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Editorial

Issue 4 of *Journal of Language and Education* presents a wide range of articles from around the world covering various topics in linguistics and practices of teaching English.

Irina Anashkina and Ekaterina Khramova study segmental phonetic means involved in the formation of identical or similar acoustic images which interact in the limited semantic space of limerics and texts containing spoonerisms. Limerics and spoonerised literary works can be considered typically English examples of ludic mini-texts the plane of expression of which is foregrounded by creative use of the phonemic inventory. The issue can be of interest to English language teachers and researchers interested in the phenomenon of language play.

The article by Svetlana Bogolepova is devoted to the issue of learners' and teachers' needs analysis on the evaluation stage of textbook development. The author points out that the results of needs analysis in this stage benefit not only textbook writers in helping them to design tasks and select materials and learners but also teachers in revealing their needs and formulating course expectations. An advantage of the article is a thorough analysis of the works and publications in the area of needs analysis and textbook development, which proves the topicality of the research and ensures reliability.

The paper by Agnieszka Dzięcioł-Pędich presents an analysis of online forums for teachers in which she examined teachers' views on the essence of ESP. The author analyses four online forums for ESP teachers. The results of this analysis show that the majority of discussions refer to the choice of materials. The analysis also reveals that forum members do not discuss how to teach individual language skills, but rather how to teach different types of ESP. The researcher claims that there is no mutual opinion on what constitutes English for Specific Purposes. Finally, the choice of topics in the analysed threads indicates that forum members and their visitors are interested not only in ESP, but also in other subjects.

Elena Freydina examines the contextual category of tenor and its prosodic realisation in rhetorical discourse on the basis of recorded and scripted sample lectures in English. The author combines theoretical grounds and personal observations to prove that tenor conveys information about participants' relationships in a given speech situation and the relationships associated with a broader sociocultural context. The focus of the article is the idea that tenor can be formed intentionally and used to implement the speaker's goals. The issues analysed in the article can be of interest to teachers of phonetics, researchers into discourse and those who are interested in cross-cultural communication.

In his research, Konstantin Khomutskii looks at temporal-aspectual forms in propositions of performative verbs of promise, swear and bet. The author uses a continuous sampling method which allows him to analyse 1,800 performative utterances containing commissive performative verbs. He argues about the frequency of the temporal-aspectual forms of verbs and the types of syntactic structures in their propositions. Despite thorough analysis, K. Khomutskii concludes that for more accurate results a more profound analysis is needed.

Valentina Khrabrova's article deals with the issue of theoretical and practical considerations on the IELTS

Academic Writing Task One and analyses common students' problems in graph description. The results of this analysis show that for successful graph description a mastery of all four skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) is necessary, as well as skills transfer, critical thinking and writing, the appropriate use of style, and graphic literacy. The article is of particular interest to those who teach for IELTS exams.

In her article, Nasy Inthisone Pfanner focuses on the notion of teacher profession, professionalism and challenges of minority teachers in western white societies. She also looks at the influence of the minority teachers' identity on professionalism and on minority students. The author provides an individual analysis and thoughts on the topic of minority teachers' current position in the educational system of different countries, particularly of Austria, which makes it topical for the present day teaching and learning practice.

Olga Stognieva investigates the efficiency of individualised resources in the Russian EFL classroom. The author argues that carefully selected individualised resources add to the development of students' speaking abilities in terms of purposefulness, richness of speech content and logical progression of speech. Quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis are implemented in this article, and students' personal profiles are given as examples.

This brief synopsis of the papers constituting this issue (Issue 4) of *Journal of Language and Education* demonstrates a diversity of approaches and topics in the areas of linguistics and practices of teaching English. We hope our readers enjoy the selection of articles chosen for this issue and the book review presented at the end of it.

Editor-in-Chief of Issue 4 Elena Velikaya

Editor of Issue 4 Prithvi Shrestha

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The Phonetic Means of Creating a Ludic Sense in the English Nonsense Text

Irina Anashkina
National Research N. P. Ogarev Mordovia State University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Irina Anashkina, National Research N.P. Ogarev Mordovia State University, 68 Bolshevistskaya Str., Saransk, Republic of Mordovia, Russian Federation, 430005. E-mail: iraida952@gmail.com

Ekaterina Khramova
National Research N. P. Ogarev Mordovia State University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ekaterina Khramova, National Research N.P. Ogarev Mordovia State University, 68 Bolshevistskaya Str., Saransk, Republic of Mordovia, Russian Federation, 430005. E-mail: kate_2087@mail.ru

Research into the creative use of language can be a source of new knowledge about language structure and its implementation. The paper describes segmental phonetic means involved in the formation of identical or similar acoustic images which interact in the limited semantic space of such English nonsense texts as a limerick and a literary work containing transposed sounds, syllables and words (also known as spoonerisms). This ludic interaction provides the sophisticated plane of expression putting less emphasis on the conveyed message. The analysis included the following stages: 1) identifying the cases of sound-based play in typically English pieces of creative writing; 2) describing the structure and semantics of language units which embody ludic acoustic images; 3) looking at the phenomena in question with relation to such constituents of speech act as the message, the addresser and the addressee. The findings reveal that English nonsense texts the plane of expression of which is foregrounded by the creative use of phonetic means demonstrate simultaneous presence and absence of meaning. The results show that dealing with ludic senses allows to appreciate the ludic possibilities of the English phonemic inventory as well as the metalinguistic awareness and literary appreciation of the author and the recipient.

Keywords: ludic function of language, ludic sense, ludic mini-text, limerick, spoonerism

Over a long time the phenomenon of language play has been unfairly neglected as a topic for a serious linguistic study. Yet some scholars are aware of the problem and consider it a matter of crucial importance. In particular, they emphasize the following basic ideas: 1) play constitutes an integral part of culture (Huizinga, 1992); 2) language play is not just a characteristic of any speakers regardless of their background and personality but it also indicates the normal development of language skills (Crystal, 2001); 3) the phenomenon of language play is equally possible to observe in any language and discourse as well as on any language level (Yagello, 2009). The above-mentioned viewpoints and the extensive literature on language creativity (Barthes, 1989; Lyotard, 1998; Crystal, 2001; Chomsky, 2005; Yagello, 2009) still enable some further research into *the ludic function of language*, the term applied by David Crystal (2001).

The ludic function of language proves to be closely connected with such communication functions distinguished by Jakobson (1975) as the poetic, the emotive and the conative one. This relation can be backed up by the following conditions: 1) the plane of expression foregrounded by the creative use of language (the poetic function → the message); 2) the situational character (the emotive function → the addresser); 3) a challenging linguistic task suggested by the creative author to the recipient who is smart enough to cope with it (the conative function → the addressee). On the other hand, the ludic function of language is quite independent due to its peculiarities: it is heuristic (i.e. reveals the possibilities of non-standard use of language) and irrelevant to transmitting information.

Thus, performing the ludic function of language is a metalinguistic activity of the addresser and the addressee. The sender creates a message with a foregrounded plane of expression for the recipient to decipher. These processes result in the formation of *a ludic sense* in the conceptual systems (as defined by Pavilionis, 1983) of the two speech act participants. The ludic sense can be identified in the limited semantic space of *a ludic mini-text*. The ludic mini-text is characterised by the creative use of language and may be compared to a kind of a linguistic puzzle meant for the addressee with developed language skills and a broad cultural background.

A limerick and a literary work containing spoonerisms seem to be fine examples of purely English ludic mini-texts the plane of expression of which is to a large extent foregrounded by the creative use of segmental phonetic means. The study of such material can provide some new and useful information on the linguistic creativity of English speakers and the ludic functioning of the English phonemic inventory.

Materials and Methods

What makes literary nonsense a perfect material for the purposes of this study is its significant relation to language play. Tigges (1988) concludes that devices which constitute a nonsense work "draw attention to the text as an artefact rather than a representation of reality" (pp. 73–74). Nonsense mini-texts are most suggestive of language creativeness. As Tigges (1988) puts it, "a balance between presence and absence of meaning" tends to be better sustained in shorter verse or prose forms (p. 51).

A limerick is commonly defined as a humorous five-line poem with a rhyme scheme *aabba* (British & World English Oxford Dictionary (BWEOD), 2016). Among its distinctive features, there is predominantly oral transmission, mass character, comparatively low style, a high degree of variation and repeatability (Bibby, 1978). A limerick can be referred to as a ludic mini-text since its plane of expression prevails over the plane of content which, for the most part, lacks any sense.

According to one of the definitions, a spoonerism is a reversal of sounds in two words, with humorous effects and originates from the name of William Spooner, an English clergyman and scholar of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who is believed to have accidentally made such slips of the tongue (Hirsch & Kett, 2002). However, this study looks at intentionally created, crafted spoonerisms which make up one third of the whole literary work and give it nonsensical character.

A text containing spoonerisms is a representative example of a ludic mini-text. Its plane of expression is foregrounded by means of changing the succession of acoustic images. The coherence can be restored by matching mixed sound fragments with corresponding graphic manifestations. Consequently, the task of transmitting information fades away again while a good deal of attention is focused on a clever language manipulation.

Both limericks and spoonerised texts are limited in their length. Limericks conform to the rules imposed on this form of verse (five lines). The length of spoonerised texts does not exceed 800 words because, obviously, a longer piece of such writing would be exhausting to comprehend and its ludic value would inevitably diminish.

It must be noted that the cases of sound-based play discovered in limericks and spoonerised texts can be found in some other pieces of creative English writing representing either poetry or prose. For instance, the interaction of similar or identical acoustic images characteristic of limericks is also contained in various jokes, which are not necessarily poems (Metcalf, 2009). Likewise, it is possible to arrange spoonerisms in such a way they constitute a valid piece of verse (Silverstein, 2005). However, poetic limericks and prosaic spoonerised texts prove to be perfectly appropriate materials for linguistic investigation as they are more specific, diverse and complicated with regard to creative use of the English phonemic inventory and mechanisms for deciphering a ludic sense.

Methodology and Data Collection Tools

The ludic mini-texts analysed in this study include 168 limericks marked by sound-based play, extracted from the anthology (Rees, 2008) and 43 spoonerised literary works (26 fables and 17 fairy tales). Taking into account a relatively restricted circulation of texts containing spoonerisms, it seems necessary to give some brief information on the sources they are taken from. The fables and fairy tales with transposed sounds, syllables and words were originally created by F. C. Taylor, an American comedian, and compiled in the book "My Tale is Twisted! Or the Storal to This Mory" under the pseudonym of Colonel Stoopnagle (James, 2000). The modern version used in the study is an updated revival of that early edition dating back to 1945. K. James (2000) is convinced that reading such texts aloud as well as listening to them and trying to work out hidden senses contributes to not only stimulating verbal creativity and oral puzzle-solving abilities but also improving social interaction.

The research into the phonetic means of creating a ludic sense in the selected nonsense texts was done in the following stages: 1) identifying the cases of sound play and their quantitative analysis; 2) analysing the structure and semantics of the language units which embody ludic acoustic images; 3) looking at the described phenomena with relation to such constituents of speech act as the message, the addresser and the addressee.

The quantitative analysis includes identifying the most frequent and peripheral cases of sound-based play in the limericks, determining the ratio of really existing lexical units to occasional ones in the spoonerised texts. The structure of the language units embodying ludic acoustic images in the limericks falls into two types: syntagmatic (i. e. visually graspable in a linear sequence) and paradigmatic (i. e. requiring the ability to explicate the correlation between a few acoustic images within the same context). As for the spoonerised texts, the structural analysis means estimating the number of occasional words forming a spoonerism as well as the length and quality of transposed sound fragments. The semantic analysis in relation to the limericks implies dividing the plane of content into two overlapping constituents. In case of the spoonerised texts, it is restoring the coherence.

Producing and reading such mini-texts resembles a linguistic game in which the factor of the addressee takes on a primary importance. Inability to cope with the challenge offered by the addresser and appreciate the creativeness of the message results in disappearance of the ludic effect and absolute pointlessness of the ludic mini-text.

Results and Discussion

The Phonetic Means of Creating a Ludic Sense in the Limerick Nonsense Text

According to the results of the analysis, sound-based play in the limericks is almost equally presented in two major ways: exploiting the language sign asymmetry and likening the graphic manifestations of rhyming words. The comparatively vast amount of the limericks demonstrates imitation of pronunciation mistakes and foreign accents. The frequency of the above-mentioned cases and diverse peripheral ones may be presented as follows in Table 1:

Table 1
The frequency of sound-based play cases in the limerick nonsense text

The cases of sound-based play	The number of mini-texts
Exploiting the language sign asymmetry	57
Likening the graphic manifestations of rhyming words	50
Imitation of pronunciation mistakes and foreign accents	22
Keeping the rhythm by means of occasional or unexpected lexical units or violating the rhythm	10
Onomatopoeia	8
Shifting word boundaries	7
Paronymic attraction	5
Phonaesthemic clusters	5
Reduplication	4
Shortening graphic manifestations	3

Figure 1 shows the proportion of each case. This paper will consider in detail only the ones that are the most frequent, representative and, therefore, the most characteristic of limericks.

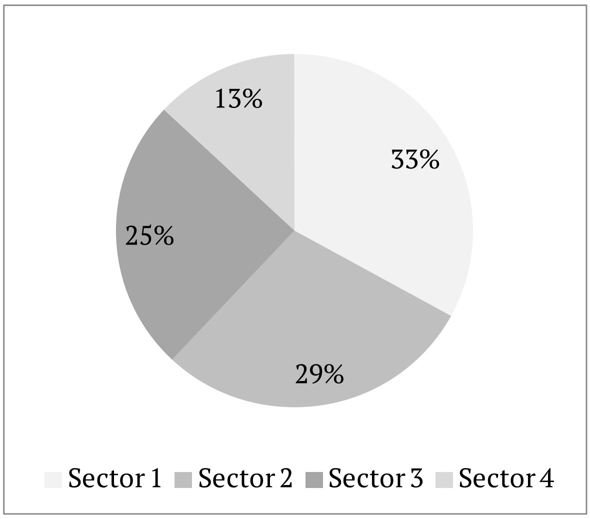

Figure 1. The proportion of sound-based play cases in the limerick nonsense text.

Sector 1 (33%) Exploiting the language sign asymmetry.
Sector 2 (29%) Likening the graphic manifestations of rhyming words.
Sector 3 (25%) Peripheral cases of sound-based play.
Sector 4 (13%) Imitation of pronunciation mistakes and foreign accents.

Exploiting the Language Sign Asymmetry

The language sign asymmetry is the natural absence of a balance between the signifier and the signified (Saussure, 1999). In the analysed limericks of this kind the plane of the content is intentionally doubled by means of such lexical units embodying identical acoustic images, either of syntagmatic or paradigmatic structure that express two different meanings at a time. These cases are found in 66 limericks and are comprised of homophones (42%), polysemantic units (37%), and homonyms proper (21%). In order to comprehend the ludic mini-text, the recipient has to do a metalinguistic activity of selecting and comparing lexical units whose graphic manifestations, either identical (polysemantic units, homonyms proper) or different (homophones) convey precisely the same acoustic images.

The syntagmatic structure of language units embodying identical acoustic images may be observed in this piece of black nonsensical humour:

At the railway station, old Jim
Crossed over the line on a whim;
When he crossed back again,
He ***did not miss*** *his train,*
And the train, sadly, ***didn't miss*** *him!*
(Rees, 2008, p. 443)

The polysemantic verb *miss* [mɪs] (Jones, 2011, p. 320) is mentioned twice and each time it expresses a different meaning depending on the agent and the object of the action. On the one hand, the word means "be too late to catch a passenger vehicle" and implies an animate agent (a person) and an inanimate object (a vehicle). On the other hand, *miss* denotes "fail to hit, reach" and gives an idea of the train as an agent and poor old Jim as an object (BWEOD, 2016).

The paradigmatic structure of language units embodying identical acoustic images seems to provide a more sophisticated case of sound-based play as below:

A dentist who lives in Duluth
Has wedded a widow named Ruth;
She is so sentimental
Concerning things dental,
She calls her dear second her ***twoth*** (Rees, 2008, p. 82).

While listening to this limerick the recipient is supposed to associate the last word with the acoustic image [tu:θ] which is known to correspond with the graphic manifestation "tooth" (Jones, 2011, p. 497). However, the written text contains the occasional unit *twoth* suggestive of English ordinal numerals. Such a mistake allows the reader to presume that the described widow is an illiterate woman using *twoth* instead of required *second*. Simultaneously, another plane of the content conjures up a weird manner of calling the husband who works as a dentist "my tooth".

A balance between presence and absence of meaning within one limerick can be achieved through a great many sources of a ludic sense:

A ***fly*** *and a* ***flea*** *in a* ***flue***
Were imprisoned, but what could they do?
Said the ***fly****: "Let us* ***flee****!"*
Said the ***flea****: "Let us* ***fly****!"*
And they ***flew*** *through a flaw in the* ***flue***
(Rees, 2008, p. 56).

This limerick demonstrates a fairly complex interaction of identical acoustic images: 1) homonyms proper: *fly* [flaɪ] (a flying insect of a large order characterised by a single pair of transparent wings and sucking mouthparts) and *fly* [flaɪ] (move through the air using wings) (Jones, 2011, p. 192; BWEOD, 2016); 2) homophones: *flea* [fli:] (a small wingless jumping insect which feeds on the blood of mammals and birds) and *flee* [fli:] (run away from a place or a situation of danger) (Jones, 2011, p. 190; BWEOD, 2016); 3) homophones: *flue* [flu:] (a duct for smoke and waste gases produced by a fire, a gas heater, a power station, or other fuel-burning installation) and *flew* [flu:] (past of *fly*) (Jones, 2011, pp. 190–191; BWEOD, 2016). Being barely comprehensible in a written form the text is expected to become more difficult to understand when listened to. Furthermore, reading the limerick aloud reminds us of practising a tongue-twister, which is aimed at mastering the articulation of certain sounds but not delivering any message.

Thus, a clash between two planes of the content in a limerick is often provoked by the ludic interaction of identical acoustic images conveying different meanings. The lexical units which embody these images can be presented both explicitly (syntagmatically) and implicitly (paradigmatically). A balance between presence and absence of meaning characteristic of nonsense texts is especially evident when the sources of a ludic sense are exceedingly numerous.

Likening the Graphic Manifestations of Rhyming Words

While appreciating the ludic effect of exploiting the language sign asymmetry is usually associated with an aural perception of the text, likening the graphic manifestations of rhyming words is an exclusively visual verbal art. The possibility of such a peculiar and, at the same time, a characteristic way of performing the ludic language function in the limerick nonsense text can be explained by the following reasons: 1) a definite rhyme scheme (rhyme *aabba*; three feet in the 1st, 2nd and 5th lines; two feet in the 3rd and 4th lines) (Bibby, 1978, p. 26); 2) a structured plane of the content (introducing a character or situation in the 1st and 2nd lines; performing an action in the 3rd and

4th lines; drawing a conclusion in the 5th line) (Bibby, 1978, p. 26); 3) and different graphic manifestations of identical acoustic images in the English language.

This case of sound-based play consists in partial reproducing the graphic manifestations of one word (as a rule, the last word of the 1st line) by other rhyming ones. It leads to coining occasional units that produce the nonsensical effect and make it difficult to comprehend the written text. The addressee has to solve the linguistic challenge of correlating these coinages with really existing spellings.

In this study, the real words (one or two) whose graphic manifestation is reproduced (often rare proper names with complicated spellings) are called the leading components. The occasional units (from one to three) resulting from such reproduction are named the derived components. As a result of the analysis, the following basic formula was worked out: A*x*A*y*B*x*B*y*B*z*, where A – the leading component, B – the derived component, *x, y, z* – the numbers of the lines in the limerick. The most frequent formula is A1B2B5 (70%). It can be illustrated by the example:

There was a young fellow of ***Beaulieu***
Who loved a fair maiden most ***treaulieu;***
He said: "Do be mine".
And she didn't decline,
So the wedding was solemnized ***deaulieu***
(Rees, 2008, p. 244).

In this limerick, the leading component is the geographical name *Beaulieu* which denotes a village in the English county of Hampshire. The derived components are *treaulieu* and *deaulieu*. In order to decipher the occasional units in the second and the fifth lines it is necessary to know the pronunciation of the leading component. The acoustic image ['bju:.li], recorded in the dictionary (Jones, 2011, p. 48), makes the addressee come up with such rhyming items as ['tru:.li] and ['dju:.li]. The next step is to identify the real graphic manifestations of these units which turn out to be *truly* and *duly* (Jones, 2011, pp. 152, 505).

Other possible formulas include A1A2B5 (6%), A1B2C3D4B5 (6%), A1B5 (4%), A1B2 (2%), A2B5 (2%), A3B4 (2%), A1B5B5 (2%), A1B2D3C4B5 (2%), A1B2B5B5 (2%), A1B1B2B5 (2%). The most representative ways of variation in structure are as follows: 1) there may be only one occasional derivative which ends any rhyming line of the limerick; 2) there may be two leading components each of which can correlate with its own dependant derivative; 3) one line may contain two occasional units.

So, likening the graphic manifestations of rhyming words is a characteristic of limericks only. A balance between presence and absence of meaning is attained when the mini-text is perceived visually and successfully deciphered thanks to the recipient's knowledge of English vocabulary. The text with such visual rhyme becomes an artefact the communicative value of which is less important than the creative manipulation of the difference between spelling and pronunciation.

Summing Up

The results of analysing the phonetic means of creating a ludic sense in the limerick nonsense text allow to draw some generalisations.

- The form of this verse makes it possible to apply unconventional ways of sound-based play connected with the rhythm and rhyme peculiarities.
- The wide variation in the graphic manifestation of acoustic images in the English language is exploited by means of coining visual rhymes.
- A ludic sense is conveyed through a different number of words which often include non-existing occasional ones.
- The plane of the content is doubled due to the correlation between meanings expressed by the following pairs of lexical units: 1) those with identical or similar acoustic images; 2) those with identical or similar graphic manifestations; 3) those imitating pronunciation mistakes or accents and representing correct pronunciation.
- A balance between presence and absence of meaning is maintained owing to: 1) simultaneous expression of several meanings, one of which seems to be natural in the given context and another one conjures up an absurd picture; 2) different emphasis on perceiving a limerick: in an aural or written form; 3) distorted lexical units imitating false pronunciation and key words helping identify the reason for such deviations.
- Aural presentation of a limerick is essential for producing the ludic effect when the text is saturated with lexical units embodying identical or similar acoustic images.
- The written presentation of a limerick is important when the emphasis is placed on either shortened graphic manifestations or spelling coinages conveying rhyming acoustic images.

The Phonetic Means of Creating a Ludic Sense in the Spoonerised Nonsense Text

The analysis of the spoonerised literary works shows that spoonerisms make up one third of the whole text and vary in structure.

The book *Stoopnagle's Tale Is Twisted: Spoonerisms Run Amok* contains 26 fables the average length of which includes 214 words, and 17 tales, which, on average, include 579 words. Spoonerisms make up 34–35% of the whole text.

The spoonerisms in this book are complicated and, at the same time, successfully represent language play of exactly phonetic character. Their main features are as follows: 1) sound transposition affects not only initial, but also middle and final fragments, which may be sounds, sound complexes or even acoustic images embraced by the whole words; 2) spoonerisms are made of not only consonants, but also vowels; 3) if necessary, spellings are adapted to provide adequate performing according to the reading rules; 4) sometimes a fragment to be transposed is made recognisable with a hyphen; 5) sound transposition may involve from one to three words.

The table below illustrates the spoonerised fable and its deciphered version.

Table 2
Restoring the coherence of the spoonerised fable

Spoonerised Text	**Deciphered Text**
The Loose That Gaid the Olden Geggs	The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs
Back in the not too pastant dist, a carried mouple was nortunate efough to possoose a gess that laid an olden gegg every dingle say of the week.	Back in the not too distant past, a married couple was fortunate enough to possess a goose that laid a golden egg every single day of the week.
This they considered a great loke of struck, but, like some other neople we po, they thought they weren't getting fitch rast enough.	This they considered a great stroke of luck, but, like some other people we know, they thought they weren't getting rich fast enough.
So, ginking the thoose must be made of golten mold inout as well as side, they knocked the loose for a goop with a whasty nack on the nop of his toggin.	So, thinking the goose must be made of molten gold inside as well as out, they knocked the goose for a loop with a nasty whack on the top of his noggin.
Goor little poose!	Poor little goose!
Anyway, they expected to set at the gourse of all this mecious prettal.	Anyway, they expected to get at the source of all this precious metal.
But as huck would lav it, the in-gides of the soose were just like the ingides of any other soose.	But as luck would have it, the insides of the goose were just like the insides of any other goose.
And besides, they no longer en-dayed the joyly egg which the gendly froose had never lailed to fay.	And besides, they no longer en-joyed the daily egg which the friendly goose had never failed to lay.
And the storal to this mory is: Wark the murds of mize wen: «All that glitts is not golder» (James, 2000, pp. 7–8).	And the moral to this story is: Mark the words of wise men: «All that glitters is not gold

The fable *The Loose That Gaid the Olden Geggs* (The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs) incorporates 37% of spoonerisms. It seems to be enough to point out only those cases of sound transposition that reflect the peculiarities of phonetic spoonerisms. First, the non-initial sounds are transposed: **n**ortunate [‘**nɔ**:t**ʃənət**] e**f**ough [ɪ’**fʌf**] → **f**ortunate [‘**fɔ**:t**ʃənət**] e**n**ough [ɪ’**nʌf**]; the in**g**ides [ɪn’**g**aɪdz] of the **s**oose [**s**u:s] → the in**s**ides [ɪn’**s**aɪdz] of the **g**oose [**g**u:s]. Second, the vowels are switched: all that glitts [glɪts] is not gold**er** [‘gəʊld**ə**] → all that glitt**er**s [‘glɪt**ə**z] is not gold [gəʊld]. Third, the spoonerisms imply transposition of acoustic images embodied by sound complexes, syllables, morphemes, words: **past**ant [‘**pɑ:st**ənt] **dist** [**dɪst**] → **dist**ant [‘**dɪst**ənt] **past** [**pɑ:st**]; to poss**oose** [pə’z**u:s**] a g**ess** [g**es**] → to poss**ess** [pə’z**es**] a g**oose** [g**u:s**]; in**out** [ɪn’**aʊt**] as well as **side** [**saɪd**] → in**side** [ɪn’**saɪd**] as well as **out** [**aʊt**].

Finally, special consideration must be given to the ways of adapting the graphic manifestations:

other **n**eople [‘**n**i:pl] we **p**o [**p**əʊ] → other **p**eople [‘**p**i:pl] we **kn**ow [**n**əʊ] (*pow* would sound as [paʊ] (Jones, 2011, p. 389));

getting **fi**tch [**f**ɪtʃ] **r**ast [**r**ɑ:st] enough → getting **r**ich [**r**ɪtʃ] **f**ast [**f**ɑ:st] enough (compare: fiche [fi:ʃ] (Jones, 2011, p. 186));

mecious [‘**m**eʃəs] **pr**ettal [‘**pr**etəl] → **pr**ecious [‘**pr**eʃəs] **m**etal [‘**m**etəl] (double ‘t’ closes the syllable and makes ‘e’ sound as [e] but not [i:]);

as **h**uck [**h**ʌ**k**] would **l**av [**l**æ**v**] it → as **l**uck [**l**ʌ**k**] would **h**ave [**h**æ**v**] it (deleting ‘e’, which opens the syllable, provides the required pronunciation; compare: lave [leɪv] (Jones, 2011, p. 285));

en**day**ed [ɪn’**de**ɪd] the **joy**ly [‘**dʒɔ**ɪlɪ] egg → en**joy**ed [ɪn’**dʒɔ**ɪd] the **dai**ly [‘**de**ɪlɪ] egg (‘ay’ seems to be more natural before ‘ed’; cp.: played [pleɪd] (Jones, 2011, p. 382));

gendly [‘**g**endlɪ] **fr**oose [**fr**u:s] → **fr**iendly [‘**fr**endlɪ] **g**oose [**g**u:s] (deleting ‘i’ makes it impossible to pronounce [i:]; compare: lief [li:f] (Jones, 2011, p. 289)); wark [**w**ɑ:k] the **m**urds [**m**ɜ:dz] → **m**ark [**m**ɑ:k] the **w**ords [**w**ɜ:dz] (‘ur’ usually sounds as [ɜ:], unlike ‘or’, which is pronounced in this way after ‘w’); **m**ize [**m**aɪz] wen [**w**en] → **w**ise [**w**aɪz] **m**en [**m**en].

The sound-based play represented by spoonerised fables and tales makes an impression of a highly sophisticated and complicated verbal art. Comprehending this ludic mini-text most of all resembles solving a linguistic puzzle. It can be a challenge for only one reader who tries to write the deciphered version as well as two recipients, one of whom has to read the text following the reading rules and the other one has to restore the coherence of the passage in their mind. Such a task requires developed language skills and contributes to better language acquisition.

Conclusion

The analysis of the spoonerised literary works reveals the addresser's advanced level of language creativity. Consequently, the potential addressee has to match the same requirements to appreciate such a verbal artefact. Reading spoonerised texts means solving the problem of restoring the coherence by appropriately shifting the intentionally mixed acoustic images. The ludic effect becomes more profound when these pieces of creative writing are read aloud and perceived aurally: this metalinguistic activity improves not only the command of English but also the social interaction between the reader and the listener who act as participants of a language game. A balance of presence and absence of meaning is sustained in the following way: on the one hand, a text which incorporates approximately 30% of spoonerisms is a meaningless message; on the other hand, the recipient who is competent enough to decipher its plane of expression can get the hidden information.

Limericks and spoonerised literary works can be considered typically English examples of ludic mini-texts the plane of expression of which is foregrounded by the creative use of the phonemic inventory.

