

---

ISSN 2411-7390

jle

---

JOURNAL  
OF LANGUAGE  
& EDUCATION

---

Volume 4 Issue 2, 2018



HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY



# Journal of Language & Education

## Editorial

### Dear Readers,

Welcome to the second issue of the Journal of Language and Education (JLE), a quarterly publication designed for the scientific enquiry in Linguistics, Psychology, Language Teaching and Learning; providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and news within international scientific community at-large. We would like to take this opportunity to thank current JLE Editorial Board members for their ongoing commitment to the standards to which the journal aspires.

With JLE, you will have regular updates and special feature segments of varying topics: psycholinguistics, communication gap, language and speech, mental health treatment, and cognitive processes. We hope you enjoy reading JLE and find useful information, as well as some food for thought for you and your colleagues.

The initial article of the second issue of JLE is a fine-drawn forum for scientific debates about the significance and replicability of linguistic and education phenomena, presented in Mizue Aiko's paper entitled "The Relationships Between the Accuracy of Self-Evaluation, Kanji Proficiency and the Learning Environment for Adolescent Japanese Heritage Language Learners". This article, representing a research on the heritage language speakers, having pragmatic advantages, such as gaining a qualification and better employment opportunities. This study sheds new light on the field of experimental studies with self-evaluation of kanji proficiency, contributing to improving kanji proficiency, as well as with improvement of the underestimation on radicals skills, giving students more awareness of radicals when

introducing and reviewing kanji regularly in class.

The paper "West" or "Vest"? Pronunciation of English Consonants [w] and [v] in the Utterances of Slovak EFL Speakers" by Rastislav Metruk explored the informative potential of the most difficult and puzzling aspect of English for L2 learners: suprasegmental features, containing possible pitfalls that foreign language learners need to avoid if they wish to communicate effectively and successfully. The author focuses on erroneous pronunciation of the consonants [v] and [w] in the English pronunciation of Slovak university students as the constituents of more information on why these errors might have occurred. The research suggests that the distinctive feature of the labiodental fricative [v] and the labial-velar approximant [w] mispronounce investigations are highly likely raise a rather vexing question since it might be difficult to clarify why the consonant [v], which exists in both languages, is replaced by the consonant [w].

Flora Komlosi-Ferdinand in "Bulgarian University Students' Learning Style Preferences in ESL Classrooms" explores the issues regarding the magnitude of the task of deciphering global linguistic behaviour, motivation, and learning style preferences. In recent times, there has not been such a study carried out on Bulgarian written in the English language. The obtained results open fascinating perspectives for further research on this issue and the development of a comprehensive model of facilitating diverse activities, educational materials, and assessment methods in order to help students find the most appropriate learning styles to gain and strengthen knowledge.

Abduljalil Nasr Hazaea and Ali Abbas Alzubi's paper "Impact of Mobile Assisted Language Learning

on Learner Autonomy in EFL Reading Context” studies the use of the advent of communications technology, including language learning systems. The authors’ findings reveal that the participants have learned how to acquire knowledge and search for more information via mobiles, which acted as an outside classroom teacher. The present study may appeal to the international reader in terms of the need to act autonomously and communicate with the world so as to practise the use of the new language and make decisions about their language learning.

The article “A Study on the Attributes of Effective English Lecturers as Perceived by EFL Learners: The Case of Indonesia” by Heri Mudra presents EFL learners in Indonesia, striving for better and deeper English knowledge and skills. The study seeks to identify the role in ensuring that learners become skilled users of English both formally and informally. The results of the research show the estimation of the frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviation (SD) of the attributes of effective English lecturers and findings in differences between male and female EFL learners’ choices of the attributes.

In “Androcentrism of English proverbs and Anti-Proverbs with Gender Components” Maria Kirsanova studies the connection between language and sex dates back to the ancient times when the grammatical category “gender” started to be considered. All the findings in this article further our understanding of proverbs, since cultural and national traditions are recorded via proverbs in order to be passed on through generations. The overview revealed a need for further research of proverbs and anti-proverbs, demonstrated by the fact that anti-proverbs are variations of traditional proverbs and they are ironic and humorous.

The paper “French Grammatical Accents: Practices, Sociolinguistic Foundations, and Pedagogical Implications in a Multilingual Setting” by Antoine Willy Ndzotom Mbakop, Sonia Laurel Emalieu Kanko, and Michelle Adrienne Tida presents a study done with new perspectives in the incorrect exposure

perspective, from the postulate that errors can start in one group (first generation) and then spill over to a second (second generation) through contact. It should be noted that studying the influence of spoken French on the use of grammatical accents by English-speaking learners of French in Cameroon ensures a more profound investigation, helping curb the tide of the errors learners made in using grammatical accents.

Deborah Azaryad Shechter in “Overcoming the Grammar Barrier in Foreign Language Learning: The Role of Television Series” investigates issues of the comprehensive and insightful study of the effects of films on language learning and critical accounts of their strengths and weaknesses. The overview of previous research shows that beneficial effects of television series on listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition have been largely overlooked. The obtained results open fascinating opportunities for further research and comparative investigation of communicative ways that can transform well-known practices of grammar instruction and called on teachers and scholars of foreign language acquisition to explore how television series promote the teaching and learning of grammar.

Lilia Raitzkaya in her review on the book “Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education” by Yasemin Kirkgöz & Kenan Dikilitaş (Eds.) considers the major trends in ESP and ESP’s position in the foreign language learning continuum in English Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts. The reviewer interpreted the main concepts and current developments in ESP in the framework of English as the world’s lingua franca and the new needs of learners of English in the globalized world.

We believe you will enjoy this second issue of the JLE, participate in the debate of the proposed concerns and that you will assume submitting your abstracts and sending comments. Please, join us by submitting your work and suggestions for special issues in the coming months and years.

**Editors-in-Chief of Issue 2**  
**Tatiana A. Baranovskaya**  
**Valery D. Solovyev**

**Editors-in-Chief**

Valery D. Solovyev Kazan Federal University, Russia  
 Tatiana A. Baranovskaya National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia

**Editorial Board**

Olga V. Alexandrova Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia  
 Christine Coombe Dubai Men's College, Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE  
 Elena L. Freidina Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia  
 Andy Gillet the author of «Inside Track to Successful Academic Writing», Pearson Education, University of Hertfordshire, UK  
 Victor Ginsburgh Institut d'Etudes Europeennes (IEE) at Universite Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium  
 Galina N. Gumovskaya Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia  
 Andy Kirkpatrick the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Australia  
 Griffith University, Australia  
 Raphiq Ibrahim University of Haifa, Israel  
 Mark Krzanowski Westminster University, UK  
 Theresa Lillis the Open University, UK  
 Irshat Madyarov American University of Armenia, Armenia  
 Hamzeh Moradi Payamenoor University, Ahvaz, Iran  
 Junia Ngoepe University of Limpopo, South Africa  
 Elena Nikulina Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia  
 Zoya G. Proshina Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia  
 Ernesta Racienu Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania  
 Lilia K. Raitskaya Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University), Russia  
 Wayne Rimmer BKC-International House, Russia  
 Jane Setter University of Reading, UK  
 Vladimir D. Shadrikov National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia  
 Zarema K. Shaukenova Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan  
 Prithvi Shrestha the Open University, UK  
 Elena N. Solovova National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia  
 Ashley Squires University of Texas, USA  
 New Economic School, Russia  
 Galina A. Suvorova Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia  
 Svetlana G. Ter-Minasova Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia  
 Svetlana V. Titova Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia  
 Anatoliy N. Voronin Institute of Psychology of Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia  
 Robin Walker the author of "Teaching English Pronunciation as a Lingua Franca", Oxford University Press, Spain  
 Shlomo Weber Southern Methodist University, USA  
 New Economic School, Russia  
 Vera I. Zabolotkina Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia

**Editorial team**

Elena V. Tikhonova National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia  
 Kseniya B. Kseniya National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia  
 Lilit Beganyan University of California, USA  
 Alexey Iakovlev Dresden University of Technology, Germany

**Editors of Issue**

Lynn Mastellotto  
 Timothy O'Day Thompson

Website: <https://www.jle.hse.ru>

# Contents

## Articles

Mizue Aiko

- The Relationships Between the Accuracy of Self-Evaluation, Kanji Proficiency and the Learning Environment for Adolescent Japanese Heritage Language Learners 6

