majors watch thirteen episodes of a sitcom with L1 subtitles or captions and showed that the latter were more beneficial for colloquial language learning at the end of the viewing experience. Nevertheless, when vocabulary was tested immediately after viewing each episode, no differences between conditions were found. In the same vein, Zarei (2009) saw that captions, as opposed to L1 subtitles, led to higher indices of vocabulary recognition and recall after having watched nine episodes of a TV series at an Iranian higher education institution. Further one-off studies, using shorter clips and set in the university classroom, have shown that video viewing enhances aural word recognition (Fievez et al. 2020; Markham 1999; Montero Perez et al. 2014, 2018) and word meaning learning (Fievez et al. 2020; Sydorenko 2010); what is more, such benefits have been reported both in oral and written tests (Winke et al. 2010). Nevertheless, it is also true that opposite results have also been found in similar research designs, which failed to find a positive effect of subtitled video viewing in some of the groups analyzed (Etemadi 2012; Raine 2012; Suárez and Gesa 2019; Zarei and Rashvand 2011).

On a different note, reflective learning practices such as reflection on one's self-efficacy and most effective language learning strategies have also proven to be a consistent predictor of behaviour and achievement, more than any other related variables (Bandura 1997). We understand self-efficacy as one's determination of one's own ability to deal with a certain task which is based both on one's past learning experiences or actual abilities and skills, and students' own perceptions of these (DeTure 2004). Effective reflective practices can also help students become self-directed learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and so foster their autonomous learning in such a way that they can apply their learning from studying themselves to contexts beyond the formal classroom. Thus, watching television in class becomes what Alm (2019, p. 15) calls "intra-formal" language learning, that is, the "interdependent nature of informal (self-initiated and out-of-class) and formal (classroom bound) learning experiences. Intra-formal language learning draws on prior informal L2 exposure and world knowledge (...), raises the learners' metacognitive awareness (through discussion and self-reflection), and prepares them for more significant subsequent informal L2 engagement". In addition, drawing on learners' viewing habits to match them with classroom practice is also a good opportunity to enhance their motivation and, hopefully, foster FL learning (Pattamore et al. 2020).

Similarly, portfolios are a learning tool that can channel this reflective practice in such a way that students can widely benefit from their elaboration to enlarge their language learning autonomy while also analyzing the efficacy of their own language learning practices in a broader sense than just a score on a test would achieve (Mhlauli and Kgosiadialwa 2016). As vocabulary learning entails independent and continuous work both in and out-of-class, it, therefore, seems a learning area that can especially benefit from the use of e-portfolios, while promoting independent and continuous learning both in and outside the EFL classroom (Little 2012; Pattamore et al. 2021).

Based on what has been expounded and despite this growing body of literature on vocabulary learning through television viewing in the university classroom, no study to date that the authors are aware of has investigated how integrating data collection for a research study on vocabulary learning affects students' self-reflections on their

vocabulary learning process. It is, therefore, the aim of this chapter to first investigate whether video viewing, together with some formal vocabulary instruction, leads to greater vocabulary gains than explicit instruction alone and, second, to analyze students' reflections on the pedagogical intervention they were asked to participate in.

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants***

The participants in the research study were 60 first-year undergraduates studying the EFL subject of the Media Studies degree at the University of Barcelona. In such a degree, the three compulsory instrumental language subjects (Catalan, Spanish, and English) for specific purposes (language for the media, focusing on communicative functions and vocabulary) are taught following a similar teaching and learning methodology. In the three subjects, students carry out projects and tasks related to several media (press, cinema, radio, marketing, advertising, digital communication, social networks...) which then they reflect upon in an e-portfolio. There is no final exam in any of these subjects. Instead, students are evaluated on their performance in the projects and tasks and on their reflections in the e-portfolio.

Participants belonged to two intact classes: one was randomly assigned to the Control Group (CG) ( $n = 23$ ), who did all the activities related to the research into vocabulary learning through TV viewing to be included in the e-portfolio and to be worked on in class but were not exposed to extensive viewing (at least in class). The other class, the Experimental Group (EG) ( $n = 37$ ), additionally watched the TV series where the Target Words (TWs), which were the main object of study, appeared. Intact classes were used to increase the ecological validity of the research (Spada 2005) as well as to keep the students in the same groups they usually attend classes in. They all were supposed to have an upper-intermediate level of English although their proficiency ranged from A2 to C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001) after having received 1300 h of formal instruction on average. Their age range was 18–26 and there were 21 males and 39 females.

### ***Research Design***

This chapter first analyses vocabulary learning through TV viewing and then presents a possible way to carry out an otherwise intrusive research study with longitudinal data collection in a classroom setting. We expound on the different tests and tasks that participants had to complete as part of a Ph.D. dissertation (Gesa 2019) and how

**Table 13.1** Chronological overview of the test and research-related activities

Type of activity	Beginning of term	Mid-term	End of term
In-class activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proficiency test (Oxford Placement Test –OPT–)</li> <li>• Vocabulary size test (X_Lex and Y_Lex)</li> <li>• Aptitude test (LLAMA)</li> <li>• In-class activities related to motivation, formal and informal EFL learning habits, learning styles and strategies, and learning preferences (based on the Kaleidoscope website; Kjisik and Karlsson 2004)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary pre-test</li> <li>• Vocabulary pre- and post-tasks (CG, at the beginning and at the end of the session; EG, prior to and after viewing the corresponding episode)</li> <li>• Activities related to the contents of the TV episode (only EG - see ‘Materials’ in References)</li> <li>• Questionnaire on TV viewing habits for EFL purposes (see Muñoz, 2020)</li> <li>• Vocabulary post-test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher debriefed on the results obtained by both groups in class depending on the viewing conditions</li> <li>• Teacher provided the keys to all the TWs in the activities and explained linguistic difficulties (see ‘Materials’ in References)</li> </ul>
e-portfolio	Linguistic snapshot wrapping up all the information obtained from the in-class activities to date	Composition reflecting on the experience of watching a TV series in class (EG), on how learning might be influenced by the right extramural exposure to TV series and other sources of input (both EG and CG) and on comedy as a TV genre	Conclusion of the course, including a section on students’ own learning from a subtitled TV series (EG). They were also asked about their most liked activities during the course

they were integrated into the course curriculum by means of an EFL portfolio that the students were expected to elaborate on during the course.

Table 13.1 presents an overview from the beginning of the term until the end of all the research- and TV series-related activities and how a reflection on them was incorporated into the e-portfolio in each phase.

## *Instruments and Procedure*

### **Oxford Placement Test and Vocabulary Size Test**

Participants’ general proficiency was measured using three tests administered at the beginning of the project: the *Oxford Placement Test 1* (Allan 2004) and the receptive vocabulary size tests X\_Lex (Meara 2005a) and Y\_Lex (Meara and Miralpeix

2006). The OPT was used as it has been calibrated, with both native speakers and EFL learners from different backgrounds and proficiencies, to be able to grasp any differences in language knowledge. Moreover, it was piloted with monolingual and multi-lingual learners for five years and with students from forty different nationalities, and the final version of the test was adapted based on such results.

The OPT is divided into two different parts: grammar (tapping into grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills) and listening (focusing on reading and listening skills, and vocabulary size). The grammar part consists of a written multiple-choice test that contains 100 sentences in which learners have to choose which of the three options given best fits each gap. When possible, these sentences are contextualized and linked to one another.

The listening part contains another set of 100 original sentences by native speakers, which test takers are asked to listen to and then decide which of the two options given corresponds to the actual words uttered in the recording. Both options are semantically and grammatically plausible, so test takers can only rely on their listening skills to choose the answer. During the test, participants could only listen to each sentence once. Participants had a maximum of 50 min to complete the grammar part and around 15 min to do the listening test.

The results of the OPT were revealed the week after participants took the test. The teacher also explained the most common grammar mistakes in the test so participants could be aware of where they had failed most often and notice these mistakes in the future.

The receptive vocabulary size tests administered are yes/no tests that ask participants to determine whether a word appearing on screen is known or unknown to them. In terms of test mechanics, they are essentially the same, but the difference lies in the fact that X\_Lex analyses the vocabulary included in the 1–5 K frequency bands, whereas Y\_Lex taps into the vocabulary included in the 6–10 K word range. Both also contain some pseudo-words that adjust participants' scores downwards if they claim they know one. Participants were instructed to label a word as 'known' only if they were sure about it; if they were doubtful, they were specifically urged not to do so. These two tests were used since learners were not thought to have a vocabulary larger than ten thousand words, claimed to be rather advanced (Meara and Miralpeix 2017), as it was later proved by the results of the tests (EG: 4400 words, and CG: 4300 words).

Participants learned about their scores immediately after taking the tests, but they received no information on the interpretation of such scores until these were verified by the teacher. One week later, via Moodle, participants were informed about what the results meant, and they were given the approximate correspondence to CEFR proficiency levels.

## **The LLAMA Test**

The LLAMA test (Meara 2005b) is an aptitude test that consists of four subtests, each of which is supposed to tap into a different language ability. LLAMA B is a

vocabulary aptitude measure in which students learn some written words and they must associate them with an image. They are then tested by having to relate these words, appearing in a random order, with the images. In LLAMA D, students hear a series of sound combinations; they then hear a string of sounds, and they have to say whether they have heard that sound before or not. LLAMA E measures sound-symbol correspondence. In the training phase, test takers listen to a series of sounds when they press different combinations of letters. In the test, they must match the sound they hear with one of the two combinations of letters they see. Finally, in LLAMA F, students learn how to infer grammar rules in an unknown written language from image combinations. In the test phase, they see an image that they must relate to two possible written solutions.

After taking the test, students learned about the different abilities that test parts are supposed to measure and how they can relate to their language learning experience, strengths and weaknesses. Emphasis was put on the fact that not all learners have the same kind or amount of aptitude, and that this can partially explain why they can score higher or lower on the different parts of the LLAMA test.

## **Intervention Materials**

### TV Series

As has been said, the intervention itself revolved around the viewing of eight episodes of *I Love Lucy* (Oppenheimer and Arnaz 1951), a very popular American sitcom from the 1950s. The story centres upon four main characters: Lucy Ricardo and her husband Ricky, and their two best friends and landlords Fred and Ethel Mertz. Throughout the series, Lucy tries to get into show business although she is not very talented. Her husband, Ricky Ricardo, plays the role of a Cuban–American singer and musician, who has to cope with Lucy’s attempts to enter the music industry. In terms of interest, participants from a similar background had claimed to like it (see Cokely and Muñoz 2019) and it was also a good pick because learners were not familiar with it as it was last aired in Spain more than fifty years ago and it is not found in the catalogue of streaming platforms. In addition, this series was related to the students’ degree and so they could benefit from it, not only language wise, with the exposure to vocabulary and situations related to show business, but also to the history of the cinema and music industry of that time, thanks to the cameos of Hollywood stars and references to the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. The students could easily relate these contents to the subject matter tackled in the ‘History of Cinema’ subject in their same degree. Finally, as students were not familiar with the show, they all watched it from a blank slate perspective, with no influence whatsoever from the media and social networks promoting or spreading spoilers of current TV shows.

Episodes were selected considering the amount of testable vocabulary and their content (i.e., they should be appropriate to be shown at university and interesting enough for students to be hooked), so some episodes were discarded because of a

lack of challenging vocabulary or for them being too explicit. Finally, consecutive episodes were given priority since they typically are easier to understand than unrelated episodes (Rodgers and Webb 2011). Bearing all these criteria in mind, eight episodes of *I Love Lucy*'s season 5 were chosen, which meant that learners in the EG were exposed to 3 h 16 min of multimodal input. All episodes were presented with English audio and captions. These episodes were later analyzed to make sure that their vocabulary demands fell under the vocabulary known by the participants. Such analysis resulted in a 95% coverage—allowing for a reasonable comprehension of a written and spoken text (Laufer 1989)—at the 2 K level and 98%—considered to be essential for ideal comprehension (Hu and Nation 2000)—at the 5 K level, thus matching learners' vocabulary level (4400 words). This also backed up the fact that episodes were presented in English and with target language captions.

From each of the eight episodes, five TWs were selected, so participants had the opportunity to learn forty TWs in total. These were selected on the basis of their frequency of occurrence in the episodes (more frequent words were prioritized over others and only words appearing at least twice were selected) and in general corpora (1 and 2 K words were avoided whenever possible since there were higher chances of being known by participants), their cognateness (cognates between English and Catalan/Spanish were not considered, since research has shown they are much easier to learn than non-cognates (e.g., Otwinowska 2016), and, overall, care was taken to select TWs that researchers thought were considered to be unknown to participants.

### Vocabulary Tests and Tasks

These TWs were tested at the beginning and the end of the intervention by means of a vocabulary pre- and post-test, respectively. They measured vocabulary intake in two ways: first, by quantifying the number of TW forms in English that learners were able to write down; second, by measuring how TW meanings were learned and retained by participants (thus tapping into the form-meaning link). In order to do so, learners were asked to listen to an audio, recorded by a native speaker, in which each TW form was read aloud twice, and the learners' task was to listen to it carefully and scribble down the TW forms they were able to recognize. Similarly, they had to provide the Catalan/Spanish translations or definitions if they knew any. Since the pre- and the post-test were identical, they were used to compute for lexical gains. While the students were not provided with any key to the pre-test, they did receive the raw score they had obtained. At the end of the intervention, they were also informed about their score a few hours later via Moodle.

Not only were TWs encountered in the episodes of *I Love Lucy* and tested using the pre- and post-test, but they were also explicitly taught at the beginning of each of the eight sessions by means of a vocabulary pre-task (i.e., language-focused exercises), which was different to the pre-test mentioned earlier. These pre-tasks, aimed at pre-teaching the TWs to students, followed a Focus-on-FormS approach since they were non-authentic tasks and participants needed the target vocabulary in order to solve the activities they were asked to do (Laufer 2006). This approach, more learning-oriented,



was prioritized over others since learners had to get familiar with a relatively high number of new words in quite a short period of time and this is less likely to happen following a more communicative approach. Moreover, language-focused exercises were included since research has shown that intentional vocabulary learning and explicit teaching are good ways to learn new vocabulary fast and efficiently (Schmitt 2008; Webb 2020), especially in an EFL context (Webb and Nation 2017).

There were five types of vocabulary pre-tasks, so as not to make them too repetitive for learners: from crosswords to word searches, including matching activities or fill-in-the-gaps. All formats were familiar to participants (they had done many activities of this kind during their language learning experience) and this way no time had to be devoted to explaining task instructions. Procedurally speaking, after being done in pairs or small groups, they were corrected with the help of the teacher, so it was made sure that all participants were actually taught the words and given feedback on their performance, so no questions were presumably left unanswered.

Similarly, more encounters with the target vocabulary were provided through the vocabulary post-task, done at the end of each session and different from the post-test explained earlier. This post-task included the five TWs that participants had been taught at the beginning of the session and some of them were seen in the episode. Students were instructed to listen to a recording in which TW forms were read aloud twice and they had to write down the form in English and then select the best Spanish translation out of six possibilities; however, they were urged to select the last option ('I don't know') if they were unsure about the answer. The remaining five options were adapted from Rodgers and Webb (2020):

- (1) The key
- (2) A semantically related distractor (i.e., same semantic field)
- (3) A phonologically related distractor (i.e., similar pronunciation as the TW in English)
- (4) A distractor sharing the same frequency band in large corpora
- (5) A hapax (i.e., an item which appeared in the episode but was not a TW).

The six options were provided in Spanish because "the use of the first language to convey and test word meaning is very efficient" (Nation 2001, p. 351). After doing the task individually, it was not immediately corrected in class to see whether participants could recall the target vocabulary immediately after it was taught. However, participants were debriefed on their scores a few hours after each class via Moodle.

On the last day of class, the TWs, and the most common mistakes in the vocabulary post-tasks as well as in the translations or misspellings in the vocabulary tests were presented in a session devoted to the use of subtitles and captions for EFL. A reflection was also provided from the preliminary results obtained from comparing the EG with the CG.

After completing the **entry tests** (grammar, listening, dictation and 10-min composition) and browsing the **Kaleidoscope** for inspiration, write a 300/350-word essay including the following points. You SHOULD NOT answer each question below separately. Instead, write an **essay** with **PARAGRAPHS** where you include the information below. You can organize your essay however you like.

- Your **relationship** with the English language:
  - in your daily life
  - in the past
  - in the future (do you see yourself using it in your daily life, at work, how?)
  - in formal (class) and informal contexts --> get inspo from 'My daily use of English' survey
  - is this relationship positive or negative?
- Your relationship with **subtitles** --> use survey done in class and 'My daily use of English and subtitles' survey for inspo:
  - do you think watching series and movies in English can help improve your English level? Why? In what skills (reading, listening comprehension, writing, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation...)?
  - in your opinion, what is more helpful, watching audiovisual materials with or without subtitles?
  - which language do you choose for subtitles, your mother tongue or English?
  - what is your experience with subtitles: When did you start using them? Have you changed your habits throughout the years?
- Your present **strengths and weaknesses** in English, in writing (first day composition), spelling (dictation), speaking, listening (OPT Listening), reading, grammar (OPT Grammar), vocabulary (X-Lex / Y-Lex), aptitude tests for learning languages (LLAMA), pronunciation (yes/no test results and reading list) --> use your scores in the placement tests and corrections in the first-class composition to support your opinion
- **Motivation** (positive, negative, intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, instrumental...) --> in-class speaking activity
- **What you need English for now and in the future** and how to manage with your present strengths and weaknesses
- **Learning style(s)**: what do you do to learn/practise a language, what kind of activities do you prefer (role plays, reading, book exercises, videos...)? --> use the Kaleidoscope + results on the 'learning styles' survey and materials presented in class
- **Turning point** in language learning experience: Is there a moment or an event that marked a significant change in your English abilities (a trip, a teacher, a friend...)?

Fig. 13.1 Instructions for the 'linguistic snapshot'

## The E-portfolio

All the tests and activities above were then integrated for reflection on the self and for planning-action-reflection cycles (Ohashi 2018) which were then collected in an e-portfolio elaborated during the whole term. The students carried out a series of reflection activities in class revolving around the topics suggested on the Kaleidoscope website (<https://kaleidoscope.helsinki.fi/>; Kjisik and Karlsson 2004), that is, motivation, learning styles and strategies, language learning history, among others. These activities, along with the reflection on the participants' scores on the cognitive (LLAMA) and language proficiency tests (OPT and vocabulary size) were the starting point for the composition "Linguistic snapshot", which also asked the students about their viewing habits and daily informal exposure to EFL (see Fig. 13.1).

Before and after watching each of the eight episodes chosen for the experimental research, the participants in the EG did some activities in class. Apart from the vocabulary pre-tasks explained above, other activities could be related to the contents of the episode, the 'Golden Age' of cinema in Hollywood, focusing on comedies, and on the role of women in them. As they did not watch the TV series, the CG worked as well on topics related to cinema which lasted approximately the same amount of time than an *I Love Lucy* episode.

Once the eight episodes were watched or, if in the CG, after the eight sessions where the TWs were presented and practiced, participants then reflected on the experience of practicing vocabulary in such a way (with or without TV series including it) in another composition for the e-portfolio, where they were also asked to discuss on the humour used in TV comedies of the Hollywood Golden Age and their (in)appropriateness nowadays (see Fig. 13.2).

Write a 300-word essay, with paragraphs, where you will develop the following points:

- Which kinds of TV series you usually watch (your favorite genre, favorite TV series), how often, why...

Focusing on comedies/humor and, specifically on *I Love Lucy*, a sitcom:

- Are you keen or not on comedy as a genre? What do you prefer: sitcoms, sketch comedy, stand-up comedy, parody, satire, screwball comedy, political comedy, black comedy, scatological humor, comedy of manners, romantic comedy... (**source for sub-genre definitions**)
- Considering that *ILL* ran from 1951 to 1960, what factors make it "different" from current sitcoms?
- How would you qualify the humor used in *I Love Lucy*? Provide examples to justify your answer.
- What was your favorite episode in terms of humor? Any scene in particular that you would like to highlight? Why this one in particular?
- What's your favorite TV comedy and how does it compare to *I Love Lucy*? How are they similar/different?
- Did watching *ILL* in English make it difficult for you, you think, to grasp the jokes or puns, or was it convenient? Why? Would you rather have watched it in your L1/with subtitles in English/with subtitles in your L1...?

**Fig. 13.2** Instructions for the composition on the experience of watching *I Love Lucy* in class

Naturally, there were additional questions for the EG regarding their experience with subtitles while watching the series in class (see Fig. 13.3).

At the end of the term, after having been debriefed on all the results of the pre- and post-tests, as well as on the cognitive and proficiency tests and how they may have influenced their learning, the students were expected to reflect on the overall experience in the conclusion of their e-portfolio. In this essay, they were also expected to include if they had experienced any changes in their EFL daily habits and were asked about the activities that they liked the most and the least during the course too (see Fig. 13.4).

- 1) What is your experience with subtitles (When did you start using them? Have you changed your habits throughout the years?)
- 2) Do you think watching series and movies in English can help improve your English level? Why? In what skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation...)? What is more helpful, watching with or without subtitles?
- 3) You have seen several episodes of *I Love Lucy* this term. How was the experience? Would you change it in any way? Would you like to continue doing this activity in class?

**Fig. 13.3** Additional questions for the composition on the experience of watching *I Love Lucy* in class (EG only)

**Write a text with paragraphs or record yourself** answering the following questions. Since this assignment will be posted on your portfolio as a text block or as a blog entry, start thinking of it in multimodal terms (hyperlinks, images, different font types, colors, layout, etc.).

- Report on your overall learning process and outcomes during this course.
- Do you think that you have improved in any of the language skills in English in relation to your initial objectives? If so, indicate which ones and how.
- Have any of your reflections (e.g., linguistic snapshot, the metaphorical images, viewing habits and learning through TV series, humor through *I Love Lucy*-, Booktuber video peer-evaluation) helped you to take some action to change your learning experience(s) or habits?
- During the PW, you received several types of feedback (from your teacher, from your classmates, from the other group partners). Did you or your group take some action after receiving the feedback on your PW from your teacher (first presentation – comments on Google Drive), your own classmates (SWOT presentation) and from the other group (sections 3, 4, 5.1-5.2)? How? What's your opinion about this procedure?
- How would you describe your experience with the electronic portfolio and dealing with multimodality?
- How would you describe both your own BookTuber experience and the feedback received from it?
- What is your...:
  - best contribution in this subject?
  - worst contribution in this subject?
  - most personal contribution in this subject?
- Mention the activities that you liked and did not like doing during the course and give reasons. Alternatively, state any course task that you would have liked to do.
- Give yourself a grade. Be objective and critical with yourself and your work.
- In hindsight, give a piece of advice to yourself or the partners that have taken this course.

**Fig. 13.4** Instructions of the conclusion of the e-portfolio

## *Analysis*

As the pre- and post-test were identical, lexical gains could be computed. To do so, the relative gains formula (see Fig. 13.5) (Horst et al. 1998; Shefelbine 1990) was used since it is a more fine-grained measure of vocabulary learning and it considers the number of words that learners knew at the beginning of the term:

$$\text{Relative gains for participants} = \frac{N \text{ of TWs learned}}{N \text{ of items tested} - N \text{ of TWs known}} \times 100$$

**Fig. 13.5** Relative gains formula

where: ‘TWs learned’ =  $N$  of items that were answered incorrectly on the pre-test and correctly on the post-test; and ‘TWs known’ =  $N$  of items that were answered correctly on both the pre- and the post-test. The ‘ $N$  of items tested’ was always 40, the total number of TWs.

Then, paired samples  $t$ -tests or Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used to determine progress from the beginning to the end of the term, with the pre- and post-test raw scores as dependent variables and time as a factor. However, to know if additional TV series viewing led to higher indices of vocabulary learning than language-focused instruction, independent samples  $t$ -tests and Mann–Whitney  $U$  tests were used with relative gains for form and meaning as dependent variables and conditions (EG vs. CG) as a factor. Vocabulary pre- and post-tasks will not be analyzed in this chapter since no vocabulary learning measure could be calculated out of them. E-portfolios were analyzed more qualitatively, by labelling the texts and categorizing the comments ad hoc from the data collected, and quotes were also extracted from the questions students had to answer.

## Results

As far as vocabulary learning is concerned, the overall results from the experiment of devising tasks dealing with 40 TWs and, in the case of the EG, having extra exposure to them through a subtitled TV series, was positive in terms of learning gains for both the EG and CG (Gesa 2019; Suárez and Gesa 2019). The paired samples  $t$ -tests and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests showed that participants had made vocabulary learning gains over the academic term both as regards to TW form and meaning (see Table 13.2).

However, independent-samples  $t$ -tests and Mann–Whitney  $U$  tests failed to be statistically significant, showing that having additionally watched the eight episodes of the subtitled TV series did not result in a significantly higher learning than having been only taught the TWs (TW form:  $t(59) = 0.489$ ,  $p = 0.627$  and TW meaning:  $U = 358$ ,  $z = -1.176$ ,  $p = 0.239$ ).

Focusing now on the e-portfolio, that is, the students’ reflections on the experience of watching a TV series in class, the results reveal that 22 out of 33 students (66%) considered this activity the best in the whole course. When specifying the reasons why they had chosen this activity, out of these 22 students, 19 (86.3%) affirmed that they very much appreciated having been able to learn vocabulary not only from

**Table 13.2** Results of paired samples  $T$ -tests and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests

Lexical aspect	EG	CG
TW form	$t(37) = -10.233$ , $p = 0.000$	$Z = -4.204$ , $p = 0.000$
TW meaning	$Z = -5.309$ , $p = 0.000$	$Z = -4.204$ , $p = 0.000$

the TV series, but also from the activities revolving around the episodes. What is more, 15 out of these 22 students (68.2%) affirmed that they also found it a very entertaining activity, while two of them highlighted the chance they had had to focus on the Golden Age of cinema in Hollywood and two more remarked that they felt their listening comprehension skills had improved from watching the TV series, as it was a longer exposure than the usual tracks used for listening practice in the EFL classroom.

Supporting these results, students reported that vocabulary could be learned from the TV series as well as the fact that it was a source of entertainment and of knowledge about Hollywoodian cinema:

If I had to name my most favourite activity during the course, I'd say that watching *I Love Lucy* was the best. Ludic reasons aside, it was a good way to learn new words and to know when it's appropriate to use them. Also I liked the episodes, so it's a win-win situation. (Student 1, EG)

The activity that I liked in this course was watching the show *I Love Lucy* because I was learning new vocabulary at the same time I was enjoying the TV show. (Student 5, EG)

Without any doubt the activity that I liked the most was watching *I Love Lucy*! It was funny but at the same time so useful: new vocabulary, new set phrases, listening to the American accent, and discovering new knowledge. For example, I didn't know who John Wayne was till I watched *I Love Lucy*! (Student 7, EG)

Regarding the integration of watching TV series in their daily life, 8 out of the 22 (36%) students mentioning *I Love Lucy* in their conclusions said that this practice had been useful to realize that they could also watch subtitled TV series at home, while 5 (22.7%) affirmed that they had changed their viewing habits by opting for captions instead of L1 subtitles thanks to this experiment.

One student also pointed out that rather than being a passive activity, he felt that watching a TV series was a real EFL learning activity like any other he could do in his daily life to improve his English.

About my objectives, I was really realistic about them, because I know myself and I know I would never get active to learn more English. My way to expand my knowledge (in this language) is to passively gather new information during my daily life. The most active thing was watching TV shows, reciting poetry and reading scripts. (Student 1, EG)

The CG was, obviously, not asked about the experience of watching eight episodes from a TV series in class. Only two of the students in the CG (8.6%) mentioned that they did not see the point in doing unrelated vocabulary activities containing the TWs. None of them mentioned such activities as their favourite part of the subject, either. In contrast, 9 out of the 23 students (39%) acknowledged that they had liked working on the topic of cinema in this instrumental language course, although three of them (13%) would have liked to focus more on specific vocabulary related to this field rather than on what for them were random words.

## Implications of the Findings

For most of these students, reflecting on their own language learning experience was a totally unknown activity, as most of them had never done that in any curricular context or produced a portfolio for any other subject before that could also be applied to the students' lifelong informal or intra-formal learning experiences.

The viewing experience had some out-of-class implications since some of the participants mentioned their willingness to change their viewing habits after the experience they had lived during the term, and it might be the case that others also considered doing so but did not express it explicitly. Hence, this in-class viewing experience could be seen as a guide or starting point for more out-of-class original version television viewing, thus increasing the presupposed benefits of extensive viewing, and contributing to incidental vocabulary acquisition (Webb 2015).