The analysis carried out makes it possible to point out the most representative cases of sound-based play: 1) exploiting the language sign asymmetry which results in interacting two identical acoustic images embodied by polysemantic words, homonyms proper or homophones; 2) unconventional phonetic means of creating a ludic sense suggested by the rhythm and rhyme of limericks (especially likening the graphic manifestations of rhyming words); 3) visual rhyme and phonetic spoonerisms based on exploiting the differences and difficulties in spelling acoustic images; 4) numerous occasional units which make sense only being engaged in sound-based play.

The challenge offered by the creative addresser to the addressee who is competent enough at linguistics in general and English in particular consists in distinguishing and comparing two planes of content emerging as a result of sound-based play. Thus, such a piece of writing becomes a valid text only on condition that its language creativeness is successfully comprehended and properly appreciated.

Limericks are characterised by either syntagmatic or paradigmatic organisation of lexical units which convey a ludic sense while spoonerised texts demonstrate exclusively linear presentation of interacting acoustic images. The ludic effect which occurs as a consequence of deciphering the plane of expression is caused by simultaneous presence and absence of meaning. Such a clash can be both amusing (as in most limericks) and suggestive of a bizarre linguistic word puzzle (as in spoonerised texts).

Thus, literary and teaching value of nonsense texts is linguistic in nature because it does not imply the evaluation of ideas but rather deals with decoding the message by means of clever language manipulations. These samples of verbal art can be useful as a teaching material for developing learners' cognitive language skills: the ability to observe the relations between language units and consider them to be elements of the system. Nonsense texts are also culturally significant as they represent a typically English trend in literature.

Further research into the phonetic means of creating a ludic sense in the limited semantic space can include the comparative analysis of different English mini-texts (e.g. jokes, tongue-twisters, rhyming slang etc.) and the study of suprasegmental features like stress and pitch.

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Textbook Evaluation as a Means of Discovering Learners' and Teachers' Needs

Svetlana Bogolepova
National Research University Higher School of Economics

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Svetlana Bogolepova, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Malaya Pionerskaya, 12, Moscow, Russian Federation, 115054. E-mail: tsbogolepova@hse.ru

Needs analysis is considered an essential step which normally precedes English for Academic Purposes course design. It allows course developers to identify the tasks the target audience has to complete, and the skills they need to master. Based on the experience of the 'English for Academics' textbook writing project, the paper shows that needs analysis can be extended to the materials evaluation stage of textbook development. The piloting undertaken at this stage involved a questionnaire which required qualitative and quantitative responses from teacher and learner participants. The respondents were encouraged to evaluate different aspects of the course implementation, e.g. timing, relevance, difficulty, sequence, clarity of instructions, etc., and suggest improvements. The questionnaire was analysed which provided course developers with the opportunity to identify additional learners' needs and to explore teachers' needs and expectations, which in many respects coincided with each other. Consequently, the learning and teaching materials were restructured in accordance with the evaluation. The changes which were introduced into the textbook and the Teachers' Notes are described. It is concluded that piloting can be an instrument to expose both pedagogical and linguistic needs, thus, providing for the triangulation of the methods and reliability of the results.

Keywords: materials design, materials evaluation, needs analysis, triangulation

Needs analysis is considered central to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course development (Hutchinson & Waters, 1997; Hyland, 2006; Jordan, 2002). Normally needs analysis is carried out before a course is designed with the purpose of understanding what should be included in the course. It allows course designers to make it learner-centered and concentrate on the development of skills appropriate for a particular audience. As Hamp-Lyons (2001, p. 126) argues, EAP 'begins with the learner and the situation, whereas general English begins with the language.'

This paper will consider a different stage of textbook development, the materials evaluation stage in particular. It will be demonstrated that learners' needs are discovered at this stage as well, and they are not similar to the ones exposed at the needs analysis stage. Apart from this, it will be shown that teachers' needs and expectations can be revealed at the piloting stage. These discoveries allow for further improvements of the materials both from the contextual and the pedagogical point of view.

However, before turning to the description of the evaluation stage and the inferences made after the consideration of its results, it is necessary to briefly outline the current understanding of needs analysis and provide the background of the textbook writing project within which the research was conducted.

Materials and Methods

Literature Review

There is no uniform view on what constitutes needs analysis. Needs analysis is viewed as both a *process* aimed at 'determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities' (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 399), and *techniques* 'for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design' (Hyland, 2006, p. 73). Flowerdew (2013) elaborates saying that those are not only *needs*, but also *lacks* and *wants* which are brought out into open. Jordan (1997, p. 28) suggests that needs analysis in EAP situations should reveal the level to achieve, language to learn, study situations and related study skills, as well as the existing level and the gap in skills which needs to be bridged. Jolly and Bolitho go even further saying that 'the most effective materials are those which are based on thorough understanding of learners' needs, that is their language difficulties, their learning objectives, their style of learning, the stage of their conceptual development… ' (Bolitho & Jolly, 2011, p. 128). However, the importance of needs analysis is uniformly recognised as 'a rigorously conducted NA is likely to provide a solid foundation needed for effective language teaching course design and delivery' (Lake, Long & Serafini, 2015, p. 25).

There are multiple ways in which needs analysis can be carried out. Long (2005, p. 31) describes the following methods: non-expert and expert intuitions, unstructured and structured interviews, surveys and questionnaires, language audits, observations, diaries, analysis of corpora and discourse, etc. He emphasises the importance of professionally conducted needs analysis. The researcher argues that, though learners provide useful information about their occupational needs and preferences, they may be ineffective in 'determining the language involved in functioning successfully in their discourse domains' (Long, 2005, p. 20). Therefore, it is the materials developers' task to analyse the questionnaire results, draw conclusions about the learners' needs and decide on the target discourse features.

Researchers (Long, 2005; Hyland, 2009) claim that the outcomes of a needs analysis are more objective when the triangulation method is implemented, that is information from various sources is considered. Moreover, 'to increase reliability and validity, data should ideally be collected from two or more sources using two or more methods' (Lake, Long & Serafini, 2015, p. 12).

It is necessary to acknowledge that needs analysis cannot be the only source of information for course designers to base their decisions on; more factors have to be taken into account (West, 1994). For example, in the case of the 'English for Academics' project, the experience of which is going to be discussed in the article, both authors' perceptions about what kind of language and skills academics need to master to successfully function in the academic environment and the survey results dictated the primary choice of materials and tasks.

However, Hyland (2006, p. 74) points out that needs analysis should be ongoing and dynamic. Normally, teachers are responsible for adjusting materials to the immediate needs of their learners. Provisioning for such kind of ongoing analysis while the materials are still being developed may be the way to better cater for learners' needs.

Background

Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) argue that EAP has already expanded far beyond university level learning, and now it encompasses more than instruction of learners on how to successfully study in an English-speaking environment. Among other concerns, the researchers highlight 'the English language skills of nonnative English speaking academics, especially those teaching and researching in non-English language countries' (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p. 4). For Russia, which has entered the Bologna process fairly recently and is still undergoing the internationalisation of tertiary education, the ability of academic staff to function in English remains a topical issue. Researchers and university teachers are required to publish in English and to participate in international events, though they do not always possess the necessary skills and knowledge.

The 'English for Academics' course was developed by a group of Russian university teachers under the supervision of the British expert Rod Bolitho within the British Council (Russia) project. Its aim was to equip academic staff with the skills and to provide them with the language to become part of the international academic community. In this article, the process of the development of 'English for Academics. Book 1' (Bezzabotnova et al., 2014) will be in focus. The authoring team agreed to divide the first book in the course into four modules, each catering for the development of the appropriate microskills within the four major skills. The author of the article mostly contributed to the development of the materials for the Writing Module, which deals with academic correspondence, summary, abstract and grant application writing.

Jolly and Bolitho (2011, p. 113) suggest the following stages of textbook development:

1. Identification of need
2. Exploration of need
3. Contextual realisation of materials
4. Pedagogical realisation of materials
5. Student use of materials
6. Materials evaluation

The need for a course to teach English to individuals involved in academia (i.e. university teachers, researches and administrators) in Russia was revealed in Frumina and West's baseline study (Frumina & West, 2012). They came to the conclusion that what really hindered the internationalisation of higher education in Russia was a low level of the English language of university academic staff. It is poor English language proficiency that inhibits Russian academics' dissemination and publication of research and prevents them from providing courses for international students. Frumina and West highlight the necessity for the development of a textbook which would suit academics' needs and teach them skills and knowledge crucial for effective functioning in the English-speaking academic environment (Frumina & West, 2012, pp. 57-58).

Once the need was identified, it was then thoroughly explored in a survey conducted by the British Council in 2012 in which 217 university teachers and researchers participated. In the self-assessment survey it was found out that the average level of the participants was B1 according to CEFR, with reading slightly more advanced than other skills. Language subskills necessary for effective communication in academic environment were identified. Examples of these include searching for relevant journals online, reading academic articles and calls for papers, listening to presentations and participate in discussions, socialising and presenting at conferences. The types of products academics need to be able to create were found out to be e-mails, grant proposals, reviews, abstracts, and journal publications. All these determined the contents of the course (contextual realisation) and the activities designed around texts (pedagogical realisation).

When the 'English for Academics' course was created, the 'materials evaluation' phase coincided with the 'students' use of materials' phase. Tomlinson (2011, p. 174) claims that 'materials need to be monitored by the author(s), by other 'experts' not involved in the writing team and by typical users of the material'. A 'fresh' look allows to identify the drawbacks which stay unnoticed by the authors as their vision is blunted by familiarity. Amrani (2011) describes three methods normally used to evaluate materials: piloting, reviewing, and focus groups. In case of the 'English for Academics' project, piloting was chosen, i.e. trial of materials in real classrooms. The advantages of piloting are opportunities to use materials in genuine settings and to adapt them to better meet learners' needs.

Two questionnaires were developed to get feedback from the participants. Both learners and teachers could leave comments in each category. The use of questionnaires has apparent benefits. They are easy to administer and to analyse, provide researchers with a significant body of data, allow respondents to keep anonymity and, therefore, be truthful in their responses. However, a questionnaire should ideally provide an opportunity for comments and open responses as 'they allow additional potentially relevant information to emerge' (Lake, Long, & Serafini, 2015, p. 124.) That is why questionnaires with an open-answer option were used both at the initial stage of the discovery of learners' needs, and at the piloting stage with the purpose of learning and teaching materials evaluation.

In this paper, it is going to be illustrated that the understanding of learners' needs is not confined to the identification of needs stage, but it penetrates the book writing process. In addition, it will be demonstrated that not only learners', but also teachers' needs can be found in the process.

Procedure

As it has been mentioned, the essential learners' needs, i.e. the microskills they need to master to successfully function in the academic environment and the texts they have to deal with, were identified at the first stages of the project. However, the materials evaluation stage, piloting in this case, gave the authors an opportunity to discover more needs and to redesign the materials in accordance. The contents of the piloting materials included two lessons from each Module. The two Writing lessons were dedicated to abstract and grant proposal writing.

What teachers and learners were asked to assess were:

1. Timing
2. Difficulty of materials
3. Relevance
4. Variety
5. Clarity of instruction (classrooms materials)
6. Clarity of guidance (teachers' notes)
7. Language support
8. Visuals
9. Sequencing
10. Learners' motivation

All in all, 56 teachers and 378 learners at universities in Russia and former Soviet republics evaluated the materials. The learner cohort was rather heterogeneous in terms of field of study. The learners were from humanities (linguistics, philology, cultural studies), social sciences (economics, sociology, history), and hard sciences (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology). They were PhD students, university lecturers and several representatives of administrative staff, all adults aged above twenty.

Both teachers and learners were encouraged to complete the evaluation survey and to give verbal qualitative feedback in the written form, the learners gave their evaluations in Russian and the teachers in English. However, not every teacher managed to cover all four modules with the classes, therefore, the number of responses in each section may differ. The responses, both qualitative and quantitative, were analysed and some conclusions were drawn about how materials should be reworked.

Results

General Feedback

Overall, the feedback was positive and included comments like:

> *In general, the course is highly relevant and unique in its context. No doubt, I'll be using it when it is released.*
> *As I have mentioned before, the material is topical for the learners and corresponds with their needs, thus they were interested and highly-motivated to work with it and obtain necessary knowledge.*
> *The students were highly motivated by the course, they participated in class work actively, and evaluated the course positively.*
> *The materials are authentic, relevant to the fields of students' specialisations and reflect the current issues in academia.*
> *These materials are exactly what I need for a group of highly motivated adults studying English for academic purposes.*
> *The materials preset an opportunity for the teacher to develop the language skills using highly authentic and motivating materials.*
> *I didn't have to motivate or encourage the learners as they were motivated by the material itself. So, I did enjoy the process of teaching. Besides, the material seemed to be interesting and useful for myself as a teacher and a researcher.*
> *The quality of the materials is excellent and relevant for University teachers. I appreciate a lot the use of authentic texts, modern teaching approaches and techniques, IC technology support.*

The Writing Module was positively evaluated as well:

> *They [the learners] were especially motivated by the tasks connected with abstracts and grants.*
> *The writing part is very logical and clear, it explains all the steps and stages of writing abstract or other paper. All the parts I worked with were interesting and corresponding with the learners' needs.*
> *The Writing and Reading sections are structured in a good way and the choice of topics and functions is very good.*

However, some inconsistencies and flaws in the materials alongside with learners' and, what is equally important, teachers' needs were revealed. The questionnaire format made it possible to understand exactly where a difficulty or a misunderstanding lies and to redesign the materials to bridge the gaps and to correct the flaws.

Timing

Each module (skill) was evaluated separately though the participants were also encouraged to describe the overall impression.

For categories 'Timing', 'Difficulty of materials', 'Relevance' and 'Variety' the answer options included:

1. Completely unsuitable for my class
2. Of limited value for my class
3. Suitable for my class but with some reservations
4. Suitable for my class in most respects
5. Ideal for my class

Figure 1 represents the teachers' evaluation of timing, i.e. the possibility to cover the given material within the allocated period of time. Although the majority of teachers rated the materials as "suitable for my class in most respects" (48%), some concerns were brought to light.

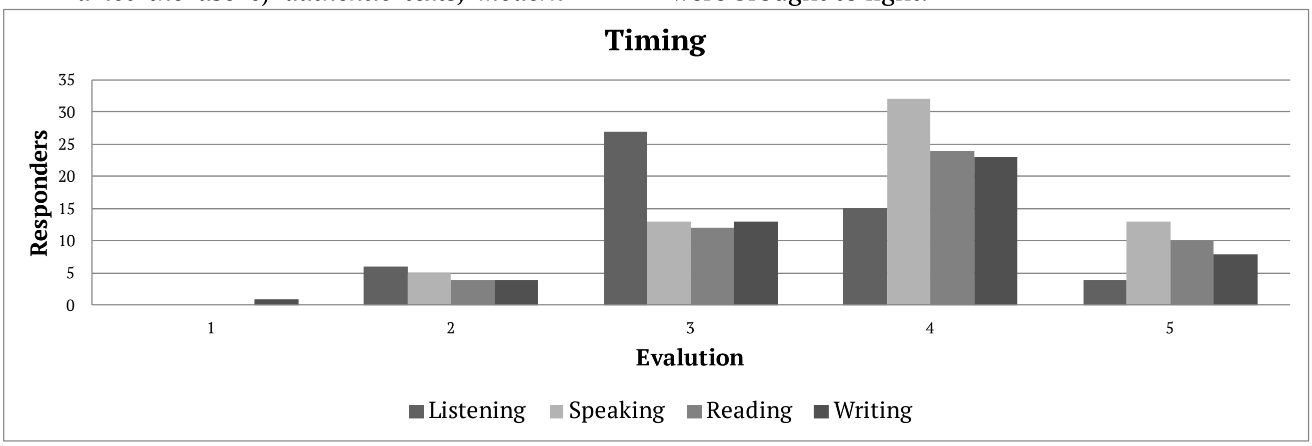

Figure 1. Timing: amount of material for the time available (teachers' response; from 1 - "completely unsuitable for my class" to 5 - "ideal for my class").

Some teachers expressed concerns about students' inability to cover all the materials included in one lesson within the 45-minute period, especially with mixed-level groups. Though in the Writing Module learners were required to create the draft of their written product in class and then self- or peer-assess it according to the set criteria, it was not always possible to do so. One of the teachers, for instance, reported that '*Writing seemed to coincide with the participants' perception of their level, however timing became an issue, as some participants required slightly more time for writing an abstract'.* One of the respondents commented that peer-evaluation of a draft is one of the most useful and interesting tasks. However, there were learners and teachers who requested such tasks to be set as homework. As one of the teacher respondents wrote,

> *Writing is good, although it's rather difficult to persuade the learners to write in class - they consider it to be a waste of time - they seem to need to discuss things in class rather than 'waste' time writing - they want this part (I mean writing with a pen) to be done as home assignment.*

As such misunderstanding of methodology was revealed, the approach taken was explained in Teachers' Notes. In the course, the attempt was made to combine product and process approaches to writing. The product approach implies studying a model text, analysing its structure and linguistic features, drilling them, and producing own text at the final stage. The process approach involves scaffolding of the writing process, from collaborative generation of ideas and their organisation to drafting, assessment and redrafting. An option was suggested that the writing of the draft can be done as homework, while peer-assessment can take place at the lesson that follows.

Relevance

The participants were also encouraged to evaluate the relevance of the materials subject to piloting and to identify if they were appropriate for researchers from various fields of study. The result of this evaluation is summarized in Figure 2.

Although the majority of teachers assessed this aspect highly, teachers and learners whose specialism was science asked for more texts from their areas of interest. Originally, the authoring team consented on the pedagogical exploitation of texts which discuss the issues of modern pedagogy and the use of technology in the classrooms. The result was, scientists not involved in teaching could find these materials irrelevant:

The emphasis put on the Humanities in the material for all sections is too obvious. I strongly recommend to use a variety of fields, as academic staff from technical and scientific institutions will NOT be happy to deal with language and social sciences throughout the whole of the book. This is a very strong recommendation from both me and my students.

That was the reason for the inclusion of texts both from humanities and hard sciences with appropriate easification. For instance, some texts are supported with glosses, challenging vocabulary and structures are pre-taught, schemata is activated before actual reading (for more information on easification see [Bhatia, 1983]). It gave the authors an opportunity to highlight the difference in structure and language of texts from different disciplines.

Clarity of Instructions

For other categories, teachers and learners could evaluate the materials as 'Poor' - 1, 'Not very good' - 2, 'Adequate' - 3, 'Good' - 4, or 'Excellent' - 5.

Unexpectedly, the instructions posed difficulty for the teachers (Figure 3). The concerns included:

- long and complex sentences;
- intricate wording which inhibited understanding;

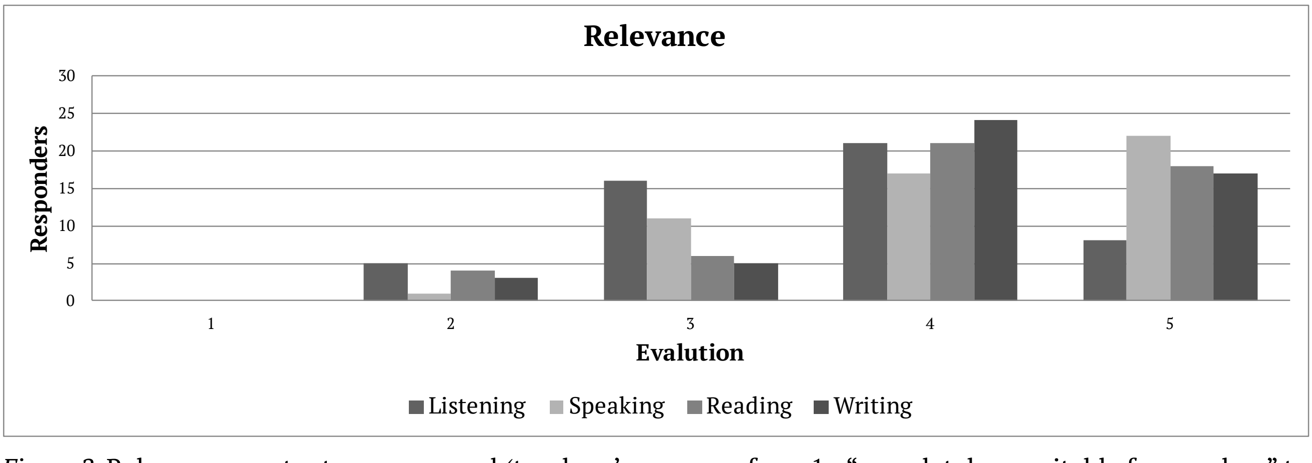

Figure 2. Relevance: content areas covered (teachers' response; from 1 - "completely unsuitable for my class" to 5 - "ideal for my class").

- unclear reference to other activities.

One teacher recommended '*to go into less detail in instructions and more straight to the point of the task'.* Another one said that '*it's difficult to figure out from the wording of the task what exactly should be done*'. It was noted in teachers' responses that '*you have to read tasks very carefully to understand what is required and, for example, which of the previous tasks that one refers to*'.

Based on teachers' evaluation, flaws and inconsistencies in instructions were corrected. Moreover, instructions were easified in terms of language and structural complexity, that is, we opted for shorter and easier structures and the vocabulary of a lower level. For instance, the instruction '*Among the words in bold in the summary above find equivalents to the expressions in Column A in the table below'* was changed to '*Match the highlighted words in the abstract to their synonyms 1-10 below'*. In some cases it was necessary to get rid of wordiness and to make instructions concise. Thus, '*Here are 7 steps for writing an abstract. They are jumbled. Number them in a logical order'* became *'Put these steps for writing an abstract in order'*. Overall, it was decided within the group to: 1. make instructions uniform throughout the book according to the pattern *imperative+what+how*; 2. assign one task per instruction; 3. provide numerical references.

Language Support

There was no univocal evaluation of language support, namely, the way grammar, functions and vocabulary were introduced and practiced as shown in Figure 4.

Some teachers were quite positive about it saying that:

> *Most texts are a valuable source of both information and language for the learners. I liked grammar and vocabulary as well as visuals. It is very convenient to work with charts especially if you have to compare or contrast something.*

However, there definitely was room for improvement as some respondents expressed the following concerns:

> *As for the guidance, it was excellent, while language support, to my mind, very often was inefficient: the vocabulary was given, but grammar and functions most often weren't.*
>
> *According to our observation of the Ls' responses, we felt that there could have been more material in terms of Language support, e.g. more extended focus on Advanced Academic Vocabulary, which was perceived to be needed for the productive skills, i.e. Speaking and Writing.*
>
> *The students reflect that there is not enough language support, especially some grammar activities on the Passive Voice.*
>
> *As for the writing, there should be 'letters-writing' exercises, exercises to support and drill linking words.*

To satisfy those needs, more activities were developed and introduced. These tasks were aimed at the development of learners' linguistic competence, in terms of reception and production, and they also included strategy training and microskills development (such as using appropriate word order, or achieving cohesion and coherence in writing).

One more issue related to language support was the misunderstanding of the approach in which grammar and vocabulary were introduced. In many cases the authors followed the language awareness approach, which implies conscious concentration on how linguistic features function in context (for more information see (Bolitho et al., 2003)). Allegedly, university professors and researchers are learners with

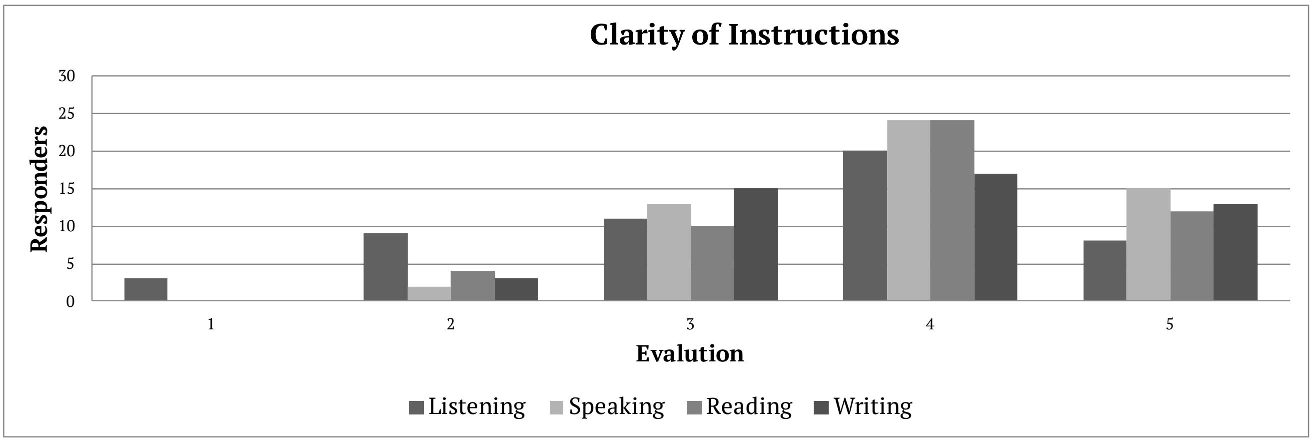

Figure 3. Clarity of instructions in Learner's Material (teachers' response; from 1 - "poor" to 5 - "excellent").

developed cognitive skills and logic. Though there were teachers who realised that the *'materials are based on such methodological principle as a conscious approach'* to the development of the linguistic competence, some teachers complained that '*Not fewer than 80% of the students are not accustomed to working in the proposed cognitive methodology and it needs time to explain the logics of almost each exercise*'.

It was even suggested that '*logical sequencing of tasks should also be revised, especially for reading and writing - vocabulary, grammar, style support should come before the task'*.

- To resolve the misunderstanding it was decide*d, firstly, to briefly outline the necessary theoretical* information about the approach in Teachers' Notes, and, secondly, to provide activities for learners' strategic training to teach them strategies to research the context for the meaning of linguistic features.

Summary of Teachers' Feedback

To sum up, teachers expressed the need for clearer instructions, more grammar and vocabulary practice for their learners, methodological clarifications both for teachers and learners, variety in texts and activities. More suggestions given by the teachers who participated in the piloting were the requests:

- to have a glossary of academic vocabulary
- for the teacher's book to have materials for further practice and comments for the teachers, explanation of some specific academic terms, possible answers for open questions ('*teachers need more general guidelines: strategies, techniques approaches, ideas for practice activities but not very detailed step by step instruction'*)
- for the student's book to have more visuals ('*that could help with understanding the content'*).

Learners' Feedback

Learners were also encouraged to give quantitative and qualitative feedback on the materials they tried in the classroom. On the whole, learners were motivated by the materials (91,8%) as they were interesting and up-to-date and the skills the participants gained could find application in their professional lives. The participants reported on having learnt new vocabulary and expressions, understanding style requirements and academic conventions (95%).

However, open responses assisted in uncovering problematic areas and discovering learners' pedagogical needs, for instance:

> *Some tasks required additional explanations on the teacher's part.*
> *We did not have enough time to do all the activities, especially in the Writing section.*
> *It would be useful to have a vocabulary list for each lesson.*
> *Vocabulary was difficult, I had to turn to the dictionary rather often.*
> *Variety could be achieved if the scope of materials is widened.*

Learners' open responses were analysed and the most frequent concerns are summarised in Figure 5.

As it can be seen, the concerns expressed by the learners are very similar to what the teachers pointed out. Though the learners evaluated the materials as relevant and practical, requests were expressed to make materials and exercises more varied, to include texts from other fields apart from pedagogy and humanities, and to provide more activities for the practice of academic vocabulary. As for difficulty of materials, some learners found them too challenging and some too easy. Such discrepancy in opinions may be dictated by the heterogeneity of the pilot groups since a number of teachers reported having both A2 and C1 learners in their classes.

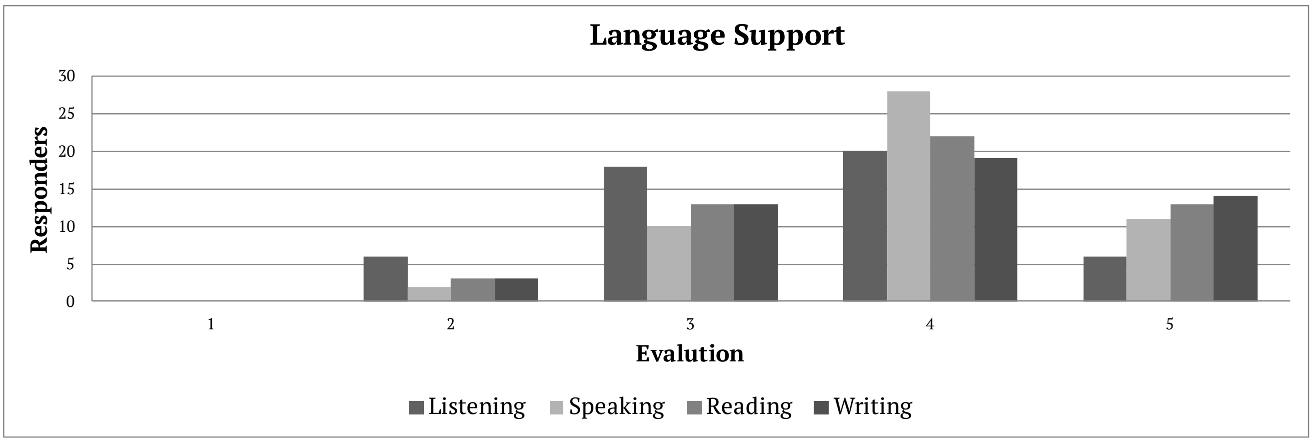

Figure 4. Language support (grammar, functions, vocabulary) (teachers' response; from 1 - "poor" to 5 - "excellent").

Discussion

However important needs analysis may be, its methodological potential is still under-researched (Long, 2005, p. 2). There are a number of studies demonstrating the ways in which needs analysis can be carried out. Among the most recent ones is Serafini, Lake and Long's (2015) article, describing the needs analysis procedure among non-native speakers of English who are part of the scientific community at a large university. In this case, an open questionnaire aimed at identifying the tasks such in-service learners fulfil was supplemented by structured interviews, activity journals, discourse analysis, observations. In another recent study Balzhiser et al. (2015) used focus group discussions and questionnaires to create a target learner profile for a Ph.D. course aimed at working professionals. Helmer (2013) compared data obtained through questionnaires administered to students and tutors, interviews and observations. In addition, institutional resources were analysed, and on the basis of the above, changes were introduced to the Academic Writing programme. In an earlier study by Read (2008), diagnostic assessment was used for the purpose of understanding students' academic needs and providing appropriate academic support. According to Serafini, Lake and Long (2015), 10 needs analysis studies of 1980s-1990s predominantly relied on questionnaire surveys, interviews and observations.