Rastislav Metruk

- “West” or “Vest”? Pronunciation of English Consonants [w] and [v] in the Utterances of Slovak EFL Speakers 24

Flora Komlosi-Ferdinand

- Bulgarian University Students’ Learning Style Preferences in ESL Classrooms 30

Abduljalil Nasr Hazaea, Ali Abbas Alzubi

- Impact of Mobile Assisted Language Learning on Learner Autonomy in EFL Reading Context 48

Heri Mudra

- A Study on the Attributes of Effective English Lecturers as Perceived by EFL Learners: The Case of Indonesia 59

Kirsanova Maria

- Androcentrism of English proverbs and Anti-Proverbs with Gender Components 68

Antoine Willy Ndzotom Mbakop , Sonia Laurel Emalieu Kanko, Michelle Adrienne Tida

- French Grammatical Accents: Practices, Sociolinguistic Foundations, and Pedagogical Implications in a Multilingual Setting 78

## Opinion Paper

Deborah Azaryad Shechter

- Overcoming the Grammar Barrier in Foreign Language Learning: The Role of Television Series 92

## Reviews

Lilia Raituskaya

- Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education. Yasemin Kirkgöz & Kenan Dikilitaş (Eds.), Vol. 11. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018. 353 pp. ISBN 978-3-319-70213-1 105

Notes for contributors

108

## The Relationships Between the Accuracy of Self-Evaluation, Kanji Proficiency and the Learning Environment for Adolescent Japanese Heritage Language Learners

Mizue Aiko  
RMIT University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mizue Aiko, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne VIC 3001 Australia. E-mail: mizue.aiko@rmit.edu.au

This paper focuses on Japanese heritage language (JHL) learners in an Australian context. The paper reports on a research project in a hoshuu-koo institution, a Japanese supplementary school, and explores the experiences of a group of Year 7 students. This study was initiated by identifying to what extent JHL learners can recognise their own skills, especially in proficiency in kanji, one of the Japanese scripts. It was predicted that several elements could relate to the accuracy of self-evaluation. By exploring levels of self-evaluation skills and the elements concerned in Japanese learning, the aim of the research was to help develop differentiated curriculum in the future. Data were based on student performance on kanji tests and answers to questionnaires, and the Excel Correl Function was used to calculate correlation coefficients. Graphs were also used to analyse the data. It was found that students who had relatively high kanji proficiency, especially in higher year levels, recognised their own skills but an overall overestimation was found amongst other students. Specific areas of kanji learning, such as okurigana and radicals, were identified as areas that need to be enhanced for appropriate self-evaluation for most of the students. Learning environment related to evaluation skills was also identified. Concluding comments centre on implications for further teaching approaches and research on the enhancement of kanji self-evaluation skills.

**Keywords:** Japanese heritage language (JHL) learners, hoshuu-koo, kanji, self-evaluation, home environment, tests

This study explores *kanji* (one of the Japanese scripts) proficiency, the self-evaluation skills of Japanese Heritage Language (JHL) learners, and the factors that relate to self-evaluation skills. A heritage language is the first language that children learn to speak fluently; for example, as children grow they will come to use the local language (e.g., English) more frequently and skilfully and thus their first language (e.g., Japanese) becomes their “heritage language” (Nakajima, 1998). It has been reported by researchers that the kanji proficiency of JHL learners has not been satisfactorily developed (Kataoka & Shibata, 2011) and it is suspected that learners who lack self-assurance in kanji miss the opportunities to develop their skills as they hesitate to learn. This attitude tends to increase as the learners become older, especially for adolescents and adults. It is assumed that recognising one’s own proficiency properly helps in gaining confidence and devising one’s own learning methods.

## Взаимосвязь между точностью самооценки, владением иероглифами и средой обучения для подростков, изучающих японский язык

Мизу Айко  
МКТИ университет

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Мизу Айко, МКТИ университет, а/я 2476, г. Мельбурн, Австралия, индекс 3001. E-mail: mizue.aiko@rmit.edu.au

Данная статья направлена на исследование изучающих японский язык наследия (ЯЯН) в австралийском контексте. В статье говорится об исследовательском проекте, проведенном в институте хошуу-ку, японской дополнительной школе, и исследуется опыт группы студентов 7-го класса. Исследование было начато с определения степени изучающих ЯЯН, признающих свои собственные навыки, особенно во владении кандзи – одним из японских шрифтов. Гипотетически предположено, что с точностью самооценки могут быть связаны несколько элементов. Изучая уровни навыков самооценки и соответствующих элементов в изучении японского языка, целью исследования была разработка дифференцированных учебных программ для будущего использования. Данные были основаны на результатах успеваемости студентов по тестам кандзи и ответах на вопросники, а для расчета коэффициентов корреляции использовалась функция Excel Correl. Для анализа данных использовались также графики. Было установлено, что студенты, которые имели относительно высокий уровень владения иероглифами, особенно на старших курсах, признали свои собственные навыки, но общая переоценка была обнаружена среди других студентов. Конкретные области изучения кандзи, такие как окуригана и радикалы, были определены как области, которые необходимо улучшить для соответствующей самооценки у большинства студентов. Также была определена учебная среда, связанная с навыками оценки. Заключительные выводы связаны с возможным развитием дальнейших подходов к преподаванию, а также исследований по совершенствованию навыков самооценки кандзи.

**Ключевые слова:** изучающие японский язык наследия (ЯЯН), хошуу-ку, кандзи, самооценка, учебная среда, тесты

Therefore, it is important to identify how accurately each JHL learner recognises their own kanji proficiency and to find out if there are any factors relating to self-recognition skills so that further learning methods can be explored to enhance self-evaluation ability.

A *hoshuu-koo* in Australia was selected for this research. *Hoshuu-koo* are supplementary Japanese schools outside of Japan and are organised by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to provide Japanese education for first grade to ninth grade students who go to a local school during the week. *Hoshuu-koo* were originally designed for children who would eventually return to Japan and were expected to provide these children with access to part of the Japanese compulsory education curriculum (Doerr & Lee, 2010). As well as teaching Japanese language to the designated original cohort of students, many supplementary schools also teach

Japanese as a heritage language (JHL) (Yamaguchi, 2008). At the hoshuu-koo where this research was conducted, almost 80% of students learn Japanese as a heritage language. It was observed that students were struggling to acquire kanji and often stopped learning Japanese when they finished Year 6, i.e., at the end of elementary school. Many of the students who do not have confidence in kanji showed passive and negative attitudes towards learning kanji. When students have a negative attitude towards learning kanji, it is hard to acquire kanji; therefore it is crucial to make kanji learning attractive by introducing culture and allowing students to understand the usefulness of kanji (Shimizu & Green, 2002). As hoshuu-koo is the main institution for JHL learners, a solution for this situation is necessary to encourage learning JHL.

Researchers insist that heritage language education is important socially, culturally, and economically as well as for maintaining a positive sense of identity (Douglas & Chinen, 2014; Wang & Green, 2001). Additionally, heritage language speakers have pragmatic advantages, such as gaining a qualification and better employment opportunities as well as expecting to obtain good marks on exams (Doerra & Leeb, 2009; Willoughby, 2006). Despite the recognition of its importance, difficulties in maintaining learning and acquiring age-appropriate proficiency have been reported (Douglas, 2008; Oguro & Moloney, 2012), especially as learners become older, and this may influence learning motivation. Age-appropriate proficiency in JHL education is regarded as knowledge of vocabulary, script, grammar, and the skills to use them that students learn at school in each grade based on the curriculum designed by MEXT. Difficulty in learning and teaching kanji at hoshuu-koo as well as at tertiary institutions is widely acknowledged, although difficulties in other areas of JHL learning have also been recognised. For example, an imbalance between the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Douglas, 2010; Nishimura, 2012), the use of wrong registers (Calder, 2008), and restricted knowledge and competence in morphology and vocabulary (Calder, 2008; Kataoka, Koshiyama, & Shibata, 2008). There could be several factors influencing learners' proficiency, and Aiko (2017) indicates that the increasing use of a dominant language and lack of opportunities to hear or use formal language registers could be example factors.