Focusing on the results reported, it seems clear that the activities related to watching eight episodes of *I Love Lucy* were not considered a waste of time, but an opportunity to learn mainly vocabulary as well as aspects related to other areas of the subject curriculum. Indeed, the vocabulary gains reported in this chapter confirm that all participants learned vocabulary, regardless of the group to which they belonged, although most of the learning came from the language-focused exercises. Based on this, it is of the utmost importance that the TV viewing experience is accompanied by a set of active learning tasks: in this intervention, the vocabulary pre-tasks were used to introduce the target vocabulary with in-context examples, whereas the post-tasks were utilized to consolidate and recycle the vocabulary seen in the TV series and to provide a higher number of encounters with the TWs. It could not be ruled out that, without these learning activities, smaller vocabulary gains might have been observed. In relation to participants' major, the TV series was carefully chosen so that these viewing sessions were not an activity totally unrelated to their major. Great care was also taken with the creation of the discussion activities revolving around specific events or scenes in the TV series, such as the cameos of John Wayne or the mentions of other Hollywood stars, or the role (or rather, the undermining role) of women in the show business industry of the time. In this way, not only could students learn a language in a novel way, but they could also acquire new subject matters needed later in their degree.

Enjoyment was also a recurrent argument when expressing the participants' like of watching a TV series in class. There was only one student who mentioned enjoyment without remarking that he had also learned vocabulary from that experience. Therefore, from this intervention, it could also be concluded that it is a good idea to use extensive viewing in the classroom to keep the students' motivation level high. This should be done, however, priorly defining a clear learning objective like, in this case, vocabulary intake, besides all the additional learning the students could take from the activities carried out in class related to the episode of the day. Finding words in context is also a boost for vocabulary learning, so TV viewing activities should be devised with that in mind. In this respect, it is important that the materials used



in the classroom are specially tailored for the target students; catering to their needs and interests is essential if motivation and engagement want to be kept high.

Finally, as it can be perceived, the students' omission of mentioning the vocabulary activities in the CG might be due to their similarity to regular language activities the students were already used to doing, again confirming that more novel and engaging activities to learn new vocabulary could be welcomed by these students that did not watch the TV series. Besides, their willingness to learn specific vocabulary related to the cinema shows that, indeed, the lack of contextualization of the TWs in the research-related activities was not the most motivating activity for the CG.

## Conclusion

To conclude, from the results obtained, it is evident that using extended TV viewing exposure in the regular classroom serves the purpose of teaching new vocabulary contextualized in a mode of input the students appreciate. This teaching practice involved as well an additional difficulty, which was not so much fitting the 3 h 16 min of extensive viewing in a course that lasted 40 h (viewing the episodes meant in total two whole classes of 1 h 30 min each) but making this viewing fit in the teaching plan in such a way that it was also accompanied by meaningful activities that served the students for their own learning purposes and personal and professional interests. Therefore, should any practitioner feel like devising a similar experience, we encourage them to do it but also bearing in mind the whole teaching plan and the curricular subjects, the students are expected to cover during the term or degree.

## Appendix 1: Contributing Materials

Slides used to complement some of the *I Love Lucy* episodes with related activities for the EG:

- Suárez, M. d. M. (2018). 'I Love Lucy' S0501: Lucy Visits Grauman's [PowerPoint presentation]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2445/128446>
- Suárez, M. d. M. (2018). 'I Love Lucy' S0502: Lucy and John Wayne (Or Where's the Fly?) [PowerPoint presentation]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2445/128432>
- Suárez, M. d. M. (2018). 'I Love Lucy' S0503: Lucy and the Dummy [PowerPoint presentation]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2445/128421>
- Suárez, M. d. M. (2018). 'I Love Lucy' S0505: The Great Train Robbery [PowerPoint presentation]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2445/128462>
- Suárez, M. d. M. (2018). 'I Love Lucy' S0506: Homecoming [PowerPoint presentation]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2445/128433>
- Suárez, M. d. M. (2018). 'I Love Lucy' S0507: Face To Face [PowerPoint presentation]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2445/128463>.



Slides with the keys to tests and further explanations of the results obtained by the EG and CG:

- Suárez, M. d. M. (2020). ILL Vocab Review [PowerPoint presentation]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2445/159764>.

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# Chapter 14

## On Corpus-Based Contrastive Linguistics and Language Pedagogy: Reimagining Applications for Contemporary English Language Teaching



Niall Curry 

**Abstract** Contrastive linguistics and language pedagogy have a complex past. While early work in contrastive analysis was specifically conducted to support the development of research-informed language pedagogies, it was to be replaced by the fields of error analysis and interlanguage studies, given its shortcomings in effectively predicting language errors. In the years that followed, the role of contrastive analysis in language pedagogy became peripheral. However, given that the current face of ELT has transformed greatly from the ELT of the 1950s and 1960s, there is value in reconsidering the role of corpus-based contrastive linguistics in contemporary language teaching. This chapter does so by proposing a theoretical model that draws synergies between core constructs in corpus-based contrastive linguistics (the Multilingual, the Multicultural and the Specialised) and key challenges in contemporary ELT (plurilingual competencies; Global citizenship in ELT; and specialised discourses and language for specific purposes—LSP—in ELT) with a view to reimagining the relevance of corpus-based contrastive linguistics to ELT. Overall, the chapter proposes a dialectical approach, underpinned by corpus linguistic approaches, which makes clear the affordances of contrastive analysis for supporting learners' plurilingual competencies, for developing interculturally and globally situated learners, and for facilitating the teaching of specialised discourses in the English language classroom.

**Keywords** Contrastive analysis · ELT · CEFR · Multilingualism

### Introduction

Contrastive analysis involves the comparison, in synchrony, of two or more collections of comparable language data with a view to identifying meaningful differences and similarities between the language data studied. In the 1940s and 50s, contrastive analysis, proposed by Fries (1945) and developed by Lado (1957), endeavoured to

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compare languages for pedagogical application. Fries highlighted that for language teaching “the most efficient materials are those based on a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner” (1945, p. 9). Building on his work, Lado’s contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH; 1957) posited that errors and interference could become predictable in the language learning process if more attention were paid to the learners’ first language. However, CAH began to fall from favour, as it failed to effectively predict and explain errors (Klein 1986). Coupled with English language teaching (ELT) movements rejecting the value of the first language in language learning (Cook 2001) and the growth of the fields of error analysis and interlanguage studies (Corder 1975), contrastive analysis fell further into decline in ELT contexts from the 1980s.

Contrastive analysis was not to remain in decline, however, as it re-emerged in the 1990s as contrastive linguistics. This was largely owing to improved theorisation in the field (Granger 2003), developments in the field of pragmatics (Senft 2014), and technological advances in concurrent fields, like corpus linguistics (Granger 2003). Most typically known now as corpus-based contrastive linguistics, contrastive studies make use of contrastive analysis approaches and language corpora, such as multilingual, comparable, and parallel corpora, to compare and contrast specific language items from formal and functional perspectives (Aijmer and Lewis 2017; Curry 2021). Corpus-based contrastive analyses are not confined to the study of different languages and can be seen in inter-varietal studies of English, for example (Mikhailov and Cooper 2016). However, in this chapter, it should be noted that the focus is on comparisons across languages and in the context of ELT, the role of such contrastive analyses for informing pedagogy remains peripheral (Curry 2021; Lightbown and Spada 2013). Recognising that corpus-based contrastive linguistics can help us to observe differences and similarities across languages in terms of language use, culture, and practice, this chapter builds on previous work (e.g. Curry 2021) to interrogate and demonstrate the value of contrastive linguistics for ELT. In so doing, it argues that while the shortcomings associated with CAH were an understandable cause for its relegation in the field of ELT, the current face of corpus-based contrastive linguistics can offer important theoretical contributions for informing contemporary ELT practices. This is especially the case in the multilingual and multicultural context of the European Union.

To support such an argument, this chapter presents a theoretical perspective, outlining synergies between corpus-based contrastive linguistics and contemporary ELT from the perspective of three key constructs: the Multilingual, the Multicultural, and the Specialised. The constructs form part of a proposed theoretical model that signals the paradigms in which the goals of corpus-based contrastive linguistics reflexively engage with challenges in contemporary language pedagogy, namely: plurilinguistic competencies in ELT; global citizenship in ELT; and specialised discourses and LSP in ELT. The generation and application of this theoretical model makes clear the potential for the mutual conditioning of the fields of corpus-based contrastive linguistics and ELT and signals the affordances of corpus-based contrastive linguistics for supporting learners’ plurilinguistic competencies,

for developing interculturally and globally situated learners, and for facilitating the teaching of specialised discourses in the English language classroom.

The relevance of this topic to the European Union is owing to the dynamic, variable, and complex practice of ELT therein. Large transnational institutions, such as the Council of Europe or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), play critical roles in developing language and education policies to guide contemporary ELT and language education. Most notably, the development of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages, which classifies language proficiency from beginner (A1) to mastery (C2), has revolutionised teaching in the European context, and beyond. Teachers and learners engage with CEFR evaluations on a daily basis (Figueras 2012). National and international educational publishers and assessmentbodies make use of the CEFR to guide their practices (Figueras 2012), and institutions, schools, and universities across Europe set their standards against the CEFR (Figueras 2012). Moreover, while we may see the European Union as a relatively fixed entity with specific member countries, policies, and languages present, from a conceptual perspective, the role of migration, cross-border work, and internationalisation in a global world render its boundaries blurry, as it has become a complex space for multilingualism, language contact, and language education (Peckham et al. 2012). In fact, we may argue that ELT in the European Union is extending beyond itself, linguistically, with growing numbers of international students from outside of the European Union bringing increased linguistic and cultural diversity to the ELT classroom therein (Gvelesiani and Mumladze 2020). Therefore, the theoretical model proposed herein, while acutely relevant for the European Union teaching context, is arguably applicable to wider international contexts too.

The chapter begins, in Section “[Contrastive Analysis and Language Pedagogy: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices](#)”, with a consideration of contrastive analysis and language pedagogy with a view to delineating their historical relationship. This section also documents the current state of the art in corpus-based contrastive linguistics and considers how it informs contemporary pedagogy. In Section “[Towards a Reapplication of Corpus-Based Contrastive Linguistics in ELT: Theoretical Synergies and Pedagogical Affordances](#)”, the discussion focuses on contemporary and key issues in language pedagogy. This discussion centres on plurilinguistic competencies, global citizenship in ELT, and specialised discourses and LSP in ELT as well as the affordances of corpus-based contrastive linguistics and its core constructs (i.e. the Multilingual, the Multicultural, and the Specialised) for ELT. In so doing, the theoretical account offers guidelines for generating and realising a dialectical model for advancing corpus-based contrastive linguistics in line with developments in ELT practices and for informing ELT with corpus-based contrastive linguistic constructs. This section focuses specifically on the use of this model for applying corpus-based contrastive linguistics to ELT and underpins this application with pedagogical approaches. Subsequently, Section “[Corpus-Based Contrastive Linguistics for ELT: Future Directions in Research and Practice](#)” considers emerging areas of research and practice that need attention before offering a brief conclusion.

## Contrastive Analysis and Language Pedagogy: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices

Contemporary research in corpus-based contrastive linguistics reflects a relatively small canon in the wider applied linguistics and language education literature (Kramsch 2007); this, however, is not without reason. Contrastive analysis came to prominence in the post-World War II era (Griffiths and Parr 2001) and this was a time of experimentation and instability in linguistic and language education research which was experiencing “changing winds and shifting sands” (Marckwardt 1972, p.7). Key work in this area, such as the CAH, proposed by Fries (1945) and developed by Lado (1957), endeavoured to compare languages for pedagogical application (Kramsch 2007). The approach became popular during the 1960s following the application of Lado’s microlinguistic contrastive analysis in *Linguistics across cultures* (1957). Lado’s CAH posits that features of foreign languages like those in a learner’s mother tongue are easier for a learner to learn and that conversely, those features that are quite distinct from those in the learner’s mother tongue are more difficult for a learner to learn. Therefore, as mentioned previously, it was thought that errors and interference could become predictable in the language learning process if more attention were paid to the learners’ first language. However, the hypothesis eventually fell from favour where researchers such as Klein (1986) began to recognise the limitations of the CAH in explaining errors.

The CAH at this time existed in three forms: strong, moderate, and weak. The strongest form focused on error prediction (Wardhaugh 1970). The moderate form was more concerned with categorising patterns of similarities and differences between languages to inform learning (Oller and Ziahosseiny 1970), and the weak form was more removed and offered a linguistic description (Wardhaugh 1970). As researchers were moving away from contrastive analysis, the loss of confidence in its strong and moderate forms led scholars to search for new explanations within the then growing fields of error analysis and interlanguage studies when informing language pedagogies (Corder 1975; Johansson 2007). Overall, contrastive analysis was seen to be too optimistic (Sridhar 1975) and theoretically weak (Selinker 1972), and this resulted in its abandonment. Critically, it is worth recognising that contrastive analysis, at this time, was largely used to address issues of accuracy, errors, and language transfer where issues such as culture, plurilingualism, and specialised language were not central to the CAH or ELT.

The shifting sands in language education and the evident shortcomings in CAH led to the temporary abandonment of contrastive analysis. Interest in contrastive analysis diminished between the 1960s and 1980s and, somewhat controversially, it was reclassified as a branch of linguistic typology in the 1980s, by Hawkins (1986). Its slow re-emergence reflects a pattern of ‘success-decline-success’ where contemporary practices in contrastive linguistics largely sit within the field of corpus-based contrastive linguistics (Granger 2003, p.13). However, it has struggled to recover entirely from its initial rejection, which has ultimately led to the effective breakdown in the relationship between contrastive analysis and language pedagogy. A

relationship that remains fraught to this day (Curry 2021; Lightbown and Spada 2013).

Nonetheless, in contemporary research, contrastive linguistics has emerged as an important field of independent study, where languages have been and continue to be analysed with a view to 'identify[ing] the similarities and differences between the conceptual structures of different languages' (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2008, p. 206). Key concepts of equivalence and the *tertium comparationis* as well foundational concepts in corpus linguistics such as representativeness and sampling (discussed in detail in Curry 2021) offer a complex theoretical foundation to contemporary corpus-based contrastive linguistics, eschewing historical critiques surrounding issues of rigor and methodological circularity (Chesterman 1998). However, nowadays, corpus-based contrastive linguistics does not claim to answer all questions surrounding the best means to inform language teaching and learning. Its aforementioned weak form, which is largely concerned with linguistic description, better conceptualises the role corpus-based contrastive linguistics plays in contemporary research. Nonetheless, it appears that interest in the role of contrastive linguistics for informing language pedagogy has resurfaced since the re-emergence of contrastive linguistics.

Several researchers in linguistics and language pedagogy have signalled a need to reconsider the merger of these two fields. Aston (1999) called for the application of contrastive analyses of comparable corpora to language pedagogy. Granger (2009) echoed this call, noting that the application of multilingual comparable corpora to language teaching warrants further investigation. Thornbury (2017) points to the values that he perceives the so-called comparative method affords language teaching, arguing that ELT classrooms are multilingual spaces that can exploit language competence in the first language to support the learning of a second or other language. This view is built on the concept of 'contrastive metalinguistic input', a concept proposed by Scheffler (2012, p. 605) that argues that 'there is growing empirical evidence that contrastive L1–L2 [first language–second language] explicit information may be necessary if FL [foreign language] learners are to master certain difficult L2 structures'.

Responding to these calls, it is worth thinking about the current face of ELT, both generally and in the European context. Is the ELT context that brought about the work Fries (1945) and Lado (1957) comparable to the ELT context of today? Are the same issues addressed and underscored in the literature? Are there similar expectations of English language learners? Put simply, the answer is no. While some issues may persist, the global context in which ELT takes place has changed immeasurably owing to changing student motivations, demographics, the role of technology in language learning, and the need to develop critical practices in the ELT classroom (Tagata 2018), for example. Moreover, the values attributed to culture and multilingualism for ELT have evolved with contemporary arguments calling for consideration of and engagement with learners' first languages in the language classroom (e.g. Annury 2017; Baker 2015). Furthermore, there is an evident, growing need for contextualised, cross-linguistic, and specialised language in ELT contexts, with learners requiring personalised, specialised input that responds to their cultural and linguistic needs (e.g.



Bocanegra-Valle and Basturkmen 2019). Contemporary corpus-based contrastive linguistics is heavily concerned with contextualised language, cultural variations, language function as well as form, and offering critical perspectives from a multilingual context (Curry 2021; Kubota and Lehner 2004). These transformations mean that corpus-based contrastive linguistics now offers a vastly different perspective for ELT than it once did which is why it is time to reconsider its relevance to ELT. To reimagine the application of contrastive linguistics to ELT effectively, the following section identifies several key issues in contemporary ELT practices and moves to source solutions to these issues in corpus-based contrastive linguistics research.

### **Towards a Reapplication of Corpus-Based Contrastive Linguistics in ELT: Theoretical Synergies and Pedagogical Affordances**

To gain a deeper understanding of contemporary issues in ELT, several valuable systematic literature reviews have revealed the key challenges that persist within the field. This chapter draws on three such key issues. For example, recognising the multilingual context in which ELT is practised in Europe, one can imagine that challenges in translanguaging and plurilingualism pervade language classrooms. Indeed, multilingual communication has grown in significance in recent years (Chalkiadaki 2018) in contexts spanning ELT and English Medium Instruction, and national and international guidance on this matter urges teachers to engage with learners' first languages and develop a plurilinguistic competence (cf. Council of Europe 2018). Interestingly, such an approach has been found to address issues of under-achievement, literacy, and dropout rates (Gatil 2021). However, teachers' perceptions of the roles of English in ELT, their willingness to engage with languages other than English in the classroom, and their capacity to do so present a challenge to the development of learners' plurilinguistic competences and are, at the very least, inconsistent (Chalkiadaki 2018; Curry and Pérez-Paredes 2021; Turnbull 2018). Evidently, the issue of supporting a plurilinguistic competence in contemporary ELT emerges from the uniqueness of the globalised and complex nature of contemporary society.

The second issue in contemporary ELT documented in the literature refers to the changing nature and role of the ELT classrooms in learners' wider education. With the focus on so-called "21st Century Skills" ever growing in ELT, language teachers are charged with additional duties of not just developing students' language and linguistic knowledge, but also their cultural, intercultural, social, and global knowledge and awareness (Zhang and Zhou 2019). One can imagine that such an issue is particularly evident in a context such as Europe wherein languages and cultures vary substantially, are closely packed together, and blur across geolinguistic boundaries. Arguably, traditional ways of teaching are no longer sufficient to ensure that learners are equipped to navigate their place in the world through English and, therefore, there has been an evident focus on increasing the theorisation that underpins ELT as

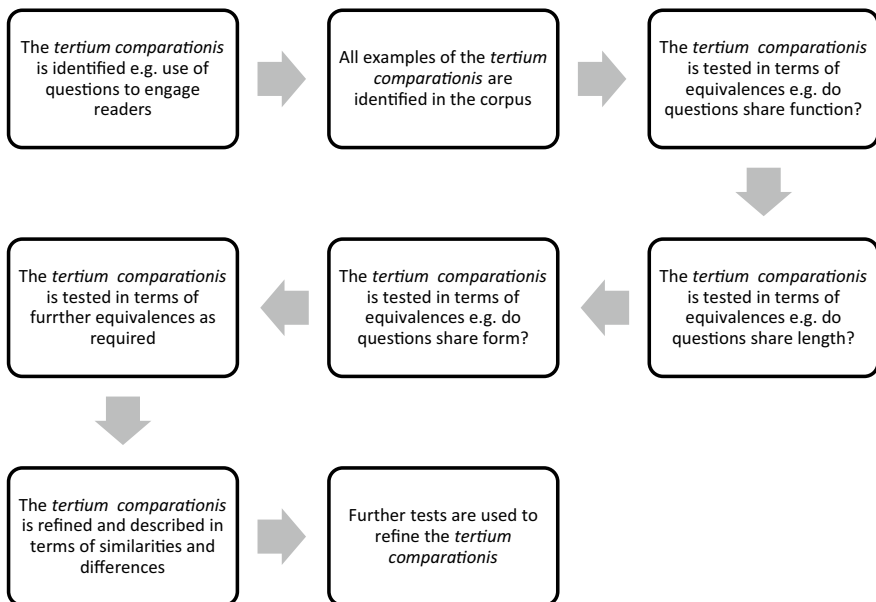
well as widening its remit, educationally (Tuzlukova et al. 2017). However, working between language and culture with external pressures of assessment (Wang and Li 2020) and gaps in teachers' knowledge of specific cultures (Altinsoy et al. 2018; Novita and Purwati 2021) can render this issue a serious impediment for teachers, who are often in need of means to access language and culture in an integrated manner.

The third and, perhaps, most substantial issue in contemporary ELT pertains to the role of specialised discourse. English for specific purposes (ESP) originated in as early as the 1960s (Barber 1962) and since then has endeavoured to equip learners with the knowledge and language of specific communities of English language users (Ramírez 2015). The sustained growth of ESP over time led to its position as one of the most prominent facets of contemporary ELT (Anthony 1997; Ramírez 2015) with language teachers specialising in the teaching of academic language (Vincent and Nesi 2021), legal language (Williams 2011), and the language of tourism (Zahedpisheh et al. 2017), for example. While theorisation in this field rests upon both (corpus)linguistics and language pedagogy (cf. Charles and Frankenberg-Garcia 2021), there remain several challenges in engaging with ESP in multilingual contexts, such as Europe. Notably, in a paper discussing the impact of migration, translanguaging, and code-switching in ESP, Gvelesiani and Mumladze (2020) found that owing to the globalised world and the increasingly important relationship between specialised language cultures, language learners, and ESP, there is a need to support cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives in ESP pedagogies. Likewise, when working across legal cultures, for example, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspectives are necessary to support language learners to communicate effectively with their desired community, utilising the appropriate discourse (Muravev 2020). Therefore, while ESP approaches are long-standing, the comparison of LSP in multilingual contexts is a much more recent endeavour that supports a more holistic ESP education. Therefore, the means to identify how LSP cultures and communities compare across languages remains somewhat obfuscated.

The three issues identified thus far are the effective development of plurilinguistic competencies, global citizenship, and the teaching of ESP from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective. To address these issues, this chapter proposes that a return to contrastive linguistics may offer a critical and timely solution. Core and foundational constructs in corpus-based contrastive linguistics offer means to engage with multilingualism, multiculturalism, and specialised languages across multiple languages and cultures (Curry 2021). There are evident synergies between multilingualism and plurilinguistic competencies, multiculturalism and global citizenship, and ESP and specialised languages that are worthy of unpacking. Based on these synergies, the subsequent section discusses the three identified constructs of the Multilingual, the Multicultural, and the Specialised with a view to illustrating how approaches in corpus-based contrastive linguistics can shape and be shaped by language pedagogy and address the issues outlined herein.

## *Corpus-Based Contrastive Linguistics for ELT: The Multilingual, the Multicultural, and the Specialised*

Corpus-based contrastive linguistics is underpinned by a number of key concepts, which are discussed in detail in Connor and Moreno (2005), Curry (2021), Krzeszowski (1984, 1990). The concept of the *tertium comparationis* serves to identify a comparable common ground that exists between language data being compared. This *tertium comparationis* is typically tested by several equivalences to determine to what extent comparable items correspond across language data. All this analysis takes place in both a contrastive and corpus linguistic domain. Therefore, the quality of the language data being contrasted must respond to corpus linguistic expectations surrounding representativeness and sampling. This means that, in order to undertake a corpus-based contrastive analysis, one needs to build or use a multilingual corpus. Such a corpus could be a comparable corpus (texts collected in different languages using the same sampling frame) or a parallel corpus (translations of texts in source and target languages) which is used to establish a *tertium comparationis* and analyse it according to specified equivalences. A typical process for conducting such corpus studies involves: (1) description of data, (2) identification of *tertium comparationis*, (3) testing of *tertium comparationis* with equivalences, (4) juxtaposition of findings and (5) refinement of *tertium comparationis*. In theory, the process can be repeated, and the data retested to continue to refine the *tertium comparationis*. The following example in Fig. 14.1, from previous work on questions, shows how such an analysis can be structured.



**Fig. 14.1** Contrastive analysis method ( adapted from Curry 2021, p. 83)

In comparing across languages, corpus-based contrastive analyses exploit multilingual corpora, both comparable and parallel, to find meaningful similarities and differences in how specific linguistic features, forms or functions are used in different languages. In this view, corpus-based contrastive linguistics offers a multilingual perspective that can facilitate an understanding of how languages or language varieties relate to one another (Mikhailov and Cooper 2016). For example, corpus-based contrastive analyses have shown that when writers use direct questions in economics research article titles in English, French and Spanish, they ellipsis words (Curry 2021). While ellipsis is most typically associated with spoken language, evidently, it also plays an interesting role in academic texts in each language. One can assume that learners would not fall into any difficulty with ellipsis in titles when moving between these three languages and the multilingual nature of the corpus-based contrastive analysis approach could facilitate learners growing metalinguistic awareness of how their languages relate to one another.

For overall text construction, a different story emerges. Corpus-based contrastive linguistic research has revealed that economics research articles in Spanish and French are non-linear (Bennett and Muresan 2016) and in English they often follow some variation of the introduction, methods, results, and discussion format (Lin and Evans 2012). These differences do not constitute the likes of grammatical errors that preoccupied studies in early contrastive analysis. Instead, they operate from a more macro perspective and for writers who wish to switch between languages and write research articles in different languages, there is a need to engage in a bilingual or translator competence to move effectively between their discourse communities (Bocanegra-Valle 2014; Curry 2021). Unlike the case of ellipsis earlier, this is a story of differences across languages. However, what studies on ellipsis in titles and the structure of research articles have in common is that they reflect relative descriptions of languages. As such, multilingual perspectives can offer relative understandings of language practices between and across languages, which, one could argue, can help learners to create connections between their first, second and other language repertoires.

In accepting this view, it is reasonable to assume that the Multilingual, as a construct underpinning corpus-based contrastive linguistics, can have a direct impact on the development of plurilinguistic competence in the ELT classroom. Indirectly, the results of contrastive analyses could inform materials developed for monolingual contexts while direct approaches to using corpora by learners could support learners in multilingual classrooms, for example. Kharchenko and Chappell (2020), for example, argue for the use of the L1 in the classroom and they propose multilingual classroom tasks for language learning, such as comparing news stories written in English and learners' L1s. Seeing that corpus-based contrastive analyses of news discourse can reveal valuable insights surrounding language similarities and differences, e.g. similarities in meaning but differences in syntactic positioning of adverbs (Carretero et al. 2017), there is scope to exploit corpus-based contrastive linguistics in the ELT classroom in order to give space for languages other than English to

facilitate English language learning (Thornbury 2017). The corpus approach offers a systematic, data-driven, and usage-based means to do so, by supporting teachers in the development of learners' plurilinguistic competences.

While the Multilingual in corpus-based contrastive linguistics offers relative descriptions of language as text, the Multicultural, as a second foundational construct in corpus-based contrastive linguistics, can give insight into the social and cultural practices embedded within spoken and written texts. Culture has long been and continues to be at the heart of contrastive linguistics (cf. Carrió-Pastor 2014; Carter-Thomas and Jacques 2017; Curry 2021) and the construct reveals how culture is realised through language. Identifying texts as reader- and writer-responsible (MacKenzie 2015), categorising languages as content- or formal-oriented (Clyne 1994), or positioning languages as relatively high or low context cultures (Oxford and Gkonou 2018) serve to illustrate how various cultures correspond to one another. Such an insight is valuable as when writers move across and between cultures, it becomes clear that there is a need to use language reflexively to respond to the cultural contexts.

Essentially, the view that the Multicultural in corpus-based contrastive linguistics affords can “form the basis for an appeal for a better understanding and tolerance of culture-specific features, with a view to preserving cultural identity when using English as the international language” (Carrió-Pastor 2014, p. 163). Similarly, Kubota (2010), notes the affordances of contrastive analyses for cross-cultural teaching, stating that.

contrastive rhetoric offers many implications for cross-cultural teaching, especially questions with regard to how culture and language are conceptualized, how politics and ideologies are involved in writing instruction and what role research plays in relation to linguistic and cultural shifts.