This article contributed to the body of methodological options for needs analysis and describe how piloting can be utilised for needs analysis purposes. Moreover, teachers' needs and concerns were uncovered.

To add to that, though the materials were positively evaluated when they were piloted, the evaluation stage disclosed the needs which were not discovered at the exploration of needs stage, which, in its turn, led to considerable amendments to learning and teaching materials.

As the needs for more techniques, ideas for additional activities, possible answers for open questions, explanation of terminology in Teachers' Notes were expressed, they were considerably reworked. Firstly, the pedagogical principles underlying the structure and logic of materials, such as process and product approaches to writing or the language awareness approach were explained. Secondly, extra activities for the reinforcement of skills and extension of knowledge were added. Thirdly, some academic terms were clarified. Finally, options were provided for mixed-level groups.

Based on the issues revealed, the following changes were introduced into the textbook:

- more activities for grammar and vocabulary practice were added, as well as some activities to develop particular writing microskills
- instructions were considerably reworked with the purpose of making them clear and concise
- an academic vocabulary list which included lexis practised within the book was added
- texts (e.g. abstracts) from different fields of study were added, and the linguistic and structural difference was highlighted and

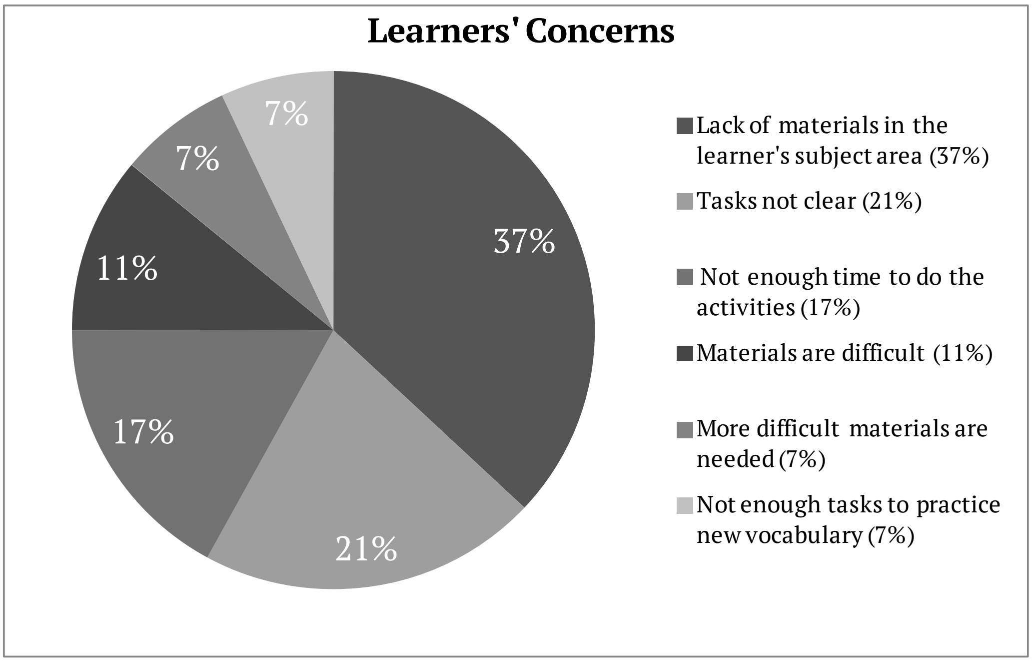

Figure 5. Concerns expressed by learners (72 responses).

practiced.

On the whole, the evaluation stage not only exposed flaws in learning materials, but also let the authoring team recognise additional needs of the target audience and restructure materials to meet these needs. Moreover, the requests were taken into account when the second book in the course was created (Bogolepova et al., 2015).

Conclusion

Though the needs analysis stage normally precedes the materials development stage, the 'English for Academics' experience clearly demonstrated that the trial of materials in real classrooms gives the developers an opportunity to further explore the needs of the target group of learners. Moreover, the needs and expectations of potential instructors can be identified. Hyland (2006, p. 74) argues that it would be accurate 'to see needs as jointly constructed between teachers and learners,' which piloting allows material developers to achieve. The feedback from the project consultant and the editor was no less valuable and taken into account, and, consequently, triangulation was provided for.

Additionally, piloting gave the materials designers the opportunity not only to identify the microskills to master but also to expose pedagogical needs such as clarity of instructions, diversity in texts and tasks, as well as misinterpretations of underlying pedagogical principles. Thus, needs analysis penetrated the textbook writing process and allowed for the exploration of needs in different dimensions and from different perspectives.

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Online Forums as a Mirror Reflecting the World of ESP

Agnieszka Dzięcioł-Pędich
School of Foreign Languages, University of Białystok

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Agnieszka Dzięcioł-Pędich, University of Bialystok, ul. M. Skłodowskiej-Curie 14, Białystok, Poland, 15-097. E-mail: lumriel@gmail.com

The article presents the analysis of most frequent[1] threads in four Internet forums to see what can be learnt about ESP teachers' interests and understanding of the concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The results show that the majority of discussions revolve around the choice of materials for different types of ESP. This might suggest that forum members know very little about oral and written communicative strategies of a given profession and rely on the expertise of course books writers to provide them with such knowledge. Moreover, the analysis shows that forum members do not discuss how to teach individual language skills but how to teach different types of ESP which might indicate that there is a greater difference between teaching the same skills in two branches of ESP than there is between teaching different skills with a single type of ESP. The results also indicate that some users feel that ESP teachers should be interested in more than just linguistics, but there are those who claim that the main difference between ESP and general English lies in vocabulary. This polarity of opinions shows that no established view of ESP may exist. The analysis further suggests that the distinction between ESP and EGP is clearer to those who are more interested in learners' professional needs. Finally, the choice of topics in the analysed threads indicates that forum members and their visitors are interested not only in ESP, but in subjects which have nothing to do with ESP.

Keywords: ESP, online forum, online community, trends, materials

Literature devoted to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) shows what methodology can be applied to teaching different professionals, what the teacher's and learners' roles are, how to conduct needs analysis and syllabus design and what materials to use. These are general guidelines but each teaching situation is different and might require a more detailed approach. Consequently, ESP teachers are likely to look for teaching tips and techniques among the teaching community who might share similar experiences.

Nowadays teaching communities can be found not only in schools or other educational institutions but also in online forums which are asynchronous computer mediated communication in an online space, which usually revolves around more than one topic and connects people through written messages (Santosa *et al*., 2005 in Kanur, 2011; Cyprus, 2016).

Participating in online discussions, teachers acquire new ideas and perspectives, refine old ones, learn about employment opportunities and establish professional contacts (Pavlina, 2005). Furthermore, teachers have instant access to knowledge which would otherwise have to be purchased (Chindeu, 2008), for example, in the form of a book. It should be stressed that teachers who turn to online forums might not always find an answer to their question but they will probably observe that others face a similar difficulty assuring them that their problems are not a sign of their incompetence. Thanks to the opportunity of being anonymous, teachers enjoy a greater degree of confidence in expressing their point of view, answer questions, especially controversial ones, more honestly or share intimate knowledge about themselves or other people (Amir, 2012).

[1] Every time a forum thread is viewed by anyone, this fact is recorded by the forum database and the number of views is usually displayed next to the thread title in forum contents.

Materials and Methods

Research Description

Internet forums offer insight into the interactions of this community and the analysis of forum posts and thread views can help answer at least some kinds of practical questions about needs and interests of ESP teachers. Moreover, they show how teachers teach needs-related English and how they understand the concept of ESP which has been widely debated in academic literature (Smoak, 2003). Therefore, the research was motivated by the following questions:

1. What are the common issues in the ten most frequently viewed threads in the analysed forums and what do they reveal about the needs of the teaching community?
2. How do forum users understand the concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), especially business English?

The forums were found through a Google search using the search term *forums for business English teachers*. Interestingly, results for this search term resulted in four forums devoted to business English and other types of ESP while the search terms *forums for ESP teachers, ESP teachers forums, teaching ESP forum* brought websites with a much more general scope. Similarly, search terms focusing on other varieties of ESP such as *medical English teachers forum, legal English teachers forum, technical English teachers forum* resulted in links to general ESL websites and forums or single threads in these general forums. Therefore, the search term forums for business English teachers turned out to be the most useful for this paper. The forums analysed in this paper were the first, fifth, sixth and fifteenth search result for this term. The remaining high-ranking search results were not applicable to this study because they were either online forums which contained too few posts devoted to the subject in question or articles and websites containing the search term. For example, one of the results was a link to http://www.tefl.net/forums/index.php which is an index of forums devoted to various aspects connected with teaching English for general Purposes; another result was a link to a Polish forum for business English teachers where one can mainly find advertisements of language teachers giving private business English lessons; yet another result was a link to an article in the Guardian newspaper on the professionalism of the ESP teaching community; etc. Only organic search results were considered, i.e. advertisements and sponsored links were not included (Blake, 2006). These were the links from the first two search result pages and the question is how likely ESP teachers might be to browse more than the first two pages of Google search results. From each forum, ten threads were selected for a closer analysis based on their number of views. Table 1 shows the most frequently viewed threads in the analysed forums. It is assumed that these threads which were viewed by the largest number of visitors might be the ones which are of the greatest interest to the users of these forums (presumably representing the ESP community). While this may not necessarily be true in all case, there is no better statistic to be used for selecting threads. Posts in the treads as shown in Table 1 were analysed for common topics.

The following forums for teachers of ESP were analysed for the purposes of the research:

- Forum 1 is available at: http://www.tefl.net/forums/viewforum.php?f=15&sid=e63531a0bc9cee1323fab68e7c86163f. The forum was accessed on 13.06. 2016 and at that time it had 31 threads. The oldest post dates back to 2004 and the forum is still active
- Forum 2 is available at: http://forums.eslcafe.com/teacher/viewforum.php?f=6. The forum was accessed on 13.06. 2016 and at that time it had 601 threads. The oldest post dates back to 2003 and the newest ones come form 2009, but since then no new post have been added. However, the forum is still visited. For instance on 13.06. 2016 the thread "How to handle awkward teaching situation" had a total of 8569 views and on 20.06.2016 it had 8581 views.
- Forum 3 is available at: http://www.esl-jobs-forum.com/viewforum.php?f=16. The forum was accessed on 14.06.2016 at that time it had 15 threads. The oldest post dates back to 2005 and the forum is still active.
- Forum 4 is available at: http://www.onestopenglish.com/english-for-specific-purposes/13.forum . The forum was accessed on 17.06.2016 and at that time it had 14 threads. The oldest post dates back to 2009 and the newest one is from January 2016. Contrary to previous three forums, this one does not list the number of views for individual threads but only for the whole forum.

Results and Discussion

Thread Views

The number of thread views has shown that Forum 1 and Forum 3 are much more frequently visited than Forum 2 and 4. Moreover, as shown in Table 1, threads in the first three forums were viewed by a large number of users, but there were only a few posts in each of the analysed threads in all forums, and only a small number of users were involved in the discussion. The reason for that might be the abundance of social media sites

Table 1
The most frequently viewed threads

Forum 1			**Forum 2**			**Forum 3**			**Forum 4**		
Thread	Views	Posts	Thread	Views	Posts	Thread	Views	Posts	Thread	Views	Posts
Teaching English for science, tourism, IT, maths	17887	7	How to handle awkward teaching situation	8569	11	Familiarising oneself with the business world	18439	8	English for Sales and Retail – coursebook	-	2
Making business letters fun	13237	4	Hello, and what is business English?	7823	11	First time with	17542	6	English for graduates in Transport and Logistics	-	1
Activities/ conversation to promote English	11350	3	Business English writing	7039	6	Business teaching methodologies	13932	6	Teaching English to restaurant staff	-	2
Pay scale for business English	11823	7	Business English for IT professionals	6704	10	SwinGuru: antispam guide :) 0001	11473	1	Need for materials for industry English	-	1
Help: Business English textbooks	11508	5	Business and ESP conversation materials	6464	8	Selling yourself to Businesses…	11309	2	ESP for builders? **HELP**!!	-	1
Crossing the language barrier	11148	3	TOEIC preparation courses	5230	2	What antivirus do you use?	10919	5	Aviation English	-	1
Successful communication	10456	3	Business English One-to-One … any tips?	4861	6	Information on teaching ESL business classes	8950	3	Teaching English for Hotel Personnel	-	3
Teaching pilots	10219	4	(POLL) teaching by telephone (Skype)	4159	3	Need verification - Has anyone heard of Comunicorp?	8540	1	Selling in English – can you recommend any materials	-	1
Technical English Books	7736	5	Distance DELTA – pre-course reading – any suggestions	4027	3	Just wanted to say Hello	7460	1	Trends materials	-	1
The LCCI Foundation Certificate in Business English	7607	3	Business English Curriculum for Consulting	3742	2	Ould Kaddour BRC : British Rally Championship	6403		Teaching English to an accountant	-	4

which has reduced the amount of time people spend per session in forums (Sabnani, 2012)). Furthermore, it is known that so-called user-generated content is only created by a small percentage of users. As Arthur (2006) observes: "It's an emerging rule of thumb that suggests that if you get a group of 100 people online then one will create content, 10 will 'interact' with it (commenting or offering improvements) and the other 89 will just view it". There are also technical reasons why there are always more views of a thread than posts in it – a single user may visit a thread multiple times, users may revisit a thread as new post appear, etc. Nevertheless, the disproportion between the number of posts and the number of views is strikingly high.

As shown in Table 1 all forums contain threads the names of which suggest that their content might be related to different types of ESP such as English for IT, Aviation English or English for Accountancy. The fact that four different forums contain such threads and the number of views of these threads suggests that content tailored for work-related needs of various professions is in great demand.

It is worth considering what a high number of views of such threads might mean. In the first place teachers might be looking for an answer on how a given type of ESP is commonly understood and therefore how a syllabus for this type of ESP should be designed. Secondly, they may be searching for profession-related classroom materials and/or sources of such teaching aids. They could also want to get new teaching tips or brush up on old ones.

Common topics in such threads confirm these assumptions. In Forum 1, in the thread *Teaching English for science, tourism, IT, Maths*, a forum member asked how to teach 12^{th} grade students, who were focusing on such careers as science, tourism, maths, and computer science, to communicate more effectively in their future professions. In the same forum, in the thread *Teaching pilots*, a person asked for help in choosing a book for pre-intermediate learners of Aviation English. In Forum 2, in the thread *Business English for IT professionals*, a forum member asked about websites where he could purchase supplementary materials for a language course for IT industry. In the same forum, in the thread *Business English Curriculum for Consulting*, a person who was developing a business English curriculum with emphasis on consulting services was searching for a place where he could obtain curriculum packages including books, manuals, activities, and visual aids. In Forum 3, in the thread *Information on teaching ESL business classes*, a person would like to receive information about tips for teaching intermediate adults who learn business English and on links to websites where such advice could be found. Furthermore, he wondered how teaching business English is different from teaching general English. In Forum 4 nine of the ten analysed threads are related to different types of ESP. For instance, in the thread *English for graduates in Transport and Logistics* a forum member was looking for examples of professional documents related to the field. In the thread *Selling in English - can you recommend material?* a person was searching for materials he could use during a workshop with sales people.

Another common issue, as suggested by the names of threads in Forum 1 and Forum 2, is course materials and textbooks. This indicates that ESP teachers are constantly looking for appropriate texts and other teaching aids which could mean that the publishing market does not offer the resources teachers need. Discussions about textbooks show that teachers struggle to choose the best course books for their learners or at least need advice choosing. In Forum 1, in the thread *Help: Business English Textbooks*, a person asked other forum members to recommend good textbooks, because a catalogue from one of the publishers was not much help. In the same forum, in the thread *Technical English Books*, a forum member was trying to find graded books for learners of technical English. However, in Forum 2, in the thread *Business and ESP conversation materials*, a person was promoting conversation and speaking materials she has created. It should be stressed, however, that the issue of materials appears in other threads as well, even though the name may not suggest that. In Forum 3 the issue of course books appeared in the thread *Familiarising oneself with the business world* where forum users recommended books and websites which might be useful for teachers who are new to ESP. In Forum 4 all the analysed threads contained requests for advice on the choice of ESP materials or on how to adapt them to learners' needs. For instance, in the thread *Teaching English to an accountant* a forum member asked how to adapt English for accounting course books for a pre-intermediate level learner. Interestingly, one of the pieces of advice he received was to use realia, such as bank statements.

Analysis of the threads has also revealed that writing is the only language skill discussed in the top ten threads (according to the number of views) in Forum 1 and Forum 2. This might be an indication that writing is considered to be the most problematic skill to develop during ESP courses. The analysis of posts in these forums shows that in Forum 1, in the thread *Making business letters fun*, the user would like to know how to make writing letters a fun activity and in Forum 2, in the thread *Business English Writing*, the user was trying to create a collection of Business English lessons for all language levels with emphasis on writing and was asking about books she could buy or websites where she could find the necessary materials.

The last common subject that appeared in Forum 1 and Forum 2 was language certificates. Users looked for information on certificates which they could use to raise their qualifications. For instance, in Forum 1, in the thread *the LCCI Foundation Certificate in Business English*, the user was looking for information about the certificate because she would like to offer Business English courses and earn a better salary. Forum users were also interested in certificates which would be most appropriate for their learners. In Forum 2, in the thread *TOEIC preparation courses*, the user needed information on TOEIC preparation courses which they could use with business administration students.

Finally, In Forum 2 and Forum 4 there were threads where members ask for materials or advice on how to conduct one-to-one lessons. For example, in Forum 2, in the thread *Business English One-to-One … any tips?*, a forum member was asking how to approach 3-hours sessions with an Italian businessman who wants to study business English and grammar. In Forum 4, in the thread *English for Sales and Retail - coursebook?*, a forum member was searching for advice on how to conduct private one-to-one lessons for French students working in retail selling jewellery and accessories.

The Concept of English for Specific Purposes

The second research question concerned ESP teachers' understanding of the concept of English for Specific Purposes. The data showed that the most frequently viewed thread in Forum 3 was *Familiarising oneself with the business world*, which offered interesting insight into what teachers who were new to ESP want to know about ESP teaching methodology and what advice those who had already been working in the field could offer. The user who started this thread wanted to know what it meant to acquire the knowledge of the business world. He also wanted to know what, apart from picking his students' brains, he could do to gain such knowledge. For that reason, he asked about easily 'digestible' trade magazines or newspapers. Other forum members recommended joining an institution similar to the Chamber of Commerce, subscribing to business newsletters, reading the business pages of a quality daily newspaper, watching business reports on TV, or working with such course books as *Intelligent Business* or *Teaching Business English* and a website: http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/. The user was also advised to conduct needs analysis to learn their students' language levels and was shown some basic ways of doing so. Moreover, he was warned not to introduce complex business issues to students who are beginners. Interestingly, one of the forum members observed that the more one knows about business, the more credibility one has with the learners but it takes time and effort to build one's knowledge base. On the other hand, another forum member claimed he teaches only general English with emphasis on transactional language, i.e. language which would help different professions in oral communicative exchanges related to their field. The main conclusion which can be drawn from the comments in this thread is that teaching business English requires more than just knowledge of the language.

The conviction that teaching business English differs from teaching general English was visible in the third most popular thread in the same forum – *Business teaching methodologies.* The person who started the discussion asked what different styles of teaching business English there are and whether there are some teaching methodologies that are better than others. One of the commentators observed that there is a teaching methodology called SQRRR where S stands for Survey, Q for Question, R for Read, R for Recollect and R for Remember. Another person observed that business English teaching is more specialized, especially in the area of vocabulary. Yet another commentator argued that English classes do not develop business English effectively and recommended such software as *Espoir Smart English through Management Ideas' for Managers & CEOs*, which is supposed to teach usable English, boost one's thinking and knowledge of the business and corporate world, as well as develop soft skills. Interestingly, in his opinion, there is almost no difference between business English or social English, but each speaker might need different terminology and might have different expectations.

Almost all the posts in this thread indicate the need for special preparation for teaching business English, but they do not explain the role of the business English teacher. Some comments on the teachers role appeared in the thread *First time with...* . One of the users observed that one should be a 'facilitator' rather than a 'teacher' and that the role of a business English teacher is to help learners communicate in English rather than to teach them in the traditional sense. She further argued that the teacher has to respect their learners' expertise.

A discussion about the nature of business English can also be found in the thread *Hello, and what is business English?* in Forum 2. The person who started the discussion wanted to know if business English is simply a jargon used in the business world and whether there is common 'business English' across various professions. According to the first answer in the thread, business English means teaching English for use in a business setting, regardless of how this setting is defined. In another post, we can read that Business English means different things to different people. Moreover, the author of this posts suggested that business English might be a clever marketing ploy. The authors of other posts claimed that there are topics and registers which are more appropriate to business situations, writing conventions that are more likely to be used only in business contexts, or some stylistic considerations, but a person needs to master grammar and simple spoken English, otherwise she or he will not be able to master any type of ESP. They also argued that business English might involve a significant amount of jargon but learners need elements of general English as well. As far as teaching methodology is concerned, we can read that it is worth combining students' business experience with one's own teaching experience and compare them to the scenarios form course books. In one of the last posts in the thread the author stressed that the teacher needs more than pages from course books to teach ESP effectively, as they will not hold up under the scrutiny of their learners who are experts in their fields. Consequently, depending on the type of ESP teachers teach, they should know, for instance, basic differences between legal systems from different countries or different ways of doing business across cultures.

The discussion about the nature of business English can also be found in Forum 1, but not among the top ten most frequently viewed threads. In the thread *Does Business English Really exist?* the author of the thread claimed that business English does not exist. The only thing that is real, in his opinion, is business vocabulary and some set phrases. He wanted to know whether there is Business Grammar or Business Phonetics. In the thread *Why bother teaching Business English?* the first user to answer argued that, apart from the fact that 'academic writing' is characterized by a higher percentage of passive voice structures as compared to other types of English, there are no other significant differences among English 'types', regardless of the content area. One of the participants of the discussion observed that there is a difference between a CELTA and ESP approach to teaching which stems from the fact that ESP courses are oriented around specific needs of the learners. Yet another user thought that teaching Business English can be really demanding, especially when the teacher is expected to help their learners with profession specific jargon which is frequently too technical. In one of the final posts in the thread we can read that it is vocabulary and functions that might be the source of differences between English for Specific Purposes and English for General Purposes but regardless of the type of ESP people learn they also need general English.

In the top ten most frequently viewed threads, more specifically in the thread *Pay scale for business English*, forum users discussed salaries of ESP teachers in different countries. This discussion seemed to suggest that another difference between ESP and EGP lies in the amount of money teachers receive. The statement that ESP teachers are likely to be paid more would need to be confirmed by a different research project.

Conclusion

The analysis of threads in the forums shows that the majority of discussions revolve around the choice of materials, even though the name of the thread may not indicate that, for different types of ESP. In the first place forum members ask about existing course books. This gives rise to the question whether the course book defines the methodology, or the methodology influences the selection (Sharma, 2011). This might also suggest that forum members know very little about oral and written communicative strategies of a given profession and rely on the expertise of course books writers to provide them with such knowledge. In the second place forum users search for ready teaching packages and websites which offer access to ESP materials. No one advises anyone to design their own materials from scratch and there are only a few remarks concerning the use of authentic documents. Does it mean that teachers do not feel qualified enough to design specialist materials, or that it is too time consuming, or that it is simply not what people are looking for in forums?

The discussion of the nature of ESP is not unanimous. On the one hand, there are forum members who see that ESP is different from EGP and who feel that ESP teachers should be interested in more than just linguistics. On the other hand, there are those who claim that the main difference between ESP and EGP lies in vocabulary and in the end all we do is teach plain old general English. This polarity of opinions shows that no established view of ESP may exist. The analysis further suggests that the distinction between ESP and EGP is clearer to those who are more interested in learners' professional needs.

Interestingly, forum members do not discuss, at least in the analysed threads, how to teach individual language skills but how to teach different types of ESP. Only threads concerning teaching writing appeared in two of the analysed forums which indicates that there is a greater difference between teaching the same skills in two branches of ESP than there is between teaching different skills with a single type of ESP. In other words, different skills within one branch of ESP have more in common with each other than the same skills with various branches of ESP. Furthermore, teaching individual skills might be connected more to the area of expertise of EGP, as teachers (because of their training) already know how to do that.

The analysis of posts suggests that most forum members are employed by companies and language schools, rather than higher education institutions, which gives rise to the question to what extent the advice which can be found in such forums is applicable to tertiary language courses.

Finally, the choice of topics in the analysed threads and in the forums in general indicates that forum members and their visitors are interested not only in ESP, but also in other subjects, including some which have nothing to do with ESP. This shows that internet forums may not only be a platform for sharing information, but also a meeting place for the community.

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On Tenor and Its Prosodic Markers in Rhetorical Discourse

Elena Freydina
Moscow State Pedagogical University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Elena Freydina, Moscow Pedagogical State University, Prospekt Vernadskogo, bld. 88, Moscow, Russian Federation, 119571.
E-mail: freydina55@mail.ru

In rhetorical discourse, tenors can be formed intentionally and used as rhetorical strategies to implement the speaker's goals. The article reports on a study of the contextual category 'tenor' and its prosodic realisation in rhetorical discourse. The paper examines rhetorical, auditory and acoustic features in the samples of English academic presentations (lectures). The author argues that tenors can reflect both the relationships of the participants of a particular speech event and the relationships associated with a broader sociocultural context. Analysing tenor as a sociocultural phenomenon the author demonstrates its correlations with some specific features of British speech culture. Special attetnion is given to the role of prosody in conveying and identifying tenors. The article contains an overview of the prosodic markers of tenor: tone of voice, pitch parameters, temporal characteristics. The study of tenor and its prosodic markers contributes to a fuller understanding of the influence of contextual factors on the prosodic realisation of discourse. The observations made in the paper may be useful to develop cross-cultural communication competence and rhetorical competence of EFL students.

Keywords: tenor of discourse, rhetorical strategy, prosodic markers, tone of voice, irony, cross-cultural communication

The shift to a discourse perspective in the research of prosody, on the one hand, and the incorporation of prosody into discourse analysis, on the other hand, have provided a deeper insight into the social and interactional meaning of speech communication. Prosodic means are studied with regard to their functions in speech communication as well as situational and contextual factors. This complex interaction of prosody and context is reflected in tenor, a communication phenomenon linking spoken discourse and extralinguistic context.

The significance of tenor as a contextual category is generally acknowledged. Some attention is given to tenor in the studies of language variation and style (Copland, 2007), discourse theory (Karasik, 2009), sociolinguistics (Downes, 1998; Schevchenko, 2015). Interestingly, all the researchers interested in tenor tend to comment on the importance of the vocal component. However, the prosodic markers of tenor are seldom included in the analysis.

The goal of this research is to describe tenor as a contextual category in rhetorical discourse with regard to its prosodic realisation. It should also be noted that the research was aimed at establishing tenor variations and tenor shifts within a particular genre of discourse. Academic public speeches (lectures) were selected as the material for the analysis, because this genre of rhetorical discourse is generally associated with a certain tenor. The observations presented here are meant to demonstrate that the tenor in academic presentations is neither fixed nor homogeneous.

Material and Methods

The material for the analysis was the corpus of 20 lectures (Moscow Pedagogical State University (MPGU) Corpus of Spoken English, 2015) delivered by British lecturers (12 men and 8 women) and recorded at the moment of their presentation. The lectures were video recorded (9 lectures) and audio recorded (11 lectures). The topics of the lectures were related to the spheres of education, linguistics, cross-cultural communication, foreign language teaching, social and cultural problems.

Transcripts of the lectures were made. The analysis of the prosodic features was combined with the analysis of the contextual factors and rhetorical characteristics of discourse.

Auditory (perception) analysis consisted of recording the "auditory impression" of the speech segments and providing their auditory transcription (intonation notation). Acoustic analysis (Speech Analyzer (v. 3.0.1) provided measurements of the following prosodic parameters: pitch, duration and intensity. The interpretation of the data obtained in the course of perception and acoustic analyses made it possible to establish the main tendencies in the prosodic realisation of discourse tenor.

Tenor as a Contextual Category

Tenor is generally described as a significant contextual category. It is viewed as a reflection of discourse participants' relationships. According to Gregory and Carroll (1978, p. 9), "The relationship the user has with his audience, his addressee(s), is the situational factor that is involved in tenor of discourse. Tenors of discourse result from the mutual relations between the language used and the relationships among the participants in language events". In other words, tenor carries the information about a variety of social and sociocultural properties of discourse participants which determine the character of their interaction: their social statuses and roles, their institutional roles, social distance, which ranges from very close (intimate) to very distant (formal).

However, tenor can also be associated with the goals of communication and language variations that result from the type of speech activity, from what the speaker does with the language, whether he wants to persuade, to inform, to entertain and so on. Thus, tenor as a complex contextual factor has two aspects: personal and functional. Functional participants' relationships and functional tenor as well as interpersonal relationships are a source of significant linguistic variation. It should be noted that functional tenor is often associated with style ("conversational tenor" - "conversational style"). In the analysis of personal tenor the following parameters are relevant: formal-informal, friendly – hostile, polite – impolite, etc. Clearly, both dimensions of tenor reflect the most subtle attitudes that emerge in the process of speech interaction and contribute to creating a certain atmosphere.

It should be mentioned that tenors are formed by all the participants of discourse. Thus, in public speaking both the speaker and the audience will constitute the tenor. One of the assumptions this paper is based upon is that tenors can reflect not only the relationships of the participants of a particular speech event but also the relationships associated with a broader sociocultural context.