The complicated system of kanji and the number of kanji characters could be reasons for the difficulty of its acquisition. There are three types of Japanese script: *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*. Hiragana and katakana are phonetic scripts; each character represents one sound and does not represent any particular meaning. Ootsuki (2010) commented that Japanese is not very different from other languages in

terms of the difficulty in acquiring the system, despite its unique grammar; however, the most difficult part of Japanese learning is the script system. Douglas (2010) also found many JHL students insist that kanji is the hardest part of learning Japanese. According to a large-scale international investigation of the experience of hoshuu-koo teachers, findings indicated that many JHL learners do not reach age-appropriate levels of kanji proficiency (Kataoka & Shibata, 2011). Nakajima (2003) also found that JHL learners' kanji proficiency does not necessarily progress as they grow older. Findings from research conducted by Douglas (2008), reported that JHL students' reading skills are very similar to the skill levels of second language learners at university. Moreover, Douglas (2010) found that university JHL students have problems in writing and reading combination kanji words amongst kanji components, although they can read kanji within context relatively well. JHL learners usually have insufficient opportunities to be exposed to spoken and written texts or enough opportunities to use the language in their daily lives, which affects the amount of acquired age-appropriate vocabulary and kanji (Kataoka & Shibata, 2011). Unlike second language learners, the amount of kanji that is expected to be remembered is large and students may not be able to grasp how much kanji they maintain. Thus, it is suspected that students have insufficient recognition of their own kanji proficiency.

Blanche and Merino (1989) mentioned that self-evaluation is a source of information about abilities and progress provided by learners themselves. This information also includes learners' expectations, needs, and worries (Harris & McCann, 1994). It has been said that students can become aware of their progress by being given the opportunities to assess themselves and by being made responsible for their own learning (Dickinson, 1987; Harris, 1997). As a result, self-assessment helps students become active participants in their education (Joo, 2016; Sloan, 1996). Blanche and Merino (1989) also insisted that metacognitive skills, as well as student proficiency, can be developed by adopting this approach. Thus, it can be said that the effect of a self-evaluation system in language education and how students then self-rate their proficiency could be a key point in making the system valuable. Research has found several tendencies which affect the accuracy of self-evaluation, such as learning environment and negative relations with family and school environment (Konaszewski & Sosnowski, 2017). The level of proficiency and length of learning are reported as affective factors. Gertsen's (2006) research proved that students who studied over a longer period can evaluate their skills more accurately. Moreover, the higher that language proficiency is, the more accurate the self-rating (Davidson & Henning,

1985; Heilenman, 1990). Komori and Fujisawa (2004) conducted research on the same students over a span of two years and found that students' self-evaluation abilities increased with improvements in proficiency; however, the increasing rate of self-evaluation was different depending on the proficiency. Students who obtained high scores in tests believed in their improvement, whereas students who did not perform well on the tests rated themselves lower than their actual improvement. Although a correlation between accuracy of self-evaluation and proficiency was found, this does not mean that high proficiency always leads to accurate self-assessment. Yoshizawa (2009) found a correlation between self-assessment and the difficulty of reading texts but no significant relation with listening. Therefore, the fields of learning relating to self-evaluation and actual proficiency vary.

This research investigated whether the relationship between self-evaluation skills and kanji proficiency of adolescents could be identified. The importance of self-evaluation skills and the relationship with language proficiency have been discussed in prior research (Bandura, 1997); however, not enough research has been conducted in the JHL area, especially for adolescents whose meta-cognitive skills are developed more than elementary school students and thus are at the age where enhancing one's own self-evaluating skills and organising one's own learning style are expected. In this research, a focus on the kanji learning of adolescents, the appropriateness of self-evaluation, and the elements which may correlate with it are explored in the expectation of improving kanji proficiency.

The context for the study was a hoshuu-koo in Australia. The participants were students in Year 7 and the researcher was a participant-observer. It was found through the researcher's observations of students during class, and the results of kanji tests, that not many students recognised their own kanji proficiency and gave up memorising kanji. It is assumed that students are able to improve their kanji proficiency and participate in learning actively by establishing and developing their learning styles if they evaluate their own proficiency appropriately and recognise which areas of kanji they are competent in, as kanji has several elements such as compounds words and *okurigana*. Okurigana are *kana* suffixes following kanji that show grammatical functions of the word. In other words, appropriate self-evaluation is one of the ways to improve kanji proficiency and helps in setting up appropriate goals. Moreover, finding the elements that influence the appropriateness of self-evaluation skills and characteristics of evaluation skills would be a cue for improving both teaching methods for educators and organising the environment at home as well as to enhance evaluation competence for students.

Based on the hypothesis mentioned above, this study will explore: How does self-evaluation of kanji proficiency contribute to improving kanji proficiency? To address this question, the research aimed to explore:

- How well does each student understand their own proficiency? Is there any relationship between kanji proficiency and self-evaluation skills?
- In which components of kanji do students recognise their own skills appropriately?
- Are there any elements that influence kanji self-evaluation?

## Methodology and methods

### Participants

Year 7 students studying Japanese at an Australian hoshuu-koo in 2017 were approached to participate in this research. There was no control group and in total 31 students agreed to join this research, with consent forms obtained from the participants, their parents, and the school. Most of the students were born in Australia and started studying Japanese at this hoshuu-koo when they were in Year 1. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the study.

### Research design

Quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis were used in this research. Quantitative research helps to build a theory and a theoretical frame that reflects a reality and observes a phenomenon in detail. The data were collected when the participants entered Year 7 after graduating from elementary school (Year 6) and the contents of the test included areas introduced before the end of Year 6. The data were analysed to determine how accurately JHL students analysed their kanji skills and to identify what specific elements influenced the accuracy of their self-evaluation. The data from the questionnaires and kanji tests was assessed and the results used to detect emerging patterns in student self-evaluation skills and learning environment. The Excel Correl Function was used to calculate correlation coefficients. Graphs were used to analyse the data and trends of correlation amongst each element were explored.

### Materials

Materials used in this research comprised tests and questionnaires.



## Tests:

Kanji that was introduced during elementary school was tested. Ten words that used kanji from each year level were selected for reading and writing, respectively, and okurigana and the use of kanji in context were also tested and each student's performance analysed. Words in the test included both single kanji words and compound kanji words. Besides this, the five most frequently used radicals were selected and the students were required to write words that included kanji with each radical.

## Questionnaires:

The following items were asked in the questionnaires:

- Confidence level in kanji and radicals for each year level
- Confidence rating for areas within kanji learning (reading, writing, compound words, radicals, meaning, and okurigana)
- Details of the learning environment, including:
  - Number of family members and friends who speak Japanese
  - Ratio of the use of Japanese at home
  - Items in Japanese that students have access to, such as books, websites, and movies
  - The number of Japanese books that students possess

## Procedure:

An examination was made of the following points:

1. Differences between actual scores in the reading kanji test and students' self-confidence
2. Differences between actual scores in the writing kanji test and students' self-confidence
3. Relationship between reading and writing kanji scores, radical scores and differences with students' confidence of radicals
4. Relationship between confidence in reading kanji and actual performance in kanji components for each year level of kanji
5. Relationship between students' confidence in writing kanji and their actual performance in kanji components for each year level of kanji
6. Relationship between students' individual confidence in the components of kanji and their actual performances for each component
7. Correlation between self-evaluation and learning environments

## Results

Using the results of the kanji tests and questionnaires, differences between actual proficiency and self-evaluation were calculated for each area of kanji. Correlation coefficients between the results and the learning environment were calculated using the Excel Correl Function to see if any relationships were apparent.

### Correlation between self-evaluation and kanji reading, writing, and radical test results

#### Procedure 1

First, the correlation coefficients between reading test results and differences with self-evaluation were calculated. The correlation coefficients were 0.768; therefore, a strong positive linear relationship was found. This indicates that when students have higher proficiency in reading kanji, differences between actual proficiency and self-evaluation are smaller.

Figure 1 below shows the differences between self-evaluation and actual performance based on students' individual reading scores. The graph is sorted by score. It was found that students who obtained more than 40 out of 100 in reading tests had fewer differences between actual test scores and their self-evaluation and most of the students who obtained more than 80 showed an underestimated self-evaluation. This means that the higher the kanji reading skills that students had, the more accurate their self-evaluation was.

