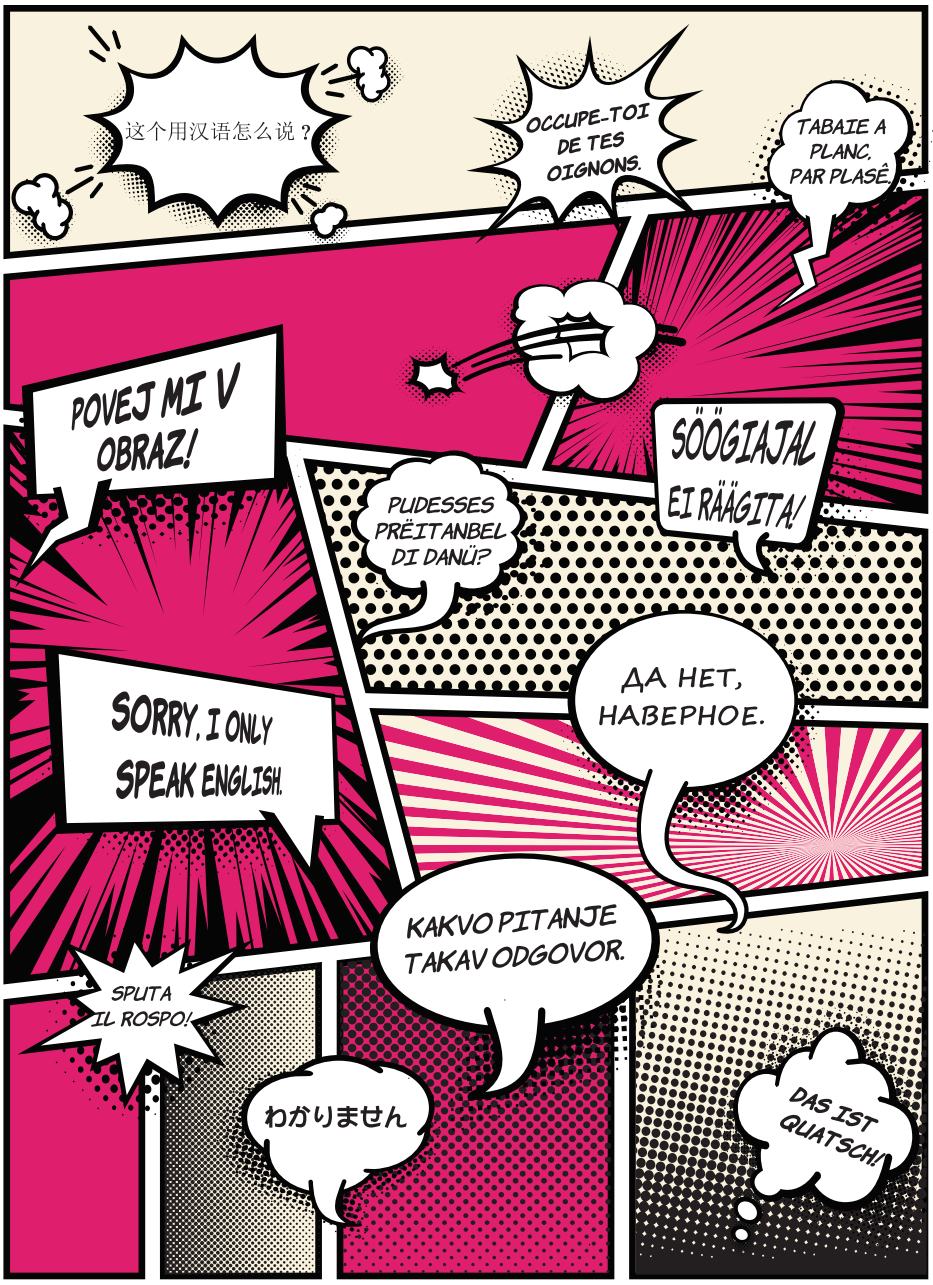
Pathways to Plurilingual Education

Edited by Silva Bratož, Anja Pirih, Alenka Kocbek



Translations of the expressions in the bubbles from the cover

Slovene: *Povej mi v obraz!* (Tell me in my face!)

Croatian: *Kakvo pitanje takav odgovor.* (Ask a silly question and you get a silly answer.)

Italian: *Sputa il rospo!* (Just say it!)

German: *Das ist Quatsch!* (What nonsense!)

English: Sorry, I only speak English.

Estonian: *Söögiajal ei räägita!* (No talking while eating.)

Russian: *Да нет, наверное.* (Yes no, probably.)

Ladin: *Pudesses prëitanbel di danü?* (Can you please repeat?)

Friulian: *Tabaie a planc, par plasê.* (Please speak more slowly.)

French: *Occupe-toi de tes oignons.* (Mind your own business.)

Japanese: わかりません (Wakarimasen: "I don't understand.")

Chinese: 这个用汉语怎么说(How do you say that in Chinese?)

Knjižnica Ludus · 24 · ISSN 2630-3809
Series Editor · Silva Bratož

Pathways to Plurilingual Education

Edited by
Silva Bratož
Anja Pirih
Alenka Kocbek

Pathways to Plurilingual Education

Edited by · Silva Bratož, Anja Pirih, and Alenka Kocbek
Reviewers · Lucija Čok, Darja Mertelj, and Karmen Pižorn
Copy Editor · Susan Cook (papers 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 15)
Cover design · Tina Cotič
Design and layout · Alen Ježovnik

Knjižnica Ludus · 24 · ISSN 2630-3809
Series Editor · Silva Bratož

Published by · University of Primorska Press
Titov trg 4, 6000 Koper
www.hippocampus.si
Editor in Chief · Jonatan Vinkler
Managing Editor · Alen Ježovnik
Koper · 2021

Electronic edition
https://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-7055-36-8.pdf
https://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-7055-49-8/index.html
https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8

Kataložni zapis o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili
v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani
COBISS.SI-ID 86381059
ISBN 978-961-7055-36-8 (PDF)
ISBN 978-961-7055-49-8 (HTML)

Contents

Preface

Silva Bratož
Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Slovenia
silva.bratoz@pef.upr.si

Anja Pirih
Faculty of Education and Faculty of Humanities,
University of Primorska, Slovenia
anja.pirih@fhs.upr.si

Alenka Kocbek
Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Slovenia
alenka.kocbek@pef.upr.si

Over the last two decades, we have witnessed important changes in our perception of the role of languages in our social, economic, cultural and political environment. It has become clear that effective social integration and cohesion can only be reached by overcoming traditional language boundaries and promoting the knowledge of different languages and cultures. A response to the challenges posed by new forms of mobility and migration is the development of plurilingual and intercultural education which implies recognition of and support for the linguistic and cultural diversity of all the learners at all levels of schooling and whose ultimate objective is to build a more humane and inclusive society.

The monograph *Pathways to Plurilingual Education* addresses recent trends, challenges and developments related to plurilingual education and foreign/second language teaching and acquisition. It consists of fifteen chapters which discuss the topic from multiple perspectives, reflecting the complexity and potential of the field and suggesting that the road to an efficient plurilingual and pluricultural environment is all but smooth and straight. The issues addressed by the different authors are therefore varied, from current research in bilingualism, pedagogical implications of plurilingualism and innovative approaches in foreign language teaching to the importance of neighbouring languages and the question of identity in a world of cultural and linguistic diversity.

The volume is divided into six parts. The introductory part presents the chapter Common Beliefs about Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition, in which Silva Bratož looks at some of the most important assumptions

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.7-10

related to second language acquisition and the so called 'bilingual advantage.' She discusses the recent trends in the area of bilingualism and second language acquisition and points to the fact that the results of studies in this field are often still fragmentary and inconclusive.

The second part addresses different factors influencing the learning of languages in multilingual environments and sheds light on linguistic and cultural diversity from different perspectives. Sara Brezigar presents the results of a preliminary study on the challenges faced by Slovene-medium kindergartens and primary schools in the Italian region Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) in their endeavours to curb the trend of deteriorating linguistic skills among pupils by improving teaching methods, adjusting teaching contents, and developing teaching skills and suggests the implementation of a contextual approach to stop the decline of linguistic skills. In the next chapter, Irina Moira Cavaion discusses the complex nature and still disputable definition of contiguous or border languages and, after presenting several documents, recommendations and frameworks aimed at introducing or enhancing the teaching of neighbouring languages in EU border areas at all educational levels, points at the difficulty of providing an exhaustive overview in this field. She also presents some successful cross-border teaching projects involving these languages and underlines the urgency of launching a debate on the status of border languages within national and European linguistic policies. In the next chapter, Ulle Saalik argues that the increasing immigration flows and the resulting expansion of linguistic and cultural variety pose challenges to teachers, educators, and policy makers, as educational laws require that students be prepared for living and operating in linguistically and culturally diverse societies. She presents the results of an ethnographic research carried out in several schools in Europe promoting the use of two or more languages and pursuing the objectives of multilingualism and multiliteracy. The second part closes with Mojca Žefran's discussion on the status and significance of English and the correlation between the perceived importance of English to students' motivation for learning English and the levels of foreign language anxiety.

The third part focuses on developing cross-linguistic competences and deals with the multifaceted aspects of communication across language and cultural barriers. It opens with Alenka Kocbek's chapter in which she discusses the potentialities of using the 'cultureme' paradigm, a scaffolding tool originating in the domain of translation studies, for developing a fully-fledged communicative competence involving verbal, para-verbal, non-verbal and extra-verbal aspects, to be used in multilingual settings. In

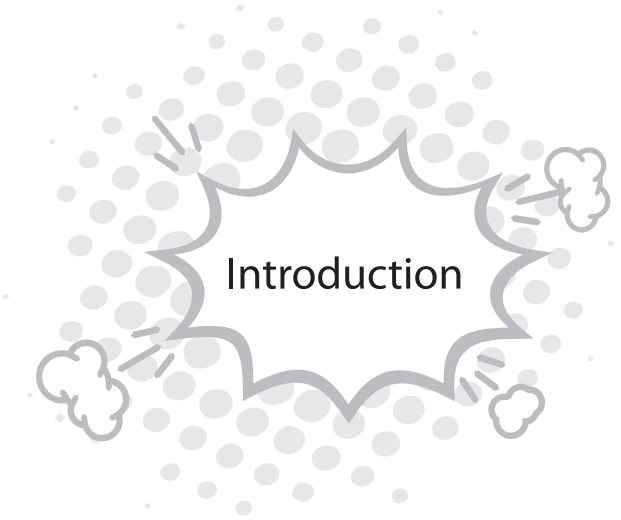
the next chapter, Tina Čok proposes new guidelines and recommendations for foreign language learning and teaching, drawing on the results of an empirical research focused on the discrepancies between conceptual representations of reality and their verbalisations by native speakers of Chinese, Italian and Slovenian. Hans Drumbl and Renata Zanin conclude this part by analysing the process of learning a new language in the light of the speech act theory and by stressing the importance of illocution as the pragmatic foundation of effective cross-linguistic communication.

The fourth part presents different approaches to developing foreign language competences. In the first chapter, Anja Pirih focuses on reading motivation as one of the key factors influencing reading efficiency, and presents the results of a study involving young adolescents in Slovenia, which has shown that this age group has multidimensional EFL reading motivation, with the strongest component being EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL. In the next chapter, Mateja Dagarin Fojkar, Mira Metljak in Tina Rozmanič examine methods and activities applied by teachers for developing literacy in EFL and present the results of their research aimed at examining how English teachers in selected Slovene primary schools develop foreign language literacy skills in grades 3–5. The results of this research are meant to provide guidance in creating foreign language literacy materials and training programmes for teachers. In the closing chapter of this part, Anita Sila presents her model for developing phonological awareness in different second/foreign languages in the preschool period and its impact on the development of literacy skills in the languages concerned in later educational stages. Her model is based on the findings of several studies carried out with (very) young second/foreign language learners, which have proven the benefits of early phonological awareness instruction.

The fifth part discusses the development of cross-cultural awareness. It opens with Eva Seidl's chapter, in which she reports on a research conducted at the Department of Translation Studies at an Austrian University, aimed at investigating university students' perceptions of linguistic and cultural pluralism and their deliberate decisions regarding the use of linguistic resources in different areas of life. The findings of the study show that multilingual higher education in the field of transcultural communication and translation studies would profit from the establishing of inclusive learning environments acknowledging the linguistic and cultural resources of all learners and the implementing of teaching practices which adopt the concept of translanguaging. The second chapter in this part, authored by Matea Butković in Ester Vidović, examines the potential of literature and creative writing in fostering

intercultural dialogue. The authors present a range of classroom activities, which have been carried out at the Faculty of Teacher Education (University of Rijeka) and the Rochester Institute of Technology (Zagreb, Croatia) and have proven useful in encouraging the students to engage in intercultural dialogue inside multicultural classrooms and thus acquire the knowledge and tools enabling them to successfully navigate multicultural environments.

The last part looks at different approaches to foreign language learning. In the first chapter Lynne Masttelotto's argues that children's literature can be seen as a rich source of high-quality language input, and as a powerful pedagogical tool for developing young learners' functional literacy and emotional literacy. She shows how multimodal storytelling practices involving well-known picture books provide rich opportunities for communication and meaning-making activities with young learners through multisensory input that activates their learning on multiple levels. In the second chapter in this part, Melita Lemut Bajec analyses the use of selected course books for team teaching of Biology and English by adopting the CLIL approach in upper-secondary education. Her study focuses on the levels of cognitive demand, authenticity and comprehensiveness implied in and the motivation derived from the use of the selected course books, and shows that the students involved in the research found the teaching materials not challenging enough and expressed the desire for more problem-based teaching materials in order to be able not only to gain knowledge of the subjects involved, but also to develop critical thinking skills.


Introduction

Common Beliefs about Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition

Silva Bratož
Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Slovenia
silva.bratoz@pef.upr.si

Bilingualism and second language acquisition are today popular topics associated with a number of beliefs and assumptions, which are often unconscious and deeply rooted. Most of these are generally positive, but there are also some negative perceptions. In the present chapter, we discuss some of the most important assumptions related to second language acquisition and the so-called 'bilingual advantage.' In addition, we have tried to identify the principal lines of inquiry in the area of bilingualism and second language acquisition today, such as the research into the effects of early bilingualism on memory loss symptoms in elderly adults with Alzheimer's disease or the beneficial effect of bilingualism on the executive control function. The growing body of literature and related debates shows that the investigation into the benefits of bilingualism and second language acquisition is an expanding and exciting area of research.

Keywords: bilingualism, second language acquisition, critical period hypothesis, bilingual advantage

Introduction

The popularity of topics related to bilingualism and multilingualism has given rise to a number of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of language acquisition and language development. Several popular convictions are today widely held to be true both among teachers and the general public. Both academic journals and mainstream media talk of the 'bilingual advantage' according to which bilinguals enjoy an advantage over monolinguals in several areas, for example in situations which require conflict resolution or multitasking (Paap et al. 2014). The main aim of the present paper is to analyse some of the most common beliefs and assumptions about bilingualism and language acquisition and examine the body of research conducted to prove a particular point.

In reviewing the literature related to the effects and benefits of acquiring and mastering more than one language, it soon becomes clear that the broader field of research includes several aspects which have developed into minor research areas in their own right, such as the body of research on bilin-

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.13-27

gualism and cognitive decline, bilingualism and early language acquisition, or the existence of a critical period for learning a second language. Considering the complexity and range of aspects studied in the area of bilingualism and language acquisition, the review of literature included in this paper will necessarily be restricted.

In addition, as the concepts discussed in this paper can be analysed from multiple perspectives, the line of inquiry pursued in this study is inevitably limited. For example, an important aspect which is beyond the scope of the present paper is the issue of terminology and definition of the key terms used, including a number of concepts which are today commonly associated with bilingualism and multilingualism, such as plurilingualism, code-switching, translanguaging and others.

Another important issue which will be discussed only indirectly is the type of bilingualism. In the field of early bilingual development, an important distinction has been made between simultaneous and sequential bilingualism (De Houwer 1999), a distinction which depends on the acquisition age of first exposure to the target languages. The former, also called 'bilingual first language acquisition' (Meisel 1989), refers to the acquisition of two or more languages from birth onwards, while the latter generally refers to situations in which children first acquire their first language and are only then introduced to the second. Children are usually considered sequential bilinguals after the age of three (De Houwer 1999).

The main focus of this paper are beliefs and assumptions, the study of which has been especially widespread in the area of foreign language teaching and learning. Richardson (1996, 103) defines beliefs as 'psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true.' This is especially important when the beliefs in question are teachers' beliefs. According to Borg (2003) teachers are 'active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs' (p. 81).

Referring to foreign language teachers, Horwitz (1985) points to the importance of making their belief system explicit as this can help them build their professional identities on reliable and tested knowledge rather than on assumptions and erroneous beliefs. Baloh and Bratož (2019) also emphasise that the role of teacher as a reflective practitioner presupposes a critical evaluation of one's own beliefs and assumptions. It is crucial for teachers to be able to identify one's beliefs – a cognitive component of attitudes which play a fundamental role in shaping our behaviour (Žefran 2015). In this re-

spect, Haukås (2016) and Lundberg (2019) argue that in order to understand the teachers' decision-making in the classroom it is necessary to understand and analyse teachers' beliefs. The overwhelming impact of teachers' beliefs about language learning and acquisition on their instructional choices has triggered a number of studies aimed at identifying teachers' beliefs in different societies and contexts. The main aim of the present paper is to identify and give an overview of some of the most common beliefs about bilingualism and second language acquisition and thus help teachers and researchers make more informed choices and decisions.

Common Beliefs about Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition

There Is a Critical Period for Acquiring a Second Language

One of the most intriguing questions in the area of foreign language acquisition is whether there is a sensitive period for acquiring a second language. Several studies have tried to prove the connection between the infants' ability to discriminate between phonetic units and second/foreign language acquisition (Tsao et al. 2004; Kuhl 2007). Kuhl (2007) argues that language acquisition requires *neural commitment* which refers to the process in which children *commit* the neural networks of the brain to patterns that reflect natural language input. According to this hypothesis, the elements of language which are acquired in infancy are critical as they both support and constrain the future learning of a language. This can be related to the concept of a 'critical' or 'sensitive' period for language acquisition, 'the idea is that the initial coding of native-language patterns eventually interferes with the learning of new patterns (such as those of a foreign language), because they do not conform to the established "mental filter"' (Kuhl 2007, 832).

According to Lenneberg's (1967) critical period hypothesis, the ability to acquire language is biologically linked to age. This means that there is a specific time span to acquire language after which it gradually becomes lateralized in the left hemisphere and language acquisition becomes more difficult. While the hypothesis has often been criticised, some studies did manage to prove that we can indeed talk about a certain critical period in which a language can be acquired at native-speaker level. Kuhl et al. (2005), for example, showed that people who acquired a second language during the early language acquisition stage of development are less sensitive to some explicit grammatical aspects than those who were bilingual from an early period.

Hakuta et al. (2003) tested the critical period hypothesis by trying to identify evidence of discontinuity in the level of English proficiency attained across a large sample of participants in the USA (immigrants with Spanish or Chi-

nese language backgrounds). In other words, they tried to establish whether there is a cut-off point which signals the end of the critical period. Although their results failed to provide sufficient evidence to prove the existence of discontinuity and thus the critical period hypothesis, they nevertheless presented compelling evidence that there is a correlation between the decline in second language proficiency and increase in age.

In a study in which they used applied functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), Kim et al. (1997) tried to determine how different languages are represented in the human brain. They analysed the language sensitive regions (Broca area) in the brain connected to the native language and other languages and concluded that they are represented in different frontal cortical areas depending on the language acquisition stage of development.

Another relevant body of studies focused on the infants' ability to recognize the differences between distinctive phonetic units or phonemes (Kuhl et al. 2003; Tsao et al. 2004; Kuhl 2007). While after a certain age people are not able to discriminate among phonetic units of a non-native language, infants are capable of discriminating among practically all non-identical sounds or phonemes. It is interesting to note at this point that while all the languages in the world contain around 600 consonants and 200 vowels, an individual language uses only about 40 distinctive phonemes responsible for changing the meaning of the word (Kuhl 2007).

Unlike adults, infants are capable of discerning differences among phonetic units both of their native language and foreign languages. Kuhl et al. (2003) have shown that the ability to discriminate among the phonemes of a second language declines considerably in the period between 6 and 12 months of age. Their study was aimed at identifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for the reversal of the decline in the perception of foreign language sounds. In one of the experiments, for example, they carried out several laboratory sessions in which they exposed 9-month old American infants to native Mandarin Chinese speakers. The results of the study indicated that compared to the control group, exposure to Mandarin reversed the decline in the perception of foreign phonemes in the experimental group.

It Is Better If We Start Learning a Foreign Language Young

The critical period hypothesis is also at the centre of discussions in the area of foreign language learning. There is today a widely held belief that if we start learning a foreign language young, we will end up as better speakers of that language (Brewster et al. 2002). The question of age is reflected in the worldwide trend of teaching a foreign language to ever younger children. A

standard argument claims that starting early is especially important for acquiring a natural pronunciation and native-like accent.

Although several studies have been carried out trying to prove the advantages of an early start, it is impossible to give a conclusively positive answer to the question of appropriate age for language learning (Pinter 2011; Lightbown and Spada 2006; Brewster et al. 2002). Rather than a definite answer, there is a general consensus among researchers that we can speak of benefits for different age groups. One of the most important benefits of starting young is that children are more sensitive to the sound and rhythm of the foreign language which means that they are more likely to develop good pronunciation. They are generally less inhibited than older learners and have lower anxiety levels. Pinter (2006, 29) also argues that by starting early, they ultimately dedicate more time to language learning than those who start later in life.

On the other mean, there are several advantages of starting to learn a foreign language later in life, in puberty or adulthood. For one, older learners are able to understand and analyse the rules of the new language which allows them to use more efficient strategies for learning it. They can rely on a much more developed conceptual knowledge network and superior cognitive abilities compared to younger learners (Birdsong 1992). Most importantly, however, they usually have a clear sense of why they are learning the foreign language (Pinter 2006, 29).

Bilinguals Control a Smaller Vocabulary in Each Language than Monolinguals

A systematic account of research related to the claim that bilingual children control a smaller vocabulary than their monolingual peers can be found in the article 'Bilingualism: The good, the Bad and the Indifferent' by Ellen Bialystok (2009). The results of a number of studies have shown that it is indeed true that bilinguals control a smaller vocabulary in each language than people who are monolingual. These findings are based on research which involved people carrying out a variety of tasks aimed at testing their vocabulary size, access to vocabulary and retrieval of lexical items. In these tasks, bilinguals' performance was significantly poorer than that of their monolingual peers. For example, they were slower in picture naming, in verbal frequency tasks, they had more 'tip-of-the-tongue' experiences, identified words through noise less efficiently and experienced more interference in lexical choices. One possible explanation for the differences between bilinguals and monolinguals in vocabulary control can be found in the conflict

created by the competition of the two languages which is present in bilinguals but not their monolingual peers.

On the other hand, the conflict and competition between the two languages also means that bilingual language production needs a special mechanism to manage and control attention to the target language, for example by inhibiting the interfering lexical option. This means that bilingual people may be equipped with a more efficient function of executive control, which involves processes, such as inhibition, tasks switching, and updating information in working memory. A number of studies (c.f. Bialystok 2009) based on various cognitive tasks have reported that bilingualism does indeed have a beneficial effect on the executive control function (EF). One of the findings of these studies is, for instance, that bilingual children develop the ability to solve problems that contain conflicting or misleading information at an earlier stage than their monolingual peers. Although it is still not clear which mechanisms and processes lie behind the different ways in which bilinguals and monolinguals process verbal information, the research shows that tasks based primarily on verbal control are performed better by monolinguals while tasks involving executive control are performed better by bilinguals.

A related study was carried out by Hoff et al. (2012) aimed at comparing the language development of bilingual and monolingual children. The results of the study showed that in single language comparisons, bilingually developing children showed a significantly lower performance in items measuring vocabulary and grammar. However, on a measure of total vocabulary, the performance of the two groups was not significantly different. In this respect, the authors (Hoff et al. 2012) point to the importance of the relative amount of input in one or more languages.

On the other hand, in a study aimed at analysing the advantage of bilinguals in executive processing, Paap et al. (2014) argue that there is no conclusive evidence for the existence of such an advantage and point to considerable bias on the part of researchers to privilege positive results over null results. According to the authors (Paap et al. 2014, 634), 'ideal bilinguals who acquire both languages early and live in language communities that speak the same two languages are not likely candidates for enhanced executive functions.' As discussed by Paap and Greenberg (2013), the problem lies in the fact that most of the studies which have tried to show the bilingual advantage in EF have used only one task and one indicator for each element of the executive function while studies which used multiple tasks have not managed to prove the bilingual advantage.

Bilingualism and Plurilingualism Delay Alzheimer's Disease

This claim is based on the exciting discovery that some activities can be used to exercise the brain and that an increased 'brain fitness' can work as protection against cognitive decline. A number of studies have recently discussed the effect of early bilingualism on memory loss symptoms in elderly adults with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia (Bialystok et al. 2007; Chertkow et al. 2010; Klein et al. 2016). According to a study carried out by Bialystok et al. (2007) focused on multilingual elderly patients, bilinguals showed symptoms of dementia 4 years later than monolinguals which might point to an increased cognitive reserve of bilingual individuals compared to their monolingual peers.

Another study, carried out by Chertkow et al. (2010), reported no significant advantage in bilinguals overall as regarded the age Alzheimer's disease was diagnosed. However, the study revealed another interesting result, i.e. that the delaying effect of bilingualism was significant in a group of immigrants and non-immigrants whose first language was French but not in a group of non-immigrants whose first language was English.

In a study in which they compared the mean number of languages spoken by the inhabitants of 93 countries and the incidence of Alzheimer's disease in the country's population, Klein et al. (2016) found a significant decline in the incidence of Alzheimer's disease consistent with an increase in population multilingualism. However, the authors recommend viewing the results obtained with caution since there might be other 'hidden' factors, such as the socioeconomic status of the population, which may influence the positive evidence for the findings in question. They also point out that further research with more comprehensive data is necessary to assess the effect of multilingualism on cognitive decline.

Bilinguals Confuse Their Languages

Bilingual or plurilingual speakers often alternate or switch between two or more languages or language varieties or codes during the same conversation. We call this kind of mixing which is characteristic of bilingual or plurilingual communication code-mixing or code-switching. However, as Ibrahim (2015) points out, this kind of alternation does not happen haphazardly: 'it is rule-governed and embedded in the syntactical and morphological structure of the languages used. The base language – the main language chosen for communication -accommodates the guest language at specific changeover points in a sentence or in a word. This allows multilingual communication to flow.' Code-switching is influenced by several factors, such as

the need to stress a certain point or adapt the language to the audience. Sometimes a word or expression from a different language is simply more appropriate or suitable for the given subject. It is especially important to note that code-switching is used by speakers who are fluent in the two or more languages and intentionally alternate between them, unlike language learners who, for example, use a word from their native language to fill a lexical gap in their knowledge of a target language.

In bilingual or multilingual social contexts, engaging in code-switching often reflects the speakers' desire to associate themselves with identities related to the languages involved (Myers-Scotton 1993; 1997). Besides the obvious cases of filling the lexical gap, the motivation for code-switching is in being perceived as a cooperative person who takes into account the different contexts and backgrounds of the speakers in the communicative situation. As Calteaux (1994, 120) points out in her sociolinguistic analysis of Black urban speech communities in South Africa:

> An important function of Mixed language is therefore that it forces you to accommodate to other people, to be patient, to not be stubborn, to try your best to make it easier for the other person to understand you, because you do not always know what language they speak.

Bilingualism Causes Delay in Children's Language Development

According to popular belief, hearing two different languages in early childhood might lead to language acquisition problems. Children who are exposed to two or more languages might be confused and show language delays or even disorders. However, no empirical evidence linking language delays to bilingualism has been found so far. According to De Houwer (2009), there is no difference in the language development between monolingual and bilingual children. On the contrary, bilingual children might actually have an advantage over monolingual peers as they 'need to pay extra attention to what speakers intend to say, since the variation in the different words they hear is so much greater in a bilingual setting' De Houwer (2009, 241).

Bilinguals Think in Two Different Languages

Another avenue of research related to bilingualism focuses on the understanding of the cognitive processes activated by bilinguals when they use different languages. A common question is whether bilinguals also think (or dream) in two different languages. Grosjean (2013) points out that bilinguals can use different modes depending on who they are interacting with

– when communicating with monolinguals they will be in a monolingual mode, while they will switch to the bilingual mode in interaction with bilinguals. However, does the fact that they are in a 'bilingual mode' also mean that they think in two different languages? Li (2018, 18) argues that 'it is hard to imagine that they (bilinguals) shift their frame of mind so frequently in one conversational episode let alone one utterance.' Rather than assuming that we think in the language we speak a more likely explanation would be that we think in a different form of language, our own idiolect, which again is different from the language-of-thought. In short, 'we do not think in Arabic, Chinese, English, Russian, or Spanish; we think beyond the artificial boundaries of named languages in the language-of-thought' (Li 2018, 19).

The idea that bilingual speakers think in two different languages is also connected with one specific view of bilingualism according to which a bilingual person has two separate and distinctive language competences. As Grosjean (1989, 4) points out, this view implies that a bilingual person is practically 'two monolinguals in one person,' a perspective which is associated with an extremely monolingual view of bilingualism.

Children Just 'Pick' up a New Language

Another popular conviction is that it is really easy for children to learn a new language, that children just simply 'pick' a language 'up' effortlessly and naturally. Looking at children learning and acquiring a foreign language may indeed give us the impression that they are like sponges, soaking up new languages like blotting paper. However, learning a foreign language is far from simple, it involves developing different communication skills and competences, such as taking part in an interaction or expressing one's opinion. And before children can become competent speakers of a foreign language, they have to be exposed to a variety of different contexts, but they also need a lot of life experience in order to grasp the complexity of language (De Houwer 1999).

Learning a foreign language is a complex process which involves a range of cognitive practices, such as deduction and memorization, but also active practice and, above all, motivation. In order to develop effective communicative competences in two or more languages, a child needs a strong supportive environment. In this respect, Clarke (2009) stresses the importance of supportive and predictable environments in which children can develop positive relationships with parents, teaching professionals, and their peers. In addition, a stimulating and supportive language environment will include language which is contextualised and supported by visual materials. It will

enable learners to participate in rich language interactions in which both the first and the home language are encouraged.

We Can Learn a Foreign Language Better When Interacting with Other People

As indicated by contemporary theories of learning (Vygotsky 2012; Bruner 1983), social interaction plays a crucial role in language acquisition while social isolation may have seriously negative effects on speech and language development. In this respect, Bruner (1983, 39) contends that 'if there is a Language Acquisition Device, the input to it is not a shower of spoken language but a highly interactive affair shaped, as we have already noted, by some sort of an adult Language Acquisition Support System.' The findings of several studies (Kuhl 2007) suggest that infants who have been exposed to a second language in a specific social context acquire foreign sounds much more efficiently and long-term compared to infants who have been exposed to the language only aurally and visually (for example through a TV screen).

The question is in what way social interaction influences early speech development. Kuhl (2007) proposes two mechanisms. The first involves the infants' motivation, which can be analysed by examining the infants' attention and arousal. The study reported by the author (Kuhl 2007) showed that the attention of an infant was considerably higher in response to a live person than an inanimate source. The second mechanism takes into account the information content of the setting in which the infant is placed and includes other elements besides the language input, such as different objects and the speaker's intention and gaze. In this context, gaze following is seen as an important predictor of receptive vocabulary. The results suggest that social signals foster learning as they enable a referential setting rich with information. In this respect, Tomasello (1999) argues that 'language does not create new cognitive processes out of nothing, of course, but when children interact with other persons intersubjectively and adopt their communicative conventions, this social process creates a new form of cognitive representation – one that has no counterpart in other animal species' (Tomasello 1999, 213).

In a study in which two- and three-year-old children were exposed to several foreign language situations created by two speakers in two languages (English and Italian), Sila and Bratož (2019) concluded that even short-term exposures may have a positive impact on the children's perception of different languages and that children clearly associate a particular language with the speaker of that language.

Most People in the World are Monolingual

Finally, it is often believed that bilingualism or plurilingualism is a much rarer phenomenon than monolingualism. According to Grosjean (2010), most people think that bilingual people are only found in some countries, such as Canada and Switzerland and that in order to be classified as 'bilingual,' you need to show equal speaking and writing fluency and native-like pronunciation in the languages you speak. The reality seems to be quite different. According to some estimates, bilingual or plurilingual people account for at least half of the world's population and the proficiency of bilingual people in the languages they speak is rarely equal. But how many bilingual or plurilingual people are there in the world? In order to answer this question, we would first have to agree on a common understanding of who is actually bilingual. Are you bilingual if you know two languages, use two languages or if you spoke two languages when you were a child? In addition, to be able to count the number of languages spoken by an individual, we would have to agree on what counts as a language in the first place.

However, we do have some useful data available for some parts of the world. According to the Eurobarometer Report Europeans and their Languages (European Commission 2012), just over half of Europeans (54%) are able to hold a conversation in at least one additional language, while a quarter (25%) reported being able to speak at least two additional languages. And as stated by the Eurostat report in 2016, 24.8% of working-age adults in the EU, who knew at least one foreign language, reported that they knew their best-known foreign language at a proficient level.

In North America, the estimated bilingual population is 35%, while in the 2000 census in the United States 18% of the people reported using another language. Furthermore, as Grosjean (2010) points out, while the statistics for Asian and African countries are scarce, we can safely assume that the percentages for North America and Europe would undoubtedly be surpassed in these areas.

Conclusion

Bilingualism and second language acquisition are today extremely popular topics and this popularity has inevitably generated a number of interesting myths and assumptions, such as the belief that children absorb new languages like sponges or that bilingualism delays a child's language development. As we have seen above, while most of these myths are overwhelmingly positive, there are also some negative perceptions. Both perspectives can be related to often deeply rooted beliefs and assumptions.

In addition to popular convictions, we can today witness a growing body of studies and reports which attempt to prove the 'bilingual advantage.' In the present chapter, we have tried to identify some of the most important lines of inquiry in the area of bilingualism and language acquisition today. One of the most exciting lines of research concerns the effects of early bilingualism on memory loss symptoms in elderly adults with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. As we have seen, the research in this area has produced some very encouraging results but has also pointed to several aspects which need to be further investigated. Another significant body of studies has tried to prove the beneficial effect of bilingualism on the executive control function. Despite some positive findings in this area, however, some authors point to methodological issues which put the evidence presented in question.

Finally, one of the aims of the present chapter was to show that there is a substantial body of literature aimed at promoting the benefits of bilingualism and early second language acquisition. This suggests that there is a growing interest both among the general public and the scientific community in the topics discussed above.

References

Baloh, Barbara, and Silva Bratož. 2019. 'Refleksija vloge učitelja v čezmejnem prostoru.' *Razprave in gradivo: revija za narodnostna vprašanja* 83:5–19.

Bialystok, Ellen. 2009. 'Bilingualism: The Good, the Bad, and the Indifferent.' *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 12 (1): 3–11.

Bialystok, Ellen, Fergus I. M. Craik, and Morris Freedman. 2007. 'Bilingualism as a Protection Against the Onset of Symptoms of Dementia.' *Neuropsychologia* 45 (2): 459–64.

Birdsong, David. 1992. 'Ultimate Attainment in Second Language Acquisition.' *Language* 68 (4): 706–55.

Borg, Simon. 2003. 'Teacher Cognition in Language Teaching: A Review of Research on What Language Teachers Think, Know, Believe, and Do.' *Language Teaching* 36 (2): 81–109.

Brewster, Jean, Gail Ellis, and Denis Girard. 2002. *The Primary English Teacher's Guide*. Harlow: Longman.

Bruner, Jerome S. 1983. 'Education as Social Invention.' *Journal of Social Issues* 39 (4): 129–41.

Calteaux, Karen Vera. 1994. 'A Sociolinguistic Analysis of a Multilingual Community.' Doctoral dissertation, University of Johannesburg.

Chertkow, Howard, Victor Whitehead, Natalie Phillips, Christina Wolfson, Julie Atherton, and Howard Bergman. 2010. 'Multilingualism (But Not Always Bilingualism) Delays the Onset of Alzheimer Disease: Evidence from a Bilingual Community.' *Alzheimer Disease & Associated Disorders* 24 (2): 118–25.

Clarke, Priscilla M. 2009. *Supporting Children Learning English as a Second Language in the Early Years (Birth to Six Years).* Victoria: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

De Houwer, Annick. 1999. 'Environmental Factors in Early Bilingual Development: The Role of Parental Beliefs and Attitudes.' In *Bilingualism and Migration,* edited by Guus Extra and Ludo Verhoeven, 75–96. The Hague: Mouton de Gruyter.

De Houwer, Annick. 2009. *Bilingual First Language Acquisition.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

European Commission. 2012. *Europeans and Their Languages.* Special Eurobarometer 243. Brussels: European Commission.

Grosjean, François. 1989. 'Neurolinguists, Beware! The Bilingual Is Not Two Monolinguals in One Person.' *Brain and Language* 36 (1): 3–15.

Grosjean, François. 2010. *Bilingual Life and Reality.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

———. 2013. 'Bilingual and Monolingual Language Modes.' In *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics,* edited by Carol Chapelle, 489–93. Hoboken, MA: Blackwell.

Haukås, Åsta. 2016. 'Teachers' Beliefs about Multilingualism and a Multilingual Pedagogical Approach.' *International Journal of Multilingualism* 13 (1): 1–18.

Hakuta, Kenji, Ellen Bialystok, and Edward Wiley. 2003. 'Critical Evidence: A Test of the Critical-Period Hypothesis for Second-Language Acquisition.' *Psychological Science* 14 (1): 31–38.

Hoff, Erika, Cynthia Core, Silvia Place, Rosario Rumiche, Melissa Señor, and Marisol Parra. 2012. 'Dual Language Exposure and Early Bilingual Development.' *Journal of Child Language* 39 (1): 1–27.

Horwitz, Elaine K. 1985. 'Using Student Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching in the Foreign Language Methods Course.' *Foreign Language Annals* 18 (4): 333–40.

Ibrahim, Nayr. 2015. 'A Few Myths about Speakers of Multiple Languages.' https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/few-myths-about-speakers-multiple-languages

Kim, Karl H., Norman R. Relkin, Kyoung-Min Lee, and Joy Hirsch. 1997. 'Distinct Cortical Areas Associated with Native and Second Languages.' *Nature* 388 (6638): 171–74.

Klein, Raymond M., Christie, John, and Mikael Parkvall. 2016. 'Does Multilingualism Affect the Incidence of Alzheimer's Disease? A Worldwide Analysis by Country.' *SSM-population Health* 2:463–67.

Kuhl, Patricia K. 2007. 'Is Speech Learning "Gated" by the Social Brain?' *Developmental Science* 10 (1): 110–20.

Kuhl, Patricia. K., Barbara T. Conboy, Denise Padden, Tobey Nelson, and Jessica Pruitt. 2005. 'Early Speech Perception and Later Language Development:

Implications for the Critical Period.' Language Learning and Development 1 (3–4): 237–64.

Kuhl, Patricia K., Feng-Ming Tsao, and Huei-Mei Liu. 2003. 'Foreign-Language Experience in Infancy: Effects of Short-Term Exposure and Social Interaction on Phonetic Learning.' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 100 (15): 9096–101.

Lenneberg, Eric H. 1967. *Biological Foundations of Language.* New York: Wiley.

Li, Wei. 2018. 'Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language.' *Applied Linguistics* 39 (1): 9–30.

Lightbown, Patsy M., and Nina Spada. 2006. *How Languages Are Learned.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lundberg, Adrian. 2019. 'Teachers' Beliefs about Multilingualism: Findings from Q Method Research.' *Current Issues in Language Planning* 20 (3): 266–83.

Meisel, Jürgen M. 1989. 'Early Differentiation of Languages in Bilingual Children.' In *The Bilingualism Reader,* edited by Li Wei, 322–47. London: Routledge.

Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1993. *Social Motivations for Code-Switching: Evidence from Africa.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

———. 1997. 'Code-Switching.' In *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics,* edited by Florian Coulmas, 217-237. Oxford: Blackwell.

Paap, Kenneth R., and Zachary I. Greenberg. 2013. 'There Is No Coherent Evidence for a Bilingual Advantage in Executive Processing.' *Cognitive Psychology* 66 (2): 232–58.

Paap, Kenneth R., Hunter A. Johnson, and Oliver Sawi. 2014. 'Are Bilingual Advantages Dependent upon Specific Tasks or Specific Bilingual Experiences?' *Journal of Cognitive Psychology* 26 (6): 615–39.

Pinter, Annamaria. 2006. *Teaching Young Language Learners.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2011. *Children Learning Second Languages.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Richardson, Virginia. 1996. 'The Role of Attitudes and Beliefs in Learning to Teach.' In *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education,* edited by John Sikula, 102–19. New York: Macmillan.

Sila, Anita, and Silva Bratož. 2019. 'Kako otroci prvega starostnega obdobja zaznavajo različne jezike?' In *Vzgoja in izobraževanje predšolskih otrok prvega starostnega obdobja,* edited by Sonja Čotar Konrad, Bogdana Borota, Sonja Rutar, Karmen Drljić, and Giuliana Jelovčan, 277–94. Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem.

Tomasello, Michael. 2009. *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tsao, Feng-Ming, Huei-Mei Liu, and Patricia K. Kuhl. 2004. 'Speech Perception in Infancy Predicts Language Development in the Second Year of Life: A Longitudinal Study.' *Child Development* 75 (4): 1067–84.

Vygotsky, Lev Semenovich. 1997. *Problems of the Theory and History of Psychology*. New York: Plenum Press.

Žefran, Mojca. 2015. 'Students' Attitudes towards Their EFL Lessons and Teachers: Their Retrospective Study.' *The Journal of Elementary Education* 8 (1–2): 167–81.


Factors
Influencing the
Learning of Languages
in Multilingual
Envirnoments

Slovene-Medium and Bilingual Schools in Italy: Towards a New Paradigm?

Sara Brezigar
Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia
sara.brezigar@guest.arnes.si

Over the past years, Slovene-medium kindergartens and primary schools in the region Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) have been trying to curb the trend of deteriorating linguistic skills among pupils by improving teaching methods, adjusting teaching contents, and developing teaching skills. The result of such efforts is not promising and the linguistic skills in the Slovene language continue to deteriorate from one generation of minority youth to the next. The paper presents the results of a recent preliminary study on the challenges faced by the aforementioned educational institutions, based on in-depth interviews and focus groups with teachers. The study seems to suggest that the adopted approach, which focuses primarily on 'linguistic' or 'didactic' issues, might be far too constrained to bring about the desired results, and a wider, contextual approach should be adopted to improve linguistic skills.

Keywords: bilingual kindergarten, language skills, Slovene language, minority language acquisition

Introduction

Slovene-medium kindergartens and primary schools in the region Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) form the core of the Slovene minority in Italy and represent an essential mechanism of its reproduction. For several decades they have faced demanding challenges, mostly stemming from the fact that an increasing number of children do not speak the minority language (or do so poorly) when enrolling into kindergartens and schools. A need arose for kindergartens and schools to reinvent themselves from institutions that teach 'in (or through)' the minority language to institutions that teach 'the' minority language. In too many instances their failure to do so led to poor linguistic skills in the minority language, endangering the minority's ability to reproduce itself.

In recent years, educational institutions have tried to deal with these challenges by improving teaching approaches and skills and adapting teaching contents in order to increase the proficiency of minority language speakers (Strani 2011; Mezgec 2008). Such efforts were promoted by actors in the schooling system (primarily teachers) as part of their professional training

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.31-46

and additional project engagements at school. A prominent role in these efforts was also played by the civil society with numerous initiatives and projects aimed at improving the linguistic situation among youth, including innovative ways of combining afterschool activities with linguistic training,[1] with additional linguistic and awareness raising workshops for teachers and trainers;[2] with projects aimed at preparing additional educational materials that could be used by teachers, parents and other educators,[3] and finally, with events and (online) tools aimed at sharing teaching experiences[4] (Grgič 2017), educational materials and other resources that could help raise the effectiveness of linguistic teaching (Strani 2011).

Conceding that these efforts were not carefully planned, coordinated or managed and therefore conceding that their effectiveness was probably much lower than expected or hoped for, the end result is still less than promising and Slovene linguistic skills continue to deteriorate (Košuta and Toličič 1989; Kaučič-Baša 1994, Jagodic and Čok 2013; Jagodic 2011; Brezigar 2007; 2009; 2015; 2017).

Therefore, a preliminary exploratory study has been carried out among teachers and educators to identify the main factors conducive to poor linguistic skills in the Slovene language, and to uncover the causes of the schools' limited ability to improve such skills.

To put the study in an appropriate context, the first part of the paper will be devoted to presenting some basic data on the Slovene minority in Italy, its schooling system and challenges faced by both. The second part of the paper will offer a short overview of theoretical approaches that could be useful to understand the intricacies of the acquisition of the Slovene language in Italy. Finally, a short outline of the methodology of the study and its most salient results will be provided, ending with a discussion on possible ways forward.

Slovene-Medium Kindergartens and Primary Schools

The Slovene minority in Italy is an autochthonous minority[5] settled in the North Eastern part of Italy, where its traditional settlement area in the re-

[1] An example of this is the Jezikovni poligon (Slosport 2016) that combined sports training with linguistic training.

[2] See, for example, the activities of the research institute SLORI in Trieste, the Zavod RS Slovenije za šolstvo and the Center za slovenščino kot drugi in tuj jezik.

[3] See, for example, the projects Eduka (http://www.eduka-itaslo.eu) and Eduka2 (http://www.eduka2.eu), also in Brezigar and Zver (2019).

[4] See https://www.smejse.it.

[5] It's a traditional national minority in the sense that it represents a part of the Slovenian nation 'left over' in a neighbouring state (Petrič 1977), as a result of historical changes of state borders

gion Friuli Venezia Giulia covers a total of 39 municipalities (Bogatec 2004b) in the former provinces of Gorizia (Gorica), Trieste (Trst) and Udine (Videm or Viden). A system of Slovene-medium public schools (consisting of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools) was set up in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia in the aftermath of WWII (Bogatec 2004a). A private bilingual school in the province of Udine was established in the 1970s to allow members of the Slovene minority to learn (also standard) Slovene[6] in a school setting. The school was subsequently incorporated into the public schools' system. [7]

Slovene-medium kindergartens and primary schools in Italy were conceived as educational institutions where the teaching language was Slovene and the students were Slovene speakers, mostly members of the Slovene minority in Italy. Later on, however, the situation changed dramatically (Bogatec and Bufon 1996; 1999; Bogatec 2004b; 2010; Pertot 2002; 2009; 2011; Fatur 1989). By the end of the 20th century a considerable number of children who did not speak the minority language were enrolling in Slovene-medium schools and kindergartens. Therefore, a need arose for kindergartens and schools to reinvent themselves from institutions that teach 'in (or through)' the minority language to institutions that teach 'the' minority language (Brezigar 2013; 2017).

The schooling system failed to acknowledge the new challenges and did not provide for special arrangements (e.g. additional support or teachers) for children who were not able to speak the minority language upon enrolment, hindering the efforts to improve the situation. It was left to the teachers to do their best, without the necessary skills to teach Slovene as L2 and with very limited teaching resources that were rarely adapted to the minority environment, mostly provided by institutions in Slovenia. Above all, there were no linguistic standards that pupils would be required to achieve at each level of schooling. Finally, teachers (and principals) faced systemic barriers that un-

in Central Europe. There are no official data on the number of members of the Slovene minority in Italy, but estimates from 2002 suggest that there are 95.000 members of the Slovene minority (Bogatec 2004b), whereas an older, unofficial estimate of the Italian authorities suggested that there were ca. 80.000 members (Ministero dell'Interno 1994, 273).

[6] Most members of the Slovene minority in Italy speak both standard Slovene – which is the state and official language in the Republic of Slovenia – and its various local dialects or variants (Sussi 1998 in Vidau 2013, Janežič 2004 in Vidau 2013). Only in the province of Udine there are some members who only speak a local Slovene dialect, but are not able to speak standard Slovene, since they have not been able to pursue any form of formal education in Slovene.

[7] See Bogatec (2010) for a comprehensive longitudinal quantitative data analysis on bilingual education and Slovene-medium education in Italy.

dermined the efforts of even the most determined among them, stemming primarily from the centralization, rigidity, and the operating procedures of the Italian public schools' system (Brezigar 2015).

An extensive qualitative study (Brezigar 2015) suggested that Slovene-medium and bilingual education did not result in a satisfactory (linguistic) reproduction of the Slovene minority in Italy, with interviewees pointing out that the minority educational system had not dealt adequately with the transition from teaching in the Slovene language (to mostly Slovene pupils or pupils from mixed marriages) to teaching the Slovene language (to a growing population of Italian and in some instances immigrant pupils). Experts listed the following factors as those contributing to this state of affairs: a lack of adequate teaching skills (and some institutional support, where educators, teachers and professors could acquire such skills); a lack of linguistic proficiency standards that should be achieved by children at various stages of schooling; a lack of teaching aids and materials for teaching Slovene to pupils who are not familiar with the language (Brezigar 2015).

Despite the strong effort to fulfil this gap (before and after the aforementioned study was conducted) by primarily developing teaching and linguistic skills, providing a supporting environment for minority language use with extracurricular activities, developing and producing the relevant teaching materials,[8] and changing language attitudes among teachers, educators, trainers, etc. (Jagodic and Čok 2013; Pertot 2004), the results achieved are far from satisfactory, especially if we consider that after Slovenia's accession to the EU, the Italian majority population showed[9] an increasing interest in the Slovene language, the Slovene minority and Slovenia (Brezigar 2013; Jagodic and Čok 2013; Bogatec 2010). This reflected also in an increased number of both adults and children learning Slovene (Jagodic and Čok 2013; Brezigar 2013).

It needs to be stressed that an increase of interest in a minority language does not necessarily lead to an increase in its use, and this was precisely the case of the Slovene language in Italy (Brezigar 2013; Jagodic and Čok 2013; Jagodic 2011; Bogatec et al. 2008; Kaučič-Baša 1997; 2002). Interest among

[8] See, for example, Strani (2011).

[9] Data on enrolment in Slovene-medium schools showed that the interest in the Slovene language increased significantly in the 90s and 2000s: The number of children from completely Italian families, where both father and mother identify themselves as Italians, rose from 7% to 24% of all enrolled children (Bogatec 2010). However, the trend seems to be reversing, since a negative trend in enrolments into Slovene-medium kindergartens has been observed since the school year 2013–2014.

the majority population led to a rise in their enrolment in Slovene-medium kindergartens and schools, as well as sports and cultural clubs, music schools, etc. (Bogatec 2004b; 2010). In particular, those environments that had been traditionally monolingual Slovene (and represented an opportunity for the exclusive use of the Slovene language), such as kindergartens, schools or cultural and sports associations, were shifting at a growing speed towards bilingualism and in some cases even towards Italian monolingualism (Bogatec 2010; Maver 2015).

Paradoxically, although nowadays more people are able to speak (some) Slovene, in practice, less actually do so (Jagodic and Čok 2013; Brezigar 2013).

There are no longitudinal studies (or other objective measures) that monitor the levels of linguistic skills in Slovene-medium and bilingual schools over time.[10] However, previous research (Brezigar 2013; 2015; Bogatec 2010; Bogatec et al. 2008; Kaučič-Baša 1997; 2002; Jagodic 2011), based primarily on qualitative studies, on experts' assessments and other indirect indicators related to language use and language preference, leaves little doubt about a significant decline in linguistic skills. Moreover, teachers included in this study confirmed on multiple occasions that the language of communication in several kindergartens and school had shifted (or was increasingly shifting) to the majority one. In the most extreme cases, the same happened with the language of instruction. Interviewee 1,[11] for example, explained: 'At our [Slovene-medium] school there's a teacher that teaches in Italian. [. . .] It's much easier than sticking to Slovene and trying to help the children who do not understand enough Slovene with additional explanations and attention. It's simply too complicated and burdensome.' A more magnanimous interviewee (Interviewee 2) explained the situation as follows: 'It's really easy to say in principle that this is a Slovene-medium school and everybody should teach in Slovene. But when you enter a class where only 2 or 3 children out of 11 are Slovenes, you have to face the reality that as a teacher you are expected to teach all of them, and they do not understand you. So, switching, at least partially, to Italian sometimes is not really a choice, but a necessity.'

[10] Beside a limited study by Košuta and Toličič (1989), a first serious attempt at planning a longitudinal study on linguistic skills has recently started as a part of the INVALSI national evaluations in the schooling system. This study is currently carried out by the Italian national research institute INVALSI in collaboration with the Slovenian Research Institute in Trieste (see http://www.slori.org/progetti/priprava-drzavnih-preizkusov-znanja-v-slovenskem-jeziku-in-prevod-drzavnih-preizkusov-znanja-v-matematiki-invalsi/).

[11] Interviewees in this study are numbered from 1 to 10 and will be referred to as Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2, etc., in order to ensure their anonymity.

The rising percentage of children who do not speak the minority language (or do so poorly) when they enrol in Slovene-medium kindergartens and schools (Bogatec 2010) is an important factor that clearly determines the starting point of a teacher. Regardless, the question is why educational institutions are so ineffective in bringing children up to speed in a longer period, e.g. 5 to 7 years. Are there possibly other factors beyond teaching, teaching methods and teaching skills, that play an important role and should be taken into account and dealt with when trying to improve the situation?

In order to explore possible answers to this question, it is necessary to widen our perspective beyond teaching skills, methods and models, and explore other approaches, from different disciplines, that can shed some light on why it is so difficult to improve linguistic skills of pupils enrolled in Slovene-medium and bilingual schools and kindergartens in Italy.

Theoretical Approaches and Perspectives towards Minority Language Acquisition

A number of disciplines and approaches attempted to clarify the intricate question why some learn a minority language and others do not, and why then some use it and some do not?

Since the core issue seems to be language acquisition, the first field to be studied is education, where researchers have developed models and methods of bilingual or multilingual education and training, and second language acquisition (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981; 2000; Skutnabb-Kangass and Cummins 1988; Baker 2001; Spolsky 1990; Thomas and Collier 1997; Cummins 1979; 2000) that are commonly used and referred to when dealing with minority language acquisition. In the case of Slovenes in Italy, extensive quantitative longitudinal research is being carried out on Slovene-medium schools and kindergartens and the challenges they face (Bogatec et al. 2008; Bogatec 2010). Other studies focused on the connection between early education and teaching with minority language acquisition and language use (Pertot 2004; Mezgec 2008).

However, in order to obtain a broader view of the issue of language acquisition that also encompasses the (indirect) impact of other factors (and is not limited to the structured teaching process), the work of researchers in other disciplines, such as sociology, social psychology, sociolinguistics and linguistics, should also be considered. With different models, schemes and approaches (Fishman 1991; 2001; Gardner and Lambert 1972; Giles and Smith 1979; Baker 1992; Crystal 2000; Gumperz 1982), with concepts such as ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles et al. 1977), researchers in these disciplines examine

the status and prestige of a language, its developmental perspectives in a given environment, trying to define factors affecting its position in a specific environment. The perspective of these researchers is frequently focused on the relationship between different languages in an environment – the minority language and the majority one. The focus is set on trying to identify factors and conditions that promote the acquisition and use of a certain language, including economic and social aspects (Baker and Jones 1998), vs. the factors that hinder its long-term preservation.

Another important line of study of language acquisition and use follows the motivations, habits and choices of speakers, aiming at understanding why and when individuals use a certain language (Gardner and Lambert 1972; Giles and Smith 1979). Concepts, approaches and theories in the field of sociology and social psychology further explain the relationship between majority and minority communities that live together (Tajfel 1978; Bourhis 1979; Bourdieu 1991) – generally by adopting an even wider perspective that exceeds language as the fundamental factor of distinction between two communities, focusing more on sociological factors. In the case of Slovenes in Italy, researchers in the field of psychology, sociology, socio-linguistics and linguistics have extensively studied issues of language acquisition, use, planning and choice (Bogatec et al. 2008; Vodopivec 2008; Brezigar 2009; Gliha Komac 2009; Kaučič-Baša 1997; 2002; Kosic 2010; Jagodic 2011). However, the results of these studies have rarely (if ever) been translated into policies that could lead to an improvement of the linguistic situation of the Slovene minority in Italy.

Methodology

In order to identify the main obstacles, perceived by educators to be the root causes and the hindering factors conducive to poor linguistic skills in the Slovene language, and to uncover the causes of the schools' limited ability to improve such skills, a preliminary exploratory study was carried out among teachers and educators between September 2018 and January 2019.

The study consisted of 10 individual qualitative interviews with educators and 3 focus groups carried out among teachers of kindergartens and primary Slovene-medium and bilingual schools in FVG, one focus group in each of the three former provinces of Trieste, Gorizia and Udine (with respectively 6, 11 and 4 participants). 5 qualitative interviews were carried out with educators working in the province of Gorizia, 3 in the province of Trieste and 2 in the Province of Udine. 6 interviewees were employed in kindergartens and 4 in primary schools.

Results of the Study and Discussion

Interviewees and participants in the 3 focus groups presented an interesting and varied picture of the challenges they face when teaching (in) the Slovene language. Overall, their answers suggest that a focus on teaching approaches and materials will only take the community so far, and that a wider approach should be adopted if results were to improve. The most salient feedback from teachers in this study was categorised in three subsections.

The Role of After-School Activities

Although teachers acknowledge the importance of a supporting environment where linguistic skills could be used, practiced and transformed into a habitual behaviour, they do not fail to observe that frequently the idea of an organised supporting environment with lots of extracurricular activities that (linguistically) support the efforts of the teachers has become weak and frail. In fact, organisations providing extracurricular activities face similar challenges as Slovene-medium and bilingual kindergartens and schools. If some of the children do not understand the trainer or do not speak Slovene, the language of communication switches to Italian (there, as well). In the end, an extracurricular activity that should reinforce Slovene linguistic skills frequently fails to do so, depriving even those children who speak Slovene of the opportunity to use the language.

Moreover, teachers contributing to Focus group 2 pointed out that there were no such activities during the summer.[12] One of them explained this issue as follows:

> It's easier to work on linguistic skills of those children who are included in the network of Slovene extracurricular activities [. . .], although many children from Italian speaking families are not [. . .] when the school starts in September, I'm close to tears. I have children that in June spoke Slovene, and in September they are not able to utter a word in Slovene. I have to start all over again and it takes me two months to get them to the point where they were in June – in terms of linguistic skills and knowledge [. . .] On the other hand, what can we expect? These children live in a completely Italian environment, they haven't heard a word of Slovene for 3 months, of course they've forgotten what they learned the previous year. [Teacher in Focus group 2]

[12] There are, of course, a few summer camps available, most of them predominantly Italian or bilingual. However, children attend them for only a certain number of weeks, and mostly only until the age when they are deemed able to stay at home alone.

Moreover, the network of extracurricular activities is rather well established in certain areas, whereas in others (e.g. Romjan or Beneška Slovenija) it is really weak, as pointed out by teachers in Focus group 2 and Focus group 3. These areas are characterised by either a traditionally weaker presence of the autochthonous minority or a stronger presence of Italians enrolled in Slovene-medium or bilingual schools.

Bearing in mind that this is a preliminary qualitative study with obvious limitations, the suggestion seems to be that the network of extracurricular activities, although necessary and important, does not fully play its role. The functioning of the network should probably be rethought, in close cooperation with schools, in order to build synergies between 'language acquisition in school' and 'after school language use.'

(Lack of) Policies for Managing the Relationship between Language and Culture

Teachers in the two focus groups in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia (Focus group 1 and Focus group 2) and several interviewees (6,7,8) pointed out that many educators (either them or others) are at a loss for how to deal with a growing population of pupils that do not identify themselves as Slovenes. In the aftermath of WW2, most pupils attending Slovene-medium schools identified themselves as Slovenes. The teacher, in that instance, was not only providing linguistic instruction, but he/she was also the bearer of the Slovene culture, the historical memory of the Slovene minority, the Slovene nation, and its values.

Nowadays, the number of children that do not identify themselves as Slovenes is growing[13] and sometimes they represent the majority of the class. 'In this instance, is the teacher still supposed to impart the Slovene culture, its historical memory and its values in the same way?,' asks Interviewee no. 6, explaining that at her school they frequently experience conflicts with parents regarding how a teacher approaches issues related to historical memory and historical celebrations. These refer to difficult historical circumstances where the two communities – Italian and Slovene – were on opposite sides. How to deal with the diversity of parents' political and ideological beliefs regarding these events? This is something that several teachers do not feel trained

[13] Pertot (2007, 273) points out an additional issue that has an important impact on the number of children entering the school who identify themselves as 'Slovenes.' She suggests that the rise of hybrid identities among members of the Slovenian minority in Italy is closely linked to the rise of different linguistic phenomena that deviate from the Slovene language (as spoken in Slovenia).

(or equipped) for. The issue can be traced back to parents' motivations and reasons for minority language acquisition. As Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggested, there are affective reasons and economic reasons to learn a language. And whereas affective reasons go hand in hand with the transmission of culture, traditions, values and historical memories, the same could not be said of those who see in Slovene-language acquisition only its economic value – the value of knowing an additional language, without the burden of also having to accept its culture and historical memory.

Environmental Factors

Several interviewees and teachers in Focus groups 2 and 3 pointed at some important factors that are hindering better language acquisition in school settings. Interviewee 5 explained it as follows: 'It's difficult to teach children that the Slovene language is important and has a value, if they don't ever experience it outside the school setting. They go to the store, and everybody speaks Italian, their neighbours speak mostly Italian, they watch TV in Italian, all around them it's only Italian. Then, of course, it's normal for the child to perceive that Italian is an important language, worth learning, and Slovene is not.'

Within Focus group 2, a teacher explained the issue further:

> It's very subtle. You can't point out one single big issue, but children are very perceptive [. . .] [they] form their opinion on the importance of the language and the community based on all those little signs they see. You still have children from Italian families that have never been across the border. Some of them don't even understand that there are people somewhere who actually use the Slovene language as a daily means of communication, in the cafeteria or in the shop [. . .].

Inherent in these observations is the realisation that the perception of the community in a wider context should not be underestimated. And the fact that the community is still rather closed, rarely visible as an important player in the wider Italian society, including Italian media, has an impact on language acquisition. Regardless of the attempts to improve the protection of the Slovene minority, the linguistic landscape shows little sign of the existence of the Slovene community (Mezgec 2017). These comments lead to the discussion on language prestige and the status of the language in the settlement area of the Slovene minority in Italy (Baker 1992; Baker and Jones 1998; Haugen 1966; Labov 2006).

Attitudes of Parents and Significant Others

Beside environmental factors that have an impact on the child's perception of the language, teachers in Focus groups 1 and 2 and three interviewees pointed out that the effectiveness of early learning (and teaching) of the minority language was significantly affected by language attitudes of parents[14] and significant others. Interviewee no. 7 explained it as follows:

> It's incredible how much the attitudes of parents affect the child's ability to learn. One of my children has a mum who always complains that she cannot understand the notices that are published in Slovene-only on the bulletin board, and she would like them to be in [translated to] Italian, as well. The child's attitude reflects the mother's. It's always 'I don't understand.' The girl doesn't even make an effort. On the other hand, there's a dad who would take a picture of the notice with his phone and figure it out by himself. I think he throws it into google translate. And his child is doing so much better, I'm so proud of how much he has learned.

Interviewee 5 pointed out that also parents need directions:

> At our first parent-teacher conference I always tell Italian parents that they have to serve as role models to the best of their abilities. If they come to school and say 'Buongiorno' instead of 'Dober dan,' the child immediately understands which language is important – and which one is not. It's not really a question of how much [Slovene language] they know, but rather if they are willing to make at least some minor effort to let know the child that what he [or she] learns here is important, that it matters to them as well.

Even more interesting is the case of a kindergarten teacher who says that not only the attitudes of parents, but also the attitudes of significant others can have an extremely important impact on children's perceptions of the value and role of the minority language, affecting, in the end, also their ability to learn it. Interviewee no. 7, for example, mentions the case of a nanny and

[14] Pertot (2007) points out that the significant ideological shift brought by the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the independence of Slovenia made it difficult for a part of the Slovene community in Italy to identify themselves as 'Slovenes' and gave rise to new identities. This shift towards hybrid identities, as suggested by Pertot (2007, 273), can have a spill over effect in the field of language, if standard language is closely linked to (standard) identity of identifying oneself as a 'Slovene.'

a grandmother who had negative attitudes towards the Slovene language and the Slovene community, and how these significantly affected the two children in kindergarten, regardless of the fact that parents displayed a positive attitude both towards the community and the language.