Tenor and Prosody

Admittedly, in oral discourse the vocal features are of primary importance in conveying tenors. As a contextualization cue, prosody provides the links between the message and the social context of interaction, participants' relationships in particular. Prosodic features can serve as signals that make it possible for the hearer to identify the tenor conveyed by the speaker.

Interestingly, the notion of tenor is similar to the notion of tone, or tone of voice, which is sometimes used to describe the emotional and attitudinal aspect of interaction: "I don't like this tone", "Why this hostile tone?", etc. In other words, it is the tone of voice that leads to inferences about the tenor of discourse.

According to Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996), "in spoken interaction we react to a lot more than the words our utterances are made up of: 'a tone of voice', a 'feeling' about the way our partner spoke, the 'atmosphere' of a conversation – these are often more significant cues to the real message than the words themselves" (Couper-Kuhlen, Selting, 1996, p. 1).

The atmosphere of communication as a factor that is relevant for the adequate interpretation of the message and that influences speech interaction is also referred to as 'keying'. Downes (1998) defines 'key' as "tone, manner and spirit" of the speech act (Downes, 1998, p. 303). Keying is very important for identifying (in most cases inferring) the speaker's intention, whether he is serious or ironic, friendly or hostile, etc. This component of communicative events is sometimes described as 'voicing', "which can be playful or malicious, acts of teasing or put-downs" (Coupland, 2007, p. 114).

It can be seen from this brief overview that most descriptions of the contextual category 'tenor' contain a reference to the vocal features ('tone of voice', 'voicing'), which shows the significance of phonetic means in conveying and identifying tenors of discourse.

In phonetic literature, the tone of voice, a complex vocal phenomenon, is described as a carrier of emotive indexical information. Expressing the speaker's emotional state and his attitude to the message, the addressee and the situation, it can "regulate speech interaction and is connected with the manner and style of interaction" (Kreydlin, 2000, p. 497).

Pitch parameters also contribute to tenor formation and serve as markers of tenor. Thus, Schevchenko (2015) claims that pitch characteristics in general and terminal tones in particular play an important role in creating the atmosphere of friendliness and empathy (Schevchenko, 2015, p. 205). It is true to say that performing its attitudinal function, intonation can convey a variety of attitudinal meanings related to different aspects of communication. In particular, it reflects the character of personal relationships in the dynamics of discourse. However, it should be noted that the process of matching a particular intonation pattern with a particular attitude is far from straightforward. According to Roach (2000),

> the notion of "expressing an emotion or attitude" is itself a more complex one than is generally realised. First, an emotion may be expressed involuntarily or voluntarily; if I say something in a "happy" way, this may be because *I feel* happy, or because I want to convey to you the *impression* that I am happy. Second, an attitude that is expressed could be an attitude towards the listener (e.g. if I say something in a "friendly" way), towards what is being said (e.g. if I say something in a "sceptical" or "dubious" way) or towards some external event or situation (e.g. "regretful" or "disapproving"). (Roach, 2000, p. 185)

It follows from this that the study of 'attitudinal intonation' involves the analysis of the context, in particular, 'speaker meaning' and the way it is perceived and interpreted by the hearer.

What needs to be stressed here is that when studying the role of particular intonation parameters (key, pre-nuclear patterns, nuclear tones) in conveying tenors, special attention should be given to a very detailed analysis of all the contextual factors: the goal of communication, the form and mode of discourse, the norms of speech culture, etc. This analysis will make it possible to identify the correlation between message, intonation and context and make some inference about the tenor of discourse.

Results and Discussion

Prosodic Markers of Tenor in Public Speeches

Researchers interested in social and interactional meaning, reflected in the tenor of discourse, are faced with three problems: firstly, it is not possible to ascribe a certain tenor to a particular genre of discourse, secondly, tenors can change in the process of interaction, and thirdly, tenor may be difficult to identify, especially in cross-cultural communication.

Admittedly, tenor is an indicator of how the utterance is perceived by the hearer: whether it is neutral or emotional, friendly or unfriendly, amusing or serious. The classification of communicative tenors, suggested by Karasik (2009), includes such types of tenor as informative, phatic, solemn, fascinating, aggressive, manipulative, jocular, didactic and others (Karasik, 2009, p. 306). It is obvious that some of these tenors are generally associated with a particular type of discourse: phatic tenor is typical of small talk, solemn can be expected in oratory, didactic tenor can be observed in pedagogical discourse. However, in actual speech interaction, tenors may vary within the same genre of discourse: a lecture may be characterised by a combination of informative, didactic and jocular tenors.

As regards the problem of identifying tenors in cross-cultural communication broad sociocultural context is to be considered. As it was already mentioned, the choice of tenor results from the cultural norms of speech interaction, which prescribe certain patterns of speech behaviour.

The author's primary concern is to investigate various sources of tenor in rhetorical discourse and give an overview of prosodic markers of tenor with regard to contextual factors.

One of the problems we are faced with is that in goal-oriented rhetorical discourse tenors can be "constructed". In other words, the speaker may be expected to project the sort of tenor, which will contribute to the effectiveness of his interaction with the listeners. The impression of friendly informal tenor of discourse may not necessarily result from the relationship of the speaker and the audience considered on the personal axis. The speaker may intentionally choose friendly informal tenor as an instrument of building rapport with the listeners so that to implement the goals of the speech.

The analysis of the corpus of lectures demonstrates that about 70% of lecturers choose the informal tenor, 15% combine the formal and informal interaction and only 15% of the academic public presentations are characterised by the formal tenor.

What needs to be stressed here is that the informal tenor in a public speech is not identical to the informal tenor of everyday conversation. Informal conversational interaction is characterised by minimal control of the verbal and non-verbal input of the participants: their posture may be relaxed, they may speak in low voices, use self-repair and hesitation pauses extensively. In rhetorical discourse, speakers are expected to control their volume, to vary the tempo of speech and melodic repertoire, and in general to avoid the speech behavior that might be perceived as lack of rhetorical competence.

However, the data obtained in the course of perception and acoustic analysis demonstrated marked prosodic differences, which result from the difference in tenors.

Prosodic Markers of Informal Tenor

***Pitch Characteristics*:**

Pitch ranges vary from narrow to medium (4-18 semitones);

The most frequent terminal tones: Low Fall, Mid Fall, Mid Level Tone, Low Rise, Fall-Rise;

Pre-nuclear patterns (Heads): Low Level Head, Mid Level Head, Falling Head, Sliding Head.

Temporal Characteristics:

Rate of speech varies from fast to medium (125-200 milliseconds), with fast rate predominating;

The duration of syntactic pauses varies from very short to medium (250-600 milliseconds); the duration of emphatic pauses varies from 250 to 800 milliseconds; hesitation pauses (both filled and unfilled) are present, their length varies from 200 to 1600 milliseconds.

These data can be compared with the set of prosodic parameters typical of the formal tenor.

Prosodic Markers of Formal Tenor

Pitch characteristics:

Pitch ranges are greatly varied (7-25 semintones), medium and broad ranges predominate;

The prevailing terminal tones: High Fall, Fall-Rise, Rise-Fall-Rise, Low Rise in non-final intonation groups;

Pre-nuclear patterns (Heads): High Level Head, Falling Head, Sliding Head, Stepping Head.

Temporal Characteristics:

Rate of speech varies from medium to slow (185 – 250 milliseconds).

The duration of syntactic pauses varies from short to very long (250-1400 milliseconds); the duration of emphatic pauses varies from 200 to 1600 milliseconds; the number of hesitation pauses is insignificant.

Loudness is not included in the comparative analysis because this prosodic feature is determined mostly by such factors as the size of the audience and the speaker's individual style and is not relevant as a marker of tenor.

It is evident that tenor is reflected on the prosodic level. Another important conclusion to draw here is the complexity of tenor as a contextual category. In rhetorical discourse, personal and functional tenors are inseparably connected and contribute to the formation of a particular style of interaction.

Tenor Shifts

As it was already mentioned tenors tend to change within the same speech act. Considering that public speaking involves active interaction of the speaker and the audience and is tailored to implement specific goals, the study of tenor in this genre of discourse can provide information about tenor variations.

We shall now turn to a series of examples illustrating how tenors function in rhetorical discourse. As it was already mentioned, two types of tenor can be traced in academic public presentations: formal (informative) tenor and informal (conversational) tenor.

> *'So having established that| the next important point is| how much of the income that is disposed| is disposed on the basic necessities of life|| That used to be very much easier to define in the old days|| But since the middle of the last century|| we have become| a consumer society|| The evidence of this| you can see every time you walk down Guilford High Street||... It's amazing at this time of the year| when we are just running up to the big Christmas spending spree| how the most ordinary things are advertised| as being absolutely essential| for your daily life|| How we ever survived without them I can't think|||*'. (Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), 2015)

This extract demonstrates the shift of tenor within one section of the lecture on social and economic problems. In the first three sentences, tenor can be described as formal, serious, informative. It is typical of academic discourse aimed at conveying information and easily identified: the use of terms, lexical density, and syntactic precision. On the phonetic level, the following parameters are relevant: distinct enunciation, particular articulatory precision; slow tempo, long syntactic pauses, broad pitch range, the use of such terminal tones as Low Fall, High Fall, Fall-Rise, the use of Stepping Head and Sliding Head. The prosodic devices used by the speaker contribute to creating the atmosphere of serious interaction in which the interpersonal aspect is effaced in favour of the main communicative goal – getting the information across to the listeners. It is very vividly expressed in the following phrase:

> *But ↘since the 'middle of the 'last \century||*
> *we have →become |a consumer \society||*

Very slow tempo, increased length of the syntactic pause between the intonation groups, word-by-word accentuation, the use of the Low Fall in non-final position, the use of emphatic pause are markers of serious informative tenor.

In the last three sentences of the extract, a marked change of tenor can be observed. The speaker supports the first statements with an example, referring both to her own experience and to the experience of the listeners. The tenor in this section can be characterised as friendly, conversational and ironic. The change of tenor is expressed both on the lexical and syntactic levels: absence of terms, colloquial expressions, simple syntactic constructions. The shift of tenor is immediately identified by the change of timber. On the prosodic level, it is marked by faster tempo, medium and narrow pitch range, and greater variety of intonation patterns: use of Mid-Level Tones and Low Falls, Mid and Low Level Tones in pre-nuclear parts of the intonation groups alongside with such intonation patterns as Sliding Head+ High Fall.

In a broad sense, the change of tenor involves a change of language and certain prosodic contrasts, that serve both as markers of tenor shift and as a means of identifying it.

Our basic assumption is that tenor should be studied with regard to the specific features of a particular genre of discourse. The study of academic public presentations (Bloch, Freydina, 2011; Freydina, 2013) provided some data demonstrating that both the choice of tenor and tenor shifts are determined by the rhetorical factors. Moreover, tenor can be viewed as a rhetorical strategy.

Tenor as a Ehetorical Strategy

It would be wrong to assume that tenors are always constructed deliberately and do not result from 'natural' relationships. However, the ways people convey these relationships in 'ordinary' everyday conversation and in goal-oriented discourse aimed at effective interaction, projecting a certain image, persuading, and influencing others are very different.

It is necessary to consider here two aspects of tenor: the social and cultural factors that regulate the choice of tenor and its functions in rhetorical discourse.

Admittedly, social and cultural norms have a great influence on rhetorical discourse, its content and style. This influence is realized in the following way: the speaker chooses speech strategies and language means which are appropriate and goal-oriented. Today public speaking is viewed as a two-sided process, in which the interaction of the speaker and the audience is of crucial importance for its effectiveness. Specialists in public speaking (Hughes & Phillips, 2004) emphasise the role of the listeners: "How should we judge a speech? By its effect on the audience. They are the only judges. Public speaking is a uniquely "democratic" form of expression" (Hughes & Phillips, 2004, p. 3). This requirement leads to the conclusion that maintaining contact with the listeners is vital for the success of any presentation.

The key concepts that refer to effective interaction of the participants of rhetorical discourse are identification, rapport, and empathy. Identification refers to the search of common language, the ability to identify yourself and others without losing your own identity. Empathy is the ability to share other people's feelings, which contributes to active and open character of rhetorical discourse. Rapport refers to the relations of sympathy and mutual respect between the speaker and the listeners.

It is clear that the choice of tenor is in fact one of contact strategies. The prevalence of informal, friendly tenor in the academic public presentations stated above (4,1) is accounted for by the guidelines for effective interaction of discourse participants. Speakers tend to structure their lectures as "enlarged conversations" with the listeners. The evidence of this can be found in the introductions when informal conversational tenor is used to establish contact and create a favourable first impression:

> *'Today the sun is shining | and my basic reaction is go and take a walk in the park ||* (Lecture "Forms of Classroom Interaction", 2012; MPGU Corpus of Spoken English, 2015).
>
> *I'd like to start| by sharing with you an interesting experience |which I had four years ago| it's difficult to believe,| but four years ago| I had discussions and workshops about culture in English language teaching|| and I always asked at the beginning of these talks the same question||: What do we mean by culture? |If I say "culture" to you,| what does "culture" mean?||'. (Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), 2015)*

It should be noted that that speakers frequently resort to the shift of tenor as a special rhetorical strategy. It can be observed in storytelling, one of powerful techniques of building rapport. A good story or a joke performs a variety of functions: it involves the audience, creates drama, makes the presentation more personal and more expressive. At the same time storytelling can serve as an effective support. Stories often contain the information about the speaker and indicate his being open and ready to share opinions and experiences with the audience:

> *'I first became interested in this problem |when I went to live in France.| France, |er|, is a place where I've spent a lot of time| and I still do,| I go there very very often.|| One of the things that I liked about France| was that,| er,| they kissed a lot.|| I don't know if you do this here.|| I've only been 12 hours in Russia.|| Do you kiss people in Russia? |Not as often as in France.| What I liked about France |is that they |(I lived in Lion)|, they kissed you on both cheeks| which I thought for a shy Englishman| was a very friendly thing to do||'. (Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), 2015)*

The tenor in the above extracts can be described as informal, friendly, conversational, and ironic. Prosodic characteristics are similar to those in spontaneous discourse: narrow pitch range, prevalence of Mid-Level Tones and Low Falls, Mid and Low Level Tones in pre-nuclear parts of the intonation groups, fast tempo, varied length of pauses, and presence of hesitation pauses.

Change of tenor is particularly vivid when the speakers tell jokes and introduce special characters:

> *'There was a guy | who was older than us || And he made a very long presentation || We were sitting in the back thinking || Is*

he a genius | or is he crazy?|| At the end of his presentation | the teacher said || "Nick | that was wonderful' || When we asked him why he had done so | he said |"I didn't want to stop his creativity"||'. (Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), 2015)

In such cases the shift from serious informative tenor to conversational, humorous, and ironic tenor is reflected in marked prosodic contrasts.

It is essential to give special attention to irony because it is highly relevant in terms of tenor formation and the perception of tenor, especially in cross-cultural communication.

Ironic Tenor

Humour and irony are rhetorical devices widely used in public speeches and characterised by a high rhetorical potential. They are also described as a British conversation code.

Traditionally, three dimensions of irony are singled out: rhetorical (trope), existential (attitude to reality) and ontological (an irony of life, an irony of fate). Irony is so pervasive in English discourse that the study of its realisation in public speeches should include both the rhetorical and the existential aspects.

In English, irony is "a default conversational (and possibly deeper-seated psychological) mode" (Thorne, 2009, p. 181).

According to Fox, who emphasises the central importance of humour and irony in English culture, "what is unique about English humour is the pervasiveness of irony and the importance we attach to it. Irony is the dominant ingredient in English humour, not just a piquant flavouring. Irony rules" (Fox, 2005, p. 65).

This research suggests that irony and self-irony permeate British rhetorical discourse, and academic public speeches (lectures) in particular. Ironic phrases can be traced as well as the whole passages which sound ironic. The overall impression is that irony is a constant element of discourse and that its tenor can be described as ironic.

There are many cases of self-irony, which are used to 'lower' the speaker's image, to demonstrate his being on friendly terms with the listeners:

'I have two main interests in life|| and they are not eating and drinking|| (Lecture "Teaching Styles", 2010; MPGU Corpus of Spoken English, 2015)

There is a big division| and it's on class lines| which is defined in this case| by educational level to some extent| between good novels| that people like us|Ann and me and Simon and Gregg and Susan| highbrow| I think I'll use this word "highbrow"| that we read||. And we are very proud of ourselves| we feel very superior| we know we are better|||'. (Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), 2015)

Admittedly, prosody, capable of expressing the most subtle shades of meaning, is of crucial importance for conveying irony and ironic tenor. At the same time prosody is a contextualisation cue: it provides a link between the utterance and the context. In other words, due to prosody 'the voicing' can be identified as ironic.

The research showed marked prosodic contrasts between the textual units characterised by ironic tenor and the surrounding textual units. Two tendencies can be traced: 1) contrast due to prosodic prominence; 2) contrast due to 'smoothed' prosody (reduced prosodic parameters). They are illustrated below.

1. '*We read a book| and then we say||"Is that a good book?|| Has it made me more sensitive?"|| That's what we do in our literature seminars| I have to say|| I mean it's a very nice life|| You only read good things| you don't read the rubbish|| It's an absolutely wonderful life| and you get paid for it as well|||'. (Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), 2015)*

This is an extract from a lecture on literary genres. The lecturer, a university professor, describes her professional activity as an easy and pleasant pastime. Ironic tenor is created with the help of the following prosodic devices: short intonation groups, broad pitch range, repeated use of intonation pattern High Level Head+High Fall. Increased loudness combined with slow speech rate (250 msec) and long syntactic pauses contribute to the effect of prosodic prominence.

2. '*The drinking || I'm afraid | <u>should I be afraid I don't know</u> || ah | has increased ||| Royal Ascot gets features in all newspapers| because ladies go to Royal Ascot as much to show off their hats| as to look at the horses| in fact horses are incidental to the exercise||'. (Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), 2015)*

In both extracts from the lecture on social and economic problems irony is realised as Low Key information: low pitch level, narrow pitch range, increased tempo, and reduced loudness.

Mid-Level Tone is frequently used to convey irony.

'We feel very proud of ourselves || we feel very superior || we know we are better ||'. (Moscow State Pedagogical University (MSPU), 2015)

In first two intonation groups, High Level Head is used in combination with the Fall-Rise and the High Fall correspondingly. In the third intonation group, the Mid-Level Tone provides a contrast.

Paralinguistic signals also contribute to creating ironic tenor. On the one hand, 'relaxed voice', and 'a phonetic smile' indicate that the speaker is not serious; on the other hand, 'a tense voice' or affected seriousness may be indicators of bitter irony or sarcasm.

The main tendencies in the prosodic realisation of ironic tenor are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Prosodic markers of ironic tenor

Prosodic markers	Exaggerated prosody	Levelled prosody
Terminal tones	High Fall, Mid Fall, Fal-Rise, Rise-Fall-Rise	Low Fall, Low Rise, Mid Level Tone
Pre-nuclear patterns	Sliding Head, High Level Head, Stepping Head	Mid Level Head, Low Level Head
Tempo	Comparatively slow	Comparatively fast
Segmentation	Short and medium intonation groups	Medium, long, very long intonation groups
Pauses	Syntactic pauses (medium, long),	Syntactic pauses (medium, short, very short)
	Emphatic pauses (medium, long)	Hesitation pauses
Voice	Tense voice, serious voice	Neutral voice, creaky voice
Articulation	Exaggerated articulatory precision, affected articulation	No specific features
Articulation	Exaggerated articulatory precision, affected articulation	No specific features

Concluding this brief overview of the prosodic markers of ironic tenor, it is necessary to point out that the adequate interpretation of ironic 'voicing' is particularly challenging for non-native speakers of English. The participants of cross-cultural communication who fail to read the prosodic signals might make wrong inferences about the speaker's communicative intentions. As Coupland puts it, "irony is a quagmire for reading acts of identity, because 'as if' identities can wholly subvert the apparent meaning of a projection" (Coupland, 2007, p. 114).

Conclusion

The results of the research presented in this article demonstrate the significance of tenor in rhetorical discourse. Tenor conveys the information both about the character of participants' relationships in a given speech situation and about the relationships determined by the social and cultural context. Moreover, tenors can change in the course of the speech event.

Tenor shifts can be used as a rhetorical strategy and perform a number of functions in a public speech. They can serve to build rapport with the audience and maintain contact, they contribute to the expressiveness of the discourse, they are used in rhetorical argumentation. Tenor can also be viewed as a means of projecting the speaker's identity and the speaker's image.

The vocal features (prosody in particular) are of crucial importance for conveying and identifying tenors. As a contextualization cue prosody provides the links between the message and the social context of interaction. The prosodic markers of tenor include pitch parameters, rate of speech, and the character of pauses. The data obtained in the research demonstrated marked difference in the set of prosodic parameters typical of formal (informative) and informal (conversational) tenors.

Adequate identification of tenors is highly relevant in cross-cultural communication. It is hoped that some of the observations made in this paper might be useful both for the development of the sociocultural competence of Russian learners of English and for improving their rhetorical skills.

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Temporal and Aspectual Forms of Verbs in Proposition of Commissive Speech Acts: the Case of Promise, Swear and Bet

Konstantin Khomutskii
National Research University Higher School of Economics

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Konstantin Khomutskii, 26 Shabolovka St., Moscow, Russian Federation, 119049. E-mail: khomutskiy@hse.ru

Numerous research on Speech Act Theory considers the pragmatic functions of various types of speech acts, their illocutionary forces and implementation in language, focusing either on their locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary constituents or on their taxonomies, whereas the analysis of semantic and syntactic properties of performative formula remains scarce. The present paper reports on the study of temporal perspective of commissive speech acts in the English language. Specifically, it examines temporal-aspectual forms in propositions of performative verbs of promise, swear and bet. The methodology to investigate temporal-aspectual features of verbs in proposition includes literature review and a continuous sampling method with the help of which the author analysed approximately 1,800 performative utterances containing commissive performative verbs. The results of research demonstrate that the set of temporal-aspectual forms as well as their frequency differ from one commissive under the study to another, while the syntactic structures of propositions is homogeneous. The study also established the correlation between the illocutionary force of commissive performative verbs and temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in proposition. The results of the study might have practical implications in teaching English as a foreign language in terms of grammar and sociocultural aspects.

Keywords: speech act theory, performative utterance, performative verb, commissive, proposition, temporal perspective

At the present stage of its development, linguistics puts an emphasis on the function of various language units. A verb is instrumental in the understanding of language function and is considered to be one of the most essential parts of speech. Generally, a verb presents the action of a doer and a certain verb is associated with a specific movement (action). For example, uttering a phrase 'I am walking', the mind subconsciously creates a picture of movement at a regular pace by lifting and setting down each foot in turn, never having both feet off the ground at once. The same is true for the following phrase 'I am writing' which depicts a process of writing i.e. marking (letters, words, or other symbols) on a surface, typically paper, with a pen, pencil, or on a computer screen. However, not every verb can be 'visualised' by an action. Thus, pronouncing 'I **promise**' or 'I **swear**' one cannot draw a picture of doing something as in cases of 'I am walking' or 'I am writing'. These are examples of performative utterances which contain performative verbs – '**promise**' and '**swear**' respectively. Performative verbs combine the action itself and the description of that action, so the speech act is performed indirectly.

Materials and Methods

Initial remarks on different nature of performative verbs were made by Wittgenstein in his view about language-games. Developing the concept of 'the descriptive fallacy' in the frame of logical positivism, Wittgenstein (1953) noticed that some utterances resist a truth-conditional analysis, that is, these utterances can be named true or false. Thus, it can be stated that the utterance 'I **promise** this will never happen again' is true because communicants are not sure about the speaker's sincerity. Wittgenstein (1953) just mentioned that phenomenon without any further attempts to explain. However, such discrepancy in 'the descriptive fallacy' drew Austin's (the Oxford philosopher) attention and in the 1960s he formed the principles of Speech Acts Theory, which were later presented in the series of lectures 'How to do things with words', where he coined the term 'performative utterance'.

Performative utterances differ from constative ones in a number of ways. First, as mentioned above, constative utterances have the property of being true or false, while performative utterances can never be either. Austin (1962) proposed another binary opposition of 'felicitous and infelicitous' utterances, where he established a set of conditions. For instance, the speech act of promising will be felicitous provided that what is promised by the speaker is something the addressee wants to happen. Thus, it can be argued that Wittgenstein's concept of 'descriptive fallacy' in logical positivism transformed into 'felicity conditions' in Austin's 'Speech Act Theory'.

Second, performative utterances can fall into two types: explicit and implicit. Let us consider two utterances below: (1) and (2). (1) contains a performative verb which makes it clear what kind of speech act is being performed, while (2) has no such verb, thus making the aim of utterance unobvious. Compare below:

(1) I **promise** I will consider this issue later.

(2) I will consider this issue later.

Pronouncing (1) the speaker certainly performs a speech act of promising. However, utterance (2) can be regarded as a **promise**, a warning, or even a threat.

Third, explicit performative utterances possess a number of syntactic and semantic characteristics, the main of which is the use of a performative verb with a first person singular subject of a predicate (verb) in the indefinite present tense, indicative mood, and active voice. Compare below::

(3) I warn you not to do that again.

(4) He warned his daughter not to do that again.

The performative utterance (3) completes the speech act of warning, while the substitution of personal pronoun and the change of tense in case of (4) makes the utterance constative, not performative, thus describing an action, not performing it.

Structurally, a performative utterance can be presented by the following performative formula: F(p), where F and p stand for illocutionary force and proposition, respectively. Being borrowed from logic, in linguistics the term 'proposition' has become an essential constituent of pragmatics and semantics. According to Fasold and Connor-Linton proposition is 'the meaning of the sentence' (2013, p. 142). It denotes an expression in a language or signs of something that can be believed, doubted, or denied, or is either true or false. Illocutionary force represents the speaker's intention in pronouncing this utterance, i.e. speaker's intention is actualized in the utterance by means of a performative verb. Compare below:

(5) I **promise** I will lend you a hand with washing up.

The proposition in (5) refers the action of 'lending a hand with washing up' to the speaker, while the speaker's intention of uttering is cognised only through the performative verb '**promise**', so the speaker wants to assure his/her interlocutor that (s)he will definitely do the action expressed in the proposition. However, the referred action in proposition in this case fails to pass verification of truth conditions, as the speaker's sincerity can be assessed only when the referred in the proposition action is performed.

All the above mentioned characteristics of performative utterances contributed to the speech act 'trinity': locution, illocution and perlocution. They represent various stages of an utterance and can be regarded as separate acts. The locutionary act corresponds to the meaning of an utterance; the illocutionary act performs the speaker's intention in pronouncing the phrase; and the perlocutionary act determines the effect on the interlocutor. Speech act theory has been a field for debate in analytic philosophy, logic and linguistics. From a linguistic point of view, the illocutionary act is a cornerstone of the theory as it focuses on the speaker's intention. However, César Félix-Brasdefer (2014) points out that the pragmatic interpretation also depends on the hearer's interpretation of the utterance under the appropriate circumstances. For example, a 'simple' phrase in a dialogue 'do you have coffee to go?' can be interpreted as a request for information with the response 'yes, we do' or as an order which will be logically answered with a counter-question 'cream and sugar?'.

Van Dijk (1979) states that such situated contexts which occur in a conversation create speech act sequences, which he thought to be significant in the relations between speech acts and the ways these relations are expressed in the sentences. César Félix-Brasdefer (2014) also highlights that alongside with generally known situated contexts such as court trials, news interviews, political debates, classroom lectures, modern technologies and ways of communication create extensive data for analysis via skype calls and social networking messages.

The taxonomy of speech acts provoked a considerable discussion in linguistics. Austin's (1962) original lexical classification of the so-called illocutionary verbs identified five groups: *expositives, commissives, exercitives, verdictives, behabitives*. However, Searle (1975) proposed 'pure' speech acts taxonomy which was based on four main criteria: 'illocutory point', 'direction of fit', 'speaker's psychological state' and 'propositional content'. Accordingly, Searle (1975) determined five classes: *commissives* (the same name as Austin's), *directives*, *representatives*, *expressives*, *declarations*. Among other classifications there are important works by Vendler (1972), Bach and Harnish (1972), Wierzbicka (1987), and Allan (1994).

As the aim of the current paper does not imply a thorough investigation of speech acts taxonomy and principles of their classification, the author will adhere to Searle's one, which first, according to Proost (2009), serves as a 'prototype' for other classifications and, second, fully satisfies the needs of the current research and enables us to structure the analysis and discussion section.

Aim of the Research

The main goal of this paper is to explore structural-semantic and functional-semantic features of commissive performative utterances. In particular, the goal is to establish the correlation between illocutionary force of an utterance and temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in the proposition of commissives *'***promise***'*, *'***swear***'* and *'***bet***'*. The frequency of aspectual-temporal form of verbs in commissive performative utterances and the types of syntactic structures used in their proposition are also considered in the research. Besides, the analysis of tense forms of verbs in propositions of promise, swear and bet, might be a basis for a new taxonomy of performative verbs.

The empirical data of the current research includes the analysis of temporal characteristics of proposition in performative utterances of commissive speech acts. The classes of declarations and directives are excluded from the analysis as in the current study only explicit performative clauses are considered, while declaratives and directives have implicit structure, that is, there is no performative verb in first person singular in Present Indefinite, which leads to the absence of proposition as such. Unfortunately, the format and the size of the current paper do not allow to examine all three remaining classes (commissives, expressives and representatives), so the focus is given to the analysis of commissive speech acts as they represent the most numerous class of performative speech acts. In the analysis, most representative performative verbs of commissives are considered. By most representative verbs are meant most frequently used verbs in English according to Macmillan Dictionary, which shows 90% of the time, speakers of English use just 7,500 words in speech and writing. These words appear in red, and are graded with stars. One-star words are frequent, two-star words are more frequent, and three-star words are the most frequent.