Next, the individual accuracy of self-evaluation was graphed by each year level of kanji and compared to reading scores (Figure 2). Overall, bigger differences between self-evaluation and actual performance were found in Years 2, 3, and 4 levels of kanji than others. Most of the students who obtained less than 40 in the tests overestimated their skills when average differences were focused on; however, some students underestimated their skills more in Year 4 levels. Besides this, some of the students who achieved 80 in the kanji reading tests showed a degree of overestimation in the lower level years of kanji learning.

#### Procedure 2

Kanji writing test scores and the differences between self-evaluation and actual scores are displayed in Graph 3. This graph is sorted by score; the correlation coefficient between the accuracy of self-evaluation and test scores was 0.507. A moderate positive relationship was found and this is lower than the reading tests. Most of the students overestimated considerably and under 20% accuracy rates were found

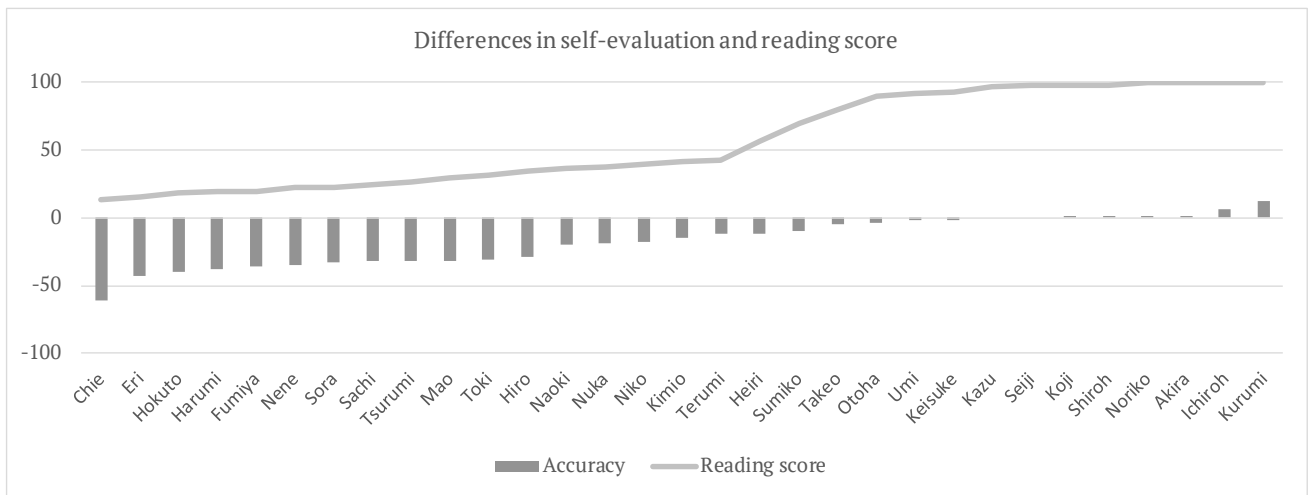


Figure 1. Accuracy of self-evaluation in reading kanji and individual reading scores.

amongst students who obtained more than 60 out of 100 in the kanji writing tests. However, differences varied amongst the students whose scores were less than 60. Moreover, few students underestimated, indicating that the students who achieved high-level scores in kanji writing recognised their skills quite accurately or only slightly underestimated them.

Individual performance in each year level for kanji and writing scores are graphed below (Figure 4). A relatively high overestimation was found in Year 2 and Year 3 level kanji amongst the students who obtained less than 40 out of 100 in the tests. Overestimation in Year 4 level was found in most of the students, regardless of the scores. Overestimation in Year 5 and Year 6 levels was mainly found amongst the students who achieved more than 20 in the tests. The number of the students who underestimated was smaller than in the reading test but this was found mainly amongst the students who achieved between 20 and 30 in Year 1 and Year 2. Similar to the reading tests, the students who attained higher scores tended to recognise their

writing skills more accurately than others.

**Procedure 3**

The graphs below show the relations between the accuracy of self-evaluation skills of radicals and kanji reading and writing scores. The graphs are sorted by scores.

Figure 5 indicates that the majority of the students whose reading score was higher than 40 underestimated their radical skills, while other students varied regardless of their score.

In Figure 6, sorted by writing score, it was found that the higher scores that students achieved, the more underestimation they had, although there were some variations. This means that the students whose scores were high in the writing tests tended to underestimate their radical skills, and this was similar to the trend in the reading scores.

Moreover, the accuracy rates as sorted by radicals scores below (Figure 7) show more than 50% underestimation, mainly amongst the students who

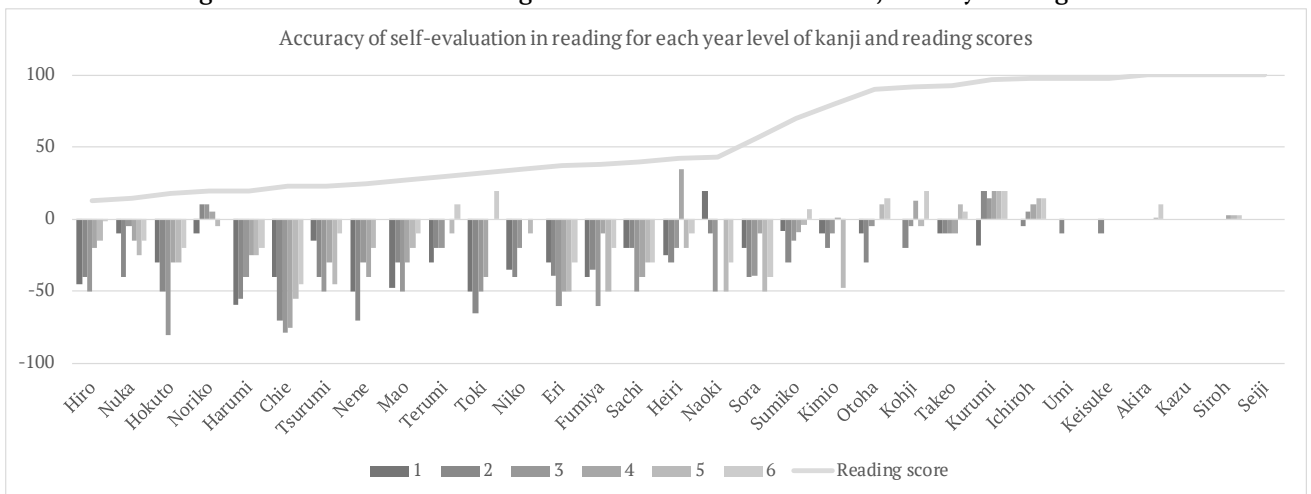


Figure 2. Individual accuracy of self-evaluation for each year level of kanji reading.

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ACCURACY OF SELF-EVALUATION

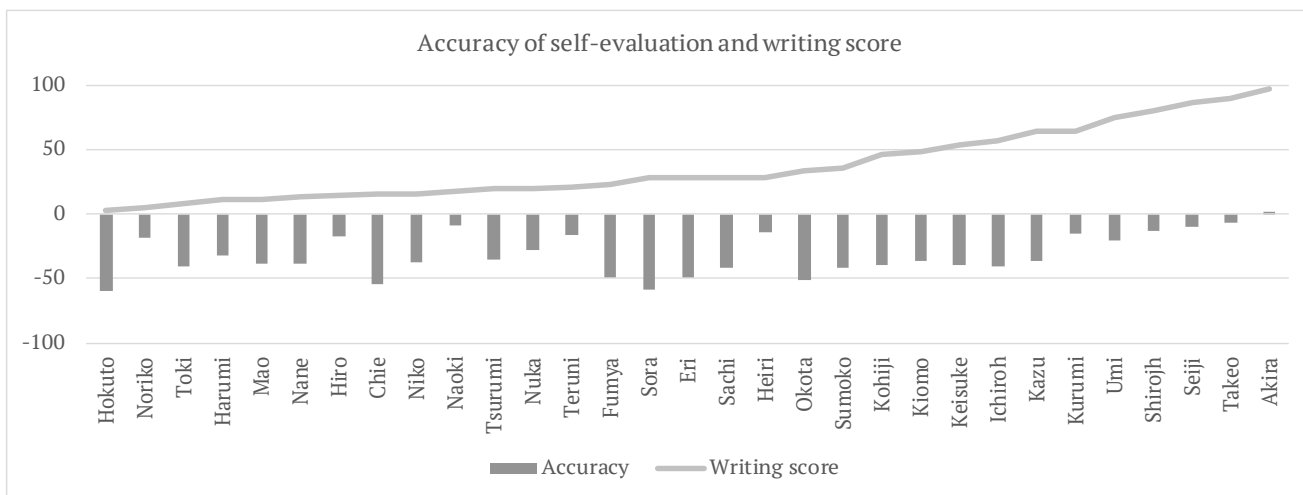


Figure 3. Accuracy of self-evaluation in writing kanji and individual writing scores.