Finally, teachers in the Focus group 1 suggested that attitudes precede action. If parents have a positive attitude towards the language, with a dedicated teacher there are also options for learning at home, even at early stages of a child's development and even if parents don't speak a word of Slovene. Interviewee no. 7 explains her own example as a kindergarten teacher as follows:

> I prepare recordings of books to be used by parents. I read the book, record the reading, and at home, they can play the recorded text and watch/read the book with their child. I also ring a bell every time they need to turn the page, so that even if they don't understand anything, they can still 'read' the book in Slovene to their children. I prepare everything for them, but, of course, in the end, they have to do it.

Conclusions

Bearing in mind that this is a preliminary and rather limited study, its results suggest that a shift in focus is needed in order to achieve better results in Slovene language acquisition and use. Teachers and educators predominantly point at sociological and sociolinguistic factors as those hindering their efforts to teach the Slovene language, whereas the predominant approach that aims at improving linguistic skills currently focuses primary on linguistic and educational (didactic) issues. A number of interesting points have been raised by educators, including (but not limited to) parents' attitudes towards and use of the minority language, issues concerning language prestige, the dichotomy of economic and affective reasons for language use that clash severely in educational institutions, and the community's (in)ability to support the use of the minority language outside school walls.

The scope of the issues exposed by educators in this study seems to suggest that language acquisition (and language use) should be tackled with a broader approach that would include more awareness-raising activities among parents and significant others, more direction on how to support the child in his learning efforts by sending positive messages about the language and the community, and adjusting the family lifestyle in such a way that the child has as much contact with the language as possible outside the school setting.

Finally, the study suggests that there is a pressing need for schools (or possibly even the community) to deal with historical divides, take a clear stand on the approach that they intend to adopt (monocultural, multicultural or intercultural), and communicate it clearly to the parents up-front, in order to avoid later disagreements or negative surprises.

References

Baker, Colin. 1992. *Attitudes and Language.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

———. 2001. *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism.* Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Baker, Colin, and Prys Jones. 1998. *Encyclopedia of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Bogatec, Norina, ed. 2004a. *Slovene: The Slovene Language in Education in Italy.* Ljouwert and Leeuwarden: Mercator Education.

———. 2004b. *Slovenska državna šola v Italiji pod drobnogledom: rezultati projekta o vrednotenju šolskih storitev EVAŠOL 2003.* Trieste: Slori.

———. 2010. 'Projekt šola 2010: predstavitev rezultatov.' http://www.slori.org/pdf/predstavitevSOLA2010.pdf

Bogatec, Norina, and Milan Bufon, 1996. *Slovenske šole v tržaški in goriški pokrajini: vrtci in osnovne šole.* Trieste: Slori.

———. 1999. *Slovenske šole v tržaški in goriški pokrajini: nižje srednje in višje srednje šole.* Trieste: Slori.

Bogatec, Norina, Marijan Kravos, and Veronika Lokar, eds. 2008. *Projekt Mozaik: učinki večetničnega okolja na osnovno šolanje.* Trieste: Sklad Libero in Zora Polojaz, Šolska mreža Projekt Mozaik, and Slovenski raziskovalni inštitut Slori.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourhis, Richard Y. 1979. 'Language in Ethnic Interaction: A Social Psychological Approach.' In *Language in Ethnic Interactions,* edited by Howard Giles and Bernard Saint-Jacques, 117–41. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Brezigar, Sara. 2007. 'Marketing Minority Language as a Valid Tool in the Fight for Survival of Minority Languages: The Case of the Slovenes in Italy.' *Treatises and Documents, Journal of Ethnic Studies,* no. 52: 198–215.

———. 2009. 'The Slovene Language in Italy: Paths to a Value-Added Position.' In *Rights, Promotion and Integration Issues for Minority Languages in Europe,* edited by Suzana Pertot, Tom Priestly, and Colin H. Williams, 207–15. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

———. 2013. 'Ali se jezikovna skupnost v Furlaniji Julijski krajini lahko širi? Poučevanje in učenje slovenščine med večinskim prebivalstvom kot perspektiva za dolgoročno ohranjanje manjšinskega jezika.' In *Med drugim in tujim jezikom,* edited by Devan Jagodic and Štefan Čok, 97–119, 105–29. Trieste: Ciljno začasno združenje 'Jezik-Lingua.'

———. 2015. 'Avoiding the Dinosaur Path: An Evaluation of the Status Quo and Developmental Perspectives of the Slovene Minority in Italy.' In *Dominated Languages in the 21st Century: Papers from the International Conference on Minority Languages XIV,* edited by Barbara Schrammel-Leber and Christina Korb, 148-67. Grazer Plurilingualismus Studien 1. Graz: Karl-Franzens-Universität.

———. 2017. 'Slovenska skupnost v Italiji med preteklostjo in prihodnostjo.' In *Skupnost v središču Evrope: Slovenci v Italiji od padca Berlinskega zidu do izzivov tretjega tisočletja,* edited by Norina Bogatec, Zaira Vidau, and Gorazd Bajc, 21–33. Trieste: ZTT, Slori.

Brezigar, Sara, and Sofija Zver. 2019. 'Priprava učnih gradiv za poučevanje slovenščine v Furlaniji-Julijski krajini: študija primera in razvojne možnosti.' *Treatises and Documents: Journal of Ethnic Studies,* no. 83: 51–66.

Crystal, David. 2000. Language Death. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, Jim. 1979. 'Linguistic Interdependence and the Educational Development of Bilingual Children.' *Review of Educational Research* 49 (2): 222–51.

———. 2000. *Language, Power and Pedagogy.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Fatur, Silvo. 1989. 'Dileme slovenske šole v Italiji.' *Primorska srečanja,* no. 89–90: 11–13.

Fishman, Joshua A. 1991. *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages.* Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, Joshua A., ed. 2001. *Can Threatened Languages be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective.* Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Gardner, Robert C., and Wallace E. Lambert. 1972. *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language.* Rowley: Newbury House.

Giles, Howard, and Philip M. Smith. 1979. 'Accomodation Theory: Optimal Level of Convergence.' In *Language: Social Psychological Perspectives,* edited by Howard Giles and Robert N. St. Clair, 45–65. Oxford: Blackwell.

Giles, Howard, Richard Y. Bourhis, and D. M. Taylor. 1977. 'Towards a Theory of Language and Ethnic Group Relations.' In *Language, Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations,* edited by Howard Giles, 307–48. London, New York, San Francisco, CA: Academic Press.

Gliha Komac, Nataša. 2009. *Slovenščina med jeziki Kanalske doline.* Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede; Ukve: Slovensko kulturno središča Planika Kanalska dolina; Trieste: Slori.

Grgič, Matejka. 2017. 'Teoretska izhodišča in metodološki okvir pri izdelavi uporabnikom prijaznega spletišča: primer platforme SMeJse – slovenščina kot manjšinski jezik.' In *Slovenščina v dvojezičnih okoliščinah,* edited by

Vojko Gorjanc, Iztok Kosem, Matejka Grgič, and Sonja Novak Lukanovič, 85–112. Ljubljana: Trojina, zavod za uporabno slovenistiko.

Haugen, Einar, 1966. 'Semicommunication: The Language Gap in Scandinavia.' *Sociological Inquiry* 36 (2): 280–97.

Jagodic, Devan. 2011. 'Between Language Maintenance and Language Shift: The Slovenian Community in Italy Today and Tomorrow.' *Eesti ja soome-ugri keeleteaduse ajakiri* 2 (1): 195–213.

Jagodic, Devan, and Štefan Čok, eds. 2013. *Med drugim in tujim jezikom: poučevanje in učenje slovenščine pri odraslih v obmejnem pasu Furlanije Julijske krajine.* Trieste: Ciljno začasno združenje 'Jezik-Lingua.'

Kaučič-Baša, Majda. 1994. *Slovenska šola na Tržaškem: sociolingvistična presoja.* Trieste, Gorizia, and Udine: Slavistično društvo.

———. 1997. 'Where Do Slovenes Speak Slovene and to Whom? Minority Language Choice in Transactional Settings.' *International Journal of Sociology of Language* 124:51–73.

———. 2002. 'Scelta del codice linguistico e status della lingua: Il caso degli sloveni in Italia.' In *Lingue di confine, confini e fenomeni linguistici: Parallela 8,* edited by Patricia Cordin, Rita Franceschini, and Gudrun Held, 197–216. Rome: Bulzoni.

Kosic, Marianna. 2010. *Patterns of ingroup identification and outgroup attitudes on the Italo-Slovene borderland.* Trieste: IUIES.

Košuta, Egidij, and Ivan Toličič. 1989. *Raziskava o stopnji obvladovanja slovenskega in italijanskega knjižnega jezika pri otrocih vpisanih v slovenskih šolskih vrtcih na Tržaškem.* Trieste: Slori.

Labov, William. 2006. *The Social Stratification of English in New York.* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Maver, Martin. 2015. *Šola, družina in zunajšolske dejavnosti.* Trieste: Združenje slovenskih športnih društev v Italiji and Slovenski raziskovalni inštitut.

Mezgec, Maja. 2008. 'Razvoj funkcionalne pismenosti v manjšinskem jeziku: primer študije med slovensko manjšino v Italiji.' In *Sodobne strategije učenja in poučevanja,* edited by Vida Medved Udovič, Mara Cotič, and Majda Cencič, 106–16. Koper: Pedagoška fakulteta.

———. 2016. 'Linguistic Landscape as a Mirror: The Case of the Slovene Minority in Italy.' *Treatises and Documents: Journal of Ethnic Studies,* no. 77: 67–85.

Pertot, Susanna. 2002. *Občutek narodnostne in geografske pripadnosti maturantov šol s slovenskim učnim jezikom v Trstu: primerjava rezultatov projektivni testov, izvedenih v letih 1990 in 2000.* Gorizia: Slori.

———, ed. 2004. *Jezikovna vzgoja v vrtcu: vidiki vzgojiteljic.* Gorizia: Slori.

———. 2007. 'V imenu očeta: medgeneracijski prenos slovenskega jezika in identitete po moški liniji.' In *Živeti mejo,* edited by Miran Košuta, 263–75. Zbornik Slavističnega društva Slovenije 18. Trieste and Ljubljana: Slavistično društvo Slovenije.

———. 2009. 'Slovensko šolstvo v Italiji: primerjalna študija.' In *Izobraževanje za dvojezičnost v kontekstu integracijskih procesov,* edited by Lucija Čok, 191–204. Koper: Annales.

———. 2011. 'Identitetne spremembe med Slovenci v Italiji v družinah učencev šol v slovenskim učnim jezikom v Italiji.' *Treatises and Documents: Journal of Ethnic Studies,* no. 66: 24–66.

Petrič, Ernest. 1977. *Mednarodnopravno varstvo narodnih manjšin.* Maribor: Obzorja.

Ministero dell'Interno. 1994. 'Popolazioni di lingua slovena.' In *Primo rapporto sullo stato delle minoranze in Italia,* 273–78. Rome: Ministero dell'interno.

Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. 1981. *Bilingualism or Not: The Education of Minorities.* Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

———, Tove. 2000. *Linguistic Genocide in Education – Or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove, and Jim Cummins. 1988. *Multilingual Education.* Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Slosport. 2016. 'ZSŠDI: predstavili novo in hvalevredno pobudo »Jezikovni poligon.«' Slosport, 16. maj. https://www.slosport.org/novica/zssdi-predstavili-novo-in-hvalevredno-pobudo-jezikovni-poligon

Spolsky, Bernard. 1990. *Conditions for Second Language Learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Strani, Primož, ed. 2011. *Šola na obronkih slovenščine – Metodološki in didaktični vidiki poučevanja slovenščine kot drugega ali tujega jezika v Furlaniji Julijski krajini.* Trieste: Državna agencija za razvoj šolske avtonomije, Območna enota za Furlanijo Julijsko krajino.

Tajfel, Henry. 1978. 'Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison.' In *Differentiation between Social Groups,* edited by Henry Tajfel, 61–76. London: Academic Press.

Thomas, Wayne P., and Virginia P. Collier. 1997. 'Two Languages Are Better than One.' *Educational Leadership* 55 (4): 23–26.

Vodopivec, Nika. 2008. 'Language Practices, Ideologies and Planning in the Cross-Border Area of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy) – From Case Study to Models of Analysis and Planning in European Borderlans.' PhD dissertation, University of Trieste.

Contiguous or Border Languages and Their Teaching in Europe

Irina Moira Cavaion
Research Institute in Koper, Slovenia
irina.cavaion@zrs-kp.si

Contiguous or border languages have a complex nature and still lack a scientific and shared definition. Numerous documents, recommendations, and frameworks encourage European border areas – which represent 40% of the territory in the Union and concern 30% of the European population – to introduce or enhance the teaching of neighbouring languages from nursery school through to university. This article will provide a reflection on the difficulty of building an overview of teaching neighbouring languages in European countries. It will also present a few successful cross-border neighbouring languages teaching projects and conclude by asserting the importance and urgency of beginning a scientific debate on the denomination of border languages and on national and European linguistic policies.

Keywords: border language teaching, language policy, historical multilingualism, national minorities, European border areas

Introduction

Contiguous or border languages are characterised by their multidimensional nature, lack of scientific definition in the field of applied linguistics (Cavaion 2016), and consequently by their challenging identification within educational language policies and procedures within each European country. This article will focus on the aspects most closely connected to educational language policies.

Starting from a reflection on the sociolinguistic nature of contiguous or border languages and proceeding with an analysis of European documents that discuss the importance of their teaching, we will guide the reader towards a reflection on the current difficulty of creating a teaching framework for these European languages. However, the examples of cross-border didactic-methodological projects – specifically on the Dutch-Belgian-German, French-German and Italian-Slovenian borders – that we will describe, will show and significantly emphasise the best qualities in teaching contiguous or border languages, which are shown (European Commission 2017) to be effective tools for economic and social growth.

It will conclude by asserting the importance and urgency of beginning

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.47-58

a scientific debate on the denomination of border languages and national language policies dedicated to them, identifying this type of education, and mostly its distribution and the sharing of it, as concrete action for the development of active citizenship and intercultural sensitivity development, as well as in the fight against neo-nationalism that has defined Europe over the last decade.

Contiguous or Border Languages: A Difficult (Missing) Definition

As their name suggests, contiguous languages are spoken in geographically close, neighbouring territories. In the field of linguistics, *contiguous languages* are being studied in the framework of contact linguistics. There, the focus is set on phenomena such as language contamination, interference and calque, often in studies related to bilingualism and multilingualism. Contiguous languages are linked to the concept of *sprachbund* (Trubetzkoy 1923; 1930) namely a *linguistic area,* interpreted as the area where geographically adjacent languages converge, and that show structural similarities not always or not at all dependent on their degree of kinship with related languages. Linguistic areas are not, in any case, linguistically, socially, and historically uniform (Thomason 2000). These studies, however, are not followed by any reflection on education or language policy.

It is indeed important to consider that in Europe, in most cases, what we define here as 'border languages' corresponds to the languages of the so-called national minorities, in other words languages of linguistic communities that, for historical reasons (mostly wars), were divided from their *kin nation,* consequently finding themselves straddling two national territories in accordance with rules ratified by international treaties that defined their territoriality and protection, thus becoming, *de facto,* transnational languages with very different functions and characteristics in the society they belong to, due to their historical journey and the related local language policies (Williams 1991; Klatt 2013; Cavaion 2016).

Border languages, in the context of national minorities, belong in a meaningful way to communities which can benefit from schools using their own language of instruction. The issue instead becomes clear in the relationship with the majority community which sets up teaching of those languages in its own schools, not following international laws that oblige its presence, but following local language policies that are often the real and direct product of policies that are varyingly inclined and varyingly sensitive to understanding and promoting the importance of teaching the language of the national minority within the majority community.

This is why contiguous or border languages, when taught in majority community schools, are often identified by the name of the language of the neighbouring country. For instance, in Italy in the border area with France, '*Insegnamento della lingua francese/* French language teaching;' in France, at the border with Germany '*Enseignement de la langue allemande/* German language teaching.' As a result of this, they do not give any clues as to what their role and function is in the area, and sometimes come with misleading information. This can be seen in the case of Slovenian language teaching in Italian-medium schools, in the province of Trieste, where it is defined as 'Teaching of Slovenian as a foreign language [European]' (Cavaion 2018). This is contrary to Italian language teaching in the Slovenian coastal area, at present defined as 'Teaching of Italian as a second language,' where it assumes both the meaning of the language of the territory and the neighbouring country.

Therefore, the denomination of border languages in the areas where they are spoken lacks a definition of that language's role and function in relation to the territory that hosts (or is inhabited by) that language, the relationship with which the choice should therefore depend upon, according to Europe (European Commission 2017), of making such teaching useful, alongside the linguistic customs of its citizens. In fact, in the neutrality of categorising this type of instruction cannot be demonstrated if they take into consideration a distinction between standard language and eventual regional variety which proves to be functional in the local society. That is, from a neutral categorising we cannot understand whether local language educational policy assumes the responsibility of meeting the needs of 'a border community' and if an open dialogue with the users is promoted for co-creation of definitions of border language education which we would hope for.

If the lack of a shared denomination for contiguous or border languages in the field of applied linguistics and in the local educational language policies in the border regions is unhelpful to the research, the study of documentation related to their development by the European Union is, on the other hand, enlightening.

Contiguous or Border Languages: Old and New References from Europe

The European Council and European Commission declare contiguous or border languages as a 'category,' denominating them as *neighbouring languages,* stressing their important transnational function (Council of Europe 2005).

Europe has not dedicated much documentation to the border areas, their languages and the teaching of these languages. Nevertheless, such docu-

mentation does depict particularly rich and propositional reading with the only weak point being their non-binding nature.[1]

The first document to consider border languages was the 'Recommendation Rec (2005)3 of the Committee of Ministers on Teaching Neighbouring Languages in Border Regions' (Council of Europe 2005), a document which adopts as principle good neighbourly relationships, in the context of conventions and agreements of transborder cooperation, for the means of promoting plurilingualism in a pan-European context. The document takes on the objective of developing educational language policies by safeguarding or, as necessary, introducing, the instruction of a neighbour's language and their culture. The document's background is very interdisciplinary, that is, very attentive to the studies that consider border areas from a linguistic, historical, and political perspective. That includes:

- recommendations which take into account the results from research of modern languages and fields of language teaching and plurilingualism;
- the emphasis on the value of cultural diversity but also taking into account the transborder cooperation impeded by such linguistic and cultural diversity;
- the adoption of a principle of good neighbourliness as a base for a more free and tolerant Europe;
- examples of a rich experience of transborder educational cooperation as 'good practice' to prepare citizens of a united Europe;
- a cross reference with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages with, in reality, only a reference to Art. 14, dedicated to transnational cooperation.

The document represents the only European recommendation that specifically takes into account neighbour languages and the importance of mastering them. It discusses the importance of:

- stablishing conditions that would allow teaching institutions of transborder regions at all levels to safeguard/introduce the teaching of neighbouring languages;

[1] In fact, Europe includes Recommendations and Communications or Communication proposals, all documents which have the function of guiding member states whilst not obliging them to accept the proposed actions.

- encouraging different actors in transborder cooperation in the teaching and language sectors to become involved in transborder cooperation projects;
- trying to establish language reciprocity, while cooperating with a neighbouring country, that would make space for national languages but also for other languages spoken in the border area involved, be they regional languages or of the minority community.

The recommendation highlights two important, desirable aspects for border areas: respect for the diversity of existing languages along the boundaries – diversity which is impossible to generalise due to the diverse typologies of linguistic situations that characterise transborder regions (Klatt 2013) – and, within the sphere of diversity, the principle of reciprocity, in which it can be imagined that every country puts into effect every possible strategy to avoid any possibility of exercising power connected to the status of the involved languages.

Albert Raasch's study (2002) *Europe, Frontiers and Languages* certainly inspired the writing of the aforementioned Recommendation. It represents an analytical and thorough investigation of European border areas and an inspiring vision of the role that teaching and learning of a neighbour's language could have in border areas. According to the author, if on one hand Neighbouring Languages should be understood and 'read' through the analysis of their 'origins, movements, changes and transfers that determine the way in which people interpret them' (Raasch 2002, 10), on the other hand their teaching demonstrates a common will to overcome old barriers.

We consider it important to cite from this study the importance given to the necessity of developing awareness, mostly among teachers and students. It is a matter both of cultural awareness – that is, related to the role of their territory, of their region, of the importance of mastering the languages of their territory – and political awareness, in this case referring mostly to the teachers who have to undertake the responsibility of co-creating meanings of language education in border areas. The study also points out the necessity of creating institutional and administrative networks capable of providing the foundation of learning and teaching specifically adapted to the situation and to the circumstances of the border, and it indicates cross-border cooperation as a foundational strategy for linguistic education based on close contact.

Another interesting document, of great symbolic value, although not specifically addressed to border languages, is the study by Amin Maalouf,

A Rewarding Challenge: How the Multiplicity of Languages Could Strengthen Europe (European Commission 2007). It reports the proposition of the European Commission on the necessity of developing 'bilateral relationships among the people of the European Union,' mostly where conflicts have divided adjacent countries. Here we will quote it in full (pp. 16–17):

> Europe has arisen from several centuries of conflict between its nations and primarily between neighbours. Accordingly, to learn the language of a partner who happens to be a former – enemy is very important, both for its symbolic value as well as for its practical advantages. If there is to be greater cohesion between the countries of the European Union, it is not enough for them to simply all belong to the same entity, the bilateral links between each country and each partner must be cemented by powerful ties based in particular on the special place occupied, for the citizens of each country, by the language of the other.

The document highlights the importance of learning languages other than English, such as neighbouring languages, not for utilitarian criteria but rather following principles based on 'cultural affinity' (personal adoptive language) in order to improve the quality of relationships in terms of 'efficiency of exchanges' but also, or even more importantly, for 'the subtlety of human contact' and to reinforce 'the intensity and the solidity of people-to-people within our vast European family' (European Commission 2007, 10).

For the purposes of this essay it is important to refer also to some recent documents, also redacted by the European Council, of which the first one – 'Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Comprehensive Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Languages' (European Commission 2018) – without solely addressing border areas, promotes their potential by proposing important actions on integration and connection between the specificities of the border context and the wider context of social and cultural growth of Europe itself and its citizens, mostly for the purpose of mobility, and starting from transborder areas of language contact. This document, in fact, considers the promotion of competencies capable of responding to the need of mobility and to an approach that would favour a strong connection between academic learning and experience beyond academia.

A second document entirely dedicated to European border areas – 'Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions' (European Commission 2017) – presents to us a vision of Europe, through numbers, of its transborder areas that prompts us to reflect on the situation.

The border regions within the European Union, according to the document, occupy 40% of its territory and represent 30% of the population. It's worth stating that this is 150 million people, who generate 30% of Gross National Product and are characterised by a dynamic situation of transborder commuting, above all for professional reasons (European Commission 2017, 2). The document, based on a socio-economic study of border areas, reports underdevelopment and points towards recovery thanks to actions which include the strengthening of multilingualism in the same areas.

Border regions are described as places in which the process of European integration should be seen in a particularly positive way, or rather that it should be possible to carry out daily activities (studying, working, training, providing care or doing business) independently of the existence of national borders, but instead it has been identified that 'the inflexible use of different languages on both sides of a border increases the administrative burden as well as hampers meaningful exchanges between public administrations and individuals' (European Commission 2017, 13).

Concluding, a useful study for forming a picture of the situation of such an improvement in multilingual education in the border regions for the purposes of their social and economic emancipation (among others) could be to verify the application of Recommendation (2005)3 on the instruction of border languages in border regions, that is, if it has been cited or not among the reference documents for the construction of local language policies and neighbouring language curricula.

Europe does not only have internal borders, but also several 'external' ones, which put it in contact with nations, ethnicities, and languages which open towards other cultural realities, not always close by. Here, the historical complexities and intercultural relations and policies make it all the more complex.

And it is precisely with regard to the complexity of these areas where concrete action is still, and more than ever, necessary for their emancipation, that we write about the importance of learning and teaching border or neighbouring languages as a potential and necessary instrument for social integration and intercultural communication and for the necessity of creating common, shared, and widespread teaching.

Teaching Border Languages in Europe: A General, As Yet Unfeasible Picture, with Examples of Good Practices

We have tried to refer to a European document which summarises the situation of language teaching in all member states of the European Union. It

refers to a redacted report from 2017 from the Eurydice[2] network entitled *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe* (Eurydice 2017). The report gives information on the languages studied in European schools: what age students start to study a first and second foreign language, what level of knowledge the students should reach at the end of compulsory schooling, and how linguistic competencies are measured. In the document we searched for contiguous, border, or neighbouring languages amongst the categories of languages taught, but they are not mentioned. In the introduction to the Eurydice Report there is a list of languages that are classified as official in various European countries, including minority languages but without distinguishing between regional languages and national ethnic minority languages situated along the borders. This appears to be new evidence for the necessity of giving a name to the teaching of neighbouring country languages which could associate it with a recognisable category which would allow the recognition of its presence or absence.

Therefore we can, up to this point, state that at the moment it is not possible to provide a general picture of teaching of border languages at a European level because this category of linguistic teaching does not exist, although it is very likely that it is practised in a widespread and unregulated way, as in the examples we report below relative to good practices of neighbouring language teaching and learning.

Border/Neighbour Language Teaching in European and Local Cross-Border Projects: CICERO, Euregioschool, French Strategy, Contatti!

If official terminology, scientific studies and the application of European recommendations show us a glimpse of how much more work there is to be done, a positive and constructive example of contiguous/border/neighbour language teaching comes from a single programme that has not only harnessed the potential of this type of language teaching but has certainly also served as guidance for the programmes that have followed.

It is the case of the CICERO project, which was proposed as a coordination centre for the teaching of border languages at European level, and led from 2000 to 2003 by Ruud Halink (Netherlands) and by Albert Raasch (Ger-

[2] The Eurydice network – made up of national units situated in various European countries and coordinated by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency EACEA – among its duties works to understand and explain the organisation and the way in which the different European educational systems work, providing descriptions of the national systems of education (see http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice).

many), Gabriele Schmitz-Schwamborn (Netherlands), Ulrike Schwarz (Germany), and Juri Valge (Estonia), to spread good practices in border language teaching in the transborder areas of the participating subjects. It was a European project that provided for the establishment of an online database, which contained descriptions of the project, practical advice, names of experts and news which could contribute to improving the knowledge of said teaching.[3]

After CICERO and its portal, in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion in the 2000s, the Euregioschool project developed under the guidance of some representatives from the same CICERO project. Euregioschool aims to put schools situated along the Belgian-German-Netherlands border in touch with each other to undertake learning activities in the reciprocal language for the development and practical application of a model for the acquisition of precocious languages and to continue through cross-border contact. The students' learning progress is connected to the European reference framework through their linguistic portfolio and checked methodically.

The Euregioschool uses a trilingual website (German, French, Dutch) and a Teaching Guide. On the website,[4] the following text can be found:

> The Euregioschool is not a school in the true sense of the word, but an approach that tries to systematically integrate the teaching of languages with a partner school in the neighbouring country. By linking neighbouring language lessons with an exchange, learning neighbouring languages gains a dimension that is very often lacking in conventional foreign language teaching: authenticity.

It is precisely this concept of authenticity of language learning that brings together examples of programming here described. The geographical closeness of the schools involved in the reciprocal language learning allows communicative and genuine relational exchanges, that is a usefulness of the language learnt, and an effective co-creation of syllabi derived from the direct experience of contact between classes. Euregioschool for example, other than from a methodological perspective, takes on border language teaching with marked attention to curricula and the continuity between primary and secondary school.

[3] The CICERO Project is no longer available online; however, minimal documentation can still be found in the archives of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz (https://www.ecml.at/Home/tabid/59/language/en-GB/Default.aspx).

[4] See http://www.euregioschool.eu/de/schulung-lehrer.

A second geographical area that has demonstrated both policy and didactic attention towards the teaching of border languages is the region of Saar, on the border of France and Germany, through the strategy known as French Strategy.[5] This is much more than an inter-institutional project. Rather, it is a very ambitious regional strategy that certainly represents an important point of reference for other border regions in Europe.

The objective of the French Strategy is to render the Saar region a multilingual federal state within one generation – before 2043 – or rather that French, together with other European languages, becomes widely used together with German as the mother and official language of the state. This would render the Saar region, where multilingual teaching is already a consolidated practice, the only multilingual federal state in Germany. In fact, a series of bilingual nursery schools and 20 binational and trinational courses that are offered by the German-French University (DFH/UFA) already exist. Thanks to the excellent specialist and intercultural education that they receive, 70 percent of all those who graduate find a job within three months in a transborder area, characterised by many bilingual entrepreneurs (see the project site mentioned above).

In the south-east of Europe, along the Italian-Slovenian border, in the coastal area, we can find the project Contatti! which uses a ministerial website, a theoretical framework (Cavaion 2016), a methodological guide (Cavaion 2019), and promotes a specific tool for reflection on transborder encounters, that is a digital interactive autobiography.[6] The Contatti! project, funded by the Slovenia Research Agency (ARRS), is based on the pedagogical model for the teaching of border languages CoBLaLT (Contact-based-(neighbouring)Language-Learning-and-Teaching) (Cavaion 2016) which envisages the learning of an adjacent country's language through the methodological use of contact with speakers of that language, in a situation of virtual, mutual understanding that comes before, prepares, encourages, and accompanies the face-to-face meeting, or rather many meetings. The act of really seeing one another actually reflects the ultimate goal and the motivational lever, both from the perspective of language learning and as a relational act for the linguistic and intercultural progress and the growth of active citizenship, as carried out through the act of learning each other's culture and language.

In this area, despite the fact that the programme of mutual learning mo-

[5] See https://www.saarland.de/229459.html.

[6] See http://contatti.si/home.page.

bilised students, teachers, supervisors, and families, and brought important positive results in terms of motivation for neighbouring language learning and in terms of pedagogic innovation (Cavaion 2016; 2019), the project is hampered by the lack of transborder language policies, more precisely by the lack of language policy on the Italian side of the border – in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region – that would potentially emancipate the region and its citizens through the widespread introduction of teaching its regional and border languages.

Conclusions

Europe demonstrates that it has taken on both the importance as well as the presence of programming regarding the teaching of border/neighbouring country languages in some transborder areas, by promoting policies that include the category of border languages in documents regarding both the border areas (Council of Europe 2005; European Commission 2017) and the global approach of European language education (European Commission 2018).

However, such proposals are not applied or applicable, in part due to the non-binding nature of the aforementioned documents, but essentially for a lack of recognition at the single state member level of the concept of a 'border/neighbouring country language' and therefore, also of a conscious and coherent teaching of these languages. On the other hand, examples of good practices exist which could serve as a guidance for the foundations of a new field of study within applied linguistics research.

Opening a scientific debate on the nature and the possible specific methodologies for the instruction of contiguous/border/neighbouring (country) languages is, in our opinion, urgent. This is more important than ever in a Europe that is suffering from protectionism that risks frustrating the efforts of a European Union not only based on cultural ethnic linguistic diversity but inspired by this, enriched for example by the opportunity for social, intercultural, and economic growth that the ethnic-linguistic border crossroads can offer if they are appreciated in the local educational language policies.

References

Cavaion, Irina Moira. 2016. *Let's contact! An Introductory Study to CoBLaLT.* Koper: Annales.

———. 2018. 'Aree di confine e formazione degli insegnanti di LS: lo sloveno nelle scuole nell'area di confine italo-slovena.' *Scuola e Lingue Moderne* 56 (7–9): 13–18.

———. 2019. *Guida alla didattica del contatto: insegnare ed apprendere le lingue del vicino attraverso il contatto transfrontaliero.* Koper: Annales. https://www.zrs-kp.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Contatti_2019_ITA.pdf

Council of Europe. 2005. 'Recommendation Rec (2005)3 of the Committee of Ministers on Teaching Neighbouring Languages in Border Regions.' Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

European Commission. 2007. *A Rewarding Challenge: How Language Diversity Could Strengthen Europe.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

———. 2017. 'Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions.' COM(2017) 534 final, European Commission, Brussels.

———. 2018. 'Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Comprehensive Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Languages.' COM(2018) 272 final, European Commission, Brussels.

Eurydice. 2017. *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Klatt, Martin. 2013. 'National Minorities as a Model for Cross-Border Integration: Lessons from Schleswig.' In *Integration und (trans-)regionale Identitäten,* edited by Joachim Beck and Birte Wassenberg, 301–19. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.

Raasch, Albert. 2002. *L'Europe, les frontières et les langues: guide pour l'élaboration des politiques linguistiques éducatives en Europe – de la diversité linguistique à l'éducation plurilingue: étude de référence.* Strasbourg: Conseil de l'Europe.

Thomason, Susan. 2000. 'Linguistic Areas and Language History.' *Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics* 28: 311–27.

Trubetzkoy, Nikolai S. 1923. 'Vavilonskaja bašnja i smešenie jazykov' *Evrazijskij vremennik* 3:107–24.

———. 1930. 'Proposition 16. Über den Sprachbund.' *Actes du premier congrès international des linguistes à la Haye, du 10–15 avril 1928,* 17–18. Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff.

Williams, Colin H. 1991. *Linguistic Minorities, Society, and Territory.* Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

Manifestation of Multilingualism in School Ideology, Environment and Practice: An Ethnographic Survey of Case Examples from Schools in Europe

Ülle Säälik
Narva College, Estonian Military Academy,
University of Tartu, Estonia
ulle.saalik@ut.ee

The changing world with spreading immigration, expanding linguistic and cultural variety, and growing demand for implementing inclusion in education has created a difficult situation, challenging for teachers, educators, and policy makers. The aim of education is no longer academic achievement, but educational laws state the need for preparing pupils for life in linguistically and culturally diverse societies, demanding systematic analyses and creative approaches (e.g. Anderson 2011; Piccardo 2017). Promoting one's ability to cope with and within different language environments is believed to give the person several advantages, such as being more successful, easily adapting to changes and fully participating in societies (e.g. Cenoz 2009; Housen 2002). Schools promoting the use of two or more languages, aiming at multilingualism and multiliteracy in one way or another, were the target of the current ethnographic research in which the real-life observations and free form interviews in several schools in Europe were made.

Keywords: multilingualism, school, educational policy

Some countries have long traditions and well-working systems for dealing with people from different backgrounds and with different languages, while others struggle hard to implement necessary changes to welcome refugees and newcomers or simply cope with the diversity of the local community. How to offer the normative level of education to those with a home language different than the instructional language at schools, minorities in the area or even marginalized population groups, if the educators do not know how to manage it? The basis for the current research is that everyone deserves the possibility of receiving appropriate education, and therefore their different home language must not be seen as a problem to be eliminated, but rather as a variety to be recognized.

Several authors have argued about the issue of multiple languages in the

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.59-75

educational context, proposing typologies, theoretical models, principles, and effect factors (e.g. Baker 1996; Cenoz 2009; García 2009; Mehisto and Genesee 2015, etc.). The research papers on the topic mostly focus on classroom practices, or student, teacher or school characteristics, but the overall context, ideology or community attitudes and expectations behind it all are often left unconsidered. Yet, the way people think about the issues in education affects the ways these issues are handled. As for the issue of several languages in education, Auer and Wei (2009, 3) stated one of the most fundamental questions as follows: Do we see monolingualism as a norm, and multilingualism as a problem that needs to be 'cured' or the other way around? The variety of approaches, policy statements, educational practices, and the rationale behind these decisions can be confusingly varied, indeed. It is not always clear to the participants in education why the things are approached one way or another, but sometimes these approaches may be perceived as unfair, unjust or unreasonable. This is the reason why policy, ideology and attitudes should be carefully reflected on before applying different educational practices, and this frame of mind should be clearly and consistently communicated to all the participants.

The present paper proposes a short ethnographic overview of several different cases from all over Europe, with different school ideologies and practices for dealing with students with different home languages, with the aim of presenting the variety of approaches and customary social behaviours, reasoning for the choices, the views of social life, etc., collected while participating and communicating with the members of the studied groups, which is the essence of ethnographic studies (Estenberg 2002, 58–59). Results of participating observations, document analyses and participant interviews are presented, and examples of educational practices alongside the ideology and attitudes behind them are discussed. Six cases of schools from Germany, Italy, Latvia, Finland, and Estonia are presented in the current paper, yet they are not the representatives of those countries, but must be perceived rather as autonomous examples which give us certain framing for different possibilities of how to approach the issue of multiple languages in education. The results were linked with the known ideologies, programme types, and pedagogical practices based on García (2009), and Reljić, Ferring and Martin (2015) (see figure 1).

The issue of language may be seen as an obligation or a right, a problem, an opportunity or as a resource. The issue of languages in education is believed to be intertwined with ideological aspects so that no-one is entirely free of biases, which might have influence on research, as well as political deci-

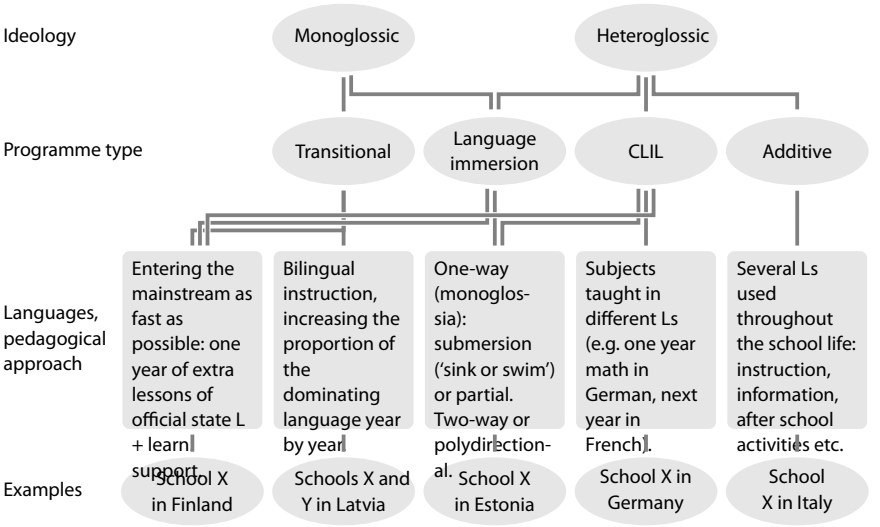


Figure 1 Examples of Schools' Approaches Linked with the Ideologies, Programme Types, and Pedagogical Practices (author's inference of results based on theory by García (2009), and Reljić, Ferring, and Martin (2015))

sions (Rossell and Baker 1996, cited in Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass 2005, 573).

Ideologies may be based on the ambition to obtain the standards of the dominating language and for other languages to be strictly considered as foreign languages, taught in separate classrooms as separate subjects, often referred to as a weak or subtractive language programme, transitioning or submerging learners into school and society with its dominating language environment. The result of such an approach is the ability to use the dominating language plus one or two separate foreign languages, which ends up as parallel *monolingualism* or *monoglossia.* A more liberal approach emphasizing principles of social justice, also referred to as a strong or additive programme, considers languages as an added value and the knowledge of other languages as additive, aiming at the entwined ability to use several languages smoothly as *bilingualism, plurilingualism, heteroglossia* (e.g. Busch 2015; García 2009; Reljić, Ferring, and, Martin 2015; Weber 2014).

School X in Finland: Decades of Experience with Teaching Immigrant Children

Background

De jure a bilingual country with two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, *de facto* a multilingual and multicultural country with a growing diversity

of population. The numbers of people with an immigrant background have rapidly increased, for example in 2005 there were about 150 thousand; in 2017 it was already 360 thousand people.[1] The government has initiated a national programme called Vastaantulo (Meeting in the Middle) to help them fit into the educational system as well as in society, and to study and develop the process of school integration of newcomers' children.[2] The first year after entering the school system is called the year of the Finnish language when children mostly learn the language and get accustomed to school. There are several support systems to help newcomers cope with learning in the classrooms with Finnish as an instructional language. The local municipality is obliged to offer some learning of each one's mother tongue, should the family wish for it, yet, the opportunity is not used very often, as the schooling may not be available at that particular school, but one may have to travel to another school a few times a week, and that is found to be too inconvenient.

The observed primary school had almost one third of pupils with an immigrant background, varying highly according to their linguistic, socioeconomic and cultural background.

Inputs: Policy, Resources, Curriculum

The school policy was driven by the regional mission and the need to take multilingualism and multiculturalism into consideration. The proportion of the population with a migrant background in the area was rather high with a rather low socioeconomic status. The school staff and management shared a common accepting and tolerant attitude. They had had a long time experience with teaching children from other countries and with other home language, they had come up with solutions to it, and thus dealing with immigrant children was perceived as a normal part of their job.

The school was well equipped with necessary technical devices such as document projectors, adjustable tables and chairs as well as printer-scanners to create one's own handouts with coloured printing, etc. There were extra resources available from the municipality should the family need some extra support, learning aid, etc. Fourteen teachers had had preparation for dealing with children with special educational needs. Most groups were taught with two teachers present, and some students had assistants to support their learning and coping in the school environment.

The regular teacher training does not include preparation for teaching learners with a home language other than the school instructional language

[1] See http://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa_en.html.
[2] See https://blogs.helsinki.fi/vastaantulo/in-english/.

but teaching in a multicultural context as well as the principles of inclusive education are present in the teacher training curricula. In-service training about content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is also available.

There was a lack of learning materials available for special needs, especially for linguistic needs of children with a different home language. The teachers said they often prepare their own materials and share them in unofficial teacher support groups.

After the first year, the stem of the curriculum was the same for everyone with slight differences for learners with Finnish as the mother tongue (S1) or as a foreign language (S2). There was one instructional language (Finnish), and other languages were learnt as separate foreign language subjects. Language immersion practice was used during the first years, and CLIL methodology throughout the primary level. By the end of compulsory primary education, language proficiency ought to be equal. The ideology towards languages appeared to be transitional with the goal for students to enter mainstream education as quickly as possible, and for every citizen to obtain one of the official national languages (Finnish) to converge into society.

Processes: Climate, Attitudes, Practices and Cooperation

The overall social and emotional atmosphere in the school felt calm and friendly, no segregation was detected. Children were playing outdoors during the breaks and sitting around the schoolhouse with no visible grouping according to skin colour or other cultural characteristics. The school environment appeared to be culturally sensitive and welcoming of differences as there are several posters, drawings or signs in different languages and objects that present different cultures, such as flags or other symbols (figure 2).

The school staff expressed support for inclusion and an individual approach in education. They said that there was no need or no time to differentiate their teaching specially towards different languages or cultures, but multilingualism and multiculturalism as such were appreciated and valued. 'They are all the same. They are all our pupils,' they said. Collaboration between staff members appeared to be the shared key value. While younger learners seemed very proud to point out the languages they speak and countries they come from, in older groups the pupils acted upset when the teacher asked about their origin. They seemed to be reluctant to reply about their origin or home language, continuing speaking in Finnish.

The teaching approach on the primary level appeared inclusive and tolerant in many ways, considering individual needs as a very natural way of teaching in compulsory education. The language of instruction is Finnish, yet the preparatory year included some English. Learning skills were also devel-

Figure 2

The Poster on the Classroom Door Welcomes Everyone in a Large Variety of Languages That Are Spoken by Children Studying in That Class

oped during teaching as well as norms of behaviour in the academic context such as raising one's hand when being ready to give a reply to the teacher's questions. The learning routine seemed to be mostly well taken up and that seemed to make the pupils feel comfortable and confident in this learning situation.

The elements of self-directed learning and collaborative learning were noticed. Dialogical teaching, student-centeredness and student involvement in learning dominated in all observed lessons. Active and helpful children also offered some peer-support while learning. The teacher helped by using prompts, hand gestures, facial impressions and mimicking, but then gave children the initiative. The child could decide whether he or she wanted someone to help him or her as well as let other children give feedback to the given answers and did not only approve the replies by her/himself as the authority.

Schools X and Y in Latvia: Bilingual Teaching and Increase of Latvian Step-by-Step

Background

De jure the official language is Latvian, *de facto* about half of the population are non-Latvians, e.g. in this capital area the population consists of 47% Lat-

Table 1 An Example of a School Curriculum and the Change in the Proportion of the Languages of Instruction during the Period of Nine Years

Year	Latvian	Foreign	Russian	Bilingual
Year 9	64.71	11.76	23.53	0.00
Year 8	61.76	11.76	26.48	0.00
Year 7	53.13	12.50	15.62	18.75
Year 6	50.00	13.33	16.67	20.00
Year 5	46.43	14.28	39.29	0.00
Year 4	42.31	15.38	34.62	7.69
Year 3	37.50	12.50	41.67	8.33
Year 2	34.78	4.35	47.83	13.04
Year 1	27.27	4.55	50.00	18.18

vians, 37% Russians, and 16% others. The compulsory official language used in national and municipal institutions is also Latvian.[3] The language of instruction in higher education institutions as well as in vocational schools is Latvian. Schools with Russian as the language of instruction are called minority schools. In schools X and Y the pupils' home language was Russian.

Inputs: Policy, Resources, Curriculum

The schools' policy was driven by the current national reforms. As the pupils' home language is different from the national language of the country, the school needed to implement a step-by-step transition to only Latvian as the language of instruction (table 1), which was boosted by the pressure of national exams previously being held in either Russian or Latvian, then in Latvian with the possibility to answer in Russian and finally demanding responses only in Latvian. As schools are regularly rated in the country according to exam results and other outcomes by the Ministry of Education, and school X had just been through the accreditation and external evaluation processes, that had put extra pressure on the school to follow the policy demands of national educational reforms. The school had already introduced having several subjects taught in two languages (referred to as bilingual classrooms) and that needed some further adjustments such as implementing bilingual lessons regularly and systematically throughout all school years, as shown in table 1.

Teachers must have C2 level of Latvian, which is carefully checked by the government, and due to that schools tend to report not having enough qual-

[3] See http://www.izm.gov.lv/en/education/education-system-in-latvia.

Figure 3

Latvian National Symbols Displayed Everywhere in the School Environment Due to the Recent 100th Anniversary of the Independence of the Latvian Republic

ified teachers. It was possible for schools to get extra funding for teaching Latvian, but as the head of the school said, 'What can you do with the money, when there is no-one to send to the classrooms as most teachers work with heavy overload already now?' There was also a lack of learning resources, especially for bilingual classrooms. This issue was solved by the heads of schools and teachers by preparing and publishing their own bilingual books. There were support specialists available such as speech therapists, psychologists or specialists in social pedagogy.

Processes: Climate, Attitudes, Practices

National symbols of Latvia were manifested everywhere in the schoolhouses (figure 3). Achievement, progress, and contemporariness seemed to be highly valued in the schools. Displays with honor certificates and trophies as well as recognitions of international projects conducted were displayed in the most visible places (figure 4).

Most official signs were either in Latvian or in Latvian and English, while non-official notices such as behavioural instructions or attention signs were in Russian (figure 5). The instruction in the classrooms was given mostly in Latvian with occasional explanations in Russian.

Figure 4

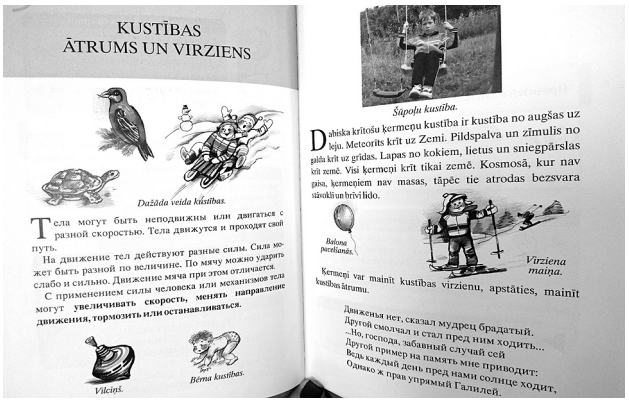
Displays with Honor Certificates, Trophies and Recognitions of International Projects Conducted Put on Display in the Most Visible Places

Figure 5

Informal Notifications Often Displayed in Russian

Informing and persuading parents was considered highly important before the changes that took place a few years ago. The school staff felt some agitation from parents, but after some persuasion of how useful the new system would be for their children, and how smoothly and safely the transition would take place, the situation cooled down.

The attitude towards the increasing proportion of Latvian was ambivalent: somehow it seemed to have caused problems and irritation, but the understanding of its uses and usefulness was present. There were still some movements in the society accusing the government of discrimination of the human rights of the Russian-speaking population due to this transition to the


KUSTĪBAS
ĀTRUMS UN VIRZIENS

Dažāda veida kustības.

Тела могут быть неподвижны или двигаться с разной скоростью. Тела движутся и проходят свой путь.

На движение тел действуют разные силы. Сила может быть разной по величине. По мячу можно ударить слабо и сильно. Движение мяча при этом отличается.

С применением силы человека или механизмов тела могут **увеличивать скорость, менять направление движения, тормозить или останавливаться.**

Vilciņš. Bērna kustības.

Šūpoļu kustība.

Dabiska krītošu ķermeņu kustība ir kustība no augšas uz leju. Meteorīts krīt uz Zemi. Pildspalva un zīmulis no galda krīt uz grīdas. Lapas no kokiem, lietus un sniegpārslas krīt zemē. Visi ķermeņi krīt tikai zemē. Kosmosā, kur nav gaisa, ķermeņiem nav masas, tāpēc tie atrodas bezsvara stāvoklī un brīvi lido.

Balona pacelšanās. Virziena maiņa.

Ķermeņi var mainīt kustības virzienu, apstāties, mainīt kustības ātrumu.

Движенья нет, сказал мудрец брадатый.
Другой смолчал и стал пред ним ходить...
–Но, господа, забавный случай сей
Другой пример на память мне приводит:
Ведь каждый день пред нами солнце ходит,
Однако ж прав упрямый Галилей.

Figure 6

Example of a Bilingual Textbook

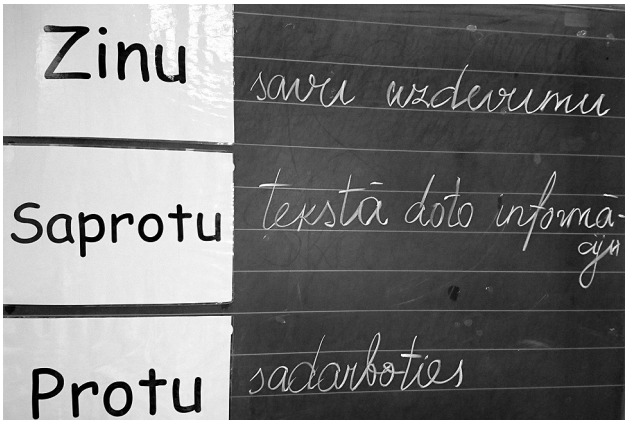


Figure 7

Learning Outcomes of 'Know, Understand, Can Do' Permanently Displayed on the Class Board for a Teacher to Add Expected Outcomes of the Current Learning Activity

Latvian language. Yet, people felt the tension had relieved after people realized it would give children a better head start and opportunities in life. The schools also contributed to improvement of bilingual learning by creating and publishing their own textbooks, in which some tasks were in Latvian and others in Russian or some more difficult parts were explained in Russian while accompanying a task in Latvian (figure 6).

The use of contemporary educational practices was detectable in classrooms. On the classroom boards there were permanent signs referring to learning outputs which the teacher would point out or write at the beginning of the lesson, and at the end of the lesson the teacher would ask children to assess if they achieved those goals, although they were not always used (figure 7). Student-centred methods were used, but the teachers still appeared to be strictly leading the process, acting as disciplinarians and pushing children to keep a fast pace in learning.

Figure 8 A Symbolic Message at the Main Entrance Promoting the 'Borderless'-Mind-Set

School X in Germany near the Border of France: Dynamic Bilingual Curriculum as a Natural Way to Learn

Background

The school is located in Germany, but very close to France. The population can also be described as diverse, mostly German and French speakers, but also with a high rate of immigrants and refugees. The need for better linguistic skills has been accepted for decades already both by parents and school.

Inputs: Policy, Resources, Curriculum

The school policy was driven by the local demographic situation and the need to develop the competence of both languages. It had officially been bilingual for decades after the treaty between the two countries, also funded by the two countries. Families could choose the intensity or direction of the curriculum as well as the choice of languages in which learning will take place. For example, maths could be studied as a regular or intense course in German for some years and then in French for some years, etc. The principle of choosing teachers was that he or she should be a native speaker of that instructional language to avoid the negative effect of learners being exposed to poor language.

Processes: Climate, Attitudes, Practices

The school was very popular among parents on both sides of the country border. Bilingual teaching aiming at competence in both target languages was considered a great advantage for children. Therefore, the attitudes of learners all over the school towards learning could be described as positive, involved and enthusiastic. Shifting between the languages among both chil-

Figure 9
An Example of a Hands-on Learning Method in a Music Lesson, Where Colourful M&Ms Sweets Were Used as Notes to Set on Staves and Then Play the Melody, Sharing the Result with a Peer

dren and staff was natural and smooth during the lessons as well as breaks. A teacher would give instructions in French, then approach a child in German, then repeat in French again, checking for understanding and continuing in French. One can also find manifestations of tolerance, for example the rainbow-coloured sign stating 'borderless' near the front door (figure 8).

The educational practices in the classrooms had good dynamics with enthusiastic warm-ups, short, clear explanations and demonstration followed by playful practice. For example, the rhythms of tunes were set on music staves using M&Ms colourful sweets, and then a pupil tried to play the tune set by his/her friend (figure 9).

School X in Italy: Hobby Classes Conducted in Several Languages as Part of Curriculum and Everyday Practice, Arts, Music and Dance Seen as a Universally Understood Language

Background

De jure a trilingual area (Italian, German and Ladin), *de facto* multilingual and multicultural with a growing number of migrants and refugees. The area, although trilingual for a long time, has rather strong segregation in the community. There may be Italian shops and German shops with customers mostly of the same home language. There is also a demand at the university to provide courses in all those languages, but certainly in separate groups.

Inputs: Policy, Resources, Curriculum

School policy was driven by the need to offer good education both to local children and to those with a migrant background as well as with a refugee background and minor experience of schooling, if hardly any at all. School life was based on the belief that every child can do something very well, and that

arts, music, dance, etc. were a universal language understood by everyone, offering everyone a chance to feel competent, included, and accepted even if failing in the main instructional language(s) of the school. It was considered highly important to build a positive attitude towards school and learning in general and to decrease anxiety and discomfort, which often occurred in the case of children arriving from countries in crisis or in war.

Processes: Climate, Attitudes, Practices

It should be noted that it is not very common for a school in Italy to make its own decisions about its policy and practices. The educators expressed their worries about the governmental policy being too rigid and not giving the school enough autonomy in such decisions. The head of that school was convinced that their approach was the best for their situation and kept proving it to the authorities as well. Yet, the tension between governmental demands and the school's choices was not at all perceived in the school environment. The overall atmosphere was rather joyful, free and full of positive energy which reflected from the energetic actions in the classrooms, both teachers' and children's faces or from the nature of children's art work displays that were presented all over the school.

After-school activities were a regular part of the curriculum in this school. It means that besides regular school subjects the children attend hobby-classes. These hobby-classes take place several times a week, and the instruction might be given in a variety of languages, sometimes in Italian, sometimes in English or German or in the language which the teacher speaks. It was believed that one can follow dance movements or sing along even if not understanding every word the teacher says, and that language awareness would increase in such an immersive environment, first getting used to the language and then starting using it.

At the beginning of the school year children could try out several options, and then they would choose one they would like to go on with during the rest of the school year. The autonomy given to children by that choice of hobby-classes was probably one of the reasons why children seemed so devoted and diligent while practicing playing musical instruments or circus acts.

School X in Estonia: Examples of Implementing Immersion and CLIL in the Context of Monoglossic Educational Ideology

Background, Inputs: Policy, Resources, Curriculum

School X is located in Estonia in the area with a population speaking mostly Russian, yet the education policy and regulations demand at least 60% of

Figure 10
Not Only Talking Walls, But Also Talking Stair Steps in the Schoolhouse

Estonian as the language of instruction in upper-secondary schools, which puts some pressure on the school in finding ways of getting their students to that level of being able to use Estonian. It is rather popular in the area to have language immersion applied at the lower primary level of education.

Processes: Climate, Attitudes, Practices

Everywhere in the school one could notice a variety of visual representations of the language which is seen as the target language. There were not only talking walls, but also talking stair steps (figure 10), which were expected to support language acquisition. The elements of educational tools used in language immersion appear in most primary classrooms (e.g. pictograms, object labels etc.), yet there were less and less supporting elements in rooms for older students.

The school environment itself was a mixture of old soviet-time relicts such as cloakrooms with metal bars or rigid two-place desks in rows alongside some contemporary technology elements such as digital screens or vending machines (figure 11). In school halls the staff had put some effort into creating some elements that stimulate students to move around, such as hopscotch or balance trails, which is a growing trend in Estonian schools. Yet here, the painted figures seem to be fading already, which means this school has been working on trendy elements for quite some time already. Also, in the classrooms one could observe elements of contemporary learning approaches such as learning aims on the board (I know, I understand, I can do) or talking walls everywhere. The teachers applied a variety of lan-

Figure 11
Modern and Bygone-Times Elements in the School Environment: Digital Information Screen, Digital Welcome Display Using Three Different Languages, a Beverage Vending Machine Alongside a Cage-Like Barred and Locked Cloakroom

guage immersion methods in primary classrooms, but also exploited intensive textbook-workbook practice with the 'teacher asks-student answers'-manner to achieve better results, as they said. In secondary classrooms more of a teacher-centred approach was observed.

Discussion

When going to visit a school in another country it is highly relevant to keep in mind that before comparing of the seen with what we know about education and before making any judgements, one should be aware of the educational setting made up of the educational policy, traditions, cultural or demographic aspects, etc. Seeing inspiring methods or fascinating approaches somewhere abroad becomes developmentally useful if one considers the context, regulations and people's mindsets about the arguments for such solutions. Another important aspect is to spend some time in those schools, truly be there as part of their everyday life and see, hear and perceive what lies behind their understanding.

The allocation of the school's ideology and practice into certain specified categories, as shown in figure 2, was created by the author after careful consideration of the essence of categories with strong emphasis on the objectives of education in those schools and its comparison with what was perceived while participating, observing, and questioning. The fear of being judged poorly or accused of being not very contemporary and not very effective was felt more in the post-soviet countries and much less in conventional European countries. In Estonia and Latvia school heads tended to give more evidence of their good results and reputation, sometimes tending to apologize for not being able to implement all useful ideas or innovative equipment so far, and teachers appeared keener on showing all their repertoire of

methods in one lesson, while children did not always recognize the practice, referring to the method not being applied often enough to be recognized by children.

As an educator, adapting a single method or an approach in one's classroom or schools may seem a feasible task, while introducing the whole programme or ideology may be perceived as too complicated and hard to do, therefore the approach may die out after the enthusiast of the school leaves. Although the methods of language immersion have been accepted in very many educational institutions in Estonia, the wider and more tolerant ideology of heteroglossia is not easily accepted. Despite having the competence of three languages present in the Italian area, instead of making use of such an advantage for true development of multilingualism in education and promotion of heteroglossia, the schools and universities mostly separate their students by their language.

It can be concluded that the broader awareness of diversity of languages as well as the tolerance towards such diversity still need to be disseminated. To achieve the coherence between educational policy, school policy and practice and people's mind-set and actions in our schools as well as community, some more research in this field needs to be conducted with a wider approach involving all the different levels of education and considering the context as well.

Acknowledgements

The school visits took place as part of the Erasmus+ Project funded by the European Union and the Estonian Research Council's programme RITA supported by the European Regional Development Fund.

References

Anderson, Jim. 2011. 'Reshaping Pedagogies for a Plurilingual Agenda.' *Language Learning Journal* 39 (2): 135–47.

Auer, Peter, and Li Wei. 2009. 'Introduction: Multilingualism as a problem? Monolingualism as a problem?' In *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication,* edited by Peter Auer and Li Wei, 1–14. Berlin: Mounton the Gruyter.

Baker, Colin. 1996. *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism.* 2nd ed. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Busch, Barbara. 2015. 'Linguistic repertoire and Spracherleben, the Lived Experience of Language.' Working papers in Urban Language & Literacies 148, King's College London, Centre for Language Discourse & Communication, London.

Cenoz, Jasone. 2009. *Towards Multilingual Education: Basque Educational Research from an International Perspective*. Bristol and Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.

Estenberg, Kristin G. 2002. *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

García, Ofelia. 2009. *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Housen, Alex. 2002. Processes and Outcomes in the European Schools Model of Multilingual Education. *Bilingual Research Journal* 26 (1): 43–62.

Mehisto, Peeter, and Fred Genesee, eds. 2015. *Building Bilingual Education Systems: Forces, Mechanism Sand Counterweights.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Piccardo, Enrica. 2017. 'Plurilingualism as a Catalyst for Creativity in Superdiverse Societies: A Systemic Analysis.' *Frontiers in Psychology* 8 (2169): 1–13.

Reljić, Gabrijela, Dieter Ferring, and Romain Martin. 2015. 'A Meta-Analysis on the Effectiveness of Bilingual Programs in Europe.' *Review of Educational Research* 85 (1): 92–128.

Rolstad, Kellie, Kate Mahoney, and Gene V. Glass. 2005. 'The big Picture: A Meta-Analysis of Program Effectiveness Research on English Language Learners.' *Educational Policy* 19:572–94.

Rossell, Christine H., and Keith Baker. 1996. 'The Educational Effectiveness of Bilingual Education.' *Research in the Teaching of English* 30 (1): 7–74.

Weber, Jean Jacques. 2014. *Flexible Multilingual Education: Putting Children's Needs First*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Perceived Importance of English and Its Connection to Learning Motivation and Foreign Language Anxiety

Mojca Žefran
Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Slovenia
mojca.zefran@pef.upr.si

The paper focuses on the students' perception of the role of English as a foreign language and the correlation between the perceived importance of English to students' motivation for learning English and the levels of foreign language anxiety. The first part examines the theoretical aspects of foreign language learning motivation and foreign language anxiety. The second part presents the results of a study which was part of a larger-scale research carried out among 673 students and six teachers. A mixed methods approach was used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data. The results suggest that students' perceptions of English have a considerable effect on their motivation and foreign language anxiety. As the study revealed, the perceived importance of the English language can be a cause of high motivation for learning English, but also one of the possible sources of foreign language anxiety among students.

Keywords: perceived importance of English, foreign language learning motivation, foreign language anxiety

Introduction

In today's society, an individual is required to have a wide repertoire of competences and mastering a foreign language is undoubtedly one of them. One of the primary objectives of the EU language policy is that every European citizen should master two other languages in addition to their mother tongue (European parliament 2015). The most important foreign language is undoubtedly English, which has become the dominant global language (Pennycook 1999; Ryan 2006). According to *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe* (Eurydice 2017), the number of pupils learning at least one foreign language in Slovenian primary schools rose by at least 25% between the years 2005 and 2014, the number of students learning at least two foreign languages in lower secondary education increased by more than 30%, whereas the number of students learning at least two foreign languages in upper secondary education remained relatively stable as it was already higher than 95%. A higher proportion of pupils and students learning one or more foreign languages is partly due to the changes in the education system, such

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.77-93

as the implementation of compulsory foreign language learning in the 2nd grade of primary school.

The Eurydice data also shows that despite the wide variety of languages spoken in the EU, the most studied foreign language in Europe is English (Eurydice 2017). The area of English as a lingua franca has become a discipline in its own right which has been investigated from multiple perspectives (Bratož and Žefran 2012; Crystal 2012; Čeh 2012; House 2003; Jenkins 2007; Kachru 1992; Seidlhofer 2005) and the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) stresses the value of learning English. Given the dominant status of English in the world as well as in Slovenia, it is clear that our society places great emphasis on the importance of learning English as a foreign language. What is more, mastery of the English language is often taken for granted leading to high expectations with respect to English language proficiency. As a result, language learners are often under pressure to perform in English which may lead to foreign language anxiety, fear from failure and negative attitudes towards language learning. Therefore, the aim of our research was to investigate how students perceive the role of English as a foreign language and the correlation between the perceived importance of English to students' motivation for learning English and the levels of foreign language anxiety.

Theoretical Background

Our research focuses on the area of individual differences in language learning which, according to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, 2), involve all the characteristics in which individuals may differ from each other. When considering individual differences relevant in the field of language learning, the majority of authors in the field focus on relatively stable dimensions that fulfil two criteria: are applicable to everyone and discriminate among individuals. Research on individual differences in language learning began with the study of language aptitude – first in the 1930s with Symonds' Foreign language prognosis test and later in the 1950s and 1960s with Carroll and Sapon's Modern Language Aptitude Test (1959). At that time researchers also started focusing on motivation; the most prominent authors of the time being Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert who later presented a theory that identified several social psychological factors affecting foreign language acquisition (Gardner and Lambert 1972). This was the foundation of Gardner's socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner 1985), which incorporates covers several learner characteristics influencing foreign language acquisition, such as intelligence, language aptitude and language learning strategies. In addition to these characteristics, Gardner's model incorporates mo-

tivation, language attitudes and language anxiety, which have lately been researched and studied extensively by several authors.