Traditionally, the investigation of speech acts has been based on introspection and the analysis of artificial examples. The scare implementation of corpus-based studies can be explained by the significant role of the context utterances are used in, which is vitally important for pragmatics and discourse, but largely ignored in corpora (McEnery & Wilson, 1996). Kohnen (2000) clarifies that the difficulties in tracing speech acts in corpora can be explained by the absence of correlation between form and function, that is, one speech act can be actualized by various utterances in different contexts. Nevertheless, Valkonen (2008) shows that corpus-based studies of speech acts can be considered viable though the use of 'computerised method for identifying and retrieving explicit performatives'. Stating that the number of explicit performative formulae is finite, Valkonen (2008) proves on the examples of two corpora (*A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* and *the Chadwyck-Healey Eighteenth Century Fiction database*) that the automatic search of certain inquiries can be quite effective and time-saving for a researcher.

The main method applied in the research is continuous sampling method. The data set used in the study is a collection of literary works by modern English-speaking writers: Dan Brown, John Grisham, Charlaine Harris, Chuck Palahniuk, Mario Puzo, Joanne K. Rowling, John Ronald Tolkien and others. All the works have been converted into pdf and combined into one set of files, so that the search could be conducted in a more convenient way. The search itself represented a two-stage process. First, with the help of computer programs Abby FineReader and Adobe Reader, the author typed in the search bar the following pattern 'I + performative verb (Present Indefinite indicative mood, and active voice) and obtained the examples of 2,900 utterances. At the second stage of the search, all the examples were checked manually against felicity conditions. As the result of the manual verification the list of 2,900 findings narrowed down to 1,800 utterances. Then the obtained examples were analysed in terms of temporal-aspectual forms of verbs and syntactic structures of their propositions.

Results and Discussion

The current section of the paper is divided into two parts, corresponding to the number of examined aspects in the class of commissives. First, temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in proposition are discussed, and then syntactic structures applied in propositions of commissive performative utterances are scrutinized. All the results of quantitative analysis are presented in pie charts.

Temporal-Aspectual Forms of Verbs in Proposition of Commissives

Commissives are the least arguable class of speech acts as they can be found in both Austin's and Searle's taxonomies. The illocutionary force of commissives is to oblige the speaker to perform some action or to bring about some state of affairs, that is, to commit the speaker to a future action. They may be in the form of promises, offers, threats and vows. The most typical 'artificial' example of commissives are 'I **promise** to come at 5 p.m. sharply', 'I **swear** to bring back the book', and 'I **bet** he won't do that again'. According to Macmillan Learner's Dictionary, verbs '**swear**' and '**bet**' are ranked as 'more frequent' (two stars), and verb '**promise**' is 'the most frequent' (three stars).

The analysis shows that verbs in the proposition of '**promise**' and '**swear**' have different temporal-aspectual forms (see Figure 1). As one can see on the pie charts, the majority of verbs in the proposition of the commissive '**promise**' refer to the future aspect (80%) while the aspectual-temporal form of present constitute only 20 percent of all the examples obtained through the study. For example:

(6) 'I **promise** you that you will be squared away with Johnny Santadio. You'll have nothing to worry about' (Puzo, 1979, p. 313);

(7) 'I **promise** you I am studying very hard in case this is the means I have to turn to' (Tan, 2005, p. 157).

It is argued that the high frequency of future temporal-aspectual forms of verb in the proposition of commissive '**promise**' can be explained by its semantic meaning, that is, to tell someone that you will definitely do something. Thus, by giving a **promise,** a speaker unintentionally refers to a future action that (s)he will perform to fulfill his/her **promise**, which also explains the absence of past temporal-aspectual forms. In terms of logic, it is impossible to **promise** to carry out an action which has already been performed.

As for the commissive '**swear**', it can be stated that the half of all the examples of verbs in the proposition have past temporal-aspectual forms, approximately a third of all examples refer to future and 20 percent to present temporal-aspectual forms (see Figure 1). For example:

(8) 'I **swear** we weren't discussing this case in particular' (Grisham, 2006, p. 67);

(9) 'I **swear** I'm innocent. I **swear** on the head of my children I'm innocent' (Puzo, 1970, p. 368);

(10) 'I can't. It's been too long, next time I **swear** I'll be sweet' (Harris, 2002, p. 48).

Comparing the use of temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in the proposition of '**promise**' and '**swear**', it should be noticed that in spite of the fact that both verbs are classified as commissives, their main temporal-aspectual references vary: the most frequent tense forms used in the proposition of '**promise**' refer to future while in the proposition of '**swear**' to past. Another peculiarity concerning these two commissives is that the second most frequent aspectual form in proposition of both is present; with the same proportion of 20 percent each. However, they have different temporal perspectives: **swear** is classified as mobile performative, that is, a verb used in its proposition can acquire three temporal-aspectual forms while **promise** is regarded as non-mobile due to the absence of future temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in its proposition.

The last but not the least peculiarity is that **swear** becomes the synonym to **promise** provided that the verb in its proposition refers to future aspect. Therefore, **promise** in (6) and (7) can be replaced by **swear** with little, if any, change in the meaning of the utterances. This fact is also proved by semantics of the verb '**swear**'. According to Macmillan Dictionary **swear,** alongside with its main definition 'to make a sincere statement that you are telling the truth' also has the second one 'to make a promise to do something'.

Commissive '**bet**', as well as performative '**swear**', has a full-scale frame of temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in the proposition: past, present and future. The most frequent is present temporal-aspectual form, which is virtually a half (45%) of all the examples in the data while present and past temporal-aspectual

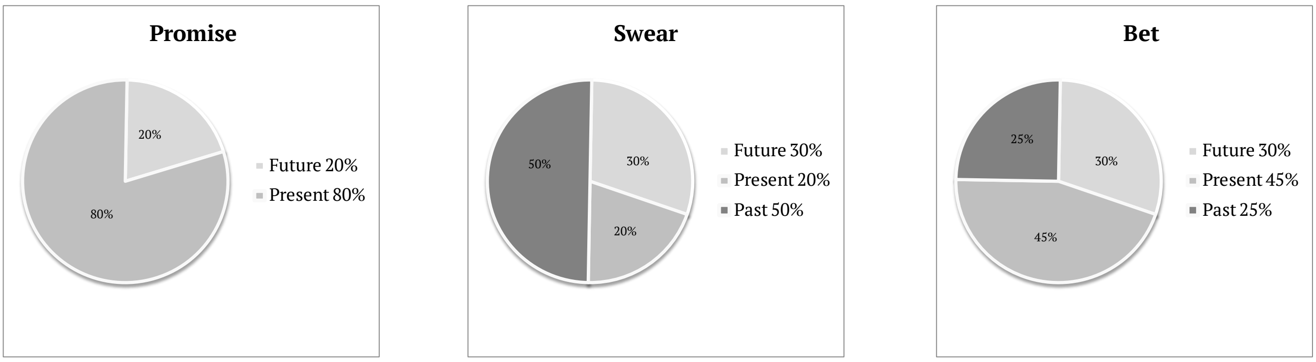

Figure 1. Temporal-aspectual forms of commissives 'promise', 'swear', & 'bet'.

forms have the almost the same frequency with 30 and 25 percent respectively. See the examples below

(11) ‘I **bet** whoever did it was the prowler I had Saturday night’ (Cruise, 2004, p. 227);
(12) ‘I **bet** he’s learning loads’ (Rowling, 2001, p. 11);
(13) ‘I have no problem with that, Patrick. No one is screaming for you to be moved to the jail. Not yet. But I **bet** the press will start soon’ (Grisham, 2005, p. 185).

The obtained data makes it clear that in case of ‘**bet**’ the difference in figures among three temporal-aspectual forms is greater than in those of ‘**promise**’ and ‘**swear**’. This can be explained by semantic meaning of the verb ‘**bet**’ as a speaker uttering a phrase with ‘I **bet**’ can be fairly sure not only about the events of the past, but also about the facts and activities in present and possible future actions.

Syntactic Structures in Propositions of Commissives

The next aspect to analyse within this class of speech acts is syntactic structures applied in the proposition of ‘**promise**’, ‘**swear**’ and ‘**bet**’. Figure 2 indicates that the most frequent type of syntactic structures in propositions of these commissives is simple sentence structure. It constitutes almost the same percentage of all the examples obtained in the course of research (75% for ‘**promise**’, 70% for ‘**swear**’ and 73% for ‘**bet**’). Here are some illustrative examples:

(14) ‘I **promise** you I will never let him come to harm’ (Novik, 2006, p. 111);
(15) ‘I **swear** I know nothing about any embezzlement. I am an honest man’ (Brown, 2002, p. 147);
(16) ‘I **bet** it still hurts’ (Sands, 2009, p. 202).

Complex sentence is the second most frequent syntactic structure with a coverage of 20% for all the performative verbs under the study. Some examples are:

(17) ‘I really need to know. I **promise** that as soon as you tell me, I will tell you everything about last night’ (Brennan, 2004, p. 7);
(18) ‘I **swear** I will remember where I’m supposed to go to school’ (Rowling, 2000, p. 204);
(19) ‘I **bet** he slept with you, when you were together’ (Goodkind, 2008, p. 828).

The use of compound sentence structure shows the most noticeable difference; it is two times more frequent in the proposition of ‘**promise**’ than in the proposition of ‘**swear**’ with 10 and 5 percent correspondingly, while in the proposition of ‘**bet**’ this figure makes up 7 percent. Some examples are given below:

(20) ‘But, I **promise** you that for every horror you will have to face and you will also discover great joy’ (Dennis, 2009, p. 58).
(21) ‘I **swear**, one woman actually plopped herself in Luc’s lap and she propositioned him for everyone to hear’ (Sands, 2003 p. 176);
(22) ‘I **bet** I could tell Sam to go wait for me in the forest, and he would do that’ (Dennis, 2009, p. 148).

The extensive use of simple sentence structure, compared to complex and compound ones, in proposition of commissives can be explained by the context of dialogue speech these utterances are used in. Performative formula ‘I (hereby) verb-present-active X …’ is one of the distinctive features of dialogue speech which, in its turns, is characterised by the simplicity of syntactic structures. For the same reason the occurrence of complex and compound sentence structures in propositions of **swear**, **promise** and **bet** is a lot less frequent.

Conclusion

The main aim of the research was to explore the temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in propositions of performatives ‘**promise**’, ‘**swear**’ and ‘**bet**’ and to reveal the syntactic structures of their propositions. It has been explained on the examples of commissive speech acts that the illocutionary force alongside with semantic meaning of performative verb predetermines the use of temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in the

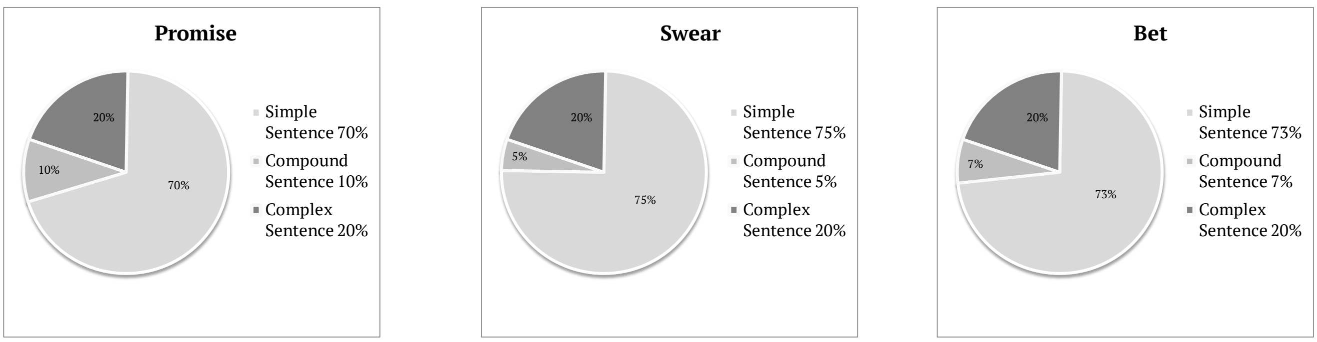

Figure 2. Syntactic structures of commissives ‘promise’, ‘swear’ and ‘bet’.

proposition of commissives. After a thorough analysis of commissive speech acts, it can be concluded that performative verb '**promise**' has a narrowed temporal perspective as verbs used in its proposition have no past temporal-aspectual forms. Performative verbs '**swear**' and '**promise**' have extended temporal perspective. In other words, temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in their propositions refer an action to past, present and future.

As for the syntactic structures used in propositions of commissives '**promise**', '**swear**' and '**bet**', it can be stated that the main one is a simple sentence structure which prevails over complex and compound sentence structures. The extensive use of simple sentence structure can be explained by the main feature of dialogue speech in which commissive speech acts are employed.

In spite of the profound analysis of the data, the results of the investigation cannot be proclaimed finite as more extensive corpora need to be studied. The current findings highlight the trends in the use of temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in propositions; however; there might be some discrepancies after broader data analysis.

The results of current study also have some practical applications in teaching English as a foreign language. The data collected in the course of the study might be used to promote learners' awareness of two aspects: grammar and sociolinguistic competence. In terms of the former, some exercises might be designed to practise the use of tense forms in propositions of performative verbs. The latter might facilitate the process of the contextual analysis which in its turn will help to use naturally commissive speech acts in spoken and written English discourses. The further research on the topic can be conducted in the following ways. First, it might be fruitful to analyse the temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in propositions of other explicit speech acts (i.e. expressives and representatives), and to compare the findings with those of the current paper. Second, the investigation of classes of expressives and representatives might approve or disapprove the correlation between the illocutionary force of these speech acts and temporal-aspectual forms of verbs in propositions. Finally, the investigation of temporal-aspectual forms in various discourses like political speeches or legal debates appeals to be interesting in terms of sociolinguistics and the Speech Act Theory.

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Graph Description as an Issue in L2 Academic English Writing

Valentina Khrabrova
National Research University Higher School of Economics

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Valentina Khrabrova, National Research University Higher School of Economics, 3A, ul. Kantemirovskaya, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation, 194100. E-mail: stefankhrabrova@mail.ru

Young people's interest in taking international exams such as IELTS results from student mobility and their willingness to appraise language abilities. In this paper, Academic Writing Task One of IELTS is examined. This task implies candidates comprehending graphic information and processing it in written discourse. The gap between a host of graph description tests and an insignificant number of efficient teaching methods has provided a rationale for the current study. It focuses on graph description as a cognitive, psychological and educational process and employs the analysis method in the theoretical section. Based on the action research method, drawing on 25 students' written samples, the study has quested for peculiar language problems detrimental to processing the graph description task. The data have revealed the key pillars of successful written graph presentation: the combination of all four main skills, i.e. reading, listening, writing, and speaking; skills transfer; critical thinking and writing; the appropriate use of style; graphic literacy. It is concluded that the "constant nudging" method, a skills transfer, the use of appropriate vocabulary for describing trends alongside academic functional phrases and grammar features, the analysis of mass media information with numeric data are solutions to graph description issues. The findings have implications for preparing students for IELTS.

Keywords: student mobility, graph description, skills transfer, critical writing, cognitive process

It is well-known that the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), being recognized by the Council of Europe and based on the CEFR, has merited approval in a host of countries. The reason for this is that the main goal of overall testing is appraising English language proficiency of those who intend either to study or to work in English-speaking countries. Besides, L2 learners attend training courses in order to perfect their academic skills needed for expanding career opportunities. Lastly, the European document "The Report on the Bologna Process and student mobility" (Pack, 2008, p. 5) makes it clear that 'improved command of languages is a considerable asset and one of the reasons for student mobility, and that it is important for intensive language courses to be offered to incoming students.'

This paper looks into the writing aspect of the EAP (English for Academic Purposes) course that affords ground for students to be trained as required by the IELTS test. At first sight, such a training process comes across as an ideal and unique set of EFL teaching methods and educational tools. However, even scrutinizing some IELTS-oriented studies cannot provide teachers with a definite answer to the question of how to teach Academic Writing Task One productively since the majority of researchers pinpoint attention upon the well-known and important elements: format, scores and band scales, tips, assessment criteria, whereas the role of cognitive processes and critical writing is disregarded.

This didactic gap accounts for the need to have a deeper insight into Academic Writing Task One (AWT1) (Yu et al, 2007), as from the cognitive perspective, it is also under-explored in the literature in comparison with Academic Writing Task Two (AWT2). It is worth noting that practical IELTS resources prevail over theoretical information, especially in the matter of AWT1: a vast number of tests, tips, samples are scattered throughout Internet websites or provided by official IELTS centers versus a very limited choice of theoretical linguistic and psychological resources. It explains a lack of both teachers' and students' knowledge of the best approaches to doing IELTS tests. (Here is a short reminder of the essence of AWT1: 'test-takers will be presented with a graph, table, chart or diagram and will be asked to describe, summarize or explain the information in their own words. This might involve describing and explaining data, describing the stages of a process or how something works, or describing an object or event' (British Council, 2013).

The main aim of this paper is to discuss some issues of Writing Task One (graph description) by considering them in terms of theory and practice so as to expose their integrated influence on a qualitative preparation of students for their final exam based on IELTS-related principles.

Materials and Methods

Theoretical Background

Some studies reveal that students find it useful and necessary (Lewthwaite, 2007) to take up the IELTS course as it gives them a chance to be up to the university mark: a chance of being able to sort out visual data, i.e. discern between the main and secondary facts, look for significant trends, select, classify, arrange relevant data, restate them in a concise form and be able to perform a task according to four criteria described in detail in the IELTS Guide (British Council, 2013). It must be emphasized that the course is incomparable because it is "discipline-free", i.e. designed for students who study either economics or technical sciences, or humanities. Thus, it is *logical reasoning, critical and independent thinking* as well as other mental abilities that are needed for doing Academic Writing Task One, not a definite level of mathematical or economic proficiency. Describing visual data deals with a quick identification and interpretation of information alongside the development of the ability to transfer skills to real-life situations. In practical terms, reading business and financial news articles in international mass media, BBC World Service, Voice of America, CNN Student News and other useful sources of information that are provided with various graphs and comments on them is the best way of acquiring new vocabulary and becoming aware of visual data.

Both students and teachers unanimously argue it is *time pressure* (Abela, 2001) that causes the most serious difficulties in describing visuals. The allotted time of 20 minutes given for this task has always been subject of criticism. Most researchers suggest that time should be mapped out well-mindedly, which will be discussed further in the paper. Interestingly, students themselves suppose that IELTS time limit is a helpful factor. Being neither a sword of Damocles nor an obstacle, it inures to the efficient time use. Thus, this acquired skill may become a valuable asset during the note-taking process at lectures and gives a chance of becoming pressure-resistant. *Critical thinking* is another noteworthy point to mention in the context of this discussion. Meaningful reading of the legend and grasping the most relevant data require the involvement of such mental activities as analysis, evaluation, synthesis, reflection, and others. In this way, students can go beyond little information given in the legend and 'will be able to generate and express multiple perspectives or, if taking one point of view, providing coherent reasons for doing so' (Lewthwaite, 2007, p. 12). *Critical writing* implies not only an adequate written response to social and economic problems that are presented graphically but also the overall literacy implementation.

For the time being, there has been much dispute about teaching methods that are often based only on IELTS test-books, which arouses criticism. Such instructional devices prevent teachers from creativity and turn them into "text-book slaves" (Lewthwaite, 2007, p. 14). However, it is an arguable point. Teaching practice shows that there are many examples of innovative instructional devices and a wide use of different teaching methods.

According to Crystal (2008), 'writing is very suited to the recording of facts and the communication of ideas, and to tasks of memory and learning', comments, collation, connections between variables, etc. By means of writing, information becomes intelligible and approachable. In all kinds of tasks, it is needed to resort to the use of *numeric data*. The University of Reading Statistical Services Centre (2000, pp. 3-4) specifies the following pillars for presenting information with numeric data:

- the information should be written presentably so that the reader or viewer may comprehend it while reading or listening; this goal is called *demonstration*;
- writings 'should not be used to convey more than three or four numbers; sets of numeric results should usually be presented as tables or pictures rather than included in the text', which means that all-sufficient visuals are hardly to be described verbally only;
- there is a guide to writing numbers whose provisions should be studied, e.g. 'when whole numbers (integers) are given in text, numbers less than or equal to nine should be written as words, numbers from 10 upwards should be written in digits';
- it is required to structure numeric information given in tables and highlight trends, make comparison or show relationships dealing with graphs;
- unlike visuals, the written description 'should always illuminate the most significant data';
- the way visuals are described should be 'as simple as possible while having sufficient detail to be useful and informative'; and the most important points for the written description are as follows: what, where, when, the source

of information;
- statistical information is not supposed to be given for AWT1, as it is designed for scientific analysis (The University of Reading Statistical Services Centre, 2000, p. 4).

In scientific literature much information can be found about writing, one of *four main language skills*, but only a few of studies deal with a synergy between them in the AWT1 process (Yu et al, 2007). To correlate the main language functions and grammar features throughout four skills, McCarter presents a list of suggested AWT1 features (see Table 1):

Table 1
Task 1: The main functions and grammar features

Main functions	**Grammar features**
introductions	complex sentences: conjunctions
trends	noun phrases
overviews	singular / plural
summarizing	tenses: Simple Present/Past/Present Perfect/Simple Future / Future Perfect
comparison/contrast	Active vs. Passive
paraphrasing/synonyms	verbs of rise / fall

Note. Retrieved from “IELTS Academic Writing and Speaking Modules – a Question of Skills Transfer”, by McCarter, 2011, *Manchester: British Council*, p. 1.

Table 1 demonstrates all key elements that students should be aware of, in order to succeed in AWT1. Secondly, knowing exactly the requirements for doing the assignment, students will try to make it a rule to include the most relevant language features in their graph descriptions. Another advantage of the list is that it is written, corrected, amended, revised and checked by the teacher. The list offers an opportunity to classify and analyze students’ mistakes by using the table. In addition, a peer review of other students’ writings can be carried out in the form of special comments in the margin of the list. It is strongly recommended that such lists be used on a mandatory basis so that students may gradually get accustomed to academic writing in accordance with teachers’ individual requirements.

The teacher’s role implies helping students to connect different skills with the aim of making the exam preparation more rational and integrated. It is apparent that there should be no restrictions in writing and speaking. By way of illustration, McCarter (2015) shows how comparison and contrast language is taught in Task 1: ‘we can elicit from the students in what other parts of the IELTS exam this language is useful; in effect, in all four skills’ (McCarter, 2015, p. 4). By practicing language skills in the reading module questions, students can raise their awareness of the exam prerequisites and unveil the myth of unavoidable arduousness of IELTS writing tasks. As focusing on contrast / comparison, paraphrasing, highlighting trends, summarizing and other features are also typical of essay writing and speaking, these can be exercised in practicing Writing Task 2 and the Speaking Module. It enables students to establish the link between all main skills.

In order to encourage students to use some specific language functions such as contrast / comparison, McCarter (2015) suggests a “simple technique” by making short revision cards with different language units used for class activities: individual, pair, group, mingling. In this process, students can ask others to explain notions / ideas, to compare, to write and to read aloud. The range of such activities depends on both students’ motivation and teachers’ creativity.

McCarter’s study (2015) clarifies that in a free conversation there are more chances for students to vary their language and create different constructions that can be incorporated in their writings. For example, students can benefit from a good knowledge of reported speech rules that they regularly use in their spoken language. If this grammar has been internalized, students will be able to paraphrase so as to *avoid repetition* in AWT1. The process of using other different expressions and phrases enables students to become more language-competent and inspired for further learning. As this case clearly demonstrates, at the first training stage students know a certain number of phrases but do not use them. After advancing in knowledge and acquiring/developing academic skills, passive knowledge will become active.

With regard to McCarter (2015, p. 3), the problem of AWT1 performance is not a set of competences but a *lack of skills transfer*, i.e. all language skills. The method he suggests for developing them is called “*constant nudging*” that implies the use of students’ linguistic bundle of knowledge throughout reading, listening, writing and speaking.

Some of the students have mixed feelings about the description of different graphs and devote all energies to AWT2. At the same time, AWT1 is very important for successful performance of the whole writing task: taking into consideration a wide range of graphs and a various level of candidates’ awareness and competence, researchers argue that there may be a fallacious deduction or underestimation of students’ academic writing skills (Yu et al., 2007). However, neither studies nor experiments have shed any light on the extent to which a specific type of graphs may influence AWT1 results. Another recurring problem is the quantity of information given in graphs. Investigations have exposed that explanatory notations and inscriptions given in the legend enhance students’ awareness of the task, while graphs with little information are linguistically complex, regardless of the participants’ language proficiency level. Despite a variety of visuals, there are some common cognitive processes that are characteristic of graph description.

The working model of the cognitive processes for AWT1 (Yu et al., 2007, p. 19) delineates a set of skills that students need to display in the writing process. Firstly, understanding the graphic and non-graphic instructions implies the involvement of English reading abilities**:** studying the legend by reading it carefully within 3-5 minutes – at the beginning, and proofreading – at the end of the writing process. According to this research, this necessary and toilsome part of the whole work is often ignored. Secondly, what matters at this stage is pertinent involvement or functioning of reasoning skills that correlate a type of graph with students' graphic literacy and their background knowledge and experience. The success of written work mostly depends on the extent to which the purpose of the task is understandable and whether it corresponds to its cognitive demands. Thirdly, English writing abilities include the description of the main trends of the graph. It also means using further language functions given in the Academic Phrase Bank, in addition to those that have been presented in Table 1, e.g. introduction/conclusion, contrast/comparison, prediction, indication of causality, signaling transition, reporting result, writing about the past, present and future, monitoring, and self-evaluating. Consequently, three main groups of working skills are required from test-takers: *reading, logical reasoning, writing.*

The study also stresses an impact of types of graphs on the way candidates can interpret data mentally and then record the information. The fact has been ascertained that graphic literacy is of psychological importance and contributes to a better task performance. Researchers revealed a strong influence of special preliminary preparation work, i.e. intensive training course, individual or group teacher-guided work, on the final results, and they called it "*coachability*" (Yu et al., 2007, p. 17). In terms of coachability, a large total sum of previously written descriptions of different type of graphs, as well as peer reviews of other students' writings are important factors that may improve their score.

What students need in order to have favorable outcomes is the appropriate style of AWT1 that implies a combination of the following elements: the use of modifiers in the form of adjectives and adverbs to show amount, emphasis, time; the use of modals and common expressions for discussing possible future trends or making predictions; refusal from informal and narrative style, repetition, grammatical errors; and proofreading (Duigu, 2001, p. 39).

The EAP (English for Academic Purposes) Course

The EAP course is designed for second-year students of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, Saint-Petersburg and is aimed at attaining the following goals:

1. development of the ELL communicative competence for using it in learning, scientific and professional activities, postgraduates supervision and economic research;
2. further development of four key academic skills that are required for passing the IELTS-related exam successfully:
   - automated reading skills including rate and techniques; abilities to understand English authentic texts that contain internalized grammatical and lexical units; skimming, scanning, reading for gist, inferring;
   - listening skills: students' exposure to extracts from a lecture, awareness of prediction, note-taking;
   - academic writing skills: understanding the structure of academic writing tasks 1 and 2; generating ideas, processing and transferring data from graphical forms into writing; constructing paragraphs with clear statements using academic phrases in accordance with the main communicative functions;
   - speaking skills are practiced in the IELTS format: Part 1, Part 2, Part 3 (Varlamova et al., 2015, p. 30).

The ultimate goal of the course is not only to reach an appropriate level of students' readiness allowing them to pass the exam in the IELTS format successfully but also upgrade their generic language skills to be used integrally. It is intended that students should acquire a wide range of lexis and grammar and get to know cultural characteristics of native English speakers. Students should be able to structure oral or written utterances logically, consistently and reasonably. They need to foreground critical thinking, i.e. seek to discover assumptions, reasons and cause-and-effect links and other abilities, promote students' autonomy by supporting their own points of view and going beyond the information given.

After completing the training course, the students sit an IELTS like test. Since all kinds of tasks are arranged in the specific format, the whole procedure encourages students to gain IELTS experience, on the one hand; on the other hand, it is a kind of a "springboard" providing a good training start and a sense of enhanced confidence in their abilities to succeed in the exam at an IELTS test center.

The basic students' book chosen for the EAP course at the Higher School of Economics is "Cambridge Objective IELTS Advanced" (Black & Capel, 2006) that provides a wide range of theoretical and practical help: 'a distinguished book among IELTS practice materials, all in one book. It has been developed for constructive and instructive language use' (Moghaddam, 2015, p. 201).

Besides the basic course-book, teachers are provided with other supplementary resources, for example “New Insights into IELTS” (Jakeman, McDovell, 2008), “IELTS Advantage. Writing Skills. A step-by-step Guide to a high IELTS writing score” (Brown, Richards, 2010), and “Improve Your IELTS Writing Skills”(McCarter, Whitby, 2007).

Research

The paper draws on the action research design method (ARD) which is defined as a ‘small-scale investigation by teachers on specific classroom problems for the purpose of curriculum renewal and/or professional development’ (Grifee, 2012, p. 109). This method enables the researcher to reflect on the results of the students’ written work and think of solutions to the problems that have been identified. It is also characterized as teacher oriented for the reason that research questions arise as a result of teachers’ concerns in their own classes/groups. Secondly, being based on the problem-solving approach, the ARD method allows singling out specific issues from a definite academic environment, not from applied investigations. At the same time, the identified problem will make the teacher turn to theoretical underpinning, i.e. academic research, which is likely to contribute to teacher professional development enhancement. Thirdly, ARD is based on structured reflection which is followed by a general pattern of identifying a problem; gathering and analyzing the data; implementing the plan; analyzing the data to decide what happened. The main characteristics of the method are:

- realization within a single group or groups (called insiders);
- presence of qualitative or quantitative evidence, or both of it;
- teacher-centeredness;
- disengagement of generalization;
- classroom practice improvement (Grifee, 2012, p. 111)

25 second-year economics students, with their English proficiency ranging from A2 to B2 of CEFR (2011), were exposed to a 20-minute written assignment in the form of AWT (see Fig. 1). The writings were collected, assessed and analyzed with the aim of determining the most frequent errors. It is important to note that a priori the teacher reckoned that the students’ responses would be authentic due to a simulated rigid exam-like atmosphere, with no allowances for the students, such as the use of a dictionary or any other prompts. A number of similar full-format assignments had been carried out to completion only as part of homework or as classroom tests at the end of the study modules, while in lessons, due to multitasking and strict timing, attention had been given to the instruction of how to produce graph description discourse which was followed by writing a paragraph, not the whole task. The other constituent of the investigation was a pre-test self-assessment survey (see Fig. 2) that had been conducted prior to the written work in order to compare the students’ general perception of AWT 1 with their real writing performance.

Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The table below shows the projected costing over the next five years in American dollars for three environmental projects for sustainable forestry. The pie chart shows the expected expenditure breakdown allocation for the first year as the projects are set up.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparison where relevant. Write at least 150 words.

Table 2
Writing Task One: Projected costings over the next five years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
West Africa	10.5 million	7.5 million	2.5 million	2.5 million	3.5 million
Central America	20 million	12 million	5 million	5 million	5 million
South-East Asia	30 million	20 million	40 million	50 million	50 million

Note. Reprinted from: *“Improve Your IELTS Writing Skills: Student’s book with answers,”* by S. McCarter and N. Whitby, 2007. Oxford: MacMillan Education, p. 69

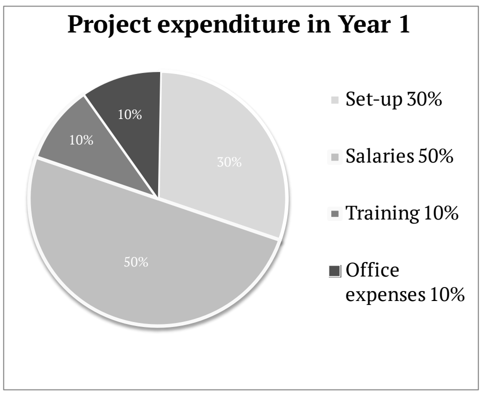

Figure 1. Writing Task One: Projected costings over the next five years (McCarter, Whitby, 2007, p. 69).

Note. Reprinted from: “*Improve Your IELTS Writing Skills: Student’s book with answers,*” by S. McCarter and N. Whitby, 2007. Oxford: MacMillan Education, p. 69.

Results and Discussion

The participants' self-analysis has revealed the fact that the majority of economics students have no obvious difficulties in interpreting graphic data. Nor do they face serious problems when describing two graphs (in the current case – a table and a pie-chart). As is clear from Figure 2, the lack of time and the fear of making mistakes raise alarming issues in the graph description performance, which is evident from their percentage containing a high ratio of 30 each. They are followed by the lack of vocabulary/grammar issue whose proportion reaches the magnitude of 13 percent. Remarkably, the no-problem ratio is coequal to that of vocabulary and grammar. The difficulty in the interpretation of the legend aggregates 10 per cent, whereas the misapprehension issue does not exceed 4 per cent.

Relying on the ARD method in this study, we seek to answer the research questions:

1) *what theoretical language problems have a negative impact on student awareness of the graph description process?*
2) *what practical inferences can be made in order to improve the writing results?*

Table 3 concisely demonstrates the research findings based on the results of the current study: both problems and their gist. As is apparent, the difficulties are clustered in 6 blocks in the table: word-for-word strategy, repetition, wordiness, inappropriate style, limited range of vocabulary, limited range of grammar (Duigu, 2001, p. 38). In the findings, the number of blocks is reduced to two large groups as they regard comparable domains: (1) word-for-word-strategy, repetition and wordiness, (2) inappropriate style and a limited range of vocabulary/grammar.

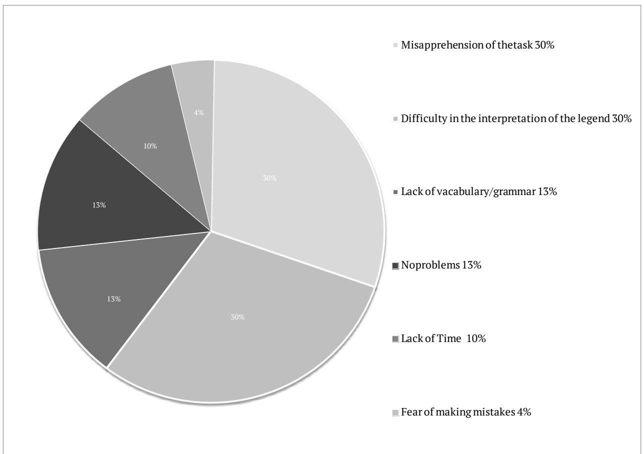

Figure 2. Results of the survey: student issues in describing graphs.

Table 3
Students' most frequent problems in graph description writing

Problem	Exposition
word-for-word strategy	deriving words from the task/ legend
repetition	using the same words for several times throughout the task, disregarding synonyms / antonyms
wordiness	employing vague and excessive language
inappropriate style	using the narrative essay style or an informal style; presence of judgments in the first person
limited range of vocabulary	disregarding the main parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in order to describe trends and express the movement or the speed of change
limited range of grammar	confining the use of degrees of comparison to only basic forms; confusing tenses, i.e. using Present Continuous instead of Future Indefinite; Present Simple instead of Past Simple

The frequency of w*ord-for-word-strategy, repetition and wordiness* patterns exceeds the other problem domains. Although the students resort to them throughout their writings, the above strategies are particularly characteristic of the introductory part where it is required to paraphrase the given task, which is often ignored on account of an inability to derive appropriate words from a person's limited word stock. For example:

Student 1 (introduction): The table gives us information about the *costings of the environmental projects* during 5 years (see Fig. 1).

Student 2 (introduction): The sector diagram deals with the detailed *expenditure allocation* for the first year of project management**.**

As mentioned above*, inappropriate style and a limited range of vocabulary/grammar* have been taken jointly due to their close interdependence. The poor graph description style emerges from its confusion with the essay style for which descriptive elements are an inherent part of written discourse. Some of the most frequent errors detected during the analysis of the students' AWT1 include the following: (1) vague and excessive vocabulary; (2) unextended incoherent sentences; (3) extended sentences with narrative style elements, the use of personal pronouns; (4) the use of imperatives and colloquial language; (5) the use of the *be going - construction* instead of Future Simple. The following examples from the students' writings substantiate the above statements:

(1) - It's *worth analyzing and summarizing* the information about the projected costings over the years and the expected expenditure over first year in West Africa, Central America and South-East Asia.

Table 4
Occurences of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs for describing trends

trends	nouns/ occurrences in numbers		verbs / occurrences in numbers		adjectives/ occurrences in numbers		adverbs/ occurrences in numbers	
rise, extensive change	boom	1	grow	5	big, biggest	5	dramatically	1
	increase	3	increase	7	considerable	2	seriously	1
	growth	3	rise	4	dramatic	1	sharply	1
	peak	2			enormous	1	significantly	2
					great/est	2	totally	1
					high/er/st	5		
					huge/st	4		
					large/er/st	9		
					prominent	1		
					significant	2		
					substantial	1		
					sufficient	1		
fall, slow change	breakdown	3	drop	4	downward	2	gradually	1
	decline	3	decline	9	low/er/est	3		
	decrease	3	decrease	14	small	6		
	downturn	1	fall	3	minimal	1		
	drop	1	diminish	1	slight	1		
	fall	2	reduce	2				
	reduction	1	lower	1				
	slope	1						
	slump	1						
other changes/ trends			remain + adj.	5	constant	1	approximately	3
			fluctuate	1	equal	3	comparatively	1
			exceed	1	stable	3	constantly	2
			level out	1	sustainable	8	equally	1
			reach + noun	5	total	5	relatively	2
							respectively	6
total		25		63		67		22

- Overall, *taking all countries into consideration, it could be said that the most money requiring* year will be the fifth and the most part of outgoes will go on salaries.

(2) - *Salaries require half of the budget. Set-up costs need 30% of money. Each year spendings for the project are different.*

(3) - *We can see* that most money will be invested in south-west Asia.

- To sum up, from these graphs *we will find* designed costings during the period of the five years in three regions.

(4) - This amount of money is *nothing compared* to the enormous 190 million dollars that are projected to be spent in south-east Asia.

- Now *let's move on* to the table. The total expenses of West Africa project *are dropping* from 10.5 million to 2.5 million in year 3 and year 4.

(5) According to the pie chart, sixty per cent of money *is going to be spent* on people (fifty per cent – on their salaries and the other ten per cent – on training).

The research draws special attention to the use of parts of speech in AWT1 by means of Table 4 that shows the occurrences of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs in the students' writings.

Firstly, the total numeric occurrences of nouns are estimated at 25, being only 3 units larger than those of adverbs. Additionally, nouns are not used for describing such changes as fluctuation or stability. In terms of Writing Band Descriptors Task 1, the use of nouns is adequate but insufficient. The triple use of the noun *breakdown* and the eightfold occurrence of the adjective *sustainable,* elicited from the task (see Table 2), verifies the student propensity for word-for-word strategy. Another obvious trend consists in the ignorance of verbs to describe trends or action. Instead, adjectives as parts of nominal predicates are employed extensively, which is reflected on their relatively high frequency by contrast to the other parts of speech. Despite it, the qualitative range of adjectives is far from sufficient, standing at only 22 (see Fig. 3). As well as this, the number of adjectival comparatives and superlatives is limited to such commonplace words as bigger/biggest, smaller/ smallest, larger/largest. All in all, the analysis of the occurrences of parts of speech provides strong evidence of a lack of vocabulary stock to describe trends, which is supported by Figures 3 and 4.

Hinkel (2004, p. 18) states that 'what students need is to become relatively good at displaying academic knowledge within the formats expected in academic discourse and text', which does not necessarily involve becoming 'proficient narrators' (Hinkel, 2004, p. 17). In compliance with this postulate, some students' writings have been regarded as successful, for example that given below (see Fig. 1):

"The given table and a pie chart diagram represent the information about the implementation of projects concerning forests. The table shows the distribution of money between the 3 parts of the world during the period of 5 years, whereas the graph demonstrates the ratio of different costs of the program in the first year. It can be easily noticed that the most considerable amount of millions of dollars is projected to be transferred to South-East Asia, while wage expenditures remain relatively more costly. The share of salaries constitutes half of the entire sum, being five times larger than office and training costs, which are expected to be less substantial. Set-up payments exceed both of the latter by 10 per cent. The expenses for the realization of the program in South-East Asia are predicted to rise gradually. In stark contrast to this, West Africa's and Central America's financial support of program declines during the estimated period though the expenses for Central America do not surpass America's numbers. In the beginning, Asia's disbursement stands at 10 which is much more considerable than that of Central America's and West Africa's. Ultimately, Asia's outlay has mounted tenfold".

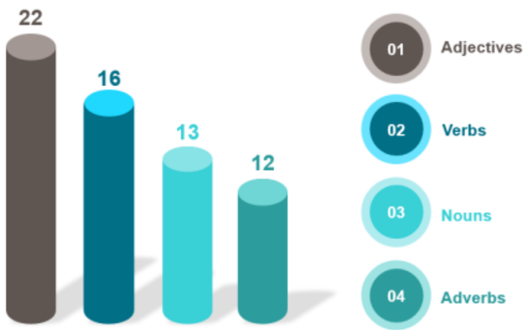

Figure 3. Qualitative comparison of the occurrences of the main parts of speech for describing trends.

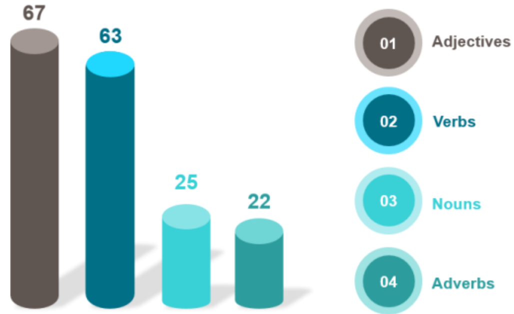

Figure 4. Quantitative comparison of the occurrences of the main parts of speech for describing trends.

Conclusion

A number of final comments appear as a result of the above arguments and the analysis presented in the theoretical section. Most significantly, academic graph description is a formal message that contains evident data and numeric information. Critical thinking and writing are consequential abilities that are needed for successful task achievement. The problem of AWT1 performance is not a set of competences but a lack of skills transfer, which requires the integrated use of all four language skills on a regular basis. According to the working model of the cognitive process, three main groups of working skills are required from L2 learners: reading, logical reasoning, writing. Provided these skills are underdeveloped and academic writing procedures are ignored, a number of language and technical issues are likely to emerge. The following writing flaws have been delineated: word-for-word-strategy, repetition and wordiness, inappropriate style and a limited range of vocabulary/grammar. The research has revealed gaping gaps between the required use of a range of parts of speech for describing trends in the AWT 1 performance and its real poor implementation; between the students' homework results and their classroom performance. To fill in these gaps, full-format AWT 1 assignments should be carried out on a regular basis as part of classroom activities to keep track of the students' progress and elicit immediate feedback from them. It also entails pursuing the strategies aimed at solving the above issues: practicing simple techniques by means of a variety of class activities, using the "constant nudging" method, i.e. teachers' series of actions designed to accustom students to a skills transfer, using academic functional phrases and grammar features, presenting information with numeric data in a correct way.

Given a small group of students participated in the investigation, the practical findings cannot be generalized at large, having been founded on the ARD method established principles (see Method). Nunan (1990, p. 64) calls this characteristic a lack of rigor that prevents the data from being called truly accurate. Due to it, the research results need to be interpreted with caution until further research is accomplished in order to support the inferences by substantial data.

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Challenges of Minority Teachers in a Western Society: Experience in Austria

Nasy Inthisone Pfanner
B.O.RG Dornbirn-Schoren

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Nasy Inthisone Pfanner, secondary school B.O.RG Dornbirn-Schoren, Höchsterstraße 32, Dornbirn, Austria, 6850. E-mail: nasypfanner@gmail.com

The aim of this reflective article is to investigate firstly, the preconception of professionalism in teaching; secondly, whether minority teacher's identity influences their professionalism; and, thirdly, how minority teachers affect minority students, since minority teachers face real inequality in white societies. The issue of teacher professionalism has always been controversial due to the changing nature of the profession and society's expectations of how the profession should be. There has not been an investigation regarding minority teachers in Austria. I wish to address this gap in the research by investigating the experience of a Laotian-American in a secondary school. The investigation reveals that in spite of the efforts that governments in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have put into recruiting minority educators, minority teacher population does not keep pace with the minority student populations. Regrettably, Austrian government does not have such a recruiting scheme. This study has the potential to raise debates about minorities in the Austrian educational system and contribute to existing discussion about minority educators in white society.

Keywords: Asian minorities, professionalism, English as a Second Language teachers, reflective teacher, diversity in education

The aim of this reflective article is to investigate firstly, the preconception of professionalism in teaching; secondly, whether minority teacher's identity influences their professionalism; and, thirdly, how minority teachers affect minority students, since minority teachers face real inequality in white societies. The issue of teacher professionalism has always been controversial due to the changing nature of the profession and society's expectations of how the profession should be (e.g. see Kennedy, 2007 for a discussion). The gap in research can only be filled when more investigation is conducted internationally. There has not been an investigation regarding minority teachers in Austria. I wish to address this gap in the research by investigating the experience of a Laotian-American in an Austrain secondary school. This study has the potential to raise debates about minorities in the Austrian educational system and contribute to existing discussion about minority educators in white society.

The author draws her recent experience of working in the Bundesrealgymnasium Dornbirn-Schoren (BORG Dornbirn-Schoren), a *Gymnasium* or grammar schools with over 800 pupils and almost one hundred teachers in Vorarlberg. The purpose of the school is to prepare pupils for university study. Being a Laotian-American woman, the author encountered challenges from the first day that she entered the classroom. Despite her Master's degrees in Education and in the German language and literature, many questioned whether she understood the Austrian school system and whether her German was good enough. Having been hired she had the backing of the Headmaster and the Department of Education; she still felt undervalued. The author focuses on the challenges of Asian teachers of English in a western society and shares her experience of teaching at a state secondary school in Austria.

Materials and Methods

Definition of Professionalism

Professionalism is when a person conforms to the technical and/or ethical standards of his/her profession

(Nicholson, 2014). According to Whitty (2008), western sociologists began listing features that occupations should have to qualify as a profession in the 1950s. Millerson (1964, cited in Power, 2008) posits that a profession ought to have the following characteristics: 1) skill based on theoretical knowledge, 2) trust base client relationship, 3) adherence to a professional code of conduct, 4) independence, and 5) altruism. These characteristics were associated with the classical professions such as law, medicine and theology. Hart and Marshall (1992) question the notion of professionalism because it divides society into classes. For example, the classical professions possess high quality of professionalism whereas manual professions display lesser qualities. The correlation between the level of the profession and salary is evident.

Some researchers challenge the traditional understanding of professionalism. As Hargreaves (2000, p. 152) posits, "The concepts of professionalism and professionalization are `essentially contested'….". Likewise, Siegrist (1994, cited in Power, 2008) and Hanlon (1998, cited in Whitty, 2008) claim the meaning of professionalism to be constantly changing depending on time and place. Brindley (2015, pp. 24-25) echoes the same opinion in her thesis "… professionalism is open to re-interpretation…". In the same vein, Power (2008) implies that traditional perception of professionalism is outdated and concurs that the quintessential image is a far cry from the daily practice of professionals. There is no longer a list with clear definitions, but rather expectations overlap. Barnett (2008, p. 191) rightly claims that "… the old narratives of the professional life weaken…". These arguments suggest that the meaning of professionalism is not static. The advantage is that no one is confined to meanings that were created before present time. The drawback is that without a clear definition people lack guiding principles.

New professions can be created anytime. The reasons for this change are the increase of life expectancy combined with the smaller family, and the invention of technology. Basing on past results, it is possible to predict that in the future, as the family structure continues to evolve and technology continues to develop, many more professions will be created. Greenwood (1957, cited in Hart & Marshall, 1992) seems to be right when he proposes looking at professionalism as a continuum which encourages a broader look at not just the profession, but the situation in which the profession exists.

To summarize, there is no absolute meaning of professionalism, but there is extensive literature that describes and defines it. After carefully scrutinizing the literature, the author takes a middle-ground position and would argue that there should be a list of features and characteristics to follow, but it should be flexible enough to meet the rapidly changing world.

Teacher Professionalism

'…it is certainly a struggle among different stakeholders over the definition of teacher professionalism and professionality for the twenty-first century …'. (Whitty et al., 1998, p. 65) Hargreaves (2000) examines the four historical phases of professionalism that are frequent to Anglophone cultures, which is a focus of this article. The phases will be used as a base for the author's discussion because the various ages cover all aspects of professionalism from the very simple up to the modern time.

Pre-professional age, the first phase, was technically simple, without formal training, teachers learned through trial and errors, limited financial support from the government. The second phase, *Age of the autonomous professional,* starting from the 1960s teachers enjoyed higher status and pay, remarkable autonomy, individualism, were connected to higher learning institutions, and received generous financial support from the government. In the third phase, *Age of the collegial professional*, as schools became more complex in the 1980s, teacher individualism became unsustainable, which moved teaching towards a collegiate approach, and professional training occurred on-site. The fourth age, *post-professional or postmodern*, an age with major development in economics and communications at the turn of the millennium, attack on professionalism in education which leads to financial cutbacks, endless information is being circulated everyday leading to continual debates about what and how to teach, resulting in de-professionalization. While Hargreaves (2000) provides a framework to understand the development of professionalism, it is vital to consider that teaching does not fit neatly into any phase. For instance, given that teachers in Austria have on-site professional development trainings and are undergoing financial cutbacks, it is obvious that the profession is stretched between the *age of the collegial professional* and *the fourth age-post-professional or postmodern.*

Hart and Marshall (1992) list five essential features of teacher professionalism: 1) specific body of knowledge, 2) ideal of service, 3) ethical codes, 4) autonomy, and 5) distinctive culture. At the same time, Hart and Marshall (1992) refer to Ginseng's (1988) point that such a list has restrictions. Without a doubt, the features can be applied to all teaching, but it is vital to acknowledge that teaching still differs greatly, according to time and context.

Macklin (1981) contends that autonomy is the key to professionalism and the professional owning technical knowledge and a culturally respected social ideal. Basing on the claim by Macklin (1981), it is arguable that teaching in Austria is a high-level profession. Teachers enjoy a large amount of autonomy. Every state has a Department of Education with an inspector for each subject, who sits at a teacher's lesson and evaluates the teaching. Since there is only one inspector per subject, it is impossible to get to everyone. This leaves the quality of education up to the headteachers. This is not simple because headteachers do not hire teachers, but rather teachers are employed by the Department of Education, which interviews, hires and dismisses teachers. So, unlimited autonomy could be problematic, as some teachers might take advantage of the system and do as little as possible.

Hart and Marshall (1992) conclude that the overall teaching profession is questionable to society. They point to the trend that many states hire people with little or no professional knowledge, the increase of home schooling and private schools. Hart and Marshall (1992) fail to consider the following reasons as to why some parents send their children to private schools: 1) religious affiliation; they want their children to grow up with people of the same beliefs, values, and principles, 2) safety; especially in the United States schools are targets of shooting, and 3) status; the wealthy want their children to meet and marry within the same social class. There is an alarming culture of distrust that puts teachers in a contradicting discourse and damages the public trust.

Similarly, teachers in Austria no longer enjoy high esteem. To illustrate, there are many cases in Vorarlberg where the situations in mathematics and physics are so dire that schools have hired foreigners with certificates from their home countries, but who speak limited German. As a result, there is much misunderstanding. Again, similarly, some schools have cancelled certain subjects altogether due to teacher shortage. Understandably, the frustrated parents complain and blame schools for not providing adequate education. Secondary school teaching in Vorarlberg still has all the features as suggested by Hart and Marshall (1992) and requires formal training as set forth by the Ministry of Education. But, it is also undergoing serious public assault to a degree where trust can hardly be restored. Finally, on the basis of personal reflections, professional experience and literary research, it seems possible to conclude that teacher professionalism is a socially changing theory, the existence and value of which are both supported and questioned by society.

Results and Discussion

Assumption of "Whiteness" with English Language Teaching de-Professionalizes the Profession

'White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks. (McIntosh, 2015, p. 241) In the field of English language teaching, "whiteness" is assumed to be associated with authentic English. To demonstrate, Amin (1997), a Pakistani ESL educator who relocated to Canada as an adult has taught ESL to adults in Toronto, claims that her student did not consider her native nor Canadian. In her 1994 research with five minority ESL teachers in Toronto, she discovered that her participants believed ESL students considered only white people to be native speakers of English. Armin (2001) interviews eight minority immigrant women teachers who taught ESL classes to adult immigrants in Toronto. Some of her subjects' students were so disappointed for not having a white teacher that they quit the classes. The similarity between Tang's (1997) survey of non-native speaking teachers in a teacher retraining course in Hong Kong and Clark and Paran's (2007) study of the marketability of non-native speakers in the United Kingdom is that they concur native speakers have a higher status than non-native speakers in the English language teaching industry.

Being a Laotian-American, who was rejected at first as a professional by a "white" community, the author had hoped to learn from other Asian minorities with similar life experience. Here the term "Asian" people refers to people from the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. Society's association of teacher with "whiteness", instead of focusing on the quality of training, ethical standards, and relationship, automatically causes minorities to be looked at with suspicion.

Cross-National Comparison

Developments in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom are of high importance for this research because they have a large Asian population. Austria has a small Asian population, but concerns the author since it is the place where she practises her profession. So, the purpose of this article is also to investigate how the various minority teachers' professionalism compares in different contexts.

Canada: Researchers Majhanovich and Rezai-Rashti (2002) studied six retired minority women teachers' experiences starting from the 1960s in Ontario. The researchers claim that racism stopped the women from achieving career advancements. Even though the study offers some rational explanation as to the teachers' lack of progress, it is not as simple as it seems. Firstly, what appeared to be discrimination on the surface might well be argued as a case of bureaucracy. As Cruickshank (2004) notices in his study of 110 immigrant teachers in Australian education programs, one of the difficulties was gaining accurate information pertaining to qualification recognitions. Likewise, Mawhinney and Xu (1997) claim that foreign trained teachers come to Ontario with great expectations only to realize that their credentials are not recognized. Secondly, the teachers observed were two Jamaicans, two Pakistanis, one Taiwanese and one Egyptian. Canadian universities have a very high academic standard. Thus, it is questionable whether the quality of education provided by the teachers from Jamaica, Pakistan and Egypt is on par with the Canadian system. Although Taiwan's students even ranked higher on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which compares test results of 15 year-olds worldwide. From the test results of 2012 Canada's student placed 9th in reading and 13th in mathematics, Taiwan's students placed 8th and 4th, respectively (BBC News, 2015). And, Canada's education system was ranked 5th best in the world in 2015 (MBC Times, 2015). In contrast, neither Jamaica, Pakistan, nor Egypt made it on the list.

Mawhinney and Xu (1997) analyze the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa's program to help foreign trained teachers get credentials. In 1994, they observed seven teachers who successfully finished the program with high hope. Notwithstanding, the teachers experienced discrimination based on their accents.

The United States: The lack of research on minority teachers motivated Subedi (2008) to study the experiences of two South Asian female teachers in an urban large mid-western city. The author observes that Nadia, a Pakistani teacher, whose identity, linguistic style came across as less qualified. Students did not accept her as a 'real' teacher. In contrast, Anita, an Indian teacher was received with higher esteem (Subedi, 2008). The reason behind this is easy to understand: in the United States, Asians are the model minority, people who achieve higher success than the average population academically as well as economically, and there are many prominent Indians in America. Although Nadia and Anita are both minorities, they have different nationalities.

New Zealand: The lack of research concerning under-representation of ethnic minorities teachers encouraged Howard (2009) to interview 15 South Korean and Chinese students aged between 16 and 18 in their last two years of secondary schools and their parents, to determine why they do not enter the teaching profession. Unlike the above stated studies, here the researcher was trying to find what information and/or social expectations discouraged the students from becoming a teacher. Generally, South Korean and Chinese students are highly academic. Some notable examples are that the Chinese are placed first and South Koreans - fifth in the PISA 2012 exam in both reading and mathematics (BBC News, 2015). Howard (2009) discovered 17 reasons that discourage the students from choosing the teaching professions. These top the list: 1) low salary, 2) low status, 3) negative public image, 4) low student respect, 5) poor student behavior, 6) responsible for student outcome, 7) absence of role models, 8) racism, 6) language difficulty, 7) parental expectations, 8) lack of intellectual challenge, and 9) lack of advancement opportunity.

The United Kingdom: A study by Wilkins and Lall (2011, cited in Eweka, 2015) found 30% of minorities, in comparison to 10% white failed or quit their teacher training programme from 2002 to 2006. Likewise, Carrington et al. (2001) identified that minority student teachers were much older and were from non-traditional academic backgrounds. Carrington et al. (2001), cited in Eweka (2015), observe that a large number of graduates turned down teaching due to low prestige. Eweka's (2015) study into school leadership aspirations of black and ethnic minority teachers' claims that there are many reasons for low representation ranging from discrimination to policy failure at various levels from beginning to top. Butt et al. (2010) studied 12 British South Asian women to investigate whether their ethnic minority status influenced their teaching profession and whether it had influenced their quality of training. The longitudinal study began at the culmination of their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) till the end of their third year of teaching, altogether four years. They found that overall the participants considered teaching to be a respectable profession in their environment for women and that it "fitted" well in family planning, but was not high enough status for men who preferred to go into higher status profession such as law, medicine, etc.

Austria: No research has focused on Asian minority students or teachers, but still some studies concerning other ethnic minorities in Austrian schools can be found. The research findings are possibly similar to other studies regarding minorities. According to Luciaka and Khan-Svik (2008), the majority of these students are Austrian-born children of migrants and offsprings of the so-called 'guest workers,' the children of refugees who came to the country in the wake of the Yugoslavian civil war in the 1990s. Luciaka and Khan-Svik (Luciaka & Khan-Svik, 2008) observe that teachers in Austrian schools are mostly monolingual and mono-ethnic. Until recently, only a few individuals with an immigrant background study at teacher training institutions; those who did encountered many hurdles. For example, Sertl (2004), cited in Luciaka and Khan-Svik (2008), notes that one student was scolded for speaking Turkish when she and a Turkish peer were unable to follow certain instructions in class.

In brief, the literature suggests that minorities come from challenging backgrounds as compared to their white counterparts. Furthermore, appearance and accents are blocking minorities from being accepted as professionals. It is vital to consider that a low salary and limited opportunity for advancement do not only deter minorities from going into teaching, but also the general public. A key thing is not to generalize, but rather to study each case separately. For instance, in countries where teachers enjoy a high pay and status such as Finland, Switzerland and Singapore, there is no teacher shortage.

Schools Do not Reflect Society's Demographic

'In many Western countries, there is a shortage of minority teachers. Although an increasing number of students are members of minority groups, teaching staff tend to come from the majority group. This disparity in the cultural backgrounds of teachers and those of the children they teach often results in low teacher expectations and the use of inappropriate teaching strategies. Recruiting quality minority teachers, therefore, is very important' (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006, pp. 5-6).

Research in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Austria shows that the teacher population does not reflect the multi-ethnic student population. It is doubtful that teachers who are different from their students can understand where the students are coming from. With a diverse group of people, fear and misunderstanding can easily occur. Fortunately, the governments in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom recognize the problem and are responding to the crisis.

Canada: Antonelli et al. (2009) point to university programmes that have been set up to help minorities become teachers across the country and through a government program called *Teach in Ontario*. Coutts (2013) also shows a Toronto board memo that was sent to principals and teachers that stated both men and minority are preferred in the hiring process to fulfill their goal of equal representation in both gender and cultural diversity. In defiance of established policies to promote equality, women and visible minorities are still underrepresented, earn less and suffer higher unemployment rate in Canadian higher education (CAUT Education Review 2010).