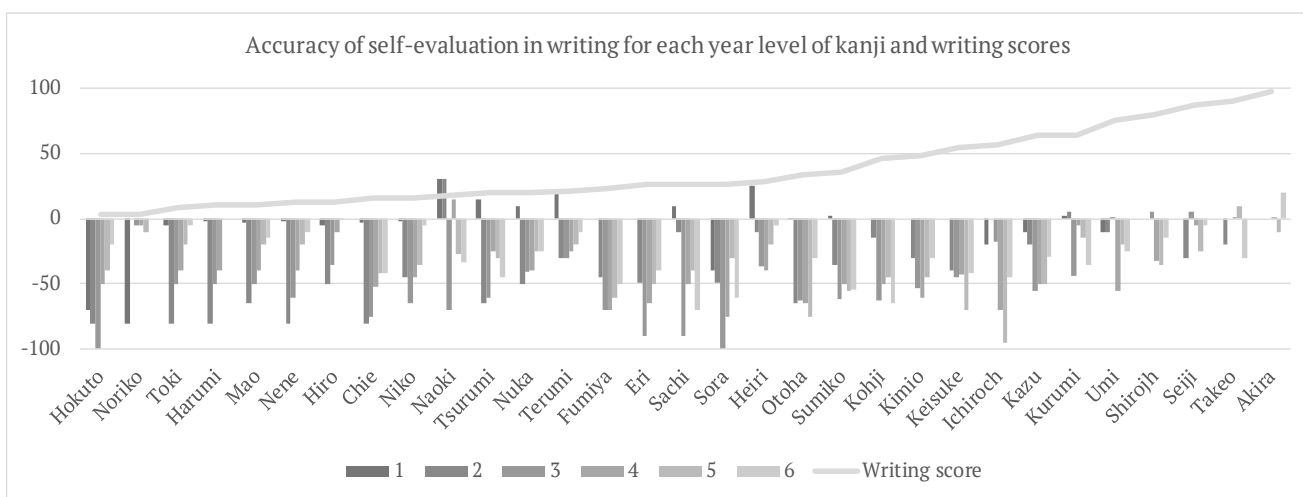


Figure 4. Individual accuracy of self-evaluation for each year level of kanji writing.

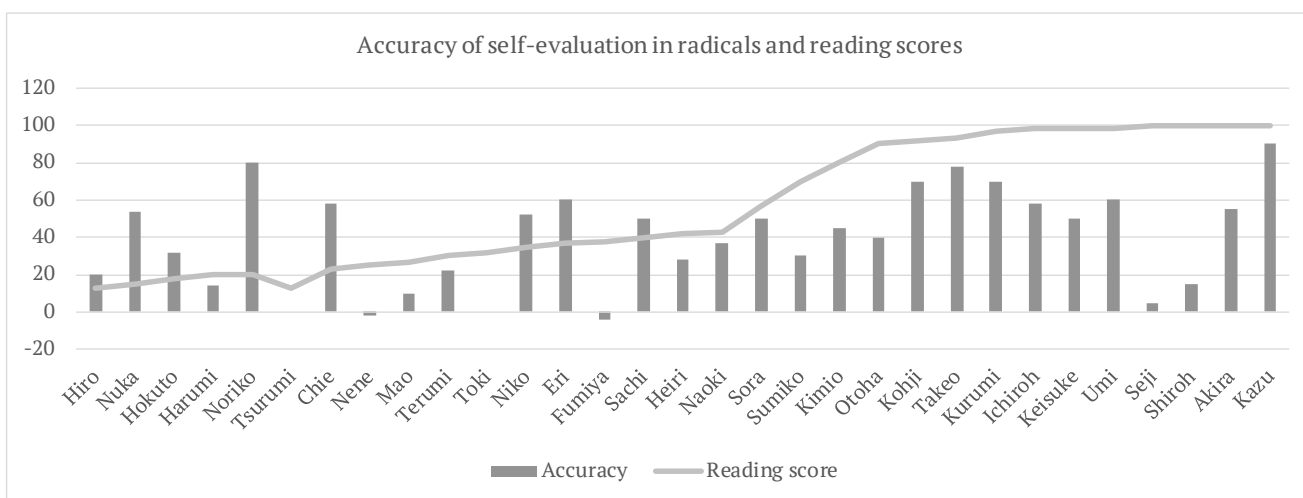


Figure 5. Accuracy of self-evaluation in radicals and reading scores.

achieved relatively high scores in radicals tests.

## 2. Analysis by kanji components

How individual students recognised each component of kanji skills was analysed. Confidence in reading and writing kanji for each year level and the actual scores for single kanji, compound kanji words, the use of words and okurigana in context were graphed. The students were required to make sentences using specific words that were provided in order to enable an examination of how much students understood the meaning of the words and if the students could use them in context. The graphs were sorted by confidence levels. Figure 8 to Figure 13 and Figure 14 to 19 represent the confidence levels and the performance in each kanji component for each year level of kanji reading and writing, respectively.

in kanji reading and the performance of each kanji component was analysed.

### Year 1 level of kanji reading

Most of the students answered they were 100% confident and their performance in reading single kanji was almost 100%. Some overestimated reading compound kanji words but the students who had higher confidence obtained better scores in compound kanji words. In contrast, the scores for the use of kanji in context varied regardless of confidence levels and actual reading kanji scores and it was found that some students could use the words even if they could not read the kanji correctly.

### Procedure 4

First, the relationship between the self-evaluation

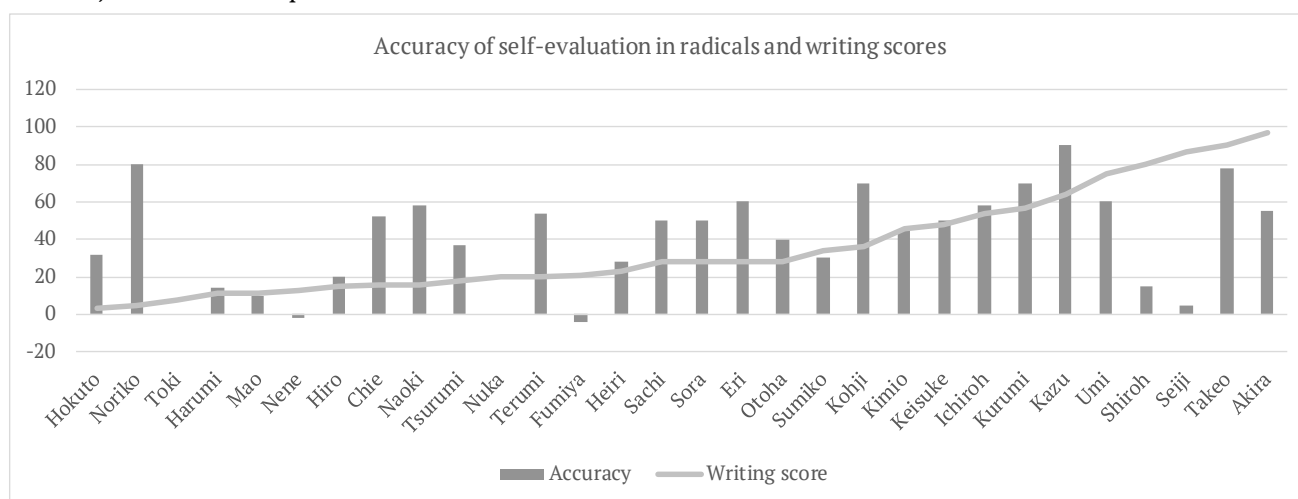


Figure 6. Accuracy of self-evaluation in radicals and writing scores.