Motivation

Foreign language learning motivation is undoubtedly one of the main factors affecting foreign language acquisition. As Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, 72) put it, without sufficient motivation even individuals with exceptional abilities cannot achieve long-term goals, whereas high levels of motivation can compensate for lack of language aptitude or poor learning conditions. Considerable attention has been dedicated to the topic of FL motivation in the past few decades (see Apple, DaSilva, and Fellner 2013, Csizer and Magid 2014; Dörnyei, MacIntyre and, Henry 2015; Dörnyei and Schmidt 2001; Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009; Lasagabaster, Doiz, and Sierra 2014; Murray, Gao, and Lamb 2011; Ushioda 2013). One of the reasons why motivation is such an appealing concept for researchers may be in the fact that it is a complex and dynamic concept. As argued by Gardner (2006), motivation as a concept cannot be measured with a single scale but in order to measure it, one can describe the characteristics of a motivated individual. According to Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014) definitions of motivation change depending on the theoretical approach of the researcher. Regardless of the differences between different definitions, various motivation models draw very similar conclusions and the theories, most importantly, do not contradict each other but rather focus on different concepts and processes (Gardner and Clément 1990).

Instead of examining the theoretical nuances of different models, Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014, 108–14), similarly to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, 73–4), look into the history of FL research which can be divided into three periods which examine the concept from different perspectives: 'the social psychological period,' 'the cognitive-situated period' and 'the process-oriented period.' The first period of FL motivation research (the social psychological period) began in 1959 with Robert Gardner as the leading author of the time. However, Gardner was not the only researcher looking into motivation. Several other theories and models were developed: Schumann's *acculturation theory* (Schumann 1978; 1986), Clément's *social context model* (Clément 1980) and *intergroup model* by Giles and Byrne (1982). In the 1990s, we then witnessed 'the cognitive-situated period,' which was the result of a considerable conceptual gap in motivation studies between the fields of foreign language acquisition and educational psychology. Authors tried to move away from social psychology towards the cognitive theories originally developed in 'non-L2-specific research,' for example Deci and Ryan's (1985; 2009)

self-determination theory. And finally, following *the cognitive-situated period,* there is 'the process-oriented period' or as Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) also call it 'the socio-dynamic period,' which understands motivation as a dynamic factor rather than a static characteristic of an individual. Research in this period focuses on changes in motivation, particularly resulting from the interaction between individuals and contexts also taking into account the concept of temporal variation. Some of the theories developed in recent years are *the Process Model* by Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), the *person-in-context relational view* by Ushioda (2009), *the 'L2 motivational self' system* (Dörnyei 2005), and the *complex dynamics systems perspectives* (Ellis in Larsen-Freeman 2006; Dörnyei 2009).

Foreign Language Anxiety

According to Scovel (1991, 18) 'anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object.' Psychologists differentiate between two types of anxiety: *trait anxiety* which refers to a personality trait and a relatively stable tendency to experience anxiety in various situations; and state anxiety which represents temporary unpleasant emotional arousal related to specific situations. Horwitz (2001) adds another category of anxiety, called situation-specific anxiety which refers to anxiety caused by specific types of situations or events, such as the experience of learning a foreign language in the classroom. Although it can often be related to trait anxiety, research has shown that foreign language anxiety is a distinct construct that needs to be studied independently (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986). Several researchers have focused on foreign language anxiety (MacIntyre and Gardner 1991) and its relation to foreign language achievement (Horwitz 2001; Matsuda and Gobel 2004; Mihaljević Djigunović 2012; Verma 2008; Vytal et al. 2012; Žefran and Cencič 2013). Their results have indicated a significant correlation between high levels of foreign language anxiety and poor foreign language achievement.

One of the most notable instruments for measuring foreign language anxiety is the thirty-three item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FCLAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986).

Foreign language anxiety can stem from a variety of different sources. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) suggest *communication apprehension, fear from negative evaluation* and *test anxiety* as the main sources. Similar conclusions have been drawn by Price (1991), whose research has shown a correlation between foreign language anxiety and perceived language aptitude,

certain personality traits, such as perfectionism and fear from public speaking, and certain situations, e.g. speaking in front of peers (being afraid of ridicule). Young (1991) also added learner and teacher beliefs about language learning and teaching, especially if the students' beliefs collide with those of their instructors or with the reality of language learning. As other possible sources of foreign language anxiety Young (1991) cites instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language testing. Some researchers (Gregersen 2003; Young 1991) have found that error correction, if not handled in learner-friendly ways, can also be a significant source of anxiety. Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014) maintain that the relationship between errors and anxiety is almost a vicious circle: the more errors learners make the more anxious they become and anxiety then causes them to make even more errors, and the learners become less willing to participate in an attempt to protect their social image.

It has been shown time and again that foreign language anxiety negatively affects language learning and acquisition (Horwitz 2001; MacIntyre and Gardner 1991; Vytal et al. 2012). Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014, 6) note that 'foreign language classroom anxiety results in a litany of specific manifestations that work together to debilitate learners' progress' and go on to suggest various symptoms of foreign language anxiety that fall into four categories: physical (increased heartbeat, tension, trembling, less eye contact with the teacher, rigid posture), emotional/affective (fear of teacher correction, insecurity about speaking, worry about being left behind in class, feelings of incompetence when comparing oneself with others, embarrassment in volunteering responses), cognitive/linguistic (inability to distinguish sounds and structures, forgetting linguistic information one has learnt, over-studying with no significant gains), and interactional/social (less classroom participation, initiating and participating in fewer conversations, speaking for shorter periods of time, rarely interrupting others, avoiding activities in class). Being aware of these manifestations can be of great value for teachers when trying to detect anxious learners in the classroom.

Study Aims

The research presented in this paper focused particularly on the nature of the connection between students' perceptions of the importance of English and their motivation for learning English and foreign language anxiety.

The aims of this study were:

– to identify students' perceptions of the importance of English,

- to determine the connection between students' perceptions of English and their levels of foreign language anxiety,
- to determine the connection between students' perceptions of English and their levels of motivation for learning English.

Sample

This study was part of a larger-scale research carried out among 673 first-year students of the university of Primorska. The sample was composed of 82.9% female and 17.1% male students. In the qualitative part of the research the two focus groups each consisted of five students from the same sample: four female and one male. The interviews were carried out among three primary school teachers and three secondary school teachers. The first primary school teacher was female, an English teacher who has been teaching English in primary school for 10 years. The second interviewee was female, a primary school teacher with English. She has been a primary school teacher for 17 years and has been teaching English in primary school for the past 13 years. The third interviewee was male, a teacher of English and German with 16 years of teaching experience. For the first year he taught German in primary school and has been teaching English and partly German in primary school for 15 years. During that time, he also taught in secondary school. All three secondary school teachers of English were female. The first one has been teaching English in secondary school for 15 years, most of that time also in the last three years of primary school. The second teacher has 25 years of teaching experience in secondary school. The last interviewee has 19 years of teaching experience; the first three years she taught in a language school and has been teaching English in secondary school for 16 years.

Methodology

In our research a mixed methods approach was used, combining both quantitative and qualitative data in order to ensure a greater degree of understanding of the connection between the concepts.

The quantitative part of the research was carried out with the help of a questionnaire partly based on Gardner's AMTB (Gardner 2004) and Horwitz's FLCAS (Horwitz 2001). The data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The validity and the reliability of the instrument were confirmed in a previous study (Žefran and Cencič 2013; Žefran 2017), which indicated that the instrument is fairly reliable.

In the qualitative part of the research two focus groups of ten students, five in each group were interviewed, and interviews with three primary school

teachers of English and three secondary school teachers of English were carried out. Focus group interviews were used as the method provides participants the opportunity to add further information to others' statements and facilitates spontaneous and informal discussions about the participants' experiences and perceptions. The first focus groups interview lasted one hour and 26 minutes and was facilitated by a fellow researcher as the author of this paper personally knew the participants and wanted to avoid the possible influence on the outcomes of the discussion. The second focus group interview was carried out by the author herself and lasted 55 minutes. The interviews with the teachers were carried out by the author of this study and all lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. Focus group discussions and the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Participants' names were changed to ensure anonymity.

Results and Discussion

Before discussing the results of the study, we need to mention a significant finding we had not foreseen prior to our research: when investigating motivation for learning English, we should differentiate between two types of motivation, motivation for learning the language in informal vs. formal (i.e. classroom) settings. The two notions proved to be very distinct with students exhibiting high levels of motivation for learning the language but significantly lower levels of motivation and negative attitudes towards learning English in the classroom with 78.1 per cent of the students showing negative attitudes, 17.1 per cent showing neutral attitudes and only 4.8 per cent showing positive attitudes towards learning English in the classroom (Žefran 2017).

Results indicate an extremely high percentage of respondents exhibiting high (49.4 per cent) and very high motivation (48.2 per cent) for learning English with only 2.4 per cent reporting low levels of motivation (Žefran 2017).

We expected such results as similar findings have already been laid out by Juriševič and Pižorn (2013) who investigated motivation for learning a foreign language among primary school pupils but we believed that the reasons for such high levels of motivation should be looked for outside classroom settings, in the perceived role and status of the English language in the eyes of the students. The results from the interviews with the teachers as well as in the focus groups confirmed our prediction. A primary school teacher of English reported that learners' motivation stems from the perceived importance of English among her learners:

> In my experience, English has become one of the main languages of the

> young people's free time and it suddenly became closely connected to their social image and their self-image. [Anita, primary school teacher of English]

A similar view was presented by Kristina from the first focus group, who confirms that English has become the language of their free time:

> As we got older, it became more and more important. It somehow went hand in hand with the development of the TV, the Internet, later also smartphones. And when you hit puberty, you started looking for idols and people to look up to and they were all singers and actors, mostly Americans and the English, and it's normal that also English became more and more important. [Kristina, focus group 1]

When asked about what her motive for learning English was, she replied:

> Well, first I wanted to get good grades in the matura because the faculty I wanted to study at had rather strict entry requirements. And the second reason: I was a teenager and wanted to go live somewhere abroad. [Kristina, focus group 1]

In the same focus group Manca added another role English played in their lives; when talking about why it was important to speak English, she focused on the social aspect:

> When you go somewhere and meet a new friend, it is important that you can communicate at least a little bit, so that you can at least make contact with them and then keep in touch when you get home. And, of course, you use English, which is a common language, because if you come from different countries where the languages are very different, you use English and not their or our language. I think that knowing you might meet someone and get a chance to visit them is very motivating. And then again, you have to be able to get the message across … [Manca, focus group 1]

Another student from the first focus group shared her experience which showed how important foreign languages (Italian, Croatian) were in her childhood and how English slowly took over as the main language one is supposed to know:

> When I was a child, we learnt Italian and when I went to Italy and asked something in Italian, I felt accepted because I could communicate. Or in summer, when we went on holidays to Croatia, we children also picked up some Croatian and when we went to the shop or to get some ice-cream, we could ask for things in Croatian and again we felt accepted. And when you get older, you start travelling and then your poor English becomes noticeable. Then you get that feeling: 'Well, I can't really go anywhere as I can't speak their language and I also can't speak English and I just won't be able to get by.' We could see how English developed in all the countries and everyone started speaking English and if you wanted to go somewhere, you just had to learn it if you wanted at least to get the message across. [Metka, focus group 1]

Simon, a teacher of English in primary school observed significant differences in the status of English among his pupils compared to other foreign languages, particularly Italian in the Primorska region:

> In our region it is interesting how they absolutely don't consider it 'cool' to speak Italian. Some of them speak English even before they enter school, because they're motivated or because their parents motivate them. But in the coastal region it's definitely 'not-cool' if you speak Italian, even though it is the language of the environment … well, the official language, at least. Other languages of the environment are also Serbian, Albanian … but English is simply 'cool' and their world is full of English. The children prefer English computer games to Italian, and they don't watch Italian programmes on TV but English ones. [Simon, primary school teacher of English]

Drawing on the experiences of Metka and Simon, we could conclude that in the past Italian played a more important role in young people's lives than it does today. It is clear that English has taken over, which was also confirmed by Anita:

> English is very much present in their out-of-school activities, for instance the Internet and films, whereas Italian in our region is losing this role and has not only become less popular among teenagers of, let's say, the last three years of primary school, but there has been a significant decrease in the level of knowledge. And Italian definitely doesn't have that influence … in the sense of their identity. [Anita, primary school teacher of English]

A very illustrative observation on how important English is in the lives of young people in Slovenia was offered by Karmen, a secondary school teacher of English:

> Everybody thinks that English is extremely important, and I have noticed recently how they perceive this usefulness in terms of finding employment. It is crucial what you put in your CV. Language proficiency comes first and it is no longer enough if you say you speak a language, but you must specify how well you can speak it. Your employer will want to know whether your proficiency level is C1 or C2, maybe. And the students are aware of this and are seeking quality and in the end, they also accept the fact that I am strict and demanding. [Karmen, secondary school teacher of English]

The prospect of better employment was also one of the reasons for learning English mentioned by Manca from the first focus group:

> When you get older, you start thinking about getting a job, and very often it is required that you speak a foreign language so English is definitely an option here. And, yes, if you don't speak English, you are somehow …, well … [Manca, focus group 1]

Karmen added another thought about the significance of English and the effects of (not) speaking it:

> Now I'm also tutoring the parents, who have to learn English in order to keep their jobs. At the moment, I'm working with a 48-year-old woman, who is struggling with English. She's learning English for finance and accounting and the vocabulary is simply overwhelming for someone who is still trying to grasp the basics of English. But she is forced to learn if she wants to keep her employment. And this is the thing that the children detect, these situations at home. And when you ask them if English is important, you can hear them reciting their parents: 'We live in a world where English is of utmost importance!' [Karmen, secondary school teacher of English]

The results presented above indicate how students perceive English as extremely important in relation to their social lives and possible future employment. As a result, they are highly motivated for learning English. However, we

have found that this perceived importance of English can also have a negative effect on individuals, as they exhibit high levels of foreign language anxiety resulting from either internal or external pressure of having to reach high levels of English language proficiency. Our research (Žefran 2017) has shown that the respondents demonstrate relatively high levels of foreign language anxiety with more than 37 per cent of the students experiencing strong or very strong levels of FL anxiety.

When asked to comment on the high levels of foreign language anxiety when learning English, Anita commented:

> Because they are so much exposed to English outside of the classroom, the differences in their knowledge tend to grow, especially in terms of their vocabulary and communicative skills, and when they become aware of that, it can be a problem for some of them. And in my experience, English has become one of the main languages of the young people's free time and it suddenly became closely connected to their social image and their self-image. It seems that if you're not good at English you're in a way much more exposed than if you're not good at for example Chemistry or Mathematics. That's my perception. [Anita, primary school teacher of English]

According to Anita's experience, English is no longer just a school subject but has become part of young people's identities, which can put children under considerable pressure. If a general belief among teenagers is that knowing English makes them important, then those who cannot speak it well, can feel inferior and as a result experience anxiety.

In secondary school, Karmen observed that anxiety emerges when students realise that English is a basic requirement if they want to achieve something important in their lives:

> Yes, I think it puts them under pressure. When they see they can get a job because of this. Or even at the university, for example, if they want to study medicine and realise that everything is in English and they start asking themselves: 'How will I manage if everything is in English?' [Karmen, secondary school teacher]

The same view is shared by another secondary school teacher who, when asked why foreign language anxiety is such a problem among students, replied:

> Yes, I think it is. I believe everyone is aware of just how important English is. [Tamara, secondary school teacher]

Mark, a participant of our second focus group interview, also confirmed that English is perceived to be extremely important:

> Well, everyone thought that English is a must … that you absolutely have to know English. [Mark, focus group 2]

Anita again compared English to Italian and in her experience, English is the preferred language of her pupils, which is, as she points out, again a source of anxiety in some learners:

> English is very much present in their out-of-school activities, for instance the Internet and films, whereas Italian in our region is losing this role and has not only become less popular among teenagers of, let's say, the last three years of primary school, but there has been a significant decrease in the level of knowledge. And Italian definitely doesn't have that influence … in the sense of their identity. This is probably why they feel more pressured to learn English and not so much Italian. [Anita, primary school teacher]

Based on the above-mentioned reports of teachers and students alike, we can conclude that the perceived importance of English among young people in Slovenia can result in the emergence of foreign language anxiety. However, in some cases, it might have just the opposite effect. This was explained by one of our respondents, a primary school teacher, who believes that this constant exposure to English can in fact decrease learners' anxiety as it offers extra support in language learning:

> This is just my speculation, as I don't have any direct experience, but the learners who also learn a second foreign language tell me that they don't feel as anxious learning English compared to other languages because they are more exposed to English in so many other areas – they watch cartoons and films which is a kind of scaffold for their learning and because of that they're less worried about English than about other languages where this exposure is not present. [Maja, primary school teacher of English]

Maja's view adds evidence of the complexity of the relationship between

learners' perceptions of English and their FL anxiety and calls for a more in-depth research of the phenomenon.

As we have seen above, the results revealed complex relationships between students' perceptions of English and their learning motivation and foreign language anxiety. On one hand, they are extremely motivated to learn English as they perceive English as a language of power, whereas on the other hand, this same perception can lead to foreign language anxiety, as they feel pressured to learn and speak English well.

Conclusion

The results of the study presented in this paper suggest that students' perceptions of English have a considerable effect on their motivation and foreign language anxiety. According to several respondents, English has become an essential language of young people's social lives and their free time:

> When you go somewhere and meet a new friend, it is important that you can communicate at least a little bit, […] And, of course, you use English … [Manca, focus group 1]

> […] English is simply 'cool,' and their world is full of English. [Simon, primary school teacher]

> […] when you hit puberty, you started looking for idols and people to look up to and they were all singers and actors, mostly Americans and the English, and it's normal that also English became more and more important. [Kristina, focus group 1]

These findings are in line with Lamb (2004, 5) who argues that:

> In the minds of learners, English may […] be associated […] with a spreading international culture incorporating (inter alia) business, technological innovation, consumer values, democracy, world travel, and the multifarious icons of fashion, sport and music.

Participants in the study, students and teachers alike, reported that high motivation for learning English results from the perceived importance of the English language, which is also claimed by Ryan (2006), whose paper explains the relationship between learning motivation and the role of English, 'the unquestioned language of globalisation,' which the learners perceive as a means to develop a new (global) identity.

In addition, as our research has shown, the perceived status of English is one of the possible sources of foreign language anxiety among students. However, the relationship between the perceived importance of the English language and foreign language anxiety is far from simple. The existing research in the field of FL anxiety shows that the major sources of anxiety are associated with some personal factors, such as self-esteem, attitudes and beliefs (MacIntyre and Gardner 1991; Oxford 1999), as well as situational factors, like classroom procedures, teacher-learner interactions, testing, and peer reactions (Gregersen 2003; Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986; Price 1991; Horwitz and Young 1991; Young 2001; Žefran 2017). We would like to argue that within the scope of attitudes towards foreign languages and learner beliefs, the perceived importance of English plays a significant part. Research done on motivational orientations towards foreign language learning also indicates that students often exhibit high levels of anxiety, but at the same time also demonstrate relatively high learning motivation (Chambers 1998; Noels et al. 2000; Dörnyei 2006). Similar findings have been offered by our study, with the majority of respondents being highly motivated for learning English but at the same time many of them exhibiting considerable levels of foreign language anxiety. The implications in this paper call for a more in-depth study of the relationship between the perceived importance of English and motivation as well as foreign language anxiety and encourage us to consider how greater understanding of this relationship can contribute to foreign language learning success.

References

Apple, Matthew T., Dexter DaSilva, and Terry Fellner, eds. 2013. *Language Learning Motivation in Japan.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Bratož, Silva, and Mojca Žefran. 2012. 'English as an Added Value in Academic Settings.' In *Akademski jeziki v času globalizacije,* edited by Sonja Starc, 205–18. Koper: Annales.

Carroll, John B., and Stanley Sapon. 1959. *The Modern Languages Aptitude Test.* San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation.

Chambers, Gary N. 1998. 'Pupils' Perception of the Foreign Language Learning Experience.' *Language Teaching Research* 2 (3): 231–59.

Clément, Richard. 1980. 'Ethnicity, Contact and Communicative Competence in a Second Language.' *In Language: Social Psychological Perspectives,* edited by Howard Giles, Peter W. Robinson, and Philip M. Smith, 147–54. Oxford: Pergamon.

Crystal, David. 2012. *English as a Global Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Csizer, Kata, and Michael Magid, eds. 2014. *The Impact of Self-Concept on Language Learning.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Čeh, Živa. 2012. 'English as a Lingua Franca.' In *Akademski jeziki v času globalizacije,* edited by Sonja Starc, 195–204. Koper: Annales.

Deci, Edward L., and Richard M. Ryan. 1985. *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behaviour.* New York: Plenum.

———. 2009. 'Self-Determination Theory: A Consideration of Human Motivational Universals.' In *The Cambridge Handbook of Personality Psychology,* edited by Philip J. Corr and Gerald Matthews, 441–56. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dörnyei, Zoltán. 2005. T*he Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.

———. 2006. *Researching L2 motivation: Towards Combined Quantitative-Qualitative Paradigms.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

Dörnyei, Zoltán, Peter MacIntyre, and Alastair Henry, eds. 2015. *Motivational Dynamics in Language Learning.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Dörnyei, Zoltán, and Istvan Ottó. 1998. 'Motivation in Action: A Process Model of L2 Motivation.' In *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* 4:43–69.

Dörnyei, Zoltán, and Stephen Ryan. 2015. *The Psychology of the Language Learner Revisited.* New York: Routledge.

Dörnyei, Zoltán, and Richard Schmidt, eds. 2001. *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition.* Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Dörnyei, Zoltán, and Ema Ushioda, eds. 2009. *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Ellis, Nick C., and Diane Larsen-Freeman. 2006. 'Language Emergence: Implications for Applied Linguistics; Introduction to the Special Issue.' *Applied Linguistics* 27 (4): 558–89.

Eurydice. 2017. *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Gardner, Robert C. 1985. *Social Psychology of Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation.* London: Edward Arnold.

———. 2004. 'Attitude/Motivation Test Battery.' http://publish.uwo.ca/~gardner/docs/englishamtb.pdf

———. 2006. 'Motivation and Second Language Acquisition.' Manuscript.

Gardner, Robert C., and Richard Clément. 1990. 'Social Psychological Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition.' In *Handbook of Language and Social Psychology,* edited by Howard Giles and W. Peter Robinson, 495–517. Chichester: Wiley.

Gardner, Robert C., and Wallace E. Lambert. 1972. *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Giles, Howard, and Jane L. Byrne. 1982. 'An Intergroup Approach to Second Lan-

guage Acquisition.' *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 3:17–40.

Gregersen, Tammy. 2003. 'To Err Is Human: A Reminder to Teachers of Language-Anxious Students.' *Foreign Language Annals* 36 (1): 25–32.

Gregersen, Tammy, and Peter D. MacIntyre. 2014. *Capitalizing on Language Learners' Individuality: From Premise to Practice.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Horwitz, K. Elaine. 2001. 'Language Anxiety and Achievement.' *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 21:112–27.

Horwitz, K. Elaine, and Dolly J. Young, eds. 1991. *Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Horwitz, K. Elaine., Michael B. Horwitz, and Joann Cope. 1986. 'Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety.' *The Modern Language Journal* 70:125–32.

House, Juliane. 2003. 'English as a Lingua Franca: A Threat to Multilingualism?' *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7 (4): 556–78.

Jenkins, Jenny. 2007. *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jurišević, Mojca, and Karmen Pižorn. 2013. 'Young Foreign Language Learners' Motivation: A Slovenian Experience.' *Porta linguarum* 19:179–98.

Kachru, Braj B. 1992. *The Other Tongue: English across Cultures.* Champain, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Lamb, Martin. 2004. 'Integrative Motivation in a Globalizing World.' *System* 32 (1): 3–19.

Lasagabaster David, Aintzane Doiz, and Juan Manuel Sierra, eds. 2014. *Motivation and Second Language Learning: New Theoretical Insights and the Interaction with the CLIL Approach.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

MacIntyre, Peter, and Robert Gardner. 1991. 'Language Anxiety: Its Relationship to Other Anxieties and to Processing in Native and Second Languages.' *Language Learning* 41 (4): 513–34.

Matsuda, Sae, and Peter Gobel. 2004. 'Anxiety and Predictors of Performance in the Foreign Language Classroom.' *System* 32 (1): 21–36.

Mihaljević Djigunović, Jelena. 2012. 'Attitudes and Motivation in Early Foreign Language Learning.' *CEPS Journal* 2 (3): 55–74.

Murray, Garold, Xuesong Gao, and Terry Lamb, eds. 2011. *Identity, Motivation and Autonomy in Language Learning.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Noels, Kimberly A., Luc G. Pelletier, Richard Clement, and Robert J. Vallerand. 2000. 'Why Are You Learning a Second Language? Motivational Orientations and Self-Determination Theory.' *Language Learning* 50 (1): 57–85.

Oxford, Rebecca. 1999. 'Anxiety and the Language Learner: New Insights.' In *Affect in Language Learning,* edited by Jane Arnold, 58–67. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pennycook, Alastair. 1999. 'Pedagogical Implications of Different Frameworks

for Understanding the Global Spread of English.' In *Teaching and Learning English as a Global Language – Native and Non-Native Perspectives,* edited by Claus Guntzmann, 147–56. Tübingen: Stauffenberg-Verlag.

Price, M. L. 1991. 'The Subjective Experience of Foreign Language Anxiety: Interviews with Highly Anxious Students.' In *Language Learning Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications,* edited by Elaine Horwitz and Dolly Young, 101–8. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Ryan, Stephen. 2006. 'Language Learning Motivation within the Context of Globalisation: An L2 Self within an Imagined Global Community.' *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* 3 (1): 23–45.

Schumann, John H. 1978. *The Pidginization Process: A Model for Second Language Acquisition.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

———. 1986. 'Research on the Acculturation Model for Second Language Acquisition.' *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 7 (5): 379–92.

Scovel, Thomas. 1991. 'The Effect of Affect on Foreign Language Learning: A Review of the Anxiety Research.' In *Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications,* edited by Elaine K. Horowitz and Dolly J. Young, 15–24. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2005. 'English as a Lingua Franca.' *ELT Journal* 59 (4): 339–41.

Ushioda, Ema. 2009. 'A Person-in-Context Relational View of Emergent Motivation, Self and Identity.' In *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self,* edited by Zoltán Dörnyei and Ema Ushioda, 215–28. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

———, ed. 2013. *International Perspectives on Motivation: Language Learning and Professional Challenges.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Verma, Meenakshi. 2008. 'Learner's Attitude and Its Impact on Language Learning.' http://147.8.145.43./clear/conference08/doc/handouts/VERMA Meenakshi H_handout.pdf

Vytal, Katherine, Brian Cornwell, Nicole Arkin, and Christian Grillon. 2012. 'Describing the Interplay between Anxiety and Cognition: From Impaired Performance under Low Cognitive Load to Reduced Anxiety under High Load.' *Psychophysiology* 49 (6): 842–52.

Young, J. Dolly. 1991. 'Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Environment: What Does Language Anxiety Research Suggest?' *The Modern Language Journal* 75 (4): 426–43.

Žefran, Mojca. 2017. 'Vpliv individualno-situacijskih dejavnikov na učenje tujega jezika.' PhD dissertation, University of Primorska.

Žefran, Mojca, and Majda Cencič. 2013. 'Tesnobnost pri pouku angleškega jezika.' *Annales: Series historia et sociologia* 23 (2): 355–64.


Developing
Cross-Linguistic
Competences

Using the Cultureme Paradigm in FLT

Alenka Kocbek
Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Slovenia
alenka.kocbek@pef.upr.si

In contemporary foreign language teaching one of the main objectives pursued is to enable foreign language learners to use the language skills developed in the learning and acquisition process to effectively communicate across language and cultural barriers. In doing this, foreign language users often resort to strategies which have been systematically researched and developed in the sphere of translation studies. We thus suggest applying the cultureme paradigm, which was originally designed to be used in translator training (Oksaar 1988; Kocbek 2013), as a scaffolding tool supporting FL learners in developing a fully-fledged communicative competence involving verbal, paraverbal, non-verbal and extra-verbal aspects, to be used in multilingual settings.

Keywords: foreign language teaching, translation, text-cultureme, memetic structure

Introduction

If we listen to the students' communication in most of the schools in Europe, we hear a number of languages and codes, and, when closely examining their interactions, we find out that students do not only switch between linguistic codes, but also spontaneously use a number of strategies which originally belong to the sphere of interpreting and translation studies. Thus, this situation very explicitly mirrors the linguistic landscape of contemporary Europe, described by Umberto Eco, in his lecture delivered at the Assises de la Traduction littéraire in Arles, in November 1993, in his famous quote 'The language of Europe is translation.' This statement reflects the ubiquitous situation in which people use languages other than their mother tongue to communicate on a daily basis and the fact that translation has become one of the main assets of daily communication in multilingual settings. It also stresses the importance of translation skills as an essential means for enabling effective communication among EU citizens and across language and cultural barriers in general. With the intensification of the migration flows in the last decades, but also traditionally in bi- and multilingual regions, more and more people find themselves in situations which require some amount of translation and/or interpreting in order to enable communication. Often the very exercise of fundamental human rights (e.g. access to medical services, to legal protection, education, etc.) can depend on a person's ability to use

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.97-110

a (foreign) language and/or on the availability of translation. Therefore, foreign language users occasionally act as 'natural translators' (Nord 1991) in situations where professional translation or interpreting is not available. This phenomenon, termed as language brokering is actually one of the most recent facets of pluriculturality and plurilingualism. What we are facing today is a drastic increase in the amount of professional translation and interpreting globally, but also a giant wave of non-professional translating and interpreting gaining momentum worldwide in all walks of life as a consequence of the increased mobility of the world population and the persisting migration flows. If education is to respond to the real needs of contemporary society, these developments need to be systematically acknowledged by the policies and practice of foreign language teaching (FLT). In the area of language teaching the last decades have witnessed the flourishing of the communicative approach as the prevalent teaching method, which stresses the importance of the communicative competence to be developed by FL learners by engaging in meaningful communication, hence one of the primary goals of FLT should be enabling the students to effectively engage in communication by using the foreign languages learned, but also the whole linguistic repertoire at their disposal.[1]

Somehow contradictorily, the communicative approach did not promote developing translation skills, as this would have implied acknowledging the learners' mother tongues, as well as the whole spectrum of languages present in the learners' environment. Several authors have thus advocated that translation is an essential component of the communicative competence (Vermes 2010; Cook 2010; Bratož and Kocbek 2013). Some scholars in the last decades actually argued that translation needed to be considered as the fifth language skill, along with the four traditional language skills (Naimushin 2002; Newmark 1991). Following these developments the so-called pedagogical translation, i.e. translation used as a tool and technique for effective language teaching, has found its way back into language curricula after years of having being banished from language classrooms. Eventually, also the Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) published in 2018, grants considerably more attention and importance to mediation activities (Council of Europe 2018, 105) compared to the first edition of the CEFR published in 2001 (Council of Europe 2001). Interlingual and intercultural mediation occur by using translation and interpreting, hence the Companion Volume to the CEFR stresses the need to

[1] For the purpose of this chapter no distinction will be made between second and foreign language teaching and the term foreign language teaching (FLT) will be used to refer to both.

systematically address these aspects in language teaching practices. But as there seems to be less and less doubt as to the legitimacy of pedagogical translation being included into language curricula, we want to argue that translation studies as a discipline have more to offer to language teaching than the mere practice of translation and/or interpreting. In their recent history, translation studies, especially the approaches marking the so-called cultural turn (Snell-Hornby 1988), developed several approaches and strategies which stress the essential interrelatedness and interdependence of language and culture, while the functionalist theories stressed the necessity of adapting translation to the intended communicative purpose (Nord 1997), which often means adapting it to the prospective receiver. These approaches are aimed at optimizing communication across language and cultural barriers by paying due attention to elements of culture which are specific or unique to a specific culture, i.e. have the status of *memes* according to Chesterman (1997) and which, in order to be made accessible to members of a different culture, require special translation approaches. This memetic transfer is of utmost importance especially in specialized settings, where a misrendering of the original concept could prevent effective communication causing serious consequences (such as e.g. in legal or medical communication), thus translation strategies and models have been designed which are aimed at envisaging all dimensions shaping a communicative act. To this purpose a translation model for legal translation based on the concept of cultureme as proposed by Els Oksaar in her cultureme-theory (1988), but elaborated and upgraded by taking into account the multifaceted aspects of communication, was designed and has been used in training translation students, as well as practising legal translators and interpreters (Kocbek 2014a).

We suggest applying the cultureme paradigm to language teaching and using it as a scaffolding tool to systematically address all aspects involved in communication, i.e. its verbal, para-verbal, non-verbal and extra-verbal elements, thus raising the awareness of language learners to how language use is conditioned by culture in the broadest sense and by the communicative purpose pursued. In line with this view, FL learners need to grasp that to effectively use a language in multicultural settings one needs to consider the cultures involved (i.e. in FLT the culture underlying a student's mother tongue and the FL, but also other cultures underlying the students' linguistic repertories).

Spoken and Written Texts as Culturemes

In light of Oksaar's cultureme theory, when observing communicative situations, we can identify patterns of communicative behaviour, i.e. culturemes

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Cultureme (Oksaar 1988)</th><th colspan="3">Text-cultureme (Kocbek 2014b)</th><th rowspan="8">Memetic structure of the text = culturally specific combination of these</th></tr>
<tr><td>Verbal dimension</td><td rowspan="5">Realisational behaviouremes</td><td>Verbal dimension</td><td>Macrostructure</td><td>The text-content defines the (conventional) text elements, their sequence and the extent of the text.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Para-verbal dimension (pitch, intonation, rhythm, prosody)</td><td rowspan="4">Microstructure</td><td>Lexical level</td></tr>
<tr><td>Syntactic level</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stylistic level</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pragmatic level</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Para-verbal dimensions (applicable to spoken texts, irrelevant in written ones)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Non-verbal dimension (facial expression, gesture, body language)</td><td rowspan="2">Non-verbal dimension</td><td>Spoken texts</td><td>Meaning conveyed by body language, dress codes, clothing, objects</td></tr>
<tr><td>Written texts</td><td>Text-layout, symbols, logos, crests, seals, stamps, images</td></tr>
<tr><td>Extra-verbal dimension (time, setting, including allocation of space, social order, hierarchies, age, etc.)</td><td>Regulatory behaviouremes</td><td colspan="3">Extra-verbal dimension – cultural aspects in the broadest sense: i.e. social (e.g. educational system, legal order, political, ideological aspects), religious, historical aspects affecting text production and reception.</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 1 Comparison of Oksaar's Cultureme and Kocbek's Text-Cultureme Paradigm

(1988). Oksaar defines culturemes as socio-cultural categories, realised through realisational and regulatory 'behaviouremes.' 'Realisational behaviouremes' refer to verbal (choice of linguistic means), para-verbal (intonation, pitch, tone, prosody) and non-verbal (e.g. gestures, body language) aspects of a communicative act, while 'regulatory' ones involve extra-linguistic factors, such as time, space, status, social order, etc. (Oksaar 1988, 26–7). As shown by Kocbek (2014b), the cultureme paradigm can be applied to spoken, as well as to written texts, which have been termed text-culturemes. In order to fully exploit the cultureme paradigm as a scaffolding tool, we have further structured it into several dimensions to accommodate the multiple aspects of spoken and written texts viewed as culturally-specific patterns of spoken and written communicative behaviour, both in the process of text reception and/or production.

When teaching a language with the aim to prepare students to be able to successfully engage in communication, students' attention should be directed to notice aspects of culturally-conditioned patterns of spoken and written communicative behaviour (culturemes) and compare them with the corresponding communicative patterns in their native culture by adopting

a contrastive perspective, i.e. by identifying similarities and differences on the different text-levels. In this way, they will be able to map the memetic structure of a text, created through the unique interplay of the verbal, paraverbal, non-verbal and extra-verbal dimension. They should then be made acquainted with the translation strategies best suiting different communicative purposes, which will enable them to apply the cultureme-paradigm both in text reception and production in a targeted way. Taking into account the memetic structure of texts will enable positive transfer and prevent the risk of negative transfer between their mother tongue and the FL (but also with respect to other languages forming their linguistic repertoire).

The Verbal Dimension: Text Macro- and Microstructure

The most obvious and relevant text dimension in terms of language teaching is the verbal one, i.e. the use of linguistic means by the agents involved in the communication. Within the text-cultureme paradigm we propose splitting the verbal dimension into the text macrostructure and microstructure.

Macrostructure refers to the text elements necessary to convey the intended text content and the sequence in which they appear in the text. This dimension is more evident in written texts, where the conventional text elements of a given genre are structured into a more or less rigid text template, such as for example the standard elements used in formal letters, e.g. indicating the sender, receiver, date, reference line, salutation, body of the letter, complimentary closes and the signature block. A similar sequence of elements can be found in relatively simple genres such as recipes, with the list of the ingredients, information regarding the number of servings, instructions for the preparation process, but also in more complex ones, such as academic papers, where norms and conventions regarding the text macrostructure are considered binding and ignoring them may result in a paper being rejected by reviewers. In legal texts, for instance, the standard elements of a text, especially of an agreement or contract are referred to as boilerplate elements and differ considerably between legal cultures as a consequence of different legal norms applying to contract law in the major legal systems.

The text microstructure, on the other hand, refers to the use of lexical items (i.e. the vocabulary used to realize a specific communicative pattern in the form of a spoken or written text), as well as to combining these items into more or less standardized syntactic structures, i.e. sentences, which shape the syntactic dimensions of the text. In spoken communication sentences are often shorter, even truncated, compared to the ones used in written texts. The specific usage of the vocabulary (i.e. of a given language register) and

the complexity of the syntactic structures shape the stylistic dimension of the text, giving it a more or less formal character. Finally, the combined use of the lexical, syntactic and stylistic features enables language users to realize the intended pragmatic function of the text (e.g. requesting, advising, ordering, explaining, granting permission, assuming obligations, etc.).

On the lexical level of the text, language users may have to deal with concepts, ideas, cultural practices, which only exist in a specific culture, i.e. have the status of memes according to Chesterman (1997) and can only be transferred across language and cultural barriers by using translation. In this context, translation should be intended as the use of a targeted translational strategy which best suits the communicative purpose pursued. For example, when translating a formal letter drafted in the source culture, intended to be used in a target culture, the text macro- and microstructure will be adapted to comply with the established text-cultureme in the target culture. This will imply adapting the salutation, complimentary closes, etc. to the target culture norms by applying the so-called domestication strategy (Venuti 1995).

Applying the domestication strategy in recipes will imply, for instance, changing the measurements when translating them from/into English (pints to grams, pounds, litres etc.), or even substituting some ingredients, which are banned due to religious norms (e.g. rules on kosher or halal food), with culturally acceptable ones (e.g. substituting pork meat in a recipe intended for Jewish or Muslim users with other types of meat, or some exotic spice with a more accessible one).

Another possible translation strategy used when transferring memes is explicitation (Blum-Kulka 2004), which implies paraphrasing or explaining the target culture concept, which may have been implicit in the source text, in such a way that it is explicit and understandable to source culture receivers. In recipes, this would imply describing culturally-specific elements, e.g. ingredients (e.g. hummus – paste or spread made from ground chickpeas and sesame seeds, olive oil, lemon, and garlic) or utensils (e.g. wok – a bowl-shaped frying pan, typically used in Chinese cuisine).

One of the ways of transferring memes is also rendering them with loan words (i.e. introducing the original term into the target culture, either unchanged or sometimes by adapting the spelling. i.e. the English muffin termed *mafin* in Slovene). This practice is widely accepted in translating recipes, especially when terms are transferred from cultures, whose culinary arts are highly valued (e.g. French terms such as *soufflé, meringue;* or Italian words such as *lasagna, focaccia, minestrone*). This type of memetic transfer sometimes leads to new terms of foreign origin being incorporated into the

target language, a process referred to as secondary term formation (Sager 1990, 80). This was the case with many above mentioned culinary terms, e.g. words such as 'mixer,' but also terms such as e.g. 'manager' and 'controlling' in business terminology, which are now used in Slovene with adapted spelling, i.e. *mikser, menedžer, kontroling*.

A further possibility of transferring memes is building calques. This has been a very frequent strategy in translating IT terminology from English into other languages, where for example 'downloading' was rendered in Italian with *scaricare,* and 'uploading' in Slovene with *naložiti,* both terms implying the reference to a physical load.

Loanwords and calques are often used as means for implementing the so-called foreignization approach (Venuti 1995), where target culture receivers are expected to become acquainted with memes of the source culture, which they would originally consider alien to their culture. This approach is often used when transferring memes from a culture perceived as superior, often economically and/or politically more powerful, into a target culture which is considered less influential. However, in everyday communication, language users sometimes need to resort to the foreignization strategy when they want to transfer memes of their native culture into a target language/culture irrespective of their status. Such memes may refer to culturally specific phenomena, ideas, cultural practices, such as e.g. celebrating festivities, but also to mythological creatures, elements of folklore, music, architecture, historical events or even linguistic features, such as for example the Slovene dual. In all these cases, FL learners should be made aware of available translation strategies which will enable them to use translation as the vehicle for bridging knowledge gaps between members of different cultures and as a powerful means of expanding cultural horizons.

The Para-Verbal Dimension of Texts

The para-verbal dimension involves the specific use of the voice, used to convey implicit and explicit shades of meaning by using intonation, pitch and prosody in a culturally-specific way (e.g. emotions such as joy, anger, but also highlighting important parts of utterances, showing respect by lowering the tone of one's voice), while also taking into consideration the relationship and/or hierarchical status of the communicating agents and the communicative purposes pursued by them. These dimensions also enable expressing features such as humour, irony, sarcasm, etc., merely by using one's voice in a targeted way. The para-verbal aspect can be culturally conditioned, i.e. spoken communication in some cultures is typically louder (e.g. Mediterranean

countries) or using a higher pitch than in others. Learners of a FL should be made aware of the differences in the para-verbal dimension of spoken communication to avoid automatically und uncritically transferring the para-verbal features typically used in their native language to a foreign language.

The Non-Verbal Dimension of Texts

The non-verbal aspect is a further aspect essential to communication, as it can convey significant information supporting, often also determining the verbal and para-verbal dimension of the communication. As regards the non-verbal and extra-verbal dimensions of communication we have upgraded the cultureme model by adopting some of the views proposed by Balboni in his work *Le sfide di Babele* (2002), in which he describes the norms and conventions ruling these aspects of communication as special 'grammars.'

In spoken communication the non-verbal dimensions involves 'reading' and using facial expressions, gestures and body language, such as for example waving, beckoning, flagging, hushing, nodding (which are often specific to a given culture or may convey differing messages and can thus produce unplanned or undesired effects if uncritically transferred from one culture to the other). Oksaar (1988) suggests categorising these non-verbal communicative codes into three categories, i.e. so-called emblems (e.g. hand-clapping to express approval or praise), illustrators, which usually accompany verbal codes (e.g. the hand gesture used to accompany inviting somebody to sit down) and regulators (gestures used to require stopping, accelerating, slowing down). They may all carry different meanings as to the cultures in which they are used and Balboni refers to the capacity of mastering these differences by using the term *competenza cinesica*.

A further element of the non-verbal sphere is represented by the culturally-specific use of clothing (termed *competenza vestemica* by Balboni), i.e. complying with dress-codes (e.g. wearing black or dark clothes when attending a funeral in Western cultures). Moreover, it involves identifying the function, professional status and authority conveyed by uniforms or special attires and even wigs (e.g. being able to distinguish between a police officer and a security guard, a nurse and a physician, a judge and a barrister in court, recognizing a religious minister).

This dimension of the communicative act can also involve deciphering and taking into account the identifying force of certain objects (which is referred to as *competenza oggettuale* by Balboni), such as national, political, religious symbols, but also paraphernalia indicating the role and status of a person, (e.g. a judge's gavel, the lawyers' robes, both indicating their judicial author-

ity), and in general the tools of the trade typical of certain professions (e.g. a stethoscope used by a medical doctor). This aspect can also involve noticing and taking into consideration badges and tags indicating the belonging to different organisations and bodies (e.g. political, humanitarian, etc.). Mastering these different grammars will inform the overall communication with bearers of such non-verbal signs, especially the verbal and para-verbal dimension.

In written communication, the non-verbal dimension is realised through paratextual aspects, such as the text layout, use of logos, symbols, illustrations, tables, charts and typographic features (CEFR 2001, 80). The targeted use of some of these elements, such as logos and symbols identifying companies, organisations and various bodies, seals and stamps, but also photos and images may confer additional power to the verbal dimensions of texts such as formal letters, certificates, but also brochures and advertisements. For example, Slovene legal texts such as rulings or court orders have a special letterhead featuring the Slovene crest and usually bear the stamp of the institution issuing the document with the Slovene crest in its centre, which both underline the official character and authority of the text. Similarly, proficiency certificates and diplomas usually feature the crest and the official stamp or seal of the educational institution issuing them, or even contain a watermark to prevent potential misuse. Even a relatively pragmatic document, such as the extract from the company register often used in business communication, may bear extremely solemn traits and symbols. In the UK, for example, the certificate issued by the Companies House, which is equivalent to a Slovene or German extract from the company register, bears the royal coat of arms of the UK, with the motto of the English monarchs (i.e. *Dieu at moin droit*/'God and my Right') and of the Order of the Garter (i.e. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*/'Shame on him who thinks evil') in French. In comparison, the functionally equivalent certificates issued by the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES) or by the German company register (*Unternehmensregister*) look indisputably plain and simple, although they fulfil the same communicative purpose.

Often less official texts also make use of images to underline and support the communicative purpose of the text. In this respect it needs to be mentioned, however, that also the use of visual features is culture-bound, as well as that some symbols will be correctly understood and interpreted only by drawing on broader cultural knowledge, which may be lacking in case that the visual features of a text are uncritically transferred from one culture into another. These visual elements actually form a kind of (often culturally-

conditioned) specialised visual grammar (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen 1996), which underlies and complements the verbal dimension of texts and needs to be learned and understood for effective communication to take place.

The Extra-Verbal Dimension of Texts

A further significant aspect of the text-cultureme is its extra-verbal dimensions. In her cultureme-theory Oksaar (1988) proposes to observe and take into account the impact of factors such as time, space, social variables, including age, gender, status, etc., on the realisation of a communicative act. Time will, for instance, define the type of greeting used in the course of a day or the conventional phrases used for season's greeting and wishes on occasion of holidays and festivities.

Space intended as the setting of a communicative act will also define the communication mode and the language register used in different ways. Communication in court, for instance, requires using the verbal mode only (non-verbal signs are not allowed/considered). In a classroom, too, the allocation of space between the teacher and the students will mark their roles and define their verbal and para-verbal communication. For example, it will require specific forms of address to be used by the communicating parties (e.g. addressing the teacher with Miss, Ms. or Mister and surname in English at primary level, and by using the word *učitelj/-ica,* or *maestro/maestra* only, in Slovene and Italian in corresponding settings). Similarly, communicating in a medical environment will require first identifying the different professionals (often through non-verbal codes such as the colour of the uniform) and then addressing them accordingly (e.g. addressing the physician with the word *doktor* in Slovene, while in English the common form of address will be Dr. followed by the surname) and the female nurse with the word *sestra,* i.e. 'sister,' which is mainly used with the same meaning in British English along with the term 'nurse.'

In most cultures, the age and status of the communicating parties will define the use of the verbal means to express respect, politeness, etc., either with grammatical means, i.e. by using the T-V distinction in Slovene, *du/Sie* in German, *tu/Lei* or *Voi* in Italian, or by other means, e.g. using specific forms of address in English, In some languages, such as Slovene, gender will be clearly expressed with corresponding morphological markers. In FLT, language users thus have to be made aware of the existence or lack of such gender specific expressions in different languages and taught strategies which will enable them to convey these aspects by other linguistic means (e.g. in English by using pronouns to refer to gender). In written communication gender will

need to be considered for example in the salutations used in formal letters, where the English formula 'Dear Sir/Madam' will be rendered in Slovene with *Spoštovani,* whereas in Italian gender-specific formulations will be used, e.g. *Egregio Signore* for men and *Gentile Signora,* when addressing women.

In our text-cultureme paradigm, we suggest expanding the view from these somehow more immediately recognisable extra-verbal aspects to also include less obvious cultural aspects, which may inform communication in less explicit ways. These aspects include religious aspects and historical circumstances, which might have affected individual cultures in different ways, as well as the social order with its political and ideological implications. In many languages, religion permeates the greeting formulas, which contain a more or less recognizable reference to God, although very often native speakers of these languages do not normally make a conscious link with God when using them (e.g. the Slovene, slightly formal word for saying goodbye, *zbogom,* or the Italian *addio,* the Austrian and South German formula *Grüß Gott,* or the informal Croatian greeting 'bok' or 'bog' as an equivalent of 'Hi!'). A political regime may also impose certain forms of address and greetings, as was the case in ex-Yugoslavia, where in Slovene adults were generally addressed with *tovariš/-ica* (i.e. comrade), sometimes followed by the name, surname or function. These forms of address were also used in correspondence, where even the typical complimentary close was derived from the word *tovariš* – official letters usually ended with the formula *S tovariškimi pozdravi!* ('With comradely greetings').

These religious and ideological dimensions are often deeply intertwined with historical aspects, but also define the non-verbal dimension of communication (e.g. the official or prevailing religion indicated by religious symbols in classrooms in certain countries, images of political leaders exhibited in public spaces as an expression of the often totalitarian regime). The linguistic expressions of these aspects are often used automatically by native speakers, and they often survive historical changes and persist in language use even when social circumstances have changed. In Slovene, for example, the informal abbreviated form of *tovarišica* (female comrade), i.e. *šica* was used colloquially by children to address female preschool or lower-grade primary school teachers even some time after the Yugoslav socialist regime, to which these expressions pertained, was abolished. Similarly, the terms *cesar* and *cesarski,* i.e. 'emperor, imperial' are still sometimes used in Slovene to specifically refer to the Austrian-Hungarian emperor/court. Examples of this implied meaning are the name of a well know Slovene and Austrian dessert called *cesarski praženec* (German Kaiserschmarrn), supposedly creat-

ed for the Austrian-Hungarian emperor Franz Joseph I, or describing somebody's polite manners by referring to them as 'Viennese-school,' where both expressions originate in the period when most of what is now Slovene territory was part of the Austrian-Hungarian empire, ruled by the emperor and with the imperial court located in Vienna.

Historical circumstances may sometimes be reflected in the language use of individual cultures very differently. For instance, when referring to one of the crucial battles of the WW1 fought in the Soča/Isonzo valley in Slovenia in the vicinity of the town Kobarid (German *Karfreit,* Italian *Caporetto*), German sources usually use the term *Wunder von Karfreit* to describe the wonder, i.e. victory of the Austrian forces, whereas from the Italian point of view the same event is seen as a catastrophe and accordingly, the term *caporetto* (with lowercase spelling) has been included in the Italian vocabulary to refer to a defeat or catastrophe.

As we have shown above, language users who in the process of learning a FL will be made aware of the full communicative potential of spoken and written texts by drawing on their verbal, para-verbal, non-verbal and extra-verbal dimensions, will also develop a contrastive perspective, i.e. they will be able to identify similarities and differences in the various dimensions of texts used for similar communicative purposes in their mother tongue and in other languages of their linguistic repertoire. This awareness will enhance their language sensitivity and help them exploit the full communicative potential of spoken and written texts.

Conclusion

By proposing the cultureme paradigm as a scaffolding tool to be used in language teaching we actually want to raise the learners' awareness of the fact that the combination of the verbal, para-verbal, non-verbal and extra-verbal elements involved in a spoken or written text used in communication represents a unique cultural practice, i.e. a complex meme. We therefore suggest analysing texts in the light of their memetic structure, both in the production, as well as in the reception phase. Acknowledging cultural differences not only at the verbal level, but also in other dimensions of the text culturemes, will help FL learners to develop their language skills, as well as to upgrade their sociolinguistic competence, which is essential for enabling effective cross-cultural communication (CEFR Companion Volume 2018, 137 ss.). In her cultureme theory, Oksaar pointed out that the better one masters the verbal dimension of a foreign language, the higher the expectations of one's communication partners are with respect to his/her competence in understand-

ing and drawing on the para-verbal, non-verbal and extra-verbal dimensions of communication.

In this respect, Eva Hoffman, a writer born in Poland, but who has spent most of her adult life in English speaking countries and has chosen English as the language of her artistic expression, in her autobiographical novel *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (1998) beautifully describes the frustration and helplessness felt by a non-native speaker using a foreign language, which derive from the fact that, although a language can be mastered almost to perfection in its verbal dimension, its full non-verbal and extra-verbal potential are never fully accessible to a non-native speaker. On the other hand, she shows with equal force and credibility that the position of an outsider in terms of language use enables an attentive non-native speaker to develop an awareness of and sensitivity for the most subtle features of language use, which often remain unnoticed by less perceptive native speakers of the same language, who use the language automatically, without being wholly aware of its expressive force and often without fully exploiting its immense potentialities.

References

Balboni, Paolo. 2002. *Le sfide di Babele: Insegnare lingue nelle società complesse.* Torino: UTET.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. 1986. 'Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation.' In *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication: Discourse and Cognition in Translation and Second Language Acquisition Studies,* edited by Juliana House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka, 17–35. Tübingen: Narr.

Bratož, Silva, and Alenka Kocbek. 2013. 'Resurrecting Translation in SLT: A Focus on Young Learners.' In *Translation in Language Teaching and Assessment,* edited by Dina Tsagari and Georgios Floros, 135–53. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

Chesterman, Andrew. 1997. *Memes of Translation.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Cook, Guy. 2010. *Translation in Language Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

———. 2018. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment; Companion Volume with New Descriptors.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Hoffmann, Eva. 1998. *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language.* London: Vintage Books.

Kocbek, Alenka. 2013. 'Translation Science as an Aid to Second Language Teaching.' In *Teaching, Acquiring and Applying Inter-Cultural Linguistic Com-*

petence, edited by Azamat Akbarov and Diane Larsen-Freeman, 63–72. Sarajevo: International Burch University.

———. 2014a. 'The Translation of Legal Texts as Culturemes.' In *Dynamics and Terminology, edited by Rita Temmerman and Marc Van Campenhoudt,* 111–34. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

———. 2014b. 'Unlocking the Potential of Translation for FLT.' *Linguistica* 54 (1): 425–38.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuven. 1996. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design.* London: Routledge.

Naimushin, Boris. 2002. 'Translation in Foreign Language Teaching: The Fifth Skill.' *Modern English Teacher* 11 (4): 46–9.

Newmark, Peter. 1991. *Approaches to Translation.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Nord, Christiane. 1991. *Text Analysis in Translation.* Amsterdam: Rodopi.

———. 1997. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained.* Manchester: St. Jerome.

Oksaar, Els. 1988. *Kulturemtheorie: Ein Beitrag zur Sprachverwendungsforschung.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht; Hamburg: Joachim Jungius Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften.

Sager, Juan C. 1990. *A Practical Course in Terminology Processing.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Snell-Hornby, Mary. 1988. *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Venuti, Lawrence. 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility.* New York: Routledge.

Vermes, Albert. 2010. 'Translation in Foreign Language Teaching: A Brief Overview of Pros and Cons.' *Eger Journal of English Studies* 10:83–93.

Guidelines and Recommendations for the Development of Cross-Linguistic Awareness for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

Tina Čok
Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska, Slovenia
tina.cok@fhs.upr.si

This paper aims to introduce new guidelines and recommendations for foreign language learning and teaching that have been conceived on the basis of data collected with an empirical research on discrepancies between conceptual representations of reality and their verbalisations by native speakers of Chinese, Italian and Slovenian. By analysing the results of the empirical research and comparing them to the currently established reference frameworks for learning and teaching foreign languages, we designed novel guidelines and recommendations that give special emphasis to the role of cross-linguistic competences in the process of foreign language learning and teaching and suggest a more comprehensive language reference framework that must consider and include these competences. The proposed guidelines and recommendations were designed to give support to learners and teachers in the process of learning and teaching Chinese as a foreign language. However, they can be easily adapted and applied for learning and teaching other foreign languages.

Keywords: cross-linguistic awareness, foreign language learning and teaching, verbal aspect

Introduction

The pedagogical framework embodied by guidelines and recommendations presented in the following pages is primarily based on empirical data acquired within a broader research study on verb conceptualisation and verbalisation in three different languages; Chinese, Italian and Slovenian.

The novelty of our research lays in the attempt of breaking away from the dominant approaches in studying semantic language differences that are usually based on notions of intercultural studies that explain linguistic differences in the light of different cultural patterns and contexts, which are consequently identified also in the language in question. Our comparison of similar communication situations in languages that differ morphosyntactically (i.e. Chinese, Italian and Slovenian) has made it possible to

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.111-129

identify differences in comprehension of word meanings or entire messages through cross-linguistic notions analysed with the approaches of cognitive linguistics. Hence, the research principally aimed at exploiting the identified discrepancies in the conceptualisation and verbalisation of reality for three languages to improve foreign language learning in teaching.

We see the value of this research in addressing concrete communication problems that may arise in different situations. The results of this study can be applied for a more general understanding of Chinese social phenomena, often inconceivable or even unacceptable for people not native to China. The principal idea of the present research is to stress the importance of comprehending the behaviour of a group of people who share similar mental processing and consequently contemplate the world in a similar way. It is said that the Chinese conception of the world is based on a holistic worldview, how people engage in relations and how they interact. This specificity of the Chinese society that complies with the notions of synthetic thinking, which makes it different from western thought, has given rise to discussions among psychologists, anthropologists, philosophers and cognitive linguists for decades. Our share in this debate is to empirically analyse this worldview by considering the interaction of mind and language.

A different practical value of the research lies in its application for educational purposes. By applying empirical data to the established theories as well as frameworks of reference for foreign language learning and teaching, we give novel insights and recommendations on the process of teaching and learning. Although the study primarily focuses on teaching and learning Chinese, we designed the guidelines in a way that allows teachers to easily adapt them to different language combinations.

Finally, the research conclusions are not merely applicable to learning a language at the beginner's level. The results can, in fact, bring about important implications, especially in the field of translation studies, since cross-linguistic differences underlined here may arise even when we are very well acquainted with the language and culture, and yet come across unconceivable misunderstandings.

The present paper is divided into two main parts. We will briefly present the main features of our research and disclose the most pertinent empirical data in the first part, as it is important for the reader to understand the premises on which we built our research. The empirical research focuses on the thorough analysis of the interaction between the grammatical and lexical aspect for each of the three languages and how this interaction and possible systemic differences affect the way speakers of these languages verbalise particular

aspects of their subjective reality. For this purpose, we examined the established aspectual classifications of verbs as proposed by Vendler (1967), Smith (1997), Xiao and McEnery (2004), Peck, Lin, and Sun (2013), and Koenig and Chief (2008) and slightly adapted them for the needs of our research.

In the second part, we will present the guidelines and recommendations as well as part of the descriptors' draft for cross-linguistic competences (for Chinese language) that we propose as an addition to the already established language frameworks of reference for foreign languages.

But first, let us introduce some theoretical considerations on the influence of language on the way we think. Our main concern throughout the whole study was the intricate relation between language, culture and cognition. By ploughing into the various theoretical positions on the relation between language and mind, we tried to answer the following questions: Whether and how does language affect the thought and behaviour of individuals? The analysis of diverse and sometimes even opposing scientific discourses that investigate these questions, made possible the conception of very constructive inferences, regarding not only linguistic but also social and cultural as well as cognitive aspects of Chinese, Slovenian and Italian language, for instance, the comparison between synthetic and analytic thought.

The entire study can be identified by four main research objectives that have empirically led us towards the application of results.

The first objective derives from the theoretical hypotheses of linguistic universalism, but primarily on linguistic relativity. In fact, our vision of the cognitive role of language is based primarily on the notions put forward by Lucy (1997; 2005) rather than the controversial theory of Wharf-Sapir, therefore a more contemporary and agreeable version of this theory.

Moreover, we conceived our empirical study on the comparison of differences instead of similarities between languages that can cause the emergence of negative transfer in the process of acquiring a new foreign language. Our study encompasses the interaction between language and cognition, but also between language and culture, in the way Agar (1991; 1994) formulates his notions of languaculture and rich points. Interestingly, when analysing the frameworks of reference discussed in the second part of this paper, we found that focusing on the differences between language systems for language learning and teaching appears less present than focusing on the similarities. We assume this derives from a more general cognitive principle of men establishing common patterns by looking for analogies. (Holme 2010)

The third objective of the study was to focus on the analysis of verbal ac-

tions, specifically, on how lexical and grammatical aspects are verbalised in the three studied languages and how they reflect the respective models of conceptualisation, assuming that verbs help understand the way the world that surrounds us has been conceived.

The fourth objective, which is also the most pertinent to the present paper, was the application of the acquired results and conclusions to the field of foreign language learning and teaching, focusing on learning and teaching Chinese as a foreign language. We attempted to answer the question: How does the verbalisation of reality differ between our native and a foreign language? We found this question relevant, as we believe that speaking a foreign language does not necessarily mean thinking in that language. This is even more true when we begin to learn a new language and we heavily lean on notions and patterns valid in our native language. (Huang et al. 2013)

The research is based on two hypotheses and two research questions. The hypotheses, partly defined in the research objectives on the polysemic nature of verbal actions and the ambiguity of their mental representations in languages, were summed up as follows: (1) verbal actions and their mental representations are polysemic and therefore difficult to compare between languages, and (2) the nature of the Chinese verb in its most basic monomorphemic form enables a broad interpretive freedom of the degree of completion, i.e. is more focused on the process than on the result of the action performed. Based on our knowledge of the aspectual systems and how they function in the three languages, we assumed the Chinese verb emphasises more the processual phase of the action than the same verb in Italian and Slovenian, causing their speakers to respectively transfer this emphasis in the process of verbalisation as well as in conceiving reality.

The conclusions acquired with the investigated hypotheses were then applied to the research questions to design guidelines and recommendations for the development of cross-linguistic awareness, not only for learning and teaching Chinese as a foreign language, but for foreign language learning in general. The questions asked were (1) how do we define morpho-syntactical critical points[1] for foreign languages? and (2) which approaches and techniques in foreign language learning and teaching can help us include contents for developing cross-linguistic awareness in a most structural and comprehensive manner.

[1] Critical points are those most complex morpho-syntactic and semantic points of variation between languages that can lead to negative transfer when learning a language and are a source of frustration in the process of foreign language acquisition.

Following the first objective of this research, we critically analysed the arguments in favour and against linguistic universalism and relativism, especially what previous studies in the fields of philosophy, psychology, contrastive analysis, language anthropology, and cognitive grammar have to say about the role of language, culture and cognition affecting our perception of reality. Although they use different research questions, techniques, and methodologies, most of them agree that discrepancies in grammatical structures and the intrinsic semantic nature of the verbal action between languages can ontologically affect the way people of different language backgrounds conceive and understand reality. As sinologist and linguist James H.-Y. Tai put it: 'Each individual language thus represents a unique segmentation of the external world and the universe of human experience' (Tai 2013, 60).

Research Category

We chose verb as the main category to investigate how language affects our perception of reality, as in our opinion it is one of the most fundamental language categories and its verbalisation appears essential for understanding the creation and conception of meanings and behaviours as ongoing processes in the person's mind. Also, we identify this category as one of the more semantically abstract categories, which is why mastering semantic discrepancies between the target and native language represents one of the biggest challenges for foreign language learning. We empirically investigated the verbal aspect, lexical as well as grammatical, with specific focus on the different degrees of attention given by each language to the process on one hand and to the completion of the activity on the other.

Verb Classification

In many languages, the verb is inflected and encodes tense, aspect, mood and voice. It often also helps convey person, gender and number of the subject or object. Nevertheless, not all of the languages in the world present these features. It has been previously proposed that different languages take different perspectives on activities and events. Scholars like Ikegami (1985) have worked on the difference between Japanese and English, arguing that Japanese is a process-oriented and English is a result-oriented language. Basically, the perspective on how we understand an action being focused on the process, which might or might not end up in a change of state or towards a result made possible by this change, depends on how this action is expressed through the use of the verb. Nevertheless, not only the verb can be

the carrier of this perspective. Language is full of more or less subtle mechanisms, which even subconsciously convey what is the conveyer's standpoint or what segment of the action he or she is focusing on.