The United States: Egalite and Kisida's (2015) article claims that in 2014, ethnic minorities made up a majority of America's public school students for the first time and that the trend will continue to rise. Richard and May (2011) view this teacher-student disparity as a civil rights issue, suggesting that a minority teacher shortage leads to a minority student failure. The National Education Association (2015) has made effort to recruit minority teachers by formulating such resolution:

'The Association urges local and state affiliates and appropriate governing bodies and agencies to work to increase the number of ethnic-minority teachers and administrators to a percentage at least equal to, but not limited to, the percentage of the ethnic minorities in the general population.

New Zealand: Howard (2009) acknowledges that the highest level of government is trying to attract minority students through recruitment campaigns and scholarships.

The United Kingdom: The government's fear that teaching was a white-middle class profession was so great that they spent a lot of money and effort to recruit and retain ethnic minorities into the teacher profession (DfEE, cited in Butt et al. (2010). But the trainees did not want special treatment and some believed that the universities were trying to fulfill a quota, thus felt that they were only accepted based on their minority status (Butt et al., 2010).

Austria: Unlike the countries discussed above, Luciaka and Khan-Svik (2008) postulate that educational performance amongst ethnic groups is hardly ever discussed, nor has it been a subject of research. Basing on the lack of interest and personal observation, it is possible to hypothesize that the situation will not improve. On the contrary, the situation is alarming given that foreigners make up almost 10% of the population. The largest Asian minority groups comprised of Filipinos 30,000, Pakistanis 4,000 and 1,250 Nepali (Wikipedia, 2015).

To summarize, the literature suggests that the teaching population needs to reflect the general population's ethnicity. While the government's effort to level the playing field is commendable, it is important to be careful not to put race above merit. It would be wrong to accept or reject anyone into any program basing simply on skin color.

Minority Teachers' Positive Effects

'In our efforts as teacher educators, we can benefit from the ways in which immigrant teachers challenge our own taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching young children. We may believe that we are constructivist teachers (or any other type of teacher), but listening to diverse groups of practicing teachers can reveal when we ourselves fall short of our stated pedagogical principles' (Adair, 2011, p. 68). The central belief from Adair (Adair, 2011, p. 68) and Rebecca Klein's (2015) article in *The Huffington Post* is that the presence of minority teachers will affect minority students positively. Additionally, Howard (2010) refers to an international research which suggests that not only minority students, but all students profit from a diverse teacher population. Being the only Asian teacher at a particular secondary school in Vorarlberg, the author has been able to educate students concerning Asian people and culture in a way that no other teacher can do.

Opponents such as Egalite and Kisida (2015) caution that there are hardly any rigorous empirical studies to back the claims that the presence of minority teachers will benefit minority students. By criticizing the lack of evidence, Egalite and Kisida are highlighting the need for more research.

Likewise, Hurtado (2001) alerts that measuring the effects of diversity is difficult because it is not easily visible. Furthermore, Villegas and Davis (2007), cited in Antonelli et al. (2009), assert that race alone does not equal a better learning experience. Equally important, Antonelli et al. (2009) claim that not all minority teachers are role models and that many white educators have much to offer minority students. To speculate about the quality of education based on skin color alone would be dangerous.

In summary, there is insufficient research on how minority teachers affect minority students to draw any firm conclusions. Above all, being a minority student as well as teacher, the author is concerned about the status quo. The researchers have made her more aware of her own academic challenges and success. Specifically, when she grew up in northern Utah or even when she was a student in Germany, she did not experience one minority educator. However, when she was a master's level student at the University of Michigan, there were many minority professors and administrators. The author succeeded in her studies with and without minority educators, but nonetheless, it was very encouraging to have minority professors and administrators.

Lessons Learned

'An important point here is that it not only concerns one's actions, intentions and experiences, but it also permits the viewing of one's representations as representations, one's beliefs as beliefs' (Von Wright, 1992, p. 61). The concept of professionalism helps to look deeper into personal teaching at a secondary state school. Personal experience proves that teaching is a traditional profession and particularly in an institution which is funded by public money will have the characteristics as listed by Millerson (1964), cited in Power (2008). As a lone Laotian-American professional in a homogeneous society, the author had to get people to look beyond her race. Although she was unable to find any research regarding Laotians in the teaching profession nor statistics about Laotians in Austria, the literature and her own experience confirm that Asian women face obstacles. Experience shows that there is no point in arguing with people, but rather to respond by doing good work, that speaks for itself. Today, in her fifth year of teaching, the teacher population is still white, but the author no longer feels any barrier separating her from parents, students or colleagues. This experience has taught her that skin colour matters in the beginning, but with sincere effort from everyone, bias can be buried.

Conclusion

The aim of this reflective article was to investigate the preconception of professionalism in teaching, whether minority teachers' identity influences their professionalism, and how minority teachers affect minority students. There is abundance of research concerning "professionalism" and "teaching" that debate the meaning of professionalism and the validity of the teaching profession. The analysis of the literature showed that the debate is open-ended. It is difficult to pinpoint oneself in any one phase of professionalism as suggested by Hargreaves (2000) because the author believes that the nature of the teaching profession is fluid. However, the features suggested by Hart and Marshall (1992) helped the author to reflect on how and why she became a teacher, and question whether she would want to continue in the chosen profession.

Research suggests that the teacher population does not reflect the changing faces of multi-ethnic classrooms, which are in need of role models. While the governments in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom are implementing programs to recruit more minority teachers, so far, Austria has no such recruitment scheme. Without a doubt, Austria must reconsider its policy given the number of recent refugee children who are already burdening the school system.

This reflective process has made the author aware of how under-represented minority teachers are in the teaching profession and that basing on their cultural background and appearance alone, they are scrutinized by many societies that associate teaching and learning with "whiteness." In particular, this statement is based on the opportunity to reflect on the author's own identity in a "white" society. Her experience as a Laotian-American in Austria is similar to other teachers that she has discovered, namely, she had to prove herself before she was recognised as a professional; polite, meticulous, diligent, and comply to the ethical expectations (Nicholson, 2014). She had a chance to reflect on her own professionalism in comparison to other teaching professionals in various cultures and in a different time frame. The stability of any society depends on its members' ability to live and work together peacefully. The key to success begins with our educational system which needs to serve all members of society, both the marginalized and the privileged. It is difficult to help minority teachers and students succeed without a full assessment of the situation. This reflective article contributed to the much needed discussion on teaching professionalism for minorities; however, much more needs to be explored. Meanwhile, Bush et al. (2007, 2005) studies cited in Eweka (2015) reveal that minority teachers have succeeded through flexibility, determination, and ambition, which seems to be true.

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Efficiency of Individualised Resources in the Russian EFL Classroom

Olga Stognieva
National Research University Higher School of Economics

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Olga Stognieva, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Kirpichnaya, 33, Moscow, Russian Federation, 115187.
E-mail: 2507794@mail.ru

In order to plan lessons that include effective instructional strategies, it is critical for teachers to be aware of student aptitudes, personality variables, learning strategies, interests, aspirations, and talents. This paper presents a way for Russian teachers to improve their students' speaking abilities when learning foreign languages, called individualised resources, which are based on the concept of individualisation. Individualised resources are designed to help students to actively participate in the learning process, contribute to their productivity of learning and compensate for missing abilities when mastering foreign languages. In order to verify the effectiveness of this educational tool, qualitative and quantitative indicators were applied to a classroom-based study. Research findings illustrate how the approach enhanced the students' speaking abilities in terms of purposefulness, richness of speech content and logical progression of speech. The results presented in the article indicate that this type of training may be sufficient to shape speaking skills when teaching English.

Keywords: individualised resources, speaking skills, aptitudes, learning strategies, personality variables

Generally, individualised teaching is recognized to be an essential response to a number of pedagogical challenges and problems currently discussed with regard to the effectiveness of teaching (Diamond, 1975; Kuzovlev, 1997; Passov & Kuzovleva, 2010; Bray & McClaskey, 2015). From the late 1990s, individualisation has become a guiding principle for educational reform in Russia. The concept of modernising Russian education highlights the need to ensure differentiation and individualisation by using effective teaching methods, in particular for EFL learning.

Individualised learning is a method of teaching, in which content, instructional technology and the pace of learning are based upon the abilities and interests of each learner (Kuzovlev, 1997, p. 15). The principle of individualised learning has become an important aspect of teaching any school subject, and foreign languages in particular (Zimnaya, 1985, p. 8). Rogova, Rabinovich, and Sakharova (2004) maintain that foreign languages are more difficult than most subjects to learn because of the complex combination of skills and cognitive functions involved in the language learning process, which is why it requires an individual approach.

However, existing resource kits for teaching English, although they are well developed, suffer significant disadvantages. They are designed for the 'average' student and cannot take into account individual characteristics of each student learning a foreign language. Therefore, the question arises: Is it possible to develop supplementary educational tools, which will correspond to individual characteristics and the needs of the students? If teachers can develop and implement extra training tools, which take into account the individual and personal characteristics of students, such as the pace of progress, the abilities for foreign language acquisition, possible gaps in learning a foreign language, a personalised system of instruction, the way that teaching is structured and managed, the learning process will proceed more effectively. This paper aims to show that providing students with individualised learning resources, which are defined as a special type of training tool designed for the individualisation and personalisation of the learning process (Stognieva, 2003, p. 56), will result in their active participation in the learning process, and contribute to their productivity when learning a foreign language.

Materials and Methods

Students' Variables Relevant for Creating Individualised Teaching Resources

Students collectively encompass a wide range of variables, including age, gender, intelligence, personality, learning style and previous learning experience, individual beliefs, attitudes, expectations, motivations and strategies for learning. This paper explores the notion of individualised resources, so this research focuses on the following three areas:

- Language aptitudes
- Learning strategies
- Personality variables

This section reviews the literature on student variables with respect to language learning and then examines the issues that arise from the literature particularly on creating individualized resources.

Language aptitude is one the most significant factors which determines individual's success in foreign language acquisition (Sparks & Ganschow, 1991; Skehan, 1998; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002). Carroll's (1981) language aptitude includes four components: phonemic coding ability (the capacity to identify distinct sounds and to code them for later retrieval), grammatical sensitivity (the ability to recognise the function of words in sentences), associative memory (the ability to learn associations between sounds and meanings and retain them) and inductive language learning ability (the ability to identify patterns in language use and to infer the rules that govern them).

O'Malley and Chamot (1993, p. 107) claim that while aptitude is generally assumed to be a fixed characteristic, it may be more adaptable to instruction than was originally anticipated. They find a close link between Carroll's four components of aptitude and language learning strategies, and propose that what has previously been defined as fixed aptitudes of learners may be redefined conceptually in terms of the strategies individuals use in learning situations. This has implications for pedagogic intervention, in terms of strategy training for language learners.

A learning strategy is a person's approach to learning and using information (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Biggs, 1992; Reid, 1995; Ehrman, 1996; Dörnyei, 2005). Students use learning strategies to help them understand information and solve problems. Students who do not know how or do not use good learning strategies often learn passively and ultimately fail at university. Learning strategy instruction focuses on making students more active learners by teaching them how to learn and how to use what they have learned to be successful. A strategy is useful when: (a) the strategy relates well to the L2 task, (b) the strategy fits the particular student's learning style, and (c) the student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies. Strategies that fulfil these conditions help students learn easier, faster and more enjoyable. Oxford (2001) points out that as with any type of instruction, foreign language learning strategy instruction is more effective when adjusted for learning styles.

There are four main personality characteristics affecting foreign language learning discussed here: motivation, self-esteem, anxiety and engagement.

Motivation is one of the most important variables in language learning (Gardner, 1985; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Kormos & Dörnyei, 2000; Ochsenfahrt, 2012). Not surprisingly teachers recognize the importance of motivation, both with regard to the motivation which students bring to the language classroom (extrinsic motivation) and the motivation that is generated inside the classroom through the choice of instructional activities (intrinsic motivation).

Many researchers claim that no successful learning activity can take place without some self- esteem and self-confidence (Coopersmith, 1967; Heyde, 1979; Brown, 1994; Ushioda, 2009). Brodkey and Shore (1976) revealed that self-esteem appears to be an important variable in second language acquisition, particularly in view of cross-cultural factors of second language learning.

Anxiety can be treated as a 'conceptually distinct variable' (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 125) for high anxiety level reduces performance when learning a foreign language. Studies into anxiety in language learning have focused on 'a type of anxiety related specifically to language situations, termed 'language anxiety' (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, p. 5), which includes self-perceptions, expectations, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning.

Bray and McClaskey (2015) consider that the learners want to be engaged with the content and they want to learn more about something they are interested in. This can be what inspires them to learn something.

The teacher should keep track of learners' aspirations, talents, interests, and passions. This will help define who they are as learners and how they learn best. If the teacher develops specific instructional and learning strategies, it can bring better performance in foreign languages.

What is important about the study of individual differences is that it allows the teacher to explore how instruction can be adapted to take account of the person who is most involved, the actual learner.

The Interaction between Individual Differences and the Components of Individualised Resources

In order to enable the most learners possible to learn as much as they can, the teacher should give them every advantage, including individualised resources that enable students to start out in a relatively comfortable and stress-free way. This means giving students the opportunity to learn in their preferred styles, to employ different kinds of supports (verbal or visual), different kinds of instruction (reminders, memos, checklists), motivating task objective presentations and material teaching aids which match their interests and other personal variables.

Figure 1 shows how each component of individualisation described above (i.e. aptitudes, learning strategies, and personality variables) is manifested in individualised resources. The structural components of individualised resources are: the task objective presentation that aims to motivate students for speech production; material teaching aids that create the informative and prompt basis for students' oral statements; instructions that demonstrate the sequence of task performances and aim to develop learning strategies; verbal and visual supports that may help students to produce statements, depending on individual aptitudes (Stognieva, 2003, p. 84). Each of these components to a varying degree should contribute to the overall goal of teaching oral communication in a foreign language.

The teacher's awareness of students' personality variables could help the teacher to state the task objective presentation and to choose the right teaching aids that could be informative and prompting. Informative teaching aids may consist of a fragment or several fragments of text based on one idea, newspaper or magazine articles, letters, diaries, tables containing specific data, pictures, photos, illustrations, drawings, sketches, etc. Prompting teaching aids may include slogans, aphorisms and sayings, diagrams, charts, statistical data, symbols, posters and cartoons.

The teacher's awareness of their students' aptitudes is reflected in supports - verbal and visual - that allow the teacher to design individualised resources for students with a varied degree of speaking ability. Different kinds of supports help the students to cope effectively with the tasks.

The teacher's awareness of students' learning strategies is introduced in instructions, reminders, memos and checklists that describe the steps of performing the task. Instructions and prompts are especially important when the task is given for the first time. On the one hand, the regular use of instructions and prompts facilitates the student's ability to follow instructions, and on the other hand, along with the supports they may help less able students to operate together with the class.

Before the teacher starts designing the individualised task, they should create a student's personal profile and then analyse the aptitudes, learning strategies and personality variables obtained for each student. In the next stage, the teacher should make instructional decisions based on learners' strengths, challenges, interests, and how they prefer to learn (in particular, what supports and instructions they may need, what material teaching aids will be the most effective in terms of calling communicative motivation).

There is an example of three different personal profiles of third year students who study at the Faculty of Business Informatics at the Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia). The names of the students have been changed.

It should be clarified that a preferred speech partner is considered to be a person with whom communication is more desirable or having more value. The communicative status of the student is determined by the number of choices made by his groupmates in his favour, when choosing a preferred speech partner in the process of experimental teaching.

Individualized Card 1 (Figure 2) has been developed for Anton, and as a teaching aid it includes the informative text (recent information about the most popular coding languages of 2015) aimed to increase his motivation by relying on his professional interests. For

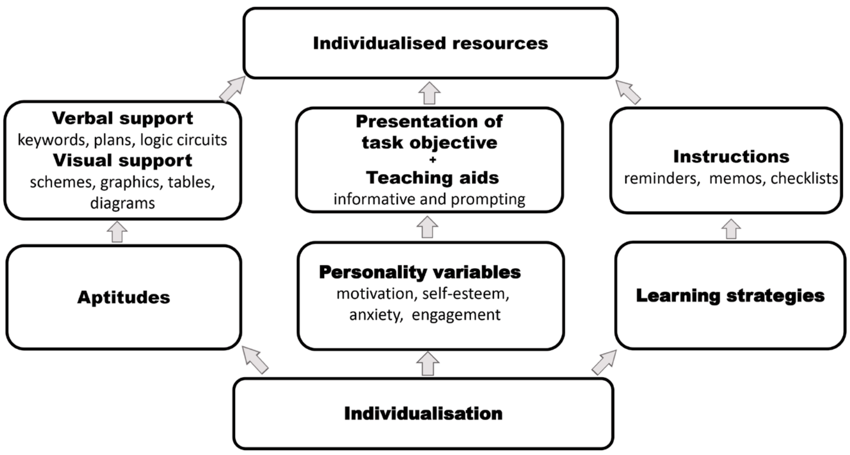

Figure 1. Individualisation as a foundation for creating individualised resources.

support, he is given a logical plan to develop his ability to speak logically, and he was given instructions that could help him to overcome anxiety and shyness.

It should be clarified that the communicative status of the student is determined by the number of choices in his favour made by his groupmates when choosing a preferable speech partner.

Individualised Card 2 (Figure 3) has been designed for Michael. As a teaching aid, a bubble chart has been chosen (because visualisation is his preferable way of receiving information) and some facts about the most popular coding languages of 2015 aimed to maintain his motivation at a high level by relying on his professional interests. As support, he is provided with a plan to overcome contextualisation gaps, and in order to develop the ability to be a good conversation partner, he is given a memo that will remind him of some basic rules.

Individualised Card 3 (Figure 4) has been designed for Oksana. Relying on her professional interests, she is given some prompts and questions (as a teaching aid) that should become a framework for her conversation with a partner. As support, she is offered a set of words and expressions to develop an ability to speak emotionally and to keep a conversation going. As instructions, she is offered some tips about working in pairs, which may

Table 1
Anton's personal profile

Individual characteristics	Tactics for individualisation
Language aptitudes	
Anton has low level of aptitude for learning English. His communicative abilities, the ability to guess from a context, speak logically and his recall abilities all need further development.	To give him support, the teacher should offer key words as a memory developing technique, logical plans and thinking structures, and to plan activities that will recycle, integrate and reinforce a certain linguistic item in the context, prompting the use of the target item in a communication situation.
Learning Strategies	
His learning style is inflexible. Sometimes he has trouble with planning his oral statements, carrying on a conversation and working with peers.	The teacher should provide him with memos about making a plan for his oral statements; recombination prompts that allow him to put together smaller meaningful phrases into new sentences; reminders about how to cooperate with peers effectively.
Personality variables	
Anton's professional interests include programming and computing support. He has a low communicative status (as a preferred speech partner he was chosen by one group member). He is weakly motivated to learn a foreign language, believing that it would not be useful in the future. He gets anxious about presenting in front of the group.	It is essential to increase his communicative status by integrating him with other members of the group, working together to solve a problem. Motivation can be enhanced by an emphasis on professional interests. Anxiety could be reduced by using mental techniques that make him feel confident to present the learning task. Provide him with more presentation practices.

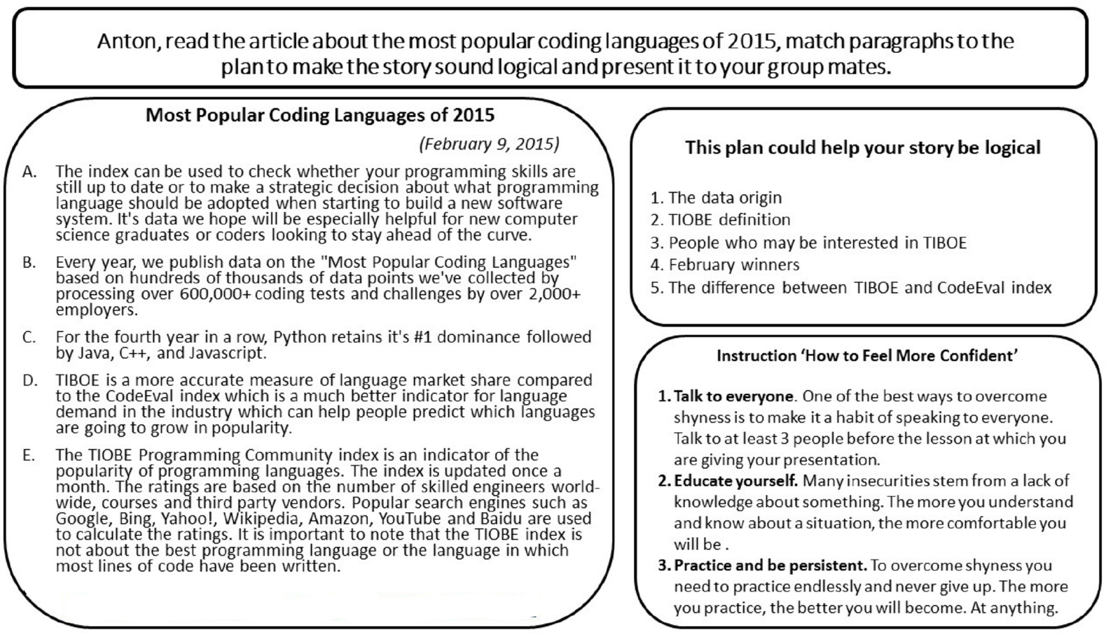

Figure 2. Individualized card 1 for Anton. Adapted from CodeEval, by CodeEval Team, 2015, Retrieved from http://blog.codeeval.com/codeevalblog/2015#.Wgh0gmi0PIV=. In the public domain.

help her to become a good conversational partner.

Therefore, it should be noted that individualised resources could be an effective learning tool, if they are adequately and consistently used in a series of lessons. When developing the components of individualised handouts, the teacher should take into account the students' aptitudes, learning styles and personality variables. Indeed, much depends on how much the teacher knows the student and how well the students are able to take advantage of using the individualised cards.

Method

The aim of the experimental training is to investigate that individualised resources are an appropriate tool to enhance the students' speaking abilities in terms of the purposefulness of their speech, the richness of its content and the way of logical progression of their speech. This includes the focused and consistent implementation of individualised resources, which consider students' individual personality traits and improve their quality of verbal expressions.

Table 2
Michael's personal profile

Individual characteristics	Tactics for individualisation
Language aptitudes	
Michael has average aptitude for foreign language learning. His language analytical ability and abilities for recognition and understanding of syntactical structures need further development.	As teaching aids, he should be given semantically incomplete texts, so the student can generate ideas based on incomplete content. As supports, the teacher should provide him with schematic grammatical rules.
Learning Strategies	
Sometimes Michael has difficulties with placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence and relating new information to other concepts in memory. It is essential to develop his skills to be a good conversation partner.	The teacher should offer instructions, which could help him to overcome his difficulties with contextualisation and elaboration, memos about making a plan for his oral statements and reminders about how to become a good conversational partner.
Personality variables	
Michael's professional interests include programming and data security methods. His communicative status in a group is not very high (as a preferred speech partner he was chosen by three group members). His motivation for learning a foreign language is more practical (instrumental motivation).	The teacher should provide him with resources focused on his professional interests that will keep his motivation at high level. It is possible to increase his communicative status by offering him some topics for discussion that will be of interest not only for him but for other learners in the group.

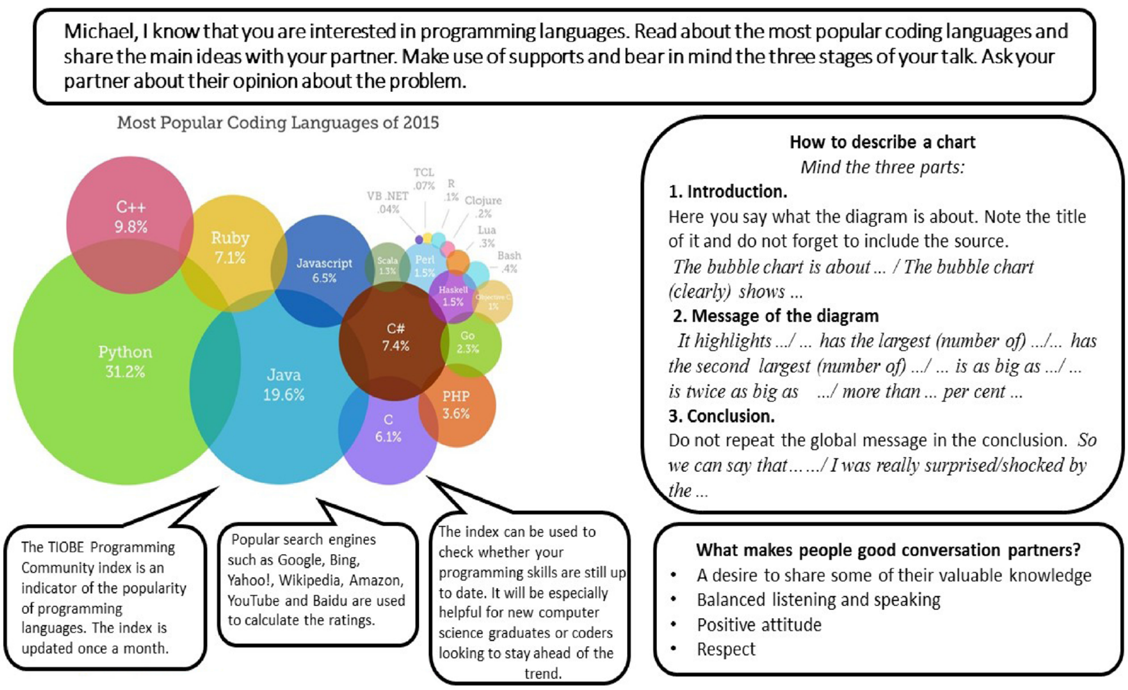

Figure 3. Individualized card 2 for Michael. Adapted from CodeEval, by CodeEval Team, 2015, Retrieved from http://blog.codeeval.com/codeevalblog/2015#.Wgh0gmi0PIV=. In the public domain.

Data Sample and Experimental Phase

Experimental teaching using individualised resources was conducted at the Moscow Higher School of Economics while teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course to 40 students from the faculty of Business Informatics. There were 20 students in the experimental group and 20 students in the control group. The experimental phase lasted for four months and in total took 72 sessions (1 session equals 45 minutes).

The topic for experimental training was the ‘The role of the Internet in the modern world’, which included the following questions for discussion: What is the internet? What is computer-mediated communication? How do you create a website? How does your web browser find the page you want? What computer codes are used for creating a web site? What is HTML? How can you evaluate websites? How can you become a web-site designer?

For the experiment, a range of teaching aids were selected, such as newspaper and magazine articles, an extract or several extracts of text based on one idea, tables containing specific data, photos, illustrations, diagrams, charts and statistical data. The students were provided with individualised materials designed for

Table 3
Oksana’s personal profile

Individual characteristics	Tactics for individualisation
Language aptitudes	
Oksana has a high aptitude for language learning. However, she has to develop the ability to communicate her feelings and emotions in the foreign language.	As supports, the teacher should offer emotional and evaluative words. Teaching aids should include textual and visual means, which are able to involve her emotionally.
Learning Strategies	
Her social strategies like working with peers and keeping the conversation going with more than one speech partners need further development.	The teacher should provide her with instructions on how to conduct a discussion with a group of speech partners.
Personality variables	
Oksana’s professional interests include programming and developing new applications for smart phones. Her communicative status in a group is high (as a preferred speech partner she was chosen by seven group members). Her motivation for learning English is integrative. She is willing to put in a lot of effort to learn a foreign language.	The emphasis should be on personal and professional interests to maintain a high level of interest. In pairs, she could assist less able students, because teaching is a great way to learn.

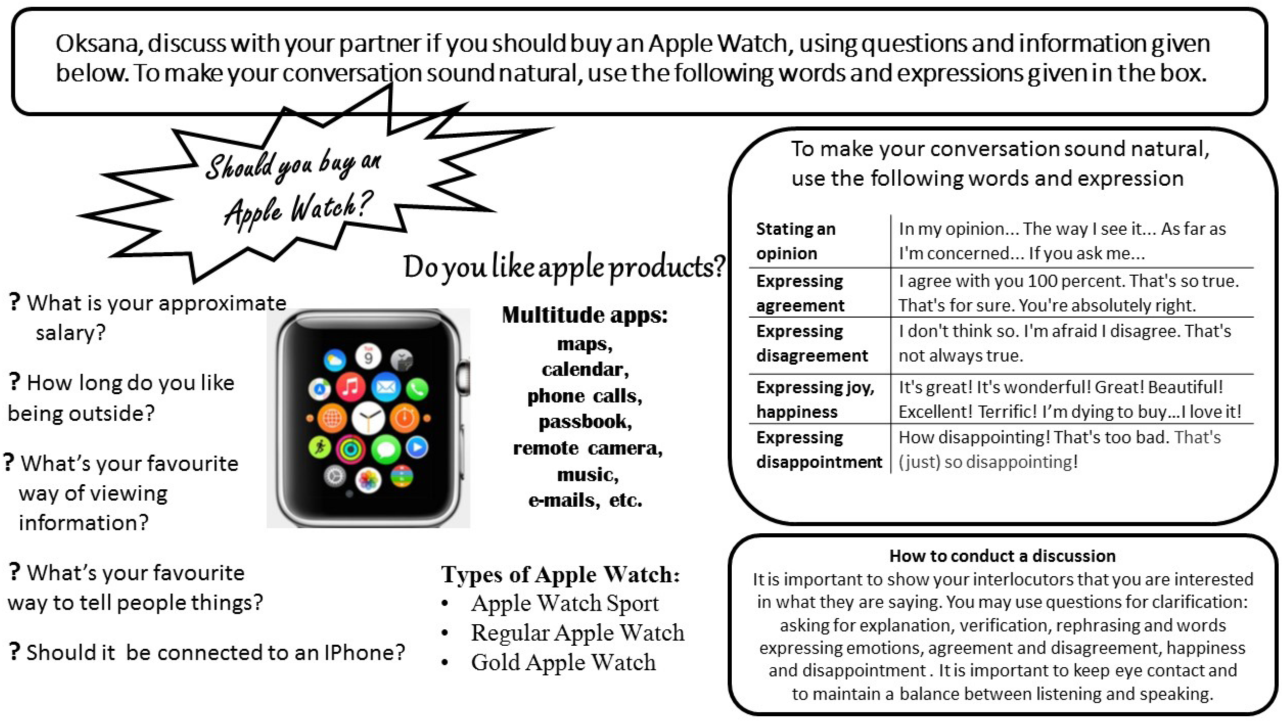

Figure 4. Individualized card 3 for Oksana.

their learning needs and considering their aptitudes, learning strategies and personality variables.