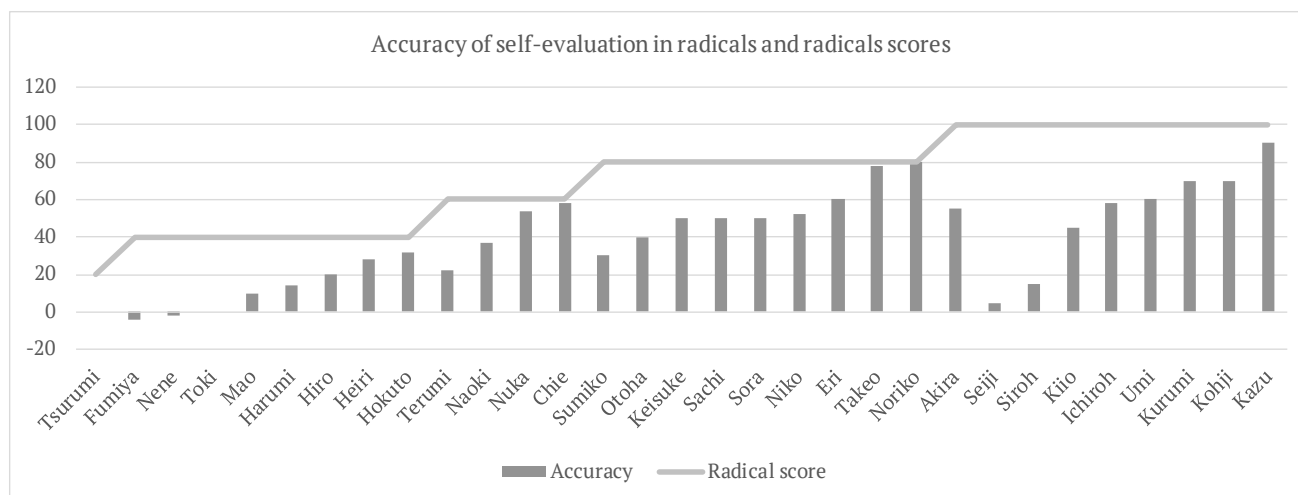


Figure 7. Radicals self-evaluation results and actual scores.

## THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ACCURACY OF SELF-EVALUATION

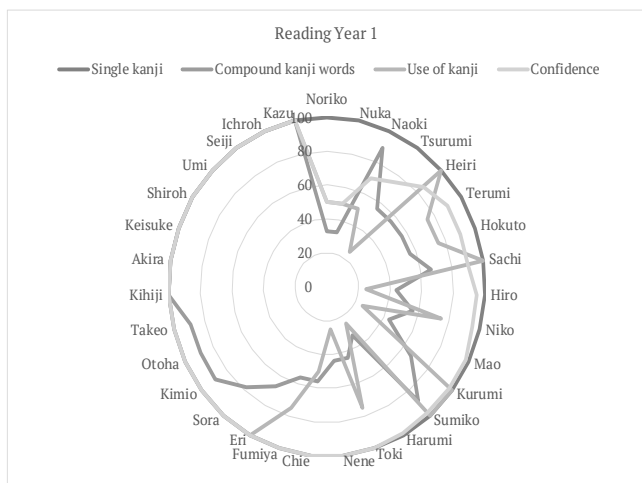


Figure 8. Accuracy of self-evaluation for each kanji component: Year 1 kanji reading.

### Year 2 level of kanji reading

Almost half of the students had 100% confidence in reading Year 2 level kanji. Most performed perfectly in reading single kanji, similar to Year 1 levels; however, variations in reading compound kanji words were also found. Even among the students who had 100% confidence, not all achieved 100% in reading compound kanji words, although quite a big variation was found amongst the students who had lower confidence. Regarding the use of kanji in context, the line in Graph 9 shows almost the same trend as reading compound kanji words and this indicates that the students who could read kanji usually understood the use of words in context.

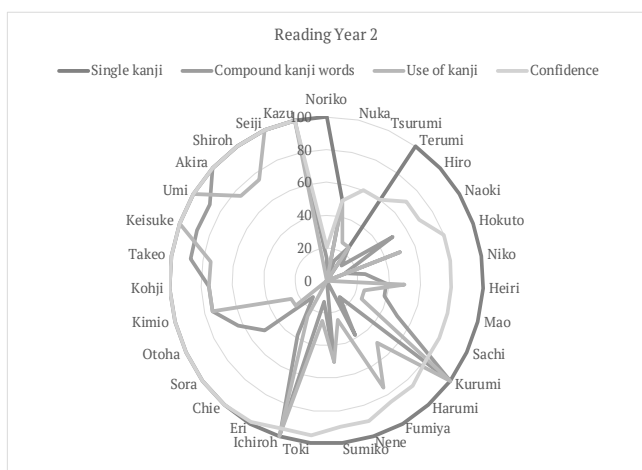


Figure 9. Accuracy of self-evaluation in each kanji component: Year 2 kanji reading.

### Year 3 level of kanji reading

At Year 3 level, the number of the students who showed 100% confidence was lower than Year 1 and Year 2 levels and the differences between confidence and actual performance levels became smaller. It

was found that overall, the students who had higher confidence performed better in reading kanji for all components. Most of the students whose confidence was under 90% performed better than they believed in reading single kanji, while the majority of them could not reach their confidence levels when reading compound kanji words. Similar trends were observed in the use of kanji in reading.

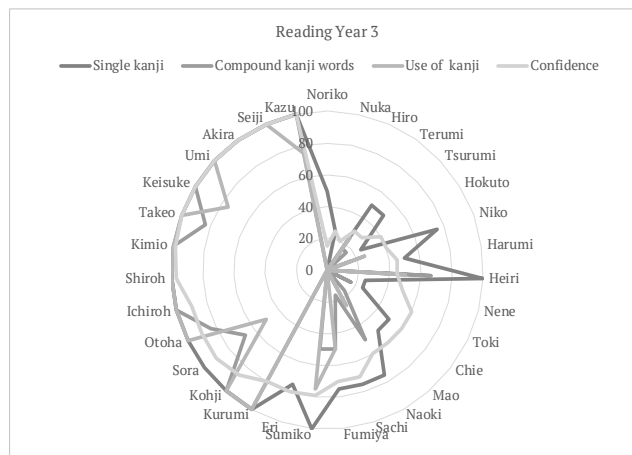


Figure 10. Accuracy of self-evaluation in each kanji component: Year 3 kanji reading.

### Year 4 level of kanji reading

Around one-quarter of the students answered with 100% confidence in Year 4 level kanji reading, and nine students answered they had approximately 50% confidence. Some students performed almost the same as they believed and most of the others performed better in single kanji reading; however, few students obtained better scores than they recognised in compound kanji words and the use of words in context but a big variation in the use of words was found amongst students who did not reach 80% confidence level.

### Year 5 level of kanji reading

Almost half of the students answered that they had less than 50% confidence in reading Year 5 level kanji. The level of confidence and the performance level of both single and compound kanji words showed similar trends amongst the students whose confidence level was more than 80%. However, a performance level that was lower than the reported confidence level for the use of kanji in context and compound words was found amongst the students who had less than 80% confidence.

### Year 6 level of kanji reading

For Year 6 level, the trend in the confidence level was similar to the Year 5 level kanji reading. The students who had more than 80% confidence performed almost to the same level in single and compound kanji words.

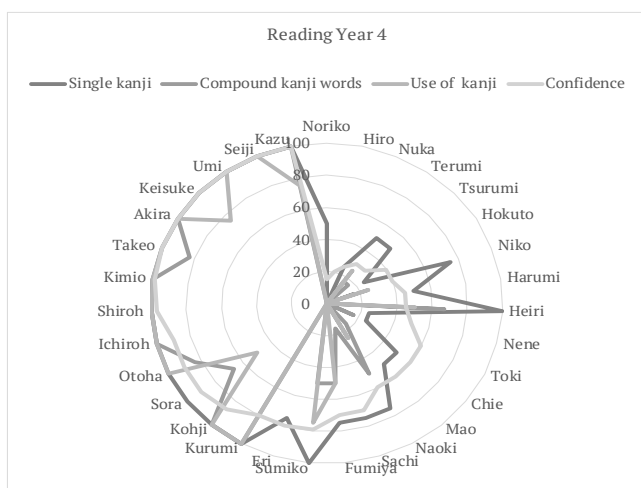


Figure 11. Accuracy of self-evaluation for each kanji component: Year 4 kanji reading

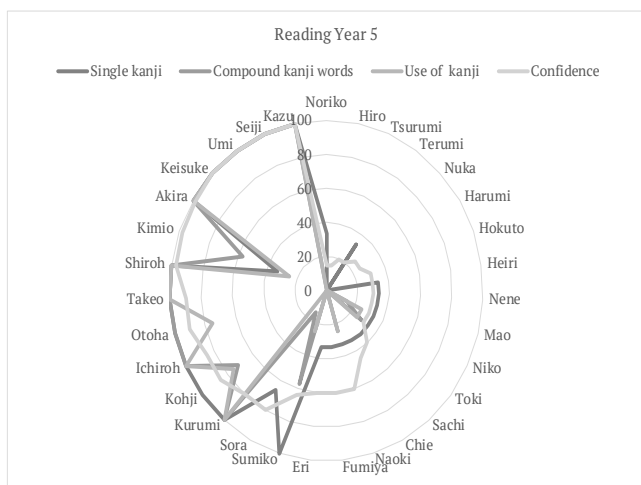


Figure 12. Accuracy of self-evaluation in each kanji component: Year 5 kanji reading.