Verbs in the Indo-European linguistic tradition have been, following Vendler's classification (1967), divided into four main types according to their inherent property of (semantic) eventuality; verbs which express state, activity, achievement, accomplishment and semelfactive as a separate category, subsequently added to Vendler's classification by Bernard Comrie in 1976. Let us have a look at how these categories work in the three languages investigated in our research. For Chinese, this division seems not to fit entirely, especially in terms of the categories of achievements and accomplishments. When we try to classify verbs in Slovenian, we are dealing with a great interconnectivity between verb class and aspectual pairs, which makes it difficult to directly apply Vendler's classification. Slovenian presents a pretty elaborate system made complex by the grammatical aspect of the verb, for which every verb has two forms, the perfective (*dovršnik*) and the imperfective (*nedovršnik*). To translate Vendler's test phrases used to classify verbs (in English) to Slovenian, we would need to switch from perfective to imperfective form and vice versa. Even though Slovenian and Italian know the same categories of lexical aspect, they do not overlap entirely, since Italian does not express grammatical aspect through single lexemes like Slovenian, but uses the past tense to emphasise the completion of an action. In Chinese, a single verb is very often not enough to express completion of an action. In these cases, the Chinese language employs resultative and compound causative constructions, which are, simply put, either a combination of two verbs or a verb and an adjective, where the first one conveys the activity and the second one the realisation that transfers the focus from the activity in process to its result. We can find more evidence of the lack of real accomplishment verbs in Chinese in Zhao (2005). Besides the resultative and compound causative construction, a maybe even more common way of changing aspect in Chinese is by employing the aspectual marker 'le.' But since it sometimes also affects only the tense, its reliability in this concern is, so to speak, weak. What can be deduced from previous studies on the ambiguities and peculiarities in the interpretation of the expressed completion of some Chinese verbs (Koenig and Chief 2008; Peck, Lin, and Sun 2013; Thepkanjana and Uehara 2009; 2010) is that they comprise a very wide and ambiguous scale of degree of completion, which is often open to interpretations.

The analysis of language tests employed in the empirical study required a categorisation of verbal actions able to comprise as much as possible the fea-

Table 1 Proposed Features of Verb Classes and Their Categorisation

Verb type	[±dynamic]	[±scalar]	[±bounded]	[±telic]	[±result]	Example
Activity	+	–	–	–	–	Play
Semelfact./iter semelfactive	+	–	±	–	–	Sneeze
Accomplishment	+	+	+	+	–	Build
Achievement	+	+	+	+	+	Find

tures of all three languages and at the same time preserve as high as possible the degree of universality to keep the features abstract while interpreting the results. We designed our categorisation of lexical aspect on the basis of those already established, i.e. the one from Smith (1997), Xiao and McEnery (2004), Peck, Lin, and Sun (2013) and Koeing and Chief (2008). While all of these categorisations contributed a great deal to ours, they did not entirely fit the language combinations of our choice. Hence the need for a new adjusted categorisation, which in our opinion best comprises also the features of verbal actions in general.

Methods and Techniques

A descriptive and causal nonexperimental method was applied in the study, which used research instruments to assess the subject's perception about the level of completion of the action expressed by verbs. The investigation used a within-subject design, thus each of the subjects participated in all conditions. We collected quantitative data with an off-line technique. We performed five tasks in the form of language tests. We employed different techniques to collect the data, i.e. the rating scale technique that comprised the semantic differential method, triads sorting task, in which participants had to select an option according to the associative principle, importance assessment and sorting task, free text description and arbitrary sentence formation. All of them have been designed to assess the focus on action (process or result), and how it is perceived by native speakers of Chinese, Italian and Slovenian. The sample size was 30 ($n = 30$), for which we tried to make groups for each language as balanced as possible in regard to gender and study field. The ages of the subjects involved in the tests ranged between 19 and 29 years, all of them were undergraduate or postgraduate students.

Procedure

The instruments employed in three tasks were questionnaires built and performed with the open-source application PsychoPy. The two tests compris-

Figure 1 Screenshots of the Chinese Version of Task 1 (left) and 2 (right) Designed in PsychoPy

ing free text description and arbitrary sentence formation were designed and performed using Word document.

The main objective of Task 1 was to determine the degree of completion of verbs perceived by native speakers. The participant described his/her perception of the action expressed by the verb used in the sentence on a descriptive 3-point rating scale, stretching from *not completed, maybe completed* to *completed*. The stimulus in this task, represented by a whole sentence in which a monomorphemic verb is used along with the particle 'le' in Chinese, is expected to make participants more likely to opt for the highest degree of completion. For the Italian version of this task, the same sentences were formed with the verb in the past tense Passato prossimo. This task was not repeated in Slovenian since the selection of the verb form (*dovršnik* or *nedovršnik*) would unambiguously affect the subjects' response. In Task 2, the participants were given a verb as a stimulus, which they then had to pair with one of the two possible options (another verb or a short phrase), on the basis of semantic similarity. The two options were semantic extremes in the degree of completion, and semantically related to the stimulus. In both tasks, verb corpus comprised 76 monomorphemic verbs, (32 accomplishment verbs, 31 achievement verbs, 8 activity verbs and 5 semelfactives). Activity and semelfactive verbs were also included in the tasks in the role of distractors.

In Task 3, subjects had to asses 8 short stories presented as cartoon strips (series of drawings) for which each drawing represented a specific phase of the action and corresponded to a specific activity also described by an appropriate verb. The assessment of verbs had to be made according to the importance they ascribe to the activity in relation to the development of the story. In total, they were assessing 37 verbs; 17 of which were atelic and 20 telic.

Task 4 simply comprised of two drawings of a specific situation for which

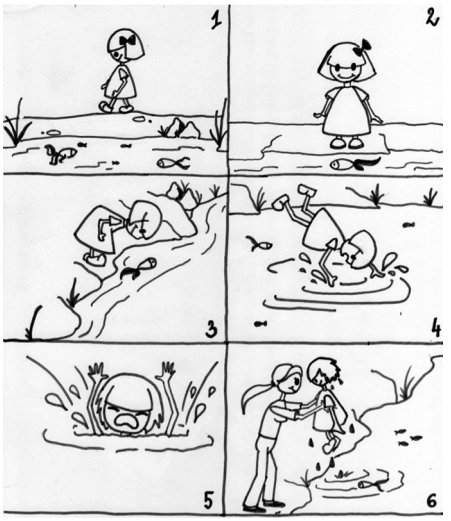


Figure 2

Screenshot of Task 3 (Italian Version)

(1) camminare
(2) vedere
(3) sporgersi
(4) cadere
(5) annegare
(6) tirare fuori

we asked the subjects to describe the illustrated situation in their own words.

In Task 5, subjects were given 16 verbs with which they had to form arbitrary sentences. The verb list comprised 5 achievement verbs, 5 accomplishment verbs, 3 activity verbs and 3 semelfactives. For Italian, the verbs were given in their infinitive form, for Slovenian we chose the infinitive of the imperfective.

Empirical Evidence and Conclusions

On the basis of the collected and analysed data, we can conclude that verbs are very polysemous in their nature, which produces semantic discrepancies between languages. By this, we can also confirm our first hypothesis that verbal actions and their mental representations are polysemous and therefore difficult to compare between languages. Which leads us to our first subhypothesis, according to which the interdependency between verb class and the degree of completion of an action in Chinese will show a smaller correspondence that the one in Slovenian and Italian, which are languages that express the verbal aspect more straightforwardly. According to our data, we can confirm that the verb class affects meaning and therefore the expressed degree of completion in all three languages. Especially Task 1 and 2 showed that verb class and degree of completion are much more interdependent in Italian than in Chinese. We also determined that it is precisely in Chinese that the category boundary between accomplishment and activity verbs is the most blurred, which can be understood as if accomplishment verbs in Chi-

nese, reflect less telic potentiality than the same verbs in Italian and therefore Chinese speakers perceive these verbs as atelic, meaning that they do not necessarily lead to a result. Although it was difficult to prove that the Slovenian verb displays a greater interrelation between verb class and degree of completion, it is precisely this feature that serves as evidence for the degree of completion, which is self-evident in the form of the verb. On the other hand, for Chinese and Italian, where the degree of completion of the verb is not lexically defined, we confirmed that Italian verbs are more affected by class than the Chinese ones.

The data analysis also confirmed our second hypothesis about the nature of the Chinese verb, which enables a broad interpretative freedom of degree of completion, and therefore focuses more on the processual phase than on the result of the action. Subsequently, our results revealed Italian and Slovenian being more focused on the resultative phase of the action.

The investigation and analysis of the empirical data has confirmed the role of the native language as a tool of thinking of and conveying subjective reality, namely the language is saturated with conceptual activity and language thinking plays an important role in activities of communication. We tried to apply these conclusions to language teaching and learning approaches to improve didactic practices, especially in regard to the relation between language, mind and culture.

Pedagogical Applications

We have now come to the most important part of the present paper – the application of the acquired empirical results to the field of teaching and learning foreign languages. For this, we asked ourselves two main research questions, which have helped us design guidelines and recommendations for cross-linguistic awareness development, based on the interrelation between mental processing, language, and culture. Following the theory of rich points proposed by Agar (1994) and his assertion on how understanding a language goes far beyond grammar and dictionary, we find rich points (we redefined this notion for cross-linguistic purposes and named it critical points between languages) revealing and very important for foreign language learning and teaching. For instance, our empirical data showed how Chinese verbs could represent a critical point in the process of learning Chinese as a foreign language, at least for speakers of Slovenian and Italian.

To answer our first research question, and although it is impossible to universally define morpho-syntactic critical points for a foreign language in general, as each language displays some degree of idiosyncrasy that produces

a unique configuration of critical points in relation to another foreign language, we will try to do so by focusing on our research category – verbal action. There are some general recommendations that can help us define morpho-syntactic critical points between languages. First of all, we must have thorough knowledge of the languages in question to be able to perform a detailed morpho-syntactic analysis. Besides grammatical features, it is very important to include sociolinguistic and sociocultural features of the native speakers in the investigation. On the basis of this knowledge, we have to perform a thorough theoretical and/or empirical research for the selected category that will comprise approaches established in the fields of linguistics, cognitive linguistics and intercultural communication, very similar to the one we presented earlier.

Moreover, one of the most important conclusions in relation to the second research question (approaches and techniques applied to foreign language learning and teaching) is the current lack of cross-linguistic contents. We therefore highly recommend the inclusion of these contents that have to be designed according to approaches and techniques of cognitive linguistics, as the novelty of our research is precisely the integration of the mentioned field with cross-linguistic contents for foreign language learning and teaching.

We now continue with the introduction of our final objective, namely, the presentation of guidelines and recommendations to support learners and teachers in the process of learning and teaching Chinese as a foreign language. These are important for learners, as they will facilitate the recognition of the so-called critical points between native and foreign language and the development of cross-linguistic competences as a strategy for avoiding or mastering negative transfer. For teachers, we provide specific guidelines and teaching strategies for Chinese as a foreign language, based on approaches of cognitive linguistics, foreign language teaching methods as well as theories established in the fields of intercultural and cross-linguistic studies. We divided the proposed guidelines for developing cross-linguistic awareness competences into four sets subdivided between learning and teaching categories. The sets are as follows: (1) recommendations for teachers' language competences, (2) guidelines for learning content designers, (3) guidelines for the teaching process, (4) guidelines for the learning process.

Although the guidelines and recommendations were conceived for the purpose of learning and teaching Chinese, they were designed in a way that allows their adaptation and application for teaching and learning other foreign languages. However, they are most applicable to unrelated languages.

To achieve our final research objective, to boost language competences, it is necessary to include more comprehensively cross-linguistic awareness competences to the field of language learning and teaching. An example taken from our research would be to include in the foreign language curriculum more thorough explanations about how verbal actions are conceived and conceptualised in one language compared to another.

Frameworks of reference for languages are valuable instruments for the applied part of our research. In fact, the analysis of such instruments, used to describe the achievements of learners of foreign language across the world, highlighted a general lack of cross-linguistic competences.

Our analysis of frameworks of reference focused on frameworks for foreign language teaching and learning used in Europe and those established in the field of learning and teaching Chinese as a foreign language around the globe. We analysed and compared the Common European Framework of Reference – CEFR (Kovačič et al. 2011) and the Companion Volume with new descriptors, the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures – FREPA (Candelier et al. 2017), the International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education (Hanban 2009), the Chinese Language Proficiency Scales For Speakers of Other Languages (Hanban 2007), and The New HSK.[2] While the CEFR, the CEFR Companion Volume and the FREPA are frameworks designed for no language in particular and can be applied for teaching and learning foreign languages in general, the Curriculum, the Scales and the HSK, on the other hand, are language-specific and are designed to fulfil the requirements of learning and teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Our investigation firstly focused on how frameworks of reference address cross-linguistic discrepancies that are language-specific and are based on behavioural and mental patterns.

Even though the authors of the CEFR acknowledged the importance of a learner's mental context in the process of creating meaning, they conclude that how he or she recognises external circumstances and limitations, accepts them, adapts or does not adapt himself or herself to them depends on his or her personal interpretation of the situation that is affected by his or her previous knowledge, values and beliefs. They also mentioned the difficulties in overcoming differences in values and beliefs, courtesy conventions, social expectations and other aspects that affect the way learners interpret interaction if they do not develop a relevant intercultural awareness.

[2] The New Chinese Proficiency Test, see http://www.hanban.edu.cn/tests/node_7486.htm#no1.

Although these facts, which are mainly considering intercultural awareness, are acknowledged, they do not really show up among the competences required for developing cross-linguistic awareness.

A basic weakness of the CEFR is also its fundamental orientation towards the user (what he or she is supposed to know) compared to the focus it gives to language as a system (how it works). Another flaw we identified in the CEFR is that even though the descriptors were designed for a plurilingual user, the language competences are very singular, for one language, which makes it faulty in terms of metalinguistic and cross-linguistic competences. The integration between languages is known only in the framework of intercultural contents.

The CEFR – Companion Volume with new descriptors was created in 2018 to remedy the deficiency of CEFR from 2001. We found that the Companion Volume gives more recognition and emphasis to cross-linguistic and cognitive mediation, acknowledging their importance for a successful communication. Moreover, it also emphasises the need to precisely define the languages involved in the communication process. This addition to the CEFR, despite not being exhaustive enough, is a step forward in regard to cross-linguistic awareness competences, which confirms the aim of our research and makes it relevant for future improvements of frameworks of reference.

Like the Companion Volume, the FREPA was created to update certain aspects of the CEFR. While the CEFR was designed on more methodological grounds, the FREPA complements it in terms of the tools that focus primarily on the development of users' plurilingual and intercultural competences and knowledge through pluralistic approaches towards languages and cultures. The novelty of the FREPA, which is also the most important aspect for the present study, is the principal of *awakening to languages* and the mutual understanding of related languages. The FREPA is therefore much more focused on plurilingualism and the competences it demands. For instance, the FREPA emphasises 'enabling learners to have easier access to a specific language or culture by using aptitudes acquired in relation to / in another language or culture [. . .].' (Candelier et al. 2017, 16). By acknowledging this, the authors of the FREPA address a fundamental principle for the present study – cross-linguistic awareness, which is very often neglected on account of intercultural awareness.

The comparison of the three descriptors shows how the FREPA is much more thorough in including competences related to cross-linguistic aspects and linguistic awareness. In some way, the pointing out of these differences, not only cultural but linguistic as well, which create diverse perceptions of

reality, proves that notions of cognitive linguistics are already part of the institutionalised teaching methods.

The main limitation of the analysed frameworks of reference in terms of foreign language teaching practice is that they are still very general, although they thoroughly define the competences, thus making the guidelines pretty vague. Moreover, they do not indicate that the frameworks have been primarily designed for Indo-European languages, which have very similar systemic properties and can be therefore taught using similar principles.

Specifically for Chinese as a foreign language, we identified three instruments that could be compared to the European framework of reference for languages: the International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education, the Chinese Language Proficiency Scales For Speakers of Other Languages, and The New HSK (The New Chinese Proficiency Test). Interestingly, the Chinese Language Proficiency Scales were created on the basis of the CEFR and represent a standard for designing curricula for teaching Chinese as a foreign language, for writing Chinese language textbooks and for assessing language proficiency for learners of Chinese as a foreign language. The International Curriculum is a rather recent instrument for planning the teaching process and assessing language proficiency and serves as the basis for designing teaching resources. The Curriculum addresses the importance of interactions between aspects of language and culture, but vaguely points out the importance of plurilingualism and how the structure of our native language affects the learning of a foreign language and the ways we mentally conceive reality. The latter is only mentioned indirectly and without giving any evidence on which cognitive linguistics is based on. On the other hand, much more importance is given to contents related to intercultural communication and intercultural awareness.

Moreover, the Chinese Language Proficiency Scales and The New HSK do not give much emphasis on the understanding of a language system as a deeper cognitive process that can affect perception, conceptualisation and the way native speakers think and consequently generate the content of their message. This idea is mentioned only in the Curriculum.

Guidelines and Recommendations for Developing Cross-Linguistic Awareness Competences

As we pointed out several times in the previous pages, we find that the currently established frameworks of reference for languages lack contents for specific aspects, i.e. the development of cross-linguistic awareness competences, which are of great importance, especially for learning and teaching

unrelated languages like Slovenian and Chinese. The final object of our research was to fill this gap by designing guidelines and recommendations applicable in the course of foreign language learning and teaching.

The following guidelines and recommendations for developing cross-linguistic awareness competences have been divided into four sets subdivided between learning and teaching categories.

Recommendations for Teachers' Language Competences

Cross-linguistic differences are an important aspect of foreign language learning but are usually vaguely addressed in frameworks of reference, especially in comparison to the intercultural differences; therefore, we consider teacher's competences a fundamental aspect of this process. To be able to teach cross-linguistic dimensions for Chinese as a foreign language, it is of crucial importance to have thorough knowledge of the languages used by the learners in the learning process (native and foreign language). Most Chinese teachers, who are often rated higher for their language authenticity, do not speak the native language of the learners, and are therefore not suited to teach cross-linguistic contents. We therefore recommend Sinologists or Chinese teachers who speak the native language of the learners to teach Chinese as a foreign language. The same applies to teachers of other foreign languages.

Guidelines for Learning Content Designers

To those who design learning contents, materials and resources and want to include contents for the development of cross-linguistic awareness, we propose to consider the approach that encompasses the relational contact between the self and the other. By learning the language, we also learn new ways of thinking and by doing this, the learner does not have to give up his or her own identity, but rather accept the changes that this learning introduces into his or her hitherto valid personal perspectives. We suggest following the six phases for the conceptualisation of intercultural sensitivity proposed by Bennett (1993). We have adapted his phases for the conceptualisation of cross-linguistic awareness.

Guidelines for the Teaching Process

The aforementioned phases primarily proposed to help and guide designers to generate learning contents for developing cross-linguistic awareness can, along with language competences descriptors, also represent support

for teachers that can follow the phases in the teaching process and successfully link them to the relevant exercises. It is a teacher's responsibility to avoid critical points to discourage learners in the process, but rather make negative transfer become part of the learner's learning path.

In our study, we have designed the most important descriptors for cross-linguistic competences (which are partly based on the analysis of the frameworks of reference) available for teachers of Chinese as a foreign language to include in their curricula. Competences descriptions are mainly linked to the field of language, which according to this study is organically related to mind and culture. We would like to share in the present paper some sections of the designed descriptors, to enable the reader to better understand our basic idea of cross-linguistic competences.

The descriptors have been designed according to the phases the learner has to pass through while acquiring language sensibility and cross-linguistic awareness. The domains according to which the phases are defined are awareness, knowledge and skills. Not all domains are fundamental in all phases. For instance, awareness is very important in the first three phases where the learner has to advance from the negative to the positive stand towards a foreign language, while skills are much more crucial in the final phases. Phases progress according to the level of knowledge already established by the current frameworks of reference but they do not overlap completely for the process, and attainment of cross-linguistic awareness is specific for each learner. It is advisable for the teacher to set a scale to better assess a learner's progress towards the target. In this way, we do not assess the level of knowledge, but rather help the learner to develop awareness about his or her role in the process of learning. We would also like to remind the reader that the proposed descriptors are a draft that needs to be improved in the coming years.

Guidelines for the Learning Process

Teachers can decide to introduce qualitative methods of self-assessment in their class, for instance, the language portfolio. In this case, the previously introduced descriptors can be of great help to learners in assessing their own cross-linguistic experience and the degree of progression through the stated phases. This should undergo the assessment of the awareness of cross-linguistic differences, of the understanding of the acquired principles of cross-linguistics and the actual use within the contents of the acquired cross-linguistic knowledge.

When teachers are not using portfolios, they should encourage the de-

Table 2 Descriptors Proposal for Developing Cross-Linguistic Awareness (Draft)

Phase	Domain	Description of the target for progressing through phases
1 Differences denial	Awareness	• Perceives the existence of differences between languages, which are of systemic nature. (Example: verbal aspect.) • Perceives that each language has its own specific way of conceiving and verbalising reality. (Example: differences between languages in emphasising the phase of process or result of the action.) • Perceives the differences between ways of thinking of speakers of different languages. (Example: the comparison between Chinese synthetic and the Western analytic thinking.) • Perceives the specificities of linguistic communication in his or her own language compared to Chinese. (Example: grasping the meaning through context in Chinese.)
4 Differences acceptance	Knowledge, skills	• Knows that each language has its own specific way of conceptualisation in verbalisation of reality. (Example: differences between languages in emphasising the phase of process or result of the action.) • Knows that Chinese speakers can interpret reality differently because of specific values, cultural system, language system, etc. (Example: the comparison between the holistic understanding of relationships and the understanding of meaning contextually.) • Knows that critical points can be the cause of mistakes and negative transfer from his or her native language. (Example: the direct use of the aspectual marker -le for defining past tense.) • Can identify differences between his or her native language and Chinese and verbalises it. (Example: the use of aspectual markers in Chinese compared to the aspect in Slovene, which is expressed at a lexical level.) • Can investigate (autonomously or under a teacher's guidance) operating modes of his or her native language and Chinese. • Can compare morpho-syntactic differences between languages and connects them with the semantic ones. (Example: the meaning of process and the use of imperfective verbal aspect.)

Notes For the whole descriptors proposal see Čok (2019).

velopment of cross-linguistic competences by guiding learners with special exercises and activities. Learners have to test themselves in conceptualising meanings in the most authentic manner, which can only be achieved when he or she is aware of the differences between ways of conceptualisation established in his or her native and foreign language.

As a concluding remark, we would like to propose one final recommendation for designing curricula that consider and raise awareness of cross-linguistic aspects. It is very important that we thoroughly introduce and explain language-related contents in the initial learning phases, as the learner is facing an enormous quantity of unknown information, especially at the beginning. The designer of the curriculum will therefore have a lot of work with finding correlations between language structures and their manifestation in a more general conceptual reality of speakers of the foreign language. Our study, which can serve as an example, was mainly concerned with verbal aspect, while some noun features are also vaguely mentioned. When designing actual learning activities, the teacher should aim at encouraging a broader understanding of the structure's meaning and the relation between linguistic (morpho syntactic, semantic, etc.) and conceptual categories.

References

Agar, Michael. 1991. 'The Biculture in Bilingual.' *Language in Society* 20 (2): 167–81.

———. 1994. *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation.* New York: William Morrow.

Bennett, Milton. J. 1993. 'Cultural Marginality: Identity Issues in Intercultural Training.' In *Education for Intercultural Experience,* edited by Michael Paige, 109–35. Yarmouth, MA: Intercultural Press.

Candelier, Michel, Antoinette Camilleri-Grima, Veroniqe Castellotti, Jean-Francois De Pietro, Ildiko Lorincz, Franz-Joseph MEisner, Artur Noguerol, and Anna Schröder-Sura. 2017. *Referenčni okvir za pluralistične pristope k jezikom in kulturam: zmožnosti in viri.* Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Čok, Tina. 2019. 'Konceptualizacija in upovedovanje glagolskega dejanja v slovenščini, kitajščini in italijanščini.' PhD Dissertation, Univerza na Primorskem.

Hanban. 2007. *Guoji hanyu nengli biaozhun.* Beijing: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu chubanshe.

———. 2009. *Guoji hanyu jiaoxue tongyong kecheng dagang: Yuenanyu, Hanyu duizhao.* Beijing: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu chubanshe.

Holme, Randal. 2010. *Cognitive Linguistics and Language Teaching.* Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Huang, Jui-Ting, Junyu Li, Dong Yu, Li Deng, and Yifan Gong. 2013. 'Cross-Language Knowledge Transfer Using Multilingual Deep Neural Network with Shared Hidden Layers.' In *Proceedings of the 2013 IEEE International*

Conference on Acoustics, Speech and Signal Processing, 7304–8. Vancouver: IEEE.

Ikegami, Yoshihiko. 1985. 'Activity – Accomplishment – Achievement: A Language That Can't Say "I Burned It, But It Didn't Burn" and One that Can.' In *Linguistics and Philosophy: Essays in honour of Rulon S. Wells,* edited by Adam Mikkai and Alan K. Melby, 265–304. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Koenig, Jean-Pierre, and Lian-Cheng Chief. 2008. 'Scalarity and State-Changes in Mandarin (and Other Languages).' *Empirical Issues in Syntax and Semantics* 7:241–62.

Kovačič, Irena, Ina Ferbežar, Simona Kranjc, Karmen Pižorn, Janez Skela, Marko Stabej, and Nataša Detič. 2011. *Skupni evropski jezikovni okvir: učenje, poučevanje, ocenjevanje.* Ljubljana: Ministrstvo Republike Slovenije za šolstvo in sport.

Lucy, John, A. 1997. 'Linguistic Relativity.' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26:291–312.

———. 2005. 'Through the Window of Language: Assessing the Influence of Language Diversity on Thought.' *Theoria* 54: 299–309.

Peck, Jeeyoung, Jingxia Lin, and Chaofen Sun. 2013. 'Aspectual Classification of Mandarin Chinese Verbs: A Perspective of Scale Structure.' *Language and Linguistics* 14 (4): 663–700.

Smith, Carlota, S. 1997. *The Parameter of Aspect.* 2nd ed. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Tai, James H.-Y. 2013. 'Reflections on Typological Characterization of Chinese Gramma: Human Language Resources and Linguistic Typology.' In *Papers from the Fourth International Conference on Sinology,* 60–88. Taipei: Academia Sinica.

Thepkanjana, Kingkarn, and Satshi Uehara. 2009. 'Resultative Constructions with "Implied-Result" and "Entailed-Result" Verbs in Thai and English: A Contrastive Study.' *Linguistics* 47 (3): 589–618.

———. 2010. 'Syntactic and Semantic Discrepancies among the Verbs for "kill" in English, Chinese and Thai.' In *PACLIC 24 Proceedings,* 291–300. Tokyo: Waseda University.

Vendler, Zeno. 1967. *Linguistics in Philosophy.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Xiao, Richard, and Tony McEnery. 2004. *Aspect in Mandarine Chinese: A Corpus-Based Study.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Zhao, Yang. 2005. 'Causativity in Chinese and Its Representations in English, Japanese and Korean Speakers' L2 Chinese Grammars.' PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge.

The Illocutionary Force behind Learning

Hans Drumbl
Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano, Italy
johann.drumbl@unibz.it

Renata Zanin
Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano
renata.zanin@unibz.it

Children got it, young people and adults, at least in certain areas of their activities, got it, successful language learners got it, unsuccessful language learners don't have it – the illocutionary force of speaking when learning a new language. Illocution, which Searle not without reason called 'illocutionary force,' appears as the decisive moment of the pragmatics of speech acts. Thus, illocution appears as the pragmatic foundation of speech acts in general and of speaking while learning a new language, opening ways to strategies for classroom activities biased for learning.

Keywords: illocution, language learning, learning bias

Introduction

Illocution is a concept from pragmatics, the area of linguistics that 'considers the execution of an action with the help of a linguistic utterance.' A distinction is made between different actions such as assurance, instruction, and obligation, whereby the illocutionary act represents an 'aspect,' a 'partial action,' a 'function,' a 'component,' the 'purpose' or the 'specific role' of the speech act, namely the 'purpose of an action connected with an utterance.'

On the basis of this theoretical foundation, in the 70's a pragmatic orientation of foreign language didactics developed with impulses for communicative and action-oriented language acquisition in schools. The new focus has been on learners' activities. Learners behave 'as if' they were citizens of the country or visitors talking to competent speakers of the language. See the paradigmatic realization of the communicative approach in *Strategies* (Abbs and Freebairn 1975) with fascinating 'tranches de vie' of English life. This textbook, alas, did not fulfill the expectations of teachers who had embraced it with great enthusiasm. Teachers were disappointed because *Strategies* was received by learners with reluctance and indifference. In the absence of illocution, the exemplary life of other people apparently did not trigger any interest in learners. The speech-acts encountered in *Strategies* were missing the

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.131-142

'fuel and fire' (Hofstadter and Sander 2013) of thinking, speaking and learning. In Italian schools there was a general return to teaching methods based on grammar and translation. Twenty years later a paradigm-shift occurred introducing syllabi with an emphasis on prosody and on prosodic skills developed in a bilingual setting (Drumbl and Missaglia 1997; Missaglia 1999; 2007).

Rethinking these issues while working together with colleagues from five different countries all working in different contexts of teaching and learning, has motivated the audacious turn which we are going to present today. Pragmatics used not in order to classify the language output – or 'input,' according to the different perspective taken – but referring the categories of the pragmatic understanding of speech acts (Sprechhandlungen) to the process of learning itself. To do this, one must address the question of what learners do when they learn a new language – the actions they perform as learners. There are no actions using speech without an illocutionary force to begin with.

The result but also the starting point of scientific research is a framework of general parameters for the assessment of empirical facts. In a recent research-report which offers valuable results for concrete work in the classroom (Kersten 2019, 35), the *Complex Systems Theory* (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008a) is cited as the theoretical foundation (p. 35):

> The context of a language learning or language using activity includes the intrinsic dynamics of the learner, that is, what individuals bring to the activity, for example, their cognitive context (e.g. working memory); the cultural context (e.g., what roles the teacher and the students play in this culture); the social context, including relationships with other learners and the teacher; the physical environment [. . .].

This is a list of select factors that can play a role in learning and speaking, but whose weight must be assessed in relation to other factors – not yet recognized, unknown, perhaps even unrecognizable factors.

There is a double problem of weighting and direction. In the dynamic interplay of forces, it may well be that when a particular characteristic of a student coincides with a particular characteristic of the requirement for the student's learning potential (e.g. memorizing new words, learning and remembering the pronunciation of a new word), any one specific trait might have consequences that do not occur in other learners. The methodological observation of the data cannot grasp these constellations, nor can it grasp the fact that it is only in these particular constellations that the characteristics of learners become pertaining characteristics for research on language learning.

Our contribution is part of ongoing research on language teaching in the tri-lingual working environment in South Tyrolean kindergarten and primary schools. The focus here is on the neglected points in language learning theory and practice, the main point being the core of what has been called the 'intrinsic dynamics of the learner' (see above). At the core of speaking is the motivation, or, to put it in the terms of linguistic pragmatic studies, the illocutionary force of speech acts.

The missing factor of illocution as a pertinent trait at the heart of the dynamic system proposed as the theoretical foundation for language studies is a clear sign that the theory is flawed on account of its cumulative approach and is unable to satisfy readers with hands-on experience and a holistic view of the subject-matter.

Motivation and Illocution

Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008a) give a list of select factors that can play a role in learning and speaking, but whose weight should be assessed in relation to other factors. Here are some factors that have not yet been sufficiently considered in scientific discourses. And they all have to do with motivation, the inner drive to achieve specific goals. A first consideration: the social and relational context may regard other facts not dealt with in research, for instance the opportunity of attending a particularly desirable and coveted school (social prestige; being with one's best friend in the same class; or having been accepted in an easily accessible school that was accompanied by the parents with a great sigh of relief, which is not unimportant to the children – for example in separation situations; the satisfaction of having passed a selective entrance examination, etc.).

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation cannot easily be separated. Motivation is a complex basis for all learning, but it rarely shows up on the surface of behavior or it has a component that does not appear on the surface and cannot be observed. There is a striking analogy to the deep motivation in speaking, the illocution that triggers all further consequences of action.

Second, the 'plateau' problem (Richards 2008; Birdsong 1992; 2005; 2007; 2009): When learning and speaking, two basic attitudes of learners can be distinguished, which experienced teachers know from their own experience, but are rarely recognized as pertinent factors. In fact, language learners sometimes reach a 'plateau' in second-language competency, a point at which their L2 skills are (or seem) good enough for routine communication, giving them immediate satisfaction and, in some cases, acting as a threshold beyond which they do not easily develop further skills as foreign language

speakers. In contrast, there is learning, which does not aim at a predetermined (low) level of achievement. This basic dichotomy is already proven in the acquisition of the first language. This phenomenon of 'late talkers,' who speak 'perfectly' without the tedious little steps before they master the language to some extent, is a pattern of behaviour that can also be verified at an advanced age in second language acquisition. These are isolated cases.

Many other cases show a different behaviour, as Wolfgang Klein (2007, 139–40) recalls with great empathy:

> We have begun to investigate which of the above characteristics that we have to learn, pronunciation, morphology, etc., is particularly difficult, and now something very peculiar emerges: a student who is motivated to do so can learn each of the characteristics studied so far in such a way that native speakers cannot distinguish him from other native speakers. This applies to pronunciation, morphology, syntax, whatever has been studied. Students can learn it perfectly – but they don't. Or, more generally, adults, at least at this age, can learn a second language perfectly, perfectly always in that sense, as not distinguishable from native speakers, but they do not. That's a very mysterious circumstance that can't really be explained.

Resonance

In a review, the bias derived from a – false – basic assumption becomes evident. We call it the 'ditch'-bias, the influence of a metaphorical evaluation of an important factor which presumably prevents progress in learning a new language, leading to fossilization.

> Rather than taking a cross-sectional, and therefore static view as this, a complex systems approach can plot the path of individual growth and variation across a time-scale (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008[b], 245). Indeed, since 'every organism is changing and determining what is important in its world-creating and remaking the world in which it lives,' the explanations for fossilization must yield, in a complex systems perspective, to an acknowledgement of the 'boundless' potential to grow one's language resources, and not stop at the powerful attractor that is 'the neural commitment of the first language, and the ensuing entrenchment, [that] may lead to a deep valley or well' (142), which normally constitutes a trough in the trajectory of how an additional language develops. [Weideman 2009, 5]

The metaphor of the protective wall or the protective deep trench has found universal dissemination. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008b) have introduced a fascinating preamble to their book asking the question 'What if?' We adopt this formula too and ask: 'What if the deep-valley-metaphor is flawed not just by its own incongruency but by a convincing alternative view on neural organization of languages in the human brain?' After all, the answer to the question of the coexistence of several languages in the human brain could be a different one. The separation of languages in the brain does not have to take place negatively, through a deep gulf according to the almost warlike metaphor that suggests a need for protection. The separation can be achieved functionally through an increased activity of the currently used language, by the fact that the 'resonance,' the connection, the calling up of the 'familiar' elements of the language is activated more intensively and thus the words and sounds of the chosen language are addressed and called in a privileged way compared to the other languages in the brain. There is a kind of competition for resources. The theoretical model underlying this picture is the 'Competition Model' (Bates 1999; MacWhinney 1987; 2005; Hernandez, Li, and MacWhinney 2005).

Rich Language Input

Theories committed to the paradigm of emergence, resonance and networking recognize the decisive moment in the competition for the distribution of resources. From this constellation of competition for cognitive resources a winner emerges. Thus Elizabeth Bates (1999) writes in her essay 'On The Nature and Nurture Of Language,' in which she sets the course for the competition model she proposes, the potential of which is becoming more and more apparent. 'In many ways, Bates and MacWhinney were pioneers of systems-based models for language' (Hirsh-Pasek and Michnick Golinkoff 2008, 2). The basics for this model go back to the early 80s: First, the competition model proposed by Bates and MacWhinney (1982) suggested that children develop language syntax by attending to both grammatical and semantic cues in the input. This groundbreaking work not only enabled researchers to predict how multiple cues might work together to explain language at any given point in time, but also sparked cross linguistic studies and the examination of individual differences in both typical and atypical children over time. (Hirsh-Pasek and Michnick Golinkoff 2008, 2)

In an article that builds on the fundamental work of Bates and explores these findings specifically for second language acquisition, this view of the language and the consequences for language learning in kindergarten and

school are described in the following way (Hernandez, Li, and MacWhinney 2005, 18):

> When the child's two languages are roughly similar in dominance or strength, each system generates enough system-internal resonance to block excessive transfer. However, if one of the languages is markedly weaker, then it will not have enough internal resonance to block occasional transfer. The situation is very different for L2 learners, since the balance between the languages is then tipped so extremely in favor of L1. In order to permit the growth of resonance in L2, learners must apply additional learning strategies that would not have been needed for children. These strategies focus primarily on optimization of input, promotion of L2 resonance, and avoidance of processes that destroy input chunks.

The didactic implementation of these guidelines for L2 acquisition in kindergarten and primary school therefore can be based on the following application-oriented principles:

- *L2 learners must apply additional learning strategies.* In contrast to first language acquisition, learners of a foreign language must employ additional learning strategies in order to compensate for the imbalance between the two resonance spaces. *These strategies focus primarily on optimization of input.*
  The input, i.e. the contact with the foreign language, must be optimized within the framework of a well-considered syllabus especially with regard to this act of compensation. Preference should be given to linguistic elements that are already organized in chunks and that are presented and learned in a targeted manner in accordance with their further 'elective affinities' during use.
- *Promotion of L2 resonance.* This may include the task of providing for language use situations that require frequent and rapid code switching. In order to practice real code switching and not speaking with a constant reference to the first language (the way many Italian students deal with the foreign language), clear boundary signals in the form of untranslatable elements such as phraseologisms should be given a privileged place in the exercise.
- *Avoidance of processes that destroy input chunks.* This could be achieved, in a first approximation, by rigorously avoiding spontaneous transla-

> tions. Paradoxically, the best way to do this is to provide students with an idiomatic and stylistically sophisticated translation in a first step, and then to make all further steps independent of the translation. (Drumbl 2009, 79–80)

The image of language processing distilled from extensive research, which has its functional pivotal point in the concept of resonance, represents a precise framework which can be combined with the groundbreaking studies by Weitz (2015) and Kersten (2019) on rich language input.

The Learning Bias

After long and intensive discussions about the most diverse aspects and critical points of foreign language teaching, a broad consensus has emerged which regards the role of the teacher as a decisive factor. The linguistic performance of the teacher is thus at the center of a research interest that needs to be redefined. A helpful instrument here is the experience gained in bilingual teaching, which is captured by the term 'input quality observation.' The following chapter is part of a research project at the University of Bozen/Bolzano, conducted by Renata Zanin. The theoretical, not to say speculative character of this chapter is intended to draw a clear distinction between aspects of language learning that can be observed and those that are inaccessible to observation (Pulvermüller et al. 2006; Pulvermüller 2018).

The essence of this chapter is to distinguish two fundamentally different cognitive activities, one dedicated to the learning of new skills and the other to the use of skills already learned. Since it is about listening and speaking and learning the skills needed for doing so, which elude direct observation, the newly coined technical term 'learning bias' does not refer to biased views that exert their influence in cognitive processes, but rather distinguishes two cognitive activities from each other, one dedicated to learning – the 'learning bias' – and the other treated by the cognitive system as pure application of something already learned, i.e. listening, reading, speaking without the 'learning bias' inherent in the learning modality.

Mapping of Heard Speech into Articulation Information

From the linguistic perspective, our current project at the Faculty of Education of the University of Bolzano is based on a fine-grained concept of 'teacher talk' (Kleinschmidt 2018; Vosoughi and Roy 2012; Roy 2014). Linguistic input is the basis of language learning and linguistic contact between learners and their teachers is an essential basis of this learning process. The essence of

this learning process is not just relevant for any single learner: 'Our ability to map sound into pronunciation – vocal imitation – is necessary for vocabulary learning, and so the existence of language' (Skoyles 1998). Sound, something a human ear has perceived, is going to be mapped, i.e. constructed by a process, into pronunciation, i.e. something that is accomplished, performed, produced by the speaker: 'Indeed, the existence of automatic verbal imitation is required for the continued cross-generational existence of language. Yet, in spite of its importance, how the brain manages to map sound into pronunciation is at present unknown' (Skoyles 1998, 167).

The answer given by this unorthodox researcher is: Mapping of heard speech into articulation information and speech acquisition (Skoyles 2010). This is a hypothesis with far-reaching consequences for our understanding of language acquisition and language learning.

The smallest units we hear in speech are phones with their characteristic features. Though we can hear the phones, they are not linked to auditory-related invariants. That is, we don't hear an [o:] or an [y:] and try to imitate the sound in relation to its pertaining invariants. According to the new findings, phones link to articulatory specifications. The input from a variety of speakers with different voices does not interfere with the child's capacity for imitating the sounds heard, if sounds are mapped directly into articulation. The word pronounced by the child is this one child's personal phonetic output comprehensible to all other speakers of that language.

In order to understand this two-step-process of speaking and learning to speak we can look at the newest way to map neural activities of speaking to the synthesizer, as reported in *Nature* 568 in April 2019: 'Recurrent neural networks first decoded directly recorded cortical activity into representations of articulatory movement, and then transformed these representations into speech acoustics. […] Furthermore, the decoder could synthesize speech when a participant silently mimed sentences' (Anumanchipalli, Chartier, and Chang 2019).

Computer-based output of speech relies on innervation patterns for articulation from which, in a second step, the corresponding sounds are produced.

This double step has been known since Patricia Kuhl's seminal studies (Kuhl 2004; 2010), even if the consequences of this new insight were not immediately apparent. Kuhl pointed out very clearly that early childhood, intuitive and automatic speech acquisition only takes place in personal contact with a caretaker, but not when babies are observing a speaking person on the screen. If, when learning new sounds through intensive eye contact – accord-

ing to the new hypothesis – the patterns of articulation are simultaneously transmitted by means of mirror neurons, the constraint to personal contact – observed by Kuhl – is sufficiently explained.

These findings are of particular relevance for the definition of input-strategies for language teaching in inclusive classrooms. Children with hearing impairments or attention deficits can be specifically addressed and encouraged through appropriate input strategies.

To understand the fundamentals of language learning one must address the question of what learners do when they learn a new language: the actions they perform – and the illocutionary force behind these actions – when actually *learning* a new language.

Learning how to speak does not consist in the imitation of sounds heard by the baby. We recognize sounds not just by the way they 'sound,' perceiving the auditory features, by which they can be recognized, but by articulatory invariants, that is, the precise way sounds are produced in our mouth. Phoneticians use a phonetic description of sounds given in terms of how the sounds are articulated and not how they sound.

Why should we bother? What does this new approach to language acquisition really mean? Does it mean something for practitioners of language teaching and for the learners themselves? What if what we hear, does not map into the pronunciation but into the articulation of the perceived sounds?

The consequences from the learning point of view are quite clear. Babies learn the first language following an innate instinct to learn. They learn, and they are able to learn languages, i.e. sounds used by their caretakers to communicate with the baby and among themselves.

This 'force' behind the arousal of attention can be considered metaphorically as an equivalent of the illocutionary force behind speaking, as the *illocutionary force behind learning*.

The new hypothesis takes into account several well-established facts about child-language development which have never been explained thoroughly in a common theoretical framework. To summarize John Skoyles' (1998) insights:

1. The existence of nearly eight hundred phones, when each language uses but a very small sub-set of these.
2. The fact, that newborns are able to hear the entire set of phones at disposal for all languages prior to their specialized usage of the subset of phones relevant for the language they are exposed to.

3. Less known to the general public, but of no less importance is the fact, that animals also hear the phones used in human language.

According to Skoyles (1998), the conclusion cannot be but one: homo sapiens shares with his ancestors – including animals – the genetic predisposition for motor activation of the entire spectrum of possible sounds. That's the reason why newborns can actually start mapping and the process of mapping never ends:

> The mapping of novel heard pronunciations strategically needs to be processed automatically upon all words. This is because speakers cannot know in advance that a word is unfamiliar. As a result, they can know a word is in need of input into motor output mapping only after the opportunity to do this has gone. Thus, speakers if they are to incorporate unfamiliar words into their spoken vocabulary must by default map all spoken input to ensure the needing mapping has been done.

Thus, children learn language by continuous repetition, exercising skills that need repetition to be mastered. Since the skills exercised are not the imitation of sounds, but of targets for the articulation of sounds, skills can effectively be exercised.

Through this automatic mapping process from heard sound onto the respective articulation targets, children get an incredible amount of reinforcement exercises and they learn to produce the subtleties of pronunciation of the languages they are exposed to.

Automatic ultra-fast mapping does not equal passive, idle exposure to something like some sort of passive 'immersion.' The process of learning is based on active response and on rehearsing.

Notes

Sections 1–5 written by Renata Zanin, section 6 written by Hans Drumbl.

References

Abbs, Brian, Angela Ayton, and Ingrid Freebairn. 1975. *Strategies: Student's Book and Teacher's Book.* London: Longman.

Anumanchipalli, Gopala K., Josh Chartier, and Edward F. Chang. 2019. 'Speech Synthesis from Neural Decoding of Spoken Sentences.' *Nature* 568 (7753), 493–8.

Bates, Elizabeth. 1999. 'On the Nature and Nurture of Language.' In *Frontiers of Biology: The Brain of Homo Sapiens,* edited by Rita Levi-Montalcini, David

Baltimore, Renato Dulbecco, François Jacob, Emilio Bizzi, Pietro Calissan, and Viriginia Volterra, 241–65. Rome: Giovanni Treccani.

Birdsong, David. 1992. 'Ultimate Attainment in Second Language Acquisition.' *Language* 68 (4): 706–5.

———. 2005. 'Nativelikeness and Non-Nativelikeness in L2A Research.' *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 43 (3): 319–28.

———. 2007. 'Nativelike Pronunciation among Late Learners of French as a Second Language.' In *Language Experience in Second Language Speech Learning: In Honor of James Emil Flege,* edited by Ocke-Schwen Bohn and Murray J. Munro, 99–116. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

———. 2009. 'Age and the End State of Second Language Acquisition.' In *The New Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* edited by William C. Ritchie and Tej K. Bhatia, 401–24. Bingley: Emerald.

Drumbl, Hans. 2009. 'Die Prosodie im Sprachunterricht.' In *Sprachen, Kulturen, Grenzen: Teilhabe an der Sprachgemeinschaft – ein Schlüssel zur Zweitsprache,* edited by Elisabetta Bolla and Hans Drumbl, 23–60. Meran: AlphaBeta.

Drumbl, Johann, and Federica Missaglia. 1997. 'Prosodie und Inferenz in zweisprachiger Lernumgebung. Neue Ansätze für Deutsch als Fremdsprache in Italien.' *L'Analisi linguistica e letteraria* 5 (2): 391–418.

Larsen-Freeman, Diane, and Lynne Cameron. 2008a. 'Research Methodology on Language Development from a Complex Systems Perspective.' *The Modern Language Journal* 92 (2): 200–213.

———. 2008b. *Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hernandez, Arturo E., Ping Li, and Brian MacWhinney. 2005. 'The Emergence of Competing Modules in Bilingualism.' *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 9 (5): 220–5.

Hirsh-Pasek, Kathy, and Roberta Michnick Golinkoff. 2008. 'King Solomon's Take on Word Learning: An Integrative Account from the Radical Middle.' In *Advances in Child Development and Behavior,* vol. 36, edited by Robert V. Kail, 1–29. New York: Academic Press.

Hofstadter, Douglas, and Emmanuel Sander. 2013. *Die Analogie: Das Herz des Denkens.* Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

Kersten, Kristin. 2019. 'Einflussfaktoren im blingualen Fremdsprachenerwerb.' In *Sprachenvielfalt als Ressource begreifen,* vol. 2, edited by Andreas Rohde and Anja K. Steinlen, 35–70. Berlin: Dohrman.

Klein, Wolfgang. 2007. 'Spracherwerb innerhalb und außerhalb der Schule.' In *DA Jahrbuch 2007,* 34–44. Darmstadt: Deutschen Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung.

Kleinschmidt-Schinke, Katrin. 2018. *Die an die Schüler/-innen gerichtete Sprache (SgS): Studien zur Veränderung der Lehrer/-innensprache von der Grundschule bis zur Oberstufe.* De Gruyter.

Kuhl, Patricia. 2004. 'Early Language Acquisition: Cracking the Speech Code.' *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 5 (11): 831–43.

———. 2010. 'The Linguistic Genius of Babies.' https://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies

MacWhinney, Brian. 1987. 'The Competition Model.' In *Mechanisms of Language Acquisition,* edited by Brian MacWhinney, 249–308. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

———. 2005. 'A Unified Model of Language Acquisition.' In A *Handbook of Bilingualism: Psycholinguistic Approaches,* edited by Judith F. Kroll and Annette M. B. de Groot, 341–71. New York: Oxford University Press.

Missaglia, Federica. 1999. *Phonetische Aspekte beim Erwerb von Deutsch als Fremdsprache durch italienische Muttersprachler.* Forum Phoneticum 68. Frankfurt: Hector.

———. 2007. 'Prosodic Training of Italian Learners of German: The Contrastive Prosody Method.' In *Non-Native Prosody: Phonetic Description and Teaching Practice,* edited by Jürgen Trouvain and Ulrike Gut, 237–58. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Pulvermüller, Friedemann. 2018. 'Neural Reuse of Action Perception Circuits for Language, Concepts and Communication.' *Progress in Neurobiology* 160: 1–44.

Pulvermüller, Friedemann, Martina Huss, Ferath Kherif, Fermin Moscoso del Prado Martin, Olaf Hauk, and Yury Shtyrov. 2006. 'Motor Cortex Maps Articulatory Features of Speech Sounds.' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 103 (20): 7865–70.

Richards, Jack C. 2008. *Moving Beyond the Plateau: From Intermediate to Advanced Levels in Language Learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roy, Deb. 2014. 'The Birth of a Word.' https://ed.ted.com/lessons/deb-roy-the-birth-of-a-word

Skoyles, John R. 1998. 'Speech Phones Are a Replication Code.' *Medical Hypotheses* 50 (2): 167–73.

———. 2010. 'Mapping of Heard Speech into Articulation Information and Speech Acquisition.' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107 (18): E73. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1003007107

Vosoughi, Soroush, and Deb Roy. 2012. 'A Longitudinal Study of Prosodic Exaggeration in Child-Directed Speech.' In *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Speech Prosody,* vol. 1, edited by En Qiuwu Ma and Hongwei Ding, and Daniel Hirst, 194–7. Shanghai: Tongji University Press.

Weideman, Albert. 2009. 'Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics.' *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 27 (2): 229–33.

Weitz, Martina. 2015. *Die Rolle des L2-Inputs in bilingualen Kindergärten: Inquiries in Language Learning.* Frankfurt: Peter Lang.


Developing
Foreign Language
Competence

They Do Read, After All: Slovene Primary School Students' Reading Motivation in EFL

Anja Pirih
Faculty of Education and Faculty of Humanities,
University of Primorska, Slovenia
anja.pirih@fhs.upr.si

The main focus of this chapter is on reading motivation, one of the key factors that influence reading efficiency and learning motivation in general. We were particularly interested in voluntary foreign language reading motivation of young adolescents in Slovenia, more specifically the frequency of their voluntary free time reading in English, the format of the chosen reading materials and various aspects of their reading motivation in EFL. The analysis of 192 questionnaires showed that the majority of participants frequently read in English and most often find their reading materials on line. They have multidimensional reading motivation, with the strongest component being EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL. Differences between genders were found both in the selection of the reading material, as well as in the dimensions of their reading motivation, while the identified transfer of L1 reading attitudes to EFL reading attitudes appears to be relatively weak.

Keywords: reading motivation, EFL, primary school learners, gender differences, transfer of reading attitudes

Introduction

In schools worldwide, one of the main learning goals in primary grades is the ability to read. However, for reading to become one's gateway for continued, life-long learning and at the same time source of enjoyment, learning how to decode letters/characters is not enough. A child can become an independent reader and learner only through an interest in reading, carefully designed instruction and numerous encounters with diverse reading materials. In our globally linked world, diverse reading materials are no longer found only in libraries, but in the multilingual environment of the world-wide-web, which means it is of utmost importance to develop motivated fluent readers in different foreign languages as well. This seemingly clear and simple goal has nevertheless remained a challenge for numerous teachers and students alike.

In Slovenia, international studies of student performance in reading showed relatively poor results in reading literacy for a whole decade (PISA 2000,

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.145-165

2006, 2009, 2012), which triggered numerous studies on L1 reading motivation and reading strategies (Bucik 2005; Pečjak et al. 2006; Pečjak and Gradišar 2012). Despite the fact that a number of these focused on voluntary reading for fun that teenagers engage in within their free time, the focus remained on reading printed materials (books, magazines, etc.), which no longer present the only or main source of information or reading pleasure for a typical (Slovene) teenager. In the last decade, reading, as numerous other activities that adolescents participate in, moved into the virtual world and one cannot address the questions related to reading without considering digital reading as well. Since the majority of reading materials on line are in English and other foreign languages, it is crucial that the studies of reading motivation expand their scope to the field of reading motivation in a foreign language, which so far remains under-researched in the Slovene context. On the other hand, also existing studies on EFL reading motivation (e.g. Baker and Wigfield 1999; Guthrie and Wigfield 1997; Mori 2002; Takase 2007) are subject to limitations, as they predominantly focus on the participants' motivation to read books and other printed materials, failing to consider online reading sources, and limit their scope to the population of secondary school and university students included into assigned reading classes. Therefore, the aim of this study was to get a bigger picture of reading behaviour and reading motivation in EFL for a group of Slovene primary school pupils, more specifically the frequency of voluntary free time reading in English, the format of the chosen reading materials and various aspects of the reading motivation in EFL. A preliminary study (Pirih 2015) showed a relatively high frequency of voluntary reading of diverse materials in English, a multidimensional EFL reading motivation and weak transfer of L1 reading attitudes to EFL reading attitudes for the studied population. The present study, conducted with a slightly modified questionnaire and a more elaborate statistical analysis of the results aimed at getting a somewhat better understanding of the multidimensional nature of motivation for reading in a foreign language for this population of Slovene primary school pupils.

Reading Motivation

An attempt to define reading motivation is an attempt to answer questions like What makes one read? Why are some people engaged readers, while others hardly ever read? Why do some people want to repeat their reading experience? How does one become a reader for life, while so many quit reading once they finish school? Experts in the field of reading (Baker and Wigfield 1999; Guthrie and Wigfield 1997; Pečjak and Gradišar 2012) define reading mo-

tivation as a multidimensional construct that includes a number of goals and beliefs and see it as one of the key factors that influence reading efficiency and learning motivation in general. Pečjak and Gradišar (2012) explain that different motivational aspects within the reading motivation construct encourage an individual to initiate reading, give meaning to the reading process and persist in reading as well as repeat the reading experience.

The most influential model of reading motivation, Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) taxonomy of reading motivation, was developed within the theoretical framework of Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (SDT), which sees an individual's behaviour as a result of various intrinsic and extrinsic motives. While intrinsically motivated behaviours, crucial in the educational process (Deci and Ryan 1985), bring an internal reward, namely an experience of pleasure and satisfaction, extrinsically motivated behaviours are typically performed to receive a reward outside the activity itself or to avoid punishment. Deci and Ryan (1987) proposed four dimensions of motivation: competency, relatedness, autonomy and interest. If a learner is given the opportunity to make autonomous choices, this will enhance his/her intrinsic motivation. Similarly, if a learner feels competent or effective when he/she is engaged in a challenging activity, this will intrinsically motivate him/her. And finally, the sense of belonging (in a classroom) that derives from social relationships based on trust and care, results in intrinsic motivation.

These dimensions were further analysed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) in their Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), administered in US elementary schools. Their results confirmed that children's reading motivation is multidimensional, composed of 11 dimensions of reading motivation that form three categories: *competence and self-efficacy beliefs, purposes for reading/reading goals* and *social aspects of reading*.

As Wigfield and Guthrie explain, when students feel competent and efficacious at reading and regard the reading task as challenging, they develop (higher) intrinsic motivation for reading, while low reading self-esteem often results in reading avoidance. However, one's engagement in reading is not facilitated predominantly by the reading self-efficacy beliefs but the purposes for reading, especially intrinsically motivated goals. According to Wigfield (1997), for students to become engaged readers, the reading task should be interesting, they should get involved in reading and perceive it as important for their lives and/or success. On the other hand, they should also recognise reading as useful, i.e. bringing rewards or helping them to outperform others. While Ryan and Deci (2000) believe that extrinsic motivation usually results in less cognitive engagement and the use of less complex learning strate-

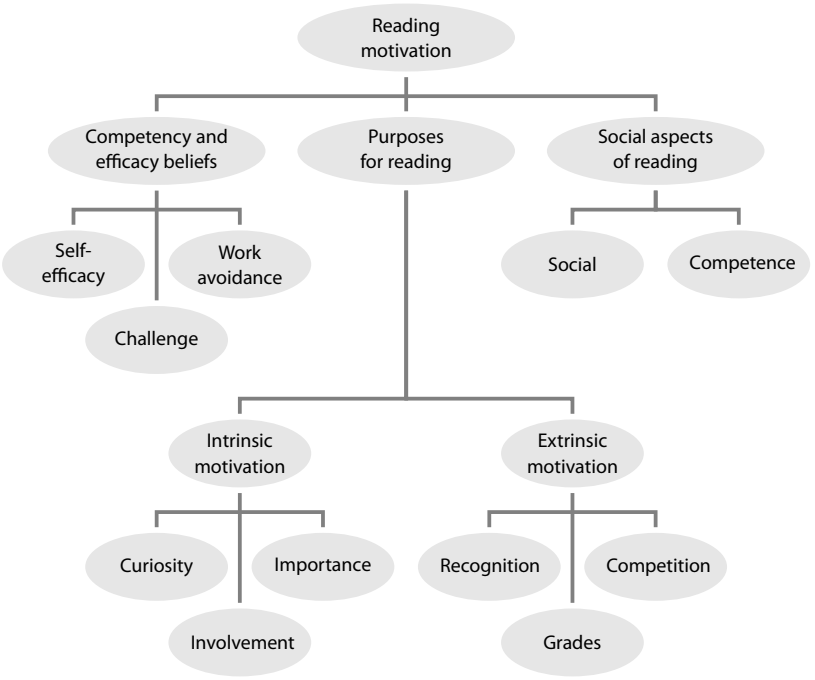


Figure 1 Wigfield and Guthrie's Taxonomy of Reading Motivation (adapted from Dunston and Gambrell 2009, 272)

gies, Pečjak and Gradišar (2012) explain that external recognition or a reward might have a negative influence on intrinsically motivated students (they can become increasingly dependent on external rewards), but it can, on the other hand, function as a very important encouragement for weaker, reluctant readers or beginners. As Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) stress in the last category of their taxonomy, i.e. social aspects of reading, reading is a social activity which may enable the readers to achieve social goals. The opportunity to share their reading experience with significant others or/and meet the teacher's requirements increases the students' reading motivation. In his research, Sweet (1997) has shown that active and good readers come from families that value books, encourage reading and participate in reading.

Results of numerous studies on reading motivation showed more or less significant gender differences in various motivational dimensions (Wigfield and Guthrie 1997; Millard 1997; Pečjak and Peklaj 2006; Wigfield, Gladstone, and Turci 2016). The differences in the profile of reading motivation have been detected in girls and boys as young as six (Baker and Scher 2002); Bucik (2005) found differences in interest for reading in the population of 5-6-

year-olds, where girls were reported to have a higher interest for reading than boys. McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) came to similar results for the same age group and discovered that the differences between boys and girls increase as the pupils grow older, while Pečjak with associates (2006) stresses that the frequency of reading in their free time and of reading for school decreases in all pupils, regardless of their sex, and the positive attitude towards reading significantly decreases, especially in boys, during primary school years. On the other hand, girls value social reasons for reading more than boys do (Wigfield and Guthrie 1997). They are more motivated to read if they know they will be able to discuss what they have read with their classmates or friends.

FL Reading Motivation

Foreign language students often have no direct contact with target language speakers except via written materials. Even in the world of advanced information and communication technology, which enables and promotes also spoken interaction with people globally, written texts are still an indispensable source of target language input. Therefore, developing motivated fluent foreign language readers is of utmost importance. Trying to explain the factors influencing one's decision to read in a second language, Day and Bamford (1998, 28–30) created their model of L2 reading motivation. The model was designed within the expectancy /value theory of L2 learning motivation (Eccles et al., 1983; Eccles and Wigfield, 1995) and includes four major components: *materials, reading ability in the L2, attitudes toward reading in the L2,* and *sociocultural environment,* including the influences of family and friends. Materials and reading ability are related to the expectancy component of successful L2 reading (i.e. the individual's expectation of success in reading), while attitudes and sociocultural environment are related to the value component (i.e. the value the individual associates with success in reading). Day and Bamford (1998; 2002) explain that interesting, attractive, readily available and easy-to-understand (well within the learners' reading competence in L2) reading materials can encourage the students' decision to read in L2, while varied reading materials stimulate also a flexible approach to reading (reading for different reasons and in different ways). The reading ability in L2 relates to the individual's sense of self-efficacy and beliefs about their reading ability in L2. Students with low reading ability are likely to have low expectations of success, and, as a result, they tend to have lower motivation to read. However, if they read materials which are well within their reading comfort zone, they are more likely to expect success and to be motivated to

read. According to Day in Bamford (1998), L2 reading attitudes are shaped by L1 reading attitudes, previous L2 reading attitudes (if any), attitudes toward the L2, culture and people, and L2 classroom environment. Especially Day and Bamford's belief that positive and negative attitudes to reading in L1 transfer to L2 reading has been disputed by some researchers of reading motivation (among them Yamashita 2004; Takase 2007; and Pirih 2015) who report that the transfer of reading attitudes is not as straightforward as that and that there are motivated L1 readers who are not motivated to read in L2, as they would not 'sacrifice' the enjoyment of effortless reading in L1, and vice versa (Takase 2007). Similarly, the influence of attitudes toward the L2 speaking community might be questioned as foreign language learners do not typically have enough experience of the target language community to have positive or negative attitudes towards it (Dörnyei 1990). Moreover, in the case of global languages, like English, non-native speakers often perceive the knowledge of a specific language simply as an indispensable skill for citizens of the world, rather than a way to meet and learn about the FL speaking nations and cultures (Pirih 2019). In Day and Bamford's (1998) opinion, one's decision to read in L2 is influenced predominantly by reading materials and attitudes, while reading ability and sociocultural environment (1998) play a less decisive role. However, studies (Fujita and Noro 2009; Sani and Zain 2011) have found the crucial role that L2 proficiency and L2 reading ability play in L2 reading motivation, while de Burgh-Hirabe (2011) also identified a less favourable sociocultural environment as a decisive factor in hindering students' L2 reading motivation. What does then facilitate voluntary reading in FL? Do L1 reading behaviour and motivation transfer to FL reading behaviour and motivation? Are there any differences between genders in the context of FL reading motivation? The present study was conducted in an attempt to answer these and some other questions and thus get an insight into reading behaviour and various aspects of the reading motivation in EFL for Slovene elementary school pupils.

Study

Research Questions

- How often and what kind of texts do Slovene primary school students read in English in their free time?
- What factors is EFL reading motivation for the selected sample of students composed of?
- Which factors predict the primary school students' motivation to read in EFL?

– Are there differences in reading motivation and reading behaviour (frequency of reading and format of reading material in English) between boys and girls?
– Do L1 reading behaviour and motivation transfer to EFL reading behaviour and motivation?

Participants

The participants in the research were 192 pupils of a suburban/rural primary school in the Primorska region (the Littoral), Slovenia, aged between 11 and 14 years. The sample was composed of 99 males (51.5%) and 93 females (48.5%); 45 pupils (23.4%) in Grade 6 (11 years old), 55 pupils (28.6%) in Grade 7 (12 years old), 54 pupils (28.1%) in Grade 8 (13 years old) and 38 pupils (19.8%) in the last grade, Grade 9 (14 years old), and it represented the total school population of the selected school of the last 4 grades, present at the time of the distribution of the questionnaire.

Instrument

The questionnaire, administered in Slovene, was composed of a series of close-ended questions and statements. Apart from the initial questions regarding gender and age, the questionnaire contained 34 items, 2 of which (frequency of EFL voluntary reading and format of reading materials in English) were multiple choice questions, while the other 32 were statements scaled along the 4-point Likert scale (from *I strongly agree* to *I strongly disagree*). The 'forced choice' method, with the removed neutral option (*I neither agree or disagree*), was used to avoid the questionable neutrality of the respondents.