In the experimental training, the students' answers were recorded and then analysed. In total, 570 statements were analysed according to qualities of the students' speaking ability such as purposefulness, richness of content and logical progression of speech. These traits were considered to be the most difficult for students to achieve and made the teaching process more problematic.

The experimental training was conducted in three stages:

- Preliminary stage that determined the initial level of students' speaking ability.
- Intermediate stage where the changes in students' speaking ability during the process of using the individualized resources were followed.
- Final stage, which reported the results of the experimental training.

To determine the level of students' speaking ability IELTS format Speaking test was used (see Appendix A).

Data Qualification and Evaluation

Purposefulness was measured by the relationship of the phrases 'working' for purpose goal, to the total number of phrases completed semantically. Introductory phrases that provided a transition to the main idea of their statements were taken into account as well. When determining purposefulness, every phrase was considered in the context of their statements. Thus, the total number of phrases in the students' statements was taken as 100%, and the number of phrases which were considered to be 'working' towards the goal was determined as a percentage of the total number of phrases.

The richness of speech content is understood as the intensity of the oral statement's information. The richness of content index/indicator for every statement was calculated using a formula implemented by Morskaya (1972, p. 162). The main idea of a sentence which was expressed by a subject (noun) and a predicate was equated to a 'unit of information'.

Any additions and clarifications were estimated at 0.5 of a 'unit of information'. Clauses were evaluated as separate sentences. If a subject or a predicate was expressed by homogeneous parts of speech (e.g. C++, Java, HTML) all of them were each assigned a unit of 0.5, but the first word was not. For example, in a sentence *"C++, Java, HTML are high-level computer languages"* the total unit of information would be 1.0. Incomplete phrases, sentences distorting the facts, repetitions and phrases that did not contribute to solving the communicative task were not taken into account.

Therefore, oral expressions which were in accordance with the task objective directly characterized the richness of the context and indirectly reflected the development of certain qualities of speaking ability such as productivity, persuasiveness and emotion.

The way of logical progression of speech was defined as the logical progression of statements in the student's discussion, where a clear introductory sentence followed by explanations and conclusions could be identified. The unit of measurement was determined as follows: for the opening phrase, the speaker received 1 point, for every phrase that logically followed on, they would receive one extra point. For example, the statement of the two phrases is worth 3 points (1 + 2), the statement of five phrases is 15 points (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5). If the logical sequence is disrupted, the following phrase was estimated at 1 point, the next at 2 etc. For the concluding phrase that summarized the oral statement, the speaker was given one additional point. The use of compound sentences was marked with one point for every clause. Points were not given for repetitions and paraphrasing the same ideas. This counting technique was based on the understanding of consistency as a logical sequence of phrases, which are fluently said to reveal the main idea of the statement. Hence, the index of consistency also served as indirect evidence for qualities of speaking ability such as the richness of context and purposefulness.

Then, the students' results before, during and after the experimental teaching intervention were analysed and compared against each other using the growth index, to see whether the experimental teaching would improve their quality of speech.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this research illustrate how the intervention enhanced the students' speaking abilities in terms of their purposefulness, richness of speech content and speech progression. The data obtained during the experimental training is indicated below.

In Table 4, column '1' indicates the number of phrases in the statements, which were completed semantically. Column '2' indicates the number of phrases in the statements, which were 'working' towards the overall goal. Column '3' indicates the proportion of purposeful phrases to the total number of phrases (in %).

In the control group, where the teacher did not use any individualized resources, it is clear that almost no changes occur, and the growth of purposefulness is 1.2% at the final stage.

The results of the intervention stage show that the students' performance improved compared to the results of the preliminary stage, which may have occurred because the task objective, support and instructions in the individualised materials were all used.

The number of phrases that invited discussion with an interlocutor and therefore facilitated the students' speaking activity markedly increased: *I think that, I'm not sure that, as far as I know, there's no denying that, no way!*

The 10% increase in the final stage of the experimental group demonstrates that students are able to build purposeful statements when they communicate.

When analysing the data from Table 5, we can see that the control group's growth index is only 6.5%, which is markedly lower than that for the experimental group, which used the intervention.

As for the experimental group, the variety of material and operating tools, which were offered to the students, allowed them to make significant progress in learning how to vary the richness of their speech. The proportion of growth for the experimental group was 73%. This could be because teaching aids for experimental training are highly informative and aimed at their professional interests.

The review of the students' answers in the experimental group revealed that their speech patterns in the final stage, compared to the preliminary stage, were characterised by a higher degree of argumentation and relevance.

Thus, the data show the effectiveness of individualised resources as a way of shaping student's vocabulary.

Table 6 indicates that the average growth rate of the learning the way of logical progression of speech in control group is 51%. It is assumed that the impetus for this could be the systematic use of the supports and instructions, which aimed to develop the students' ability to express themselves more logically.

In the control group, there is a minor increase in the development of speech progress, and the index of growth is 5 %. This can be explained by the fact that the teacher from time to time assigned tasks, which aimed to develop the students' logical ability although this was insufficient.

Over the period of experimental training, the students learned to expand their ideas gradually, to avoid repetition. Moreover, the number of clauses and summarising phrases increased as did the overall number of phrases in the statement.

Here is an example of the student's ability to speak at the final stage of the experimental teaching (see Appendix B).

One of the best programming languages I am going to talk to you about is Java. *I am not saying this because I can code Java, but Java has proved it in last 20 years.*

First of all, *Java is everywhere, it's on desktop, it's on mobile, it's on card,* ***I mean almost everywhere****. Java has Rich API. Java API, well, API is* ***an application programming interface****, is used for networking, database connections, inputs/outputs and utilities, everything.*

Furthermore, *because Java is open source, it is used in more places than some of its competitors. One job placement company did a marketplace analysis and found that 20% of the openings called for Java skills, either alone or in addition to other programming languages.*

You can get a lot of Jobs opportunity by learning Java programming language. You can develop core Java based server side application, enterprise applications, and you can even develop Android based mobile applications.

If you decide to learn Java programming, *I personally suggest picking a book, because they are almost always written well for beginners. I personally recommend 'Head First Java' to beginners, that's great book to start, if you don't know much about Java. Online tutorials will also can help you to learn Java.*

Table 4
Purposefulness measured for the experimental and control group

Group category	Preliminary stage			Intervention stage			Final stage			Growth index (%)
	1	2	3 Proportion of purposeful phrases (%)	1	2	3 Proportion of purposeful phrases (%)	1	2	3 Proportion of purposeful phrases (%)	
Experimental	8.4	6.1	70. 8%	10.5	7.9	75.0 %	12.6	10.3	81.3 %	+10.5 %
Control	8.2	5.7	69.5 %	8.5	5.9	69.4 %	8.8	6.2	70.7 %	+1.2 %

Table 5
The richness of speech measured for the experimental and control group

Group category	Preliminary stage	Intervention stage	Final stage	Growth index (%)
Experimental	7.8	10	13.5	+73.0 %
Control	7.7	7.9	8.2	+ 6.5 %

Table 6
Logical progression of speech measured for the experimental and control group

Group category	Preliminary stage	Intervention stage	Final stage	Growth index (%)
Experimental	17	21.6	25	+51 %
Control	17,3	17,7	18,2	+5.0 %

I meant to say earlier *that one of the reasons for learning Java it is easy to learn. Java has English like* ***phrase structure****, you know,* ***arrangement of words****, with minimum angle brackets, which makes it easy to read Java program. It does not require any prior programming experience to learn Java coding. Learning Java can be really easy if you already know a programming language.*

Finally, *if you are a programmer, you should always keep learning. This is because there is no place for outdated professional skills in programming. It is very important to keep up with the latest trends in order to be competitive. The best way is to put new knowledge into practice. I recommend reading Java and Technology Sites and Blogs from experts.*

The student's speech was clearly outlined and structured and this made it easy to follow. The student introduced his topic (*One of the best programming languages I am going to talk to you about is Java*), and covered all the points in his assignment, wherein each point was clearly introduced in a logical succession (*First of all…, Furthermore…, If you decide to learn Java programming…, Finally…*). Using repair strategies allowed him to include an idea, which had not been mentioned in the main structure of the talk *(I meant to say earlier…*) and to repeat a phrase to avoid hesitation (*Java is everywhere... ...I mean almost everywhere).* He paraphrased when he could not remember a word '*syntax*' (*phrase structure, you know, arrangement of words…*) and clarified some technical terms (*API is an application programming interface* …). The student demonstrated the ability to speak at length and keep going. Since this topic was discussed previously, he had plenty of ideas to express. As a result, his talk could be considered as purposeful, logical and rich in content.

In Table 7, an overview of the indicators in the experimental group as compared to the control group can be seen. Overall, in the control group, there is no significant growth of any indicator. The exceptions are the richness of speech, where we can see a 7% increase due to the quality of teaching aids which were specially prepared for the experimental training.

The ratio of the average growth of indicators in the control and the experimental groups for purposefulness is 8.75, for the richness of speech it is 12 and in for speech progression it is 10.3.

After comparing the data from the experimental and control group, it can be concluded that if teachers do not search for adequate ways to work on the development of their students' speaking skills, then they cannot expect high indicators of their oral speech performance.

The results of the research showed that after using individualised resources in the experimental group, the quality of verbal expressions significantly increased and the students' speaking abilities, particularly in terms of the purposefulness of their speech, the richness of its content and their logical speech progression also enhanced.

The final stage of the experiment showed that the students' performance improved compared to the results of the preliminary stage, which may have occurred due to the use of the task objective, supports and instructions in the individualised materials. Moreover, the variety of material and prompts, which were offered to the students allowed them to make significant progress in learning.

In the process of intervention, the students demonstrated an ability to relate to the facts and events presented using their own personal experience, interests and abilities. Structurally, the texts offer a model for future statements that the students will make. The task objective presentation aimed to motivate students to produce their own speeches. The verbal and visual supports help students to develop their recall abilities and to organise their speech more productively, using a variety of words and expressions. The instructions help them to perform their tasks more effectively and logically and develop the students' learning strategies.

There are two factors, which mean that additional training tools are required; first, a focus on the fact that the student body is comprised of diverse individuals, and second, the demand for personalised curricular materials to satisfy the needs of each student (Bray & McClashey, 2015).

Within the context of this study, a solution has been found using the individualised handouts as an extra training tool for the development of students' speaking skills. However, it can only be an effective tool if it meets the following six criteria:

1. Individualisation: the idea of individualisation must provide the theoretical grounding for the individualised resources, where the content and instructional technology of learning are based upon the aptitudes, learning strategies and personality variables of each student.
2. Resources: each component of individualisation should be manifested in individualised resources (i.e. aptitudes should be represented by verbal and visual supports, learning strategies should be indicated by instructions and personality variables by the presentation of task objective and teaching materials).
3. Process: the tactics of individualisation described in the student's personal profile should

Table 7
Summary table of indicators of growth

Group category	Growth in the purposefulness indicator, %	Growth in the richness of speech indi-cator, %	Growth in the speech progression index, %
Experimental	+10.5 %	+78.3 %	+51.3 %
Control	+1.2 %	+ 6.5%	+5.0 %
The ratio of the average growth of indicators			
	8.75	12	10.3

determine the content of these components.

4. Components: the structural components of the individualised resources should be the presentation of the task objective, material teaching aids, instructions and supports. Each of these components to a varying degree should contribute to the overall goal of teaching oral communication in a foreign language.
5. Consistency: in order to be an effective learning tool, individualised resources should be adequately and consistently used in a series of lessons, rather than in isolated sessions.
6. Accessibility: The students must be taught to make use of the individualised resources, so that they achieve the maximum potential from them.

Following these criteria, the teachers create individualised resources, which could be an effective learning tool, if they are adequately and consistently used in a series of lessons.

Conclusion

This paper provided some suggestions on how the students' speaking abilities can be improved through designing and using individualised resources, which help the students to be actively involved in the learning process, contribute to their productivity of learning and compensate for missing abilities when learning English as a foreign language. Research findings illustrated how the approach enhanced the students' speaking abilities in terms of purposefulness, richness of speech content and logical progression of speech. The results presented in the article indicated that this type of training may be sufficient to shape speaking skills when teaching English for Specific Purposes to the students from the faculty of Business Informatics at the Moscow Higher School of Economics.

Although the research has reached its aims, there are some potential limitations that may interfere with its implementation in the everyday teaching practice. First, it is time consuming to create a personal profile and individualised cards for every student. Each student is different and the teacher must be aware of their individual differences. However, in order to reduce the amount of work that the teacher will have to do, a personal profile, which includes language aptitudes, learning strategies, personality variables, and the ways they prefer to learn could be filled out by the students at home, with guidance from their teacher and possibly their parents. This would be a very powerful tool because it helps the students to evaluate themselves and how they learn. This will save much more time for the teacher when making the individualised cards, and be very helpful for the students' further development. Another way to overcome this limitation could be to build a team of co-teachers to research individualised learning and as a team work on collecting a database of teaching aids, and share them to create tasks, which match the individual students' needs.

The results presented here have highlighted a number of topics on which further research would be beneficial. First, future studies should address the different ways of modifying individualised resources, particularly for pair and group work, and for different types of verbal expression (e.g. monologues, dialogue, and group discussion) as well as the content of individualised handouts. A more detailed elaboration of all the structural components of individualised resources could be a good contribution to this research. Second, further investigation with a larger sample size and perhaps with a different study body such as high school students or working professionals, would be interesting to consider. This would lead to a wider range of data and allow the development of new types of individualised resources for different age groups and different needs. This would offer a better impression of the overall performance of the individualised resources, and allow a comparison between the results of different groups of students.

In Russia, until the 1990s, the predominant instructional materials were printed textbooks and worksheets, which were fixed and inflexible. Since there were no obvious alternatives, the students became accustomed to only one method of learning. This has started to change with the advent of computer technology and influences from other countries on the educational system. However, creativity is still lacking in most Russian schools across the country. Therefore, these individualised resources offer a creative alternative to the existing dry methods of teaching. They are based on the diversity of all students and can be adapted to a variety of their specific needs and the ways in which they learn best.

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Appendix A

Speaking Part 2 task. Variant 1

Describe a website that you like using.
You should say:
- what this website is
- how people use it
- who uses it

and explain why you often browse this website

Appendix B

Speaking Part 2 task. Variant 2

Describe the best programming language from your point of view.
You should say
- what the language is
- what it is used for
- how you can learn it

and explain why you should learn it

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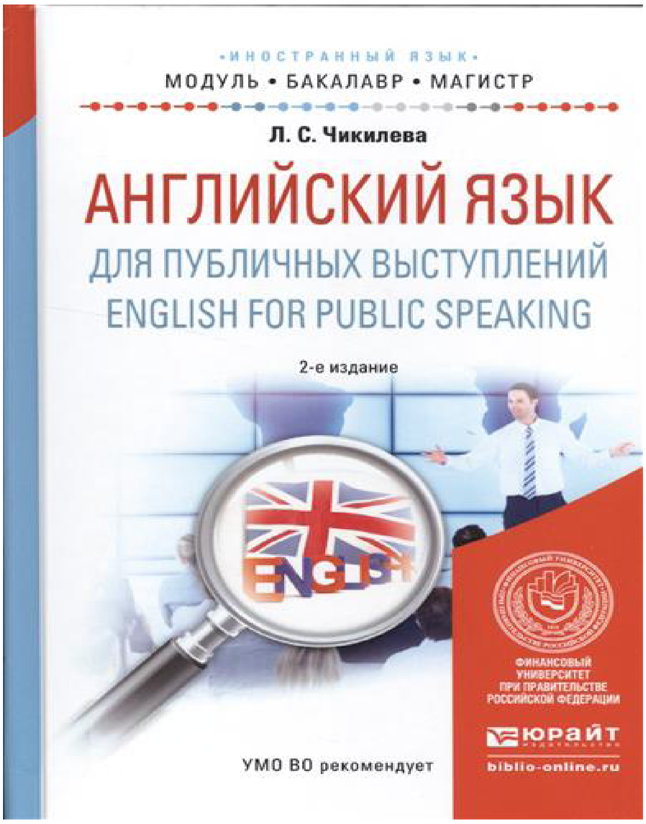
Elena Nikulina
Moscow State Pedagogical University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Elena Nikulina, Moscow Pedagogical State University, 1/1 M. Pirogovskaya Str., Moscow, Russian Federation, 119991.
E-mail: elenik40@yandex.ru

The second edition of *English for Public Speaking* is written for a University-level public speaking course. It is commonly known that an effective speaker is an ethical speaker. It means that the speaker should be true to his or her values and sense of right and wrong. Audience-centered speakers articulate truthful messages. They give audience free choice in responding to a message while using effective means of ensuring message clarity and credibility. This edition is supposed to be an effective tool to help students develop their public speaking abilities. Expanded discussion in every chapter emphasizes the important task of understanding, appreciating and adapting to listeners.

English for Public Speaking consists of introduction, eight chapters, four supplements and the list of bibliography. It should be noted that the book is well structured. Chapters begin with a quotation that helps readers to anticipate the message. Summary is provided at the end of each chapter and suggested activities are presented. *English for Public Speaking* features a variety of pedagogical devices to help students learn concepts and develop skills most effectively. Activities throughout the book help readers take a closer look at important concepts and improve their communication skills. *English for Public Speaking* includes appendices containing public speaking quotes, glossary of rhetorical terms, speeches and public speaking internet sites.

In the introduction, the author states what goals should be achieved while studying the course, expresses gratitude to reviewers and to all those who have encouraged the author to write this book.



Chapter 1, entitled "Listening", provides an overview of the process of effective listening. It emphasizes the importance of becoming a better listener so its main focus is shifted towards identifying listening goals and improving listening skills. Special attention is given to analyzing and evaluating of speeches. Students are given self-assessment opportunities. They are encouraged to use speech evaluation form and receiver anxiety scale (pp. 27-30). According to the definition, "listening is a process that involves selecting, attending, understanding and remembering"(p. 25). Barriers keeping people from listening efficiently include outside distractions, information overload, personal concerns and prejudice. Several suggestions for overcoming these barriers and improving listening skills are presented in the summary of Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 is devoted to analyzing audience, therefore special attention is given to various types of audience analysis, such as demographic, psychological and situational analysis. Expanded discussion in this chapter emphasizes the important task of understanding, appreciating and adapting to listeners. This edition of *English for Public Speaking* continues to emphasize the transactional nature of interpersonal relations. It presents communication not as a collection of techniques we use on others, but as a process in which these techniques are used. As stated in this edition, even the most competent communication does not always seek to create warm relationships, that even less personal interaction usually has the best chance of success when handled in a constructive, respectful manner. This edition continues to integrate the discussion of similarities and differences involving gender and culture. It retains a non-ideological approach to these topics. "Audience analysis is the process of examining information about the listeners whom you expect to hear your speech" (p. 31). The audience-analysis skills and techniques presented in this chapter will help students throughout the public-speaking process. Consciousness of their audience will be important as they select a topic, determine the purpose of the speech, develop its central idea, generate main ideas, gather supporting material, rehearse and deliver the speech. In this chapter, both formal and informal strategies are given for gathering information about the audience (p. 33). There are certain ways of analyzing and adapting to the audience before, during, and after the speech. As stated in this chapter, there are two steps to become an audience-centered speaker. First, it is recommended to analyze the audience to assess who the listeners are; identify their psychological profile, as well as consider the occasion at which the speech will be delivered. Second, the information that has been gathered should be adapted to the audience in an ethical way. Each decision made when designing and delivering the message should consider the needs and backgrounds of the audience.

Chapter 3 is entitled "Introducing and Concluding Your Speech". There is no doubt the introduction and conclusion of a message are vital to achieving the communication goal as they provide audience with important first and final impressions of speaker and speech. The introduction may convince the audience to listen carefully to a credible speaker presenting a well-prepared speech, or it may send the message that the speaker is ill prepared and the message is not worth listening. It is mentioned in this chapter that a good introduction gets the audience's attention, introduces the subject, gives the audience a reason to listen, establishes the speaker's credibility and previews the main ideas (p. 58). The author seems to be right stating that it is important to begin and end the speech in a way that is memorable and that also provides the repetition audiences need. Introducing your subject and previewing the body of your speech can be accomplished by including your central idea and preview statement in the introduction. The speaker can gain favorable attention and provide a motivation for listening by using one or a combination of the following: illustrations, startling facts or statistics, quotations, humor, questions, references to historical events, references to recent events, personal references, references to the occasion or references to preceding speeches if there are any. Concluding the speech is as important as introducing it, for it is the conclusion that leaves the final impression. Specifically, a conclusion should summarize the speech, reemphasize your central idea in a memorable way, motivate the audience to respond and provide closure. Conclusions may take any one of the forms used for introductions. In addition, the speaker can refer to the introduction, make inspirational appeals or challenges, or make appeals to action. As it has been mentioned in the previous chapters, a credible speaker is one whom the audience judges to be a believable authority and a competent speaker. If the speaker can establish credibility early in a speech, it helps to motivate the audience to listen. A relevant and interesting anecdote introduces your subject and gains your listeners' attention. Humor, handled well, can help to relax the audience and win their goodwill for the rest of the speech. Startling an audience with the extent of a situation or problem catches the members' attention, as well as motivates them to listen further and helps them to remember afterward what you had to say. Rhetorical questions prompt the audience's mental participation in your introduction, "hooking" the listeners by getting them to engage in a mental dialogue with you. Although personal references can take a variety of forms, what they do best, under all circumstances, is to establish a bond between you and your audience. A speech conclusion leaves an important final impression. Long after the speaker finishes speaking, the audience is likely to remember the effect, if not the content, of closing remarks. A speech conclusion is the last chance to repeat the main ideas for listeners. The most obvious purpose of a conclusion is to let the audience know that the speech has ended. An inspirational appeal or challenge in a conclusion can rouse listeners to a high emotional pitch.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the speechmaking process and provide various ways for supporting the speech. It is common knowledge that public speakers sometimes feel nervous just thinking about giving a speech and nearly every speaker experiences some nervousness. Relaxation techniques suggested in *English for Public Speaking*, such as visualization, deep breathing and focusing thoughts may be useful. The audience-centered model of public speaking suggests that throughout the speech crafting and delivery process, the choices made about designing and presenting the message should be guided by knowledge of the audience. Based on information about listeners, the speaker selects and narrows the topic, determines the purpose, develops the central idea and generates the main ideas. These speech-preparation steps are followed by gathering and organizing supporting material, including visual aids. In order to support the speech with interesting, convincing supporting material the speaker can choose from various types of supporting material, including illustrations, explanations and descriptions, definitions, analogies, statistics, and opinions. Additional criteria such as magnitude, proximity, concreteness, variety, humor, and suitability can help the speaker to choose the most effective support for the speech.

Continuing the previous discussion, Chapter 6 is a careful study of delivery style. Such methods of delivery as manuscript, memorized, impromptu and extemporaneous are presented in this chapter. Speakers are recommended to select their delivery style to be better connected with the audience as well as to achieve their speaking goal. Special attention is given to characteristics of effective delivery: gestures, postures, movement, facial expression, vocal delivery, personal appearance. Gestures and movements should appear natural and relaxed, definite, consistent with the message, varied and coordinated with what the speaker says. They should also be appropriate to the audience and situation. Eye contact is the single most important delivery variable: looking at the audience helps to control communication, establish the speaker's credibility, maintain audience's interest and provide feedback. The speaker's facial expressions and vocal cues are the primary ways in which feelings and emotions are communicated to the audience. Vocal pitch, rate, and use of pauses help to provide variation to add interest to the speech. The chapter concludes with several final suggestions for rehearsing and delivering the speech. It is helpful to leave several days to focus on speech delivery and on developing speaking notes. It is recommended to create speech environment during rehearsals for the speaker to be more confident when the message is delivered.

Chapter 7 "Understanding Principles of Persuasive Speaking" falls into four parts. The first part is about persuasion. Various theories explain how persuasion works to change or reinforce attitudes, beliefs and values which are the determinants of behavior. "Persuasion is the process of changing or reinforcing attitudes, beliefs, values or behavior" (p. 137). Although knowing your listeners' attitudes, beliefs and values can help you craft any message, these three variables are especially important to consider when designing and delivering a persuasive message. Attitudes represent our likes and dislikes. An attitude is a learned predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably toward something. A persuasive speech could also change or reinforce a belief. A belief is what you understand to be true or false. If you believe in something, you are convinced it exists or is true. We have structured our sense of what is real and what is unreal to account for the existence of whatever we believe. A value is a conception of right or wrong. Persuasive messages often attempt to do more than change or reinforce attitudes, beliefs or values - they may attempt to change our behavior. The persuasion process is of great help for motivating listeners to respond to the speaker's message. The audience is more likely to be persuaded if the speaker helps members to solve their problems or meet their needs. They can also be motivated if the speaker is able to convince them good things will happen to them if they follow the speaker's advice, or bad things will occur if they don't. Each of these strategies for motivating listeners is considered in more detail. The second part of this chapter is about motivation of listeners. There are several ways to motivate listeners. These include the concept of cognitive dissonance according to which we all strive for balance or consistency in our thoughts. When a persuasive message invites us to change our attitudes, beliefs, values or behavior, we respond by trying to maintain intellectual balance or cognitive consistency. A second theory explains why we are motivated to respond to persuasion by proposing that we wish to satisfy our needs. Third, positive motivational appeals can help the speaker to develop a persuasive message by encouraging listeners to respond favorably to the message. A fourth theoretical approach that helps to understand how persuasion works is the use of negative motivational appeals, mainly appeals to fear. Fear can motivate listeners to respond favorably to a persuasive suggestion. Preparing and presenting a persuasive speech requires the same approach as preparing any other kind of speech. A key concern is to consider the audience. The next concern is an appropriate topic. Finally, speakers can apply to choose broad principles of persuasion to prepare a persuasive speech. The third part of Chapter 7 is about developing a persuasive speech. In the last part persuasive principles are put into practice.

The final chapter "Special-Occasion Speaking" consists of three parts: public speaking in the workplace, ceremonial speaking and after-dinner speaking. Occasionally most of us can be called on to speak in a business or professional setting, or for some occasion that calls for celebration, commemoration, inspiration or entertainment. These special-occasion speeches are critical-thinking activities that require the speaker to synthesize and apply his or her speaking skills to unique situations. Public-speaking skills are used frequently in the workplace, from making report presentations to representing your company or profession in front of the public. Each of these two professional speaking challenges have unique requirements. Considerable emphasis is made upon ceremonial speeches that include introductions, toasts, award presentations, nominations, acceptances, keynote addresses, commencement addresses, commemorative addresses and tributes, eulogies. After-dinner speaking is an established tradition. Interestingly, the after-dinner speech is not always after *dinner* (the meal is just as likely to be breakfast or lunch), it is also not always *after* anything. The after-dinner speech may be delivered before the meal or even between courses. After-dinner speeches may present information or persuade, but their primary purpose is to entertain. The theme of the meeting may suggest the speaker's central idea, but he or she will usually avoid such subjects as diseases or social problems. The best after-dinner speech is one that makes a thought-provoking point with humor. For most speakers, humor is the challenge of the after-dinner speech. Even the speaker who knows how to gather and organize information and deliver it effectively may be at a loss when it comes to techniques and strategies for creating humor. One of the best ways to create humor is to start with what speakers know.

As stated in the preface (p. 8), professional success is often determined by skills to speak in public. Throughout the book the framework of developing such skills has been applied. Within this framework, the author's main focus is on speaker's credibility, on different ways of writing an effective speech and various methods of efficient speech delivery. The book is systematically structured, concise and quite easy to read. All chapters are divided into subsections according to the topic, have both introductions and conclusions; as a result, the text is easy to follow. The appendices are handy and to the point. However, the book could benefit from including a word index.

To conclude, it should be mentioned that *English for Public Speaking* is a useful resource for both academics and students enrolled in the course of public speaking. Though for the most part it requires some background in rhetoric, even beginners in public speaking have much to gain using this edition.

Notes for contributors

1. Journal of Language and Education is an electronic journal of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE), Russia.

2. In order to ensure a worldwide readership, all articles submitted to Journal of Language and Education must be written in English (either British or American, but not mixed up). All publications are free of charge, and can be accessed on the Web site of the HSE.

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4. Each manuscript must be accompanied by a statement that it has not been published elsewhere and that it has not been submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere.

5. The authors bear full responsibility for the content of the articles and the opinions expressed in them.

6. Articles submitted must be unpublished, and cannot be simultaneously submitted to other journals.

7. Manuscripts should be in MS Word format and conform to the formatting style of *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 6th Edition*.

8. Structure: the main manuscript document should be organized as follows:

   (1) Title

   (2) List authors' full names (first-name, middle-name, and last-name).

   (3) Affiliations of authors (department and institution).

   (4) E-mails

   (5) Abstract: The abstract shouldn't be less than 150 words but not more than 300 words. The keywords should be less than 10 (for guidelines regarding abstracts, please see the JLE's How to write a scientific abstract.

   (6) Abbreviations: Abbreviation should be used only for non standard and very long terms.

   (7) Introduction: The statement of the problem should be stated in the introduction in a clear and concise manner.

   (8) Theoretical background

   (9) Research, Materials / Participants and Methods: Materials and methods should be clearly presented to allow the reproduction of the experiments. All articles published in JLE must make strong empirical contributions.

   (10) Results and discussion: Results and discussion maybe combined into a single section. Results and discussion may also be presented separately if necessary.

   (11) Conclusion

   (12) References

Note: JLE recommends 6000 or more word count, excluding title page, legends, and references.

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