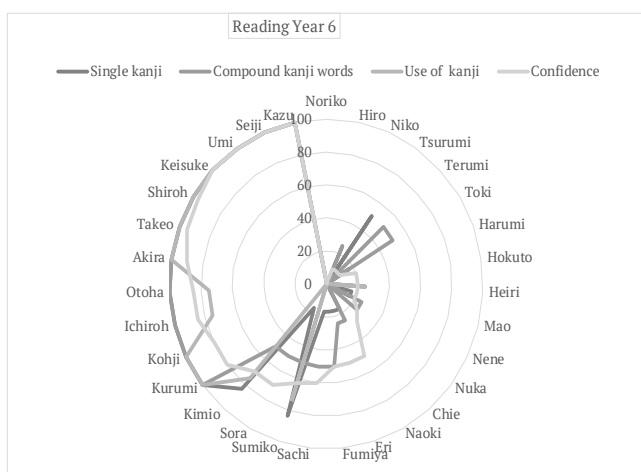


Figure 13. Accuracy of self-evaluation in each kanji component: Year 6 kanji reading.

Higher performance levels than confidence levels

were rarely found for the single and compound kanji words and large variations were observed in the use of kanji amongst the students whose confidence was under 70%.

**Procedure 5**

Next, the self-evaluation skills in kanji writing will be analysed. Single kanji, compound kanji words, and okurigana were included in the kanji writing analysis.

**Year 1 level of kanji writing**

The number of the students who had 100% confidence in kanji writing was smaller compared to kanji reading. Most of the students' confidence levels were distributed between 70% and 100% and some performed better than their confidence levels. Actual performance in single kanji writing shows almost the same trends as confidence levels, with some variations. The accuracy of okurigana varied regardless of confidence levels but actual scores in compound kanji words and okurigana did not correspond with confidence levels

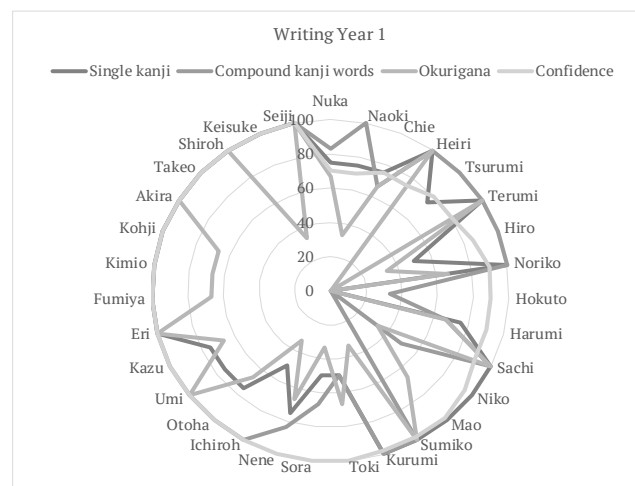


Figure 14. Accuracy of self-evaluation in each kanji component: Year 1 kanji writing.

**Year 2 level of kanji writing**

Approximately half of the students had more than 80% confidence. However, few students reached their confidence levels in both single and compound kanji words. The students whose confidence levels were more than 80% obtained 60% or more in actual tests but only a few other students obtained high scores. The performance in okurigana varied regardless of confidence levels.

**Year 3 level of kanji writing**

At Year the 3 level, the number of students who had more than 90% confidence was similar to the Year 2 level; however, the confidence levels of other students were obviously lower than Year 1 and Year 2 levels. For single and compound kanji words or okurigana, no clear relations with confidence levels could be

## THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ACCURACY OF SELF-EVALUATION

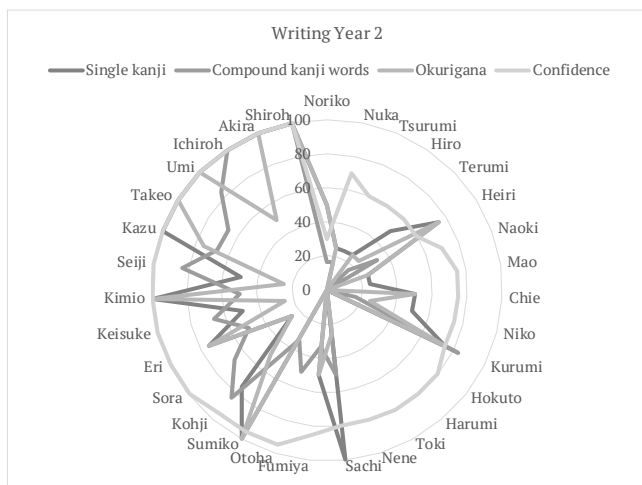


Figure 15. Accuracy of self-evaluation in each of the kanji components: Year 2 kanji writing.

observed and the majority of students did not reach the confidence level in actual scores. It was also found that even the students who could correctly write single kanji did not perform well in okurigana.

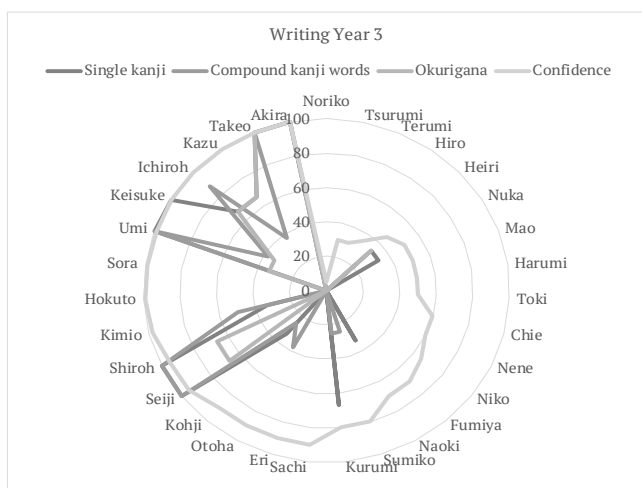


Figure 16. Accuracy of self-evaluation for each kanji component: Year 3 kanji writing.

### Year 4 level of kanji writing

Similar trends in confidence at the Year 3 level were found in the Year 4 level of kanji writing, although the scores and confidence levels were smaller than the Year 3 level. Similar to the Year 3 level, it was rare that actual scores were higher than confidence levels. The shapes of single kanji, compound kanji words and okurigana lines for each student were very similar. This means that the performance in single, compound kanji words and okurigana were almost the same; therefore, the students who reached certain levels in single kanji could reach a similar level in other components but no clear correlation was recognised with confidence levels.

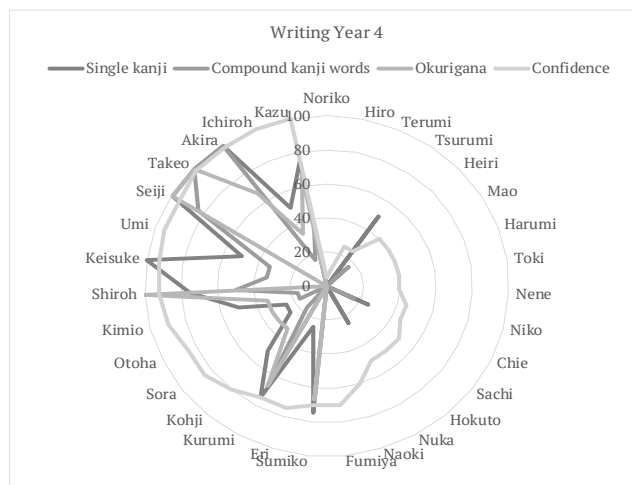


Figure 17. Accuracy of self-evaluation for each kanji component: Year 4 kanji writing.