The questionnaire consisted of items related to reading materials in English, reading ability in EFL, motivation and attitudes towards reading in EFL, and environmental influences on reading in EFL, as well as motivation, attitudes, and parent and family influences on reading in the L1. The instrument was based on Takase's (2007) questionnaire researching Japanese high school students' EFL reading motivation, however, it was modified to better suit the age of the participants and the aim of the conducted study. The questionnaire was also pilot tested in a preliminary study (Pirih 2015) and further modified to clarify some confusing items.

Data Collection and Analysis

Before the distribution of the questionnaire, the participants were given some additional guidelines and explanations regarding the voluntary par-

ticipation and ensured anonymity. It was specifically stressed that the goal of the study was to get the macro view of their reading motivation in EFL and not characteristics of the individual respondents, that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, and that the focus was on voluntary free-time reading of various materials in English as opposed to intensive reading within English school lessons or reading exclusively books in English.

To study the gathered data from the questionnaires, various statistical methods and techniques (i.e. descriptive statistics, bivariate and multivariate methods) were used, all performed with SPSS statistical software tool.

Results and Discussion

Frequency of Reading in English and Types of Reading Materials

The initial question of this research aimed at discovering the frequency of voluntary reading in English and the format of reading materials, selected by the respondents. The majority of studies on EFL reading motivation (Mori 2002; Takase 2007) take the number of words or books read or the duration of time as the criterion to measure the participants' reading in EFL, since these numbers provide a more precise data for further analysis. This study, however, is specific in certain ways. Firstly, it does not limit the research to reading books in English, but takes into consideration various formats of reading materials, which makes the estimate or even exact count of the read words difficult; secondly, reading certain formats, like web sites, can be intertwined with other activities (e.g. L1 reading, browsing), and the estimate of time spent reading in English is difficult to make; and finally, the participants in the study were young adolescents who, judging from the researcher's personal experience as their teacher, were mostly incapable of such estimates on their own.

In some informal conversations with my pupils, prior to this study, I asked them about the frequency of their free time reading in English and was surprised to get a negative answer from a large number of them. It only later became clear that we understood the question in a slightly, but decisively, different way. While I wanted them to tell me about voluntarily reading in English, regardless of the format or topic of texts, they 'heard' a question about reading books or literature in English. Once we clarified the misunderstanding they mostly reported reading in English (very) often. A similar sequence of events happened with other students while they were completing the questionnaire. It is evident from their answers that they first ticked 'never' to the question on the frequency of reading in English, later, presumably after reading the next question on the possible formats of reading materials, realized the true meaning of the question and chose 'almost every day'

Table 1 The Distribution of Respondents According to Their Age and Frequency of Reading

Age		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
11	Count	21	15	4	4	1	45
	Percent	46.7	33.3	8.9	8.9	2.2	100.0
12	Count	22	18	6	5	4	55
	Percent	40.0	32.7	10.9	9.1	7.3	100.0
13	Count	17	11	15	6	5	54
	Percent	31.5	20.4	27.8	11.1	9.3	100.0
14	Count	20	13	3	2	0	38
	Percent	52.6	34.2	7.9	5.3	0.0	100.0
Total	Count	80	57	28	17	10	192
	Percent	41.7	29.7	14.6	8.9	5.2	100.0

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) almost every day, (2) once a week, (3) once a month, (4) only during holidays, (5) never, (6) total.

or '1x week.' The analysis of the questionnaire confirmed frequent reading in English by the selected population of pupils.

As seen from table 1, in each age group the highest share of participants reported to read in English almost every day, with the highest share of 14-year-olds. Among the ones who read in English once per week, the share of 11-, 12-, and 14-year-olds was almost the same and fluctuated around 30%, while the share of 13-year-olds who read in English once per week was lower. Among the participants who read in English once per month, 13-year-olds stood out with 27.8%. Reading in English only during holidays was least likely for 14-year-olds, whereas among the participants that never read in English the highest share was represented by 13-year-olds. According to the value of Likelihood ratio statistics, 13-year-old participants differ significantly from other participants regarding the frequency of reading in English, namely they read the least of all, making Year 8 the critical year for EFL reading motivation. The trend in EFL reading seems to follow the trend in L1 reading, where the drop of reading motivation from Year 3 to Year 7 is reported, regardless of the gender (Pečjak and Gradišar 2012).

Unlike other studies (Mori 2002; Takase 2007) on L2 reading motivation, this study does not limit its scope to books or only printed materials in English, but takes into account various formats of reading materials, with the aim of getting a more detailed picture of participants' free-time reading. Since numerous free time activities that today's adolescents participate in, also reading, moved into the virtual world (OECD 2011), it seemed necessary to expand the range of reading materials and consider very different formats, from

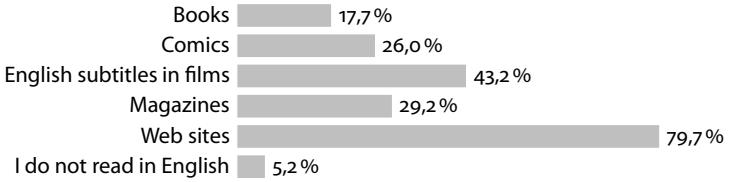


Figure 2 Format of Texts Read in English ($n = 192$)

printed texts to web sites. The most unusual option might seem English subtitles in films, but it is not that unusual in this environment. In Slovenia, only children's programs in foreign languages are dubbed, others are subtitled. Consequently, Slovene viewers are used to reading subtitles.

Figure 2 shows that those respondents who reported reading in English most frequently read the content of various web sites (79.7%) and/or English-subtitled films (43.2%). 29.2% of respondents read English magazines and 26% of participants preferred reading comics. Only 17.7% of participants spent their free time by reading English books. Even though at least one third of the participants reported reading different types of printed materials, the preferable choice of the majority, regardless of their age, were various web sites in English. In the questionnaires, numerous respondents noted they read fanfiction stories, lyrics of popular songs, online magazines, instructions for video games, etc. The result is not surprising, since internet reading materials are easily accessible and cover a virtually unlimited range of topics and genres, making it possible for the readers to find texts that suit their needs, interests and levels. This clearly makes online materials in English a preferable choice to the limited selection of printed materials in English in school and public libraries in the area. The availability of reading materials is one of the most important variables influencing L2 reading motivation in Day and Bamford's (1998) model of L2 reading motivation. Taking this into account, we can conclude that availability of reading materials in English (with easily available online texts and less available books) strongly influenced the choice of reading materials of the studied group.

The Dimensions of EFL Reading Motivation

To determine the dimensions of EFL reading motivation for the selected sample of students, factor analysis was applied to the variables measuring the level of agreement with the statements regarding participants' reading motivation. In the course of the analysis of multicollinearity in the data, some variables were excluded from further analysis, since their communalities were

Table 2 Rotated Factor Weights

Item	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
t6	I am successful at reading tasks in English.	0.774			
t7	I am good at reading in English.	0.746			
t9	I like reading in English even if it requires additional time and effort.	0.685		0.314	0.226
t12	I read in English even if it is not obligatory.	0.628		0.245	
t10	Of all English tasks, I like reading the most.	0.520		0.342	0.329
t11	Reading in English is my hobby.	0.436			0.205
t3	I often read online.	0.414			
t26	I read in English because I will need to do it in secondary school.		0.840		
t25	I read in English to get better grades.		0.786		
t27	I read in English to get a better job in the future.		0.671		
t24	I read in English to get a better result on the national assessment test.		0.654		0.298
t13	I read in English to be smarter.		0.503		0.432
t21	My family reads a lot.			0.695	
t4	I often use school or public libraries.			0.577	
t1	I like reading in Slovene.			0.527	
t22	My parents took me to the library when I was little.			0.517	
t20	Reading is important to broaden my horizons.	0.210		0.515	
t2	I prefer reading to watching TV.			0.498	
t14	I read in English to compete with my classmates.		0.255		0.689
t16	I like reading in English because my friends like it as well.		0.254		0.639

Notes Factors: (1) EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading, (2) Extrinsic motivation for EFL reading, (3) Family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading, (4) EFL reading in social context.

not high enough (under 0,3). Altogether 20 variables were included in the factor analysis. Using the Varimax rotation method, four factors were extracted. According to the Cronbach's alpha values, the first two factors indicate a high level of reliability (0.801, 0.852; $\alpha > 0.8$) and the last two factors indicate a moderate level of reliability (0.744, 0.620; $0.6 < \alpha < 0.8$).

The first factor, explaining the highest proportion of variance (12.7%), was named *EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading.* It includes factors that are the most often cited dimensions in reading motivation (Gambrell et al. 1996), namely self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. Reading self-efficacy factor includes items that describe self-efficacy beliefs about reading in EFL (t6, t7) and willingness to invest time and effort into

EFL reading (t9). The intrinsic motivation factor includes items describing involvement in EFL reading (t10, t11, t12) and fondness for online materials (t3). Even though the last item does not specify the language of reading materials, the participants seemed to relate online reading with texts and reading in English. Despite the fact that self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation are usually found separate, it is not surprising that they emerged in the same dimension, as they are closely connected. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) explain that the individual's positive competence and self-efficacy beliefs reveal the fulfilled need for competence (in Self-Determination Theory terms) and facilitate his/her intrinsic motivation.

The second factor (12.5% of variability) was named *Extrinsic motivation for EFL reading*. It includes items that relate to interest in EFL reading because it brings external rewards, i.e. public acknowledgment and grades (t24, t25, t26, t27) and an item related to intelligence (t13), which can also be perceived as something generally recognised as positive and desirable, thus bringing recognition. Even though secondary education and employment possibilities (t26, t27) seem as ideas quite distant to a primary school pupil, they loaded together with items describing factors more closely related to primary school context, namely grades (t25) and the national assessment test (t24).

The third dimension *Family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading* (10.9% of variability) relates to reading in the participants' mother tongue. The items that loaded on family attitudes towards reading describe family engagement in reading (t21) and parents' influence on the participants' reading in early childhood (t22), while the other six items (t1, t2, t4, t20) relate to intrinsic motivation for L1 reading. It is interesting that there are two items related to library visits in this factor (t22 and t4), which suggests a connection already established by several researchers (check Pečjak et al. 2006, 34), namely a connection between library visits of young teenagers or even adults and their early childhood experiences with libraries, influenced by their parents. Overall, it is not surprising that the two factors loaded together, since numerous studies (e.g. OECD 2002; Pečjak et al. 2006, Pečjak and Gradišar 2012) stress the link between family attitudes and engagement in reading and the children's intrinsic motivation for reading.

The last dimension, explaining the lowest proportion of variance (7.7%), is *EFL reading in social context*. It includes two items describing the influence of peers (t14, t16).

Predictors of EFL Reading Motivation

To test the differences in dimensions of reading motivation according to the participants' frequency of reading in English, the ANOVA test was conducted,

while the relations between the dimensions of EFL reading motivation of the selected sample of students was analysed by correlation analysis.

The results show that the effect of the frequency of participants' reading is statistically significant only for the first factor, i.e. *EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading*. The participants who read more frequently felt more competent and were more intrinsically motivated for reading in English than their peers that read less often. At the same time they did not seem to be motivated by grades and public acknowledgement, i.e. external awards to the same extent, which is not surprising, since it had been explicitly explained to them prior to the completion of the questionnaire that the focus was on voluntary, free time reading, which they obviously did not link to school-related tasks.

Despite the fact that *Family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading* did not emerge as a statistically significant factor of influence on EFL reading motivation, the results show that all groups of readers (frequent and occasional) and non-readers alike expressed a relatively high intrinsic motivation for L1 reading, showing that intrinsic motivation is the most powerful factor for motivating the students in their L1 as well. The results of the analysis are thus consistent with the findings of Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) study on younger primary school pupils (third and fifth graders) and Baker and Wigfield' s study (1999), both of which show that intrinsic motivation more strongly predicts the amount of reading than extrinsic motivation. Even though researchers (Pečjak and Košir 2004, Pečjak et al. 2006) explain that in the last years of primary school extrinsic motivation becomes a stronger influence on reading and general learning motivation than intrinsic motivation, the results of this and Takase's (2007) study, which also reported on the statistically significant influence of intrinsic motivation for EFL reading, imply that in FL voluntary reading Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) findings can be generalized to teenage readers as well.

The analysis of data showed also lower self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading, but higher *extrinsic motivation for EFL reading* for the group of occasional readers (who read once a month or only during holidays) and non-readers. These results correspond to those of Fujita and Noro's (2009) study of Japanese EFL learners participating in an extensive reading program, which showed the connection between the learners' competence in EFL and reading motivation; better readers developed their intrinsic motivation, while poorer readers developed class-related extrinsic motivation. Moreover, correlation analysis showed a strong and statistically significant correlation between the factors *EFL reading in social context* and *Extrinsic motivation for EFL reading,* meaning that reading motivation of participants

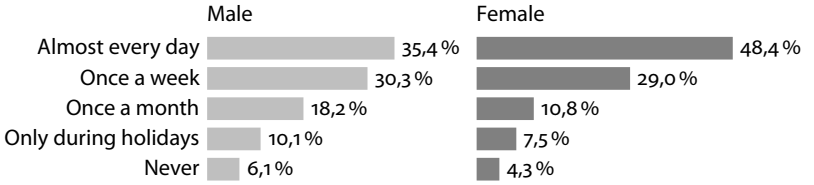


Figure 3 The Distribution of Male and Female Participants According to Their Frequency of Reading ($n = 192$)

who reported higher extrinsic motivation for EFL reading highly depends on the social context, more precisely peer influence. For extrinsically motivated readers in English the source of their motivation were not only grades but also social confirmation and competition with their peers. However, altogether, the participants attached a relatively low value to the social context in EFL reading, suggesting they perceive reading as a more individualized than social activity.

Gender Differences in Reading Behaviour and Reading Motivation

Numerous studies (Wigfield and Guthrie 1997; Millard 1997; Pečjak and Košir 2004; Pečjak and Peklaj 2006) have shown gender differences in various aspects of reading motivation. For this reason, one of the aims of this study has been to check the potential differences between boys and girls in the studied population in their EFL reading behaviour and motivation.

As seen in figure 3, there were more female than male participants who read almost every day, whereas the share of male and female participants who read once per week was almost the same. The situation then turned: among male participants there was a higher proportion of those who read once per month, only during holidays, and who never read in English. According to the value of Pearson Chi-square statistics, the difference in frequency of reading between male and female participants is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, these results mirror the findings of numerous studies in different countries showing that girls read more than boys; on average, they not only spend more time reading, they also tend to read more diverse types of materials than boys (OECD 2002; Puklek Levpušček, Podlesek, and Šterman Ivančič 2012). Among others, McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995, 934) in their study of American primary school children's reading attitudes came to the conclusion that girls have more favourable attitudes than boys to recreational and academic reading, while Pečjak and her associates (2006) reported that positive attitude towards reading significantly decreases during primary school years, however, the trend is more noticeable for boys.

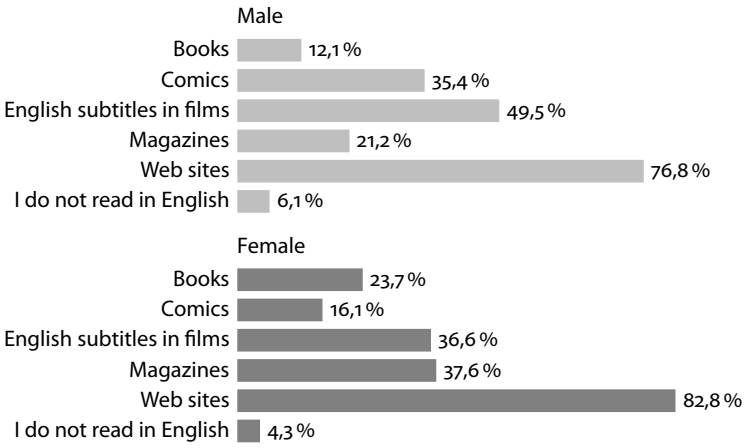


Figure 4 The Distribution of Male and Female Participants According to the Format of Text They Read in English ($n = 192$)

As for the format of texts the participants typically chose (figure 4), both, male and female participants, reported to frequently read the content on the web sites. Among female participants, the second most popular material were magazines, followed by English subtitles in films, books, and lastly comics. Among male participants, English subtitles in films were the second most popular material they read in English, followed by comics, magazines and books. As shown, female participants read printed materials, with the exception of comics, more often than male participants. There was, however, no difference in the frequency of screen reading (i.e. reading English subtitles in films or web sites) between male and female participants. In terms of the diversity of reading materials, noticeably more girls reported reading diverse reading materials (i.e. on screen, short printed materials and books) than boys, however, among the least diversified readers there was the same percentage of boys and girls. These findings mirror those of PISA 2000 (OECD 2002) and PISA 2009 (Puklek Levpušček, Podlesek, and Šterman Ivančič 2012) which show a very similar distribution of diverse readers according to gender. In these studies, girls identified themselves as readers of newspapers, magazines, books (especially fiction), but not comics, and boys as readers of newspapers, magazines and comics. Experts have widely debated on possible reasons for these differences and suggested solutions to improve boys' reading engagement. One of the most frequently mentioned causes are to some degree stereotyped reading materials that are used at school. Instead of the topics often included in school curricula, boys prefer reading web sites, jour-

nals on sport, electronics and computer games, and comics (Blair and Sanford 1999, as cited in Pečjak et al. 2006; Millard 1997; OECD 2002). Thus, school environments that enable easy access to large amounts of varied reading material and encourage pupils' autonomy in choosing reading materials are of utmost importance especially for them. The fact that the findings of this study of EFL reading agree with those of L1 reading suggests that certain aspects of reading behaviour in the L1, specifically the attitude towards reading and preference for specific format of reading materials, transfer to some extent to reading behaviour in the FL (as further discussed in the next section).

Further analysis of the questionnaires revealed some similarities as well as differences between boys and girls in dimensions and predictors of EFL reading motivation. Participants, regardless of their gender, who read a lot in English, were largely motivated by their self-efficacy beliefs and intrinsic motivation for reading in English. For extrinsically motivated readers of both genders, the results suggest that their motivation comes more from social recognition from their peers than grades or job possibilities (*EFL reading in social context*). However, there are also statistically significant differences between male and female participants, namely in *EFL reading in social context* and *Family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading.* For male respondents EFL reading in social context, i.e. the influence of peers, had a weaker effect on their EFL reading motivation as compared to female participants. This mirrors the findings of various studies (Wigfield and Guthrie 1997, Pečjak et al. 2006) which show that social reasons for reading are valued especially by girls. They are more motivated to read if they know they will be able to discuss what they have read with their classmates or friends. On the other hand, boys' reading motivation is more influenced by peer competition (Wigfield and Guthrie 1997). Since the motivational dimension *EFL reading in social context* is composed of one item related to sharing the reading experience with peers and one item related to peer competition, the results suggest that the influence of social reasons for reading in EFL were stronger than peer competition. Another difference is in the *Family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading,* as this factor proves to be less important for female participants as compared to their male schoolmates.

Transfer of L1 Reading Behaviour and Motivation to EFL Reading Behaviour and Motivation

As regards reading behaviour, namely the frequency of reading and the choice of reading material, it is very difficult to make any clear comparisons, since the data on these aspects of L1 reading for the studied group was not

obtained. However, on the basis of the results for EFL reading and the reported results concerning L1 reading in Slovenia from various studies (Pečjak et al. 2006; Pečjak and Gradišar 2012), also PISA 2009 (Puklek Levpušček, Podlesek, and Šterman Ivančič 2012) we can to a certain extent compare reading behaviour of Slovene primary school children in their mother tongue and EFL. We can say that in L1 reading and EFL reading, digital reading occurs more frequently than reading of printed materials. Since digital reading includes not only text processing, but also navigation in a digital environment, we can assume that the participants acquired the set of digital reading skills in their mother tongue first and then used them in FL digital reading. However, since the majority of texts online are in English, the switch from digital reading of materials in Slovene to that in English possibly happened quite early, making the experience with L1 digital reading less influential for EFL digital reading than in the case of printed materials. With regard to printed materials, the findings about gender differences in the frequency of reading, the choice of reading materials and consequently in the reading profiles (discussed in the previous section) suggest that reading habits which the participants developed in their mother tongue influenced and shaped also reading in EFL.

The analysis of the motivational dimensions, their influence on the frequency of reading in EFL and the respective correlations showed two interesting results. As expected, non-readers in EFL expressed low EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading and low motivation for EFL reading in social context. However, their family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading are almost as high as in frequent readers and higher than in participants who reported reading in English once a week or less often. This clearly shows that the intrinsic motivation of non-readers in EFL was limited to L1 reading and their positive experiences with L1 reading in early childhood and early teens did not transfer to EFL reading. On the other hand, weak, yet statistically significant correlations between the factors *EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading* and *Family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading* show that on the whole, participants who reported more positive family attitudes towards reading and were more intrinsically motivated for L1 reading, felt also more self-efficient and intrinsically motivated for EFL reading. As explained in the previous section on gender differences in reading motivation, this mostly applies to boys, while the transfer of L1 reading motivation to EFL reading motivation for girls was not identified. This might suggest that early childhood experiences with reading and positive attitudes towards reading

that a child develops through the influence of significant others, i.e. parents, which numerous researchers (e.g. McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth 1995; Pečjak et al. 2006) see as the crucial factor shaping an individual's interest in reading, are more influential for the development of L2/FL reading motivation for boys than they are for girls. However, to understand the matter better, some follow up interviews with non-readers and male readers of English materials should be conducted. In her research of Japanese high school students' motivation for extensive EFL reading, Takase (2007) also studied the relationship between L1 reading and L2 reading, but did not identify a transfer from L1 reading to L2 reading. Yamashita (2004), on the other hand, conducted a study of reading attitudes and EFL extensive reading of Japanese university students, and identified the transfer of the affective domain of reading (attitudes) from L1 to EFL. She, however, did not compare the results of male and female students.

Conclusion

Developing motivation for reading in foreign languages is key not only for more efficient foreign language learning, but also for successful encounters via written materials with foreign language speakers globally. For this reason, reading motivation studies in Slovenia and elsewhere should expand their scope from L1 to reading in different foreign languages.

Despite the fact that the present research included a relatively small, single-school sample of participants, it gives us an insight into the reading behaviour and reading motivation in EFL for Slovene primary school pupils, aged 11–14. The findings confirm some results of the preliminary study (Pirih 2015), namely that the majority of young adolescents, girls and boys alike, frequently read in English in their free time and that most of their reading in English, as numerous other free time activities, takes place online, while printed materials appear to be significantly less popular. This suggest that it is of utmost importance to include online materials and authentic texts of other formats into primary school reading lessons and to give the pupils autonomy in choosing what they want to read. In this way they might be encouraged to read also diverse reading materials (digital and printed texts of different length), which is the precondition for gaining higher levels of proficiency. The results further confirm that the participants' EFL reading motivation is a multidimensional construct, with four identified components: EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading, extrinsic motivation for EFL reading, family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading, and EFL reading in social context. However, only one statistically

significant predictor of motivation for the participants to frequently read materials in English was identified, namely EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading. The reason for this might be that the participants focused on voluntary, free time reading, which they obviously did not link to school-related tasks and other extrinsically motivated goals. Moreover, correlation between the EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL reading and family attitudes towards reading and intrinsic motivation for L1 reading show the transfer of L1 reading motivation to EFL reading motivation, however, only for boys. It seems that when developing their FL reading motivation, male learners are more influenced by their early childhood experiences with reading and positive attitudes towards reading that are shaped through the influence of one's parents than their female peers. Some gender differences were found also in the choice of reading materials in English, with significantly more girls reporting to read magazines and books than boys, who prefer reading comics. These differences are true for L1 reading as well, which suggests that preference for specific format of reading materials to some extent transfers from L1 to EFL reading.

References

Baker, Linda, and Deborah Scher. 2002. 'Beginner Reader's Motivation for Reading in Relation to Parental Beliefs and Home Reading Experiences.' *Reading Psychology* 23 (4): 239–69.

Baker, Linda, and Allan Wigfield. 1999. 'Dimensions of Children's Motivation for Reading and Their Relations to Reading Activity and Reading Achievement.' *Reading Research Quarterly* 34 (4): 452–77.

Blair, Heather A., and Kathy Sanford. 1999. 'TV and Zines: Media and the Construction of Gender for Early Adolescents.' *Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 45 (1): 103–5.

Bucik, Nataša. 2005. 'Razvoj otrokovega interesa za branje v povezavi z branjem odraslih otroku.' Master's thesis, University of Ljubljana.

Day, Richard, and Julian Bamford. 1998. *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Day, Richard, and Julian Bamford. 2002. 'Top Ten Principles for Teaching Extensive Reading.' *Reading in a Foreign Language* 14 (2): 136–41.

de Burgh-Hirabe, Ryoko. 2011. 'Extensive Reading and L2 Reading Motivation in Japanese as a Foreign Language: A Case Study of New Zealand High School Students.' PhD dissertation, University of Otago.

Deci, Edward L., and Richard M. Ryan. 1985. *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behaviour.* New York: Plenum Press.

———. 1987. 'The Support of Autonomy and the Control of Behaviour.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53 (6): 1024–37.

Dörnyei, Zoltan. 1990. 'Conceptualizing Motivation in Foreign Language Learning.' *Language Learning* 40 (1): 46–78.

Dunston, Pamela J., and Linda B. Gambrell. 2009. 'Motivating Adolescent Learners to Read.' In *Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: Research-Based Practice,* edited by Wood, Karen D. and William E. Blanton, 269–86. New York: Guildford Press.

Eccles, Jacquelynne S., Terry F. Adler, Robert Futterman, Susan B. Goff, Carol M. Kaezala, Judith Meece, and Carol Midgley. 1983. 'Expectancies, Values and Academic Behaviour.' In *Achievement and Achievement Motives,* edited by Janet Taylor Spence, 75–146. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.

Eccles, Jacquelynne S., and Allan Wigfield. 1995. 'In the Mind of the Actor: The Structure of Adolescents' Achievement Task Values and Expectancy-Related Beliefs.' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21 (3): 215–25.

Fujita, Ken, and Tadashi Noro. 2009. 'The Effects of 10-Minute Extensive Reading on the Reading Speed, Comprehension and Motivation of Japanese High School EFL Learners.' *Annual Review of English Language Education in Japan* 20:21–30.

Gambrell, Linda B., Barbara M. Palmer, Rose M. Codling, and Susan A. Mazzoni. 1996. 'Assessing Motivation to Read.' *The Reading Teacher* 49 (7): 518–33.

Guthrie, John T., and Allan Wigfield. 1997. 'Reading Engagement: A Rationale for Theory and Teaching.' In *Reading Engagement: Motivating Readers through Integrated Instruction,* edited by John Guthrie and Allan Wigfield, 1–12. Newark, DE: IRA.

McKenna, Michael, Dennis Kear, and Randolph Ellsworth. 1995. 'Children's Attitudes toward Reading: A National Survey.' *Reading Research Quarterly* 30 (4): 934–55.

Millard, Elaine. 1997. 'Differently Literate: Gender Identity and the Construction of the Developing Reader.' *Gender and Education* 9 (1): 31–48.

Mori, Setsuko. 2002. 'Redefining Motivation to Read in a Foreign Language.' *Reading in a Foreign Language* 14 (2): 91–110.

OECD. 2002. *Reading for Change: Performance and Engagement across Countries: Results from PISA 2000.* Paris: OECD.

———. 2011. *PISA 2009 Results: Students on Line Digital Technologies and Performance* Vol. 6. Paris: OECD.

Pečjak, Sonja, Nataša Bucik, Ana Gradišar, and Cirila Peklaj. 2006. *Bralna motivacija v šoli: merjenje in razvijanje.* Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

Pečjak, Sonja, and Ana Gradišar. 2012. *Bralne učne strategije.* Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

Pečjak, Sonja, and Katja Košir. 2004. 'Pupils' Reading Motivation and Teachers' Activities for Enhancing It.' *Review of Psychology* 11 (1–2): 11–24.

Pečjak, Sonja, and Cirila Peklaj. 2006. 'Dimensions of Reading Motivation and

Reading Achievement in 3rd and 7th Grade Students.' *Studia Psychologica* 48 (1): 11–29.

Pirih, Anja. 2015. 'Who Says They Don't Read? Slovene Elementary School Students' Reading Motivation in EFL.' *Journal of Elementary Education* 8 (1–2): 113–32.

———. 2019. 'Extensive Reading and Changes to Reading Motivation in EFL among Slovene Primary School Pupils.' *The Journal of Elementary Education* 12 (4): 291–314.

Puklek Levpušček, Melita, Anja Podlesek, and Klaudija Šterman Ivančič. 2012. *Dejavniki bralne pismenosti v raziskavi PISA 2009.* Ljubljana: Pedagoški inštitut.

Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. 2000. 'Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations.' *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25 (1): 54–67.

Sani, Azlina M., and Zaizati Zain. 2011. 'Relating Adolescents' Second Language Reading Attitudes, Self Efficacy For Reading, and Reading Ability in a Non-Supportive ESL Setting.' *The Reading Matrix* 1 (3): 243–54.

Sweet, Anne P. 1997. 'Teacher Perceptions of Student Motivation and Their Relation to Literacy Learning.' In *Reading Engagement: Motivating Readers through Integrated Instruction,* edited by John Guthrie and Allan Wigfield, 86–101. Newark, DE: Reading Association.

Takase, Atsuko. 2007. 'Japanese High School Students' Motivation for Extensive L2 Reading.' *Reading in a Foreign Language* 19 (1): 1–18.

Wigfield, Allan. 1997. 'Children's Motivations for Reading and Reading Engagement.' In *Reading Engagement: Motivating Readers through Integrated Instruction,* edited by John Guthrie and Allan Wigfield, 14–33. Newark, DE: Reading Association.

Wigfield, Allan, Jessica R. Gladstone, and Lara Turci. 2016. 'Beyond Cognition: Reading Motivation and Reading Comprehension.' *Child Development Perspectives* 10 (3): 190–95.

Wigfield, Allan, and John T. Guthrie. 1997. 'Relations of Children's Motivation for Reading to the Amount and Breath of Their Reading.' *Journal of Educational Psychology* 89 (3): 420–32.

Yamashita, Junko. 2004. 'Reading Attitudes in L1 and L2, and Their Influence on L2 Extensive Reading.' *Reading in a Foreign Language* 16 (1): 1–19.

Developing Foreign Language Literacy Skills in Primary School

Mateja Dagarin Fojkar
Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
mateja.dagarin@pef.uni-lj.si

Mira Metljak
Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
mira.metljak@pef.uni-lj.si

Tina Rozmanič
Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
tina.rozmanic@pef.uni-lj.si

Literacy impacts many social, economic and cultural areas of human life. In its broad definition, it entails the development of language; however, its traditional interpretation is the ability to read and write. In the school context, its development spreads across the whole curriculum, with its subskills influencing each other. Reading is reported to be the least developed English language skill of Slovenian students in the ninth grade of primary school. This suggests that there may be clear benefits in starting its development earlier and in a more systematic way. The aim of the present research was to investigate how English teachers (N = 111) develop foreign language literacy skills in grades 3–5 in Slovenian primary schools. A questionnaire was constructed for this purpose, exploring teachers' practices in developing English reading and writing skills as well as the strategies, activities and materials they use for developing their students' literacy skills. The research results will serve as guidance in creating foreign language literacy materials and training programmes for teachers.

Keywords: young learners, literacy, foreign language, teachers' practices

Introduction

The area of literacy development has seen many changes in recent years. The traditional definition of literacy as 'developing reading and writing skills' was later extended to a competence that 'involves the ability to interpret and critically evaluate a wide variety of written and spoken texts' (Kern 2000, 3), including visual literacy, i.e. skills involved in interpreting and producing visual content (Ediger 2014). In response to the present-day technological development, Leu et al. (2007, 38) have defined literacy as 'the ability to find, identify, evaluate, use and communicate using a variety of resources, including text,

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.167-182

visual, audio and video.' At its core it is the ability to communicate in various cultural contexts and shifting the focus 'from "what texts mean" to what people mean by *texts,* and what texts mean *to people* . . .' (Kern 2000, 2).

In Slovenia, the learning of the first foreign language (FL) as a compulsory subject in the second year of primary education was introduced in 2016, which means that more time can be dedicated to the development of initial foreign language literacy skills. This is encouraging, since the results of the Surveylang report in 2012 showed that reading was the least developed skill of Slovenian students in the ninth grade, with 12% of students failing to achieve even the first reference level, i.e. A1 (European Commission 2012, 42). Starting with literacy development early on can expedite its development and make English learners competent readers and users of language.

Considering the recent changes in the literacy definitions and low results of Slovenian students' reading skills in the Surveylang report, our aim was to investigate teachers' practices in developing reading and writing skills at the stage when students are, according to Baker (2001), at the peak of developing their literacy skills, in the first years of primary school. We explored the activities and materials teachers use for developing their students' literacy skills, the strategies they develop in their students' reading skills and the classroom management they apply in developing literacy skills in their lessons. In the conclusion, recommendations and guidelines for a more systematic approach to developing FL literacy skills are put forward.

Developing Foreign Language Literacy

Literacy is an ever-changing and developing phenomenon and as such has undergone many different phases. Stevenson (2018) divides the notion of literacy into three theoretical paradigms. The first one is the textual paradigm in which literacy is part of the language and entails grammar, lexis and genres, and in which learning to read and write is about understanding different genres. The second paradigm is the process paradigm in which learners employ different strategies and processes in developing their reading and writing skills. The third paradigm, which has recently gained importance, is the social paradigm in which learning to read and write is seen as understanding the expectations and practices in different social and cultural contexts.

In its broad definition literacy does not relate only to the development of reading and writing skills; it is an all-encompassing term including all four language skills and the development of communicative competence. Thus, practice in one skill should lead to the development of other skills (Skela 2002). This is more transparent in the first years of primary education, where the skills are integrated and the focus is on the development of learners' lis-

tening and oral skills (Murphy 2014). Young learners are exposed to the spoken language through songs, stories and games. This early exposure to the language is essential in the process of reading and writing that comes later in their language acquisition. Furthermore, initial literacy includes the development of learners' phonological and phonemic awareness. Activities such as blending and manipulating sounds, noticing the onsets of words, breaking words into syllables and using rhymes help learners to decode words later in their reading development. According to Share (1999), phonological awareness is crucial for successful reading acquisition of all learners. Kormos and Smith (2012) go even further, claiming that it is crucial in the development of reading skills of learners with reading and writing difficulties.

In addition to phonological development, learners need to be exposed to a large amount of reading materials and be able to recognize words as whole to become efficient readers. This is the main rationale of the whole word or the whole language approach. The advocates of this approach claim that language is too unpredictable for rules, and context is crucial in developing meaning (Moats 2007). The English language is, a language with a lot of exceptions in rules and with its deep orthography can cause many problems to non-native readers, especially the ones whose native language has shallow orthography (Skela, Sešek and Dagarin Fojkar 2009; Cook 2016; Weaver 2002). Many authors, among them Brown (2007) and Geva and Ramírez (2015) claim that eclectic approaches produce better results in developing literacy, which has become known as 'interactive reading' in which readers continuously shift from predicting meaning to checking the meaning (Nuttall 2005). In varying the approaches, we need to constantly consider learner characteristics and contexts in which learning takes place (Hamayan 1994).

There are many reasons why reading strategies need to be developed in FL classes. Firstly, strategies present the process paradigm in literacy (Kern 2000). Furthermore, reading strategies, such as guessing meaning from context or using illustrations, can be transferable from one language to another, i.e. strategies used in the first language promote the same strategies used in another language and vice versa (Pinter 2017). Šamo (2009) compared the use of reading strategies among primary school learners and noticed that good readers used a variety of FL reading strategies and used them more frequently than weak readers. Similarly, Macaro and Mutton (2009) have argued that strategy instruction has beneficial effects on FL learning, basing their statement on research done with primary French learners, where the group exposed to the inferencing strategies outperformed the comparison groups in reading comprehension.

Writing is closely related to reading. For many learners it is perceived as the

most difficult task in language learning and this is especially true for primary school learners, since writing requires many skills, among them organisation of thought, knowledge of content, proficiency in language, the ability to plan, revise, edit your own text, etc. (Reid 2001). Therefore, Cumming (2016) emphasises the importance of establishing routines for writing frequently and purposefully in a language classroom.

Among reading and writing activities commonly used in a primary classroom, Pinter (2017) mentions many games at word-level, phonics activities to reinforce regular patterns in English, gap-fill activities, multisensory activities, extensive reading, writing texts with the help of given models and reading as well as writing texts of different genres. These activities vary in difficulty with age and language level.

When planning reading and writing activities, Nuttall (2005) stresses the importance of selecting appropriate texts and mentions three main criteria in the choice: suitability of content (texts should be interesting and enjoyable for learners), exploitability (texts should offer opportunities for developing effective reading strategies) and readability (texts should be at the right level of structural and lexical difficulty). She further states that a variety of texts should be used in developing FL literacy.

Reading and writing activities can be done in many different types of grouping. While individual work seems to prevail in traditional classroom settings, research clearly shows that interactive writing tasks, when learners work together in pairs or groups, stimulate learning, and that students produce better texts than individually (Swain and Lapkin 1998).

Developing FL literacy skills entails many issues teachers need to take into account, such as choosing the right approach, activities, strategies, materials, types of texts, classroom organisation, etc. However, our primary concern should be providing students with authentic purposes for reading and writing in a foreign language.

The Study

The aim of the study was to investigate how English teachers develop foreign language literacy skills in grades 3–5 in Slovenian primary schools, with the focus on developing reading and writing skills.

Methodology

A quantitative research approach was used. A questionnaire was constructed for the purpose of exploring teachers' practices in developing English reading and writing skills, i.e. strategies, activities and materials they use for de-

veloping their students' literacy skills. The Delphi method was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. First, a panel of international subject-matter experts and statisticians were asked to provide feedback on the questionnaire and how well the questions measure the construct. After the revisions, a pilot study was conducted using a sample of the population targeted. Teacher volunteers completed the questionnaire and provided information about two fundamental issues: the length of the questionnaire and the need for clarification of some of the questions included. The final version of the questionnaire was thus designed based on the structured rounds of revisions and covered sections such as: general information, reading and writing practices, reading resources, types of texts used in teaching and classroom organisation in developing reading and writing skills. Questions combined a descriptive 5-point rating scale and open questions. Respondents to the questionnaire were self-selected, as the online questionnaire was made available to all teachers of English through email, social media and personal contacts. The questionnaire was available on the website https://ww.1ka.si/ from December 2018 to March 2019.

Data was extracted from the web questionnaire and analysed with the SPSS programme. Results are presented in tables with calculated means and standard deviations. Furthermore, in some cases, inferential statistics was performed and differences between groups of teachers were calculated.

Participants

The questionnaire was completed by 111 English teachers who teach English in grades 3–5 in Slovenian primary schools. The minimum age of the participants was 24 years, the maximum age was 55. The average age was therefore 36.01 years. As for the number of years working as a teacher, the minimum was 1 year, the maximum was 33 years and the average was 10.24 years.

Out of 111 participants there were 5 male (4.5%) and 106 (95.5%) female participants. 69 (61.6%) participants were primary education teachers with specialisation in English, 3 participants (2.7%) were primary education teachers and 33 (29.5%) were English specialists. 80 (72.7%) participants worked in the 3rd grade, 67 (60.9%) in the 4th grade, and 64 (58.2%) in the 5th grade. The participants could teach in more than one grade, and therefore they had the option to choose more than one answer.

Results and Discussion

This part of the paper presents the main findings of the study linked to the main sections of the questionnaire, i.e. the activities used in the development

Table 1 Activities for Developing Students' Reading Skills

Item	*M*	*SD*
Help students understand new vocabulary in the texts	4.32	0.774
Read aloud to the class	3.98	0.849
Do reading comprehension tasks orally	3.90	0.880
Listen to a tape while reading a text	3.72	0.988
Ask students to read aloud	3.62	0.991
Teach students strategies for decoding letters into sounds	3.39	1.011
Do reading comprehension tasks in writing	3.31	1.139
Ask students to read silently	3.30	0.987
Do a project about what they have read (e.g. a play or an art project)	3.18	1.146
Give students time to read books of their own choosing	3.03	1.069
Ask students to write something in response to what they have read	2.64	1.263

of reading skills, the development of reading strategies, the use of reading materials, types of texts used for reading, classroom organisation in the development of reading skills, the activities used in the development of writing skills and classroom organisation used in the development of writing skills.

Developing Reading Skills

In the first set of questions, teachers were asked which activities they use to develop their students' reading skills and how often (1 meant very rarely or never, 2 rarely, 3 occasionally, 4 frequently and 5 very frequently). As can be seen from table 1, the most frequently used activity teachers use to develop their students' reading skills is helping them understand new vocabulary in the text, the second most frequent activity is reading aloud to the class, and the third one is doing reading comprehension tasks orally. The three top-down activities are asking students to write something in response to what they have read, giving students time to read books of their own choosing and doing a project about what they have read (e.g. a play or an art project). Halbach and Candel Bormann (2019) similarly noticed a lack of interest in literacy projects in primary schools around Madrid, and among the few projects that schools were involved in, only one or two were moving away from traditional teaching and towards the use of language in more meaningful contexts.

The teachers in the present survey could list other activities they use for developing their students' reading skills and among them they mentioned activities such as matching sentences with pictures, comparing Slovenian and English texts, different games practising sounds and syllables, and activities connected with rhythm, finding rhymes, finding words that begin/finish with

Table 2 Activities for Developing Students' Reading Strategies

Item	*M*	*SD*
Find specific information in the text	3.93	0.979
Encourage risk taking and guessing about the text	3.72	0.955
Identify main ideas in the text	3.60	1.086
Make predictions about what will happen in the text	3.45	1.089
Compare what they have read with their experiences	3.40	1.056
Make generalisations and draw inferences based on the text	3.34	1.083
Talk about the text structure	2.61	1.076
Talk about the text genre	2.38	1.104

the same sound, reading books at home, and borrowing books from the library. This shows that teachers use a variety of activities for developing their students' reading skills.

A similar survey was conducted by Wray et al. (2000) where teachers had to state whether they use the following reading activities: teaching letter sounds/names, using cloze activities, using flashcards to teach particular words, using sequencing activities, reading to the class, using comprehension activities, using a big book with a group of children, involving other adults in reading with children, listening to children read/reading with children, using reading scheme books and using phonics exercises. The majority of teachers claim that they most often listen to children read or read with children (98.6), read to the class (97.6), involve other adults in reading with children (92.8) and teach letter sounds/names (92.1). Less than half of the teachers use comprehension activities (36.8), cloze activities (39.2) and flashcards (40.8) when teaching reading. Similar to our study, one of the most frequent activities that teachers use is reading aloud to the class. Contrary to our study, they rarely use comprehension activities, which are very common in developing students' reading skills in Slovenia.

Teachers were then asked how often and which activities they use to develop their students' reading strategies. As can be seen from table 2, the most frequent activity teachers use for developing their students' reading strategies is finding specific information in the text. They also frequently encourage risk taking and guessing about the text and they ask students to identify the main ideas in the text. However, they rarely talk to students about text genre and text structure. They occasionally make generalisations and draw inferences based on the text. Some of the teachers also listed other activities they use for developing their students' reading strategies, some of which include summarising the text, completing the text with missing

Table 3 Materials/Resources Used for Developing Students' Reading Skills

Item	*M*	*SD*
Worksheets	3.77	0.931
Children's books	3.59	1.012
Web pages	3.27	1.035
Graded readers	3.26	1.093
EFL textbooks	3.21	1.555
Materials written by students	2.33	1.098
Children's magazines	2.28	1.063
Non-fiction books	2.21	1.037
Materials from other subjects	2.12	1.107
CLIL textbooks	1.48	0.989

words, completing the text with their own ending, writing titles for different texts/paragraphs, learning about a step-by-step reading technique (reading the whole text first, finding the main idea, deciding/guessing what the paragraphs are about, stressing the main idea of the paragraph, finding answers in the text), etc.

Halbach and Candel Bormann's study (2019) similarly showed that teachers rarely talk about genres in developing literacy around the Madrid area and we believe this is the case in many FL educational contexts. Nevertheless, it is an important skill; when learners see language features of different text genres, it is much easier for them to produce their own texts of different genres (Ediger 2014).

We also wanted to find out how often and what kind of materials/resources teachers use for developing their students' reading skills. As is clear from table 3, for developing their students' reading skills teachers most frequently use worksheets. They also frequently use children's books and graded readers. Since we have very few CLIL schools, it is expected that the most rarely used materials are CLIL textbooks. There is also a lack of CLIL textbooks in Slovenia, which in turn leads to their non-use at schools. Teachers also rarely use materials from other subjects and non-fiction books. Some of them also stated other resources they use during their classes for developing their students' reading skills, e.g. different learning and movement games, their own/personal materials (appropriate for interactive white board), handouts they have created, short newspaper articles, online materials, EPI Reading Badge books,[1] flashcards with words on one side, pictures that students have

[1] EPI Reading Badge is a national reading project where students read graded readers.

Table 4 Texts Used for Developing Students' Reading Skills

Item	*M*	*SD*
Songs, chants	3.92	0.916
Dialogues/plays	3.80	1.012
Poems, riddles, limericks	3.56	1.113
Short stories, tales, fables	3.29	1.107
Charts, diagrams, graphs	2.75	0.986
Instructions or manuals about how things work	2.17	1.135

to transform into text, comic books, video clips, audio books, songs, etc.

A similar research was conducted in Maltese and Finnish schools (Sollars and Ylinen 2002), where significant differences were seen in the teachers' choice of materials/resources for developing their students' reading skills. Respondents could choose between the following reading resources used in schools: grammar books, storybooks, dictionaries, handouts, reference books, CD-ROMs, Internet, newspapers and magazines. Storybooks and handouts seem to be equally popular in both contexts, but there is a greater variety of materials used for reading activities in the Finnish classrooms, where they also frequently use dictionaries, reference books, grammar books and CD-ROM's. What is interesting to note among the Maltese respondents is the greater variety of reading material they claim to engage in at home with significant increases in the use of dictionaries, reference books, newspapers and magazines. Within the Finnish group, fewer children claim to use dictionaries, handouts, CD-ROM's and the Internet at home than at school. Similar to our study, the majority of Maltese and Finnish teachers also use children's books/story books and worksheets/handouts. However, the research does not offer the option to choose graded readers, which is common practice in Slovenia, so it is assumed they do not use them in Malta and Finland.

Slovenian respondents were also asked how often and what kinds of texts they use to develop their students' reading skills (table 4). The most frequently used are songs, chants, dialogues/plays and poems, riddles and limericks. Short stories, tales and fables are used less frequently. Charts, diagrams, and graphs as well as instructions or manuals about how things work are used the least frequently, which are common features of non-fiction texts. These data coincide with the data related to the types of resources used (table 3), where non-fiction texts were at the bottom of the list of the resources used. Some also listed other types of texts they regularly use for developing reading skills e.g. picture texts, short texts, tongue twisters, motivational quotes/sentences, grocery lists, greetings cards, announcements, comic

Table 5 Classroom Organisation Used When Developing Students' Reading Skills

Item	*M*	*SD*
Whole-class	4.09	0.793
Pair-work	3.66	0.855
Individual work	3.59	0.857
Mixed-ability groups	3.56	0.998
Same-ability groups	2.54	1.110

books, picture books, short articles about relevant topics, brochures, menus, maps, fill-out forms, letters, etc.

Sollars and Ylinen (2002) report similar types of materials being used in Maltese and Finnish schools, where comprehension passages proved to be the most popular reading material in classrooms. Reading poems and letters appear to be almost equally popular activities in both schools. However, stories, articles, newspapers, magazines and recipes are much more frequently used in Finnish than in Maltese classrooms. Similar to our study, Maltese and Finnish schools frequently use poems/songs; however, there is no mention of dialogues and plays in their research, which are commonly used among Slovenian students.

Slovenian primary teachers were also asked which classroom organisation they most commonly employ when developing their students' reading skills. As can be seen in table 5, when developing their students' reading skills the most common classroom organisation is a whole-class form, followed by pair-work. Individual work and mixed-ability groups are also frequently used. The least used form is same-ability groups' organisation, indicating a possible lack of differentiation tasks in Slovenian classroom. Many authors stress the significance of group work in literacy development. Zhang (2018) emphasises the importance of peer reading in motivating FL learners to read. Nuttall (2005), similarly, supports reading in groups, by claiming that it is less threatening for learners than whole-class reading, and it provokes discussion among students on effective reading.

Developing Writing Skills

The study also investigated FL writing practices in Slovenian primary classrooms. Teachers were asked how often and which activities they use for developing their students' writing skills.

As can be seen in table 6, among given activities used for developing students' writing skills, gap-fills were most frequently used. Occasionally teachers use activities to practice spelling and copying. The least used activity

Table 6 Most Common Activities Used for Developing Students' Writing Skills

Item	*M*	*SD*
Gap-fills	3.45	1.003
Activities to practice spelling	3.24	1.064
Copying	3.13	0.963
Creative writing	2.64	1.244
Writing texts of different genres (e.g. narratives, description …)	2.56	1.258
Dictation	2.15	1.097
Summary writing	2.06	1.149
Writing non-fiction texts	1.79	1.006

was writing non-fiction texts. Summary writing and dictation are performed rarely. Teachers also suggested some other activities they use in order to develop their students' writing skills e.g. creative writing, made-up news, articles, descriptions about people, animals, objects, dialogues, mind maps, building sentences (out of random words), preparing stories in pairs, etc.

The lack of writing texts of different genres can be linked to the lack of reading texts of different genres (see table 1), as Brown (2007) states that by reading different texts, learners get an important insight into how they should write them. Primary FL course books mostly include short stories and comics, therefore learners might not get access to reading and writing different genres, among them also non-fiction texts, which is the activity that is employed in Slovenian primary FL classes the least. Summary writing, which is also very low on the list of writing activities above, is a very constructive way of developing learners' writing skills, since it employs many different skills, and seeing a text before writing your own one can help the learners with the topic of the text, its vocabulary and structure (Hirvela 2016). However, it is an activity that is usually not used in young learner classrooms extensively, as it requires a higher level of language competence.

In Wray et al.'s study (2000) teachers in Britain selected the following two writing activities as the most common: formation/handwriting (97.6%) and writing for an audience other than the teacher (80%), but only a minority use peer group editing (12.8%). Contrary to our study, the majority of teachers do not use spelling (66%) and copying activities (52%).

When it comes to Maltese and Finnish students, the most popular writing activity in their classrooms appears to be writing stories/compositions and letters. According to Sollars and Ylinen (2002), Maltese students are especially fond of writing poems and newspaper articles, which contributes to a statistically significant result between students of both nationalities, as writing po-

Table 7 Classroom Organisation Used in Developing Students' Writing Skills

Item	*M*	*SD*
Individual work	3.79	0.941
Whole-class	3.66	1.036
Mixed-ability groups	3.12	1.206
Pair-work	3.10	1.022
Same-ability groups	2.38	1.137

ems and newspaper articles is rarely used in Finnish schools. Sollars and Ylinen (2002) further on state that this difference could be attributed to the fact that students of one of the Maltese schools are encouraged to submit contributions for the school publication/newspaper. It includes poems, letters, jokes, anecdotes, competitions and short stories. Contrary to our study, gap-fill activities, activities where students practice spelling and copying, which are the most frequently used activities for developing students' writing skills in Slovenia, are not mentioned in the Maltese[2] and Finnish research.

Slovenian primary teachers were also asked which classroom organisation they most commonly use when developing their students' writing skills. When developing their students' writing skills, the most often used form of class organisation is individual work. The least used form of class organisation in the case of developing writing skills is same-ability groups (table 7). There is some evidence that students' achievement also relates to effective classroom organisation. According to Pressley et al. (1996), the most effective classroom organisation is a combination of whole-class, group and individual teaching. A similar picture emerges from British research and suggests that effective teachers group children in their classrooms according to the children's needs and the tasks they are working on (Wray et al. 2000). Rarely used same-ability groups therefore imply lack of differentiation, which focuses on the success of each individual learner (Tomlinson 2014).

Difference between Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience and Their Development of Students' Reading and Writing Skills

Within the scope of the questions related to the difference between teachers' years of teaching experience and the way they develop their students' reading skills, statistically significant differences ($F = 3.774$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.026$) were shown only in one answer i.e. how often teachers teach students strategies for decoding letters into sounds when they do (pre-, while-, post-) read-

[2] English is one of the two official languages in Malta, besides Maltese.

Table 8 Difference between Teachers' Years of Working Experience and Their Development of Students' Decoding Strategies in Reading

Working years	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Levene test		ANOVA		
				F	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*
1–5	45	3.27	1.095	2.059	0.133	3.774	2	0.026
6–15	34	3.76	0.855					
16 and more	30	3.13	0.973					
Total	109	3.39	1.018					

Table 9 Difference between Teachers' Years of Working Experience and the Classroom Organisation They Use When Developing Their Students' Writing Skills

Working years	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Levene test		ANOVA		
				F	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*
1–5	45	3.24	0.908	4.740	0.011	4.023	2	0.022
6–15	35	2.69	0.832					
16 and more	30	3.33	1.269					
Total	110	3.09	1.028					

ing activities with students (measured on the 5-point scale, 1 meaning very rarely or never, 2 rarely, 3 occasionally, 4 frequently and 5 very frequently). The Tukey HSD post hoc test showed that statistically significant differences were between teachers that had 6–15 years of working experience and the ones with more than 16 years of working experience. The ones that have 6–15 years working experience more often teach students strategies for decoding letters into sounds than the ones with more years of working experience.

With respect to questions regarding the development of students' writing skills, the only statistical significance between teachers with different years of working experience occurred with the question of classroom organisation that is used when developing students' writing skills, and only regarding pair-work ($F = 4.023$, $df = 2/76.656$, $p = 0.022$). The Games Howell post hoc test showed statistically significant differences between teachers with 1–5 years of working experience and those with 6–15 years ($p = 0.015$). Those with less working experience use pair-work more frequently than the ones in the middle of their career.

Conclusion

Literacy in English as a foreign language should be developed systematically, through the development of all language skills, and it should start early on with a variety of approaches, activities and materials.

The study, which focused on the development of FL literacy skills in grades 3–5 in Slovenian primary schools, has shown some positive practices and some challenges that need to be faced in the future. Teachers use a variety of activities in developing their students' reading skills. They focus on the development of their students' vocabulary and they often read aloud to them using children's books. They use a lot of songs, dialogues and poems in their teaching. In addition to that, they encourage the development of some reading strategies among their learners, risk taking and guessing about the text being the most often applied.

Some of the challenges that need to be considered in the future are listed below. The focus in the classroom is mostly on whole-class activities and individual work. Pair work and project work in developing literacy are not encouraged among learners, despite the fact that they are more motivating for students and, according to previous research, stimulate learning. The majority of reading activities focus on finding specific information in the text and students are not often given a choice to select what they want to read. In developing writing, there is still a considerable focus on activities that include imitative writing and gap-fills. Furthermore, non-fiction texts are not often used in primary classes, as well as materials from other subjects, which would invigorate cross-curricular links and more holistic learning. The excessive use of worksheets for developing writing can also be a cause for alarm, since they may not all be linguistically or developmentally appropriate for young learners and they do not encourage open-ended answers and creative thinking.

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. A more comprehensive picture of the development of literacy would be established if we included longitudinal classroom observations, noting what is happening in the classrooms and how literacy is gradually developed in different grades. Moreover, interviews with teachers would show us a more in-depth analysis of their classroom practices and their concerns about developing their students' literacy skills, which we could then address more precisely in teacher education.

Nevertheless, we believe that this paper will serve teachers and teacher educators as a springboard to develop FL literacy more systematically and effectively, raising their awareness about the variety of texts, activities and classroom forms used in the process of developing FL literacy skills.

References

Baker, Colin. 2001. *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism.* 3rd ed. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Brown, Douglas H. 2007. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* 3rd ed. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Cook, Vivian. 2016. *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching.* Oxon: Routledge.

Cumming, Alister. 2016. 'Writing Development and Instruction for English Language Learners.' In *Handbook of Writing Research,* 4th ed., edited by MacArthur, Charles A., Steve Graham, and Jill Fitzgerald, 364–76. New York: The Guilford Press.

Ediger, Anne. 2014. 'Teaching Children Literacy Skills in a Second Language.' In *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language,* 4th ed., edited by Marianne Celce-Murcia, 154–88. London: Heinle & Heinle Thomson Learning.

European Commission. 2012. 'First European Survey on Language Competences: Final Report.' European Commission, Brussels.

Geva, Esther and Gloria Ramírez. 2015. *Focus on Reading.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Halbach, Ana and Daniel Candel Bormann. 2019. 'Inching towards Literacy in Madrid's Primary Schools: A Survey of School-Wide Projects.' *Language and Education* 33 (5) https://www.doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2019.1622712

Hamayan, Else. 1994. 'Language Development of Low-Literacy Students.' In *Educating Second Language Children,* edited by Fred Genesee, 278–300. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hirvela, Alan R. 2016. *Connecting Reading & Writing in Second Language Writing Instruction.* 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Kern, Richard. 2000. *Literacy and Language Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kormos, Judit, and Margaret A. Smith. 2012. *Teaching Languages to Students with Specific Learning Difficulties.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Leu, Donald J., Lisa Zawilinski, Jill Castek, Manju Banerjee, Brian C. Housand, Yingjie Liu, and Maureen O'Neil. 2007. 'What Is New about the New Literacies of Online Reading Comprehension?' In *Secondary School Literacy,* edited by Leslie S. Rush, A. Jonathan Eakle, and Allen Berger, 37–68. Denver, CO: National Council of Teachers of English.

Macaro, Ernesto, and Trevor Mutton. 2009. 'Developing Reading Achievement in Primary Learners of French: Inferencing Strategies versus Exposure to "Graded Readers."' *Language Learning Journal* 37 (2): 165–82.

Moats, Louisa. 2007. *Whole-Language High Jinx: How to Tell When 'Scientifically-Based Reading Instruction' Isn't.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Murphy, Victoria A. 2014. *Second Language Learning in the Early School Years: Trends and Contexts.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nuttall, Christine. 2005. *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Heinemann.

Pinter, Annamaria. 2017. *Teaching Young Language Learners.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pressley, Michael, Joan Rankin, and Linda Yokoi. 1996. 'A Survey of Instructional Practices of Primary Teachers Nominated as Effective in Promoting Literacy.' *Elementary School Journal* 96 (4): 363–84.

Reid, Joy. 2001. 'Writing.' In *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages,* edited by Ronald Carter and David Nunan, 28–33. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Share, David, L. 1999. 'Phonological Recoding and Orthographic Learning: A Direct Test of the Self-Teaching Hypothesis.' *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 72:95–129.

Skela, Janez. 2002. 'Multi-Literacy: Literacy Acquisition, (Creative) Reading and Writing in a Foreign and/or Second Language.' In *Issues in Multi-Literacy,* edited by Valerie Sollars. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Skela, Janez, Urška Sešek, and Mateja Dagarin Fojkar. 2009. 'Opismenjevanje v tujem/drugem jeziku na zgodnji stopnji.' In *Učenje in poučevanje dodatnih jezikov v otroštvu,* edited by Karmen Pižorn, 220–45. Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

Sollars, Valerie and Ulla-Kaisa Ylinen. 2002. 'Young Learners' Reading and Writing Experiences of a Second/Foreign Language: The Maltese and Finnish Context.' In I*ssues in Multi-literacy,* edited by Valerie Sollars, 135–71. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Stevenson, Marie. 2018. 'Learning Literacies.' In *The Cambridge Guide to Learning English as a Second Language,* edited by Anne Burns and Jack C. Richards, 242–50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swain, Merrill, and Sharon Lapkin. 1998. 'Interaction and Second Language Learning: Two Adolescent French Immersion Students Working Together.' *The Modern Language Journal* 83:320–38.

Šamo, Renata. 2009. 'The Age Factor and L2 Reading Strategies.' In *Early Learning of Modern Foreign Languages: Processes and Outcomes,* edited by Marianne Nikolov, 121–31. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Tomlinson, Carol A. 2014. *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of all Learners.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Weaver, Constance. 2002. *Reading Process and Practice.* 3rd ed. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Wray, David, Jane Medwell, Richard Fox, and Louise Poulson. 2000. 'The Teaching Practices of Effective Teachers of Literacy.' *Educational Review* 52 (1): 75–84.

Zhang Jun, Lawrence. 2018. 'Learning Reading.' In *Learning English as a Second Language,* edited by Anne Burns and Jack C. Richards, 213–21. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The Importance of Phonological Awareness Instruction in (Very) Young Second/Foreign Language Learners

Anita Sila
Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Slovenia
anita.sila@pef.upr.si

Phonological awareness (PA) instruction in early years plays an important role in helping children listen to their language's sound inventory, as well as in developing phonics, a sense of intonation, and rhythm. What is more, well-developed PA is a key element in the development of literacy skills in a second/foreign language. However, PA instruction is not a common practice in many second/foreign language classrooms. This paper therefore presents the results of several studies concerning systematic and explicit phonological awareness instruction in (very) young second/foreign language learners (aged under 7). Its main aim is to examine the effects of PA instruction as provided in different second/foreign languages (e.g. English, French, Italian) on the development of literacy skills in learners' first and/or second/foreign language. The findings show that children benefitted from early phonological awareness instruction in their first and/or second/foreign languages. It is hoped that our research will lead to an improved understanding of phonological awareness and that it will encourage teachers to find effective ways to apply it in practice. This would make it easier for children to learn to speak, read, and write in second/foreign languages in the future.

Keywords: oral skills, young learners' oracy, spoken language, phonological awareness instruction, teacher's language input

Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing interest in teaching reading and other literacy skills in children's first, second, and foreign languages. Literacy is usually understood as the ability to read and write, but the reality is more complex, as it involves using and applying strategies to various types of texts while gaining a comprehensive understanding of what has been read (Dell 2014). In order to help children become skilled readers and writers in any language, teachers should support (very) young learners' oral language proficiency, which sets a strong foundation for auditory and oral skills (Linse 2005). Effective pre-literacy and literacy instruction is therefore crucial in children's early education. Efforts to prevent reading problems should target not

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.183-205

only oral language but also phonological awareness, as well as knowledge of the alphabet and print knowledge (National Research Council 1998; Whitehurst and Lonigan 2002). Oral language abilities affect the development of preliteracy skills such as phonological awareness and letter knowledge (Caravolas et al. 2012). Helman (2009, 117) explains this clearly: 'Each language or literacy interaction that children have is like a seed for their emerging literacy understanding. […] The oral-language foundation that each student possesses is the soil on which emergent literacy develops. Informal and formal instruction in sounds and letters are like seeds planted that will sprout into understanding the alphabetic code.' By practicing language-rich activities at school/kindergarten and at home, emergent learners develop a more advanced understanding of print (Helman 2009). This process is especially crucial for foreign and second language learners, who experience the period of emergent literacy in a slightly different way. English language learners (ELLS), for example, who are learning oral English and its written features at the same time, are doing double duty – 'the phonemic and alphabetic seeds in English are being planted just as the soil of the English language is being prepared. Without a foundation of oral language, an understanding of text in that language will not flourish. So learning oral English and the written code become simultaneous goals for ELLs and require concerted planning efforts on the part of curriculum leaders and teachers' (Helman 2009).

In this paper, we focus on the importance of the development of phonological awareness (PA) skills in foreign/second language acquisition, as such skills comprise *a* core prerequisite for early literacy development. Several studies have confirmed that the development of PA in learners' first and second languages is closely related and that it significantly predicts reading and writing performance in children learning to read in two alphabetic systems (Chiappe and Siegel 1999; Cisero and Royer 1995; Geva and Siegel 2000; Sun Alperin and Wang 2011). It is crucial to point out that the lack of phonemic awareness (the highest level of PA) is the most powerful determinant of the likelihood of failure to learn to read, also in a foreign language context (Moats and Foorman 1997; Adams 1990). What is more, poor PA is associated with poor auditory word acquisition for both L1 and in L2 (Bowey 1996; Elbro and Jesen 2005; de Jong, Seveke, and van Veen 2000; Hu 2003; Hu and Schuele 2005; Mayringer and Wimmer 2000). In addition, a close relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading has been demonstrated by many empirical studies, which included English as both a first language and a second language (Stahl and Fairbanks 1986; Qian 2002; Nation 2001; Beck, McKeown, and Kucan 2002).

This significant role of phonological awareness in developing L2 reading skills, as well as the lack of extant studies in this field, have led some researchers to examine the effects of phonological awareness instruction in helping second and foreign language learners acquire L2 reading skills. This paper accordingly also reviews recent studies on the instruction of phonological awareness in (very) young second/foreign language learners (aged under 7). Explanations of phonological awareness and its development, along with recent findings from such studies, could be of potential help to second/foreign language educators who are challenged with teaching preliteracy and literacy skills at an early age (0–7).