Corpus-based contrastive linguistics, therefore, can allow learners to identify how culture is realised through language and, in so doing, offer a space for realising a cultural identity and raising intercultural awareness. Laviosa (2018) affirms this view in her work on corpora for contrastive analysis and translation-oriented ESP teaching in which students use corpora to study the language of politics in the press to inform their own writing. She argues that her approach supports learners' enculturation within their relevant academic discourse communities in each language, effectively developing their intercultural awareness.

This is an important facet of contemporary usage of corpus-based contrastive linguistics, as in developing intercultural awareness, learners seek to understand and exploit their communicative practices and behaviours as culturally embedded processes and in an increasingly globalised world, characterised by international exchange, intercultural awareness has never held more import (Baker 2012a, b). The notion of the global citizen preoccupies much contemporary work in intercultural awareness and language education and pertains largely to the creation of language learning spaces that cultivate the non-native paradigm, challenge monolingualism, address issues of equity and representation, and position ELT within a truly

global and multicultural world (Wu 2020). Evidently, if the Multicultural in corpus-based contrastive linguistics affords inter-, trans- and cross-cultural insights about the communicative behaviour of communities of language users across languages, as Carrió-Pastor (2014) argues, then it can be a rich resource for language learners who can develop their understanding of different cultures associated with different languages and language varieties, for example. Thus, corpus-based contrastive linguistics becomes a valuable tool to support the development of global citizens in the ELT classroom.

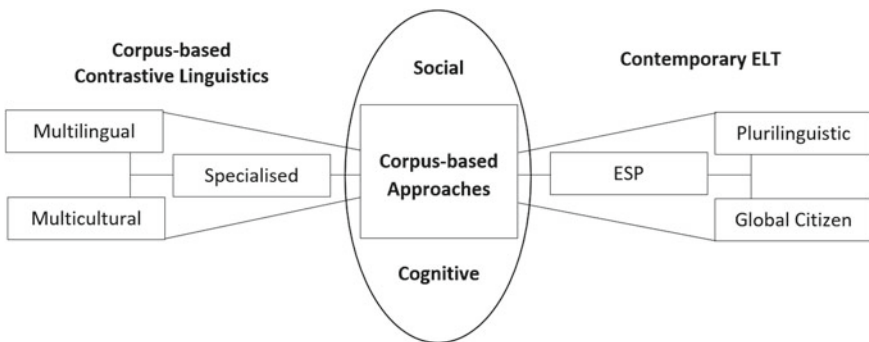
The third construct, the Specialised, reflects the importance of specificity in corpus-based contrastive linguistics. To compare effectively across languages and language varieties, it is important that the language corpora compared are comparable at each stratum. For example, when comparing across languages, research typically centres on shared genres, registers, content/discipline, and purpose, as conceptualised by theories of discourse community (Swales 1990) and genre (Bhatia 2004). If care is not taken in determining comparability, the results of a comparison may hold little value and, as such, the most typical recourse in corpus-based contrastive linguistics is to focus on specialised discourses (Curry 2021; Szczyrbak 2017). While contrastive analysis may not traditionally prove effective in determining grammatical or lexical errors based on language transfer (Klein 1986), it has been made clear that corpus-based contrastive linguistics can act as a resource for drawing on plurilinguistic competence and developing intercultural awareness. Bringing these two strengths of corpus-based contrastive linguistics to the fore, the focus on specialised language allows for the understanding of how different subcultures and their languages compare to one another.

In the context of ESP, learners face challenges in understanding how language is used by specialised communities of language users (Ramírez 2015). Unlike in more general contexts, which typically constitute more open and flexible discourses, the language of specialised communities serves to signal membership therein. As such, ESP is premised on the view that it is of critical importance that learners are equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge to engage with their target community effectively (Bocanegra-Valle 2014). Arguably, one could see these specialised discourses as microcosms of wider language learning within specific communities. Laviosa (2018) draws these issues together, highlighting that the conceptualisation of the notion of “austerity” in media discourse in English and Italian demonstrates clear cultural differences in a specialised linguistic domain. Therefore, in moving across linguistic and cultural boundaries in specialised contexts, the multilingual, multicultural, and specialised nature of corpus-based contrastive linguistics offers a clear recourse for informing ESP pedagogies that draw together these three core constructs to support ELT in multilingual and multicultural contexts, such as Europe.

### *Towards a Contrastive Linguistics-English Language Teaching Dialectic*

Overall, the Multilingual, the Multicultural, and the Specialised constructs that underpin corpus-based contrastive linguistics reflect valuable affordances for contemporary ELT. In developing a theoretical model that departs from the CAH, this chapter proposes a contrastive linguistics-English language teaching dialectic, which is underpinned by corpus linguistics. Henceforth, this theoretical model is called the CL-ELT Dialectic. This model draws iteratively and dialectically on the pedagogical challenges evident in contemporary ELT and the empirical, analytical, and methodological affordances of corpus-based contrastive linguistics. In this way, these two fields are mutually conditioning one another and creating a space for the development of the CL-ELT Dialectic. Notably, the three identified constructs in corpus-based contrastive linguistics should not be seen as a definitive or exhaustive set. Rather, they are reflexive constructs developed dynamically through a dialectical translation of practices afforded by corpus-based contrastive linguistics, corpus linguistics, language pedagogies and ELT. Therefore, further constructs could, and arguably should, emerge based on the identification of further challenges and ongoing developments in the fields of both ELT and corpus-based contrastive linguistics. Figure 14.2 presents a visual of this theoretical model, which demonstrates its bidirectional nature.

Central to the dialectic, and of particular value to this chapter, are the means through which corpus-based contrastive linguistic affordances are developed and translated to the ELT. First, consideration had to be given to the goals of corpus-based contrastive linguistics and contemporary ELT with a view to aligning, as I have done here, the core constructs in corpus-based contrastive linguistics with the emerging challenges in ELT. Next, for the purpose of this paper, the pedagogical approaches that can translate corpus-based contrastive linguistic research to ELT must be considered. The pedagogical approaches can be categorised as corpus-based approaches that are supported with social and cognitive pedagogies with a view to



**Fig. 14.2** CL-ELT dialectic



developing plurilinguistic competences, global citizenship and specialised language users.

In order to make use of corpus-based contrastive linguistics in ELT, traditional corpus approaches can be exploited to support an integrated teaching of language and culture. Direct use of corpora by learners through DDL (Johns 1991), for example, could offer opportunities for language learners to navigate multilingual corpora and engage with comparative activities, comparing English with their first language (e.g. Laviosa 2018). Such activities could focus on specialised language yet also support the development of plurilinguistic competences and global citizenship through reflective and socially oriented tasks, for example focusing on the language of global issues such as climate change (e.g. Kharchenko and Chappell 2020).

Recent systematic literature reviews on DDL (cf. Boulton and Cobb 2017; Pérez-Paredes 2019) have made clear the linguistic value that corpora can bring to language learning. As such, this is a clear avenue for application of comparable corpora to ELT. Furthermore, indirectly, corpus approaches inform lexicography (Teubert 2007), grammars (Carter and McCarthy 2006), coursebooks (Curry et al. in press), assessment (Callies and Götz 2015; Curry and Clark 2020), language learning technologies (Curry and Riordan 2021; Lew et al. 2018), and teacher training (O’Keeffe and Farr 2012). Multilingual corpora could be similarly exploited to develop support, educational, and reference materials for language learners who can be encouraged to exploit their first language as a means to learn English. However, given that little work has made use of corpus-based contrastive linguistics and multilingual corpora in language education (Aston 1999; Curry 2021; Granger 2009), this potential exploitation of multilingual corpora reemerges as a clear opportunity.

In the process of applying corpus-based approaches to language learning, consideration must be given to the pedagogical underpinning to facilitate this. Coupling corpus-based approaches with socio-cultural and cognitive pedagogies, for example, can effectively exploit corpus-based contrastive linguistics for ELT. In a study of first language use in the second language classroom, Turnbull (2018) found that pre-service teachers are increasingly interested in exploiting the first language. However, the means to do so remain limited among many teachers, especially in multilingual contexts (Altinsoy et al. 2018; Novita and Purwati 2021). Laviosa (2018) discusses the value of corpus-based contrastive analyses for supporting learners as they move across community and linguistic borders and in doing so highlights the importance of socialised approaches to learning. Therefore, from a social perspective, encouraging learners to share their experience of drawing on their first language or the cultural similarities and differences they identify between English and their first language can help them to support one another and demonstrate practices for developing plurilinguistic competences and global citizenship.

Furthermore, metacognitive strategies could be embedded in the development of language learning activities to encourage reflection, goal setting, and critical thinking (Raofi et al. 2014). Overall, such approaches work from the premise that we want to create multilingual learners and engage with the learner as whole, embrace their language and cultural background, and offer learners an avenue into new ways of thinking about the role of English in their lives. This is exemplified in Hasselgård



(2018) who finds that contrastive analyses of Norwegian and English lexicogrammar serve to raise learners' language awareness.

Overall, recognising the increasingly international nature of education in the European context (cf. Curry and Pérez-Paredes 2021) as well as the current aims surrounding plurilinguistic competences, global citizenship, and ESP in language education (Council of Europe 2018; OECD 2018), I argue that the CL-ELT Dialectic, outlined herein, offers a pathway for the reapplication of corpus-based contrastive linguistic approaches to ELT. Such a reapplication can offer a means to address new and emerging issues in the field.

## **Corpus-Based Contrastive Linguistics for ELT: Future Directions in Research and Practice**

Overall, this chapter has argued that a reconsideration of the application of corpus-based contrastive linguistics to contemporary ELT offers recourse for addressing extant and emerging challenge in the ELT classroom. While the relegation of contrastive analysis, historically, is based on methodological weakness and a lack of rigor in predicting errors, contemporary approaches are built upon rich theoretical foundations with applications that can move beyond issues of accuracy and the text towards issues in plurilingualism, global citizenship, and specialised discourses. As contemporary approaches in contrastive linguistics draw on corpus linguistic approaches, there is scope for direct and indirect applications of multilingual corpora to the ELT classroom. By translating key constructs underpinning corpus-based contrastive linguistics (the Multilingual; the Multicultural; and the Specialised) via corpus approaches and social and cognitive pedagogies, the CL-ELT Dialectic, proposed in Fig. 14.1, reflects a potential application of corpus-based contrastive linguistics for contemporary ELT.

Looking forward, future studies could begin by considering how the application of corpus-based contrastive linguistics to ELT, as I have outlined here, could reinvigorate the field of corpus-based contrastive linguistics, and strengthen its relationship with language education. By widening the focus on further challenges emerging in language education, there is also scope to advance and modify the CL-ELT Dialectic and uncover opportunities for methodological developments in corpus-based contrastive linguistics to address these challenges. Following ongoing developments in the corpus revolution (Chambers 2019), future directions will require a deeper integration of corpus linguistics and language pedagogy as well as further cultural shifts in teachers' perceptions of the role of the first language in the ELT classroom (Turnbull 2018). Engaging teachers directly with research through participatory and action research would seem an obvious next step (cf. Denos et al. 2009; Lau and Stille 2014), in order to evaluate and further refine the CL-ELT dialectic. To close, it is worth remarking that the origin of this dialectic arose from a critical reflection on wider literature contextualised within the complex practices in ELT in

the European Union. While the European context holds particular promise to test this dialectic, owing to the range of language cultures present, the complexity and interrelatedness of these languages, and the ongoing internationalisation processes taking place within the Europe Union (Gvelesiani and Mumladze 2020), arguably, it can also be evaluated in wider international contexts; a practice that would be very much encouraged.

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# Chapter 15

## Teaching Form in the Action-Oriented Classroom: Can-Do!



Eloy Romero Muñoz

**Abstract** This chapter explores the operationalization of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001; CEFR) in the foreign language classroom. More specifically, it points to the contribution usage-based linguistics could make in relating the CEFR's action-oriented pedagogy with its criterial features, i.e., "certain linguistic properties that are characteristic and indicative of L2 proficiency at each level" (Hawkins & Filipović, 2012, p. 5). The chapter ends with some practical suggestions for a more effective approach to integrating UBL in the action-based classroom and considers broader implications for applied linguistics.

**Keywords** Usage-based linguistics · Criterial features · CEFR · Pedagogical grammar

### Introduction

Since its publication, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001; henceforth: CEFR) has become a default "supranational language education policy" (Little 2006, 2007) not just in Europe, but worldwide. However, the CEFR is in essence a descriptive framework for language proficiency whose rather vague descriptors are in stark contrast with the current ethos in language teaching, which is to view language learning as a cumulative process centered on the acquisition of what O'Keeffe and Mark (2017, p. 466) refer to as "the ELT canon of grammatical structures". Efforts to render the CEFR levels more indicative of learners' performance at specific levels may have complicated, rather than facilitated,

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The original version of this chapter was revised. The corresponding author name is updated correctly. The correction to this chapter can be found at [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-2152-0\\_20](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-2152-0_20)

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the task of teaching in an action-oriented way as the CEFR advocates. As illustrated in Fig. 15.1, the so-called “criterial features”, i.e., “certain linguistic properties that are characteristic and indicative of L2 proficiency at each level” (Hawkins and Filipović 2012, p. 5), have defined even more fine-grained grammatical outcomes than the so-called “ELT canon of grammatical structures” (ibid). Such a discrete-item approach may foster the idea that language teaching should focus on “formS” to borrow Long’s now classic terminology (1991).

The short-term benefits of grammar instruction have been documented for discrete-point language tests (see especially Norris & Ortega, 2000). However, as Ellis et al. (2002, p. 421) noted, “there is much less evidence to show that [grammar instruction] leads to the kind of learning that enables learners to perform the targeted form in free oral production (e.g., in a communicative task)”, which is at the core of the action-oriented classroom. Quite the contrary, excessive focus on accuracy may even put students in “a defensive learning environment” as Omaggio Hadley (2001, p. 91) remarked.

SuperCategory: PAST  
SubCategory: past continuous

Results 1 - 12 of 12  
Sort by: SuperCategory Ascending

SuperCategory	SubCategory	Level	Can-do statement
PAST	past continuous	A2	<b>FORM: AFFIRMATIVE</b> Can use the affirmative form.
PAST	past continuous	A2	<b>FORM: WITH ADVERBS</b> Can use the past continuous with a limited range of adverbs in the normal mid position.
PAST	past continuous	A2	<b>USE: BACKGROUND EVENTS</b> Can use the past continuous to show that an event was happening in the background to the main event.
PAST	past continuous	A2	<b>USE: EVENTS IN PROGRESS</b> Can use the past continuous to talk about actions and states in progress around a particular time in the past.
PAST	past continuous	B1	<b>FORM: NEGATIVE</b> Can use the negative form.
PAST	past continuous	B1	<b>FORM: QUESTIONS</b> Can use the question form.
PAST	past continuous	B1	<b>FORM: WITH ADVERBS</b> Can use the past continuous with an increasing range of adverbs in the normal mid position.
PAST	past continuous	B1	<b>USE: REASON</b> Can use the past continuous to give a reason for something, often with 'because'.
PAST	past continuous	B1	<b>USE: REPEATED EVENTS</b> Can use the past continuous to talk about ongoing repeated events in the past, often with 'always'.
PAST	past continuous	B2	<b>FORM: WITH ADVERBS</b> Can use the past continuous with a wide range of adverbs in the normal mid position.
PAST	past continuous	B2	<b>USE: POLITENESS</b> Can use the past continuous to make a request or suggestions more polite or less direct.
PAST	past continuous	C2	<b>USE: UNDESIRABLE EVENTS</b> Can use the past continuous with 'always' or 'constantly' to talk about repeated events which are undesired or uncontrolled.

Fig. 15.1 Criterial features for the past continuous (English Grammar Profile Online, 2015)

This chapter singles out usage-based linguistics (henceforth: UBL) to bridge the gap between criterial features and the action-oriented classroom. Unlike other major theoretical frameworks such as Generative linguistics that have regularly downplayed the relevance of linguistics to language education (Olson et al. 1991), UB linguists are devoting much time and effort to the exploration language acquisition and the potential for applications of their framework to Foreign Language Teaching (henceforth: FLT) has largely been documented (see, e.g., Bielak and Pawlak 2011; Cadierno and Eskildsen 2015; De Knop 2020; Evers-Vermeulen and Tribushinina 2018; Holme 2009; Langacker 2001; Littlemore 2009; Niemeier 2017; Tyler and Evans 2004). However, while reasserting the relevance of UBL to the action-oriented classroom, this chapter also problematizes the way in which this linguistic framework approaches FLT, allowing for a broader assessment of innovation in the FL classroom.

## Grammar Through the Prism of UBL

It remains to be seen, however, what UBL may bring to the teaching of form within the action-oriented classroom that other frameworks cannot or have not. In other words, can UBL deliver?

Underlying UBL is the belief that language structure is inherent in, emerges from, and is modified by, actual usage. As Tyler and Ortega (2016, p. 335) put it, “language, in all its complexity, variability, and systematicity, can largely be accounted for by the language to which humans are exposed”. This has an important implication as we are forced to reconsider actual usage, and with it our relation to the world, not as an epiphenomenon, as Chomsky and others have argued, but rather as the core of linguistic inquiry. As Thornbury (2015) informs us, “the units of language acquisition are not ‘tenses and conjugations’”, nor is the “ELT canon of grammar structures” (ibid.) a reliable indicator of how language works, let alone how it should be taught. To put it simply, a better description of language can only benefit FLT.

The question that remains is not if, but *how*, linguistic knowledge stems from, and is informed by, language use. The answer can be summarized in three tenets: embodiment, construal, and frequency.

### *Embodiment*

It is quite uncontroversial to underscore the deterministic nature of the human body and the constraints it imposes on our experience of the world. We think the way we do because we are the way we are. In UBL, this is called embodiment or embodied cognition (see especially Lakoff and Johnson 1999). The knowledge that we acquire through physical interaction with the environment is structured in abstract image schemata. Each image schema corresponds to the trace left by an embodied experience. For instance, the choice of verb for the concepts COLD/HOT in Romance



**Table 15.1** Metaphor as a structuring principle in cognition (based on Danesi 1995)

The container is...	Italian (quoted in Danesi 1995: 10)	French	Spanish	English
... the environment	FARE as in <i>fa freddo</i>	FAIRE as in <i>il fait froid</i>	HACER as in <i>hace frío</i>	BE as in <i>it's cold</i>
... the object	ESSERE as in <i>e caldo</i>	ETRE as in <i>c'est froid</i>	SER/ESTAR as in <i>es/está frío</i>	BE as in <i>it's cold</i>
... the body	AVERE as in <i>ha freddo</i>	AVOIR as in <i>il a froid</i>	TENER as in <i>tiene frío</i>	BE as in <i>He is cold</i>

languages seemingly relies on “an underlying image schema of bodies and the environment as containers” (Danesi 1995, p. 10) whereas in English, the verb BE is used in all cases (see Table 15.1).

The realization that our linguistic knowledge is embodied has far-reaching implications for our very conception of language learning and teaching. Traditional pedagogies have consistently sought to advocate the need for an a priori grammar and its necessary formalisms. Terms like “noun”, “object”, or “simple past” are descriptive (this is *what* it does) rather than explanatory (this is *why* it does it). The point is not to say that traditional word classes or grammatical categories are not explainable. For instance, the meaning of “pronoun” is quite transparent if you know that the prefix *pro* in Latin means “for”. Nor should we underestimate the descriptive and analytical purpose that such categories serve (Lamb 1999, pp. 174–177). If grammar is the schematization of our experience, it should be possible to use explanations and metalanguage that illustrate not only what language does, but also why and how. UB linguists thus explore the interaction between embodied cognition, semantics, and grammatical configurations with a view to adopting cognitively pertinent, rather than purely notional, descriptions of linguistic phenomena.

## ***Construal***

If language encodes our embodied experience of the world, it follows that meaning is not inherent in a situation and we are consequently able to “impose alternate structurings on a conceived phenomenon” (Langacker 1987, p. 107). These conceptualization processes are referred to as construal within the usage-based framework. The belief in construal establishes a constitutive relationship between concepts and the linguistic means that are used to construe them, which amounts to a de facto dismissal of large-scale arbitrariness in language.

In UBL, the basic unit is the “symbolic assembly” (Langacker 1987), a form-meaning pairing. Such symbolic assemblies cover a wide range of linguistic constructs in UBL. As illustrated in Table 15.2, these constructs are arranged along a lexicogrammatical continuum and, while all constructs result from the association

**Table 15.2** The syntax-Lexicon continuum (adapted from Croft 2001, p. 17)

Constructiontype	Traditional name	Examples
Complex and (mostly) schematic	Syntax	[SBJ be-TNS VERB-en by OBL]
Complex and (mostly) specific	Idiom	[pull-TNS NP's leg]
Complex but bound	Morphology	[NOUN-s], [VERB-TNS]
Atomic and schematic	Syntactic category	[DEM], [ADJ]
Atomic and specific	Word/lexicon	[this], [green]

of form and meaning, some of them may be more lexical (such as individual words) and others more syntactic (such as the ditransitive construction).

Linguists will readily acknowledge the motivation underlying most of the derivational as well as inflectional morphology, or even the fact that phonological principles may constrain co-selectional tendencies in multi-word units (e.g., cool as a cucumber), but resistance to the idea of motivation in language may be stronger for grammatical categories which are often thought of as purely notional. However, the very notion of “construal” that lies at the heart of UBL makes it possible to deal with the semantics of abstract notions such as word classes and even general grammatical relations as cognitively motivated categories. Sentences that construe the same situation in a different way, i.e., by means of different grammatical means, do so because they rely on contrasting modes of cognitive processing. Here is an example. Some UB linguists convincingly argue for a joint treatment of traditionally separate grammatical categories such as PROGRESSIVE aspect and COUNT/MASS distinctions (see especially Niemeier and Reif 2008; Kermer 2016). The idea is rooted in “the extensive homology between the representation of space and that of time” (Talmy 2000, p. 41). It is so, for instance, that demonstratives can be used to refer both to time as in (1) and space as in (2) or that time is conceptualized as forward motion as in (3) in English.

- (1) It's that time of year again!
- (2) Take this pen (the one that I am showing you and that is close to me).
- (3) Let's have a break. We are ahead of time anyway.

UB linguists maintain that one of the basic operations in construal is to decide whether we apply boundaries to specific viewing arrangements and to the “nouns” and “verbs” that constitute them. This cognitive process is referred to as “bounding” (see especially Langacker, 1987). Both PROGRESSIVE aspect and MASS nouns unbound the PROCESS or THING they refer to as in (4) and (5):

He is traveling through France  
Have more milk!

When unbounded, a verb or noun loses any reference to boundaries. The term “boundaries” should be understood in its broadest sense, i.e., as referring to physical,

temporal, or figurative limitations. A verb or noun also possesses inherent characteristics which may make it incompatible with specific viewing arrangements (here: bounding/unbounding) as in (6) and (7):

- \*I'll take two milks
- \*I am understanding this

In (6), *milk* is a MASS noun and as such it cannot combine with elements such as cardinal numbers and the plural marking that impose/require boundaries. In (7), the verb *understand*, like all state verbs, is inherently unbounded, which renders the PROGRESSIVE superfluous.

### ***Frequency***

The picture that emerges is that of a grammar in flux where items at various stages of abstraction coexist. However daunting at first, it is important to remember that such a conception of linguistic structure needs little more than the ability to process linguistic data, which humans have been shown to possess. Humans are indeed sensitive to the statistical properties of usage; they resort to distributional analyses to acquire language, be it their first language (Tomasello 2003) or a subsequent one (see, e.g., Ellis 2002; Ellis and Ferreira-Junior 2009a, b).

From a language acquisition perspective, this also means that frequent usage patterns will be mastered more quickly and more thoroughly than less frequent ones. Meunier and Littré (2013), for instance, investigated the acquisition of the progressive by French-speaking learners. They hypothesize that the imprecise use of the present progressive to express futurity can be attributed to distributional analyses of authentic data. Learner errors may be attributed to the lack of sufficient input in the language classroom about specific features of the target language. Another possible explanation may be that “conventional” rules represent a view of language that does not do justice to the complexity of our mental lexicon and, as such, may complicate language teaching and learning. In this respect, it is perhaps advisable to envisage the possibility that Meunier and Littré (2013)’s reported errors are also conceptual in nature, i.e., that they belie a misunderstanding of how the language works (see, e.g., Danesi 1995) as a direct consequence of imperfect “rules” during teaching.

Ultimately, a UBL approach to form is necessarily premised on the need for input processing in the broadest sense of the term, which amounts to a de facto dismissal of Krashen’s (1981, 1982) views that explicit grammar teaching is useless. There are two important points here. First, a UB approach will integrate explicit instruction of form in the teaching sequence while a Natural Approach à la Krashen syllabus will rely on implicit learning only. Second, since evidence is beginning to mount on the role of constructions in L2 acquisition (see, e.g., De Knop and Gilquin 2016; De Knop 2020; Gilquin 2015; Legallois 2016), especially as to the fact that learners resort to abstract constructions alongside low-level generalizations, rather than abstract syntactic rules, in language comprehension and production (see, e.g., Dąbrowska

2004; Tomasello 2003). If “constructions are basic rather than epiphenomenal” as Langacker (2001, p. 4), among others, has claimed, it follows that constructions should perhaps also feature prominently in the language classroom, yet keeping in mind that the distribution of constructions is not uniform across registers (Vilkaitė 2016; Gablasova et al. 2017a, b).

## What UBL can—and Cannot—Contribute to FLT

Where does a usage-based model of language acquisition leave us in terms of grammar teaching? From a practitioner’s perspective, UBL may offer little pedagogical bang for the buck. First and foremost, teaching resources that can be clearly linked to UBL are thin on the ground, and largely remain destined to teaching grammar in a usage-based perspective rather than using UBL as a means of teaching a language (see, e.g., Radden and Dirven 2007). Second, the resources that do exist focus on a limited number of language issues such as prepositions (e.g., Tyler and Evans 2003, 2004; Almuoseb 2016) or phrasal verbs (e.g., Kövecses and Szabó 1996; Boers 2000; Kurtyka 2001; Yasuda 2010; Kohl-Dietrich et al. 2016). These issues are usually conceived of as secondary, if mistakenly, and this is certainly true at lower proficiency levels. Third, the kind of fuzziness that UB linguists advocate is radically different from the neat, algorithmic rules that are so popular in FLT. Witness the popularity of Murphy’s *Grammar in Use* (2007) series together with the persistence in mainstream textbooks of a syllabus in which grammatical structures are ordered according to their structural complexity. The main challenge that lies ahead for UB linguistics might be to provide “tools for dealing with more syntactic aspects of language or, at least, with aspects of language that are traditionally perceived as such” (Romero Muñoz 2012, p. 8).

The need for ready-to-use teaching materials cannot be overstated. As Markee (1997) claims, “primary innovations” such as new theoretical frameworks rely on “secondary innovations” such as continuous professional development seminars for teachers, and textbooks. So far, UBL has featured only marginally in such seminars; textbooks using UBL are both scarce and not classroom-proof. UB linguists’ suggestions are so radically different and, I daresay, counterintuitive, that stakeholders, especially teachers, may simply be put off. However, much teachers might want to engage in the necessary “tweaking, adjusting and adapting materials to suit particular needs” that Samuda (2005, p. 235), among others, advocates, they are more often than not prevented from doing so due to the castrating influence of top-down educational policies on micro-level variables such as curriculum design, classroom practices, and textbooks. In short, the cognitive dissonance between UBL and the ecology of the FLT classroom can hardly be overstated.

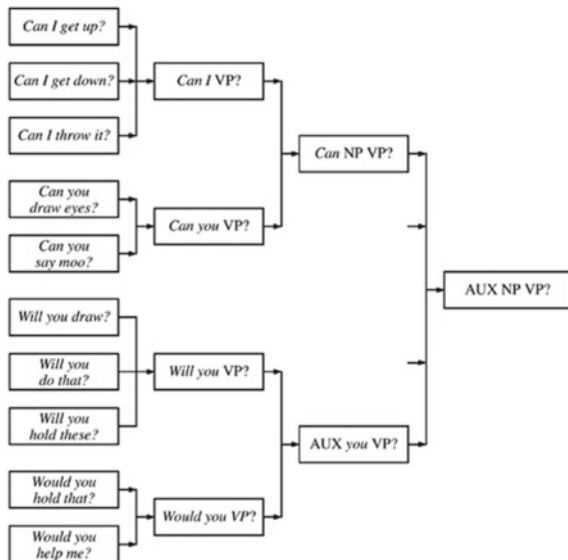
Notwithstanding the numerous issues mentioned so far, some thought-provoking pedagogical suggestions have been put forward for a UBL approach to grammar teaching (see especially De Knop and Gilquin 2016; De Knop 2020; Gallez 2020; Holme 2009, 2010, 2012; Littlemore 2009). These suggestions typically cover the

spectrum of linguistic constructs that fall under the label “constructions” (see Table 15.1) and, as such, adopt what Granger (2011, p.127) calls “a wide view of phraseology for teaching”. In what follows, I review some concrete suggestions that have been put forward so far.