Metalinguistic Awareness

Metalinguistic awareness is the ability to reflect upon and manipulate a language's structural features (Nagy and Anderson 1995). This awareness develops during preschool years and continues into adolescence and beyond. Metalinguistic awareness skills are related to the formal aspects of language: phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical awareness (Altman, Goldstein, and Armon Lotem 2018). The main skills covered by metalinguistic awareness include understanding of language and literacy functions or purposes, comprehending a text's visual-perceptual features and its structural characteristics (from the micro or word level to the macro or text level), procedural knowledge (from encoding to self-regulating metacognitive reading and writing strategies), metalanguage (language used to talk about language and literacy, including grammar of sentences and genres), and awareness of the symbolic nature of writing and its relationship to oral language (Chapman 2003).

People can be aware of their language at many different levels, from the automatic, virtually unconscious monitoring of their own speech, to the rapid language switching through languages by skilled translators and the detailed analytic work of linguists. The first signs of reflection upon language begin to appear at about age two. They are recognized as spontaneous corrections of one's own pronunciations, word forms, word order, and even choice of language in the case of bilinguals; questions about the right words, the right pronunciation, and the appropriate speech style; comments on the speech of others: their pronunciation, accent, and the language itself that is spoken; comments on and play with various linguistic units, segmenting words into syllables and sounds, making up etymologies, rhyming, and punning; judgments about linguistic structure and function, deciding what utterances mean, whether they are appropriate or polite, whether they are

grammatical; questions about other languages and about language(s) in general (Clark 1978).

It is important to mention here that plurilingual experiences at an early age can influence the development of metalinguistic awareness skills, which are of key importance for language and literacy learning (Lourenço and Andrade 2013). Many studies (e.g. Yelland, Pollard, and Mercuri 1993; Bruck and Genesee 1995; Chen et al. 2004) have clearly shown that bilinguals possess more advanced metalinguistic awareness skills than monolinguals because they have to focus on the features of two languages. The positive impact of bilingualism has been confirmed in the sound and speech awareness of both first and second/foreign languages in preschool children and children in the first grades of school (Campbell and Sais 1995; Bruck and Genesee 1995; Chen et al. 2004; Marinova Todd, Zhao, and Bernhardt 2010; Rocha de Souza and Conceição Leite 2014).

There are certainly some features displayed by bilingual children that would hint at an advantage in PA, as comparing and contrasting between two languages makes them more attentive to the phonological form of words. In contrast to bilingual children, monolinguals tend to focus rather on the meaning of words and ignore other aspects. However, the advantage that bilingual children may have is not consistent across all levels of phonological awareness. Their relative performance seems to depend on the specific level of phonological awareness examined and the children's age. For bilingual as well as monolingual children, PA is also affected by the phonological structure of the language that children speak and the writing system they learn to read. Some studies (e.g. Marinova Todd, Zhao, and Bernhardt 2010; Bruck and Genesee 1995; Chen et al. 2004; Laurent and Martinot 2010) have confirmed some positive effects of bilingualism on the development of PA skills and some have not (e.g. Jackson, Holm, and Dodd 1998; Bialystok, Majumder, and Martin 2003). What is more, research findings indicate that monolingual children usually catch up with bilingual children after a while (Chen et al. 2004; Kuo and Anderson 2010). Thus, it cannot be asserted with certainty that bilingual and monolingual children have differently developed PA skills.

Phonological Awareness Development

Phonological awareness is the ability to notice, think about, or manipulate the sounds in language (Torgesen 1997), rather than just the meaning of the word. It is an understanding of the structure of spoken language – that it is made up of words, and words consist of syllables, rhymes, and sounds (Trehearne 2003).

From birth through the end of first grade, children gradually develop their sensitivity to the phonological structure of language. Early accomplishments in phonological awareness include recognizing that sentences are composed of words, which words are composed of syllables, and that two words can rhyme. In the later pre-school years, children understand when two words share sounds in the beginning and final position of words, and usually by kindergarten they are able to combine sounds into words and segment words into their constituent sounds. In first grade, children acquire the ability to focus more intensely on the phonemic structure of words and syllables and to think about phonemes as distinct features of language (Justice et al. 2005). The continuum of PA skill development moves from the capacity to manipulate words, such as words in phrases and words within compounds (rain + bow = rainbow), to the syllable level (sister – /sis/ = /ter/), to onset-rime (/b/ + ird = bird), and finally to phonemes (/m/+/o/+/p/ = mop). This does not mean that children must master one level before moving to the next, as they can show incipient ability for more complex skills while still working toward the mastery of less complex ones (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, and Lonigan 2008). This is probably also the reason for a slightly different explanation of the developmental sequence of some PA skills advanced by different authors. Chard and Dickson (1999), for example, list the development of alliteration awareness along with rhyme awareness, whereas Paulson and Moats (2010) list the development of alliteration awareness after children are able to recognize a word's initial sound. Nevertheless, all authors agree that the development of PA skills moves from less complex to more complex levels as it is summarized in table 1.

When children develop PA skills, it is important for educators to consider a range of tasks with varied difficulty, for example identity tasks (e.g. rhyme oddity, first sound matching), synthesis tasks (e.g. syllable or phoneme combining) or analysis tasks (e.g. word or syllable segmenting or deleting, phoneme counting tasks). Combining tasks typically are easier than analysis tasks and tasks requiring production are more challenging than recognition tasks. In addition, tasks supported by visual props or tasks that use multiple-choice items are simpler for children than those that require more memory or verbal production (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, and Lonigan 2008). Some other dimensions of task complexity in phonological awareness include word length (shorter words are easier than longer words), size of phonological unit (onset-rime manipulation is easier than phoneme manipulation), consonant clusters and the articulatory features of words (identifying continuous sounds – sonorants and fricatives are easier than stops and affricates and clusters), and identifying phonemes in words by position (beginning,

Table 1 The Development of PA Skills from Less Complex to More Complex Levels

Level		Activities
Less complex levels	Word	Distinguishing between long and short words, segmenting sentences into words, counting words in a sentence, forming a compound word (e.g. Dog + house = doghouse), removing one word from a compound word and saying what remains (e.g. Notebook – note = book).
	Rhyme	Identifying rhymes, odd-one-out rhymes, matching rhymes, producing rhymes.
	Syllable	Combining syllables into words, segmenting words into syllables, deleting syllables.
Beginning of phonemic awareness	Onset-rime	Combining onsets and rimes into words, segmenting words into onsets and rimes, producing words from given onsets/rimes.
More complex levels	Sound	Distinguishing between similar initial and final sounds, identifying and producing alliteration, identifying first, final, and middle sound in a word, identifying the place of the sound in a word, producing words with given initial and final sounds, combining sounds into words, segmenting words into sounds, manipulating sounds (addition, deletion, substitution).

Notes Adapted from Chard and Dickson (1999), Paulson and Moats (2010), Pečjak (1999), Schuele and Boudreau (2008), Trehearne (2003), Yopp and Yopp (2000), Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, and Lonigan (2008).

ending, middle – the latter is the most difficult) (Barrus Smith, Simmons, and Kameenui 1995).

Children first learn to identify or manipulate the initial consonant in a cluster onset (e.g. *cr*est) or the final consonant in a cluster coda (e.g. cres*t*) and then to identify or manipulate the medial consonants (e.g. crest) (Anthony and Francis 2005). Articulatory factors also contribute to a word's linguistic complexity. Children develop sensitivity to differences in the placement of articulation, the location along the vocal tract where the tract is occluded or narrowed, before developing sensitivity to differences in phoneme voicing (Treiman et al. 1998). Recent scholarly attention to segmental phonetics signals the importance of articulation, not the imitation of sounds, as a key learning impulse in acquisition processes (Anumanchipalli, Chartier, and Chang 2019).

Language-Related Differences in PA Development

Although the developmental sequence of phonological awareness from large to small sound units is universal across languages, it has been found

that certain characteristics of individual spoken (e.g. saliency and complexity of word structures, phoneme position, and articulatory factors) and written languages influence the rate of normal development and levels of phonological awareness that are normally achieved (Anthony and Francis 2005). According to Ziegler and Goswami (2005), this could simply reflect the lack of cross-language matching for factors like vocabulary acquisition and teaching practices in kindergarten. However, systematic language-related differences and the fact that early forms of phonological awareness develop prior to literacy instruction suggest that experiences with oral language interactions play an important role in the development of phonological awareness (Anthony and Francis 2005).

A number of studies have been carried out to uncover the characteristics of oral language that foster the development of particular phonological awareness skills. Durgunoğlu and Öney (2002) point out that children who learn Turkish, Greek, and Italian, all languages with a simple syllable structure and relatively limited vowel repertoires, show high levels of syllable awareness prior to literacy. In contrast, children who learn French and English as languages with quite complex syllable structures and many consonant clusters, as well as larger vowel repertoires, develop lower levels of syllable awareness prior to literacy. What is more, the saliency and complexity of onsets in spoken language may influence the development of onset awareness and phoneme awareness (Anthony and Francis 2005). Caravolas and Bruck (1993) found that preliterate English-speaking children were better than preliterate Czech-speaking children at isolating onsets with one consonant, whereas Czech-speaking children were more aware of individual phonemes within clusters than English-speaking children. According to Anthony and Francis (2005), these findings correspond to the phonological characteristics of the two languages: Czech has more and different cluster onsets (258) than English (31).

Moreover, vowel and consonant harmony also influence the development of phoneme awareness. For example, kindergarten children who speak Turkish constantly monitor and manipulate the phonemes in roots, prefixes, and suffixes in order to achieve vowel and consonant harmony. This may force them to become sensitive to phonemes. Thus, kindergarten children who speak Turkish are better at deleting the final phoneme from words than kindergarten children who speak English, which does not require vowel harmony (Durgunoğlu and Öney 1999). In addition, children who speak languages with more rime neighbours (e.g. the English words *bright, kite,* and *height* are phonological rime neighbours because they share a similar rime)

than body neighbours (e.g. words like *cat, cab,* and *calf* that share a similar onset and vowel combination, called a body) develop onset-rime awareness prior to body-coda awareness (the coda usually being the terminal consonant or consonant cluster). On the one hand, English, French, Dutch, and German children learn to segment a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) syllable into onset and rime (C-VC) before they learn to segment a CVC syllable into body and coda (CV-C) (Ziegler and Goswami 2005; Anthony and Francis 2005). Young Japanese children, on the other hand, may develop body-coda awareness before onset-rime awareness (Inagaki, Hatano, and Otake 2000).

Finally, a language's orthographic transparency also influences the rate at which its speakers develop phonological awareness. Children who learn to read an alphabetic language with a transparent orthography (consistent spelling-to-sound relations and consistent sound-to-spelling relations) develop phoneme awareness more quickly than children with less transparent orthography do. For example, German children in their first year of schooling develop phoneme awareness more quickly than English children do. In addition, children can have difficulties with counting phonemes in a word if the number of letters and phonemes differ, as well as with judging whether two words rhyme if the words are spelled differently (e.g. *rye-tie*) (Anthony and Francis 2005).

The Importance of Phonological Awareness Development in a Foreign/Second Language

Some children develop PA skills fairly easily within a stimulating classroom environment, while others need more explicit and systematic instruction that consciously and deliberately focuses on PA (Trehearne 2003). Classroom-based instruction in phonological awareness should be provided to all preschool and kindergarten children in order to establish a foundation of ability on which to build the skills of decoding and spelling in the early elementary grades (Schuele and Boudreau 2008). Children (approximately 20%) who fail to acquire an adequate foundation of PA, even when good classroom instruction is provided, (Torgesen 2000) need explicit corrective help with phonological awareness in late kindergarten or early first grade (Schuele and Boudreau 2008). There are several key elements to providing systematic and explicit instruction, including instructional sequencing, modeling, and explaining the task, scaffolding, and providing corrective feedback (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, and Lonigan 2008; for more see e.g. Schuele and Boudreau 2008).

As PA skills transfer from one language to another (Cardenas Hagan, Carl-

son, and Pollard Durodola 2007; Dickinson et al. 2004) it is very important to help children develop good phonological awareness in their first language. Native language proficiency (L1) in reading and writing seems to be the number-one predictor of overall skill in a second language (L2). However, the speed of native language learning is also a significant predictor of L2 skill (Sparks et al. 2006). Although PA transfers from one language to another, children should learn to distinguish between the sounds in their L1 and L2, otherwise they risk difficulties with associating sounds with written letters or groups of letters – phonics. Students may not be able to 'hear' or produce a new sound in a second language (probably because that sound was not a part of the student's native language), e.g. a Slovenian speaker would pronounce an English /ϴ/ as /t/, a Japanese speaker would pronounce an English /l/ as /r/, a French speaker would pronounce an English /ϴ/ as /s/ or /z/, a Spanish speaker would pronounce an English /v/ as /b/. These sounds may not be perceived as being different by the speaker because they do not discriminate between the two and can cause special problems for learners.

Instruction in systematic and explicit phonological awareness is, therefore, also of great importance in second/foreign language learning at an early age in order to achieve functional bilingual or multilingual literacy. Children who acquire a second language from birth or before the age of three are immediately aware of the sound characteristics in both languages. They develop dual vocabulary and a certain degree of comprehension in both languages. Bilingual children must become familiar with writing systems in both languages during school years (they must learn about similarities and differences in the sound and writing systems). Even children who learn another language after the age of six need to learn to distinguish between the sounds in their L1 and L2 in order to learn the correspondence between these sounds and the spelling patterns (graphemes) that represent them. After the age of six, though, mastering the pronunciation of certain sounds becomes more difficult. A child might also encounter a new writing system. Some languages do not use the alphabetic system, but syllable or iconographic and logographic systems instead (Colja 2013). Phonological skills are important in learning to read in any language system.

In *alphabetic* writing *systems,* there are transparent and opaque orthographies. In transparent orthography (e.g. Spanish, Italian), there are graphemes which map almost one-to-one onto phonemes, while in opaque orthography (e.g. French, English), there are graphemes that have many phonetic interpretations or phonemes that have many graphemic interpretations (Du-

lude 2012). Research has shown that transparent orthographies are more easily acquired than complex and opaque orthographies (e.g. Aro and Wimmer 2003; Seymour, Aro, and Erskine 2003). For example, children learning to read in English may encounter more challenges in decoding and building a sight vocabulary than children learning to read in a relatively transparent orthography like Spanish (Spencer 2007).

In addition, when planning instruction, educators should also consider language interferences (transfer). The term transfer in the context of non-native language acquisition or use broadly refers to the influence of the learner's native language. Language transfer can be negative or positive. Negative transfer or interference occurs when the influence of the native language leads to errors in the acquisition or use of a target language, while positive transfer or facilitation occurs when the influence of the native language leads to immediate or rapid acquisition or use of the target language. Negative transfer, which manifests itself in different linguistic domains, including phonetics and phonology (or pronunciation), morphology and syntax, vocabulary, and pragmatics, poses challenges to teaching and learning (Bardovi-Harlig and Sprouse 2018). For example, in the field of phonetics and phonology, Slovenian English students acquiring English as a foreign language often have problems with a distinction between long and short vowels (e.g. distinction between 'to leave' and 'to live') (Bratož and Kocbek 2015). What is more, in vocabulary acquisition, positive transfer may account for the immediate recognition and acquisition of words with similar or identical pronunciation in both first and second/foreign languages. However, words known as false friends (ones that look and/or sound alike in the native and target languages but have different meanings, e.g. English *parent* and French *parent,* 'relative'; English *become* and German *bekommen,* 'to receive' (Bardovi-Harlig and Sprouse 2018); English *scholar* and Slovenian *šolar,* 'pupil'; in English *biscuit* and in Slovenian *biskvit,* 'sponge cake' (Bratož and Kocbek 2015)) are also likely to lead to errors (Bardovi-Harlig and Sprouse 2018).

All this means that the similarities between languages can present an obstacle. If these errors are not given sufficient attention in teaching, they can remain permanent. Moreover, interferences are reproducible and the most noticeable occur at the level of phonetics and phonology. Thus, they are one of the major causes of retaining a 'foreign accent' (Sabo 2016). It is therefore particularly important that teachers of (very) young language learners give special attention to listening activities, and activities of sound differentiation, as well as pronunciation of sounds that are not present in the first language (in Slovenian for example, the sound /Θ/ in the word *three*), or phonetically

similar sounds (e.g. /s/ and /z/, /l/ and /r/, /d/ and /t/) (Skela, Sešek, and Dagarin Fojkar 2009). This can be done by demonstrating and reinforcing the correct production of a specific sound in small groups through games, non-reading activities, and work with a puppet. For example, children can match pictures of familiar English words that have the same beginning, middle, or ending sound or they can listen to the initial/middle/ending sound and find the corresponding picture.

Research Review on Systematic PA Instruction in a Foreign/Second Language

PA is significantly related to reading in both first and second/foreign languages (Chiappe, Siegel, and Wade Woolley 2002; Gottardo et al. 2001; Lesaux and Siegel 2003). This fact and the lack of extant studies in this field have led some researchers to examine the effects of phonological awareness instruction in helping ESL and EFL children acquire L2 reading skills. Some of the studies below were conducted with preschool children and some of them with primary school children.

Studies with Preschool Children

Giambo and McKinney (2012) conducted a study in order to determine whether phonological awareness instruction promoted oral English proficiency more than a story-reading condition for Spanish-speaking kindergarten children, most of whom had limited English proficiency. Their second aim was to determine the extent to which change in English proficiency over the course of the instruction period could be attributed to changes in phonological awareness. Pre- and post-test measures included tests of oral English proficiency, receptive English vocabulary, and phonological awareness. The results of both groups showed a significant change in oral English proficiency over pre-test scores. However, an analysis of covariance indicated that the phonological awareness group showed greater change than did the story-reading group. Multiple regression analyses were carried out with measures of sound discrimination, short-term memory, and change in vocabulary and phonological awareness in the predictive model. The findings revealed that changes in phonological awareness variables were the only significant predictors of change in oral English proficiency. These results confirmed that phonological awareness instruction promotes oral English proficiency for Spanish-speaking kindergarten children. According to the authors, a balanced reading program for Spanish-speaking kindergarten children with limited English proficiency should therefore also include phono-

logical awareness instruction in order to help children develop oral English proficiency.

Yeung, Siegel, and Chan (2013) explored the effects of 12 weeks of language-enriched phonological awareness instruction on 76 young Hong Kong children who were learning English as a second language. Their mean age was 5.14 (*SD* = 0.23; range = 4 years, 9 months to 5 years, 9 months). There were 38 children in the experimental group (EG) and 38 in the control group (CG). Children in the EG received PA instruction embedded in vocabulary learning activities or comparison instruction, which consisted of vocabulary learning and writing tasks but no direct instruction in phonological awareness skills. Teachers were given the targeted word list of the language-enriched phonological awareness instruction and were asked to teach the words, while children in the CG were given typical Hong Kong kindergarten English instruction. Cantonese is used as the medium of instruction and English is regarded as a school subject. Children have 2–3 English lessons per week, each of approximately 20–30 min, with Native English Teachers (NETs). They also do English and Chinese writing (copying) every day (20–30 min per day), instructed by the class teachers. There is no systematic phonics teaching provided. Children in both groups went through twenty-four 30-minute sessions over a period of 12 weeks. The two instructions were comparable in terms of learning time and the targeted vocabulary. Children were tested on receptive and expressive vocabulary, phonological awareness at the syllable, rhyme and phoneme levels, reading, and spelling in English before and after the program implementation. The results indicated that children who received the PA instruction performed significantly better than children in the CG on English word reading, spelling, PA at all levels and expressive vocabulary on the post-test when age, general intelligence and the pre-test scores were controlled statistically. That means that PA instruction embedded in vocabulary learning activities might be beneficial to kindergarteners learning English as a second language.

Bing, Hui, and Bingxia (2013) carried out a longitudinal study following an English PA training program, aiming to investigate the long-term effect of the training on young English learners' subsequent literacy acquisition in China. Eighty primary school children from two intact classes in first grade participated in the study. Among them, 44 children in the experimental group received 10 weeks' PA training, while the remaining 36 children in the control group did not. All children participated in the tests, which were conducted at two time points – 6 months and 12 months after the training sessions respectively. The training program was designed with reference to Schuele and

Boudreau's study (2008). It began in late September 2010, and lasted for 30 minutes each time, once per week, 10 weeks in total, and was carried out by one of the researchers. Both tests examined participants' early English reading and spelling (Test 2 also investigated the participants' reading comprehension and PA). The results of the study showed that the experimental group performed better than the control group on every literacy sub-skill test in both tests conducted after the training, showing significantly better performance in early English reading and spelling than the control group. This means that there is a long-term training effect on participants' literacy acquisition. In addition, the study also suggests that PA is closely related to English literacy skills, and that the initial phoneme deletion is likely the most powerful predictor of children's early English reading and spelling.

Sila (2018) conducted a study with preschool children (5–6 years old) in order to explore the effects of explicit and systematic PA instruction in English on the development of PA in English (foreign language) and Slovene (first language). Over 3 years there were 2 periods of instruction conducted by the researcher and 1 by other practitioners. The first instruction period (January 2014–June 2014) lasted 40 hours (each for 45 minutes), twice a week. It included 15 children. Before and after the instruction period all children took a test on phonological awareness skills (from less to more complex; the first test was in Slovene, the second was in both languages). The results showed that children improved their skills at all levels (word, rhyme, syllable, onset-rime, sound). The biggest improvement was in recognizing initial sounds in both languages, whereas the smallest improvement was in the production of words (with a given ending sound) in Slovene and the production of words (with a given initial sound) in English, as well as in distinguishing between short and long words, and in segmenting syllables. Children were more successful at producing rhymes, words (with a given initial sound) and alliteration, segmenting sentences into words, and segmenting words into syllables in English, whereas in Slovene they had better results in distinguishing between short and long words. The second instruction period (January 2015–June 2015) also lasted 40 hours (each for 45 minutes), twice a week and included 15 children in the experimental group and 15 children in the control group. This time the test was conducted only in Slovene (at the beginning and the end of instruction) and it showed similar results. Children improved skills at all levels (word, rhyme, syllable, onset-rime, sound). Their highest improvement was in recognizing final sounds, whereas the lowest improvement was in segmenting words into constituent sounds. The third instruction period was administered by practitioners (a teacher of English, preschool teacher

and assistant) (March 2016–May 2016). It lasted 40 hours (each for 45 minutes), twice a week (once a week in Slovene and once a week in English). It included 6 children. The results of the PA test in Slovene (before and after the intervention) also showed that children improved skills at all levels (word, rhyme, syllable, onset-rime, sound); the biggest improvement was in distinguishing between long and short words, producing rhymes, segmenting words into sounds, manipulating sounds, and recognizing final sounds.

Studies with Primary School Children

Zorman (2007) carried out a study with 140 primary school children learning Italian as a second language in schools with Slovene as their language of instruction. They began their schooling in the 2001–2 school year and attended the fourth grade in the 2004–5 school year. The study was a pedagogical experiment with two comparable groups (control and experimental). Children in the experimental group were given systematic literacy instruction in Italian: phonology, phonological awareness development, and systematic learning of phoneme-grapheme correspondences with a particular stress on phonemes, graphemes, and phoneme-grapheme correspondences that differ in Italian with respect to Slovene. The effects of the introduction of systematic literacy instruction were measured by testing phonological awareness and dictation. Study results have shown that children in the experimental group achieved significantly better results on all contents and levels tested. This confirms that children learn to read and write significantly better when they receive systematic literacy instruction in a second/foreign language.

Wise and Chen (2010) in their study analysed the impact of phonological awareness instruction on the reading achievement of 29 at-risk Grade 1 readers from diverse linguistic backgrounds enrolled in an early French immersion program. At-risk readers were identified by their text-reading performance and phonological awareness test scores. They also received 20 weeks of phonological awareness training in small groups. Instruction was initially given in English and then switched to French (when students had acquired a foundation in the language). Significant progress was found in the phonological awareness skills of the treatment group. Results also showed that the end-of-year French reading levels of the experimental group were superior to those of the comparison group. These findings show that phonologically based instruction can effectively address phonological awareness deficits and facilitate French reading acquisition for early immersion students who are considered to be at risk of developing later reading difficulties.

Al Tamimi (2012) investigated the effectiveness of explicit phonological awareness instruction in contrast with formal classroom instruction on developing phonological awareness skills for 60 Jordanian EFL second-graders (average age = 7.1) at a governmental school. Their native language is Arabic, and English has been taught to them as a foreign language. In addition, almost all the test subjects had previously had the chance to learn some English at kindergarten. A phonological training program focused on five phonological awareness skills: segmentation, isolation, deletion, substitution and combining, and their respective sub-skills. On measures of Robertson and Salter's (1997) Phonological Awareness Test (PAT), the experimental group that underwent fifteen 40-minute phonological awareness sessions outperformed the control group in deletion, substitution, and combining skills; the control group continued to receive formal classroom instruction. These findings are also consistent with previous research, favouring explicit phonological awareness instruction, thus giving less credit to formal classroom instruction.

Le Roux et al. (2017) wanted to determine the effects of instruction in vowel perception and production on phonemic awareness and literacy skills of Setswana first language (L1) learners. These learners are English second language (EL2) learners in Grade 3 and aged between 8 and 10 years old. These learners were exposed to ELoLT for 3–4 years, and basic literacy skills should have been established at this stage. The EL1 group included 12 South African English L1 speakers attending an English medium school in Pretoria. This group was seen as the 'norm' and did not receive additional instruction. The EL2 group included 15 EL2 (Setswana L1 speaking) learners, attending two English medium primary schools in the Moot (Pretoria). These participants received additional input concerning the English vowel system by final-year EL1 Speech-Language Therapy (SLT) students. The control group included 15 EL2 (Setswana L1 speaking) learners who were selected from the same schools as participants in the EL2 group and did not receive additional instruction. Their study, which employed a quasi-experimental, pre-test-post-test design, revealed that PA instruction improved the literacy skills of EL2. These results suggest, according to the authors, that PA skills should be a crucial part of the literacy curriculum in South Africa.

Murakami and Cheang (2017) (programme year 1) gave direct structural instructions focused on rhyming and syllable awareness to 101 students in the 2nd grade at Japanese public elementary schools. They designed the program very carefully so that students were not only aware of English phonological units but also of their manipulation through several activities. The in-

structions were given 6 times in total between June and November 2015 by Cheang, the co-author of the present study, who has knowledge and experience in teaching phonological awareness and phonics. Authors assessed the students' general level of phonological awareness before and after the instructions were given in order to verify their effects. The result of the post-test showed remarkable progress on both the rhyming and syllable tests. The findings also showed that the students had some degree of difficulty in recognizing medial vowels, as well as in separating initial consonants from medial vowels, which are co-articulated in speech.

In March 2017, Murakami (2017) carried out another study in order to assess the students' general level of English phonological awareness, and to verify the effectiveness of the previously provided instruction in syllable awareness. This time 80 students in the 3rd grade participated in the English phonological awareness assessment, Test 3 (they took Test 1 and Test 2 during program year 1). In program year 2 (2016), the students did not receive any phonological awareness instruction, except for a one-time 15-minute syllable segmentation game in November. Test 3 was conducted at the very end of program year 2, after a 15-month period in which no instruction was provided. The results of Test 3 showed improvement in almost all tasks. In addition, the scores of at-risk students (9% of the lowest) decreased in Test 3 as compared with Test 2. The results of their study thus also indicate that phonological awareness can be developed through instruction, and thereupon retained and further enhanced. The authors suggest that individual differences in the teaching methods and conditions should be taken into consideration.

To sum up, studies confirmed that explicit and systematic PA instruction in foreign languages, embedded in vocabulary learning activities, helps children improve PA skills at all levels and develop oral foreign language proficiency, reading, spelling and writing skills in both languages. This also applies to early immersion students who are considered to be at risk of developing later reading difficulties. In addition, as there is a long-term training effect on participants' literacy acquisition, PA should be thoughtfully developed in the educational process and not left to the natural or intuitive development of children. Bing, Hui, and Bingxia (2013) also advise that instruction programmes for foreign language learners should last longer than those for native speakers. What is more, in order to develop PA skills in a foreign language successfully, teachers should have highly developed language skills in native and foreign/second languages, and they should understand the pro-

cess of developing early literacy and, in this context, PA skills. They should be familiar with the similarities and differences between developing literacy in both languages. Moreover, they should know the characteristics of the target language and the differences between languages (as regards phonics and writing systems). They should understand the development of language competencies and the process of acquiring and learning first and foreign/second languages (Sila 2018).

Overall, early PA instruction is beneficial to all children, but especially to foreign/second language learners. Thus, children develop oral language proficiency and early literacy skills in both languages.

As the studies in this review focused on particular language groups, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the particular language combinations studied.

Conclusion

This paper presents an overview of the findings in research focusing on phonological awareness instruction administered to (very) young language learners in foreign language classrooms. Several studies have shown that systematic and explicit instruction of PA in foreign languages can improve PA skills in the first and second (foreign) language. As PA instruction in foreign languages improves spelling, reading, vocabulary, rapid naming, PA skills, listening and reading comprehension, communication, and phonics skills, it is important to integrate PA instruction in second/foreign language learning at an early age. This imperative is even greater in multilingual classroom contexts as children come from different language backgrounds and need to learn to distinguish between the sounds in their L1 and L2, in order to learn how to read and write. Thus, it would be most advisable to develop PA skills in both languages.

Regarding future research, we believe the evidence from existing studies is so clear that future studies should be confined to longitudinal and training studies. There is no doubt that explicit phonological awareness instruction has a positive impact in developing literacy in first and second/foreign languages. However, future studies should concentrate on how such instruction can be most effectively delivered in multilingual settings (in kindergarten) and what other skills should be trained in order to help children from different language backgrounds reduce the possibility of reading and writing difficulties at school entry time.

In conclusion, raising the awareness of teachers, educators, and parents about the importance of developing PA in both languages at an early age

can facilitate children's process of acquiring literacy skills in first and second/foreign languages.

References

Adams, Marilyn Jager. 1990. *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Al Tamimi, Yasser. 2012. 'Relevance of Phonological Awareness Intervention to a Jordanian EFL Classroom.' *Arab World Geographer* 3 (2): 117–47.

Altman, Carmit, Tamara Goldstein, and Sharon Armon Lotem. 2018. 'Vocabulary, Metalinguistic Awareness and Language Dominance among Bilingual Preschool Children.' *Frontiers in Psychology* 9. https://doi.org./10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01953

Anthony, Jason L., and David J. Francis. 2005. 'Development of Phonological Awareness.' *American Psychological Society* 14 (5): 255–9.

Anumanchipalli, Gopala K., Josh Chartier, and Edward F. Chang. 2019. 'Speech Synthesis from Neural Decoding of Spoken Sentences.' *Nature* 568:493–8.

Aro, Mikko, and Heinz Wimmer. 2003. 'Learning to Read: English in Comparison to Six More Regular Orthographies.' *Applied Psycholinguistics* 24 (4): 621–35.

Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen, and Rex A. Sprouse. 2018. 'Negative versus Positive Transfer.' *In The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching,* edited by Joh I. Liontas, 1–6. Hoboken: Wiley.

Barrus Smith, Sylvia, Deborah C. Simmons, and Edward J. Kameenui. 1995. 'Phonological Awareness: Curricular and Instructional Implications for Diverse Learners: Review of Converging Evidence.' Technical Report 22, National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators, Eugene, OR.

Beck, Isabel. L., Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan. 2002. *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction.* New York: Guilford Press.

Bialystok, Ellen, Shilpi Majumder, and Michelle M. Martin. 2003. 'Developing Phonological Awareness: Is There a Bilingual Advantage?' *Applied Psycholinguistics* 24 (1): 27–44.

Bing, Sun, Zhou Hui, and Zhu Bingxia. 2013. 'Effects of English Phonological Awareness Training on Chinese Child EFL Learners' Literacy Development.' *Canadian Social Science* 9 (1), 56–64.

Bowey, Judith A. 1996. 'On the Association Between Phonological Memory and Receptive Vocabulary in Five-Year-Olds.' *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 63:44–78.

Bratož, Silva, and Alenka Kocbek. 2015. 'Novi pogledi na vlogo prevajanja pri poučevanju tujega jezika.' In *Aktivnosti učencev v učnem procesu,* edited by Dejan Hozjan, 223–35. Koper: Annales.

Bruck, Maggie, and Fred Genesee. 1995. 'Phonological Awareness in Young Second Language Learners.' *Journal of Child Language* 22 (2): 307–24.

Campbell, Ruth, and Efisia Sais. 1995. 'Accelerated Metalinguistic (Phonologi-

cal) Awareness in Bilingual Children.' *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 13 (1): 61–8.

Caravolas, Marketa, and Maggie Bruck. 1993. 'The Effect of Oral and Written Language Input on Children's Phonological Awareness: A Cross-Linguistic Study.' *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 55 (1): 1–30.

Caravolas, Marketa, Arne Lervåg, Petroula Mousikou, Corina Efrim, Miroslav Litavský, Eduardo Onochie-Quintanilla, Naymé Salas et al. 2012. 'Common Patterns of Prediction of Literacy Development in Different Alphabetic Orthographies.' *Psychological Science* 23 (6): 678–86.

Cardenas Hagan, Elsa, Coleen D. Carlson, and Sharolyn D. Pollard Durodola. 2007. 'The Crosslinguistic Transfer of Early Literacy Skills: The Role of Initial L1 and L2 Skills and Language of Instruction.' *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools* 38 (3): 249–59.

Chapman, Marilyn. 2003. 'Phonemic Awareness: Clarifying What We Know.' *Literacy Teaching and Learning* 7 (1–2): 91–114.

Chard, David J., and Shirley V. Dickson. 1999. 'Phonological Awareness: Instructional and Assessment Guidelines.' *Intervention in School and Clinic* 34 (5): 261–70.

Chen, Xi, Richard C. Anderson, Wenling Li, Meiling Hao, Xinchun Wu, and Hua Shu. 2004. 'Phonological Awareness of Bilingual and Monolingual Chinese Children.' *Journal of Educational Psychology* 96 (1): 142–51.

Chiappe, Penny, and Linda Siegel. 1999. 'Phonological Awareness and Reading Acquisition in English- and Punjabi-Speaking Canadian Children.' *Journal of Educational Psychology* 91 (1): 20–8.

Chiappe, Penny, Linda Siegel, and Lesly Wade Woolley. 2002. 'Linguistic Diversity and the Development of Reading Skills: A Longitudinal Study.' *Scientific Studies of Reading* 6 (4): 369–400.

Cisero, Cheryl A., and James M. Royer. 1995. 'The Development and Cross-Language Transfer of Phonological Awareness.' *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 20 (3): 275–303.

Clark, Eve V. (1978). 'Awareness of Language: Some Evidence from What Children Say and Do.' In *The Child's Conception of Language,* edited by Anne Sinclair, Robert J. Jarvella, and Willem J. M. Levelt, 17–44. Berlin and New York: Springer-Verlag.

Colja, Tanja. 2013. *Porajajoča se pismenost v dvojezičnem okolju: primer otrok, ki obiskujejo vrtce s slovenskim učnim jezikom v Italiji in dvojezični vrtec v Špetru.* Trieste: Ciljno začasno združenje 'Jezik – Lingua.'

de Jong, Peter F., Marie- José Seveke, and Marjo van Veen. 2000. 'Phonological Sensitivity and the Acquisition of New Words in Children.' *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 76 (4): 275–301.

Dell, Jamie L. 2014. 'Literacy Instruction in Early Childhood Education: Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee.' Honors Thesis, University of Dayton.

Dickinson, David, Allyssa McCabe, Nancy Clark Chiarelli, and Anne Wolf. 2004. 'Cross-Language Transfer of Phonological Awareness in Low-Income Spanish and English Bilingual Preschool Children.' *Applied Psycholinguistics* 25 (3): 323–47.

Dulude, Laura. 2012. 'Writing Systems, Phonemic Awareness, and Bilingualism: Cross-Linguistic Issues in Dyslexia.' *Indiana University Undergraduate Journal of Cognitive Science* 7:22–30.

Durgunoğlu, Aydı Yücesan, and Banu Öney. 1999. 'A Cross-Linguistic Comparison of Phonological Awareness and Word Recognition.' *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 11 (4): 281–99.

———. 2002. 'Phonological Awareness in Literacy Acquisition: It's Not Only for Children.' *Scientific Studies of Reading* 6 (3): 245–66.

Elbro, Carsten, and Mette Nygaard Jensen. 2005. 'Quality of Phonological Representations, Verbal Learning, and Phoneme Awareness in Dyslexic and Normal Readers.' *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 46 (4): 375–84.

Geva, Esther, and Linda Siegel. 2000. 'Orthographic and Cognitive Factors in the Concurrent Development of Basic Reading Skills in Two Languages.' *Reading and Writing* 12 (1–2): 1–30.

Giambo, Debra, and James D. McKinney. 2012. 'The Effects of a Phonological Awareness Intervention on the Oral English Proficiency of Spanish-Speaking Kindergarten Children.' *TESOL Quarterly* 38 (1): 95–117.

Gottardo, Alexandra, Bernice Yan, Linda S. Siegel, and Lesly Wade-Woolley. 2001. 'Factors Related to English Reading Performance in Children with Chinese as a First Language: More Evidence of Cross-Language Transfer of Phonological Processing.' *Journal of Educational Psychology* 93 (3): 530–42.

Helman, Lori. 2009. 'Emergent Literacy: Planting the Seeds for Accomplished Reading and Writing: Research-Based Instruction in Grades K-6.' In *Literacy Development with English Learners,* edited by Lori Helman, 117–37. New York: The Guilford Press.

Hu, Chieh-Fang. 2003. 'Phonological Memory, Phonological Awareness, and Foreign Language Word Learning.' *Language Learning* 53 (3): 429–62.

Hu, Chieh-Fang, and Melanie Schuele. 2005. 'Learning Nonnative Names: The Effect of Poor Native Phonological Awareness.' *Applied Psycholinguistics* 26 (3): 343–62.

Inagaki, Kayoko, Giyoo Hatano, and Takashi Otake. 2019. 'The Effect of Kana Literacy Acquisition on the Speech Segmentation Unit Used by Japanese Young Children.' *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 75 (1): 70–91.

Jackson, Nicola, Alison Holm, and Barbara Dodd. 1998. 'Phonological Awareness and Spelling Abilities of Cantonese-English Bilingual Children.' *Asia Pacific Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing* 3 (2): 79–96.

Justice, Laura M., Khara L. Pence, Angela R. Beckman, Lori E. Skibbe, and Alice K. Wiggins. 2005. *Scaffolding with Storybooks: A Guide for Enhancing Young*

Children's Language and Literacy Achievement. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Kuo, Li-Jen, and Richard C. Anderson. 2010. 'Beyond Cross-Language Transfer: Reconceptualizing the Impact of Early Bilingualism on Phonological Awareness.' *Scientific Studies of Reading* 14 (4): 365–85.

Laurent, Angélique, and Clara Martinot. 2010. 'Bilingualism and Phonological Awareness: The Case of Bilingual (French-Occitan) Children.' *Reading and Writing* 23 (3–4): 435–52.

Le Roux, Maria, Salome Geertsema, Heila Jordaan, and Danie Prinsloo. 2017. 'Phonemic Awareness of English Second Language Learners.' *The South African Journal of Communication Disorders* 64 (1): e1–e9.

Lesaux, Nonie K., and Linda S. Siegel. 2003. 'The Development of Reading in Children Who Speak English as a Second Language (ESL).' *Developmental Psychology* 39 (6): 1005–19.

Linse, Caroline. T. 2005. *Practical English Language Teaching: Young Learners.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lourenço, Monica, and Isabel Ana Andrade. 2013. 'Promoting Phonological Awareness in Pre-primary Education: Possibilities of the "Awakening to Languages" Approach.' *Language Awareness* 23 (4): 304–18.

Marinova Todd, Stefka H., Jing Zhao, and Barbara May Berhardt. 2010. 'Phonological Awareness Skills in the Two Languages of Mandarin-English Bilingual Children.' *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics* 24 (4–5): 387–400.

Mayringer, Heinz, and Heinz Wimmer. 2000. 'Pseudoname Learning by German-speaking Children with Dyslexia: Evidence for a Phonological Learning Deficit.' *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 75 (2): 116–33.

Moats, Louisa C., and Barbara R. Foorman. 1997. 'Introduction to the Special Issue of SSR: Components of Effective Reading Instruction.' *Scientific Studies of Reading* 1 (3): 187–9.

Murakami, Kayoko. 2017. 'Developing English Phonological Awareness in Elementary School: Focusing on Rhyme and Syllable.' *JASTEC Journal* 36:1–14.

Murakami, Kayoko, and Atsuko Cheang. 2017. 'Introduction of Phonological Awareness to Japanese Elementary School Students (2): The Explicit Instructions in Syllable Awareness and its Achievement after a Year.' https://www.kobe-yamate.ac.jp/library/journal/pdf/college/kiyo60/60murakami_cheang.pdf

Nagy, William, E., and Richard Anderson. 1995. *Metalinguistic Awareness and Literacy Acquisition in Different Languages.* Champaign: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library.

Nation, Paul. 2001. *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

National Research Council. 1998. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Paulson, Lucy H., and Louisa C. Moats. 2010. *LETRS for Early Childhood Educators.* Longmont: Cambium Learning Sopris West.

Pečjak, Sonja. 1999. *Ali slišiš – ali vidiš? Priročnik z vajami za razvoj metajezikovnega zavedanja.* Trzin: Izolit.

Phillips, Beth M., Jeanine Clancy-Menchetti, and Christophr J. Lonigan. 2008. 'Succesful Phonological Awareness Instruction.' *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* 28 (1): 3–17.

Qian, David D. 2002. 'Investigating the Relationship Between Vocabulary Knowledge and Academic Reading Performance: An Assessment Perspective.' *Language Learning* 52 (3): 513–36.

Rocha de Souza, Lourdes Bernadete, and Aline Gisele Conceição Leite. 2014. 'Profile of Phonological Awareness in Bilingual and Monolingual Children.' *CoDAS* 26 (1): 61–7.

Sabo, Leon. 2016. 'Izbrani primeri interferenc v slovenščini pri rojenih govorcih ruščine.' *Filološke studije* 2:226–39.

Schuele, Melanie, and Donna Boudreau. 2008. 'Phonological Awareness Intervention: Beyond the Basics.' *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools* 39 (1): 3–20.

Seymour, Philip H. K., Mikko Aro, and Jane Erskine. 2003. 'Foundation Literacy Acquisition in European Orthographies.' *British Journal of Psychology* 94 (2): 143–74.

Sila, Anita. 2018. 'Pomen sistematičnega razvijanja sposobnosti fonološkega zavedanja pri učenju tujega jezika v predšolskem obdobju.' PhD dissertation, University of Primorska.

Skela, Janez, Urška Sešek, and Mateja Dagarin Fojkar. 2009. 'Opismenjevanje v tujem/drugem jeziku na zgodnji stopnji.' In *Učenje in poučevanje dodatnih jezikov v otroštvu,* edited by Karmen Pižorn, 26–62. Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

Sparks, Richard L., Jon Patton, Leonore Ganschow, Nancy Humbach, and James Javorsky. 2006. 'Native Language Predictors of Foreign Language Proficiency and Foreign Language Aptitude.' *Annals of Dyslexia* 56:129–60.

Spencer, Ken. 2007. 'Predicting Children's Word-spelling Difficulty for Common English Words from Measures of Orthographic Transparency, Phonemic and Graphemic Length and Word Frequency.' *British Journal of Psychology* 98:305–38.

Stahl, Steven A., and Marilyn M. Fairbanks. 1986. 'The Effects of Vocabulary Instruction: A Model-Based Meta Analysis.' *Review of Educational Research* 56 (1): 72–110.

Sun Alperin, Kendra M., and Min Wang. 2011. 'Cross-Language Transfer of Phonological and Orthographic Processing Skills from Spanish L1 to English L2.' *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 24 (5): 591–614.

Torgesen, Joseph. 1997. 'The Prevention and Remediation of Reading Difficul-

ties: Evaluating What We Know from Research.' *Journal of Academic Language Therapy* 1:11–47.

———. 2000. 'Individual Differences in Response to Early Interventions in Reading: The Lingering Problem of Treatment Resisters.' *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice* 15 (1): 55–64.

Trehearne, Miriam P. 2003. 'Phonological Awareness II.' In *Comprehensive Literacy Resource for Kindergarten Teachers,* edited by Miriam Trehearne, Lynne Hemming Healy, Maria Cantalini, and Joan L. Moore, 116–154. Vernon Hills, IL: ETA/Cuisenaire.

Treiman, Rebecca, Victor Broderick, Ruth Tincoff, and Katiuska Rodriguez. 1998. 'Children's Phonological Awareness: Confusions Between Phonemes That Differ Only in Voicing.' *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 68 (1): 3–21.

Whitehurst, Grover J., and Christopher Lonigan. 2002. 'Child Development and Emergent Literacy.' *Child Development* 69 (3): 848–72.

Wise, Nancy, and Xi Chen. 2010. 'At-Risk Readers in French Immersion: Early Identification and Early Intervention.' *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 13 (2): 128–49.

Yelland, Gregory, Jacinta Pollard, and Anthony Mercuri. 1993. 'The Metalinguistic Benefits of Limited Contact with a Second Language.' *Applied Psycholinguistics* 14 (4): 423–44.

Yeung, Susanna S., Linda S. Siegel, and Carol K. Chan. 2013. 'Effects of a Phonological Awareness Program on English Reading and Spelling among Hong Kong Chinese ESL Children.' *Reading and Writing* 26 (5): 681–704.

Yopp, Hallie Kay, and Ruth Helen Yopp. 2000. 'Supporting Phonemic Awareness Development in the Classroom.' *The Reading Teacher* 54 (2): 130–43.

Ziegler, Johannes C., and Usha Goswami. 2005. 'Reading Acquisition, Developmental Dyslexia, and Skilled Reading Across Languages: A Psycholinguistic Grain Size Theory.' *Psychological Bulletin* 131 (1): 3–29.

Zorman, Anja. 2007. 'Prepoznavanje glasov in spoznavanje njihovih pisnih ustreznic v maternem in drugem oziroma tujem jeziku.' PhD dissertation, University of Ljubljana.


Developing
Cross-Cultural
Awareness

Do They Appreciate Diversity? University Students' Approach to Linguistic and Cultural Pluralism

Eva Seidl
University of Graz, Department of Translation Studies, Austria
e.seidl@uni-graz.at

This chapter reports on research designed to investigate university students' perceptions of linguistic and cultural pluralism. An open exploratory research approach was taken in order to gain more insight into the mindsets on cultural reflexivity and plurilingualism of young adults. To accomplish this, a small-scale, questionnaire-based study was conducted at the Department of Translation Studies at an Austrian University, more precisely, with students of the Bachelor's degree programme Transcultural Communication. The analysis reveals German-as-L2 students' perceptions of the role of languages as well as their deliberate decisions regarding the use of linguistic resources in different areas of life, such as study activities or recreational activities. The purpose of this chapter is to emphasise the fact that multilingual higher education in the field of Transcultural Communication and Translation Studies is in need of inclusive learning environments where the linguistic and cultural resources of all learners are appreciated. Accordingly, a possible teaching practice is presented, adopting the concept of Translanguaging.

Keywords: translation studies, transcultural communication, translanguaging

Introduction

Being a student and being a teacher at the university should mean that both parties share the same pedagogical space, that is to say, a space in which there is freedom, there are choices to be made and chances to be taken, and in which risk-taking and responsibility-taking occur (Barnett 2007, 141). Without this space, students in higher education 'cannot come authentically to their judgements, findings, observations, actions and exchanges' (Barnett 2007, 150). Of course, some students may be reticent to deliberately take on self-responsibility, particularly in their first years in a higher education context. Nevertheless, this shared pedagogical space requires university teachers to encourage their students to stretch their boundaries, or, as McGuire (2015) states, by focusing on the students' part, '[h]igher education is an environment where students are expected to push themselves past their limits' (McGuire 2015, 106).

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.209-227

In this respect, Mentz (2017) advocates compulsory stays abroad for students[1] at the tertiary level, to promote the formation of critically thinking young adults who value democratic practices and global fairness. He maintains that '[i]f we want to prevent populist and post-factual slogans, we must equip citizens with knowledge-based skills they need to analyse political and social developments on a rational and argumentative level. This requires critical, free-thinking and informed citizens, who are able to look beyond their own national horizon' (Mentz 2017, 196).

Teaching, Learning and Living in the 21st Century

In the same vein, the American Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007) calls for the promotion of multilingual individuals 'who have deep translingual and transcultural competence [and] are also trained to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture' (MLA 2007, 3–4). As for the European context, from 2015–2018, the European University Continuing Education Network (eucen) coordinated the project 'HE4u2 – Integrating cultural diversity in Higher Education,' which was co-funded by the European Union Erasmus+ programme. The consortium of seven project partners recently published policy recommendations concerning the integration of cultural diversity in higher education (Bernal Gonzalez, de Viron, and Souto Lopez 2018). There, the authors call for higher education institutions to 'more actively embrace their social responsibility and work towards influencing positively the development of an intercultural society' (p. 10).

Similarly, the High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education, reported to the European Commission the pressing needs of university graduates as future leaders, who will live to see the perhaps futuristic-sounding year of 2080. These needs consist of 'a new kind of intercultural understanding, respect for common rules and fair play, an understanding of different interests, views and ways of thinking, and the ability to reconcile and to compromise' (High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education 2013, 50). For the members of this High Level Group, the accelerated changes and the disappearance of clearly-defined boundaries, which derive from globalisation, have led to obvious consequences in and requirements for education. This means that university teachers must prepare graduates for global competitiveness as well as for global cooperativeness in order to live peaceful and healthy lives in the 21st century.

[1] In this case, in particular for teacher training students.

Educational Context

So far, the focus has been on the general framework of learning and teaching in higher education in an age of increasing diversity, complexity and shifting boundaries. What follows is a description of the plurilingual teaching context where the author of this chapter conducted a questionnaire-based study and deployed the Translanguaging concept as a pedagogical approach to German-as-L2 teaching at the Austrian tertiary level. The author, a native German-speaking teacher and teacher educator, teaches first- and second-year students at the levels B2 and C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The German language classes are offered within the three-year bachelor's degree programme (BA) in Transcultural Communication at the Department of Translation Studies at the University of Graz. This BA prepares students for a two-year master's degree in Translation and/or Interpreting.

During their first two years at university, students spend a significant portion of their time as BA students developing their language skills and cultural knowledge in their respective primary language and two additional foreign languages. In the third year of the programme, they attend introductory translation courses. Throughout the BA programme, they are offered courses in translation theory and an introduction to translation technology. The compulsory German classes, which are the focus of this chapter, serve two purposes: they aim (1) to prepare BA graduates to work in the rather broad field of Transcultural Communication or (2) to continue their studies in a master's programme.

Institutional Challenges

Exactly this requirement of pursuing two pedagogical objectives in the BA Transcultural Communication represents a considerable challenge. On the one hand, this programme forms the basis of a master's degree in Translation Studies. However, on the other hand, it must equally provide the BA graduates with language skills and cultural competence that will allow them to gain footholds 'in an increasingly complex professional environment, in which it is possible to work in various contexts and geographical areas' (Orlando 2016, 94). Teachers must equip those students who choose to work in the field of Transcultural Communication with general capabilities and transferable skills to succeed in a wide range of possible job prospects. Some of the career profiles open to them are in the field of institutions managing migration and integration, in the tourism industry or the language teaching profession (Sinclair 2019). It is also likely that some undergraduate students

will choose to continue their university career with other study avenues, such as the MA programme Global Studies.

Language teachers at the Department of Translation Studies have to keep in mind that they serve the needs of different student cohorts. Not every BA student will continue with an MA in Translation Studies, but, as Li (2002) stated, nonetheless 'efforts must be made to ensure that the language courses are tailor-made for translation students' (Li 2002, 525). Whether or not students leave the university after completing their bachelor's programme, there is one decisive qualification for translators as well as for cultural communicators, namely empathic accuracy, i.e. being able to imagine what is taking place in another person's mind. Thus, language instruction as well as translation training needs 'to help students develop this empathic capacity,' because only then will students 'have the opportunity to become the cultural mediators they need to become' (Hague 2015, 28).

It should be clear, however, that the early years of language learning in higher education should not be undervalued. On the contrary, the Modern Language Association's Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages advises us to appreciate the contribution of teachers who provide basic training, as they are often experts in the fields of second language acquisition and higher education language didactics (MLA 2007).[2]

Educational Challenges

In addition to the aforementioned institutional challenges, more general educational challenges must be addressed as well. In her analysis of pathways to multilingually teaching culture in foreign language education, Kramsch (2018) comes to the following conclusion (Kramsch 2018, 30):

> In our post-modern era of diversity, social and historical contingency, and symbolic power struggles, we can no longer teach stable monolingual cultures. If FL education is about opening students' minds to other ways of viewing the world by speaking the language of people who might see it differently, then it is about making them not doubly monolingual, but 'multilingual.'

While Kramsch (2018) speaks of opening language learners' minds, Cook (2002) uses the notion of alteration. For him, the acquisition of a foreign language 'alters the L2 user's mind in ways that go beyond the actual knowledge

[2] For a more detailed analysis of the specific characteristics of language teaching for translators, see Seidl and Janisch (2019).

of language itself' (Cook 2002, 7).[3] When it comes to teaching and learning foreign languages and getting to know different, unfamiliar cultures, Kramsch (2018) reminds us that culture is no longer the 'taken-for-granted unitary cultural narrative that holds nation-states together [. . .], but something that individuals carry in their heads' (Kramsch 2018, 18). Furthermore, Boeckmann (2006) offers another interesting observation with his comparison of pluricentric languages with intra-cultural variation within a given culture. By rejecting the idea of two opposites, namely native or source culture versus target culture, he argues that cultures are not only dynamic but also differentiated within themselves, allowing for subcultural and intracultural variation. By analogy with intra-linguistic variation within a given language, which is the case with pluricentric languages such as English, German, French or Spanish, the author suggests considering rich intra-cultural variability as a similar phenomenon (Boeckmann 2006, 12).

Identity and Cyberspace

Finally, the concept of identity has to be addressed when speaking of current educational challenges. By stressing the critical role that the development of criticality plays in higher education, Brumfit et al. (2005), with regard to the experience of language learning, maintain that '[it] becomes not just a means of encountering the other cultures but a process of redefinition of self, a means of refining criticality by destabilising and restabilising the mechanisms through which we both understand and communicate' (Brumfit et al. 2005, 166). In this respect, language educators should embrace the idea that in the post-modern era, the concept of identity is seen as 'multiple, dynamic, and conflictual, based not on a permanent sense of self but rather the choices that individuals make in different circumstances over time' (Warschauer and De Florio-Hansen 2003, 158). Through deliberate choices of language and intra-linguistic variation, individuals 'constantly make and remake who they are' and by doing so, they attribute to language the role of an 'important identity marker in the age of information' (Warschauer and De Florio-Hansen 2003, 158). Therefore, Warschauer and De Florio-Hansen (2003) raise the question of the role that language plays in cyberspace, where one can immediately notice what language or dialect is being used.

[3] See also, in this context, Dewaele's (2018) rejection of the term 'L2 user' and his proposal to substitute it with the value-neutral term 'LX user.' This term does not imply any level of proficiency and has no connotation of inferiority, suggesting that 'all individuals can be multi-competent users of multiple languages' (Dewaele 2018, 239).

By looking at the concept of cyberspace, which cannot be conceived as just an empty space, from a Translation Studies perspective, Kaiser-Cooke (2004, 207) argues as follows:[4]

> In the context of globalisation, and particularly in the realm of what is commonly called cyberspace – that allegedly 'culture-free' and 'supranational' space – translational practice, and the decisions a translator is faced with, are closely connected with the compatibility of different human theories of the world.

The author elaborates on the decision-making process of translators when they have to 'transfer something of source cultural conceptualisation into the target cultural perception of reality' (Kaiser-Cooke 2004, 244). In the context of language teaching for students of Transcultural Communication and/or Translation Studies, it is of central importance to clearly communicate what is asked of them if they want to become translators and cultural mediators.

Kramsch (2003) offers an appropriate description of young adult language learners, which perfectly describes the majority of the students who attend German-as-L2 classes at the Department of Translation Studies at the University of Graz. She claims they are 'multilingual young adults at the threshold of defining an adult identity for themselves [. . .], [who] live and study in other languages and cultures than the ones they were born into, and thus might have quite a different relationship to these languages than monolingual speakers' (Kramsch 2003, 108). As university teachers we should 'bear in mind that although undergraduate students at this stage of their tertiary education do not necessarily plan their future as professional translators, they should be provided with the foundations to build their general language competence' (Kodura 2019, 91).

Returning to Kaiser-Cooke's (2004) elaboration of what is demanded of translators demonstrates that, in fact, the task of cultural transformation is by no means an easy one. The author explains that a policy of inclusion or integration can be used, such as in the following situation (Kaiser-Cooke 2004, 207–208):

[4] She posits that cyberspace does not contain any formal or officially recognised instance to which power is explicitly attributed (Kaiser-Cooke 2004, 247). This resonates with Warschauer and De Florio-Hansen (2003) who highlight the basic contradiction of cyberspace when they describe the Internet as 'potentially the most democratic media yet developed' which, contrastingly, can also be a very restrictive medium that magnifies existing inequalities (p. 160).

> If [. . .] the aim is to really transfer something of source cultural conceptualisation into the target cultural perception of reality, a policy of inclusion can be used. In order to give target text recipients access to the source cultural interpretation of reality through the medium of the target language, i.e. to show them how 'the others see it,' the two concept systems need to be integrated into one another.

The above-mentioned inclusion or integration of the so called 'other' into the target system of language and culture 'brings two interpretations of reality together and thus, at least for the duration of communication, has the ability to change their respective power relations' (Kaiser-Cooke 2004, 209). In her words, translation takes place 'in the space between the differences' (Kaiser-Cooke 2004, 212). These requirements or educational objectives should be kept in mind when discussing the teaching and learning of future translators and cultural mediators. At the same time, the question of whether or how learners' own multilingualism affects their sense of self (Kramsch 2003, 108) must not be disregarded. Unfortunately, though, still too often 'the non-native language learner [. . .] is expected to produce linguistic forms that are identical to those produced by native speakers' and his or her own 'linguistic and sociocultural knowledge and resources tend to be regarded as irrelevant, even counterproductive' (Wei 2016, 536).[5] One way of validating and taking into account language learners' manifold competencies and resources is to adopt the concept of Translanguaging as a teaching practice.

The Notion of Translanguaging

According to Wei (2016) the notion of Translanguaging (TL) is 'not some fancy post-modernist term to replace traditional terms such as code-switching or language crossing in referring to specific language mixing behaviour' (Wei 2016, 541). To answer the question of the very nature of TL, Mazak (2017) reviewed the history of the concept as an evolving term and concluded that 'it means different things for different researchers in different contexts' (Mazak 2017, 3). For the remainder of this chapter, TL will be understood as 'a *pedagogical stance* that teachers and students take on that allows them to draw on all their linguistic and semiotic resources as they teach and learn both

[5] Even if she does not refer to Translanguaging, Kaiser-Cooke (2004) offers a powerful description of such resources. 'As one learns a language – and especially if one has grown up in that language – one learns how the particular community talks, i.e. relates to different things, what associations, ideas, feelings and emotions are linked with certain words, places, personalities, historical events etc.' (p. 254).

language and content material in classrooms' (Mazak 2017, 5; original emphasis). That means that teachers' and students' dynamic multilingual and multimodal communicative repertoires are conceived of as valuable resources for learning and teaching. Both parties are called upon to reflect on how they think, know, and learn in and about their first and additional languages and cultures.

Translanguaging in Higher Education

In comparison with research on TL in primary and secondary classrooms (see, e.g. García and Kleyn 2016), hardly any literature exists on TL in higher education contexts (Mazak 2017, 6). Yet, early on, Canagarajah (2002) established himself as an important TL scholar, focusing specifically on multilingual academic writing or on the question of assessing TL competence in academic settings. A seminal publication is the anthology on TL in higher education by Mazak and Carroll (2017), who aimed to fill the existing gap between research in school and university settings 'by showcasing the complexity and illustrating the various ways in which translanguaging practices exist within higher educational contexts around the world' (p. 6). The editors of this volume acknowledge the fact that TL itself is an ideology and a political act, which must be examined through a critical lens. The description of examples in which TL was applied in various higher education teaching contexts on different continents across the globe demonstrates not only the successful deployment of the concept but also possible limitations.[6]

Translanguaging Space and Instinct

One of the most prominent TL scholars, Wei, coined the terms Translanguaging Space as well as Translanguaging Instinct. In his view, the act of translanguaging is transformative in nature, as it is 'both going *between* different linguistic structures and systems, including different modalities (speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading, remembering) and going *beyond* them' (Wei 2011, 1223; italics added). Thus, translanguaging forms and transforms (Wei 2011, 1223):

> [I]t creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and

[6] For a perspective on Translanguaging in the Austrian higher education context, see, e.g. Seidl (2020).

> physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, and making it into a lived experience.

The author calls this social space 'translanguaging space,' a space '*for* the act of translanguaging as well as a space created *through* translanguaging' (Wei 2011, 1223; italics added), to emphasise the ongoing, lifelong process of its construction and the ever-shifting nature of its boundaries, which exist primarily 'in the mind of the individual who creates and occupies it' (Wei 2011, 1223).

As for the notion of Translanguaging Instinct, Wei (2016) argues that all human beings have this 'innate capacity to draw on as many different cognitive and semiotic resources as available to them to interpret meaning intentions and to design actions accordingly' (541). In order to achieve effective communication, this innate capacity or Translanguaging Instinct 'drives humans to go beyond narrowly defined linguistic cues and transcend the culturally defined language boundaries' (Wei 2016, 541).

In the following sections, we will take a closer look at multilingual university students' perceptions of language boundaries and such concepts as Translanguaging. In addition, we will explore their approach to learning and teaching settings, where pedagogical space is highly valued, i.e. where there is room for freedom and their own choices but also the need for risk-taking, and responsibility-taking. The concept of Cyberspace will also be considered within the pedagogical examples.

Questionnaire-Based Study

The following sections refer to the class 'German: Language, text and culture' which the author of this chapter has been teaching for more than ten years at the Department of Translation Studies at the University of Graz. The class is taught in the second year of the BA programme Transcultural Communication at the CEFR level of C1 (with some students' German language proficiency being B2). Classes take place 6 hours per week during a semester (4 months) and students can earn 9 ECTS credits. The author's interest in the topic of Translanguaging was generated when she first encountered the concept while attending a presentation at an international conference on L2 writing at the tertiary education level.[7] Translanguaging as a pedagogical approach to language learning and teaching resonated with the author's

[7] This was the international writing symposium 'Supporting L2 Writing in Higher Education,' held at the University of Gießen, Germany, April 6–7, 2017.

hypothesis that: (1) neither teachers nor students automatically employ all their cultural and linguistic resources in the university classroom and, more importantly, that (2) both parties are not fully aware of the potential of linguistic and cultural pluralism for translation and language didactics.

To investigate how students of the BA programme Transcultural Communication perceive their own plurilingualism, in the summer term 2017, a questionnaire-based, small-scale study was conducted in the above-mentioned German language class. A literature research on Multilingualism and Translanguaging (e.g. Sembiante 2016) as well as on Multicompetence (e.g. Hall, Cheng, and Carlson 2006; Cook and Wei 2016) in the context of higher education encouraged the author to investigate multilingual university students' linguistic and cultural resources and competencies. Both the usage-based approach to multicompetence (Hall, Cheng, and Carlson 2006) and the functional language perspective suggested by Sembiante (2016) informed the creation of a 5-page questionnaire. With this approach, the author aimed to encourage the students 'to develop a critical language awareness, or the understanding of how language varies across social contexts, [and] how they use language in different ways and for different purposes' (p. 56).

The questionnaire was distributed in one of the last course sessions and filled out by hand, on a voluntary basis, by 13 students (10 female, 3 male). It consisted of three main parts: the student's (1) language biography, (2) linguistic repertoire (oral and written), and (3) linguistic activities (reception, production, interaction). The most important insights after analysing the responses were that the teacher as a researcher had had no idea of the manifold languages and (sub)cultures that represented the participants' backgrounds and characterised their circumstances. It was revealing to see in which situations they opted for which language to use, which role they attributed to different languages and whether they preferred language teaching approaches such as Translanguaging. This first attempt to gain insight into multilingual students' mind-sets on plurilingualism in the higher education language teaching context was enlightening. It prompted the author to offer in an upcoming semester writing assignments for which students could employ all their linguistic resources.