Research in various fields has hypothesized the facilitative effect of elaborative learning strategies, sometimes referred to as the Dual Coding Theory in psycholinguistics (see, e.g., Paivio 1971, 1986) and the Noticing Hypothesis in SLA (Schmidt 1990). It is believed that we remember things that stand out or are modified in a way that makes them more salient and, in the case of Dual Coding, that involve a visual aspect. UBL boasts a rich tradition of researching such mnemonic effects. Filled constructions, which mostly consist of idioms, proverbs, and word compounds, are best approached pointing to inherent priming effects at the level of their constituting elements. For instance, the phonological properties of one element have been shown to prime the phonological properties of the others (see, e.g., Boers and Lindstromberg 2008). This property is observable in binomials (*fit as a fiddle*), fixed expressions (*talk the talk, walk the walk*), and collocations (*crystal clear*) among others. Providing etymological information has also been shown to help students make better inferences about the semantics of such expressions as much as it seems to facilitate recall (Boers et al. 2007). Priming may rely on more abstract parameters such as hypothesis-forming about their origin/etymology because “the meaning of many idioms is ‘motivated’ by their original, literal usage” (Boers et al. 2007, p. 43). As illustrated in Fig. 15.2, more abstract constructions can be traced back to concrete instantiations.

Holme (2009, p.187) suggests that when teaching such constructions, “the prime task [for instructors] is to identify lexis central to that construction’s meaning and

**Fig. 15.2** From tokens to types (quoted in Dąbrowska 2015)



hence to furnish learners with a productive prototype”. Holme (ibid.) rightly claims that the core meaning of the ditransitive construction, namely *X causes Y to receive Z*, is best exemplified by the verb *give*.

From a pedagogical perspective, then, it follows that language structure is best taught/learnt through exposure to high-frequency tokens (such as *I gave them a new book*) rather than types (i.e., abstract generalizations such as *X causes Y to receive Z*), especially in the case of rare constructions where the token matches the type as in the famous *kick the bucket* example that was mentioned above. It is thus best to view a UB approach to form through the prism of English for Specific Purposes (see, e.g., Hutchinson and Waters 1987; Dudley-Evans and Johns 1998; Johns and Price-Machado 2001) in that it ought to be corpus-informed, perhaps even data-driven, to be linguistically tailored to the learner’s communicative needs.

## Operationalising UBL in the Action-Oriented Classroom

The challenge, it seems, is to find a user-friendly alternative for what Holmes (2012) rather vaguely refers to as teaching along the lexico-grammatical continuum. Perhaps it is wise to set our expectations lower to begin with. As of yet, UBL is an unlikely candidate to become a “method” such as audiolingualism or grammar-translation with a clear syllabus, teaching materials, and classroom practices. What it can already do, however, is help teachers and learners gain a better understanding of “form” in the sense that Long (1991) intended it, one that will inevitably benefit FLT. The main difficulty remains to characterize this “fluctuating” grammar and its fuzzy organization in a classroom-friendly way. In other words, how do we teach grammar knowing that it is, in essence, a process rather than a product? *That* is the question that UBL can help us answer.

A good place to start is to look at the values and flaws of the closest we have come to an operational UB approach to FLT so far: Lewis’ *Lexical Approach* (1997; henceforth: LA). The LA was brought about by the advent of corpus linguistics, especially the COBUILD project (Sinclair 1987) which demonstrated the phraseological nature of language in use. Lexical items were shown to display marked co-sectional tendencies; they occurred in specific lexico-grammatical patterns rather than as a sum of individual words. Although these lexico-grammatical patterns have been referred to using many different terms, they are commonly discussed using Sinclair (1991)’s “idiom principle”. Sinclair (1991) claimed that “[a] language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analyzable into segments” (110). This realization led Lewis, among others, to hypothesize that language learning should be based on “the acquisition of a large store of fixed and semi-fixed prefabricated items [...]” (Lewis 1997, p. 15).

What of syntax? This very question belies the popular belief in FLT that languages rest on a system of complex algorithms that can be isolated, sequenced, and practiced independently from meaningful communication. Knowing rules does not lead

to better communicative competence (Schmidt 1983). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) remind us that “[...] learning an additional language is about enhancing one’s repertoire of fragments and patterns that enables participation in a wider array of communicative activities. It is not about building up a complete and perfect grammar in order to produce well-formed sentences” (p. 17). In other words, grammar can and should be approached phraseologically, i.e., in terms of the patterns words occur in and with a marked emphasis on patterns that are likely to facilitate communication.

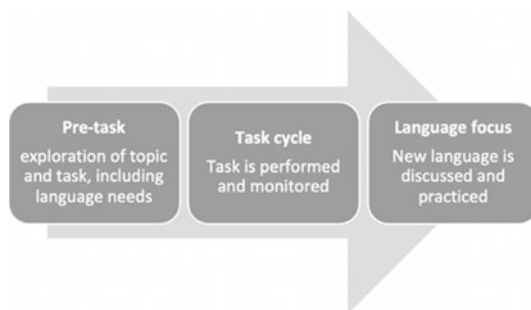
Moreover, syntactic knowledge starts with word knowledge because words have affinities with specific grammatical patterns. The preposition *over*, for instance, tends to be preceded by a verb and, at the same time, to be followed by a noun or noun phrase as in *fight over Europe*, *grieved over her*, and *triumph over Russia* (quoted in Hunston and Francis 2000, p. 43–44). Similarly, as we pointed out in the previous section, syntactic constructions are best instantiated by the behavior of their constituting words. For instance, a verb like *give* instantiates the prototypical value of the ditransitive construction so that teaching this verb amounts to teaching the grammatical patterns it occurs in and, as a corollary, being able to use the verb *give* in meaningful sentences amounts to mastering the ditransitive construction. A usage-based approach would thus advocate teaching the preposition *over* using the “V over N” pattern and to teach the ditransitive construction using patterns involving the verb *give*, respectively.

Unfortunately, the LA was also flawed in many fundamental ways. First, the “idiom principle” is hard to quantify. Depending on the authors’ conception of phraseology, the figures range from 4 to 80% (Wray 2002). No wonder, then, that the LA should lack a well-defined phraseological inventory, let alone a clear syllabus (Harwood 2002). Questions such as passive versus active lexis are not really addressed just as issues of register or frequency are equally only brushed on. It is not enough, as Lewis (1997) has claimed, to provide a language-rich experience to the learners. Second, dogmatic lexicalism imposes a considerable cognitive burden on the learner even though it is yet unclear if and how “memorised language becomes analysed language” (Thornbury 1998, p. 13). In other words, the LA lacks a clear acquisition theory to back up its claims (Richards and Rodgers 2001).

There is another strand in FLT that may also be compatible with a usage-based approach: Task-Based Language Teaching (henceforth: TBLT). TBLT is quite unique in the FLT landscape in that it offers a clear methodology that rests on well-established facts about SLA while at the same time remaining in line with action-oriented language policy. It is true, as Niemeier (2017) points out, that TBLT happens to be very much compatible with the ubiquitous CEFR (Council of Europe 2001) and its action-oriented approach. In what follows, an attempt is made to clarify the convergence of UBL with TBLT, with all due credit to Niemeier’s (2017) pioneering work.

It should be noted with Niemeier (2017, p. 26) that the concept of task covers a wide range of meanings in language pedagogy. In what follows, the focus is on Willis’ (1996) and Willis and Willis’ (2007) definition in that it crystalizes the current ethos in FLT, viz., an action-oriented pedagogy *à la* CEFR. As is evident from Fig. 15.3, TBLT follows a goal-oriented pedagogical cycle that alternates between a teacher-focused

**Fig. 15.3** Components of the TBLT framework (adapted from Willis 1997, p. 36)



and a learner-focused classroom. The task cycle always begins with a preparatory phase during which the teacher introduces the task and makes sure learners possess the necessary “tools”, linguistic and otherwise, to perform said task. The learners then take the lead, usually in small groups. They are responsible for all aspects of the task, including planning and reporting. The final stage of the task cycle consists in a metacognitive activity about the task whereby learners and their teacher reflect on the outcome. The teacher concludes the activity by providing form-focused feedback and practice where necessary.

Figure 15.3 reflects the main concern of Long’s Focus-on-Form (1991) approach in that grammar teaching remains “remedial” (Niemeier 2017, p. 20). The contribution that a cognitive-pedagogical approach could make is that form—i.e., useful language—could be integrated more proactively at the pre-task stage as well as in the language focus phase. Perhaps the greatest asset would be that adopting a UBL within TBLT could take some of the arbitrariness out of grammar teaching as suggested above.

The main avenue for UBL within the action-oriented classroom may be to re-envisage the CEFR’s criterial features. Let us focus on passives and past simple/past continuous in English to illustrate this point.

First and foremost, UBL confirms the importance of selecting readily applicable lexico-grammatical features of the target language such as chunks and high-frequency verbs associated with those constructions. Criterial features are essentially just that. In the case of passives, the teacher might want to start with a simple search on English Grammar Profile Online, the result of which is shown in Fig. 15.4.

By clicking on “details” on the right-hand side, the teacher may access some examples for individual can-do statements. Table 15.3 summarizes the information that is visible online for all three entries:

Even a cursory look at the search results provides important information on the constructions that are likely to benefit the most at CEFR level A2 both in terms of token (It is called/It was made) and type (IT IS/WAS + Past Participle + BY-Person/OF-NOUN). The role of the teacher is to make sure learners are exposed to enough *tokens* to be able to notice the context in which these forms occur. A simple task for this purpose might consist in looking at labels on clothes to elicit the construction “it is made of...” and “it is made by ...”, and then move on to other,



## English Grammar Profile Online

The screenshot shows the English Grammar Profile Online search results for 'PASSIVES'. The interface includes a search bar, filters for Level (A1, A2), and buttons for Search, Add Filters, and Clear Results. A 'Download XLS' button is also visible. The results are sorted by SuperCategory, Ascending, and Display # 20. The table below summarizes the data shown in the screenshot.

SuperCategory	SubCategory	Level	Can-do statement	Example	Details
PASSIVES	passives form	A2	<b>FORMS</b> WITH 'BY' TO ADD INFORMATION Can use the passive with 'by' to add information about something already known.	Example	Details
PASSIVES	passives form	A2	<b>FORMS</b> PAST SIMPLE, AFFIRMATIVE Can use the past simple passive affirmative after a singular subject	Example	Details
PASSIVES	passives form	A2	<b>FORMS</b> PRESENT SIMPLE, AFFIRMATIVE Can use the present simple passive affirmative with a singular subject.	Example	Details

**Fig. 15.4** Results for passives for CEFR levels A1 and A2 (English Grammar Profile Online, 2015)

**Table 15.3** Passives at levels A1 and A2 (English Grammar Profile Online, 2015)

Can-Do	FormS
Can use the passive with “by” to add information about something already known	It was bought by my uncle It’s made by Sony-Ericsson, I love it? ? it was written by an excellent author, Lev Tolstoy
Can use the past simple passive affirmative after a singular subject	It was built in 1880 On Saturday morning I was invited to a sports competition
Can use the present simple passive affirmative after a singular subject	The group is called “playmo” I bought a T-shirt, it cost £42 because it is made of cotton

perhaps more abstract instances of that construction using a question such as “What is ... made of?”/“Who is it made by?” as in “it is made of wool” and “it is made by H&M”. An even more fine-grained understanding of the type of NOUNS that can be used in the constructions may be achieved through carefully chosen examples: it (the brick) is made of clay versus it (the house) is made of bricks. The use of the meta-language such as *passive* or MASS/COUNT does not seem necessary at this point.

We have just shown the convergence between UBL and criterial features, which is arguably the easiest entry point for UBL in the action-oriented classroom. Another way in which UBL may facilitate grammar teaching is by providing an embodied explanation for aspects of the language that are usually presented through the prism of notional categories such as the distinction between simple present and present continuous. As argued by Romero Muñoz (2012), the idea of “ongoingness” that is at the center of many ELT discussions of the present continuous pushes an “impressionistic” view that is hard to combine with even the most common exemplars the learners are likely to encounter. By contrast, the concept of BOUNDEDNESS discussed above

may prove more useful to students. Admittedly, this is a radical shift in how grammar is approached, but once the logic is clear, it is transposable to other areas of the English tense/aspect system. More importantly, as Achard (2008) claims, adopting UBL principles places the perspective of the speaker at the center of communicative acts, which may encourage learners to feel that language learning is far from arbitrary.

## Conclusion

Clearly, the impact of UBL in FLT has remained modest. Some might say the failure to date of UBL to penetrate the classroom lies in its being a relatively new addition to the theoretical apparatus. This claim certainly has some validity as it does take time for theories to trickle down to “end users”—if they ever make it that far. Despite its visibility and academic backup, GL has not for instance. Another example is Corpus linguistics. It has been almost thirty years since the publication of Sinclair’s (1991) landmark text and, despite the bombastic claims found on ELT textbook blurbs and covers, corpus linguistics is just beginning to enter the classroom through the back door, in any significant way beyond extraction that is. The lag between innovation and applications in FLT should not surprise us though. Research has indeed demonstrated that educational change is never instantaneous; it is a process that requires “sustained effort to change school and classroom practices ... in thousands and thousands of classrooms ... by all parts of the education system and its partners” (Levin and Fullan 2008, p. 291). Arguably, this is not restricted to UBL.

It is a fact too that UB linguists have made the same mistakes as previous frameworks, i.e., overlook variables such as the profile of the students and teachers involved, the type of school, language policy (be it local, national, or supranational, prescribed by law or tacitly agreed upon like the CEFR), the “risk-averse” ELT publishing industry and its self-replicating business model as described by Tomlinson (2003) and, last but not least, the interplay between these variables. In this sense, UBL is very much in line with other frameworks; it has largely remained out of touch with the reality of the FL classroom. This observation is sadly consonant with van Lier’s (1994) criticism of the *Journal Applied Linguistics*:

There has occurred a sort of “double split” – linguistics (and SLA) with theory in one direction, and education with practice in another—and this split needs to be resolved before we can once again speak of a healthy AL’ (p. 30).

The main challenge for proponents of UBL, then, and of any innovation, may still be to correlate research-based, desired changes with existing practices and teaching contexts (Sweetser 1990), be it only to provide support—emotional or otherwise—to teachers (Sato and Loewen 2019). “Blind applicationism”, viz., the use of whatever pedagogical innovation is trending in academia, did not work in the past and is unlikely to work in the future.

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**Part IV**  
**Exploring Broad Applications**  
**of Technology-Enhanced Teaching**  
**and Learning**

# Chapter 16

## English Language Teachers' Attitudes Towards Computer-Assisted Language Learning: SWOT Analysis in Spain



Dara Tafazoli 

**Abstract** The purpose of the present qualitative study is to explore the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) according to English language teachers' attitudes across Spanish higher education. The study is based on a sample of 136 teachers, and I applied an online open-ended ten-question survey for data collection and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) Matrix for data analysis. To make a sound decision, I utilized the Delphi method for validating the instrument and content analysis to classify data and synthesize them into the SWOT matrix. The content analysis finding revealed that English language teachers in Spain agreed that CALL provides a wide range of tools, resources, and language learning materials. Among many pedagogical implications, this study suggests more obligatory or voluntary CALL programs in order to enhance teachers' CALL literacy and cognitive dimensions.

**Keywords** CALL · The Delphi method · SWOT analysis · Attitudes · Spanish English language teachers

### Introduction

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is recognized as any application of technology in language education (Tafazoli et al. 2018). CALL has become an integral part of English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL) because of its positive impacts on students' language achievements: oral skills (Hwang et al. 2016; Wang et al. 2018), reading comprehension (Yang and Qian 2020), writing (Awada et al. 2020; Li 2018; Wu et al. 2020), vocabulary (Hsieh 2020; Tsai 2019), English for Specific/Academic Purposes (ESP/EAP) (Ma 2020), interactions (Börekcü and Aydin 2020), motivation (Lamb and Arisandy 2020), and attitude (Tafazoli et al. 2018, 2020a).

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Despite all its advantages, most teachers do not use CALL frequently in language education. Many scholars addressed the barriers of technology integration into language education worldwide (e.g., Ertmer 1999; Hong 2010; Laabidi and Laabidi 2016; Park and Ertmer 2007; Teo 2009; Yeh and Swinehart 2019). Based on Hong's (2010) study, the demerits of CALL can be categorized into (a) CALL teacher education, (b) individual teacher factors, and (c) contextual factors based on teachers' points of view.

Categorized as CALL teacher education, the previous studies addressed a number of key areas, including teachers need more time in the classroom (Chen 2008; Figg and Jamani 2011; Kay 2006; Laabidi and Laabidi 2016); teachers need more teacher training and continuous updating (Arnold et al. 2007; Bataineh et al. 2020; Boucheфра and Baghoussi 2017; Ertmer et al. 2006; Hakim 2015; Laabidi and Laabidi 2016; Tayan 2017), CALL is inappropriate for large classes (Bataineh et al. 2020), CALL provides fewer chances for weak students (Bataineh et al. 2020), teachers are unable to control students (Bataineh et al. 2020), the lesson preparation is difficult for teachers (Bataineh et al. 2020), there are no clear instructions for teachers, (Bataineh et al. 2020; Tafazoli et al. 2020a, b), technology is a threat to conventional teaching techniques (Boucheфра and Baghoussi 2017; Laabidi and Laabidi 2016).

In the second category of individual teacher factors, the literature clarified that some teachers have no experience in CALL (Laabidi and Laabidi 2016), teachers fear being replaced with technology and fear of additional workload (Bai et al. 2016; Bataineh et al. 2020; Hakim 2015; Laabidi and Laabidi 2016).

Finally, in the third category of contextual factors, teachers argued about the insufficient number of computers, technical problems such as failure of the software or malfunctioning hardware systems (Cuban 2001; Laabidi and Laabidi 2016; Tayan 2017; Teo 2009), students' view toward the computer as an entertainment tool (Montrieux et al. 2015), lack of student computer skills (Ilomäki et al. 2014; Laabidi and Laabidi 2016; Røkenes and Krumsvik 2016; Tayan 2017), high cost (Laabidi and Laabidi 2016), lack of well-designed software, slow computers, policy constraints which prevent and discourage students from bringing their digital devices, tightly controlled and filtered internet in some countries (e.g., China and Iran) (Hedayati et al. 2018; Mei et al. 2018).

In line with global investigations, researchers in the language education of Spain also explored the role of CALL in terms of teachers' attitudes (Gimeno-Sanz et al. 2020; Pérez-Paredes et al. 2018; Tafazoli et al. 2019), students' attitudes (Arrosagaray et al. 2019; García-Gómez 2020; Tafazoli et al. 2019, 2020a), students' language skills (Castañeda 2021; Castañeda and Cho 2016; Vurdien 2013), teaching presence and student participation (Rubio et al. 2018), CALL literacy (Tafazoli, et al. 2020a, b), CALL-based communications (Andujar and Salaberry-Ramiro 2019), to name a few. Different aspects of these studies are investigated in the next section.

## Technology Integration in English Language Education in Spain

The role of English language is significant in Spain. Parallel to local languages, Spanish students should study English as a foreign language at all educational levels. In primary education, foreign language learning (English, German, or French) becomes compulsory in the 3rd grade (age of eight). In secondary education, due to the international position of English, students prefer to choose English, but students may also choose another foreign language, as a second one, in the last two years of schooling.

English language teachers in Spain must hold a *Magisterio* degree for primary education and English Philology degree for secondary education, and in public schools must be accepted for the *oposición* exam. Also, all English teachers should pass a course called “Methodology of English Language Teaching (C.A.P)”. Most of the Spanish universities have an English Philology department which supports general English and English for Specific/Academic Purposes (ESP/EAP) for non-language majors such as economics, medicine, among others.

Many studies in Spanish higher education have tried to investigate the role of technology in language learning: computer-mediated and mobile-mediated chat-based communication (Andujar and Salaberri-Ramiro 2019), students' attitudes toward ICT in the classroom, blended, and distance language learning modes (Arrosagaray et al. 2019), students' perceptions about using WhatsApp to develop their pragmatic and interpersonal relationships (García-Gómez 2020), students' attitudes toward CALL (Tafazoli et al. 2019), Language MOOCs (Martín-Monje et al. 2018; Sallam et al. 2020), and enhancing writing through blogging (Vurdien 2013). Many studies also investigated the role of technology in language teaching: teaching presence in blended courses (Rubio et al. 2018), mobile gamification app (language teachers' attitude toward CALL (Tafazoli et al. 2019), language teachers' perceptions on the use of mobile devices (Pérez-Paredes et al. 2018), language teachers' CALL literacy (Tafazoli et al. 2020b).

Tafazoli et al. (2020b) believe that little use of technology in language education deals with teachers' required literacies and knowledge. They believe that “teachers' CALL literacy as “the ability to use technology at an adequate level for teaching or learning a language” (p. 4) is a necessity. So, they conducted a quantitative study on 318 language teachers in Spain. Focusing on Spanish participants in their study, data analysis of teachers' self-evaluation revealed that English teachers are competent in using technological tools. Also, teachers reported their proficiency in using technology for language teaching purposes. However, Tafazoli and his colleagues argued that teachers' self-evaluation of CALL literacy might not be a good representative of their actual CALL literacy levels.

In another quantitative study, Pérez-Paredes et al. (2018) investigated language teachers' perceptions about using mobile devices. Although the teachers highlighted the growing interest of institutions in utilizing mobile devices in language education, Spanish teachers have received no training regarding this utilization. The findings

also revealed that teachers are interested in using computer labs and online platforms instead of smartphones and tablets. Also, teachers claimed that they have no knowledge about other mobile devices such as Open Educational Resources (OERs). The researchers argued that the existence of technology is not sufficient for effective implementation.

However, thorough scrutiny of the literature shows that most studies on teachers' attitudes toward CALL have been explored through quantitative designs. In spite of the profound information in CALL gained over the review of literature, no study has qualitatively explored the attitudes of English language teachers on a large scale in Spain. Thus, to bridge the gap, I attempted to answer the following research question:

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of CALL in English language education based on Spanish higher education teachers' attitudes?

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

This qualitative study included open-ended questions in order to find out about the perceptions of English language teachers in Spain's higher education toward CALL. A SWOT analysis (which stands for Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat) of the collected data was conducted manually. The researcher applied qualitative content analysis. The analysis included content analysis of qualitative data to classify and align them with the SWOT matrix. Content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (Krippendorff 1980, p. 21) and which "uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (Weber 1990, p. 9).

The SWOT analysis is an attempt to acknowledge the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a phenomenon to analyze the intervening factors for improvement and predict the possible barriers. The SWOT analysis is extensively used for "strategic planning of long-term and short-term development" (Thamrin and Pamungkas 2017, p. 144). Several steps of SWOT analysis were applied in this study, including (a) collecting information, (b) categorizing data into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats, (c) determining the weight of each factor, (d) specifying rates, and (e) presenting the result.

In this study, I built a questionnaire-based system in order to automate the SWOT analysis process (see Fig. 16.1).



**Fig. 16.1** Data analysis process

**Table 16.1** Rule model  
(adopted from Thamrin and  
Pamungkas 2017)

		Score	
		Positive	Negative
Factor	Internal	Strength	Weakness
	External	Opportunity	Threat

The qualitative responses of this study were in the form of text descriptions. I applied content analysis to categorize text data into either positive or negative responses. I calculated the total weight scores and categorized the content for each data. Then, I classified the factors into relevant SWOT categories: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The categorizing process was based on the content of the qualitative data. I adopted the Rule Model (Thamrin and Pamungkas 2017) to categorize the factors based on teachers' responses (see Table 16.1).

The Rule Model discriminates the responses according to external and internal factors. The SWOT matrix of the current study was devised based on participating teachers' points of view, which might not be similar to other stakeholders (e.g., students, administrators, etc.). Hence, internal factors are those dealing with teachers, whereas external factors deal with students and technology itself. After that, I categorized the responses based on their either positive or negative scores. Then, the scores for qualitative data were directly categorized based on content.

## *Teachers*

A total of 136 English language teachers enrolled in the study responded to ten open-ended questions. Volunteer teachers were asked to answer the survey, and they had to upload their responses onto Google Forms. Female was the dominant gender in the sample with 96 teachers. A total of 40 of the 136 teachers were male. The distribution of teachers' qualifications (in terms of MA and Ph.D.) was not uniform in the sample. The majority group in terms of education level was MA holders who summed up to 83 teachers, while the minor group was Ph.D. holders with 53 teachers. As far as age was concerned, the largest category of teachers ( $N = 97$ ) fell within the age range of 36 and above. On the other hand, the smallest group was the category of 24–29-year old (9 teachers).

## *Instrumentation*

I decided to apply the Delphi methodology. The initial questionnaire was developed and submitted to twenty experts. The panel of experts consisted of twenty scholars in various fields of Applied Linguistics, Computer Sciences, English Language

Teaching, and Computer-Assisted Language Learning. The experts were from Iran, Spain, the USA, and the UK.

The Delphi methodology was guided in three phases of opinions discovery, the most significant issues determination, and opinions synthesis. In order to reach a consensus on the questionnaire content, I should first determine experts' opinions. Then, I applied content analysis for analyzing the opinions. Finally, at the end of three rounds, the panel agreed on the final version of the questionnaire. After reaching a consensus on the content of the questionnaire to collect data from Spanish teachers, 14 demographic information questions and ten open-ended questions were included in the final version of this tool.

## Findings and Discussion

In the following, I present and discuss the final SWOT matrix with extracts from data. It should be noted that the codes in brackets were specified to each teacher in the sample to refer to extracts taken from teachers through the questionnaire.

As illustrated in Table 16.2, the teachers claimed that one of the most substantial aspects of CALL is to provide a rich and authentic environment, materials, and communication. An authentic environment is an expedient criterion for effective learning (Hwang et al. 2016). Regarding real communication, one of the teachers stated that:

[T2131]: Students get more exposure to the target language, and they can take models [regarding] how to use language in real communication from the internet. Using technology makes no boundaries between teachers and students. They can have personal consultation any time they need. [The] Teacher can control students' participation in course groups.

The authenticity of the environment and materials accentuates meaningful learning in settings that involve real-world challenges (Shadiev and Huang 2016). Shadiev et al. (2017) believed that authentic environments provide teachers with many features such as authentic contexts, authentic activities, the opportunity for sharing learning, reaching other learners' experiences, promoting reflection, and enabling authentic learning assessment.

[T222]: With the right material, the lesson doesn't stop when the bell rings. The learning process can continue by providing the right websites/videos/exercises and subsequently by offering a low threshold to increase the willingness to learn.

Moreover, language teachers argued that by using CALL in their classes, they have more control over students' learning process. In addition, teachers highlighted "anywhere and anytime" features of the CALL and mobile learning which led to variation in teachers and students' behavior (Geddes 2004). Also, Wang and Shih (2015, p. 374) affirmed "mobile-mediated learning could offer opportunities for learning to occur anytime and anywhere and create an efficient, flexible and motivating condition for autonomous learning".