Replication Study

Since the participants in the above-mentioned study were only 13, a replication study was conducted in winter term 2018–9 at the same institution and within the same German language course. This time, the group of students (and study participants) consisted of 26 (24 female, 2 male). Again, the

Table 1 The Role of Languages

Now important in my life (1.)	Important in society (1.)
German 42%	English 77%
Hungarian 15%	German 12%
Croatian 15%	Spanish 4%

student cohort's cultural and linguistic potential was overwhelming: 26 students represented 22 languages in the same classroom. When asked which languages play an important role in their current lives and which ones are of great importance in society in general, the results demonstrated a clear discrepancy.

Table 1 only shows students' top priority answers and not the languages they ranked in second or third place. It must be noted that multiple answers were possible. Nevertheless, one can easily grasp the dominant role of English as a lingua franca or a global language. What is more, the findings show that even if 42% of the participants assign the German language the most important role in their current life circumstances, only 12% consider the very same language as being of importance in society. One can only speculate as to what effect this attribution of the German language has on students' motivation and job perspectives.

Another question focused on the classroom usage of languages, i.e. which ones students are familiar with and which approach they personally prefer. When looking at table 2, again, it should be considered that multiple answers were possible. The results show that the majority of participants prefer the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom, without any reference to their source language or any other languages. However, the results also reveal considerable familiarity with exactly the approach that none of the participants would prefer, namely the combined use of source and target language. One student describes his preference for the exclusive target language use as follows: 'If you only use the target language, you start to think in the target language.' Nevertheless, the results seem to confirm Wei's (2018) conclusion, that '[d]espite the theoretical appraisal in recent years of the importance of L1 in learning additional languages, the target-language-only or one-language-at-a-time monolingual ideologies still dominate much of practice and policy' (p. 16).

Behind the description 'more languages at the same time' the teacher-researcher conceptualised the Translanguaging concept without mentioning the very word. Of the 15% who opted for this language learning and teach-

Table 2 Classroom Usage of Languages

Typical language classes	Personal preference
Source and target language 88%	Target language only 62%
Target language only 65%	More languages at the same time 15%
More languages at the same time 35%	Source and target language 0%

Table 3 Students' Usage of Languages

Language I use in this classroom	Language I use in my leisure time
German 42%	For emails: German
Arabic, Hungarian (resp.) 19%	For WhatsApp/Facebook/Instagram etc.: 3 different answer types: L1 only; L1 and English; L1, English, and German
English 15%	For diary writing: 3 different answer types: English; L1 and English; L1 and German
Italian 12%	
Serbian 4%	

ing approach, one student stated insightfully: 'I would love to use all the languages I speak in the classroom, so I could make connections all the time.' In order to provide an additional insight into the students' approach to plurilingualism, table 3 reports on the languages they prefer to use in the German language classroom in which this study was conducted as well as the preferred languages for their leisure time. Note that multiple answers could be given here, too.

The students stated that for private conversations during the German language class or for clarification of tasks they might well use other languages besides the target language. Some answers seem to reveal that students feel that they can be more authentically themselves in their first language or can express humour more easily if it does not necessarily have to occur in the target language. One student described his linguistic usage as follows: 'When I switch to my mother tongue, I don't even realise it. It comes so naturally to me.' As far as students' private language use is concerned, it is interesting that for writing emails they prefer German. This might be connected with the status of emails for the young generation of students who consider emails as formal texts and use them mainly for interactions with teachers or administrative matters. The three different response categories the study participants chose for domains such as WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram, i.e. the so-called Cyberspace, reveal a surprisingly hybrid use of languages. There, as well as for diary writing, the participants make use of a variety of linguistic

resources, a behaviour that could be described as a translanguaging space according to Wei's (2011) definition of the term.

Writing and Translanguaging

As stated earlier, already the results of the first questionnaire-study in 2017 prompted the author to consider writing assignments in which students could resort to their full linguistic potential. By doing so, the teacher-researcher wanted to stretch the linguistic boundaries of typical writing tasks by deliberately abandoning the target-language-only ideology. Therefore, in the academic year 2018–2019, two different writing tasks were introduced in the class 'German: Language, text and culture.'

Each winter term, the topics to be addressed in this class are: (1) media & digitalisation, (2) law & administration, (3) research & medicine, and (4) science & technology. For every topic, students are given a writing task. In the winter term 2018–9, within the topic science & technology, students had to listen to online videos, which were produced by a German start-up company[8] specialising in the production of multilingual videos online and focusing on solutions for saving data storage space. Students were requested to listen to as many language options for individual videos as possible and to analyse grammar, lexicon, pronunciation and intonation of the different speakers who were not always L1 speakers. The time available for the assignment was two weeks and 300–400 words were requested. When students, after submission, were asked to critically evaluate this kind of writing task (which took place only orally) they reported the following observations: (1) They could really use all their linguistic knowledge (in several cases they analysed languages which the teacher was not familiar with). (2) When they wanted to analyse videos in non-familiar languages, they asked friends for help, thus showing considerable motivation for the assignment. (3) Not being critically evaluated themselves this time, but being asked to evaluate others' online language use, was reported to be very gratifying. (4) They found it rewarding to be able to gain professional awareness, as they realized how important competent translation and interpreting services are in the real world, beyond the classroom.

Writing and Translanguaging Revisited

Some students in the winter term 2018–9 complained about the fact that their first language or other languages which make up their linguistic reper-

[8] See https://alugha.com/

toire, were not part of the existing multilingual online videos, provided by the German start-up company. Hence, in summer term 2019 a writing assignment was designed which was much more open for linguistic variety. Generally, during each summer term, the following topics are addressed: (1) arts & culture, (2) rules & taboos, (3) nature & environment, and (4) economy & sustainability. Within the topic rules & taboos, after a classroom discussion of the sub-topic 'psychiatry, mental health and art therapy,' with video examples in German, students had to carry out research on this topic in any language available to them. The assignment was due within two weeks, the requested words were 300–400, students could use sources in print or online, and they had to be cited in their texts. This time, after submission, students were asked to informally and anonymously write down their thoughts on this kind of writing task.

In comparison to the more restrictive task in winter term, students appreciated the greater freedom of choice regarding the language in which they wanted to do their research (even if the language of the text *production* was the target language German). Some stated that they could use many more sources, as it was easier for them to do research on the topic in languages they felt much more secure with than with German. It was reported as very rewarding being allowed to employ all one's own linguistic resources and simultaneously improve receptive and productive competencies in a variety of languages. One student wrote that he or she learnt to understand how other cultures deal with a certain concept, in this case art therapy. This resonates with Kramsch (2018) who reminds us 'by learning other people's vocabularies, [we] are also learning other ways of thinking, talking and writing about people, objects and events' (p. 17). However, with respect to Translanguaging, translingual practices, and Cyberspace, she raises a note of caution (p. 27):

> The ever increasing importance of words and their indexicalities in professional interactions on the internet, in political pronouncements and diplomatic exchanges speaks to the need for ever greater caution in the choice of syntax and vocabulary. Translanguaging might be appropriate for functional transactions in informal contexts of language use; it is much less appropriate in highly complex contexts where communication stakes are high and potential misunderstandings abound.

In the same vein, some students cautioned that for this assignment they might have misunderstood some concepts or might have translated incorrectly from other languages into German. Since still being undergraduate

students of Transcultural Communication and not yet proper students of translation, some felt overburdened with translation tasks. However, students were free to choose their languages of research on the topic and some even opted for the target language German. Those who deliberately did not choose German as the source language regretted the fact that, by doing so, they missed the opportunity to learn to understand complex texts about a difficult subject in the language of the classroom. Another issue that the students addressed, was the teacher's inability to diagnose potential errors due to her lack of proficiency in several languages that the students used for this assignment.

Conclusions and Implications

This chapter focused on the question of whether undergraduate students of Transcultural Communication appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity. The findings support the idea that the majority of the students who took part in a questionnaire-based study and gave the author of this chapter oral and written feedback on writing assignments using a Translanguaging approach appear *not* to be very aware of their linguistic resources. However, the results of this study also suggest that it can be awareness-raising for language and translation students if these resources are consciously incorporated in the learning and teaching context, both by the teacher and the students. Throughout the chapter, the notion of space was found to be central for addressing students' cultural and linguistic potential. By starting with the concept of pedagogical space and its inherent freedom of choice, the role of language and culture in the so-called Cyberspace was subsequently discussed. The third kind of space which was introduced was Translanguaging Space as a social space.[9] The findings of the literature study, the empirical study and the teaching approaches can be summarized in that it seems that the majority of the survey participants are not yet very familiar with alternative language teaching approaches such as Translanguaging. As for the pedagogical space with its inherent need for responsibility-taking, it is possible that especially undergraduates are in need of further guidance from their teachers. For Barnett (2007), '[t]he teacher who is sensitive to these matters of space and risk, wanting to encourage her students to have a go – intellectually, practically, personally – may use just these words: "Have a go!" She

[9] For an overview of the academic debate on learning space and learning place in educational contexts, see, e.g. Assinger (2019) and for the distinction between space and place from an experiential perspective, see, e.g. Tuan (2018).

may also add: "Nothing will happen to you; you are in a safe place"' (pp. 146–7). In this digital age, we may extend this kind of 'safety blanket' by guiding students safely through the Cyberspace, encouraging them to become critical, free-thinking, digitally literate world citizens. As for criticality in the digital age, Darvin (2019) asserts that '[t]o create something new, whether a new idea or text, learners need a critical disposition that empowers them to challenge and transgress linguistic and ideological boundaries' (p. 2). Consequently, to develop such a critical understanding, learners need teachers who 'construct a space where learning processes are negotiated rather than imposed' (p. 23).

With regards to the Translanguaging Instinct and Translanguaging Space, the findings suggest that some of the students whose opinions and circumstances were at the heart of this chapter are not yet very much accustomed to be allowed to claim their own Translanguaging Space. In this regard, Haukås (2016) calls for teachers who encourage learners 'to become aware of and use their pre-existing linguistic and language learning knowledge [. . .] rather than attempting to maintain [their] languages in isolation' (p. 1). According to Otheguy, García and Reid (2015), Translanguaging 'evens the playing field, giving bilingual students the same opportunity that monolinguals have always had, the opportunity to learn and grow while enjoying the intellectual and emotional benefits of all of one's linguistic resources' (p. 305).

Still, too often, language students compare themselves with native speakers and should, therefore, be reminded of Cook's (2016) message of hope. He encourages students not to see themselves 'as failures always trying to be like native speakers' but rather 'as successes, achieving things as L2 users that are out of the reach of monolinguals' (Cook 2016, 187–8). This means that students should trust their own abilities and teachers should challenge students to meet their high expectations while, at the same time, communicating their confidence that they can succeed. With regards to the concept of Translanguaging, the engagement with it in the university classroom led the author of this chapter to the conclusion that university language educators should demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity towards the specific social, linguistic and cultural contexts of their students, thus showing evidence of trust-building teacher-student relationships.

References

Assinger, Philipp. 2017. 'Lernräume in der Erwachsenenbildung. Aktuelle Literatur und wissenschaftliche Rezeption.' *Magazin Erwachsenenbildung.at: Das Fachmedium für Forschung, Praxis und Diskurs,* no. 35–36: 1–7.

Barnett, Ronald. 2007. *A Will to Learn: Being a Student in an Age of Uncertainty.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Bernal Gonzalez, Amandine, Françoise de Viron, and Miguel Souto Lopez, ed. 2018. *Policy Recommendations on Better Integrating Cultural Diversity in Higher Education: Synthesis.* Barcelona: Eucen.

Boeckmann, Klaus-Börge. 2006. 'Dimensionen von Interkulturalität im Kontext des Fremd- und Zweitsprachenunterrichts.' *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 11 (3): 1–19.

Brumfit, Christopher, Florence Myles, Rosamond Mitchell, Brenda Johnston, and Peter Ford. 2005. 'Language Study in Higher Education and the Development of Criticality.' *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 15 (2): 145–65.

Canagarajah, Suresh. 2002. *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Cook, Vivian. 2002. 'Background to the L2 User.' In *Portraits of the L2 User,* edited by Vivian J. Cook, 1–28. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

———. 2016. 'Where Is the Native Speaker Now?' *TESOL Quaterly* 50 (1): 186–9.

Cook, Vivian, and Wei Li, eds. 2016. *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Multi-Competence.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Darvin, Ron. 2019. 'Creativity and Criticality: Reimagining narratives through Translanguaging and Transmediation.' *Applied Linguistics Review.* https://www.doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2018-0119

Dewaele, Jean-Marc. 2018. 'Why the Dichotomy "L1 Versus LX User" is Better than "Native Versus Non-Native Speaker."' *Applied Linguistics* 39 (2): 236–40.

García, Ofelia, and Tatyana Kleyn. 2016. *Translanguaging with Multilingual Students: Learning from Classroom Moments.* New York and London: Routledge.

Hague, Daryl R. 2015. 'Empathic Accuracy and Translator Training: Helping students imagine other minds.' *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 9 (1): 20–29.

Hall, Joan K., An Cheng, and Matthew T. Carlson. 2006. 'Reconceptualizing Multicompetence as a Theory of Language Knowledge.' *Applied Linguistics* 27 (2): 220–40.

Haukås, Åsta. 2016. 'Teachers' Beliefs about Multilingualism and a Multilingual Pedagogical Approach.' *International Journal of Multilingualism* 13 (1): 1–18.

High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education. 2013. *Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Kaiser-Cooke, Michèle. 2004. *The Missing Link. Evolution, Reality and the Translation Paradigm.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Kodura, Małgorzata. 2019. 'Translation Training and Language Instruction at

the Academic Level.' In *Rethinking Directions in Language Learning and Teaching at University Level,* edited by Barbara Loranc-Paszylk, 75–94. Voillans: Research-publishing.net.

Kramsch, Claire. 2003. 'The Multilingual Subject.' In *Plurilingualität und Identität: Zur Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung mehrsprachiger Menschen,* edited by Inez De Florio-Hansen, and Adelheid Hu, 107–24. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

———. 2018. 'Is There Still a Place for Culture in Multilingual FL Education?' *Language Education and Multilingualism,* no. 1: 16–33.

Li, Defeng. 2002. 'Translator Training: What Translation Students Have to Say.' *Meta* 47 (4): 513–31.

Mazak, Catherine. 2017. 'Introduction: Theorizing Translanguaging Practices in Higher Education.' In *Translanguaging in Higher Education: Beyond Monolingual Ideologies,* edited by Catherine Mazak and Kevin Carroll, 1–10. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Mazak, Catherine, and Kevin Carroll, eds. 2017. *Translanguaging in Higher Education: Beyond Monolingual Ideologies.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

McGuire, Saundra Yancy. 2015. *Teach Students How to Learn: Strategies You Can Incorporate Into Any Course to Improve Student Metacognition, Study Skills, and Motivation.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. 2007. 'Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World.' http://www.mla.org/flreport

Mentz, Olivier. 2017. 'Memorandum of the BE-SMaRT project on Border and Memory Education in Teacher Education Curricula.' In *Unity in Diversity: European Perspectives on Borders and Memories,* edited by Olivier Mentz and Tracey McKay, 193–212. Zürich: LIT Verlag.

Orlando, Marc. 2016. *Training 21st Century Translators and Interpreters: At the Crossroads of Practice, Research and Pedagogy.* Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Otheguy, Ricardo, Ofelia García, and Reid Wallis. 2015. 'Clarifying Translanguaging and Deconstructing Named Languages: A Perspective from Linguistics.' *Applied Linguistics Review* 6 (3): 281–307.

Seidl, Eva. 2020. 'Translanguaging – Bewusstsein über und strategischer Umgang mit individuellem linguistischem Repertoire aus studentischer Perspektive.' In *Bausteine translationsorientierter Sprachkompetenz und translatorischer Basiskompetenzen,* edited by Astrid Schmidhofer and Annette Wußler, 115–127. Innsbruck: University Press.

Seidl, Eva, and Elisabeth Janisch. 2019. 'What a Difference Language Teaching Makes in Translator Training.' In *Translation and Language Teaching: Continuing the Dialogue,* edited by Melita Koletnik and Nicolas Frœliger, 171-187. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Sembiante, Sabrina. 2016. 'Translanguaging and the Multilingual Turn: Epistemological Reconceptualization in the Fields of Language and Implications

for Reframing Language in the Curriculum Studies.' *Curriculum Inquiry* 46 (1): 45–61.

Sinclair, Katerina. 2019. 'Translator*innen als Sprachlehrer*innen.' In *Besondere Berufsfelder für Dolmetscher*innen,* edited by Mira Kadrić, 15–39. Wienna: Facultas.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 2018. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Warschauer, Mark, and Inez De Florio-Hansen. 2003. 'Multilingualism, Identity, and the Internet.' In *Plurilingualität und Identität: Zur Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung mehrsprachiger Menschen,* edited by Inez De Florio-Hansen and Adelheid Hu, 155–79. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Wei, Li. 2011. 'Moment Analysis and Translanguaging Space: Discursive Construction of Identities by Multilingual Chinese Youth in Britain.' *Journal of Pragmatics* 43 (5): 1222–35.

———. 2016. 'Epilogue: Multi-Competence and the Translanguaging Instinct.' In *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Multi-competence,* edited by Vivian Cook and Li Wei, 533–43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2018. 'Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language.' *Applied Linguistics* 39 (1): 9–30.

Fostering Intercultural Dialogue through Literature and Creative Writing: Examples of Successful Classroom Practices

Matea Butković
Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka, Croatia
matea.butkovic@gmail.com

Ester Vidović
Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka, Croatia
ester.vidovic@ufri.uniri.hr

With the rapid changes in social diversity, higher education institutions are presented with the challenge, but also the opportunity, to encourage intercultural dialogue, which fosters the universal respect for human rights, peace, and justice. This dialogue is an on-going process and depends on the willingness of its participants not only to share their views, but also to be open to accepting diverging opinions, diversity as an enrichment to our environment, and critically analyzing even their own culture. This paper focuses on the importance of intercultural dialogue and provides a range of classroom activities (discussion topics and creative writing tasks) that have been carried out at the Faculty of Teacher Education (University of Rijeka) and the Rochester Institute of Technology (Zagreb, Croatia) and have proven useful in encouraging the students to engage in intercultural dialogue inside multicultural classrooms. While the verbal activities, such as oral practice, discussions and debates, greatly contributed to the development of the students' reading and speaking skills as well as sharing of their personal experiences, feedback on the students' creative writing, with an emphasis on the group rather than individual performance, confronted the students with some of their cultural biases (lack of racial diversity, women portrayed as victims and men as villains). The implemented activities, and the obtained findings, provide language instructors with invaluable insight into the kind of content that needs to be included in their courses in order to equip the students with the knowledge and tools to successfully navigate through multicultural environments.

Keywords: EFL, intercultural dialogue, intercultural competence, literature, creative writing

Introduction

As educators in the 21st century, we are living in a world of constant cultural motion that requires the creation of inclusive learning environments based on the principles of intercultural, democratic, and cooperative learning in

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.229-248

which 'critical thinking, democratic dialogue and a holistic view are valued and encouraged throughout the whole educational process' (Cabezudo et al. 2012, 32).[1] Interculturalism,[2] as one of the main principles of democratic and global education,[3] is oriented towards 'the analysis of oppressive social relationships, combating prejudice and discrimination and transformation of society into a state of equity' (Bartulović and Kušević 2016, 8, translated by the authors). It also highlights the importance of understanding and respecting different lifestyles and viewpoints as well as developing intercultural sensitivity' and acquiring the 'ability to cope with unclear and complex social situations and the development of skills, including verbal and non-verbal communication' (Piršl et al. 2016, 19, translated by the authors).

The major goal of intercultural[4] education is the creation of a better world in which there will be no place for racism, discrimination, and domination of one person over another. In that sense, it is directed towards the whole society and to all people (Piršl et al. 2016, 50, translated by the authors). Intercultural education also seeks to 'provide the optimal environment for mutual learning by means of *intercultural communication* and *dialogue* aiming at intercultural understanding and competences' (Lasonen 2005, 400, emphasis added). Based on the research on effective intercultural communication, culturally competent individuals (a) cope effectively with the psychological

[1] The authors of this paper subscribe to the UNESCO recommendation of inclusive education, which is defined as 'an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination' (Inclusive Education 2008, 3).

[2] A multitude of terms associated with intercultural education, such as 'intercultural learning and dialogue, intercultural communication, intercultural competences, intercultural communication competence and intercultural understanding' (Lasonen 2005) reveal the complex nature of the term.

[3] 'The Maastricht Global Education Declaration' (Europe-Wide Global Education Congress 2002, 2) defines global education as 'education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalized world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all. Global education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimension of Education for Citizenship.'

[4] Terms 'intercultural' and 'multicultural' are nowadays being used as synonyms. While 'multiculturalism' and 'multicultural education' are preferred terms in the English-speaking countries such as Australia, USA, Great Britain, Canada), 'interculturalism' and 'intercultural education' are predominately used by European authors (Sablić 2014). However, in its core, interculturalism emphasizes the mutual exchange of cultural norms and respect for all cultures, while multiculturalism refers to societies that comprise a range of ethnic groups, which live alongside one another but do not necessarily interact.

and emotional stress of dealing with the unfamiliar, (b) quickly establish rapport with others, (c) sense other people's feelings, (d) communicate effectively with people from varying backgrounds, and (e) respond adequately to miscommunication (quoted in Giles et al. 1991). Therefore, at least two prerequisites need to be fulfilled for the students to reach the desired level of intercultural communication and deal effectively with intercultural challenges: the teaching content needs to expand beyond the borders of the traditional, often monocultural approach to education that focuses primarily on the dominant culture, and the teachers themselves need to embody the fundamental principles of intercultural competence in their everyday teaching practice.

This paper provides some examples of successful classroom practices and activities that have contributed to more open dialogue among the students in multicultural classrooms and have allowed the educators insight into content that needs to be emphasized if the goals of intercultural education are to be achieved.

Fostering Intercultural Dialogue in the EFL Classroom

Foreign language educators are provided with the opportunity, but also responsibility, to include in their curriculum the kind of topics that encourage intercultural analyses and comparisons that transcend mere factual knowledge[5] and allow students to successfully navigate through intercultural encounters.[6] In doing so, educators should go beyond a linguistic code, because forms and structures of the language will not suffice to enable effective communication (Kramsch 1993; 2008, quoted in Sobkowiak 2015, 794). The path to the discovery of the complexity of intercultural education begins with intercultural dialogue.

While dialogue in the general sense of the word is crucial for 'co-habitation of subjects belonging to different cultures' (Piršl et al. 2016), the role of inter-

[5] Council of Europe's report 'Living Together: Combining Diversity and Freedom in 21st Century Europe' (Council of Europe 2011) goes a step further and highlights that all Member States should strive to develop intercultural competence not only as a core element of school curricula but also beyond formal education, in non-formal settings.

[6] An intercultural encounter may be defined as 'an encounter with another person (or group of people) who is perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself. Such encounters may take place either face to face or virtually through, for example, social or communications media. They may involve people from different countries, people from different regional, linguistic, ethnic or religious backgrounds, or people who differ from each other because of their lifestyle, gender, social class, sexual orientation, age or generation, level of religious observance, etc.' (Huber and Reynolds 2014, 16).

cultural dialogue is reflected in the freedom of speech, one's own choice and expression, as well as in the tolerance, equality, mutual understanding, and respect (Piršl et al. 2016, 51). Above all, intercultural dialogue is about accepting different opinions and arguments and peacefully resolving conflict. It is thereby important that the participants of intercultural dialogue do not lose the independence of their judgment during this process (Piršl et al. 2016) because the purpose of intercultural dialogue is not to 'suspend our feelings and opinions and become neutral' but rather to 'suspend our value judgements' (European Commission and the Council of Europe n. d., 6). However, establishing the kind of dialogue inside the classroom that enables all of its participants to share their views and opinions freely, and even to challenge the existing, often monocultural curriculum and co-create a more inclusive one is a major challenge for educators, but also all participants in the formal educational process.

Given the high importance attributed to intercultural dialogue at the EU[7]

[7] Several EU documents address the importance of intercultural dialogue. In the 'Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention,' also known as the Opatija Declaration (Council of Europe 2003), intercultural dialogue is defined as 'an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's global perception.' The Faro Declaration (Council of Europe 2005) describes it as 'a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation, tolerance and respect for the other, of preventing conflicts and of ensuring an integrated and cohesive society' (2005, 4), while 'The Rainbow Paper' (Platform for Intercultural Europe 2008, 5) highlights its aim of 'turn[ing] our diversity away from socio-cultural difference into active intergroup collaboration.' In the 'White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue' (Council of Europe 2008, 10), dialogue is defined as 'an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different background, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect' and as a key tool in 'prevent[ing] ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides' on the democratic basis of shared universal values. The Council of Europe emphasizes that the objective of intercultural dialogue, as 'the oldest and most fundamental mode of democratic conversation,' is to enable us 'to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging,' 'to learn to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world,' and 'to develop a sense of community and belonging' (see https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/concept_EN.asp). It also lists six crucial conditions for achieving a true, meaningful intercultural dialogue: Equal dignity of all participants; Voluntary engagement in dialogue; A mindset (on both sides) characterized by openness, curiosity and commitment, and the absence of a desire to 'win' the dialogue; A readiness to look at both cultural similarities and differences; A minimum degree of knowledge about the distinguishing features of one's own and the 'other' culture; The ability to find a common language for understanding and respecting cultural differences. The importance of intercultural dialogue at the EU level is also reflected in the joint decision of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe to name the year 2008 as the 'European Year of Intercultural Dialogue' with the objective to foster the role of education as important medium for teaching about diversity, increase the understanding of other cultures and developing skills and best social practices, and highlight

level, it is imperative that it becomes an inherent component of everyday teaching practice. This, however, is no easy accomplishment. Even when teachers are aware of the importance of establishing (intercultural) dialogue and introducing intercultural topics into their subject curricula, they are faced with the challenge which approach to take as well as which topics to address. Teachers should consider how they address local and global dynamics and how the newly gained insights and knowledge might enable students to understand global changes and realities better. Such an approach also contributes to the raising of the awareness and acceptance of cultural and linguistic diversity, provided they are addressed effectively. However, this endeavor requires a collaborative approach to research topics and careful planning of the curriculum that will provide the students with multiple opportunities to learn about a core set of issues that will increase in complexity throughout their education (Gaudelli 2006) and provide them with the tools to express their opinions in a mindful and respectful manner.

Literary texts and creative writing can be a starting point for explorations of the students' views and attitudes about cultural diversity. In the context of foreign language education, the literary medium has always been linked to culture (Hoff 2017); however, in the 1990s, the focus turned away from teaching about foreign cultures to promoting the learners' intercultural competence. Emphasis was thereby placed on providing both the teacher and the students with the opportunity to engage in a holistic, human rights-based approach to education, as opposed to the traditional 'tourist approach' that gives merely a superficial glimpse into the life of different communities. Today, it is recognized that literature in the language classroom encourages not only 'dynamic learning – learning which involves the students actively and as personally[8] as possible' (McRae 1991, 8) but also language development since it 'cannot occur if students are only passive recipients of the teacher's input' (Daskalovska and Dimova 2012, 1184). As Hild Elisabeth Hoff (2017) further points out, reading literature in a foreign language is in itself an intercultural experience, and since readers engage in their own and other cultures through literature, this engagement may foster intercultural learning (Kramsch 1993; Bredella 2000; Fenner 2001). Multicultural literature thereby

the central role of the media in promoting the principle of equality and mutual understanding' (European Parliament and the Council 2006).

[8] Personal involvement can thereby be understood as 'the readers' close contact with the characters or the engagement in the event of the story, the sharing of emotions and feelings between readers and characters, between readers and the author, and among readers themselves' (Shazu 2014, 31).

plays a vital role in fostering intercultural given that, as Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) highlight, the intercultural dimension in teaching aims to develop learners as 'intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping' (9). It is through meaningful interactions with multicultural literature that students are given the opportunity to discover 'the universality of the human experience that unites people of all backgrounds' (Stallworth, Gibbons, and Leigh 2006, 478) and enhance their awareness of diversity (Tunnell et al. 2012).

Research Aims

The major aim of the carried-out activities was to uncover and help reduce possible discrepancies between the students' current and desired understanding of cultural diversity. In the section focusing on verbal activities, the students were encouraged to engage in discussions on race actively, in the context of the offered literary texts and everyday life, while remaining mindful of the language they use in conveying their thoughts. The aim behind the written assignments was to gain an insight into the students' explicit and implicit views on cultural diversity through creative expression.

The observations of the students' expressed opinions and the findings obtained through an analysis of their creative writing would help the educators to make appropriate changes to the educator's teaching pedagogy.

Two groups of students took part in the selected activities:

- Students enrolled in two teacher education programs (Integrated university undergraduate and graduate Study of Teacher Education and the University undergraduate study of Early and Preschool Education at the University of Rijeka), who attended the courses Children's Literature in English and Anglo-Saxon World. Countries represented included Croatia, Spain, France, Austria, Turkey, Czech Republic, Finland, and Slovenia.
- Students enrolled in two non-teacher education programs (Undergraduate studies in information technology and Undergraduate studies in International Business at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Zagreb), who attended the courses Topics in American Literature and Literature, Culture, and Media at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Zagreb. Countries represented included Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro, USA, Canada, India, Palestine, France, South Africa, Syria, Switzerland, and Russia.

In our preparation for the activities that probed our students' views on cultural diversity, we were guided by the characteristics which Vasileiadis, Tsioumis, and Argyris (2013) highlight as crucial for educators. According to these authors, educators should: (a) consider the contents of their own perceptions on the superiority or inferiority of those who are different, (b) examine, along with their students, their experiences, cultural backgrounds, as sources of behaviors, perceptions and attitudes, through a critic of their views, as culturally determined and partial, (c) think and reflect that their views influence positively or negatively the others and (d) challenge knowledge's neutrality and to understand that knowledge is not neutral and can be subjective or objective.

During the interaction with the students, we made an effort not to lose sight of the fact that our attitudes and behaviors must reflect the principles of intercultural dialogue, that we do not use or tolerate violent communication but promptly react to offensive behavior and hate speech between the participants and that we continuously encourage the expression of different points of view and sharing of experiences. Our goal was thereby 'to accommodate the two worlds in the learner's mind [...], to sharpen the learners' awareness of similarities and differences and help them to come to terms and deal with divergent experiences' (Neuner 1997, 236).

Literature and Intercultural Dialogue

In their early stages of implementation, literary texts were mostly used 'for translation purposes and exercises on reading comprehension' (Premawardhena 2005, 92), which kept the learner's focus on the surface level of text analysis – learning new vocabulary – rather than allowing room for developing a deeper understanding of the cultural context behind the words. As Denka (2005) noted, the purpose of this approach was to turn looking up words in a dictionary into a habit. However, it has been recognized that besides linguistic benefits, literature offers humanistic and educational benefits that include empathy, tolerance, and intercultural understanding and promote critical analyses of both the native and foreign culture. Through literature, language learners become immersed 'in authentic communication and in genuine experiences which have value, importance, or significance for them' (Stern 1992, 302) and 'construct experiences of "content" in a non-trivial way which gives voice to complexities and subtleties not always present in other types of texts' (Carter and McRae 1996, xxiv).

Nowadays, literature in the foreign language classroom is used as support for the acquisition of communicative and intercultural (communicative)

competence (Riverol 1991; Bretz 1990) since it has been recognized that it provides a 'dimension of depth' (Stevick 1976), i.e., 'the learner's mental involvement in what he or she is saying, leading to a kind of communication that is more than superficial' (Stern 1987, 48). Teaching literature in the FL classroom 'offers a new perspective in the globalized world' (Lovrović and Kolega 2019, 4) given that it offers a glimpse into another culture since it is a cultural artifact. As such, its interpretation requires from the students to engage in an interplay between cultural knowledge and their personal experiences, attitudes, and values. In essence, literature provides fertile ground for a critical exploration of one's own culture and those perceived as foreign and has the potential to facilitate the kind of dialogue which can steer the learners' cultural awareness and knowledge in unexpected new directions. In other words, literature 'encourages inter- and intracultural awareness' (Mazi-Leskovar 2010, 10).

In the following activities, we engaged in an exploration of our students' intercultural competence by trying to uncover their explicit and implicit views on race, gender, and prejudices.

Comprehension Checks and Text Analyses

As pointed out by Henderson and May, race plays important roles in children's and adolescent literature (2005, 81). The author emphasizes that young readers are taught to accept the difference in a codified way, with race 'underwritten into the text with certain cultural assumptions' (2005, 81). When it comes to race, Henderson and May point out, the literary discourse has been marked by silence and evasion, resulting in turn in 'substitute language in which the issues are encoded, foreclosing open debate' (2005, 81). In that way, children encounter silences while witnessing oppressive scenes in books, thereby decoding the significance of equity from conversations of characters in the books they read.

The Rabbits' Wedding *by Garth Williams*

We had an opportunity to explore whether race is underwritten into a literary work with certain cultural assumptions with the fourth year students of Primary School Education at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Rijeka. The research was conducted with the students during the elective course Children's Literature in English.

The activity aimed to investigate the students' understanding of the (possible) symbolism of the rabbits' color, namely whether they represent the black and white races as had been assumed by the Southern American readership

at the time of the book's publication. The activity comprised two parts. In the first part, the students were shown the cover of Garth Williams's picture book *The Rabbits' Wedding* (1986) and asked whether the colors (black and white) of the two rabbits represent human races. In the second part of the research, the students were familiarized with the crucial moments that marked the US racial discourse in the period encompassing slavery up to the 1950s. Thereupon they were asked to write down their impressions on the picture book and the author's possible intentions behind it.

The students' initial responses were compared to their written impressions. The participants' answers related to the rabbits' color only changed concerning what these colors represented at the time the book had been written and not because they had changed their minds about what the colors generally refer to (Butković and Vidović 2017, 157). Most students did not connect the color of the rabbits with the black and white colors of human races, which was in line to our initial hypothesis. The students eagerly shared their disagreement with the historical understanding of the picture book and uniformly condemned such treatment of children's literature. The conversation quickly turned to the topic of censorship, whereby the students tried to provide examples of censored authors from their home countries as well as the political reasons for their censorship.

Uncle Tom's Cabin *by Harriet Beecher Stowe*

Additional research has been conducted with third-year students of Primary School Education with a focus on racial nomenclature in the context of the elective course Anglo-Saxon World. First, the students studied an excerpt from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* provided from the supplement instructional material *Across Cultures* (Sharman 2004, 152). In the depicted scene, Simon Legree, a brutal Louisiana slave owner, buys a new slave, Tom, whom he gradually deprives of all his possessions.

The aims of the research included encouraging student-teachers to reflect on the impact of the derogatory language in the studied excerpt. We also wanted to explore their knowledge of acceptable and unacceptable racial nomenclature and its appropriateness in children's literature before discussing with them the social-political context of the period in which the novel had been written. Our aim was also to discuss the existence of racism in Croatia with the hope that the research in this area would guide us in the future framing of our curricula.

The activity was conducted during two teaching periods. In the first period, the stress was placed on text analysis, while in the second period, we carried

out our research in the form of a questionnaire. The first activity was conducted in stages, with the first stage concentrating on the comprehension of the extract, the second on text analysis, and the third on a trans-historical analysis.

Section 1

- How is Tom dressed at the start and at the end of the scene?
- How does Legree discover Tom is a religious man?
- What changes does Legree make to Tom's clothes?
- Why does the crew of the boat find Tom's possessions so amusing?
- What possessions is Tom left with at the end of the scene?

In the first section, the students concentrated on finding the required information, which they were able to do after scanning and skimming the text.

Section 2

- How would you describe Legree's treatment of Tom and his attitude towards slaves in general?
- What is symbolized by the description of how Tom is gradually deprived of all his clothes and possessions?

In the second section, the students concentrated on the symbolical meaning of the text, i.e., while Tom was being deprived of his clothes, he was also being deprived of his pride and human dignity.

Section 3. Do you think that the enslavement of black people has had a long-term effect on race relations in the USA?

The third part of the lesson gave room for a trans-historical analysis, with the students being allowed to reflect upon racial relations in the USA in the 19th century and today.

The actual research was conducted a week later in the form of a questionnaire. In the first part, the students were told to pay special attention to the words the author used when referring to black people, i.e., 'slave' and 'nigger.' In the second part of the research, the students could express their views on the possible existence of racism in Croatia/other European countries and the need to teach children about the presence of racism in society. They were also presented with 16 expressions used throughout US history when referring to American Blacks (Butković and Vidović 2019, 233). The students were encouraged to express their opinions about the appropriateness of the suggested nomenclature in children's literature and were asked to reflect upon

the existence of racism in Croatia and the need to introduce racial topics in the first four grades of primary school.

Most students (60%), both home and foreign, found that the term 'slave' was more neutral than the term 'nigger' and emphasized that the latter term is very negative and carries more weight (Butković and Vidović 2019, 234). They understood that the author's aim when using these words was to show the protagonist's dehumanization and deprival of his identity. The findings in the second part were somewhat surprising and disturbing because, although most students identified a great majority of offensive words, a significant percentage (25%) did not consider terms such as 'boy' or 'auntie' offensive (Butković and Vidović 2019). The students opined that the topics related to racial issues, regardless of their delicate nature, could and should be discussed with students in junior grades of primary school. Only in this way, emphasized the students, could we educate informed and responsible citizens of the 21st century (Butković and Vidović 2019). They also expressed their concerns about the recent examples of unrest in the USA caused by biased racial politics. The discussion developed into an analysis of the racial situation in Croatia and some other countries (the home countries of the ERASMUS students).

White Teeth *by Zadie Smith*

The novel *White Teeth* also provides fertile ground for studying race in literature. The extract from the supplement instructional material *Across Cultures* (Sharman 2004, 159) portrays a scene in which one of the main characters, Magid Iqbal, a boy from a Bangladeshi immigrant family, changes his name to Mark Smith.

Our main aim was to develop intercultural dialogue by discussing the lives of immigrants in the UK and other European countries. Such a dialogue greatly contributes to promoting tolerance, friendship, and cooperation between people of different races, social status, habits, and traditions.

The activities were organized around three sets of questions: comprehension check, text analysis, and questions for discussion. The students first looked for information in order to answer the questions in the first section. Following are the questions.

Section 1: Comprehension

- What did Magid tell his white friends that upset his parents?
- What is his real full name?
- What work does his mother/father do?

– Why is Magid determined to participate in the Harvest Festival?
– Why doesn't his father want him to go?

Section 2: Text Analysis

– What do items like cats, pianos, holidays in France and wooden floors symbolize for Magid?
– How is the text representative of the immigrant experience?

Section 3: Questions for Discussion

– What problems can immigrants experience in terms of clashes between their native culture and the culture of the country they live in?
– Do you think that the older and the younger generations of immigrants in your country have the same disagreements as Samad and Magid?

The three sets of questions naturally developed into a discussion linked to exploring the symbolic meaning of the things and actions that symbolically represent the way of living of immigrant families compared to domicile families. The discussion was put in a wider context, where the students freely and openly exchanged experiences about the immigrant culture in their home countries. It was interesting to hear about heterogeneous cultures such as France and Spain, and classes filled with children from numerous countries.

Creative Writing and the Benefits of Teacher Feedback in Fostering Dialogue

According to Hattie and Timperley, feedback 'is that which happens second – after a student has responded to initial instruction – when information is provided regarding some aspect(s) of the student's task performance' (2007, 82). In the carried out written assignments, the feedback provided did not seek to address the students' linguistic skills or to correct factually incorrect information; however, it nevertheless had a corrective function. The effort was made to correct some of the misconceptions about cultural diversity observed in the students' creative writing by addressing them in the follow-up discussions. No names of individual students were mentioned; the observations addressed the similarities within the group. Our approach to providing feedback relied on three elements: recognition of the desired goal, evidence about the present position, and some understanding of a way to close the gap between the two (Black and William 1998). Furthermore, the outcome

– students' recognition of their current and shift toward the desired understanding of cultural diversity – depended not only on the educator's feedback but also on the opportunity for the students to share their opinions about the possible reasons behind their creative choices.

In the activities listed below, the educator refrained from providing the students with creative ideas or certain content that might be considered desirable in the context of the research aims. In addition to the written guidelines that were provided to each student, the only additional guideline the educator repeated when the students asked questions about the possible content of their writing was: 'Use your imagination. Feel free to include in your writing whatever you deem important for your story.'

Individual Activities

Writing the Introduction to a Murder Mystery. This activity aimed to explore inclusivity in the students' portrayal of fictional characters. It was hoped that the students would consider including in their writing ethnically diverse characters as well as characters with special needs.

Given the time restraints, the students were asked to write only the introduction to a detective story, whereby they had the full freedom in their creative expression. The students received the following instruction:

> This will not be the entire story, but rather the beginning of a murder mystery. One of the key figures in the story is John Smith. Start your story with: 'It was 5 in the morning when John Smith received a phone call that would turn his day upside down.' Include the following: description of John Smith (appearance, personality, the setting, the crime (location, time, weapon, clues left behind at the crime scene), and give your story a title.

After studying the content of 164 texts, a worrying pattern was noticed. The texts revealed a disturbing lack of female characters as well as racial diversity. More precisely, there were only 11 female characters (1.68%) out of a total of 651 characters, 10 of whom were victims of a brutal crime, and only one (0.15%) was the protagonist. Furthermore, there was only one reference to race (0.15%) – a homeless black man who ends up becoming the murder suspect. On the other hand, a character's whiteness was never mentioned. In essence, providing the students with the opportunity to freely express their thoughts uncovered their implicit views that men can be police officers, detectives, and even suspects, while women are reduced to the role of the vic-

tim as well as that male characters dominate their imaginative worlds; even the female students included predominately male characters in their writing. Interestingly, the students never mentioned their characters' religious affiliations or characters with special needs. In the rare instances when sexuality was mentioned, the characters were exclusively heterosexual.

The students' feedback was almost uniform – there were no specific reasons for omitting female and/or racially diverse characters; their choices seemed to be instinctive and spontaneous rather than intentional. This rather surprising revelation became the foundation for a discussion on gender roles and the students' exposure to disabilities and ethnic diversity in their everyday lives – their immediate environment, favorite TV shows, movies, and music. However, we maintain that the aforementioned findings deserve further exploration in future research.

Writing a Chapter in a Wartime Novel. This activity aimed to explore gender roles, especially the role of women and transgender soldiers during times of war. It relied on a letter excerpt from *My Confederate Girlhood: The Memoirs of Kate Virginia Cox Logan,* which was abbreviated and amended with the educator's addition of an alternative ending (added after the square brackets).

The students were provided with instructions that mention a writer named A. C. Their task was to imagine themselves being the writer and to use the letter as an inspiration for a chapter in their wartime novel. This activity was carried out after the students had read Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage* and analyzed his naturalist style of writing. To help the students with their writing, we suggested that they consider the time and setting of the plot, how a naturalist writer might describe a battle scene as well as to provide descriptions of the protagonist and other characters.

> After experiencing excruciating three weeks of writer's block, A. C. comes across a letter while rummaging through a box tucked away in a dusty corner of the attic. The letter is unsigned, and the ink on the envelope no longer reveals the name of its author. As A. C. gently pulls out the crumbling paper and unfolds it, the words you are about to read below present themselves. Some parts of the letter have served their purpose and have become invisible to their reader, but others still have a role to play.
>
> Here we made a stand, and here our company fought absolutely alone … our men were subjected to a ranking fire. I was the first who fell. I had put on my spectacles, taken good aim, and fired my first shot. As I was in the act of re-loading, a rifle-ball struck me in the head, a little about the forehead; and the violence of the concussion felled me to

> the earth immediately. I drew off my spectacles and flung them aside. Not believing my wound a bad one, as it was not painful, I attempted to reload. But the blood was gushing over my face and blinding my eyes, and I found it impossible to do so. I knew pretty well the extent of my wound, as I had probed it with my finger as I fell. And as the gash seemed to be a deep one, I feared faintness would ensue from loss of blood. I put aside my gun for a while and put my white handkerchief inside my hat upon the wound.
> By the time I had finished these precautions [. . .]
> Another battle is upon us. I can hear them coming. I can hear their cheers.
> The sound of marching feet is piercing through my ears.
> The ground is shaking.
> Lord, help us all. They are here.

The students' writing once again revealed a lack of character diversity. Out of 68 stories, the protagonist, who is a soldier, is male in 65 of them (95.5%); two characters are robots (2.9%), and the only female protagonist (1.4%) is a nurse. There were no transgender characters. Interestingly, the characters' race, sexuality, and religious affiliations were completely omitted.

The students revealed that the inspiration behind their writing stemmed from real-life experience given that men tend to enlist in greater numbers from women, and including transgender characters was not an option they considered exploring. When reminded that this was a creative writing task and that they had the freedom to invent a new reality, they seemed perplexed. In other words, a different allocation of roles did not seem plausible to them in this context. Interestingly, in the students' fictional world of war, there is a greater chance of encountering robot soldiers than female, religious, gay, or transgender protagonists.

Group Activity

Creating the Biography of a Villain. Given that the purpose of successful intercultural communication is the achievement of dialogue that includes the exchange of thoughts and opinions, thereby acknowledging other points of view, the educator intended to provide the students with the possibility to spontaneously engage in dialogue as opposed to being directly instructed to participate in discussions. The purpose of this activity was to uncover whether there are languages or specific character traits that are perceived as menacing due to a lack of familiarity with a particular culture.

While the students were given a 15-minute time frame for the completion

of the task, they were allowed to work for as long as they felt comfortable. Successful completion of the task depended on the students' ability to communicate ideas, accept suggestions, and jointly choose the best solutions. A total of 65 students participated in the activity, divided into 15 groups.

The examples students came up with reveal both intercultural but also intracultural differences. The vast majority of the students (13 groups) envision a villain to be middle-aged, male, with a physical disability, a very low or very high IQ and a pronounced ego. The same characteristics apply to female villains. In terms of the language, villains speak Albanian, Serbian, and Russian as well as a southern Croatian and southern American dialect. Those students who highlighted the character's dialect came from northern parts of Croatia or northern USA and Canada.

While the perception of dialects served more to lighten the mood in the classroom, it was the perception of the languages spoken in Eastern Europe and the Balkan region that revealed, as the students phrased it, a kind of 'psychological detachment' from those cultures due to geographical distances. The words uttered in those languages seemed harsh and cold to western Europeans and the North American students. The students concluded that movies and TV shows tend to portray Eastern Europeans as members of drug cartels and poverty-stricken individuals with easy morals. Given the culturally diverse classroom, it was particularly rewarding for the North American students to hear from European students about the lack of positive representations of Eastern Europeans on screen. On the other hand, Eastern European students became more aware of the lack of uplifting representations of themselves in western productions.

Conclusion

The dynamic nature of modern societies inevitably leads to a new understanding of the role of formal education, which includes the development of intercultural communicative competence from all participants in the education system. These competencies include a blend of linguistic abilities and the awareness of the value of cultural diversity; this, in turn, leads to a successful dialogue between individuals coming from different cultural backgrounds. In Croatia, the achievement of open and respectful dialogue is crucial since our classrooms are becoming meeting points of a wide range of cultural backgrounds and viewpoints with an increase of international students. Such cultural encounters enable both the students and the educators with invaluable insight into real-life global experiences that allow them to compare and contrast socio-political and cultural specificities of each coun-

try. However, the achievement of change from the current to desired understanding of cultural diversity as well as from the reluctance to the willingness to participate in open dialogue is no easy task. It relies on the creation of a safe learning environment, a mindful choice of words, carefully chosen teaching content, as well as the educator's intercultural competence and openness to learning from the students to improve their teaching pedagogy.

The described verbal activities related to the text analyses greatly contributed to the development of the students' reading and speaking skills. Moreover, they proved as fertile ground for exploring the symbolical meaning of the text and subsequent exchanges of opinions and personal experiences. Most importantly, they served as an excellent base for developing intercultural dialogue among the students. The students got personally involved in class activities, justified their stands on racial issues, and gave interesting insights into cultural practices of their home countries. One should approach delicate topics such as race with great care, keeping in mind that they have caused turmoil throughout history. However, at the same time, we all have to be determined and promote ideas of equality, friendship, tolerance, and cooperation.

Providing feedback on the students' writing but also hearing the students' feedback on the educator's findings has proven a fruitful starting point for the improvement of intercultural competence. Being presented with an analysis, with an emphasis on the group rather than individual performance, confronted the students with some of their cultural biases while simultaneously not diminishing their creative endeavor or their value as individuals. Creating such a safe environment made the students feel more comfortable to participate in the sharing of the possible reasons behind their creative choices because they were not singled out to the group. This approach to addressing their implicit biases resulted in a joint correction or at least a greater awareness of the existence of cultural biases. Furthermore, such analyses of the students' writing provided the educators with invaluable insight into the kind of content that needs to be included in their courses that would provide both verbal and visual representations of cultural diversity.

What the preparation, execution, and follow-up phases of our activities reveal is that the educator's role in fostering respectful intercultural dialogue is key because a meaningful change requires time, effort, and reflection. However, if educators wish to close the gap between the observed present positions and the desirable ways of thinking, as well as equip the students with the knowledge and tools to navigate through multicultural environments successfully, then they need to reach outside of the traditional, often mono-

cultural approach to education, and introduce topics and activities that challenge the students' outlooks on life and provide concrete opportunities for personal growth.

References

Bartulović, Marija, and Barbara Kušević. 2016. *Što je interkulturno obrazovanje? Priručnik za nastavnike i druge znatiželjnike.* Zagreb: Centar za mirovne studije.

Black, Paul, and Dylan William. October 1998. 'Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment.' *Phi Delta Kappan* 80 (2): 139–44.

Bredella, Lothar. 2000. 'Literary Texts and Intercultural Understanding.' In *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Language Teaching and Learning,* edited by Michael Byram, 382–6. London; New York: Routledge.

Bretz, Mary Lee. 1990. 'Reaction: Literature and Communicative Competence: A Springboard for the Development of Critical Thinking and Aesthetic Appreciation.' *Foreign Language Annals* 23 (4): 335–8.

Butković, Matea, and Ester Vidović. 2017. 'Student Primary School Teachers' Understanding of *The Rabbits' Wedding* Controversy.' In *Razsežnosti sodobnih učnih okolij,* edited by Silva Bratož, 145–60. Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem.

———. 2019. 'Student-Teachers' Views on Racism and Racial Nomenclature in Children's Literature.' *Društvene i humanističke studije DHS* 2 (8): 225–48.

Byram, Michael, Bella Gribkova, and Hugh Starkey. 2002. *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching: A Practical Introduction for Teachers.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Cabezudo, Alicia, Christos Christidis, Miguel Carvalho da Svilva, Valentina Demetriadou-Saltet, Franz Halbartschlager, and Georgeta-Paula Lihai. 2012. *Global Education Guidelines: A Handbook for Educators to Understand and Implement Global Education.* Lisbon: North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

Carter, Ronald, and Joe McRae, eds. 1996. *Language, Literature and the Learner: Creative Classroom Practice.* Harlow: Longman.

Council of Europe. 2003. 'Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention.' DGIV/CULT/PREV(2004)1E, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

———. 2005. 'Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue.' DGIV/DC-FARO (2005) 8 final, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

———. 2008. White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: 'Living Together as Equals in Dignity.' Council of Europe, Strasbourg. www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf

———. 2011. 'Living Together: Combining Diversity and Freedom in 21st Cen-

tury Europe; Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe.' Council of Europe, Strasbourg. https://rm.coe.int/16806b97c5

Daskalovska, Nina, and Violeta Dimova. 2012. 'Why Should Literature Be Used in the Language Classroom?' *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences* 46:1182–6.

Denka, Andrzej. 2005. *Lesestrategien und Lesesteuerungsstrategien beim Einsatz literarischer Texte im Fremdsprachenunterricht.* Frankfurt am Main: Lang.

Europe-Wide Global Education Congress. 2002. 'The Maastricht Global Education Declaration.' https://rm.coe.int/168070e540

European Commission and the Council of Europe. N. d. 'Guidelines for Intercultural Dialogue in Non-Formal Learning/Education Activities.' https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262115/ICD2014.pdf/73add476-4e8e-4522-8fb5-67df5e4ccfc8

European Parliament and the Council. 2006. 'Decision no. 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.' Official Journal of the European Union, L 412/44–50.

Fenner, Anne-Brit. 2001. 'Dialogic Interaction with Literary Texts in the Lower Secondary Classroom.' In *Cultural Awareness and Language Awareness Based on Dialogic Interaction with Texts in Foreign Language Learning,* edited by Anne-Brit Fenner, 3–42. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Gaudelli, William. 2006. 'Convergence of Technology and Diversity: Experiences of Two Beginning Teachers in Web-Based Distance Learning for Global/Multicultural Education.' *Teacher Education Quarterly* 33 (1): 97–116.

Giles, Howard, Nikolas Coupland, Angie Williams, and Laura Leets. 1991. 'Integrating Theory in the Study of Minority Languages.' In *The Influence of Language on Culture and Thought,* edited by Robert L. Cooper and Bernard Spolsky, 113–36. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Hattie, John, and Helen Timperley. 2007. 'The Power of Feedback.' *Review of Educational Research* 77 (1): 81–112.

Henderson, Darwin L., and Jill P. May. 2005. *Exploring Culturally Diverse Literature for Children and Adolescents.* Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Hoff, Hild Elisabeth. 2017. 'Fostering the "Intercultural Reader"? An Empirical Study of Socio-Cultural Approaches to EFL Literature.' *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 63 (3): 1–22.

Huber, Josef, and Christopher Reynolds. 2014. *Developing Intercultural Competence through Education.* Council of Europe Pestalozzi Series 3. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Kramsch, Claire. 1993. *Context and Culture in Language Education.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2008. 'Ecological Perspectives on Foreign Language Education.' *Language Teaching* 41 (3): 389–408.

Lasonen, Johanna. 2005. 'Reflections on Interculturality in Relation to Education and Work.' *Higher Education Policy* 18:397–407.

Mazi-Leskovar, Darja. 2010. 'Fiction for Adults Promoting Intercultural and Intracultural Understanding.' *Facta Universitatis Linguistics and Literature* 8 (1): 9–17.

McRae, John. 1991. *Literature with a Small 'l.'* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Neuner, Gerhard. 1997. 'The Role of Sociocultural Competence in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning.' *Language Teaching* 29: 234–9.

Piršl, Elvi, Mirjana Benjak, Marina Diković, Matija Jelača, and Andrea Matošević. 2016. *Vodič za interkulturalno učenje.* Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak.

Platform for Intercultural Europe. 2008. 'The Rainbow Paper: Intercultural Dialogue; From Practice to Policy and Back.' 2008. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/the-rainbow-paper---intercultural-dialogue-from-practice-to-policy-and-back-1

Premawardhena, Neelakshi Chandrasena. 2005. 'Integrating Literature into Foreign Language Teaching: A Sri Lankan Perspective.' *Novitas-Royal* 1 (2): 92–97.

Riverol, Jenny Elliott. 1991. 'Literature in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language.' Revista *Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 4:65–9.

Sablić, Marija. 2014. *Interkulturalizam u nastavi.* Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak.

Sharman, Elizabeth. 2004. *Across Cultures.* Harlow: Pearson Education.

Shazu, Rafiul Islam. 2014. 'Use of Literature in Language Teaching and Learning: A Critical Assessment.' *Journal of Education and Practice* 5 (7): 29–35.

Sobkowiak, Paweł. 2015. 'Developing Students' Intercultural Competence in Foreign Language Textbooks.' *US-China Education Review* 5 (12): 794–805.

Stallworth, B. Joyce, Louel Gibbons, and Leigh Fauber. March 2006. 'It's Not on the List: An Exploration of Teachers' Perspectives on Using Multicultural Literature.' *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 49 (6): 478–89.

Stern, Hans Heinrich. 1992. *Issues and Options in Language Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stern, Susan L. 1987. 'Expanded Dimensions to Literature in ESL/EFL: An Integrated Approach.' *English Teaching Forum* 25 (4): 47–55.

Stevick, Earl W. 1976. *Memory, Meaning, and Method.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Tunnell, Michael O., James S. Jacobs, Terrell A. Young, and Gregory Bryan. 2012. *Children's Literature, Briefly.* 5th ed. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Vasileiadis, Konstantinos Nikolaos, Konstantinos Alexandros Tsioumis, and Argyris Kyridis. 2013. 'The Effects of Dominant Ideology on Teachers' Perceptions and Practices towards the "Other."' *International Journal of Learning & Development* 3 (1): 33–48.

Williams, Garth. 1986. *The Rabbits' Wedding.* New York: HarperCollins.


Approaches
to Foreign
Language
Learning

Developing Young Learners' Multiliteracies through Multimodal Storytelling

Lynn Mastellotto
Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano, Italy
lynn.mastellotto@unibz.it

Satisfying a rich communicative function in both linguistic and cultural terms, children's literature and storytelling present an effective approach to the development of multiple literacies in primary education. As a rich source of high-quality language input, children's stories lend themselves to language and literacy work, not only in L1 but L2 as well. Learners gain language exposure in an authentic and meaningful context that stimulates their listening and reading fluency while helping them learn the rhythm, intonation, prosody and pronunciation of the target language. Picture books offer a dual-decoding experience since the text carries meaning that is enhanced by images and peritextual features, which offer visual scaffolding to help young learners unlock narrative meaning in the target language. This chapter will explore children's stories as a powerful pedagogical tool for developing young learners' functional literacy and emotional literacy. Two popular storybooks, namely Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* (1999a; 1999b; 1999c) and Trudy Ludwig's *The Invisible Boy* (2013), will be examined to demonstrate how multimodal storytelling practices offer rich opportunities for communication and meaning-making activities with young learners through multisensory input that activates their learning on multiple levels.

Keywords: storytelling in primary education, multimodal picture books, English language Teaching (ELT) in primary school, literacy and young learners, multiliteracies through children's stories

Introduction

Drawing on Bruner's (1991; 1997) understanding of the key role narrative plays in the construction of meaning, it is widely acknowledged that stories function as a powerful tool to pass on knowledge and values in a social context. Recent studies in psychology and cognitive science show that the human brain is predisposed to understand, remember and tell stories: humans think in, remember facts according to, and shape their personal and group identities along narrative structures.[1] Philosophers such as Alasdair McIntyre (1981,

[1] See, for example, Bruner (1991), Graesser and Ottati (1995), Glaser, Garsoffky, and Schwan (2009), Rubin (1995), and Schank and Abelson (1995).

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.251-265

216) suggest that storytelling is so central to human nature that *homo sapiens,* the thinking person, could more aptly be called *'homo narrans,'* the storytelling person, given our propensity to organize and interpret the world in terms of narrative plots that shape our lives. Stories and storytelling thus occupy a privileged status in human cognition, offering a powerful pedagogical tool when harnessed in early learning. Learning theorists and educators point to the benefits of using stories as a strategy for designing meaningful and anchored learning experiences for young learners.[2]

Children's picture books and classroom storytelling practices combine different media and modes of communication to immerse children in story worlds.[3] By reading stories and hearing stories read aloud, seeing stories performed through animated readings, dramatizations, roleplays and film adaptations, and by interacting with stories through tactile engagement with picture books and related cultural artefacts such as masks, puppets and lapbooks, children participate in transmedia storytelling.[4] Multimodal storytelling offers rich opportunities for communication and meaning-making activities with young learners through multisensory input that activates their learning on multiple levels, as we shall see below.

The article begins with an examination of how stories, in general, are an effective teaching-learning tool that make use of different modes of communication (multimodality) to develop children's multiple literacies, from functional literacy, to visual literacy, to cognition and metacognition, as well as their social, emotional and intercultural competences. Then, through an analysis of Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* (1999a; 1999b; 1999c) and Trudy Ludwig's *The Invisible Boy* (2013), the article unpacks specific modes of engagement, demonstrating how stories immerse young learners in compelling story worlds that are instructional on many levels.

Multimodal Stories for Multiple Literacies

Gail Ellis suggests that using picture books helps children develop key transversal learning competences since they ignite curiosity and nurture 'an in-

[2] See, for example, Järvelä and Renninger (2014), Glaser, Garsoffky, and Schwan (2009), and Mayer (2011).

[3] Gunther Kress defines mode as a 'socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning. *Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack* are examples of modes used in representation and communication' (2009, 54).

[4] Transmediation involves moving between and among language and art, language and music, language and film, and other ways of knowing and representing the world. Siegel defines transmediation as 'the process of translating meanings from one sign system (such as language) into another (such as pictorial representation)' (1995, 456).

quisitive mindset' (2016, 30). Her research on 'learning literacy' (learning how to learn) demonstrates that cognitive and metacognitive skills are supported by picture books, including wordless picture books, which enable children to develop an awareness and understanding of their own learning processes (i.e. metacognition) by reflecting on their preferences, monitoring their progress, and encouraging autonomy in learning. Cognitive skills, which are more task-specific and involve children using the language and their learning materials for specific purposes – including information retrieval, sorting, classifying, hypothesizing, predicting, sequencing, and summarizing – are also supported by reading storybooks (2016, 31–2). Both cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies can be embedded in book-based approaches and storytelling activities in the language arts classroom and across the curriculum.

As Ellis further notes, written-linguistic modes of communication interface with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile and spatial patterns of meaning as teachers make use of multimodal resources for teaching and learning in the classroom; consequently, children must be able to decode information from many sources, reflect on it and discuss their learning (2016, 28). Janice Bland claims that through their *multi-layered* (i.e. readable in different ways at different levels of linguistic sophistication and cognitive maturity) and *multimodal* (i.e. combining written text, visual images and graphic elements) dimensions, children's stories encourage engaged analysis on many levels (2014, 2). This complexity helps foster children's multiliteracies, that is, not only their functional literacy (the ability to read and write) but the many different literacies- visual literacy, emotional literacy, cultural literacy and digital literacy- needed to interpret and decode information today.

The term 'multiple literacies' embraces the notion that knowledge is constructed through many sources and modes that extend beyond language itself, and children must become literate in all of these. A multi-literacies pedagogy is thus underpinned by multimodal theory which recognizes that children create meaning using a 'multiplicity of modes, means and materials' for self-expression (Kress 1997, 97). Immersive and participatory story worlds encountered through diverse media enable children to receive, reproduce and produce new stories. Kress notes that children move easily between and across modes, semiotically recycling information in creative and transformative ways according to their interests. The ability to express their thoughts, to be understood, and in so doing to act upon their culture is, according to Kress, an essential part of the child's development of a sense of agency and voice.

Functional Literacy through Stories

As a rich source of high-quality language input, children's stories lend themselves foremost to language and literacy work with young learners. Wright (2001, 5) suggests that authentic stories are highly motivating and rich in language experience, allowing learners to develop a 'reservoir of language' as vocabulary and sentence constructions are introduced first through receptive learning. Reading aloud stimulates children's listening and reading fluency as they search for textual meaning and predict outcomes of stories. Listening to and telling stories help them learn the rhythm, intonation, prosody and pronunciation in L1 and L2 since stories present language through repetition and rhyme, which are predictable and memorable, thus facilitating language acquisition and retention through pattern practice. Speaking and writing fluency develop gradually as children build up knowledge of lexis and grammar, moving the acquired language into their productive control through an input-intake-output cycle wherein language exposure leads over time to language emergence (Mastellotto and Burton 2018).

Research findings on the use of storytelling with young learners of foreign languages indicate that stories contribute to the development of oral skills (Tsou, Wang, and Tzeng 2006; Wilson 1997), to a deeper understanding of syntax and story structure (Glazer and Burke 1994; Mallan 1991), and to vocabulary learning (Kirsch 2016). Young learners gain language exposure in a rich, authentic and meaningful context, first through the sounds of the language in the oral performance of a story, then gradually through the recognition of words and chunks as their literacy develops. Ghosn notes that exposure to 'rich, natural language typical of quality children's literature will facilitate the procedural memory's processing of the correct structures to the cerebellum' (2013, 134), and claims that, by contrast, conventional English language teaching (ELT) course books often present discourse in de-contextualised and artificial situations, thus 'minimizing opportunities for meaningful learner engagement and cognitive development' (2013, xvii).

Language Learning through Picture Books

Julia Donaldson's international bestseller, *The Gruffalo* (1999a; 1999b; 1999c), is a rhyming text with natural repetition of key sounds, words, and phrases through refrains. Rhyming pairs such as wood/good, mouse/house, no/gruffalo, gruffalo/know, rocks/fox, said/sped, toes/nose, stream/ice cream, too-whoo/flew, black/back, lake/snake, hid/slid, said/bread, see/me, laughter/after, said/ahead, hello/gruffalo, see/me, rumble/crumble, said/fled facilitate sound recognition and pattern practice in the target language. Alliteration

in the text, such as 'walk'/'wood,' 'little'/'lunch,' also helps introduce children to the repeated initial sounds of English words and build up knowledge of phonetics. These features, which are predictable and memorable, encourage young learners' oral understanding of the English language before they begin to formally recognize graphemes and decode written text.

Given the salience of prosody and phonetics in the process of children's language acquisition, it is not surprising that translations of *The Gruffalo* (1999b; 1999c) have kept the main story but altered some words in order to maintain the rhyme and rhythm in the translated texts. The original lines describing the gruffalo in Donaldson's text, 'He has terrible tusks, terrible claws, and terrible teeth in his terrible jaws,' instead use a variety of adjectives and introduce new cognates in the Italian translation by Laura Pelaschiar – *'Ha zanne tremende, artigli affilati, e denti da mostro di bava bagnati'* – in order to preserve rhyme and alliteration. Similarly, 'Where are you meeting him?'/'Here by this stream … and his favourite food is owl ice cream' become in Italian *'E dove lo incontri?/Qui in riva al fiume … Ah … e mangia civette con tutte le piume!'* thus changing words (ice cream) in the translated text to preserve the rhyme (*fiume/piume*).

The verbal coup de grâce uttered by the mouse to outwit and ultimately defeat the gruffalo – 'But now my tummy is starting to rumble, and my favourite food is … gruffalo crumble!' – is translated in Italian as *'Ma ora mi sa che ho una gran fame … che voglia di Gruffalò col salame!'* which preserves the rhyme (*fame/salame*) while introducing a new word, 'salame,' that is culturally more appropriate to the target audience than the word 'crumble.' This is also true in the German translation by Monika Osberghaus, in which crumble is replaced by *grütze* (grains): *'Und jetz hab ich Hunger, mir knurrt schon der Magen. Grüfeelogrütze könnt ich heut gut vertragen!'* By presenting language through repetition and rhyme, children's stories facilitate language acquisition, learning and retention through pattern practice. Listening to and telling stories helps young readers learn the rhythm, intonation, prosody and pronunciation of the target language as they begin to develop literacy.

Beyond rhyme and repetition in picture books, early literacy development is also facilitated by images and peritextual features which provide context to help young readers unlock the meaning of the text. Donaldson's text, beautifully illustrated by Axel Scheffler, contains 19 illustrations in total (two double-page spreads), of which 9 illustrations depict body parts of the gruffalo – tusks, claws, jaws, knees, toes, nose, eyes, tongue, back – helping with vocabulary learning. Another 9 illustrations present specific locations or settings – deep dark wood, underground house, treetop house, log-pile house, rocks,

stream, lake – where the story unfolds, also supporting new lexis. The contextualization provided through the book's images helps orient young readers in the story world and facilitates language work by introducing new words in meaningful situations.

The illustrations are a vital component of Donaldson's tale, rendering the storyscape more realistic and believable and, consequently, more likely to rouse readers' identification and empathy. As noted by Krashen and Bland (2014, 8), empathizing with characters in compelling stories is important for initiating young readers to the pleasure of literature. Scheffler's illustrations in *The Gruffalo* also help contextualize suspense and reversal of expectations as the plot unfolds, making the textual input more comprehensible by rendering the shifting feelings of the protagonist – fear, confidence strength, self-reliance – accessible to a young audience.

As the little mouse makes his way along a path through a dark wood with towering trees, his eyes gazing upward and over his shoulder, young readers are immediately drawn into the story through identification with the vulnerability of the small protagonist who finds himself in a landscape full of bigger creatures and hidden dangers. The problem of the mouse – that bigger and stronger animals want to eat him – is immediately discernible to children through their prior knowledge. Though small in size, the mouse uses his very large brain to outwit his opponents; young readers thus learn that being clever is more powerful than being big and strong as they see themselves represented by a protagonist in an engaging and empowering story.

At times, the word-image juxtaposition corresponds in picture books, in what Barthes (1977) calls 'elaboration,' whereas at other times these elements lack correspondence, what he terms 'relay.' The latter is the case in the scene in which Owl invites Mouse for tea in his treetop house: though the invitation seems on the surface to be kind, the image of the owl with glaring orange eyes and open talons ready to snatch the little mouse betray the former's true intentions. By pointing to the image and asking children whether they think owl is a friend or a foe, and whether his invitation to tea is sincere, teachers can use the illustrations as scaffolding for disambiguation and deeper understanding.

Word-image interactions can and do change in the course of one picture book, creating different types of textual-visual interanimations across a story. A thorough intermodal analysis of *The Gruffalo* would require a detailed and systematic description of how each image coheres with the verbal text accompanying it, which is beyond the scope of this article. However, teachers considering using this picture book with young learners should pay attention

to symmetries and asymmetries in the intermodal messages conveyed in order to guide children's interpretation. As Moya Guijarro (2014, 68) explains, concurrence between image and text requires less inference since the intermodal input is symmetrical, which in turn lightens the cognitive load of the reader. In other instances, when the verbiage and image do not fully concur, scaffolding is necessary to help support young readers' understanding of the story.

Interactive storytelling activities in the classroom can provide authentic language exposure in meaningful contexts, facilitating young learners' L2 acquisition. Pre-story activities, including verbal and non-verbal warm-ups that focus on key lexis, on setting and theme, help set the stage for storytelling. This could be followed by a dialogic reading of the story, either in part or whole – pausing for clarification, sign-posting key actions and events, drawing attention to the images and graphic elements of the book – to help young learners follow the storyline and acquire key words. In the post-reading phase, the story can be revisited through dramatized storytelling which draws on different media (music, rhyme, chants, masks, puppets, scenery, mini-books, props) to enhance storytelling and re-telling. In the re-telling phase, children recycle the language they have learned, gradually moving it into their productive control.

Character-based picture books like *The Gruffalo,* often come with related paratext – flash cards, posters, graphic organizers, character-cutouts, songs with rhyming lyrics, suggested questions to stimulate discussion, and recommended activities – support materials which can help teachers guide children to an understanding of the story and language learning (Dunn 2012, 242).

Other post-storytelling activities can be used for empathy building in the classroom through perspective-taking tasks, such as having children adopt a character's perspective by writing a journal entry (for children with more advanced literacy) from one of the supporting characters' point of view, or by engaging in a roleplay based on specific characters and settings; for instance an imagined encounter between the owl and the snake. Extended interactive activities might include inviting children to imagine what they would bring with them on a long walk through a forest, using elements from the story as objects of realia in class – acorn, branch, pine cone, rock – and naming each object as an opportunity to recycle related lexis from the text. Bringing elements of the story world, or 'heterocosm' (Hutcheon 2013, xxiv), into the classroom stimulates children's physical interaction with the story, contributing to the transmedia storytelling experience.

Social, Emotional and Intercultural Learning through Stories

Listening to stories in class is a social experience that allows children to share emotions as a group and forge a deep connection with others. Roney (1996, 7) notes that the 'co-creative and interactive' dimension of sharing stories makes storytelling a powerful tool for social learning in childhood. Moreover, discussing stories allows children to express a range of emotions and understand their sources. Stories link fantasy or imaginative worlds with children's real worlds, helping them make sense of their everyday lives. Stories also help children situate themselves in the world and identify ever-widening circles of belonging – home, school, community.

By transmitting cultural information (values, customs), stories help children understand their own reality and that of others, as well as construct an identity. Bruno Bettelheim (1989) and other scholars who research identity formation point to the value of stories not only in reflecting identities, but also in helping shape them.[5] Since stories transmit cultural information, they are ways for children to understand what makes them the same as or different from others encountered in story worlds.

Narratives and storytelling are, in fact, part of a 'hidden curriculum' in primary education since they nurture children's psychosocial and emotional development through the transmission of values related to self-definition, empathy for and connection with others, intercultural awareness, and respect for diversity.[6] Martha Nussbaum signals the ethical force of stories which help to cultivate a 'narrative imagination': through imaginary encounters with difference, readers can develop an ethical orientation by thinking about 'what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have' (2010, 95–6).

The imaginary encounters which take place through the telling and receiving of stories facilitate an engagement with other perspectives from the horizon of one's own position and experience, making self-awareness and critical distance an integral part of self-other narrative encounters. Edward Said reminds us that identities are dialogically constructed through difference: one defines oneself based on the recognition of what one is not in relation to

[5] See also Bennett (2001), Giddens (1991), Nehamas (1998), Nussbaum (1990), Taylor (1989).

[6] A hidden curriculum refers to the unspoken or implicit values, behaviours, procedures, and norms that exist in an educational setting. While such expectations are not explicitly written, 'hidden curriculum' is the unstated promotion and enforcement of certain behavioural patterns, professional standards, and social beliefs while navigating a learning environment. See Miller and Seller (1990).

others; thus 'the Other' acts as 'a source and resource for a better, more critical understanding of the Self' (2004, xi). Perspective-taking tasks through reading and imaginary encounters with others can help develop empathy by enabling readers to project themselves into a character, to see the world through different eyes, and vicariously experience a spectrum of emotions. Goleman claims that 'fundamental ethical stances in life stem from underlying emotional capacities' which constitute what he calls 'emotional intelligence' (1995, xii).[7]

Recent studies in psychology and behavioural science point to the value of indirect contact with diverse outgroups (immigrants, homosexuals, refugees) in educational settings as a strategy to reduce prejudice and lead to improved intergroup attitudes. Vezzali, Stathi, and Dino's (2012) and Vezzali et al.'s (2015) research with adolescents shows that indirect contact through book reading on intercultural topics can help foster an open mindset and more flexibility in perspective-taking: those who read a book with an intercultural theme showed a reduction in stereotyping, improved intergroup attitudes and intentions, and a willingness to engage in future contact with immigrants (2012, 148). Furthermore, the effects of indirect contact were mediated by an increased inclusion of the other in conceptualizations of the self (2012, 158).

In this way, storybooks and storytelling practices can help teachers and pupils navigate the multilingual and multicultural dynamics of today's classrooms that are increasingly defined by diversity, offering strategies to ensure that each person has a voice, is recognized, and feels a sense of belonging. A guided analysis of how identity and inclusion are represented in storybooks can provide a gateway for teachers to discuss diversity in all its dimensions, as well as issues of empathy and belonging.

Stories for Social Inclusion and Empathy

The Invisible Boy (2013), written by Trudy Ludwig and illustrated by Patrice Barton, offers rich opportunities for young learners to learn about difference through the protagonist, Brian, a young boy who feels invisible. He is ignored by his classmates and even overlooked by his teacher, Mrs. Carlotti, who is too busy dealing with certain 'problem' children in class to notice him: they 'take up a lot of space' whereas 'Brian doesn't.' (2013, unnumbered) He does not get chosen to play in games at recess because he is not among the best players,

[7] For a further analysis of literature and the development of emotional intelligence, see Bettleheim (1989), Ghosn (2013), Goleman (1995), Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999).

or the best friends of the best players, or even the friends of the best friends of the best players. He does not get invited to friends' houses or friends' birthday parties because he has no friends.

This marginal status is poignantly portrayed through Barton's illustrations: whereas the other children appear in full colour, Brian is drawn in faded shades of white and grey, always placed on the margins of the group, suggesting his isolation. By drawing attention to the images, teachers can encourage children to engage in inferential thinking – What is going on here? What do you think will happen next? How do you think Brian feels? Have you ever felt this way? – a multimodal focus which helps children develop not only textual and visual literacy, but emotional literacy as well (Bland and Lütge 2014, 7). Teachers can exploit the story's multimodality by engaging pupils first in listening to a dialogic reading that pauses to examine and comment on images, thus inviting children to interact with the text and its images.

When a new student named Justin arrives, Barton's illustrations show a similar sensitivity as the new boy stands before the class uncomfortably being sized up by his classmates. Later, some of the kids poke fun at Justin's lunch, which consists of *bulgogi* or barbecued beef made by his Korean grandmother. Brian observes this from his separate table in the cafeteria, 'wondering which is worse – being laughed at or feeling invisible.' (2013) As he loves to draw and is good at it, Brian leaves Justin a drawing with a note in his cubby: 'I thought the bulgogi looked good.' (2013) His empathy pushes him to overcome his own shyness and reach out to the new boy in an act of kindness.

Justin thanks him for the note at morning recess and compliments him on his drawing. Later, when it is time to pick partners in class, Emilio invites Justin and tells Brian to 'find someone else,' which makes Brian wish he could 'draw a hole right there [in the floor] to swallow him up.' (2013) But Justin intervenes, suggesting they add Brian to form a trio for the group project, and Emilio concedes. Given his special talent, Brian is asked to do the drawing for the group, a recognition that makes him smile. Then at lunchtime – 'Brian's least favourite part of the day. Another twenty l-o-n-g minutes of kids talking and laughing with everyone else … but him' (2013) – Justin waves Brian over and Emilio nods and makes room for him at their table. Sharing cookies with Justin, Brian feels like he might not be invisible after all; in fact, as he begins to be drawn into a social circle, the first blush of colour tints his cheeks in Barton's illustrations. By the end of the story, Brian appears in the same full-colour hues as his classmates, and no longer on the fringes but at the centre of action.

Images are a vital component of all picture books, providing details about characters' identities and their worlds, details that render them more realistic and believable and, consequently, more likely to rouse readers' identification and empathy. In *The Invisible Boy,* the images not only reinforce the story's message by offering visual scaffolding to support textual meaning, but also resonate on a deeply affective level as children *see* Brian's transformation from invisibility to visibility through the power of friendship. Bland notes that authentic picture books are powerful in early learning since the pictures transform into dynamic mental images that remain in the young reader's repertoire of experience, anchoring ideas, concepts and feelings along with new language; she states, 'the sensory anchoring supplied through the pictures in children's literature constitutes one of the most supportive features for comprehension of the text: the illustrations simplify the understanding of the verbal text both for L1 and L2 readers.' (2015, 25).

Ellis and Brewster (2014, 14) also note that using authentic storybooks can be motivating for second-language learners and can provide a greater sense of achievement then conventional ELT materials. However, the rich language of the story could present obstacles for second-language speakers since expressions like 'scurry,' 'pair off,' 'is left waiting,' 'glances,' 'haven't quite made up their minds yet' are beyond the minimal language of L2 learners in the 6–10 age range. Barton's images provide effective disambiguation when children's attention is drawn to the characters and situations depicted, as well as to the emotional cues suggested through the intersemiosis of text and image. Mastellotto and Burton (2018) suggest that language difficulties associated with using authentic storybooks that provide input beyond the minimal language of young learners can be overcome by fully exploiting illustrations as visual support and by using dialogic readings with scaffolded gestures and prosody to aid comprehension.

The endpapers in Ludwig's book are also beautifully illustrated and offer a further opportunity for children to negotiate textual meaning and understanding. While the front endpapers present Brian in faded grey-white tones, alone and surrounded by empty space as he draws a chalk circle on the ground, the back endpapers are colour-saturated, with Brian himself appearing in bright orange and blue as he busily draws with a chalk. Here he is surrounded by smiling and carefree classmates, all of them set in motion thanks to his chalk drawings: one is riding a rocket he has drawn, another a magic carpet, another is flying with a magic cape he has sketched, another with a set of wings. Brian's artistic talent gives them flight. Clearly, the peritextual features in Ludwig's book are a rich resource for literary and aesthetic

interpretation; the dissimilarity in the front and back endpapers invite critical attention and problem-solving as children posit why and identify what has changed in the course of the story. They can be guided by their teacher to recognise how the endpapers help amplify the story's theme of the transformative power of friendship and inclusion.

Conclusion

Storytelling offers a dynamic, multi-sensory way to familiarize young learners with the rich tradition of children's literature in different languages by taking into account various narrative genres (fairy tales, folktales, myths, legends, fables) as well as informal narratives, and by examining how stories circulate in every culture as a means of entertainment, cultural preservation and moral education.

Through compelling picture books like Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* (1999a; 1999b; 1999c) and Ludwig's *The Invisible Boy* (2013) children gain exposure to the target language in language-rich contexts, draw connections between different translated versions of the stories or other stories with similar themes, reflect on metalinguistic connections, and enjoy opportunities to creatively retell stories and recycle language.

Furthermore, by analyzing the structural elements of stories (characters, plot, setting, narrative point of view), children learn how narrative technique is used in making meaning. Narrative literacy, the ability to 'read between the lines' of a story and understand its subtext and context, is a vital complement to functional literacy, the ability to read and write. It relies on an understanding of the pragmatic function of language, which generally evolves from ages 6 to 10 years. Narrative literacy is stimulated through new forms of media that are enhancing our ability to record, express, consume and share stories; this makes an understanding of multimodal narrative a key component of the primary curriculum. By stimulating learners' emotions and inspiring their creativity while activating their prior knowledge about how language works (metalinguistic awareness) as well as their prior knowledge about the world (metaphysical awareness), picture books are a powerful pedagogical tool in primary education. They also act as vehicles for developing young learners' emotional literacy by discussing identity and fostering inclusion in the primary classroom.

References

Barthes, Roland. 1977. *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives: Image-Music-Text.* London: Fontana.

Bennett, Jane. 2001. *The Enchantment of Modern Life.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bettelheim, Bruno. 1989. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairytales.* New York: Vintage Books.

Bland, Janice. 2014. 'Introduction.' In *Children's Literature in Second Language Education,* edited by Janice Bland and Christiane Lütge, 1–11. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Bruner, Jerome. 1991. 'The Narrative Construction of Reality.' *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1): 1–21.

———. 1997. The Culture of Education. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

Donaldson, Julia. 1999a. *The Gruffalo.* Illustrated by Axel Scheffler. London: Puffin Books.

———. 1999b. *Il Gruffalò.* Translated by Laura Pelaschiar. Trieste: Emme Edizioni.

———. 1999c. *Der Grüffelo.* Translated by Monika Osberghaus. Weinheim Basel: Beltz & Gelberg.

Dunn, Opal. 2012. *Introducing English to Young Children: Spoken Language.* London: Collins.

Ellis, Gail. 2016. 'Promoting "Learning Literacy" through Picturebooks: Learning How to Learn.' *Children's Literature in English Language Education* 4 (2): 27–40.

Ellis, Gail, and Jean Brewster. 2014. *Tell It Again! The Storytelling Handbook for Primary English Language Teachers.* London: British Council.

Ghosn, Irma K. 2013. *Storybridge to Second Language Literacy: The Theory, Research, and Practice of Teaching English with Children's Literature.* Charlotte, NC: IAP.

Giddens, Anthony. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Glaser, Manuela, Bärbel Garsoffky, and Stephan Schwan. 2009. 'Narrative-Based Learning: Possible Benefits and Problems.' *Communications: European Journal of Communication Research* 34 (4): 429–47.

Glazer, Susan Mandel, and Ellen M. Burke. 1994. *An Integrated Approach to Early Literacy.* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Goleman, Daniel. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence.* New York: Bantam Books.

Graesser, Arthur C., and Victor Ottati. 1995. 'Why Stories? Some Evidence, Questions, and Challenges.' In *Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story,* edited by Robert S. Wyer, 121–32. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hutcheon, Linda. 2013. *A Theory of Adaptation.* 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Järvelä, Sanna, and K. Ann Renninger. 2014. 'Designing for Learning: Interest, Motivation, and Engagement.' In *The Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences,* 2nd ed., edited by Keith Sawyer, 668–85. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kirsch, Claudine. 2016. 'Using Storytelling to Teach Vocabulary in Language Lessons – Does It Work?' *The Language Learning Journal* 44 (1): 33–51.

Krashen, Sephen, and Janice Bland. 2014. 'Compelling Comprehensible Input, Academic Language and School Libraries.' *Children's Literature in English Language Education Journal* 2 (2): 1–12.

Kress, Gunther. 1997. Before Writing: Rethinking the Paths to Literacy. London: Taylor & Francis.

———. 2009. 'What is Mode?' In *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis,* edited by Carey Jewitt, 54–67. Abingdon: Routledge.

Lazar, Gillian. 1993. *Literature and Language Teaching: A Guide for Teachers and Trainers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ludwig, Trudy. 2013. *The Invisible Boy.* Illustrated by Patrice Barton. New York: Knopf.

Mallan, Kerry M. 1991. *Children as Storytellers.* Newtown, CT: PETA.

Mastellotto, Lynn, and Graham Burton. 2018. 'Storytelling.' In *Maestra Natura: per una pedagogia esperienziale e co-partecipata,* edited by Liliana Dozza, 137–46. Bergamo: Zeroseiup.

Mayer, John D., David R. Caruso, and Peter Salovey. 1999. 'Emotional Intelligence Meets Traditional Standards for an Intelligence.' *Intelligence* 27 (4): 267–98.

Mayer, Richard E. 2011. *Applying the Science of Learning.* Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

McIntyre, Alasdair. 1981. *After Virtue.* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Miller, John P., and Wayne Seller 1990. *Curriculum: Perspectives and Practice.* Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman.

Moya Guijarro, Arsenio Jesús. 2014. *A Multimodal Analysis of Picture Books for Children: A Systemic Functional Approach.* Sheffield: Equinox.

Nehamas, Alexander. 1998. *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Nussbaum, Martha. 1990. *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature.* New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 2010. *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Roney, R. Craig. 1996. 'Storytelling in the Classroom.' *Storytelling World* 9:7–9.

Rosenblatt, Louise M. 1991. 'Literature – S.O.S.!' *Language Arts* 68:444–8.

Rubin, David C. 1995. *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out-Rhymes.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Said, Edward W. 2004. *Humanism and Democratic Criticism.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Schank, Roger C., and Robert P. Abelson. 1995. 'Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story.' In *Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story,* edited by Robert S. Wyer, 1–86. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Siegel, Marjoire Gail. 1995. 'More than Words: The Generative Power of Transmediation for Learning.' *Canadian Journal of Education* 20 (4): 455–75.

Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tsou, Wenli, Weichung Wang, and Yenjun Tzeng. 2006. 'Applying a Multimedia Storytelling Website in Foreign Language Learning.' *Computers and Education* 47 (1): 17–28.

Vezzali, Loris, Sofia Stathi, and Dino Giovannini. 2012. 'Indirect Contact through Book Reading: Improving Adolescents' Attitudes and Behavioural Intentions towards Immigrants.' *Psychology in the Schools* 49 (2): 148–62.

Vezzali, Loris, Sofia Stathi, Dino Giovannini, Dora Capozza, and Elena Trifiletti. 2015. 'The Greatest Magic of Harry Potter: Reducing Prejudice.' *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 45 (2): 105–21.

Wilson, Julie Anne. 1997. 'A Program to Develop the Listening and Speaking Skills of Children in a First Grade Classroom.' Eric Document Reproduction Service ED 415 566. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED415566.pdf

Wright, Andrew. 2001. *Storytelling with Children.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Suitability of Coursebook Materials for Teaching English Through CLIL

Melita Lemut Bajec
Secondary School Veno Pilon Ajdovščina
melita.lemutbajec@gmail.com

CLIL is a didactic approach that assumes simultaneous learning of a foreign language and another subject and enables the fulfilment of goals that each individual subject can never reach on its own. Despite much research that speaks in favour of the approach it is still relatively unknown in Slovenia and therefore received with much scepticism. Teachers are worried about their (in)competence of knowing two fields of expertise on a high enough level as well as about the demands for interdisciplinary team teaching as both call for changes on organizational and content-related levels and presuppose creating unique authentic materials that would take into account many contextual factors. The purpose of the research was a critical analysis of three coursebooks currently widely used in upper-secondary education. Particular emphasis was put on the suitability of the selected coursebooks for team teaching of Biology and English through CLIL. The research focused on levels of cognitive demand, authenticity, comprehensiveness, and motivation arising from the three selected coursebooks. The analysis revealed that the coursebook materials are very simplified, thus not offering many cognitive challenges and that students wish for problem-based lessons as they are aware of the importance of skills such as the ability to form arguments, evaluate, analyse and make autonomous decisions. In order to develop these skills, and thus raise critical thinkers, language and subject teachers must unite, which presupposes a different kind of work ethics as well as a different mind-set. CLIL proves to be a very successful tool in achieving this.

Keywords: CLIL, coursebooks, upper-secondary education, critical thinker

Introduction

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is a didactic approach that has been present in Europe since the 1990s. It postulates that a subject is taught through a foreign language, which means simultaneously meeting the goals of individual school subjects as well as joint objectives that overcome specific subject fields. Despite extensive research done on its benefits and strong recommendations from EU institutions that encourage multilingualism, many Slovenian academics as well as laymen express deep reservations about this innovative didactic approach. The first reason for such an at-

Bratož, S., A. Pirih, and A. Kocbek, eds. 2021. *Pathways to Plurilingual Education.* Koper: University of Primorska Press.

https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-36-8.267-286

titude is the safeguarding of the Slovenian language, and the second the feeling of incompetence that comes with the requirements for interdisciplinary team teaching. Quality CLIL lessons require changes in the arrangement of the timetable and the ways content is presented as well as challenge teachers to produce their own materials.

Therefore, the aim of the research was a critical analysis of 3 coursebooks currently most widely used in upper-secondary education (grammar schools) with focus on suitability of the materials for interdisciplinary team teaching of English and Biology through CLIL rationale. Levels of cognitive demand, authenticity, motivation, and comprehensiveness as arising from coursebook materials were closely examined. The participants of the research were Biology and English teachers as well as 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade students of the grammar school programme. Qualitative and quantitative data helped us determine that the analysed materials lack sufficient cognitive challenges because they are oversimplified; that students wish for problem-based lessons because they are aware that only knowledgeable individuals capable of independently assessing, evaluating, forming argumentative opinions and making decisions can succeed in the world they are about to enter. The path to the lessons that will equip students with the above-mentioned skills is certainly in close collaboration between a language teacher and a subject matter teacher. This assumes a different kind of work as well as a different mindset.

Theoretical Part

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)

In 2002, the European Council of Barcelona invited European Union countries to take action and encourage development of basic skills including learning of two foreign languages from the youngest age. As many countries, including Slovenia, followed this initiative, today 90% of the pupils in mainstream education of 15 EU countries learn two or more foreign languages (Eurydice 2017, 12). CLIL is, therefore, grounded as a very successful teaching approach on all levels of education as it increases students' foreign language competences, encourages intercultural understanding and is a very important step towards a multilingual Europe (Jazbec and Lovrin 2015, 76). It is a didactic approach that assumes additional subject matter learning through a foreign language within the same curriculum frame but not on account of other subject lessons (Eurydice 2017, 14). CLIL is oftentimes understood as a language bath, integrated learning, bilingual lessons etc., which may mark the same or a very similar approach, yet it is more neutral and therefore applicable to

many social contexts as well as relevant for many different European educational policies (Lipavic Oštir and Jazbec 2009, 104–5).

CLIL requires applying a critical perspective when teaching and learning a language (Lipavic Oštir, Lipovec, and Rajšp 2015, 13). Lessons are given different foci as the main attention is paid to the adoption of a pragmatically cultural competence, a foreign language competence and a non-language subject competence (Balek and Jazbec 2010, 27). As CLIL's main rationale is on studying through understanding and comprehending, teachers that follow CLIL meet this pivotal goal more spontaneously and also more intensively than teachers that follow traditional ways of teaching language or non-language subjects (Lipavic Oštir and Jazbec 2009, 110). Such studying also ensures better understanding of the content and the connections in between (Lipavic Oštir, Lipovec, and Rajšp 2015, 13). Students as active co-creators and lesson builders have a chance to experience a foreign language in all its variety and diversity (Retelj and Pižorn 2010, 140).

CLIL is flexible at its core and enables different models and realizations, depending on what a specific model sets in the intersection, be it content, language and communication, culture or cognition (Pevec Semec 2015, 46). Regardless of the emphasis that each individual model places, the starting point should always be non-language subject syllabi so as to avoid putting an additional burden on students. We should focus on extending their knowledge of the topics they are already acquainted with (Retelj and Pižorn 2010, 140), yet at the same time we need to be very careful that the content is cognitively challenging and initiates critical thinking (Pevec Semec 2015, 56). Problem-based lessons arising from CLIL rationale develop communication skills and strengthen profession-related literacy as well as boost students' self-confidence. In particular, CLIL can be very motivational in vocational schools as students see it as a simulation of their possible future profession-related situations (Lipavic Oštir 2009, 51). To sum up, CLIL's value is beneficial at all levels and in all programmes.

Challenges for Teachers and Students

Teaching CLIL sets high expectations and demands on both parties – students and teachers. Students get to know advanced content of one specific subject, by being simultaneously challenged with the demands and principles of a foreign language (Retelj and Pižorn 2010, 137). On the other hand, foreign language teachers need to be knowledgeable in many different subject fields, whereas subject teachers need to master a foreign language. That is also the reason why CLIL teachers in 15 EU school systems are required to

demonstrate additional foreign language knowledge on B2 or C1 level (Eurydice 2017, 15).

Furthermore, through acquiring adequate didactic and methodological knowledge teachers need to develop their own cognitive (learning to learn), affective (learning to be) and pragmatic dimension (learning to do), which that forces them to step out of their comfort zone and enter a less predictable zone of progressive teaching that is characteristic of the environments in which a target language has the second or even the first language position (Skela and Sešek 2012, 74).

As a student is at the focal point of our attention, the teacher seems to fade into the background, s/he is no longer a sole transmitter of knowledge, the only source of information and a mistake hunter, but rather a mentor, animator and co-creator of an optimal learning environment (Skela 2008, 182). So prepared and conducted lessons speak in favour of students' development and success (Brumen, Ivanjšič Kolbl, and Pšunder 2015; Retelj 2015). Students are no longer passive in-takers of information but active participants in the learning process and take on responsibility for their own knowledge; they have to study independently and make use of their mental effort by giving a sensible interpretation to the data through acquiring problem-solving as the primary study technique (Skela 2008, 159).

In addition, with CLIL it is the way to the goal that is important; to see how knowledge gets created and which thinking processes are going on. Lah Šuster (2013, 98–99) points to the fact that knowledge is built gradually, upon acquiring first declarative (getting to know the facts, data, information, rules and theory), then procedural (how to do something) and strategic knowledge (when and why to do something). The final stage is metacognitive and helps students actively control, assess and improve their own reasoning and its use (Pevec Semec 2015, 54).

Besides this, educators must be aware that older students function on a different cognitive level than younger ones, and it is the explicit learning and metacognitive knowledge that counts for them (Lipavic Oštir and Jazbec 2009, 112). Also, older students know that a foreign language is meaningful for their own personal and professional career to a much greater extent, which inherently changes the position of a foreign language within the school context (p. 113). As foreign languages have the ability to bond different school subjects, they necessitate introduction of an integrative curriculum, interdisciplinary lessons, team teaching, and timetable adjustments as well as joint planning, assessment and evaluation of the students' progress (Retelj and Pižorn 2010, 136).

Learning Foreign Languages and CLIL in Slovenia

Learning and teaching foreign languages in Slovenia is rather distinct due to its specific historical context. It has to be regarded as an evolution, intertwinement and synthesis of the most important historic and global trends, endeavours and attempts (Skela and Sešek 2012, 63).

To start with, the attitude towards foreign languages in Slovenia is ambivalent. On the one hand, mastering foreign languages was a must for our predecessors if they wanted to ascend the social ladder, and that is why foreign language skills have always been a prestige. This also explains the fact why today so many children learn foreign languages in a formal or non-formal way from kindergarten and primary school on (Lipavic Oštir and Jazbec 2009, 113).

On the other hand, there are considerable worries about the demise of our mother tongue, in particular among experts of the Slovenian language (Lipavic Oštir and Jazbec 2009, 107), plus an assumption that multilingualism is a burden for an individual's progress (Lipavic Oštir 2009, 42). Consequently, it does not come as a surprise that despite EU recommendations CLIL enters the Slovenian learning environment very slowly, non-systematically and with much resistance (Pevec Semec 2015, 55).

Another unsettling requirement of CLIL is full collaboration between school subjects and teachers, in particular with teachers of the Slovenian language (in our case) (Pižorn 2010, 140). If we want to achieve more advanced learning objectives such as critical thinking and problem solving we need to apply a multi-perspective approach (Pavlič Škerjanc 2010, 30).

CLIL shakes and interferes with the well-established traditions of teaching, as it emphasizes constructivism, experimental work, independent and collaborative models of working, and implies very practical and useful aspects of studying a foreign language (Jazbec and Lovrin 2015, 76). The above stated should convince critics in the Slovenian learning environment that their doubts, concerns and second thoughts on CLIL are pointless and therefore give CLIL a chance to prove its true value.

Coursebooks

Quality lessons are closely related to the choice of quality educational resources. Therefore, it is worth examining them. Despite the availability of other contemporary forms of online educational resources, softcover coursebooks remain an important source and a significant factor of a foreign language learning process (Balek and Jazbec 2010, 30). Skela (2008, 155) emphasizes the meaning that coursebooks have – they reflect scientific achieve-

ments as well as a certain philosophical orientation and as such contribute to and inspire societal changes. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for any teacher to be well acquainted with coursebooks if they want to make the most effective use of their resources as well as adjust them to their students' needs (Skela 2008, 91).

Also, research reveals that coursebook materials are oversimplified and already familiar in content to the students. When emphasizing language (vocabulary, grammar), the content gets neglected, and is consequently randomly problematized (Banegas 2013, 347). CLIL, however, is not about re-studying the already known topic in another language (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010, 96), it is about getting to know the topics in-depth, expanding new horizons and teaching critical distance towards the content.

Further on, successful foreign language acquisition requires overlapping of a foreign language and non-language curricula, which in the Slovenian study environment is not a frequent occurrence. One of the reasons for that is also in 'mainstream' coursebooks as they are not built upon CLIL rationale, which – to coursebooks' defence – is extremely difficult to incorporate due to many contextual factors (such as students' age and cognitive development, levels of foreign language knowledge, curriculum and educational policies). Therefore, for economic reasons publishing houses do not decide to prepare and publish CLIL-based coursebooks on an international range (Lucietto 2009, 13). For that reason, creation of CLIL materials and attempts for the overlapping of the curricula objectives are mainly in the domain of individual teachers.

Empirical Part

Definition of the Research Problem and of the Purpose of the Survey

As the topics in the English language coursebooks are oversimplified, descriptively and shallowly prepared, they do not pose major cognitive challenges, which negatively affects, in particular, the more-able students; they get bored, demotivated and disinterested. Consequently, they see no point in participating in the lessons, and show little or no interest for further self-investigation into the subject matter. Secondly, the materials in the analysed coursebooks are not suitable for quality interdisciplinary team teaching based on CLIL rationale but present merely a solid foundation on which to form one's own materials. Also, the existing materials neither stimulate problem-solving nor require higher thinking processes. As a result, such lessons do not raise critical thinkers.

The purpose of this research is, therefore, to analyse Biology-related topics in three English language coursebooks and find out which of the topics could

be a good foundation for further interdisciplinary team teaching via CLIL. Also, we want to find out if there are any discrepancies between students' and teachers' assessment related to levels of cognitive demand, authenticity, motivation, and comprehensiveness that coursebook materials provide. We also want to find out if there are any statistically significant differences between the group of higher- and lower-graded students in the English language subject when experiencing coursebook materials.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses were set:

- *Q1 Which and how many topics in the selected English coursebooks are suitable for interdisciplinary team teaching of English and Biology via CLIL?*
- *Q2 To what extent are the selected topics suitable as well as already prepared for hands-on interdisciplinary team teaching of English and Biology via CLIL?*
- *Q3 Which cognitive processes are anticipated alongside learning the subject matter in English coursebooks and to what extent do they raise a critical thinker?*
- *Q4 To what extent do the contents and objectives of specific English topics match the objectives of Biology?*
- *Q5 To what extent does the students' assessment differ from the teachers' assessment when looking into levels of cognitive demand, authenticity, motivation, and comprehensiveness that English coursebooks provide?*

- *H1 There are statistically significant differences between higher- and lower-graded students when referring to levels of cognitive demand that coursebook materials provide.*
- *H2 There are statistically significant differences between higher- and lower-graded students when referring to levels of comprehensiveness that coursebook materials provide.*
- *H3 There are no statistically significant differences between higher- and lower-graded students when referring to levels of authenticity that coursebook materials provide.*
- *H4 Coursebook materials motivate higher- and lower-graded students to the same extent.*

Methodology

The paper presents a qualitative research with elements of empirical quantitative research based on descriptive and causal research methods.

Table 1 Constructs According to Internal Consistency and Mean Value

Construct	(1)	(2)	Statements comprising the constructs
Level of cognitive demand	0.723	3.03	I think the topics in the coursebook are oversimplified. I think the topics in the coursebook are easy. I think the topics in the coursebook are demanding.
Authenticity	0.742	3.46	I think the topics in the coursebook are realistic. I think the topics in the coursebook are practical. I think the topics in the coursebook are factual. I think the topics in the coursebook are related to life.
Motivation	0.691	3.17	Topics in the coursebook are appealing. Topics in the coursebook are interesting. Topics in the coursebook are boring. Topics in the coursebook inspire me to do further research.
Comprehensiveness	0.663	3.31	I think the topics in the coursebook are presented from all perspectives. I think the topics in the coursebook are holistically presented. I think the topics in the coursebook are expertly presented. I think that the topics in the coursebook are critically presented.

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) Cronbach α, (2) mean value.

After fulfilling the criteria (the coursebooks need to be currently confirmed by the Slovenian Ministry of Education, and they also need to rank among the three most widely-used ones in Slovenian upper-school education – grammar schools) three coursebooks were selected for a further detailed analysis.

Further on, on the basis of a semi-structured interview with a Biology teacher, an assessment of suitability of the materials for interdisciplinary team teaching of Biology and English via CLIL was prepared. Prior to the meeting the teacher had been asked to bring her own Yearly Syllabus Plan for Biology, National Curriculum Plan for Biology and Matura Exam Catalogue for Biology. This way we gathered information on possible topics for interdisciplinary lessons as well as joint objectives that CLIL would meet. Special attention was also paid to the objectives and cognitive processes that are realized through specific topics.

Next, five English language teachers were asked to fill out an Assessment form, consisting of nine open-ended questions that referred to their perception of levels of authenticity, cognitive demand, motivation, and comprehensiveness that arise from the analyzed coursebook materials.

Finally, we were also interested how participants (87 first, second and third year grammar school students aged 15–18 of a smaller upper-secondary grammar school in the Primorska region) regard the topics in the analysed

coursebooks. Data were obtained with an online questionnaire that consisted of a 5-point Likert type scale and two open-ended questions. Quantitative data had to do with four constructs: levels of cognitive demand, authenticity, motivation and comprehensiveness. Besides that, we also attained qualitative data on participants' standpoint on potential English lessons that would follow CLIL rationale and stress problem-solving skills.

Processing of the on-line data included bivariate statistical analysis on a descriptive and inferential level. Individual variables (statements) were joined into four constructs and were incorporated in the analyses in the form of mean variables (table 1). The given values, representing an individual's level of agreement varied from 1 (meaning 'do not agree at all') to 5 (absolutely agree), enabled comparison and interpretation. Processing of the questionnaire data started by measuring Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, which proved to be acceptable ($\alpha > 0.6$) or good ($\alpha > 0.7$). Upon that we ran a *t*-test in order to see individual constructs. Before that, we had run Levene's test to assess the equality of variances that tests the null hypothesis that the population variances are equal.

Results and Discussion

The following section will first deal with the characteristics of the analysed coursebooks and cognitive processes anticipated alongside studying the subject matter. Further on, we will propose Biology-related topics that present a suitable foundation for conducting Biology-related topics in English lessons via CLIL. Next, we will identify joint objectives that such lessons would meet. Also, teachers' and students' responses on coursebook materials when related to cognitive demand, motivation, comprehensiveness, and authenticity of the coursebook materials will be discussed. We will also review participants' responses related to problem-based teaching/learning through CLIL rationale. This way we will answer our research questions and hypotheses on which this research paper builds.

Characteristics of the Analysed Coursebooks

It needs to be stressed that the three analysed coursebooks – *On Screen B2* and *B2+, New Success Intermediate* and *Upper-Intermediate* as well as *New Headway Intermediate* and *Upper-Intermediate* – effectively achieve the objectives of the English language as a school subject, which is knowledge of English on B2 and B2+ level. They follow a communicative approach and emphasize communicative functions of the language. They highlight vocabulary (synonyms, antonyms, word formation, idioms and set phrases), and

there is also a section on acquiring new and practising already familiar grammar plus studying pieces of writing necessary for Matura.

Each unit presents the topic gradually, taking into account a 'linguistic loop,' which is a very important didactic tool when acquiring a foreign language. It helps one learn receptive and productive skills and is an essential part of a linear advancement in bettering linguistic skills (Lipavic Oštir, Lipovec, and Rajšp 2015, 16).

Also, it is transparent that the units follow the same structure and pattern (text, vocabulary tasks, communication activities, writing assignments, listening comprehension activity) and thereby present a safe and expected learning environment, which is very important for weak students to whom language learning poses a challenge.

Topics Suitable for Preparing Biology-Related English Lessons via CLIL

Upon a critical analysis of the three English coursebooks we found four concurrent topics in all three coursebooks, e.g. Sports and Fitness, Food, The Environment and Environmental Problems, Health & Injuries and Illnesses, which could present a good foundation for interdisciplinary team teaching of English and Biology via CLIL, provided extra study material is prepared. Despite different presentations of the topics they all cover meaningful vocabulary needed for everyday communication related to the subject matter.

Cognitive Processes Anticipated alongside Learning the Subject Matter

The above-mentioned topics are familiar to students as they were studied in primary school through Science (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences) as well as English. In upper-secondary school students mostly expand their vocabulary, revise and add to the already-known facts and solutions, yet they do not deepen the understanding of the concepts, they do not problematize them, and they do not look for alternative/innovative solutions.

Moreover, the texts are from the Matura's point of view insufficiently demanding. Teacher Š. warns: 'On Matura students are expected to deal with much more difficult texts. Also, types of tasks in coursebooks only partially coincide with Matura tasks.' Further on, the analysis shows that the topics are presented in a very descriptive way, which means that critical thinking is not at the core of the materials. 'Each unit consists of two or maximum three open activities where critical thinking can occur which is far too little to carry out problem-based lessons,' says a beginner teacher. Even tasks that partially encourage critical thinking are formed in a way that offer solutions and lead to very expected outcomes.

Activities that require original and creative thinking, searching for alternative solutions as well as situations/problems that would enable greater identification of the students with the topics have to be prepared by the teachers themselves, as 'coursebooks offer just a starting point with the basic vocabulary,' says teacher T. Therefore, it can be assumed that students might be robbed of cognitive challenges if confronted only with coursebook materials. Our assessment is in line with the Argentinian researcher Banegas (2013, 352) who claims that topics are presented as if targeted to primary school pupils.

One of the reasons why the materials are simplified is their adjustment for foreign language learning. 'Texts, despite their contemporary nature, feel rigid, artificial and in a way forced,' says the participating male English teacher. Listening comprehensions and models of writing pieces tend to be even more simplistic than reading comprehension texts. So much so that models of writing assignments can serve only as a prototype to be referred to in the future when confronted with a more complex assignment.

Following the above analysis, it becomes clear that most of the tasks require lower-order thinking processes (knowledge, understanding, application), whereas tasks that require higher-order thinking processes (synthesis, analysis, evaluation) are present on a minor scale and refer mainly to communication (opinion forming) or teaching the students how to write Matura-required pieces of writing (formal letter, report, article, essay). Yet, it should be justly questioned if and to what extent students make use of their innovative, original and authentic ideas and solutions when writing the required pieces if all that students do is make use of already-known arguments, which they were led to by the coursebook. Teacher Š. also observes that students tend to concentrate more on form than on the content itself. Following the prescribed form, they neglect creative, innovative and original solutions; no wonder that the content remains cliché-like.

To round up, the analysis also showed that students are only rarely given a chance to carry out independent research work. This is not necessarily part of the unit; therefore, it is written below the line (e.g. in *On Screen*) or at the end of the unit (as it is in *New Success*) and meant as homework. The teacher can – if/when lacking time – decide to skip these assignments.

Challenges for the Teachers Wanting to Carry out Lessons Built on CLIL Rationale

As already pointed out, topics in the three coursebooks present a solid foundation on which teachers can work and prepare their autonomous materials

that will meet the objectives of both subjects. According to one of the participating teachers, 'Many of the topics could be worked further on in collaboration with other subjects and consequently offer a palette of topics and expand students' horizons and knowledge. That way also students that struggle with the language might find it more relevant; or if the language is too easy for some, they could expand their knowledge in the field they are not so confident in.'

Also, as it is really difficult (at least in Slovenia) to find a teacher that is a subject-matter and a foreign language expert, the most effective CLIL can be achieved through interdisciplinary team teaching. This, however, sets high expectations on teachers who worry about 'extra workload that would come from studying the topic in order to prepare quality lessons of this type' (teacher M.). Further on, all participating teachers see many obstacles in 'fast-paced scientific advancements that require constant education in many different fields of expertise.' Nonetheless, teacher I. who participated in pilot-run European programmes (aimed at introducing interdisciplinary team teaching into a regular teaching practice) added: 'The project connected teachers of different profiles. It took a lot of time and self-discipline. The biggest challenge was finding time to work together in the classroom. However, as a teacher I benefitted tremendously.'

Possible Interdisciplinary Links and Joint Objectives

The main objective of English lessons is the development of holistic competences for intercultural and interlinguistic understanding (Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport 2008, 7); the main objective of Biology is a holistic understanding of Biology, that is, understanding the concepts and links in between them (Vilhar 2008, 55). Seeing what both National Curricula strive for, it is crucial that Biology and English teachers alike comprehend the necessity of interdisciplinary team teaching as it predisposes work on higher taxonomic levels where understanding of how one field is related to other fields of expertise is prioritized (Vilhar 2008, 80). Such lessons help develop key competences for life-long learning that include creativity, problem-solving, risk assessment, decision making, and critical thinking (Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport 2008, 8).

Upon a critical analysis of the selected English coursebooks, Yearly Syllabus Plan for Biology, National Curriculum Plan for Biology and Matura Exam Catalogue for Biology, authors of the research identify possible links for interdisciplinary team teaching as presented in table 2.

We also believe the following would be the joint objectives that such lessons if conducted would meet:

Table 2 Possible Links for Interdisciplinary Team Teaching

English	Possible links for interdisciplinary team teaching	Biology
Pollution and environmental problems	Tragedy of the commons Endangered species Sustainable development Alternative sources Development of life on Earth Climate changes Endemic and non-indigenous species Slovenia as a place of biotic diversity	Ecology
Food	Food pyramid Food labelling GMO Genetic inheritance Food additives Modern diseases	Foundations of healthy life
Sport	Doping Addictions (smoking, alcoholism, drugs)	Foundations of healthy life
Injuries, illnesses, health	Vaccination Hygiene and infectious diseases Mental and physical diseases	Foundations of healthy life

- First, students would acquire foreign language terminology of a specific subject matter;
- Secondly, by making use of the right sources and information, they would deepen their understanding of the concepts;
- Finally, as such lessons enhance students' critical thinking skills they would raise critical thinkers able to form a critical distance to (oftentimes fake) information.

Teachers' and Students' Responses to Coursebook Materials

The following section will deal with the interpretation of the students' grades given to the constructs cognitive demand, authenticity, comprehensiveness, and motivation. We will also analyse possible correlations and discrepancies between the students' and teachers' assessment to the above-mentioned constructs. Finally, we will take a look into students' and teachers' thoughts and doubts about potential CLIL lessons.

Cognitive Demand

As already pointed out, teachers' professional assessment shows that coursebook materials are simplified. Also students' evaluation of the construct 'lev-

Table 3 Students' Responses to 'Levels of Cognitive Demand'

Students	*M*	*SD*	Levene's test (Sig.)	*t*-test (Sig.)
Lower	2.52	0.83	0.407	0.000
Higher	3.38	0.78		

els of cognitive demand' was 3.0 on the scale from 1 to 5 (table 3). As students' grades reflect teachers' assessment it can be concluded that materials in the coursebooks do not provide significant cognitive challenges and do not push students out of their comfort zone. Further on, we wanted to find out if there are statistically significant differences between the group of higher- and lower-graded students. We found out that lower-graded students evaluate materials in the coursebooks as significantly more demanding ($p = 0.000$) in comparison to higher-graded students.

Therefore, our hypothesis that claims 'There are statistically significant differences between higher- and lower-graded students when referring to levels of cognitive demand that coursebook materials provide' can be confirmed. This outcome is very important for teachers when starting to prepare their own CLIL materials. It means that different cognitive abilities should be taken into account and tasks should be built from simpler to more complex ones. This way, students of all abilities would benefit.

Authenticity

We have already discussed the adaptation of the materials in the coursebooks for the purpose of foreign language learning, which does not agree with CLIL rationale that presupposes work with authentic materials. This is why we wanted to find out how students perceive coursebook materials as we believe that they use authentic texts themselves for their own interests and purposes regardless of the fact whether they belong to the group of higher- or lower- graded students, and therefore know what authentic means as well as how important it is in seeking the correct information.

The average grade of the construct 'authenticity' was 3.5 (table 4), which shows students' awareness that they learn in a quite artificial and adjusted environment. The result of the Levene's test for the construct 'authenticity' was statistically non-characteristic ($p = 0.573$), which means that the assumption was verified and we could run an adjusted *t*-test. We found out that there are no statistically significant differences when grading authenticity between the two groups ($p = 0.188$) (table 4), therefore, we confirm the hypothesis which claims 'There are no statistically significant differences be-

Table 4 Students' Responses to 'Authenticity' of the Study Materials

Students	*M*	*SD*	Levene's test (Sig.)	*t*-test (Sig.)
Lower	3.34	0.74	0.573	0.188
Higher	3.55	0.68		

Table 5 Students' Responses to 'Comprehensiveness' of the Study Materials

Students	*M*	*SD*	Levene's test (Sig.)	*t*-test (Sig.)
Lower	3.05	0.59	0.846	0.002
Higher	3.50	0.60		

tween higher- and lower-graded students when referring to levels of authenticity that coursebook materials present.'

As authentic materials are 'designed not to transmit declarative knowledge about the target language but rather to provide an experience of the language in use' (Tomlinson and Masuhara 2010, 400), it is clear authentic language teaching should be educators' priority.

Comprehensiveness

When analysing the coursebooks teacher T. pointed to the fact that 'critical thinking, opinion forming, justification as well as problem-based lessons are up to teacher's creativity and incentive,' by which it becomes obvious that good CLIL lessons call for creation of the teacher's own comprehensive and problem-based materials, which is not the case with the analysed materials.

Students' average grade when referring to the construct 'levels of comprehensiveness' is 3.31 (table 5). The grade undeniably shows that students are well aware of the fact that coursebook materials are not holistic, comprehensive and critically presented and therefore do not develop key competences so necessary in life.

We also carried out a *t*-test and found out that there are statistically significant differences between the two groups ($p = 0.02$) when referring to levels of comprehensiveness (table 5) and hereby confirm the hypothesis which says 'There are statistically significant differences between higher- and lower-graded students when referring to levels of comprehensiveness that coursebook materials provide.'

The construct 'comprehensiveness' is in some extent similar to the construct 'levels of cognitive demand,' therefore, it is not surprising that higher-graded students are more aware of the superficial and shallow materials and the consequences that arise from that than lower-graded students.

Table 6 Comparison of the Groups According to the Construct 'Motivation'

Students	*M*	*SD*	Levene's test (Sig.)	*t*-test (Sig.)
Lower	3.02	0.75	0.564	0.078
Higher	3.28	0.63		

Motivation

Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010, 140) stress that it is essential that students' attitude be constantly included in the evaluation. This is why the authors of the research wanted to check if there is any correlation between levels of motivation and study materials, in particular between higher- and lower-graded students. Therefore, we asked the participants what they think of the materials when considering their ability to motivate the students.

Teacher Š. stresses that coursebooks lack topics that students could identify with, which means that the topics could be potentially boring to them. Teacher T. warns that the texts are too long, therefore, unappealing to the students who are no longer used to reading. Teacher S. simply concludes that the materials do not boost students' motivation, as there is not much they can relate to.

Students graded the construct 'motivation' with 3.2 (table 6), which shows their neutrality towards the topics. The *t*-test showed that there are no statistically significant differences ($p = 0.078$) in motivation between the higher- and lower-graded students (table 6). Thereby, we confirm our hypothesis that claims 'Coursebook materials motivate higher- and lower-graded students to the same extent.'

To conclude, when preparing CLIL materials it is necessary to think about ways to get closer to the young in order to encourage their curiosity and boost their motivation as well as contribute to a more effective and affective way of learning, all of which refers to stronger and weaker students alike.

Thoughts and Doubts about Potential Lessons Based on CLIL

Further on, the students were asked if they would like the topics they normally associate with other subjects (e.g. history, biology, physics) to be discussed in English lessons even if it meant more cognitively challenging lessons (more advanced vocabulary, higher thinking processes). 60 students (75%) said yes, 20 students (25%) said no. Among the reasons in favour of the suggestion are the following:

– 'It's very important for our further professional career (further education, job).' (10 students)

- 'We would expand our horizons.' (10)
- 'We would have more knowledge.' (9)
- 'We would expand our vocabulary (9), in particular terminology.' (4)
- 'We would be able to link between different school subjects.' (10)
- 'Such lessons would be more interesting, down-to-earth and practical.' (8)

Students that are against such lessons present a minority and say:

- 'I see no point in that.' (3)
- 'Topics are already very difficult.' (7)
- 'Topics are already thoroughly enough presented.' (6)

All teachers expressed their concerns that 'an English teacher is not competent enough in the fields that are not his/her expertise in order to present them well.' They also add that this would mean 'investing a lot of time and energy in one's own education.' Nonetheless, all of them are well aware of the importance of being well acquainted with the subject-related terminology for one's future professional career. However, in most cases they do not point to interdisciplinary team teaching as they see huge obstacles in organizing such lessons as well as the preparation of the materials being too time consuming. Teacher T. concludes that it is much more important that the students 'master general competences and strategies that will help them independently acquire new knowledge in areas of their interest.'

Thoughts and Doubts about Potential Problem-Based Lessons

When asked if they wanted more problem-based lessons which would naturally arise from CLIL postulates, 38 (55%) students confirmed and 31 (45%) declined. Students who do not want problem-based lessons think that the lessons they currently follow are already 'too problem-based' and add 'it's fine the way it is.' Some students mention 'the level of difficulty that they can't follow,' two students say 'they see no point in that.' However, a majority voted for problem-based lessons, stressing:

- 'We would deal with more contemporary issues and learn problem solving skills.' (8)
- 'Lessons would be more realistic.' (5)
- 'We would develop critical thinking skills.' (4)
- 'We would raise awareness and expand our horizons.' (6)
- 'We would exchange different points of view.' (8)

– 'We would discuss topics more in depth.' (2)
– 'We would better understand and memorize more.' (3)
– 'Lessons would be more interesting.' (6).

All the teachers agree that there are ways to make the lessons more problem-based. However, they are also unanimous that students above all need to learn the strategies that will help them link different types of knowledge and enable them to see that subjects are not separated but intertwined.

Concluding Findings

CLIL is a didactic approach, in which the language is used as a tool to achieve goals of different subjects. Such an approach enables an in-depth overview of a topic, stimulates work on higher-order thinking levels and raises critical thinkers. Furthermore, quality CLIL lessons call for changes in the arrangement of the timetable and the ways content is presented as well as challenge teachers to produce their own materials based on the materials found in the coursebooks. Another important factor is the mindset of everyone involved in the learning process, which needs to be open to novelties and changes, which is not necessarily the case in the Slovene study environment.

In the wake of all the forthcoming global changes that make English a lingua franca and call for its command, a critical overview of the existing coursebooks is not only well-grounded but also necessary. The analysis conducted of the three coursebooks shows that they follow a communicative approach to foreign language learning, therefore successfully develop communication skills, and are based upon a 'linguistic loop.' However, it needs to be addressed that coursebook materials are oversimplified, which makes their authenticity questionable. As such they are cognitively unstimulating and do not pose any cognitive challenges to more advanced students. Quantitative data underlies the very same conclusion. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the materials can function as a good foundation for interdisciplinary team teaching on the condition that new materials be prepared.

Teachers and students stress that well-prepared problem-based lessons, which can be successfully realized through CLIL, are crucial in developing critical thinkers as well as for students' further professional careers. Additional value of these lessons would be more knowledge; work with authentic materials; contemporary, debatable topics; acquisition of problem-solving techniques and strategies. When and if introducing such lessons teachers also need to pay special attention to weaker students, to whom English already is a hurdle and would require an individual approach if teachers are to real-

ize the same objectives. Yet, it should not go unnoticed that all participating teachers fear extra workload and organizational obstacles.

All in all, as the research has managed to prove benefits arising from CLIL lessons, CLIL materials and interdisciplinary team-teaching, we should strive for slow but steady implementation of this novel approach into Slovene upper-secondary education.

References

Banegas, Dario Luis. 2013. 'An Investigation into CLIL-Related Sections of EFL Coursebooks: Issues of CLIL Inclusion in the Publishing Market.' *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 17 (3): 345–59.

Balek, Slavica, and Saša Jazbec. 2010. *Pot v večjezičnost – zgodnje učenje tujih jezikov v 1. VIO osnovne šole.* Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

Brumen, Mihaela, Polonca Kolbl Ivanjšič, and Mateja Pšunder. 2015. 'Pedagoški predmeti poučevanja nejezikovnih predmetov v tujem jeziku.' *Revija za elementarno izobraževanje* 8 (1–2): 27–42.

Coyle, Do, Peter Hood, and David Marsh. 2010. CLIL Content and Language Integrated Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eurydice. 2017. *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Jazbec, Saša, and Metka Lovrin. 2015. 'Koncept CLIL – novost ali stalnica pri učiteljih na OŠ v Sloveniji, študija primera.' *Revija za elementarno izobraževanje* 8 (1–2): 65–79.

Lah Šuster, Anamarija. 2013. 'Učenje tujih jezikov v otroštvu – stopnja osebnostne razvitosti in razvitosti strategij v 2. triadi OŠ.' *Vestnik za tuje jezike* 5 (1–2): 95–113.

Lipavic Oštir, Alja. 2009. 'Organizacija in okoliščine izvajanja zgodnjega učenja tujih jezikov na osnovnih šolah.' Evalvacijska študija, Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Mariboru.

Lipavic Oštir, Alja, and Saša Jazbec. 2009. 'Vzajemno delovanje različnih dejavnikov pri uvajanju CLIL-a v šolski sistem v Sloveniji.' *Didactica Slovenica – Pedagoška obzorja* 24 (3–4): 104–18.

Lipavic Oštir, Alja, Alenka Lipovec, and Martina Rajšp. 2015. 'CLIL – orodje za izbiro nejezikovnih vsebin.' *Revija za elementarno izobraževanje* 8 (1–2): 11–26.

Lucietto, Sandra. 2009. 'Writing Materials for CLIL: A Lost Cause?' *Folio* 13 (1): 12–14.

Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport. 2008. 'Učni načrt: angleščina; gimnazija.' http://portal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2010/programi/media/pdf/ucni_nacrti/UN_ANGLESCINA_gimn.pdf

McKinlay, Stuart, in Bob Hastings. 2013. *New Success Intermediate.* Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Pavlič Škerjanc, Katja. 2010. 'Smisel in sistem kulikularnih povezav.' In *Medpredmetne in kurikularne povezave,* edited by Zora Rutar Ilc and Katja Pavlič Škerjanc, 19–42. Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.

Pevec Semec, Katica. 2015. 'Pedagoški pristop CLIL – izziv za profesionalni razvoj učiteljev tujega jezika na zgodnji stopnji šolanja.' *Revija za elementarno izobraževanje* 8 (1–2): 43–63.

Retelj, Andreja. 2015. 'Razvoj leksikalnih zmožnosti pri učenju nemščine v srednji šoli: primerjava komunikacijskega pristopa in pristopa CLIL.' *Šolsko polje* 26 (1–2): 67–80.

Retelj, Andreja, and Karmen Pižorn. 2010. 'Povezovanje tujih jezikov z nejezikovnimi predmeti.' *Vestnik za tuje jezike* 2 (1–2): 135–42.

Skela, Janez. 2008. 'Vrednotenje učbenikov angleškega jezika z vidika kognitivne teorije.' In *Učenje in poučevanje tujih jezikov na Slovenskem,* edited by Janez Skela, 154–82. Ljubljana: Tangram.

Skela, Janez, and Urška Sešek. 2012. 'Od globalnih smernic do lokalnih kontekstov: Učenje in poučevanje tujih jezikov v Sloveniji.' *Jezik in slovstvo* 57 (3–4): 63–81.

Tomlinson, Brian, and Hitomi Masuhara, ed. 2010. *Research for Materials Development in Language Learning.* London: Continuum

Vilhar, Barbara, ed. 2008. *Učni načrt za biologijo, gimnazija.* Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.


Reviews

The monograph *Pathways to Plurilingual Education* consolidates and promotes linguistic and cultural diversity by highlighting the benefits of developing plurilingual competences and living in multilingual societies. It relies on the established theories and recent findings in the area of multilingual education as well as teaching and learning second/neighbouring/foreign languages. The contributors to the monograph have years of experience in various fields related to language teaching and learning. The chapters included in the monograph deal with linguistic, social, psychological, and cultural dimensions of bilingualism and interculturalism. At the same time, they present original and innovative teaching approaches aimed at promoting plurilingual and multilingual practices in education.

The volume consists of different thematic sections, starting with the introductory chapter which discusses common beliefs about bilingualism and second language acquisition and presents the recent findings and trends in this area. The other sections cover different aspects of plurilingual education, such as language learning motivation and anxiety, developing cross-linguistic awareness, linguistic and cultural pluralism, the teaching of border and neighbouring languages, and others.

Prof. Dr. Lucija Čok
Institute for Linguistic Studies,
Science and Research Centre Koper

The research monograph *Pathways to Plurilingual Education* edited by Silva Bratož, Anja Pirih, and Alenka Kocbek brings together fifteen research papers which provide an in-depth overview of different aspects of plurilingualism and multilingualism studied across all levels of education, from preschool to university level. It addresses recent dilemmas and issues arising in contemporary learning environments by focusing especially on various aspects of linguistic and cultural diversity and their (inherent) relatedness. It shows that the response to the challenges posed to society today by new forms of mobility and migration can be found in developing effective plurilingual and cross-cultural forms of education. As stated by the editors in the preface to the monograph, the pathways to a linguistically and culturally diverse learning environment are complex and divergent, especially when taking into account the numerous factors affecting the development of such an environment.

The introductory chapters of the monograph present a critical overview of the literature and recent research in the area of bilingualism and foreign language acquisition by stressing that a considerable amount of the research in this field is still fragmentary and methodologically disputable. The following chapters include papers dealing with several models and examples of practice in various multilingual environments, by paying special attention to minority and neighbouring languages and multilingual settings. The chapters of the next part address the multi-faceted dimensions of communication across languages and cultures and highlight the importance of developing fully-fledged foreign language competences. The following part presents two chapters analysing and stressing the role of cross-cultural awareness. Finally, the monograph closes with two chapters discussing different approaches to foreign language learning.

The present monograph provides new insights, both from a research and professional perspective, into the understanding of the role of teaching other languages (foreign, second, additional, neighbouring, minority, etc.) and the significance of cultural and linguistic diversity in contemporary educational settings, and will undoubtedly prove valuable in raising the relevant stakeholders' awareness of these issues.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Darja Mertelj
Faculty of Arts,
University of Ljubljana

The monograph *Pathways to Plurilingual Education* edited by Silva Bratož, Anja Pirih, and Alenka Kocbek presents original research and review papers that investigate a variety of aspects related to education in a multilingual and plurilingual environment. It incorporates views and perspectives of authors from different European countries who discuss the recent trends in multilingual education, such as studies in the area of bilingualism and second language acquisition, contemporary approaches to foreign /second language learning, the importance of minority and neighbouring languages, the interdependence of language and culture, the development of cross-linguistic awareness, the question of identity in plurilingual environments and others. The book is written in English as it targets an international audience.

As emphasised by the Editors of the monograph, plurilingual education is a complex area which is worth exploring from multiple perspectives. Authors in this area address issues and questions which help us understand the role of language in the cultural, political and broader social context while at the same time pointing to the importance of going beyond the traditional linguistic and cultural barriers. The issues and topics discussed in the monograph are timely and relevant as they address the recent trends and challenges in the area of language education which are aimed at promoting linguistic and cultural diversity at all levels of education.

The present monograph is a welcome contribution to the scholarly literature in the field of language studies and multilingualism as it offers several important insights into the role and importance of plurilingual and multilingual practices in education. Last but not least, an advantage and significant aspect of the work is undoubtedly the fact that the authors of the contributions are themselves from different linguistic and cultural environments which allows them to present different views of the topics discussed.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Karmen Pižorn
Faculty of Education,
University of Ljubljana