**Table 16.2** SWOT Matrix (arranged based on most frequent teacher response)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching via CALL is convenient and user-friendly</li> <li>• Teaching with CALL is fun</li> <li>• CALL provides a rich and authentic environment, materials, and communication</li> <li>• CALL saves time</li> <li>• CALL increases teachers' creativity</li> <li>• CALL keeps teachers up-to-date</li> <li>• There is more control in the classroom via CALL</li> <li>• CALL is helpful</li> <li>• Personalized/individualized teaching and learning via CALL</li> <li>• CALL is ubiquitous: it can be used anywhere and anytime</li> <li>• CALL enhances peer collaboration and interaction</li> <li>• CALL increases the quality of teaching</li> <li>• CALL fosters the ability to cover all language skills</li> <li>• CALL complements teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher's lack of CALL/computer/digital literacy</li> <li>• Teacher's lower control on students via CALL</li> <li>• Implementing CALL is overwhelming</li> <li>• Implementing CALL needs too much work</li> <li>• Teacher's lack of confidence in using CALL</li> <li>• CALL makes teachers nervous</li> </ul>

(continued)

Table 16.2 (continued)

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There can be found a wide variety and versatility of materials in CALL</li> <li>• CALL increases interest and motivation of the students</li> <li>• CALL is interactive</li> <li>CALL is flexible</li> <li>CALL increases students' engagement</li> <li>Independent learning is fostered via CALL</li> <li>• CALL is efficient</li> <li>• CALL is more attractive</li> <li>• CALL gives learners instant and individualized feedback</li> <li>• CALL provides endless opportunities</li> <li>• CALL is dynamic</li> <li>• CALL keeps students' attention, focus and awareness</li> <li>• CALL increases learners' autonomy</li> <li>• Teachers reach different learning styles through CALL</li> <li>• CALL decreases students' stress</li> <li>• CALL stimulates the students' curiosity</li> <li>• CALL increases the willingness to learn</li> <li>• CALL makes students active</li> <li>• CALL breaks down students' inhibitions</li> <li>• CALL brings innovation and novelty</li> <li>• CALL makes learning adaptable</li> <li>• CALL provides more input and different types of input</li> <li>• CALL is multimodal</li> <li>• CALL improves student's critical thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology failure/malfunction/crash/break-down/glitches</li> <li>• Technical issues</li> <li>• Unavailability/lack of standardized CALL materials</li> <li>• CALL is time-consuming</li> <li>• Students' confusion and distraction via CALL</li> <li>• Lack of/old equipment/infrastructure</li> <li>• Unreliable</li> <li>• CALL decreases face-to-face and oral communication</li> <li>• Lack of students' CALL/digital/computer literacy</li> <li>• CALL may replace teachers</li> <li>• Expensive equipment and facilities</li> <li>• Complicated</li> <li>• Technologies require a lot of maintenance</li> <li>• Bad content on some websites</li> <li>• CALL cannot stand alone</li> <li>• The feedback provided is not always precise via CALL</li> <li>• Students' over-dependency to CALL</li> </ul>

Teachers also expressed that CALL gives opportunities for personalized teaching and learning. It is called “personalized” because each language student learns at their own pace (Basal, 2015; Millard, 2012). In other words, as Parsons and Beauchamp (2012, p. 220) stated, learners are allowed to “progress through the material at different speeds according to their learning needs. Some students take longer to finish a topic, might skip topics that cover information they already know, or might repeat topics if they need more help”.

Furthermore, teachers added that by utilizing technology in their classes, they could cover the four language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. In addition, technology-based tools and programs could act as complements to their teaching.

Increasing the interest and motivation of students via CALL is another positive factor extracted which is stated by other scholars such as Yilmaz (2017). Motivation could be understood as the most significant component of instructional design (Keller 1979) which has a substantial influence on students' attitudes (Tafazoli et al. 2018) and learning behaviors in educational environments (Fairchild et al. 2005).

The variety and versatility of materials, content, and tools provided by CALL in the teaching process are reported by many teachers as well. Evseeva and Solozhenko (2015) confirmed that technologies such as Learning Management System (LMS) (in general) and Moodle (in particular) are providing “a variety of tools for studying and communication” for teachers and learners (p. 208). Moreover, a variety of facilities and capabilities of social networking sites may be applied to enhance students' linguistic skills (Akbari et al. 2015). Godwin-Jones (2017) also asserts that mobile applications such as ChinesePod, Conjugation Nation, among others, offer a variety of opportunities for language learners to work with and improve their language skills.

Assisting learners to engage in learning is a critical challenge for language teachers in instructional environments. Learner engagement through active participation is a substantial element for learning that has many profits to students (Berman 2014).

[T177]: Some students find [CALL] an engaging way to learn and in certain contexts, it can encourage greater learner independence - though this often needs to be demonstrated.

[T221]: Often, if I expect students to interact in class, I find it best to use as little technology as possible. They get distracted by technology and forget to interact.

As reported by teachers, CALL could increase student engagement in both inside-and outside-of-the-classroom language activities, which is confirmed by research regarding the role of innovative instructional practices' effects on student engagement in technology-mediated learning contexts (e.g., Denker 2013; Mango 2015). The report of the teachers was in line with Henrie et al.'s (2015) definition of learner engagement. They considered “learner engagement” as an umbrella term which includes learning both inside and outside the academic settings, whereas student engagement would concentrate only on formal academic contexts.

The researchers proved that since technology as an educational tool provides an undeniable source of interactive tools and applications and facilitates peer and student–teacher interactions (Arkorful and Abaidoo 2015), it may promote engagement (Rashid and Asghar 2016).



Language teachers noted that CALL could foster independent learning, as reported by Sung et al. (2016). The aim of education, from a constructivist perspective, is to nurture independent and self-directed learners. Chen et al. (2005) declared that “independent learning can assist students in acquiring the knowledge, abilities, skills, values, and motivation that will enable them to analyze learning situations and develop appropriate strategies for action” (p. 397). In other words, by applying technology, we will cultivate more independent learners who can acquire knowledge and information more independently and easily and can broaden their own learning capabilities.

A fundamental component of the assessment for learning approach is the feedback provided to students (Stobart 2008), which is acknowledged as a powerful means to improve student learning (Hattie and Gan 2011). The teachers in the study notified that CALL provides learners with instant and individualized feedback. Computer-based assessments have the capability of providing timely feedback. The provided feedback in computer-based assessments can assist in instantly bridging the gap between the learner’s existing level in the learning procedure and the anticipated results. In other words, computer-based assessments could support teachers in giving instant and personalized feedback based on learners’ needs (e.g., Li et al. 2015; Muis et al. 2015).

Based on the information-processing model of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), learners need to consider input to receive it as intake that finally may be “integrated into the learners’ interlanguage system” (de la Fuente 2014, p. 261). Hence, providing learners with an attention-focusing environment and/or tasks may play a vital role in assisting the progress of language learning. According to our participants’ statements, CALL keeps students’ attention, focus, and noticing. By referring to Schmidt’s (1990, 1995) noticing hypothesis, “attention controls access to awareness and it is responsible for conscious noticing, which is the necessary condition for the conversion of input to intake” (Schmidt 1993, p. 209). Benefiting from attention and noticing of language learners were at the core of many studies regarding the implementation of CALL in language education (de la Fuente 2014; Oberg and Daniels 2013), which supports language teachers’ claim in this study.

[T285]: The fact that [CALL] generally grabs the attention of more learners, even the distracted ones, introduces variety and brings motivation to the classroom. Students find it comfortable to use technology.

There is no doubt that increasing students’ autonomy is one of the major roles of educational systems. Lai et al. (2016) even go further and state that one of the central goals of education is to educate autonomous learners who can enthusiastically use technologies in constructing their personalized learning environments, which surely supports the claim of language teachers who argued that CALL increases learners’ autonomy. Despite the various definitions of learner autonomy, it is widely agreed that autonomy refers to “the degree of choice that students have when they perform academic tasks, as well as the degree of choice they have regarding when and how to perform them” (Pintrich and Schunk 1996, as cited in Akbari et al. 2015, p. 127).

Regarding the use of technology for learning, autonomy consists of two major dimensions: (1) the ability dimension which includes self-regulation skills and the skills of locating, choosing, and efficiently applying technology for language learning (Lai 2013); (2) the willingness dimension which entails “a flexible mindset to deal with the uncertainties and complexity of interacting with technology” (Kop and Fournier 2011, as cited in Lai et al. 2016, p. 2), a proactive approach to following chances to learn and applying the language (Kormos and Csizer 2014), “the perceived usefulness of technology for language learning and the perceived educational compatibility of technology with language learning needs and preferences” (Lai 2013, as cited in Lai et al. 2016, p. 2). The weight of learners' autonomy out of the classroom is on the shoulder of technological tools and resources (Lai 2015; Lai et al. 2014; Reinders and White 2011). However, it would be the teachers' responsibility to assist their students to promote the required attitudes and competencies to get involved in the autonomous use of technology out of the classroom (Reinders and Darasawang 2012; Toffoli and Sockett 2015).

Finally, English language teachers in Spain also stated that by implementing CALL in their classrooms, they are able to (1) reach students' different learning styles, (2) stimulate students' curiosity, (3) increase students' willingness to learn, (4) make students active, (5) breaks down students' inhibitions, and (6) provide more input and different types of input.

In contrast, teachers counted some negative facets of CALL. Among the mentioned pitfalls of CALL, teachers' lack of CALL literacy should be counted as the most substantial one—based on the frequency of teachers' responses and the importance of the problem itself.

[T133]: ...sometimes I might not have enough literacy about particular programs and apps and that can be solved by taking part in more CALL training programs.

Although CALL scholars focused on the concept of new literacies and competencies (e.g., digital literacies) in language education (Ilomäki et al. 2014; Røkenes and Krumsvik 2016; Tafazoli et al. 2020b) and their importance in teacher education (Arnold et al. 2007), none of the previous research dealt with the critical concept of CALL literacy (Tafazoli et al. 2020b). Considering product end-users, developing teachers' CALL literacy should be another role of educational scholars and teacher educators. The more CALL literate teachers, the more competence in implementing CALL in an appropriate context.

[T161]: Negative aspects [of CALL] may include inappropriate content of online sources since teachers cannot always control learners. The content of some sources may be ethically or politically inappropriate or biased.

Participants argued the unavailability of resources and lack of standardized CALL materials, which is also mentioned by Sadaf et al. (2016). In addition, they complained about the bad content of some websites and the unreliability of some available educational content.

Teachers also reported that implementing CALL might lead to students' confusion and distraction which supports the previous study by Montrieux et al. (2015). This might be due to students' use of other unrelated tools such as games in the classroom.

[T175]: Students tend to be distracted by notifications, social media, etc., and have not received adequate learning training to effectively use digital technologies for learning.... Mostly related to the distracting effect of digital technologies. Mobile phones, in particular, become part of the learner's character/personality and this can be an obstacle when trying to get them to use this for non-personal, non-social media-related activities like learning.

Many of teachers' negative attitudes and perceptions were in line with a previous study by Tafazoli et al. (2018, 2020a) and Laabidi (2016): (1) time consumption and teachers' lack of time during the lesson, (2) fear of technology breaking down/failure/malfunction/crashing or glitches, (3) teachers' lack of confidence in using CALL, and (4) technical issues.

[T2136]: [T]echnical problems [are the most negative aspect of CALL] (computer starts updates when e.g., I want to do a listening test; problems with internet access, other problems: viruses, crash, not enough memory etc.; compatibility of computer software with teaching/learning software).

[T298]: First, [...] you always need a plan B in case there is a power cut. Second, [...] computer may not work in all the computers of the institution. [...] Third, with older students you need to take into account that not all of them will go on board with the use of technology. Thus, you need to spend time building students' confidence in the software, and sometimes it is difficult to have time to do so.

Furthermore, some of the teachers highlighted that (1) by implementing CALL, teachers have lower control on students' performance, (2) CALL cannot stand alone, and (3) the provided feedback by CALL is not always precise.

[T29]: I cannot monitor as effectively when everything they are doing is on a screen - I, as the teacher, don't get as much subtle feedback about how a student is doing.

[T287]: Feedbacks are sometimes not clear enough; they need a teacher's sense of judgments and explanations.

[T2100]: One negative outcome is that it is difficult to control what all the students are doing. It is very easy for them to start checking or doing things completely different from what is planned.

The participants of the study also complained about the old equipment and lack of appropriate infrastructure within their schools due to their expenses and maintenances (Nova 2017). It is quite interesting that some teachers have their own personal worries: some of them argued that implementing CALL needs too much work; CALL is complicated and overwhelming (Arkorful and Abaidoo 2015). In addition, some of the participating teachers have had their own concerns about future careers as they think that CALL may replace teachers, which could lead to low job offers in the near future.

[T161]: Limitations in infrastructures and resources, tech skills and knowledge, filtering. Usually I am responsible for providing tech-based lessons. University does not provide anything. It's all up to me and students.

[T222]: My repository of material is growing steadily, but it does take time to make new things, also because you want the new material to be better and different.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) based on English language teachers' attitudes in Spanish higher education. To meet the end of the study, I applied the Delphi method, content analysis, and a SWOT matrix.

The findings revealed the following key strengths: (1) convenience and user-friendliness of CALL, (2) fun aspect of teaching via CALL, (3) rich and authentic environment, materials and communication via CALL, and (4) saving time via CALL. Among the opportunities, participants claimed: (1) variety and versatility of CALL materials, (2) CALL increases the students' interests and motivations, (3) Interactivity of CALL, (4) Flexibility of CALL, and (5) CALL increases students' engagement. The major weakness identified was teachers' lack of CALL/digital/computer literacy. And finally, the most common threats were (1) Technology failure/malfunction/crash/break-down/glitches, (2) technical issues, (3) unavailability/lack of standardized CALL materials, (4) students' confusion and distraction via CALL, and (5) lack of/old equipment/infrastructure are the most frequent factors which were reported by the English teachers in Spain.

The present study suggests that the effective application of CALL in language teaching and learning is impeded by several distinctive factors. The findings of the current study have some implications concerned with the integration of CALL into language education, which can be summed up as follows:

(1) Running more CALL teacher education programs to improve teachers' CALL literacy, (2) Improving teachers' cognitive dimension in order to overcome psychological problems such as lack of confidence, being nervous, (3) Providing teachers with standardized CALL materials, (4) Facilitating the use of technological tools, facilities, and infrastructure, (5) Specifying a special budget by government and education authorities for providing institutions with required facilities, (6) Providing a proper evaluation by institutions to integrate ICT into teaching, (7) Enhancing students' CALL literacy by holding extracurricular courses, and (8) Encouraging language teachers to implement CALL in their classroom by their affiliated institutes.

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# Chapter 17

## ICT Training of Pre-service Bilingual Teachers: Present, Past, and Future Needs



María Elena Gómez-Parra 

**Abstract** Twenty-first century skills were part of the ATC21S (University of Melbourne 2012) international research project entitled *Assessment and Teaching of twenty-first Century Skills* (Dudeney et al. 2014) which further specify as creativity and innovation, collaboration and teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, autonomy, flexibility, and lifelong learning. Bilingual pre-service teachers are entitled to develop technology-related skills for both their own education and that of their future students (Savage and Barnett 2015). This research analyzed the perceived ICT competence and needs of 34 pre-service bilingual teachers from the University of Córdoba (Spain) based on their opinions on their attitudes, skill, tools, and pedagogy on what they think they will need in the future, what they need to fulfil their Undergraduate training as teachers, and what they have needed so far in their school placements. Quantitative and qualitative data were scrutinized under a mixed-methods research design. Findings showed that pre-service students viewed their technology training positively in the four categories analyzed (i.e., Will, Skill, Tools, and Pedagogy). The conclusions indicate that twenty-first century teachers are entitled to be ‘digital citizens’, who have a digital identity which, for more than sure, will instil in future generations.

**Keywords** Literacy · Twenty-first century skills · Pre-service bilingual teachers · Technology · Teacher education

### Introduction

Twenty-first century skills were part of the ATC21S (2012) international research project entitled ‘Assessment and Teaching of twenty-first Century Skills’, a framework which “approaches the question of what people need to function effectively in society and takes a variety of perspectives from high-level to detailed, and from inclusion of a vast array of human characteristics to skills or competencies alone”

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(Care 2012). Then, the ‘Partnership for twenty-first Century Skills’ (P21 Skills 2013) set its own definition of twenty-first century skills, which has been reformulated by The *Framework for Twenty-First Century Learning Definitions* (P21 2019, p. 2) as: “the skills, knowledge, and expertise students must master to succeed in work and life; it is a blend of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacies”. The components of such learning are seen “as fully interconnected in the process of twenty-first century teaching and learning”, which is further specified in Fig. 17.1.

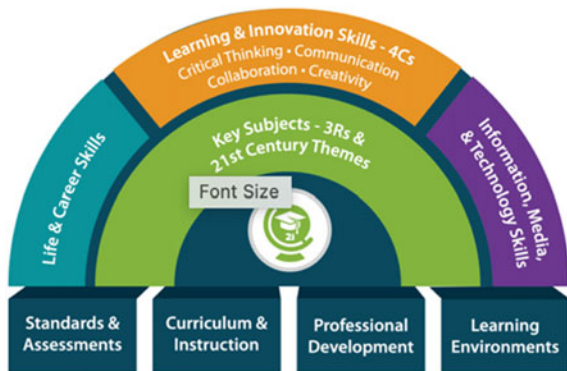
Dudeney et al. (2014) identified creativity and innovation, collaboration and teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, autonomy, flexibility, and lifelong learning as the ‘twenty-first century skills’, but the P21 (2019) framework is more comprehensive as it includes ICT as a specific area of development, which constitutes a *sine qua non* condition of the twenty-first century citizen. These competences are regarded to be of specific interest to bilingual teachers due to the wide implementation of bilingual programs across the world and, especially, in Europe, where ‘the number of identified English-taught programmes went up from 725 programmes in 2001, to 2389 in 2007 and to 8089 in the present study [2014]’ (Wächter and Maiworm 2014, p. 16).

Moreover, the teaching and acquisition of skills should not be done in isolation (San Diego County Office of Education, n.d., para. 2):

The abilities listed here are not developed independently of each other, but rather sequentially and concurrently. It would be a serious mistake to try to teach skills in isolation, making difficult to understand, and in many cases, students would not be able to apply the skills with rigor.

The importance of digital skills for both the training and professional development of teachers is unquestionable among educational institutions (e.g., INTEF 2017). Brooks-Young (2007, p. 9), and Savage and Barnett (2015) also identify technology as an essential component of twenty-first teachers’ literacy, because digital resources are becoming increasingly common as one of the main sources of information in most educational settings (Khuziakmetov et al. 2020). Technology-related competences are considered as primary also for bilingualpre-service teachers due to the fact that

**Fig. 17.1** Components of twenty-first century teaching and learning (P21 2019, p. 2)



its development is important not only for their own training, but also for that of their future pupils (Kay and Greenhill 2011; Savage and Barnett 2015). Moreover, Khuziakhmetov et al. (2020, p. 22) state:

Teachers must have supportive training focused on the pedagogy of integrating these devices, as well as useful strategies for classroom management that will enable the teachers to feel confident in using these digital tools in their classroom instructional environment.

Purposeful training of the digital competence as part of twenty-first century skills must be carefully planned by university teachers and included in the curriculum of such bilingual pre-service teachers as, following Carrington and Robinson (2009, p. 142): ‘Provision of clear expectations and models, coupled with explicit teaching and one-on-one support, are as necessary with digital literacies as with traditional print assignments’.

This research has been motivated by such background, establishing the analysis of bilingual pre-service teachers’ perceptions of their needs in three specific moments of their training as teachers: i. In the future, as bilingual teachers; ii. In the present, regarding their perceived needs as teacher Undergraduate trainees; and iii. In the past, during school placements.

It is of paramount importance for this researcher to understand and analyze the perceived digital needs of such students because the results of this analysis will contribute to improving her specific planning. More importantly, though, it is the fact that the written formulation of participants of their own perceived digital needs (and skills) can lead them to self-awareness, whose increase ‘is thought to enhance performance’ (Fletcher and Bailey 2003, p. 395). Pre-service teachers have been chosen as the target population of this study because the analysis of their perceptions regarding their skills, access to technology, pedagogy and tools ‘will have the longest impact and potential to affect change (Tondeur et al. 2017)’ (Bower et al. 2020, p. 2216).

The instrument designed ad hoc for this research has been based on the ‘Will, Skill, Tool, Pedagogy’ (WSTP) model, which affirms these four components are necessary for the successful integration of technology into the classroom teaching and learning environment (Knezek et al. 2000; Knezek and Christensen 2016): (i) positive teacher attitudes toward technology (Will); (ii) proficiency with technology (Skill); (iii) access to the needed tools and infrastructure (Tool); and (iv) teaching practices that are conducive to promoting technology-infused teaching and learning (Pedagogy). These four areas can offer the researcher a suitable platform of analysis which can meet the objectives of this study.

Therefore, this analysis can contribute to make pre-service bilingual teachers aware of their own digital needs (in two specific contexts—university and school—and in three specific moments in time—future, present and past) which, hopefully, could lead to a better-targeted future performance as bilingual teachers.

The main objective of this research is therefore to analyse bilingual pre-service teachers’ perceptions of their digital attitude, competence, tools, and needs. This objective was further divided into four specific objectives:

1. To analyze bilingual pre-service teachers' perceptions on their attitudes towards technology.
2. To analyze bilingual pre-service teachers' perceptions on their skills on technology.
3. To analyze bilingual pre-service teachers' perceptions on technological needed tools and infrastructure.
4. To analyze bilingual pre-service teachers' perceptions on the pedagogy of technology.

## **Research Questions**

These objectives were achieved through a series of research questions:

1. What are bilingual pre-service teachers' perceptions on their attitudes towards technology?
2. What are bilingual pre-service teachers' perceptions on their skills on technology?
3. What are bilingual pre-service teachers' perceptions on technological needed tools and infrastructure?
4. What are bilingual pre-service teachers' perceptions on the pedagogy of technology?

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

This study was grounded in mixed methods traditions (MMR), which analyses both quantitative and qualitative data. Such combination offers an appropriate understanding of the research problem (Creswell and Plano Clark 2010). Qualitative analysis was carried out through content analysis to complement quantitative data (analyzed through Jamovi 2020, v. 1.2), by scrutinizing the perceptions of 34 pre-service bilingual teachers in order to make sense of and interpret the phenomena according to the meaning that participants attach to them (Denzin and Lincoln 2017, p. 3). The integration of these two main methodological approaches enhances the research design itself, as the strengths of one approach may counterbalance the possible weaknesses of the other (Creswell et al. 2011). This study, therefore, applies both deductive and inductive types of inquiry to the analysis of data.

**Table 17.1** Distribution of the sample according to participants' age

Age	20	21	22	25 or more
%	11.76	67.65	11.76	8.82

**Table 17.2** Distribution of the sample according to languages spoken

Languages	Spanish	English	French	German	Italian	Slovak
%	100	100	26.47	8.8	2.9	2.9

## *Participants*

The sample of this research consisted of 34 bilingual pre-service teachers doing their 4th university year of the Teacher Education programme at the University of Córdoba (Spain). The data of this research were collected in December 2020 through an online questionnaire purposefully designed (see Appendix 1). The gender distribution of the sample was: male (26.47%) and female (73.53%). Moreover, Table 17.1 shows the distribution of students surveyed according to their age:

Regarding languages spoken by participants, the distribution of the sample is shown in Table 17.2.

Regarding technology (questions 4 and 5 of the questionnaire), all students declared that they had done a course on technology, out of whom 44.12% stated that it was before their university degree, whereas 55.88% affirmed that they did it during their higher-education period.

## *Instrument Design and Analysis Procedures*

The instrument designed for this research has been based on the Will, Skill, Tool, Pedagogy (WSTP), as discussed in the Introduction. The Delphi method was defined by Skulmoski et al. (2007, p. 1) as 'an iterative process to collect and distill the anonymous judgments of experts using a series of data collection and analysis techniques interspersed with feedback.' It was used to check its validity and reliability against the research objectives set, for which five international experts were identified and selected from the following Universities: University of Bremen—Germany—University of Oldenburg—Germany—Texas Women's University—United States of America—University of Córdoba—Spain—and Lower Silesia University—Poland. The template for validation was divided into four blocks by following the structure of the questionnaire, and it was arranged according to (a) a 4-point Likert scale for the questions, where experts could assess their pertinence and/or validity; (b) a section for comments by the experts. A sample question is shown in Fig. 17.2.

The whole process was carried out within a two-month period. Experts advised on the pertinence of the questions by including a cross in 1 or 2 when they considered

The Likert scale is established for pertinence as:  
 1 = Not Appropriate (NA)  
 2 = Little Appropriate (LA)  
 3 = Appropriate (A)  
 4 = Very Appropriate (VA)

**SECTION 1: WILL**  
 For sections 1-4, please write a cross (x) for your answer.

My attitude towards the use of technology in these contexts is...

	Very Positive (4)	Positive (3)	Negative (2)	Very Negative (1)
a. for my Undergraduate course assignments nowadays				
b. in my teaching placements (Practicum)				
c. for my future teaching				
d. Can you briefly explain why you have / do not have positive attitudes towards technology for both your academic and professional tasks in the past, present and future?				
e. What sort of technologies do you think you need nowadays and in the future?				
f. Is there any special technology you needed for your placement? Please, explain if you had it or not?				
Comments by the reviewer:				

**Fig. 17.2** Example of Delphi method

that the item did not meet the research’s objectives and including a cross in 3 or 4 when they thought it did. Moreover, they advised on any further comment (e.g., the linguistic phrasing of the items) by adding their suggestions in the final section of the table (see Fig. 2). Arrangements were done accordingly. The final version of this research instrument contains five sections (see Appendix 1). The first section (not numbered) entitled ‘Demographic and Educational Data’ was comprised by five general questions to gather personal data on participants’ sex, age, languages spoken, and knowledge of technology. Then, four more sections were included to correspond to the four areas for the analysis of successful integration of technology into teaching and learning: Will, Skill, Tools, and Pedagogy.

**Table 17.3** Scale reliability statistics

	Cronbach's $\alpha$	McDonald's $\omega$
Scale	0.853	0.853

Table 17.3 shows the Cronbach's alpha for this instrument was 0.853 which, according to Oviedo and Campo-Arias (2005), indicates a high reliability index. This coefficient is confirmed by MacDonald's omega (0.853 in our study) which is, again, very good, according to Campo-Arias and Oviedo (2008), as it is ranged between 0.70 and 0.90:

## Results and Discussion

The analysis and discussion of the results of this research will be divided into four main sections to follow the structure of the questionnaire.

### *Section 1: WILL*

#### **RQ1: What Are Bilingual Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions on Their Attitudes Towards Technology?**

Table 17.4 summarizes the quantitative data from participants' answers to three questions about their attitude towards the use of technology in different contexts.

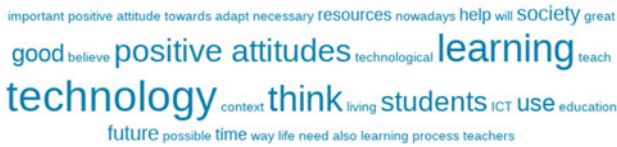
Students' attitude towards the use of technology in the three contexts identified (i.e., Undergraduate courses, teaching placements, and future teaching) is either very positive or positive for most of the cases. Only one student of the whole group showed negative attitude. These findings are consistent with Tafazoli et al. (2018)

**Table 17.4** Participants' attitude towards the use of technology in different contexts

My attitude towards the use of technology in these contexts is...				
	Very positive (4) (%)	Positive (3) (%)	Negative (2) (%)	Very negative (1)
a. For my Undergraduate course assignments nowadays	51.61	45.16	3.23	–
b. In my teaching placements (Practicum)	48.39	48.39	3.23	–
c. For my future teaching	67.74	29.03	3.23	–



Q: Can you briefly explain why you have / do not have positive attitudes towards technology for both your academic and professional tasks in the past, present and future?



**Fig. 17.3** Most frequent words for question ‘d’ of Section 1 ‘WILL’

study on CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning), where most participants (also teacher students) showed positive attitude towards technology. Such positive attitude towards the use of technology will encourage them to use it more frequently (Liw, 2002).

The qualitative analysis of these data comes from answers to questions ‘d’ and ‘e’ of Section 1 ‘WILL’. The cloud of most frequent words is shown in Fig. 17.3, where more frequent words are shown in larger font.

Q: Can you briefly explain why you have/do not have positive attitudes towards technology for both your academic and professional tasks in the past, present, and future?

The five most frequent words of this cloud are: ‘technology’ (41.94%), ‘learning’ (35.48%), ‘think’ (32.26%), ‘positive attitudes’ (29.03%), and ‘students’ (25.81%), which shows consistency with the question posed. Content analysis further explains the reasons why participants think technology is important for their professional lives. The first feature of technology that some of these participants (coded as ‘P. + number’) underline is their usefulness in modern society:

[P.2] “Because I consider that they are essential to adapt to today’s society, they are also very useful and allow us to develop new skills.”

[P.17] “I think that all teacher should have a good attitude towards technologies because our society is based on them and we have to attend to the demands of society in order to help students to grow up in their contexts.”

It is very interesting that bilingual teachers consider technology important to adapt to modern society, which makes a clear reference to twenty-first century skills (ATC21S 2012; Care 2012; Dudeney et al. 2014) identified in our theoretical framework. Another reason that students give supporting their positive feelings towards technology has to do with motivation:

[P.17] “I strongly believe that I have positive attitudes of using ICT in the learning-teaching process because it is a greater resource to increase the motivation of our students.”

[P.21] “Because I think that life is evolving towards the field of technology and the virtual, so students will be more used to working in that way, and they will be more motivated learning with a more innovative methodology and closer to their daily life.”

[P.27] “I have positive attitudes because I like using technological resources in class and I believe that students really learn, maybe not deeper but I’m sure better.”



**Fig. 17.4** Most frequent words for question ‘e’ of Section 1 ‘WILL’

Amir et al. (2020) show that there is a strong relationship between usefulness and behavioral intention, which concurs with the results of this research where the usefulness of technology is attached to the positive motivation it can exert among participants’ future pupils. Moreover, the positive evaluation and understanding of technology is related to its effective integration in teaching and learning (Kessler and Phillips 2019).

Figure 17.4 summarizes the most frequent words in answers to question ‘e’:

Q: What sort of technologies do you think you need nowadays and in the future?

The five most frequent words in this set are: ‘technologies’ (51.61%), ‘computer’ (22.58%), ‘use’ (16.13%) and ‘Apps’ (16.13%) in the third place, ‘games’ (9.68%), ‘think’ (9.68%) and ‘software’ (9.68%) in the fourth place, and ‘learning’ (7.39%).

Content analysis of participants’ statements identifies Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) as the most important sort of technology that they would need in their near future as teachers:

[P.12] “We need to deep more in VR and AR technologies which I think that in the close future will be exploited to its maximum level.”

[P.24] “Some technologies could be related with gamification or new learning projects that could change the view of the traditional learning way. Maybe the internet, with VR technologies or the use of computers could be enough to implement these new advances in our future classrooms.”

[P.31] “AR apps.”

[P.32] “Augmented reality, different programs for presentations, math graphics app, games, videos...”

Following Calabuig-Moreno et al. (2020, p. 2): ‘virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are emerging technologies that are gaining special interest in the educational field’, as the full potential of AR has not been fully exploited in education yet (Seufert et al. 2020). Therefore, the fact that pre-service bilingual teachers identity them as important technology for their future as teachers is outstanding. Some other participants underline the general use of computers, Internet and updated apps as important instruments for their present and future lives, which confirms the fact that pre-service bilingual teachers surveyed think technology, in either a more specific or general way, rely on technology for the development of their profession as teachers:

[P.4] “Microsoft Office, programs with videocalls, Google Tools.”

[P.11] “Computers, tablets, mobile phones, TVs, etc.”

[P.16] “I think all types of technology are welcoming in order to improve the ICTcompetence.”

[P.19] “Apps that allow teachers to teach through games.”

[P.28] “Apps and technological devices apart from the digital boards.”

## Section 2: SKILL

### RQ2: What Are Bilingual Pre-Service Teachers’ Perceptions on Their Skills on Technology?

Table 17.5 summarizes the quantitative data from participants’ answers about their skills using technology:

Participants’ answers regarding self-evaluation of their proficiency on technology are mostly placed on the ‘positive’ area of the Likert-scale, as only 12.90% of participants judge such skill as ‘little’ for Undergraduate course assignments, 16.13% for their teaching placement, and 22.58% for their future teaching. These results agree with the study by Molano (2020), where Philippines’ pre-service teachers show a high level of skill on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Figure 17.5 summarizes the most frequent words found in participants’ answers to question ‘d’ from Section 2:

Q: Can you briefly explain why you are/are not proficient in the use of technology for both your academic and professional tasks in the past, present, and future?

The five most frequent words in this set are ‘think’ (48.39%) in the first place, ‘proficient’ (32.26%) in the second, ‘learn’ (29.03%) and ‘use’ (29.03%) in the third place, ‘know’ (25.81%) in the fourth place, and ‘students’ (22.58%) in the fifth place.

Content analysis of participants’ statements identifies the main reasons why they think they are proficient in the use of technology, daily practice is the most frequent of these:

[P.7] “I tend to use technologies in my own life, so I think I am also proficient with them when it comes to work.”

**Table 17.5** Percentages of participants’ answers regarding their proficiency on technology

I think I am proficient in...	Very little (1)	Little (2) (%)	Much (3) (%)	A lot (4) (%)
a. The use of technology for my Undergraduate course assignments nowadays	–	12.90	61.29	25.81
b. The use of technology in my teaching placements (Practicum)	–	16.13	64.52	19.35
c. The use of technology for my future teaching	–	22.58	45.16	32.26



**Fig. 17.5** Most frequent words for question ‘d’ of Section 2 ‘SKILL’

[P.10] “I think that I am proficient in the use of technology because every day I use it and know new technological things.”

[P.29] “I am proficient in the use of technology because it is a way to learn daily from practice during a lesson, while students are developing digital competences and they know how to solve specific problems through technology. Finally, students will understand the importance of this competence nowadays.”

Practice in technology and frequency of use seems to be conducive to pre-service teachers’ perceived proficiency in this area, because for an in-depth understanding of technology integration, cultures of practice have to be understood (Mishra and Warr 2020). Bilingual teachers acknowledge difficulties experienced when using technology, which are mainly ascribed to specific problems encountered in the classroom context:

[P.16] “I am proficient in planning the use of technology in class and assessing students. Nevertheless I think I am not proficient in solving typical IT problems in class.”

[P.34] “I’m not proficient in the use of planning the use of technology in class, solving typical IT problems in class.”

Despite the efforts of university programs to equip pre-service teacher students with the knowledge and skills to engage with technology, some of these teachers still feel they do not have the sufficient command to use technology in their future classrooms (Sang et al. 2010).

### **Section 3: TOOLS**

#### **RQ3: What Are Bilingual Pre-service Teachers’ Perceptions on Technological Needed Tools and Infrastructure?**

Table 17.6 summarizes the quantitative data from participants’ answers regarding their access to needed tools and infrastructure:

These data allow us to state that participants’ evaluation of access to the needed tools and infrastructure for Undergraduate course assignments is mostly positive, as only 19.35% judge this as negative. This percentage increases for their teaching

**Table 17.6** Percentages of participants’ answers regarding access to tools and Infrastructure

I think I have sufficient access to the needed tools and infrastructure...				
	Very little (1) (%)	Little (2) (%)	Much (3) (%)	A lot (4) (%)
a. For my Undergraduate course assignments nowadays	–	19.35	58.06	22.58
b. In my teaching placements (Practicum)	3.23	38.71	51.61	6.45
c. For my future teaching	–	25.81	61.29	12.90



**Fig. 17.6** Most frequent words for question ‘d’ of Section 3 ‘TOOLS’

placement, where 41.94% of participants think that this access is not positive. Krause et al. (2019, p. 241) state: ‘Over the past decade, the increased emphasis on technological skills and proficiencies within teacher education programs has made the reliance on a stand-alone educational technology course appear unsustainable’. Therefore, the fact that this study’s participants positively judge their access to technological resources for their Undergraduate course assignments (i.e., 80.64% for ‘much’ and ‘a lot’ values) offers an optimistic view of their teacher education program. Moreover, the positive value of future technological resources (i.e., participants’ judge of technology as future in-service teachers), which is 74.19% for ‘much’ and ‘a lot’ values, is assessed as sensitive and realistic, taking into account data from Sect. 3.1., where students mentioned AR and VR as some of the tools they will be needing in their near future as teachers. Therefore, this set of data does not concord with studies which state that pre-service teachers often use technology learnt during Undergraduate programs in their future instruction (e.g., Hughes et al. 2016).

Figure 17.6 summarizes the most frequent words in answers to question ‘d’ from Section 3.

Q: Can you briefly explain why you think you have/do not have access to the needed tools and infrastructure for both your academic and professional tasks in the past, present, and future?

The five most frequent words in this set are ‘think’ (46.67%), ‘schools’ (43.33%), ‘learn’ ‘tools’ (33.33%), ‘resources’ (30%) and ‘access’ (30%) in the fourth place, and ‘computers’ (26.67%) in the fifth place. These words are a clear indicator that students mainly mention schools, tools, and access to resources in their answers. Content analysis of participants’ statements helps us identify further the main reasons why they think either have or do not have access to needed tools and infrastructure. We will separate quotations from participants who think they have access (i.e., positive answers to the main question) from those who think they do not have it (i.e., negative answers):

i. *Positive answers:*

[P.3] “I think I have access because they have taught me the correct procedures and have given me the necessary tools to carry it out, as well as having sufficient knowledge and skills to do so.”

[P.4] “I think that nowadays all of us can access due to globalization.”

ii. *Negative answers:*

[P.27] “It is not so difficult for me to have access to this in the university or in our homes as we can create a lot of things with the resources proposed but the difficulties appear when

Q: What sort of technologies do you think you need nowadays and in the future?

Computers ones **students** teaching **technologies**  
mobile phones **VR**

**Fig. 17.7** Most frequent words for question ‘e’ of Section 3 ‘TOOLS’

you want to apply in the school. Many times, the time that you have to spend for it is a lot of time, so finally a lot of teachers tend to decide not to use it. From my experience being a student and a pre-service teacher, it is difficult as usually schools don’t have the necessary resources and for the whole school there is only one class with computers which, you have to spend time to displace there and turn them on. I think it would be better if each student could have their own computer, although a bit unrealistic, so as an alternative to this, there should be more computers available in the schools.”

[P.30] “I have dedicated an important part of my money to buy this technology, so I have it. But in schools or even at University, they don’t have much of this technologies due to the lack of money.”

The main reasons why participants judge their access to needed tools and infrastructure as positive confirm the analysis of data so far: University training has equipped them with the knowledge and skills they think they will need in a near future as in-service teachers. Globalization ‘results in greater interconnectedness’ (Treadwell 2011, p. 27), so it stands as a relevant means for updating technology. Insufficient budget for schools is identified as the reason why necessary technological resources are lacking in schools (e.g., P.27 and P.30).

Figure 17.7 summarizes the most frequent words in answers to question ‘e’ from Section 3:

Q: What sort of technologies do you think you need nowadays and in the future?

The three most frequent words in this set are: ‘technologies’ (29.03%), ‘students’ (16.13%), and ‘VR’ (12.90%). Content analysis of participants’ direct quotations helps us specify the technologies they think they (will) need:

[P.9] “Computers and Internet would be the basic. Then we could add VR or AR, robots, or artificial intelligence.”

[P.14] “Nowadays I need a basic technologies manage but in our future we have to reach mastery in technologies to teach our students and to deal with our daily life.”

[P.31] “Laptops, digital backboard, VR glasses.”

[P.32] “Digital boards, computers, printers, cameras, QR codes...”

Once again, participants mention AR and VR as two of the main tools they will need as in-service teachers, which confirms our analysis so far. It is relevant to mention here that pre-service teachers are aware of the fact that ‘to master’ these technologies (P.14) is necessary both for their daily lives nowadays and for their future profession. Such focus on specific training will be of special interest in the analysis of data at next set.

Figure 17.8 summarizes the most frequent words in answers to question ‘f’ from Section 3:



**Fig. 17.8** Most frequent words for question ‘f’ of Section 3 ‘TOOLS’

Q: Is there any special technology you needed for your placement? If your answer to this question is “yes”, please, explain which was it and if you had sufficient knowledge.

The three most frequent words in this set are: ‘really’ (12.90%), ‘think’ (11.48%) and ‘technologies’ (10.62%). Content analysis of participants’ direct quotations helps us specify the reasons why participants consider they have (or not) sufficient knowledge:

[P.5] “I am not sure we need any in particular technology, but as a teachers we cannot stop learning. We have to use the ones we already know and learn the new ones that will appear.”

[P.19] “Yes, I believe that the children can apply some kind of technology in which augmented reality or virtual one could be developed, because it should be really useful and has got such many advantages in their teaching-learning process.”

The need for learning is underlined by P.5: ‘we cannot stop learning’ and they affirm that they should use the technologies they ‘already know’, at the same time that they need to update. Then, data from this set confirm Hughes et al. (2016) results (i.e., pre-service teachers use technology modeled by university program in their future instruction as in-service teachers). References to VR and AR in this set of data support their view of what technologies they think will be useful for their future as teachers and for the education of their pupils. Bower et al. (2020, p. 2215) state: ‘Teachers need to be provided with access to devices, professional learning, technical guidance, time and a supportive school and policy environment to become confident and capable users of IVR.’

## ***Section 4: PEDAGOGY***

### **RQ4: What Are Bilingual Pre-service Teachers’ Perceptions on the Pedagogy of Technology?**

Table 17.7 summarizes the quantitative data from participants’ answers on technology.

Participants’ answers regarding the inclusion of teaching practices which address at promoting technology-infused teaching and learning are mostly positive for the three timeframes and sets (past and present for both their Undergraduate courses and teaching placements, and future for their professional praxis). The highest percentages are found in the ‘much’ (= 3) and ‘a lot’ (= 4) values: 73.34% for Undergraduate courses; 63.43% for teaching placement; and 96.66% for their teaching profession (being this the highest value). On the contrary, if we look at the negative

**Table 17.7** Percentages of participants’ answers regarding the inclusion of teaching practices conducive to promoting technology-infused teaching and learning

I think teaching practices that are conducive to promoting technology-infused teaching and learning...				
	Very little (1) (%)	Little (2) (%)	Much (3) (%)	A lot (4) (%)
a. Have been included in my undergraduate courses	3.33	23.333	66.67	6.67
b. Have been present in my teaching placements (Practicum)	10	26.67	53.33	10
c. Will be needed for my future teaching	–	3.33	33.33	63.33

values (i.e., values ‘very little’ = 1 and ‘little’ = 2), the highest percentage is found at the teaching of technology in their teaching placement periods (36.67%). Then, pre-service teachers believe that technology pedagogy is mostly found at university programs, and it will be mostly needed in their future as in-service teachers. This concurs with the literature as, following Rowston et al. (2019, p. 684):

Literature suggests effective technology pedagogy beliefs and practice can be sustained through mastery of technological tools, vicarious observations of peer technology integration practice, feedback and support from esteemed colleagues, and assistance interpreting physiological reactions when using technology (Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich 2010; Govender and Govender 2009; Hew and Brush 2007).

Figure 17.9 summarizes the most frequent words in answers to question ‘d’ from Section 4:

Q: Can you briefly explain if you think teaching practices that are conducive to promoting technology-infused teaching and learning are included in your present teacher education curriculum and in your past and future practice as a teacher?

The five most frequent words in this set are: ‘use’ (46.67%), ‘teachers’ (40%), ‘learn’ (36.67%), ‘think’ (33.33%), and ‘technology’ (30%). Content analysis of participants’ direct quotations helps us identify more precisely the contexts where they think technology pedagogy is best promoted:

[P.8] “The moment in my life where I learned the most about technology was in the university, so it is included in the curriculum. In the high school I did not learn too much nor in Primary Education, even having a computer that Junta de Andalucía gave us, which we barely used.”



**Fig. 17.9** Cloud of most frequent words for question ‘d’ of Section 4 ‘PEDAGOGY’



[P.26] “They are included in the curriculum of a teacher, and teachers have to use them in order to develop digital competences in children while they are learning contents in their lessons.”

[P.29] “Some of my subjects have been directed to promoting technology when teaching. However, I wasn’t taught about how to put in practice this knowledge in the lesson. Also, in my Practicum experience teachers used to follow the traditional method, so they didn’t use these technologies for the teaching process.”

Teacher students agree that university programs have greatly contributed to equip them with the knowledge on technology which foreseeably they will need as in-service teachers (Banas and Polly 2016), but this learning is acquired ‘in isolation and does not provide the necessary skills to integrate within their own program of study (Bakir 2015, 2016; Wachira and Keengwe 2011).’ (Krause et al. 2019, p. 241), which is also found among participants’ quotation (e.g., P.29 complains about lack of technology practice—or integration—in either their teaching placement or in the university lessons).

## Conclusions

Technology has been identified by the P.21 (2019) framework as one of the twenty-first century skills, so the analysis of perceived opinions of pre-service bilingual teachers on their knowledge, access to infrastructure and tools, level of competency and pedagogy is relevant for teacher educators and university authorities.

Several factors might influence on the results of this research, among which the size of the sample is the most obvious ( $n = 34$ ), as it can limit the extrapolation of findings.

The main findings of this study underline that pre-service bilingual teachers’ attitudes towards technology are mostly positive, a fact which participants associate with ‘learning’, which is the second most frequent word from content analysis (see Fig. 3). Following Watson et al. (2020, p. 89): ‘Preservice teachers’ beliefs and attitudes impact the likelihood they will integrate technology in their future teaching’, which concurs with the findings of our study (i.e., participants of this study identify VR and AR as the most important technology that they would need in their future teaching practice). Moreover, participants’ self-perceived skills on technology are also mostly positive in the three areas surveyed (Undergraduate course assignments, future praxis as teachers and teaching placements). The fact that 55.88% of participants took ICT training during higher-education period confirms the fact that over the last few years university systems have put increasing emphasis on placing educational technology courses (Krause et al. 2019). This shows a positive impact on university students’ evaluation and perception of their technology skills nowadays and, as discussed above, it makes more probable that they are willing to implement such technology in their future praxis as teachers (Hughes et al. 2016). It is also noteworthy to underline that pre-service bilingual teachers reflect on the difficulties they encounter with technology (Shea and Bidjerano 2009), which we also regard as

a positive outcome of this research. We, nevertheless, agree with Nelson and Hawk (2020, p. 2) when they state: ‘Technology is merely a tool, and its inclusion does not automatically improve pedagogy’.

Access to technology tools and infrastructure is also positive for most participants, which is intrinsically related to the above-mentioned efforts by universities to implement technology in their programs (Krause et al. 2019). This is also corroborated by the last set of data regarding pedagogy, which confirms students’ understanding that most of the pedagogy on technology is found at university programs (73.34% of participants), at the same time that they insist on the idea that technology will be needed in their future praxis as teachers (96.66% of the sample).

The last reflection on this study goes to the seemingly unstoppable increase of opportunities and expectations surrounding the integration of technology in teacher education programs. Our data state that such efforts carried out by institutions (through increase in their budget) and teachers (through the inclusion of technology in course syllabi) are perceived as positive by university students. But this race for the future is, as said above, unstoppable, as twenty-first century teachers are entitled to be ‘digital citizens’, who have a digital identity which they will instill in future generations. Therefore, the constant update of higher-education as an institution and university teachers (as professionals of education) must be a *sine qua non* condition (or skill) of twenty-first century teacher education.

## Appendix 1: Demographic and Educational Data

For questions 1–5, please write a cross (x) for your answer.

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age:
3. Languages you speak (please, write them):
4. Have you done a course on technology?  Yes  No
5. If you answered 'Yes' to the question before, please, say if it was before or during your Undergraduate course at the University:  Before  During

### SECTION 1: WILL

For sections 1–4, please write a cross (x) for your answer.

My attitude towards the use of technology in these contexts is...

	Very positive (4)	Positive (3)	Negative (2)	Very negative (1)
a. For my Undergraduate course assignments nowadays				
b. In my teaching placements (Practicum)				

(continued)

(continued)

	Very positive (4)	Positive (3)	Negative (2)	Very negative (1)
c. For my future teaching				
d. Can you briefly explain why you have/do not have positive attitudes towards technology for both your academic and professional tasks in the past, present and future?				

**SECTION 2: SKILL**

I think I am proficient in...

	Very little (1)	Little (2)	Much (3)	A lot (4)
a. The use of technology for my Undergraduate course assignments nowadays				
b. The use of technology in my teaching placements (Practicum)				
c. The use of technology for my future teaching				
d. Can you briefly explain why you are/are not proficient in the use of technology for both your academic and professional tasks in the past, present and future? Here are some examples of digital skills: Planning the use of technology in class; solving typical IT problems in class; reflecting on the use of technology; assessing students' use of technology, presenting and communicating in digital scenarios				

**SECTION 3: TOOLS**

I think I have sufficient access to the needed tools and infrastructure...

	Very little (1)	Little (2)	Much (3)	A lot (4)
a. For my Undergraduate course assignments nowadays				
b. In my teaching placements (Practicum)				
c. For my future teaching				
d. Can you briefly explain why you think you have/do not have access to the needed tools and infrastructure for both your academic and professional tasks in the past, present and future?				
e. What sort of technologies do you think you need nowadays and in the future?				

(continued)

(continued)

	Very little (1)	Little (2)	Much (3)	A lot (4)
f. Is there any special technology you needed for your placement? If your answer to this question is “yes”, please, explain which was it and if you had sufficient knowledge				

## SECTION 4: PEDAGOGY

I think teaching practices that are conducive to promoting technology-infused teaching and learning...

	Very little (1)	Little (2)	Much (3)	A lot (4)
a. Have been included in my Undergraduate courses				
b. Have been present in my teaching placements (Practicum)				
c. Will be needed for my future teaching				
d. Can you briefly explain if you think teaching practices that are conducive to promoting technology-infused teaching and learning are included in your present teacher education curriculum and in your past and future practice as a teacher?				

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# Chapter 18

## The Effects of Virtual Classroom Instruction: The Pre-service Teacher Preparation Program at the University of Ljubljana



Lara Burazer and Janez Skela

**Abstract** Over the past few decades, a strong presence of the reflective model of teacher-training has been observed. It presupposes intense teacher-trainees' involvement in the development of teaching practices and engagement in teacher self-development through the process of self-reflection. Subject to internalization, this process facilitates transmutation of personal learning experience into effective teaching practices. With the current pandemic still well underway, these systems of self-reflection and internalization have significantly shifted as the process of transmutation had to be replaced or at least supplemented by development and implementation of new teaching practices, inadvertently demanding of students and teachers alike to adapt to the new reality. The shifts in teaching practices have been marked by a number of modifications in the teacher-training experience, which are reflected in the recent research, conducted within our teacher-training program at the end of the online Teaching Practicum (TP). The present chapter discusses the research findings based on the teacher-trainees' responses in two separate surveys designed for use at the end of the academic year 2020–21, which was heavily marked by the lockdown mode. These findings are further supplemented by the analysis of the relevant content from the teacher-trainees' reflective essays, which are submitted as part of their TP portfolio requirement. Supported by the research results, the present chapter highlights the respondents' concerns over as well as benefits of their online teaching experience and draws relevant conclusions pertaining to future development of (online) teaching practices.

**Keywords** Online teaching · Pandemic · Reflective model · Teacher training

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## Introduction

The shutdown of universities and schools in Slovenia, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, came in mid-March 2020, just as many pre-service teacher-trainees either began their final practicum or were conducting their group observations/school visits. This means there has been disruption to initial teacher training during the last three months of the academic year 2019/20, and throughout the academic year 2020/21 for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the academic year 2020/21, the restrictions imposed regionally or nationally varied, depending on the Covid-19 situation, with primary and secondary schools being both on- and offline, then moving on to a hybrid model, to finally reopening in May 2021 (according to online sources <https://www.portalplus.si> and <https://ourworldindata.org/>). The universities remained online throughout the academic year. So, there has been variance in the disruption experienced by initial teacher training (henceforth referred to as ITT) trainees during the academic year 2020/21 regarding their final practicum or school placements, whereas the university-based teacher training program remained online throughout the year. This research focuses on the challenges this posed for teacher-trainees.

The Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, is by far the largest ITT provider in Slovenia. Within different departments, it provides teacher preparation programs for future teachers of the following languages: English, German, Italian, French, Spanish, Russian, Croatian, and Slovenian (both as a first and a second/foreign language).

So, the context framing this research is the official route into teaching established by the Bologna Reform in Higher Education in Slovenia. The Faculty of Arts adopted the so-called two-cycle degree structure, i.e., a 3-year Bachelor/Undergraduate Level, plus a 2-year Master/Graduate Level. In this two-cycle degree structure, the first three years of undergraduate studies are, in the case of future teachers of English, devoted entirely to subject-specific courses relating to linguistics and literature. The whole teacher preparation program is placed within the second cycle, i.e. at Master Level, and within what we refer to as the Pedagogical Module. Students at MA level can opt to follow either the non-pedagogical (i.e. omitting all teacher-training courses) or pedagogical route, the latter being the only route into teaching.

## The Initial Teacher Training Design

There are two main types of ITT programs—a consecutive model, and a concurrent or simultaneous model, both with their advantages and disadvantages (Sedrevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė and Vainorytė 2015). In the consecutive model, students take the teacher preparation program after they have completed their “package” of disciplinary subjects relating to linguistics and literature. In the concurrent model, however, “the academic subjects are taught alongside the educational and pedagogical studies throughout the preparation period” (Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt 2017, p. 414). It is generally believed that the consecutive model offers stronger subject matter



preparation. Yet, as Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt (2017, p. 415) point out, “this model provides a less integrated learning experience between the discipline and the pedagogical studies, and a shorter period of socialization into the profession.” On the other hand, “the concurrent model offers a more integrated learning experience but requires a fairly early career decision from people who are also less mature and less knowledgeable” (ibid.).

In this sense, the current teacher preparation program provided by the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, is a mixture of both—consecutive and concurrent—models because trainees enroll into the MA program with a BA (i. e. subject-specialist) degree, but continue to study, during both MA Level years, both the academic subjects and the educational and pedagogical studies in a 1:1 ratio. The scope of the Master’s degree curriculum is 120 ECTS credits—60 credit points of academic subjects, and 60 credit points of the educational and pedagogical studies). Quantitatively, the pre-service teacher training program is in fact a one-year post-graduate program spreading over two years of MA Level.

The pedagogical module consists of two parts: (a) general educational and pedagogical studies, and (b) subject-specific teacher training courses. The scope of the general educational and pedagogical studies is the same for all departments at the Faculty of Arts that provide a pedagogical route of studies and is as presented in Table 18.1.

The scope of the subject-specific teacher training courses at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, is as presented in Table 18.2.

As can be seen from Table 18.2, the trainees have to complete two school placements (in Year 1 and in Year 2), totaling 12 lesson observations (based on specific observation tasks), 4 holistic or general lesson observations (i.e. observing lessons as a whole), 14 lessons taught independently, and a negotiable number of micro-teaching sessions (i.e. instances where the trainee and the mentor team-teach parts of a lesson). To document their school experience, the trainees are required to develop a Teaching Practice Portfolio, which is a collection of their work on placement, highlighting and demonstrating their knowledge and skills in teaching. The portfolio also provides a means for reflection; it offers the opportunity for critiquing their work and evaluating the effectiveness of their lessons.

**Table 18.1** Pedagogical module curriculum

	Contact hours	ECTS*
Psychology for teachers	90	7
Pedagogy	45	3
(General) didactics	60	5
Adult education	30	3
Observation practice	15	2
an elective course	60	4
Total:	300	24

\*ECTS stands for European Credit Transfer System

**Table 18.2** Subject-specific teacher training curriculum

	Contact hours	ECTS
<i>Year 1</i>		
The Fundamentals of ELT Methodology	150	8
Methods and Techniques of Teaching English	60	7
Teaching Practice for English Teachers (practicum)	30	2
<i>Year 2</i>		
Programs and coursebooks in ELT	45	4
Testing in ELT	30	3
Scientific research work in foreign language pedagogy	30	3
<i>Elective courses (trainee chooses 2 out of 3):</i> Teaching English for Specific Purposes Teaching English Across Age Groups Trends in ELT	30 + 30	3 + 3
Teaching Practice for English Teachers (practicum)	30	4
Total:	435	37

### ***The COVID-19 Lockdown Effects on ITT***

Before we move on to describe the situation that happened in March 2020 when, as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic, all universities and schools in Slovenia shut down and transferred teaching online, we need to highlight the main methodological and “philosophical” design of the pre-service teacher education program to see how it was affected by this sudden change of teaching. The methodology of the pre-service teacher education program stresses the importance of involving the teacher-trainees in the instruction through hands-on activities, class discussions, pair work, brainstorming sessions, etc. In other words—the program is based on the so-called “reflective methodology” as we believe that this style of instruction is not only more engaging for the student teachers, but it also makes instruction less wearing on the teacher educator. So, given the “reflective methodology”-based design of the pre-service teacher education program and the centrality of the practicum, what happens when it is no longer possible?

As we are discussing the methodological design of the program, we will be interested in whether the imposed online teaching mode spelled a return to a more traditional way of teaching, and, primarily, what were the challenges related to »e-practicum«. In other words, we will try to show whether giving training sessions online and doing »e-practicum« are more demanding and challenging, and potentially less effective, or not.

The lockdown that happened in March 2020 was, of course, emergency-mode. As Nissim and Simon (2020, p. 11) point out, “in contrast to distance learning courses that are planned, designed and tailored to online settings ahead of time, emergency-mode is a temporary move made to transfer learning to an alternative

option due to a crisis.” Although at the faculty level, nobody was really prepared for this kind of situation (organization-wise, or otherwise), all theory-oriented courses, after the initial shock, seemed to move from frontal teaching to emergency-mode distance teaching without much difficulty, leaving teacher educators in a much more challenging situation. As for the practicum, the Ministry of Education issued very vague emergency guidance, letting the ITT providers (i.e. the faculties) decide for themselves, and the faculties letting the teacher educators decide for themselves. As the school practicum is a crucial point in the program, and its assessment is a key requirement for Year 1 trainees to be promoted to the next year level, and for Year 2 trainees to gain their final Qualified Teacher Status, we, the teacher educators, had to come up with new forms of practice in this “practicum vacuum”, and alternative strategies to substitute for lost practicum learning (Kidd and Murray 2020). We drew up an “alternative-practicum” plan that would enable the trainees to gain their teaching qualifications, but it also contained some changed requirements for school experience. The following alternative options were available to the trainees:

- Finding a school placement and doing their practicum online.
- Waiting until schools re-open, and doing the practicum offline.
- Year 1 trainees (academic year 2019/20) could postpone their practicum to next year (2020/21), in the hope that the situation would get back to normal. This meant, of course, that the trainees would have to do two placements in one year.
- Acknowledging and assessing any of the trainees’ (documented) past teaching experience such as individual tutoring, teaching language courses, working as a substitute teacher, providing help with teaching students with learning difficulties, and the like.
- Peer e-practicum sessions. At the faculty level, several departments of foreign languages (English, German, French, Spanish, and Italian) set up virtual classrooms where teacher-trainees of different languages performed micro-teaching to their peers who acted as students by using Zoom. For example, teacher-trainees of German would teach German to teacher-trainees of French, and vice versa, to mention just one language combination. After the e-practicum sessions, both peers and the university supervisor gave detailed feedback to the pre-service teachers. The benefit of the peer e-practicum was twofold—it was acknowledged as a (partial) practicum requirement, and the teacher-trainees found it useful because it helped them overcome online teaching fears.

As we can see, the trainees’ live teaching experiences in a classroom setting had to be compromised because otherwise they may not have fulfilled the pre-requisites for licensure.

It is safe to state that during this epidemic, pre-service teachers missed components of the school environment, culture, and expectations, “minimizing opportunities for reflection to understand failures and, most importantly, to build relationships in the learning environment” (Hill 2021, p. 2).

### ***Strengthening Theory/Practice Connections via the Methodological Design of the Pre-service Teacher Preparation Program***

Within pre-service teacher education programs, the so-called “theory/practice divide” and the importance of the practicum (or placement) in schools have been much debated (Kidd and Murray 2020). The practicum is usually widely recognized as it represents the central link between theory and practice—it is only here that the principle of “theorizing practice or practising theory” can be applied (Trappes-Lomax and McGrath 1999, p. 33). In other words, it is during the practicum that trainees acquire the skills to transfer knowledge of pedagogy to practice. The assumption is that more such practical experience straightforwardly produces better teachers as “practitioner and academic knowledge can be re-conceptualised to enhance students’ abilities to learn in and from practice” (Kidd and Murray 2020, p. 544). Although the practicum is, without doubt, the strongest connection between practice and theory (i.e. academic knowledge at the university), it is not the only one. Other solutions to strengthening theory/practice connections include increasing the practical, skills-based, experiential, and reflective components of university teacher education programs (Kidd and Murray 2020, p. 544).

### ***Changes in Conceptualizing the Knowledge Base of Language Teaching***

As the major concepts related to this topic have previously been outlined in a published work by the co-author of this article (cf. Skela 2019), we are briefly summarizing the main ideas in the following paragraphs.

Since the 1970s, there has been a marked shift in our understanding of what we mean by teacher preparation. Since then, several developments have significantly shaped the way second language teacher education (henceforth SLTE) is currently conceptualized (Burns and Richards 2009), of which the most important are changes in the knowledge base of language teaching and a re-orientation of our perspectives on pre-service teachers.

The established core curriculum of a SLTE program has traditionally been composed of two “packages”: a “package” of disciplinary knowledge that provides academic underpinning of practice, and a methodology “package” that shows teachers how to teach. In the “applied science” model of teacher education (Wallace 1991), which underpinned the growth of applied linguistics, it was assumed that disciplinary knowledge about language and SLA can be unproblematically applied to teaching, perhaps facilitated by classroom observation or through experience (Burns and Richards 2009). The growth and diversification of applied linguistics did not substantially affect how teachers were taught (Graves 2009). The content component of teacher education was taught separately, in both time and space, from the

practical component and actual teaching practice (Freeman and Johnson 1998; cited in Graves 2009, p. 117). It was perhaps not surprising teachers often failed to apply such knowledge in their classrooms.

For this reason, many experts called for the reconceptualization of the knowledge base of language teaching (Johnson 2009) that would include the third strand which had often been missing from formulations of the traditional core content of SLTE—namely, the nature of teaching itself, or *how teachers learn to teach*. In the 1980s, certain intellectual streams significantly changed our ways of understanding teaching. When researchers coined the term *teacher-learner*, it became a touchstone for teacher educators. Teachers began to be seen as “actors in two fields of activity: with students in classrooms where they *taught*, and in settings of professional training, where they *learned*” (Freeman 2009). In other words, SLTE began to include not simply *what* teachers need to learn, but increasingly *how* they would learn it. Additionally, research on teacher cognition began to develop and it focused on how teacher-learners’ prior (experiential) knowledge affects what and how they learn and how they make sense of experience (Borg 2006; Graves 2009). Language *teacher cognition* research indicated very clearly that “teacher-learners have strongly held conceptions of and tacit personal theories about teaching through which they filter input from educational courses” (Graves 2009, p. 117). In other words, the research distinguished between *explicit* knowledge and *implicit* knowledge.

Moreover, research that previously focused on language teachers and language teaching itself has begun to acknowledge an essential kind of knowledge that is critical for language teachers—the *pedagogical content knowledge* or the *practitioner knowledge* (Johnson 2009). This means that teachers have specialized knowledge about how to teach their subject matter—the so-called *pedagogical content knowledge* (Graves 2009). Pedagogical content knowledge, then, describes the teacher’s capacity to transform content into accessible and learnable forms. The acknowledgement of the pedagogical content knowledge “positions language teachers as creators of knowledge that constitutes the activity of language teaching” (Johnson 2009, p. 22). This is not to say that English teachers do not need to know the disciplinary knowledge of their field, but it does suggest that they also need to acquire the pedagogical content knowledge that will enable them to teach language (and linguistic concepts) in ways that will make it possible for their students to learn them.

### ***Changes in Conceptualizing the Nature of Teacher Learning***

It is ironic how little language teacher education has concerned itself with how people actually learn to teach. As Upadhyay (2014) points out, the notion that there is a learning process that undergirds, if not directs, teacher education is fairly recent. A focus on the nature of teacher learning has significantly expanded and reshaped the knowledge base of language teaching, and consequently both the content and delivery of teacher education programs (Burns and Richards 2009).

Roberts (1998) considers teacher education in terms of four “views of the person”, which have a significant impact on the objectives, content, and process of teacher education. In the first perspective, pre-service teachers are viewed essentially as input–output systems. Such a conception privileges imitative and behaviorally-informed models of teacher education, such as what Wallace (1991) called the *craft model*. This typically involved pre-service teachers working alongside experienced masters, following their instructions and advice, and learning by imitating. A second view of pre-service teachers involves focusing on their self-agency and viewing them as autonomous agents. Inherent in this view is the goal of empowering teachers with specialized knowledge about language and pedagogy. In the *applied science* model (Wallace 1991), such theoretical knowledge is imparted to pre-service teachers by experts, and then the former are tasked with applying this knowledge to practice. The other two perspectives described by Roberts (1998) involve viewing pre-service teachers as constructivists, who craft personal constructions of their professional contexts and as social beings whose professional role is shaped by social rules, group identity, occupational culture, and teacher development in the context of school. Comparing the four views, Roberts suggests that “behavioural and humanistic perspectives throw useful but only partial light on teacher learning”, and that “a synthesis of constructivist and social perspectives, a broadly social constructivist view, provides the most helpful and appropriate general framework for teacher education design” (op. cit., p. 13). Such a synthesis led to the development of the *reflective model* of teacher education (Wallace 1991), which is described below.

*The reflective model* is trainee-centered. It assigns great importance to teacher cognition and seeks to establish solid connections between theory (i. e. both personal small *t* theories, and the capital *T* Theory) and classroom practices. It includes two kinds of knowledge development: (a) received knowledge (i.e. external input coming from scholarly sources, the collective theoretical knowledge of the profession or the capital *T* Theory), and (b) experiential knowledge. The trainee will develop experiential knowledge by teaching or observing lessons, or recalling past experience; then reflecting, alone or in discussion with others, in order to work out theories about teaching; then trying these out again in practice. Such a “reflective cycle” aims for continuous improvement and development of personal theories in action (Ur 1996).

Being an effective English language teacher means a lot of things. It involves, as Richards (2015, p. 106) notes, “mastering practical classroom skills, as well as acquiring specialized knowledge that teachers make use of in their teaching.” But it also involves developing a deeper understanding of teaching, over time, through the experience of teaching. At the same time, teaching is an activity that draws on the teacher’s personal assumptions, beliefs, and values (ibid.). The challenge in this expanded scope of the knowledge base of language teaching lies in how to operationalize it, i.e., how this learning can be incorporated into a teacher education program that would adequately prepare as many participants as possible for the classroom contexts in which they will teach. As a Postmethod pedagogy poses a lot of challenges to language teachers, their preparation “requires the existence of an appropriate teacher education infrastructure” (Akbari 2008, p. 644).

Recognizing the legitimacy of practitioner knowledge (i.e., the teacher's capacity to transform content into accessible and learnable forms), teacher-learners' implicit personal theories, and the role of prior (experiential) knowledge, calls for the kind of teacher education pedagogy/methodology that emphasizes exploration and experimentation, risk taking and cooperation, balancing input and reflection, using what trainees bring and know, and increasing their autonomy (Freeman and Cornwell 1993, pp. xiii–xiv). Such methodology of teacher learning will enable teachers to make sense of the disciplinary knowledge they are exposed to in their SLTE programs and to reorganize their experiential knowledge which, in turn, helps them understand their classroom practices. For practitioner knowledge to become part of the knowledge base of teacher education, it must be made public and »represented in such a way that it is accessible to others and open for inspection, verification, and modification« (Johnson 2009, p. 23). All this calls for the reflective teaching methodology which resists the assumption that people will learn to teach just by being told what to do or how to do it. Instead, it is based on the educational philosophy of constructivism which claims that knowledge is actively constructed and not passively received.

It seems, then, that a broadly reflective model of learning teaching provides the most helpful and appropriate general framework for teacher education design. Although the reflective model might now be the dominant paradigm of teacher education, there are also many pedagogical and institutional barriers to devising and implementing "reflective practice" in pre-service training (Wallace 1999, p. 184). This raises many questions about the scope, impact, and realities of pre-service teacher education.

## **The Practicum: The Interplay of Practice and Theory**

An important assumption of the reflective model is the interplay of practice and theory—a reflective cycle where classroom practice "will inform personal theories, and theories and Theory will inform classroom practice" (Malderez and Bodoczky 1999, p. 14). In this view of initial teacher education, "where the central link is classroom practice, the carefully designed practicum has a vital part to play and can no longer be viewed as a luxury add-on" (ibid.). However, the fact that trainees get on average only six weeks of teaching practice during their entire pre-service education, makes the scope of pre-service teacher education disappointingly narrow. Six weeks (or even less) of teaching practice, usually completely separate in time and space, cannot possibly prepare student-teachers for life in the classroom or help them acquire their 'practitioner knowledge'. For one thing, "the trainee teacher has to become a practitioner, and only then they can become reflective practitioners" (Wallace 1999, p. 185). The reflective model assumes that developing expertise in teaching entails a constantly evolving process of growth and change, and that professional learning will take place throughout a career. It is obvious, then, that a teacher's expertise will be mostly developed on the job; the pre-service education course can only lay foundations for the trainee's motivation and ability for life-long learning.



From what has been said, *it follows* that the aim of an initial professional training program is, as Wallace (1999) puts it, at least two-fold: (a) to bring the trainee to an acceptable level of professional competence; (b) to equip the trainee with the motivation and the means to continue to develop in professional expertise through reflective practice. An important role of the pre-service teacher education program is, then, to provide learner-teachers with opportunities to develop reasoning and reflective skills, tools and processes for continuing their own learning of teaching throughout their professional lives (Malderez and Bodoczky 1999, p. 13). Therefore, Wallace (1999) makes a strong case for explicit demonstration of reflective techniques. A training framework as a bridge to reflective practice typically contains activities such as the teaching practicum, teaching practice portfolios, supervision and the supervisory dialogue, reflective demonstration (follow me!), micro-teaching, loop input (hall of mirrors), journal and diary keeping, peer observation, action research, study groups, self-development activities, and others. What these instructional practices have in common is that they see teacher learning as the theorization of practice (i.e., knowledge construction); in other words, making visible the student–teacher’s beliefs about teaching and the nature of practitioner knowledge, and thus providing the means by which such knowledge can be elaborated, understood, reviewed, and reorganized (Burns and Richards 2009).

Closely related to “reflective practice” are teacher-learners’ prior knowledge about and their tacit conceptions of teaching through which they filter input from educational courses. The contemporary constructivist position “that teacher learning occurs through interactions between prior knowledge on the one hand and new input and experience on the other” (Borg 2009, p. 164), carries significant implications for pre-service teacher education: trainees must first recognize their existing knowledge and beliefs about teaching in order to transform and reorganize them. In other words, the role of teacher education then becomes one of reshaping existing ideas rather than simply introducing new raw material (Upadhyay 2014). Or, as Borg (2009, p. 164) puts it, “ignoring preservice teachers’ prior cognitions is likely to hinder their ability to internalize new material.” Even though we are dealing here with “the unobservable dimensions of teaching—teachers’ mental lives”, i.e., what teachers think, know, and believe (Borg 2009, p. 163), it is still possible to design a methodology that will help them “fish out” their invisible and implicit beliefs.

By providing an insight into the reflective nature of methodological design of the current pre-service teacher education program at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, we wanted to emphasize considerable challenges related to online teacher education. Because of the legacy of knowledge-transmission, which is very pervasive and is embedded in most institutions that prepare teachers, implementing a reflective model of learning teaching in pre-service teacher education is very difficult even in normal circumstances, and all the more so when it comes to online teacher education. As pointed out initially, theory/practice connections can be strengthened via practical, experiential and reflective components of university teacher education programs, and primarily via the practicum. With this, we move on to the research part to show what were the challenges related to the e-practicum.



## Study Aims and Research Questions

This study explores responses to two surveys carried out into the needs and experiences of pre-service teachers trying to do their practicum during the Covid-19 pandemic. The responses to an online survey are further supplemented by the relevant content from the teacher-trainees' Teaching Practicum Portfolio: a survey and a reflective essay relating to their Teaching Practicum. Given the "reflective methodology"-based design of the pre-service teacher education program and the centrality of the practicum, we were interested in finding out about the challenges related to "e-practicum" and the status of the traditional ways of teaching compared to the currently observed online practices. The research questions were therefore:

1. What are the challenges related to the "e-practicum"?
2. Did the shift of the education process into virtual environment spell a return to more traditional ways of teaching?

## Methodology

For the purposes of the present investigation, three research tools were employed to collect information on the teacher-trainees' first-hand experience at their teaching practicum (henceforth referred to as TP): an online survey, a survey as part of TP portfolio and a reflective essay. The respondents were all future English teachers, students of the MA teacher-training program at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

The online survey at the end of the academic year was targeted at the specifics of the online learning and teaching experience, explicitly reeling the respondents' attention towards ranking the challenges of their online TP. It was voluntary and anonymous, designed with the open access online survey tool called I ka (available at <https://www.ika.si/d/sl/spletne-ankete>). The research only targeted those first- and second-year teacher-trainees who conducted their TP online, therefore the number of respondents was reduced from the potential maximum number of 64 (the number of all enrolled students) to 22.

The survey the teacher-trainees need to complete at the end of the TP is conducted manually and included in their portfolio, which is submitted as the final course examination requirement. It includes 18 questions, of which 13 are multiple choice and 5 are open-ended. They are targeted at sharing general impressions as well as personal experience. The questions have been designed by the authors of the present chapter, based on the aspects of TP which have in the past been identified as the most prominent. The teacher-trainees are generally encouraged to focus on advantages and disadvantages of the system in place and provide suggestions for improvement. For the purposes of the present research, only responses to two open-ended questions were used in the analysis (for details see Section "[Results and Analysis of the Survey After the TP](#)").

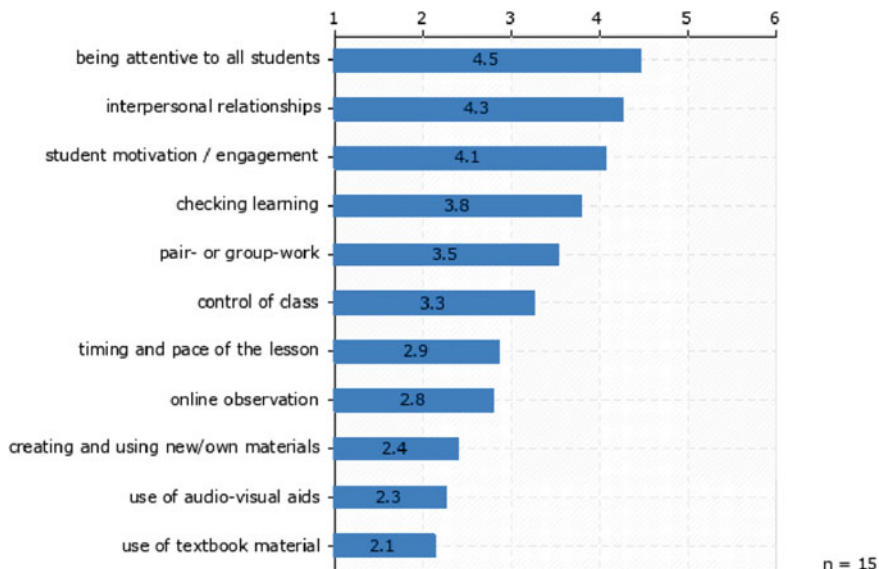
The third tool, the reflective essay, is also included in the teacher-trainees' portfolio and submitted as part of the final course examination requirement. Its design is entirely unrestricted as it seeks to reveal the more personal and, hopefully, the more dominant aspects of the teacher-trainees' teaching experience. This is achieved through the open-ended nature of the task, where no restrictions or narrowed-down expectations are imposed upon the respondents. On the contrary, the teacher-trainees are expected and encouraged to write about anything that relates to their TP, allowing them the freedom to express their grievances as well as praise. Therefore, the respondents' reflective process triggered with this research tool inevitably involved a level of re-living particular episodes and thus—in some cases at least—resulted in successfully dissolving certain issues as well as stretched the teacher-trainees' awareness about the importance and social relevance of the teaching profession. Due to the unrestricted nature of the task, the responses in the essays are extremely varied, therefore the thematic coding approach is used in the analysis to group the responses into manageable and sensibly selected categories.

## **Results and Discussion**

The research results collected in the two surveys and supplemented by those extracted from the reflective essays are represented and discussed separately in the three subsections that follow. The online survey results are presented in the form of graphs, generated by the online tool used. The portfolio survey results for the two open-ended questions are represented descriptively, in a narrative, referring to specific mentions and their frequency. The reason for the narrative and descriptive choice of presentation of results is the open nature of the two questions selected for analysis, which generated a colorful palette of different responses. The data from reflective essays is represented in the form of three categories, the choice of which was motivated by the principles of thematic coding, applied by the authors in the process of data analysis. The ensuing discussion offers a collective interpretation of the results within the context of the recent Covid19-related circumstances, heavily impacting traditional teaching practices. In the conclusion, the data from all three sources is collated and interpreted within the context of the study of online TP, and their effectiveness within the scope of proposed aims is examined.

### ***Results and Analysis of the Online Survey***

The online survey was conducted in June 2021, after the pedagogical process at the faculty had ended. It was targeted at the group of teacher-trainees who had completed their TP online. The number of responses was 15 out of the expected 22, accounting for 68% of expected respondents who had completed their TP online. The survey consisted of 1 question: *What were some of the challenges that you encountered while*

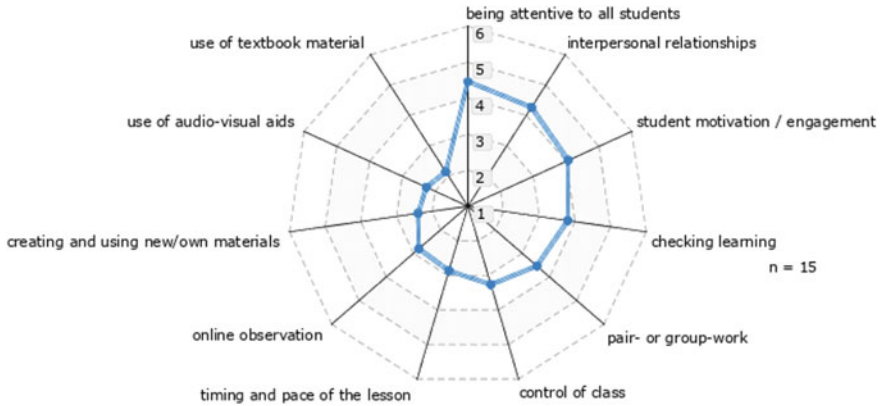


**Fig. 18.1** The challenges encountered during TP

*doing the teacher practicum online?* with 11 categories the respondents had to assess on the scale from 1 to 6. The choice of categories was motivated by the reflective methodology (cf. Section 1.2 for details) which presupposes the proposed aspects of classroom instruction, such as *being attentive to all students*, *checking learning*, *timing*, and *pace of the lesson*, to mention a few (see Graph 1 for a comprehensive list of categories). The 1–6 Likert scale was used for ranking the categories, offering options ranging from *extremely satisfied* to *extremely dissatisfied*. The 1–6 scale was specifically chosen because it forces the respondents into making a choice, thus rendering the data collected more reliable. The results featuring average values are represented in Fig. 18.1.

The results somewhat unambiguously lead to the conclusion that the pre-service teacher-trainees acting as respondents in the present survey were not highly concerned with the *use of textbook material*, *using aids* or *creating and using other (audio-visual) materials*, with these categories tailing the list. The middle values fell on the *online observations*, *timing and pace of the lesson*, *control of class*, and *pair or group work*. The categories heading the list were those strongly related to communicative activities, such as *checking student’s engagement and learning*, *interpersonal relationships*, featuring *attentiveness to all students* at the top of the list.

The visible indent on the academically motivated categories relating to the actual use of classroom materials (textbooks, audio-visual, and creating new/own) versus the round-shape arch on the value of the more sociologically motivated categories of *interpersonal relationships*, *motivation*, *attentiveness to students*, and *pair- or group-work* can be observed in the radar graph (see Fig. 18.2). This further strengthens the



**Fig. 18.2** The challenges encountered during TP—radar graph presentation

respondents' position of prioritizing the social aspects contributing to successful classroom interaction over those relating to classroom instruction tools and techniques. The reason for this might be assigned to the fact that the teacher-trainees are expected to use published classroom materials rather than create their own, and therefore did not perceive these categories as challenging. In light of the Covid-19-related online switch, perceived as more challenging were the categories connected to the sociological aspects mentioned earlier.

A closer look at the survey results (cf. Table 18.3 Summary of the TP online survey in Appendix 1) shows that *attentiveness to students* and *checking learning and motivation/engagement* received zero votes on the value of 1 (corresponding to *not at all challenging*), while receiving 4 (27%) and 5 votes (33%), respectively, on the value of 5 (being perceived as *very challenging*). However, neither of the highest-ranking categories—*attentiveness to students* and *interpersonal relationships*—scored the highest in the maximum value (6), having received fewer votes (4 and 3, respectively), which might attest to the fact that these aspects of online teaching, while challenging, were not perceived as extremely challenging or corresponding to something resembling “beyond manageable” after all. The most votes (6, accounting for 40% of respondents) were located on the value of 5 for the category of *interpersonal relationships*, and the same share (6 votes, accounting for 40%) fell on the lowest value (1) in the *use of textbooks*, which complies with the general interpretation of the survey results, placing the former high up (second) on the list of concerns and the latter to the least frequent position. Interestingly, in the category of *student motivation/engagement* the same percentage (40%) fell on the value of 4, appropriately relativizing its status of ranking the third on the list of the most challenging aspects of online TP, as the teacher-trainees clearly did not perceive it as extremely challenging, but rather ranked it as slightly above average.

## ***Results and Analysis of the Survey After the TP***

The survey conducted immediately after the TP consists of 18 questions, focusing on several areas, such as the level of contentment with the TP, rapport with the students, general satisfaction with the teaching experience, rapport with the mentor, and similar. Thirteen questions are multiple-choice type, while five are open-ended (numbers 8, 12, 16–18; the specifics of the survey are available on request;). As the present investigation targets the teacher-trainees' issues with the TP experience, specifically relating to the current pandemic circumstances, we are focusing on the selected two of the open-ended questions:

- Number 8: *Did you experience any difficulties at your TP?*
- Number 17: *Did you encounter anything at your TP that you were not prepared for at all?*

Due to the current circumstances, not all teacher-trainees were able to complete their TP, therefore the number of collected responses is reduced to 22 (accounting for just under 49% out of the expected maximum number of 45 enrolled), which classifies as another consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, directly affecting the educational process and the teaching profession/practices on the whole.

Interestingly, 50% (11 out of 22) of respondents gave a negative reply to question number 8, expressing that they had not encountered any issues at all during their TP, thus displaying a positive attitude towards the online switch. The rest of the responses revolved around the obvious issues of having had to switch to online or distance teaching (all 11 of them), specifically emphasizing that it required considerable adaptations on the part of the teachers. Difficulties listed were interrupted sessions due to internet connection issues, bad sound quality, time constraints, pushing the TP towards micro-teaching in place of individual teaching, issues in lesson planning, often spelling out the obvious matter of never having met the class in a physical environment or highlighting the devastating effect of online teaching on student motivation.

In answer to question number 17, a little over 27% (6 out of 22) of respondents expressed they had not experienced any issues. The rest (16, close to 73%) mostly focused on the issues related to the digital environment they were faced with, such as the paradigm shift in teaching activities, managing all the documentation digitally, getting lost in numerous folders, coping with the unavoidable loss of control over students' presence (who would leave the online session without notice), and effectiveness of classroom assignments (wondering whether they had completed them or not), as well as getting used to teaching in complete silence, with students' microphones muted and, for most of the time, cameras switched off.

Some issues raised in responses were not related to the digital switch, such as the unexpected extra workload of the teacher-trainees, corresponding to invigilating make-up exams at the end of the year, conducting the duties of the "class teacher", attending crisis meetings, managing the weight of paperwork, class preparations

and reflective writing, managing the knowledge gap for topics not covered by the teacher-trainee, and the like.

Despite the deliberate formulation of the two questions selected, which was aimed at pushing the teacher-trainees towards examining their TP experience from a critical perspective, the respondents' reflective process allowed for a balanced view of their experience. While having noted the obvious and expected issues resulting in inescapable difficulties in implementing the TP online, the respondents acknowledged the inevitability of the situation they were faced with and displayed a high level of maturity in the way these circumstances were handled. Although the concepts of adaptability and flexibility cannot be over-emphasized in the context of teaching practices, the results of the current investigation highlight the overall appreciation for the more traditional teaching practices involving the ever irreplaceable in-person human interaction and transfer of knowledge, which is further supported by the reflective essays' results and analysis in Section "[Results and Analysis of Reflective Essays](#)".

### ***Results and Analysis of Reflective Essays***

In reference to the analyzed content of the teacher-trainees' reflective essays, there were quite a few aspects of their COVID-19-lockdown-related teaching experience that were addressed, displaying considerable overlap with issues brought up in the surveys. Due to the latter, and in order to classify the issues mentioned in the essay narratives, the principles of thematic coding have been applied. As a result, the following categories are proposed (see Table 18.4), grouping the responses into positive and/or negative aspects of the three main thematic clusters of *teaching*, *students*, and *technology*. The first category (teaching) targets the process of class instruction, involving the use and management of teaching tools, time management, as well as the more positive aspects of it, such as the value of teaching as contribution to society. The second (students) groups together the references to the responses from the student audience, such as classroom discipline, control of class, building rapport. The third (technology) highlights the most prominent concerns primarily related to fear of technology failure and other effects of dependence on technology.

A few additional aspects of the results' analysis were noted in connection to the frequency of occurrence of the above-listed categories. The most frequently mentioned (occurring 18 times in 22 essays, accounting for almost 82% of the respondents) was *the value of teaching as contribution to society*. Many were assured in their choice of study and future profession and were experiencing positive reinforcement of their decision. Others realized just how difficult the job of a teacher actually is and what an asset teachers represent in any society. Their reflective writing was often accompanied by expression of pride in their career choice.

The second most frequently occurring aspect in the reflective essays (mentioned 15 times, thus accounting for a little over 68% of the respondents) was the realization about *the value of the teaching experience*. In most cases, it seemed to have been the

result of the effort it required and the level of response from the class the teacher-trainees received as a result of their time and energy investment.

Unsurprisingly, among the top three, we find in third place (mentioned 14 times and accounting for over 63% of the respondents) the effect of having to *switch the TP online* and dealing with the subsequent adaptations to teaching practices. The latter was not as relatable as they usually are to the teacher-trainees' own experiences of learning, subject to the reflective model, but had to be invented or at least newly learnt.

The next (mentioned 8 times and accounting for a little over 36% of the respondents) was the significance of the *transfer of knowledge from mentor to trainee*. It proved to be of utmost importance to have someone to rely on for professional advice, which is something only first-hand experience with teaching can provide and cannot be compensated for by any amount of higher education theoretical instruction.

A number of other mentions were distributed across the 4 *technology-related* categories, amounting to a total of 14 mentions, with *worry of internet connection failure* and *adapting to various online environments* topping the list (at 5 and 4 mentions, respectively) and only one mention of *Zoom fatigue*, placing it at the bottom of the list.

Many single mentions were also in reference to the beneficial nature of the online teaching experience and TP in general, as an integral part of teacher-training, in particular as regards building the trainee's confidence and realizing the size of investment required to develop the skills of a successful teacher. A substantial share of reflection fell on the importance of mastering computer skills, with suggestions of implementing the e-literacy training into the university level teacher-training curriculum. The amalgamation of all the skills any teacher needs to develop and master inspired awe and admiration in many trainees. In addition to computer skills, there were also mentions of classroom management, building rapport, motivating and engaging the students, mentoring, maintaining interest, earning respect, handling emotional response, giving feedback and constructive criticism, all the while displaying adaptability to unpredictable situations and handling the entire workload.

## Discussion and Implications for the Context

In reference to our first question What are the challenges, related to online teacher training and e-practicum?, we were able to compose a lengthy list of issues which were raised by the respondents in the surveys or addressed in their reflective essays. The research expectations revolving around the stress related to the online switch being the prominent issue were met to a certain extent. They were reflected in the number of categories the respondents relayed in the two surveys and the essay. However, these stress-related issues did not top the list in regard to their frequency of occurrence, as might have been assumed prior to this investigation. Quite the contrary, in fact. They were preceded by the teacher-trainees' realization of the tremendous importance and significant social standing of the teaching profession. The survey

results imply that, although the online switch had presented them with many training- and teaching-related challenges, the teacher-trainees were more concerned with finding solutions for successfully coping with the circumstances rather than resorting to criticism on the level of merely voicing their objections. In the process of meeting these unfamiliar challenges, they displayed a high level of adaptability and flexibility.

The second research question *Did the shift of the education process into virtual environment spell a return to more traditional ways of teaching?* was in part answered by the responses to the first question, where the respondents expressed their pride in the teaching profession. The remaining share of the responses highlighted the issues related to handling the various digital environments and those related to maintaining a clear educational focus, while having to switch between delivering content and using technology. The respondents also mentioned a number of concerns about the increase in the teachers' workload and (in-)adequate e-literacy, the strain of having to adapt the teaching materials to online implementation virtually overnight, as well as the weighty administrative work that was expected of them. The results on the second research question lead towards an affirmative answer in reference to spelling a return to more traditional ways of teaching, as the weight of the survey results fell on the negative aspects of the switch to the digital environment. The implications for the educators would be to evaluate the limitations of the online against the physical classroom instruction and adjust it in a manner appropriate to the current circumstances. Since among their main concerns were those relating directly to students (lack of social contact, establishing rapport, classroom management, and similar), adjustments to education processes should primarily be reflected in meeting the students' needs. And, at this point, the latter seem to be better met in physical classroom instruction mode.

It is obvious and it was inevitable that a shift into the virtual educational environment would place a considerable strain on the teachers in having to adapt their activities, adjust to altered teaching environment, often resulting in loosening control over the class in reference to monitoring their assignments and maintaining class discipline, on top of having to manage additional administrative workload. But the adaptations on the part of the students were as inevitable and strenuous as the young generations had to quickly develop stronger self-reflective and self-monitoring mechanisms, albeit in consequence granting them a higher level of autonomy in their learning process. All of a sudden, they had to cope with even more home assignments, with expectations from parents and teachers alike that they would be able to accomplish the goal of reaching high levels of autonomous learning by the sheer power of internal motivation. They were even expected to study new materials on their own, which was practically impossible as there had been no prior research into the area of understanding learners' needs in online teaching and learning environments and planning the curricula accordingly (cf. the study by Šebalj and Komljanec 2020, pp. 30–31). According to the research findings (ibid.), not all teachers were keen on or able to make the instant online switch, so they had to resort to various models of student–teacher interaction (via online chatrooms, email, and suchlike), chose to test the students only on content covered in the physical classroom, thus reducing the students' workload by half, while there were some teachers who did not



make the switch at all and thus left the students without any instruction or interaction for the duration of the spring 2020 lockdown (*ibid.*, pp. 42–45).

In these conditions, the teacher-trainees more often than not turned out to be a real asset to those more experienced teachers who, to a certain extent, struggled with the online switch of the educational classroom activities. It was one of the rare benefits of the digital classrooms where the trainee-mentor relationship enjoyed the opportunity of passing knowledge and experience in both directions, resulting in reducing the stress levels for both parties involved: the teaching professionals had the opportunity to share their methodological experience and insights, while the teacher-trainees came to rescue with composing and implementing online materials as well as assisted with the use of digital tools and resources. The concept of the inter-generational engagement and support could thus come full circle, with future prospects of even tighter mutual endorsements between skilled professionals and their beginner counterparts.

## Conclusion

The “reflective methodology”-based design of the pre-service teacher education was heavily affected by the sudden online switch of the entire university program, thus making it difficult to follow its basic principles of instruction through hands-on activities, class discussions, pair work, brainstorming sessions, and the like, as pointed out in the introduction. But even with copious teacher-trainees’ responses leaning towards a more critical view of the online teaching experience, there remains the other half of the respondents who did not convey any issues related to their online TP. While it would warrant a closer look at the reasons behind their seemingly positive attitudes, we might at this point observe that, with the current generation of teacher-trainees being predominantly digital natives, any traditional instructional models will inevitably be subject to modification and adaptation. The “reflective methodology”-based approach, however, seems to fit into any teacher-training model simply due to its reach into the depths of the trainee’s professional development. And for that reason, it remains the appropriate option, regardless of the mode of instruction.

## Appendix 1: Summary of Survey Results

See Tables [18.3](#) and [18.4](#).

**Table 18.3** Summary of the TP online survey

Q1	Odgovori										Skupaj	Veľjavni	Št. enot	Povprečje	Std. Odklon	
	1	2	3	4	5	6										
	Podvyprašanja															
Q1a	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	4 (27%)	2 (13%)	3 (20%)	2 (13%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	3.5	1.6				
Q1b	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	3 (20%)	6 (40%)	4 (27%)	1 (7%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	4.1	1.0				
Q1c	4 (27%)	4 (27%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)	4 (27%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	2.8	1.6				
Q1d	3 (20%)	5 (33%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)	4 (27%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	2.9	1.6				
Q1e	5 (33%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	2.3	1.4				
Q1f	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	4 (27%)	1 (7%)	5 (33%)	4 (27%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	4.5	1.4				
Q1g	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	3 (20%)	1 (7%)	6 (40%)	3 (20%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	4.3	1.5				
Q1h	5 (33%)	4 (27%)	3 (20%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	2.4	1.4				
Q1i	0 (0%)	5 (33%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	3.8	1.6				
Q1j	1 (7%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	4 (27%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	15 (100%)	15	15	15	3.3	1.6				

(continued)

**Table 18.3** (continued)

Q1	Podvprašanja	Odgovori						Veljavni	Št. enot	Povprečje	Std. Odklon
		1	2	3	4	5	6				
Q1k	use of textbook material	6 (40%)	4 (27%)	3 (20%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)	15	2.1	1.2

**Table 18.4** Reflective essay analysis: categorization of results

Teaching	<p>Negative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the strain of writing numerous lesson preparations</li> <li>difficulty in sticking to lesson plans due to online time management</li> <li>teaching modifications related to switching to online mode</li> <li>technology related issues and the importance of e-literacy</li> <li>difficulty in shifting focus during class between technology and content of classroom instruction</li> </ul> <p>Positive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the value of teaching as contribution to society</li> <li>the value of the teaching experience</li> <li>successful trainee/mentor cooperation &amp; transfer of knowledge</li> <li>time saved on not commuting</li> <li>reduction in teaching requirements</li> </ul>
Students	<p>Negative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lack of social contact reflected in students' attitudes</li> <li>difficulty establishing rapport and providing support</li> <li>discipline, classroom management, student engagement</li> <li>coping with grades and students' responses to them</li> <li>handling the knowledge gap (content already covered)</li> </ul>
Technology	<p>Negative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>worry of internet connection failure</li> <li>adapting to various online environments (Teams, Zoom, etc.)</li> <li>silent classrooms/muted microphones</li> <li>Zoom fatigue</li> </ul>

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# Chapter 19

## Perspectives on the Shift to Online Learning in Private English Language Centers in Greece



Georgios Vlassios Kormpas

**Abstract** More technological integration has been implemented in English language classrooms in recent years (Mercado, 2017). This has been the case in the teaching of the English language in private language centers in Greece. Teachers of English in Greece believe that technology is a tool and can be used in English language teaching (Spiris, 2014) along with others. This chapter examines the technological preparedness of teachers of English in private language centers in Greece during the COVID-19 pandemic and how their teaching was affected. In this mixed methods study, which was conducted through convenience sampling, 100 teachers of English and 50 English Language Center owners responded to two surveys and participated in follow up semi-structured interviews where their opinions on various aspects of technology integration prior and during the pandemic were sought. The findings indicate that teachers and English Language Center owners reported overwhelmingly positive views on the integration of technology into their classrooms but noted certain limitations when it comes to being educated in online education and implementing online course design. This chapter concludes that teachers were able to teach online successfully after they had taken some professional development courses on their own or from English language teacher associations.

### Historical Overview

#### *Greek and English as a Lingua Franca*

Greek, along with Chinese and Hebrew are the sole 3 languages that have been spoken for more than 3000 years (Beaton 2021). Greek was the lingua franca in ancient times and English is the lingua franca nowadays in several sectors such as business, schools, academia, and tourism (Smit, 2003). Since Greece is a touristic country, and the hospitality sector relies heavily on the English language, as it is the medium of

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communication of the locals with most tourists, Greeks have been keen on learning English. Furthermore, Dellatola and Daradoumis (2016) mention that Greeks are learning more English than before, because they want to be able to work abroad due to the current financial crisis. Another very important reason that English is being taught extensively is that Greek students have the highest percentage in Europe (92%) of students who learn one foreign language at school (Vasilokonstantakis 2019). The Greek educational system is ranked quite low in Europe, the last to be precise, as found by the results of SurveyLang tests which show that the majority of students are at the Independent User level (Vasilokonstantakis 2019). Nine out of 10 students achieve this level, not by conventional schooling, but from attending supplementary language classes at English Language Centers (ELCs). For these reasons, English language instruction has been part of mainstream education in Greece.

### *English Language Teachers in Greece*

English Language (EL) teachers that can teach English in Greece are divided into two main categories. EL teachers that can teach in the private sector only, and EL teachers that can teach in the public and private sectors. The latter are graduates from a Greek or equivalent university abroad in English Literature or TESOL. These EL teachers have the option when they graduate to work in the public sector (K-12) or in the ELCs. Many use ELCs to gain experience in teaching until they are able to work for the public sector, as being able to secure employment in the public sector is a complex process with several bureaucratic steps and exams to take. That makes the teachers working at ELCs mainly C2 certificate holders, a few BA and MA holders, and sporadic Ph.D. holders.

The other main category of EL teachers is adult individuals that have taken a language exam of a C2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). These individuals once they have passed the C2 exam and submitted their certificate along with a few other documents (ID, health certificate, and police clearance) and receive their “competence” certificate or “eparkia” in Greek are able to teach in ELCs. This process can take up to a few months. When they receive their eparkia they are ready to teach English to ELCs legally. Up until 2016, these individuals did not have to take any other exams, certifications, or professional development to be able to teach in ELCs.

This eparkia process and hiring process by ELCs was highly challenged by the English Language Literature and TESOL university graduates as they were expressing their concerns that a C2 level certificate is not enough to be able to teach English as a foreign language to students. This argument took many years to be resolved, and it was not until 2016 that the ministry of education mandated that all new C2 certificate holders have to take 30 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits prior to be given the eparkia and be able to work at ELCs. The ECTS would be offered by the Greek University and more specifically the English language and literature departments. This addition brought no change in

the policy of C2 holders being able to teach at the public system, but it has opened opportunities to foreign universities. C2 holders of *eparkia* with more than 3 years of experience now qualify for post graduate degrees in the UK. An example of that is the Masters in TESOL by the University of Staffordshire, a public UK university, that is offered in Greece through Unicert College.

## Research Questions

1. How did private English Language Centers in Greece use technology prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are the perspectives of ELCs and EL teachers about the impact of technology in English language teaching in private English Language Centers in Greece during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How will technology affect the future of English Language Centers in Greece?

## Technology at English Language Centers Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic

As English Language Centers (ELCs) are private businesses, they have always opted for better quality of education, as students and mostly parents would send their children to these centers, as they would not get the best English language education in the public schools (Vasilokonstantakis 2019). As ELCs were looking for best quality, they would always have technological advancements that were not available in the public schools. Among these technological advancements, they would offer interactive white boards (IWBs), computers, laptops, different gadgets and other devices students would get engaged with. In that way, they would have more motivated students who would be more active to learn and engage with English as a foreign language. ELCs are very common in the Greek landscape, they can operate with a license from the Ministry of Education and Labor, and they are considered a business, hence the ELC owners do not necessarily have to be EL teachers to open or operate them. ELCs over the years have offered more educational choices from other languages than English, as well as computer literacy programs and other certificates.

## *Publishing Houses*

Publishing houses have played a fundamental role in the development of technology in ELCs. Primarily international publishers like Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Pearson, and others have been providing educational materials to ELCs since their inception.



Although publishers would primarily provide print-based educational materials, over the years they have provided holistic technological solutions. That can mean that they gave electronic or online support for teaching English such as interactive online books, games, activities, and others. In the last few years, they have also been providing hardware for ELCs. Several publishers upon adoption of certain educational materials would provide for the technological needs of the ELC and students, such as IWBs, laptops, tablets, and others. This has proven to be quite helpful and supportive to ELCs, as they have access to technologies that are very expensive to purchase and maintain. It also reduces the cost further as it comes with sophisticated professional development opportunities for EL teachers, and sometimes students.

### ***Changing Times and Surveys to ELC Owners and English Language Teachers***

Technology may have played a pivotal role in ELCs around Greece for many years, but there was no standard practice when it came to the use of technology, as ELCs were not under any specific framework of minimum technology requirements. An ELC may have had the latest technology and provided ample technological opportunities to its students, another may have had very basic amenities and students would not have the same opportunities. When the pandemic hit Greece in March 2020 a different approach was taken by ELCs. As such, I decided to conduct an empirical study on the use of technology in these changing times.

### **Methodology**

A mixed methods approach (Silverman 2017) was used to conduct this research; two surveys and semi-structured interviews were used to investigate the perspectives of both groups involved (i.e., ELC owners and EL teachers). The ELC owners and EL teachers were selected through convenience sampling whereby the following definition was used: Convenience sampling is a type of sampling where the first available primary data source or those individuals who are conveniently accessible to the researcher will be used for the research without additional requirements (Research Methodology 2018). For both ELC owners and EL teachers the quantitative aspect of the study was a 9-question survey (See Appendices 1 and 2). A ten question semi-structured interview protocol (See Appendices 3 and 4) was the qualitative element of this mixed methods study. 50 participants responded to the ELC owners survey and 10 opted for a follow up interview, from those 6 materialized. 100 participants responded to the EL teachers survey, and 23 opted for a follow up interview, from those 16 EL teachers participated in the semi-structured interviews.

## *ELC Owners' Perspectives*

ELC owners who were for the most part Directors of Study (DOS) of each ELC, direct the centers for all business or curricular matters from hiring staff, to coursebook selection, to methodology, use of technology and others. When they were asked on the survey about technology being used in the center, unanimously all said that they were using technology in the classroom prior to the pandemic. They also supported wholeheartedly the idea that technology helps students learn better. Costley (2014) agrees with the research findings as she mentions that “technology has a positive impact on student learning. Technology causes students to be more engaged” (p. 2).

Technology can be beneficial in mainstream education (Hennessy et al, 2005) for that, ELC owners were asked if they use technology in mainstream, but also supplementary teaching. It was interesting to note that the use technology for both aspects is the same (17%) when it comes to mainstream and supplementary aspects of teaching as sole methods. When responding if they use it for both, mainstream and supplementary the percentage rose to 66%.

Technological equipment in the ELCs has always been more advanced than the Greek public school, as parents have to pay extra tuition for their children to learn English better. When the pandemic occurred, ELC owners were split in half when it comes to acquiring new equipment to support the extra needs. 56% of participants claimed that they have acquired new technological equipment during COVID, and the rest 44% did not. ELC owners unanimously agreed that technology use has risen significantly during the COVID era. In one of the semi-structured interview Lisa, an ELC owner, mentioned that she had to replace all 30 computers at her ELC. This was a huge cost for the business, but it made a difference when students came back to her ELC and they could use the facilities properly.

Professional development was one of the core needs that was essential during the pandemic. As most ELC owners did not have prior experience with online teaching, they were asked to provide their EL teachers with relevant professional development sessions. ELC owners responded that they mostly consulted the internet for professional development for their EL teachers. The second highest response was TESOL Greece, founded in 1988, the official affiliate of TESOL International Association headquartered in Washington DC, USA in Greece. TESOL Greece provided ample opportunities during the pandemic for EL teachers, including a 4-month series, called “Daring the Virus” where they invited 50 professionals to deliver online professional development workshops for their members. TESOL Greece also transformed its annual convention into an online one in 2021, and the same will occur in 2022, as they believe that professional development should be available through electronic means for all teachers. Lower ranked options for finding online professional development were the public sector trainings, that were offered, and the sessions offered by TESOL International Association. This could be the case as these were targeted at teachers working in the public sector, or to a more international audience.

One of the participants, Nickolas, that participated in the semi-structured interviews discussed that he was at a total loss when the government asked ELCs to close

and offer all classes online. Although he has a master's degree in TESOL, he was not familiar with online education. He vividly described how he spent endless hours online to watch videos and sessions in order to be able to educate or assist his EL teachers the next day.

### *EL Teacher's Perspectives*

EL teachers played a pivotal role in the transformation of face to face to online teaching and learning in Greece. They were the key players in this endeavor, and they were the ones that were faced with the most challenges. As EL teachers had no previous experience, the way that they were teaching has been characterized as emergency remote instruction or teaching ERI or ERT and not meaningful online education. Emergency remote teaching is by nature applied when there is an emergency or catastrophe (Hodges et al 2020). Meaningful online education is practiced when both students and teachers know in advance that the mode of education will be online.

On the survey, EL teachers were primarily asked if they had any experience teaching online prior to the pandemic. An astounding 70% of them said that they had never taught online before the pandemic. That would indicate that they were almost totally unprepared to go and teach online to all their students. Given the fact that EL teachers usually have a heavy workload, 6–8 h per day, 5–6 days per week, it is obvious that they had a lot to cope with at the beginning of the pandemic. When the survey was conducted, fall 2021 90% of EL teachers responded that they are still teaching online, despite government regulations that allow face to face classes in ELCs.

More technical questions were asked in the survey, the first of which was the use of electronic platforms before the pandemic. Platforms like Zoom, Webex, MS Teams, BigBlue Button, and others were used by ELCs for online teaching. EL teachers responded that more than 70% had no prior technical knowledge of using such platforms, but most importantly most of the participants of the semi-structured interviews discussed the issues of pedagogy. George, a teacher with more than 20 years' experience said, it was really confusing at the beginning, there were so many unknown factors that he had to take into consideration when planning or implementing his classes. Students would not open their cameras, they would drop from the class, not being able to reconnect due to technical reasons, and a plethora of other reasons that would make it nearly impossible to teach online.

Technology as part of the pedagogical process was also discussed in the survey and in the semi-structured interviews. The question of "Are you using technology more now than before?", the question itself is not astounding but yet the results were interesting. 60% responded that they used technology less in the past, 33% the same and 7% more in the past than now. Maria, one of the participants in the semi-structured interviews mentioned that the pandemic did change the way she uses technology but only on the medium of delivery. She used technology moderately in

her teaching before and the sole difference is that she uses an eLearning platform to get to her students. So in essence, she has not significantly changed the amount of technology she used in her class now due to the pandemic.

Another technological question was about the use of technology in core or supplementary learning. EL teachers had almost the same perceptions as the ELC owners in this, technology was used more for supplementary teaching, rather than core. This also signifies the importance of technology as they see it being used for students. Technology plays an important role but not the main one in the language learning process. Nadia, a teacher with more than 10 years' experience mentioned that she always used technology in the class for extra activities, she would not use it for the main activities or learning objectives of a lesson as students would get bored of using computers all the time. She also mentioned that the ELC she was working at did not have up-to-date equipment so she would struggle every time she needed to use technology for her classes.

Lastly, EL teachers were asked what the primary resource of information was when it came to online teaching. Their responses were similar to the ELC owners, the majority of whom responded that they used the internet like the ELC owners mentioned. They followed the same pattern and mentioned TESOL Greece, public sector trainings and lastly TESOL International. Niki, one of the participants in the semi-structured interviews mentioned that she struggled a lot to find trainings for Zoom during the first days of teaching. It was very difficult for her to get used to the idea of teaching online. She also mentioned that students had great difficulty focusing and they thought that this was a game, as some of them were logging in from their phones.

### ***Technology at English Language Centers During the COVID-19 Pandemic***

When the pandemic hit, ELCs were mandated to close, and it was not possible for them to provide their services to their students. The majority of ELCs did not have the infrastructure to support online teaching, so they swiftly looked online for solutions. They managed to get e-learning platforms, but they were still lacking in training. Online solutions, TESOL Greece and other groups on Facebook were able to help and support them. EL teachers showed a lot of resilience and were able to cope with significant challenges at the beginning.

Challenges came from different directions. Primarily, the basic functions of online teaching were not provided to either EL teachers or students. Internet and devices to connect from were not always available. There were common times of teaching, and it was not possible for families with more than one child to have multiple devices that could connect online at the same time. Adding to the fact that parents were working from home, this made the burden on the internet connection even worse.

Through continuous support and resilience, EL teachers were able to cope with the difficulties and go over and beyond their role as teachers. They took on new roles in addition to that of teacher. They also functioned as advisors, tech support personnel, and counselors among many others.

### ***The Future of Technology in ELCs***

Technology has always been a part of English Language teaching in Greece. From electronic workbooks to whole digital books, ELC owners, EL teachers, and students are familiar with them. Many times, technological advancements are not used while they are available, but where a real need occurs, such as a pandemic, there is a paradigm shift. The pandemic showed that when forced to use technology all parties involved find a way to participate. It may take time to get used to the practice, but eventually they catch up. This is the case of the ELC owners and EL teachers, most of whom did not have any previous experience with online teaching, but they succeeded in getting it, one way or another.

The future of technology is not paved in a certain way. There has been an influx of new technologies and many interactive applications that can motivate students more on learning English. Further developments, like virtual reality, augmented reality, and the Metaverse, also present wide scope for the use of these technologies in the future. Although not within the scope of this chapter, further research needs to be conducted on these potential technologies and their relationship to teaching English in the future.

### **Conclusion**

It is quite obvious that technology has been long used in private English language centers in Greece prior to the pandemic funded by the center itself, or supported by publishers. Although centers are not obligated to have a specific minimum of technology ELCs have used technology for the improvement of the English language services they offered students. With the hit of the pandemic ELC owners did not see a huge influx of technology in their centers, except the equipment used by their teachers. ELC owners sought online for professional development opportunities and did not rely so much on public sessions, rather private ones like TESOL Greece. Teachers on the other hand, value technology more in their lessons, and had an influx of technology professional development for platforms, online pedagogy, and technology use overall. All in all, there was a change in the technology use in ELCs. Further studies should be carried out to see how the large scale use of technology improved the language skills of ELC students.

## **Appendix 1: School Owners Survey**

1. Do you use technology in your language school? Yes/No
2. Do you think technology helps your students learn better? Yes/No
3. Do you use technology in your language school for ... (Mainstream teaching, Supplementary teaching, both)
4. What credentials do your teachers have? (C2 Certificate, CELTA, DELTA, BA, MA, Ph.D.)
5. Have you acquired new technological equipment during the COVID era? Yes/No
6. Do you use technology more during the COVID era? Yes/No
7. Any comments about technology before and during the COVID era? (Comment Box)
8. In case you are interested in a follow up interview please put your email here (Comment Box)
9. Where did you find professional development support for online teaching during the pandemic? (TESOL Greece, TESOL International, Public Sector Trainings, Internet, Other)

## **Appendix 2: English Language Teachers Survey**

1. Do you teach online currently? Yes/No
2. Did you teach online prior to the pandemic Yes/No
3. Did you use technology in your teaching before the pandemic ... Less/The Same/More
4. Did you use technology before the pandemic for ... Core learning/Supplementary learning/Both
5. Did you know how to use online learning platforms (Zoom, Webex MS Teams) before the pandemic? Yes/No
6. Do you think technology adds value to the learning of students? Yes/No
7. Where did you find professional development support for online teaching during the pandemic? (TESOL Greece, TESOL International, Public Sector Trainings, Internet, Other)
8. Any comments about technology before and during the COVID era? (Comment Box)
9. In case you are interested in a follow up interview please put your email here (Comment Box)

### Appendix 3: School Owners Interviews

The interviews were conducted following the procedure outlined below:

- Participants were invited in a Zoom Room
- The meeting was recorded with their consent
- They could answer as many questions as they wanted
- The researcher took copious notes and highlighted quotes.

The following questions were asked:

1. Do you use technology in your language school? Yes/No and why
2. Do you think technology helps your students learn better? Yes/No and why
3. Do you use technology in your language school for ... (Mainstream teaching, Supplementary teaching, both why?
4. Have you acquired new technological equipment during the COVID era? Yes/No and why
5. Do you use technology more during the COVID era? Yes/No and why
6. Any comments about technology before and during the COVID era? (Comment Box)
7. Where did you find professional development support for online teaching during the pandemic? (TESOL Greece, TESOL International, Public Sector Trainings, Internet, Other) and why.

### Appendix 4: EL Teachers

The interviews were conducted following the procedure outlined below:

- Participants were invited in a Zoom Room
- The meeting was recorded
- They could answer as many questions as they wanted
- The researcher took copious notes and highlighted quotes.

The following questions were asked:

1. Do you teach online currently? Yes/No
2. Did you teach online prior to the pandemic Yes/No and why
3. Did you use technology in your teaching before the pandemic ... Less/The Same/More
4. Did you use technology before the pandemic for ... Core learning/Supplementary learning/Both
5. Did you know how to use online learning platforms (Zoom, Webex MS Teams) before the pandemic? Yes/No
6. Do you think technology adds value to the learning of students? Yes/No and why

7. Where did you find professional development support for online teaching during the pandemic? (TESOL Greece, TESOL International, Public Sector Trainings, Internet, Other)
8. Any comments about technology before and during the COVID era? (Comment Box).

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# Correction to: English Language Teaching



Lee McCallum

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In the original version of the book, the following corrections have been made:

The First and Surnames of corresponding authors are correctly updated in the credit lines as in below:

In Chapter 13, the corresponding author name has been changed from “M. del Mar Suárez” to “Suárez, M.d.M”.

In Chapter 15, the corresponding author name has been changed from “E. R. Muñoz” to “Romero Munoz, E”.

The book and the chapters have been updated with the changes.

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The updated original versions of these chapters can be found at

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