### Year 5 level of kanji writing

Different trends were found in Year 5 level kanji writing compared to Year 1 to 4 levels. Twelve students had more than 70% confidence and big variations were found in the performance in the tests amongst these students, although most of them performed better in single kanji and okurigana than in compound kanji words. The students whose confidence was under 70% did not write any kanji or wrote incorrect kanji.

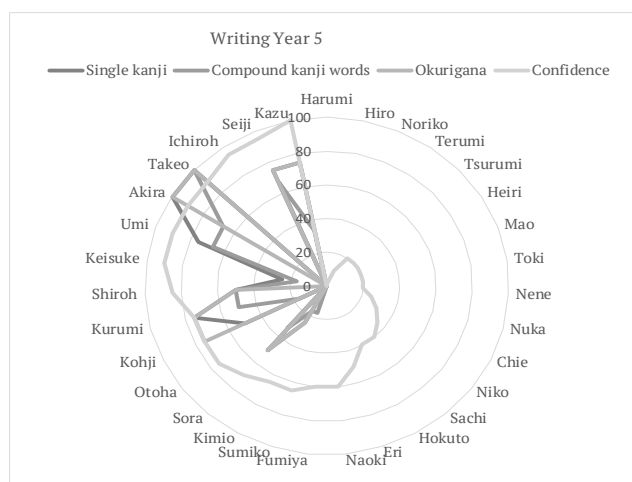


Figure 18. Accuracy of self-evaluation for each kanji component: Year 5 kanji writing.

### Year 6 level of kanji writing

Overall, the figures for Year 6 were the same as the Year 5 level. Students whose confidence was more than 80% reached certain scores in single kanji, compound kanji words, and okurigana with some fluctuations. More students performed better in okurigana compared to other year levels of kanji; however, other students barely obtained scores in any component and they mostly underestimated their skills.

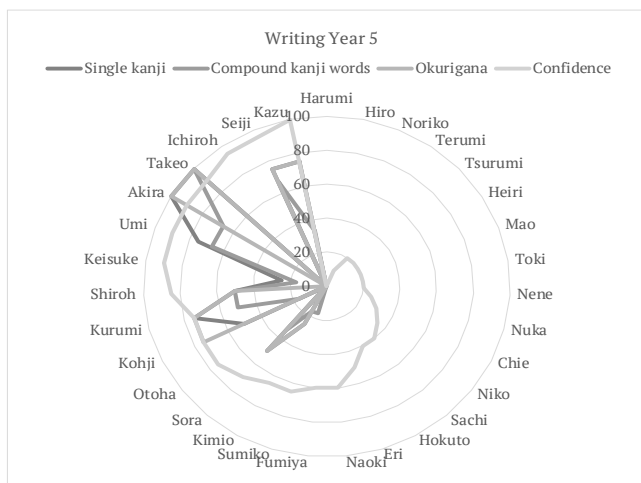


Figure 19. Accuracy of self-evaluation for each kanji component: Year 6 kanji writing.

### 3. Individual analysis of each kanji component.

In the previous section, the confidence levels of students in reading and writing kanji and their actual performance levels in each of the components of kanji were compared. This section will examine whether or not individuals' confidence in the components of kanji and their actual performances matched.

#### Procedure 6

In the questionnaires, the students were asked to rate their proficiency in each area of kanji learning. The actual results of the tests were then compared with the self-ratings. The areas included kanji reading, writing, compound kanji words, radicals, the use of kanji words in context, and okurigana. The graph below (Figure 20) shows the individual confidence order of kanji components and is sorted by the total scores of kanji reading and writing tests.

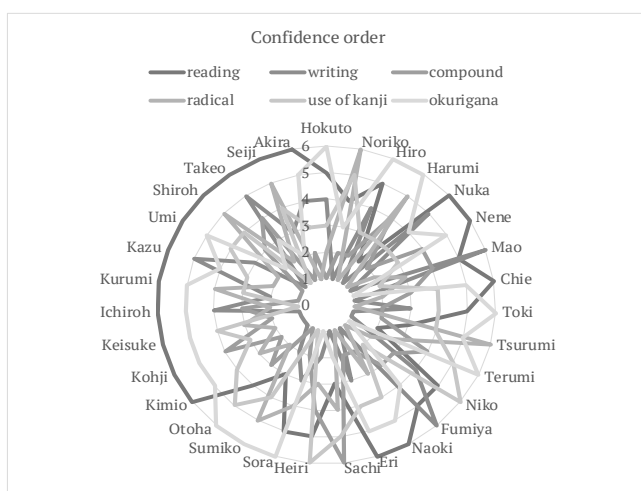


Figure 20. Individual confidence – order and actual performance.

It was found that reading kanji was recognised by the largest number of students as being the easiest part of kanji learning, followed by okurigana. Most students chose compound kanji words as their least or second least confident area. It was also found that the students who achieved higher scores in the tests answered that reading was their most confident area, while amongst the students whose scores were not high, the most confident areas varied.

Next, the individual order of confident areas and actual scores in each area were compared. The most confident area in the questionnaires was marked as “6” and the least area as “1”. The areas in which each student performed the best and worst in the test were marked as “6” and “1”, respectively. The differences between each students' confidence order and actual competent areas were calculated and graphed below (Graph 21). Positive numbers in the graph indicate that the student performed better in the test than he/she believed they would in that specific area, and the negative numbers indicate that his/her performance in other areas was worse than they predicted. The graph was sorted by the totals of reading and writing test scores. On the right-hand side is the student who achieved the highest score in the tests.

It was found that figures for radicals were high overall. This indicates that most of the students considered radicals as their least confident area but they could actually use radicals properly in making kanji. In contrast, the line for okurigana shows mainly negative figures. This indicates that most of the students recognised they were competent in okurigana but they could not actually perform well in the tests. The line for kanji writing shows both positive and negative figures. Students' recognition of writing skills varies; some recognised they could perform in writing other elements and others diagnosed the opposite, regardless of their actual performance skills. Especially, the figures for the students who achieved high scores were mostly negative. This means that the students who reached high scores in the total of reading and writing kanji recognised writing kanji as the hardest area, although they could perform relatively well in writing compared to other skills. In contrast, relatively small differences between confidence orders and actual test results were found in reading kanji for most of the students. Most students recognised reading kanji as their most competent area and they actually performed best in this area. Regarding compound kanji words, more positive figures were found than negative figures. This means that more students recognised it as a difficult area compared to other areas but their performance in compound kanji words was actually better than other areas, more or less. However, the figures remained between +2 and -2, indicating that there were no big differences between their recognition and actual skills in compound kanji



words.

**4. Correlation between self-evaluation and learning environments**

Finally, whether the learning environment at home related to the accuracy of self-evaluation was explored.

**Procedure 7**

The data from the questionnaires were used to determine each students' learning environment at home. Five types of information were gathered: access to types of Japanese media at home; those people who speak in Japanese; the ratio of the use of Japanese at home; the number of friends who speak in Japanese; and the number of books written in Japanese that they have at home. Japanese media included books, television, websites, games, letters, and magazines. The types of people who speak in Japanese included parents, relatives who live in Japan, siblings, and friends. The graphs were sorted by the accuracy of self-evaluation in reading and writing scores. The left-hand side of the graphs shows the students who overestimated their

own skills the most; reading and writing kanji scores were graphed separately. The correlation coefficients between the learning environment and reading and writing scores are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1  
Correlation coefficients between learning environment and accuracy of reading and writing self-evaluation

	Reading	Writing
Use of Japanese at home	0.54	0.28
Number of books written in Japanese	0.49	0.005
Access to Japanese media at home	0.19	0.02
People who use Japanese with the students	0.17	0.38
Number of friends the students speak to in Japanese	0.13	0.14

Figure 22 below shows the accuracy of self-evaluation in reading kanji, the ratio of the use of Japanese at home and the number of books written in Japanese. Regarding the use of Japanese at home, the students on the left-hand side of the graph used Japanese less than 60% at home, and most of the others

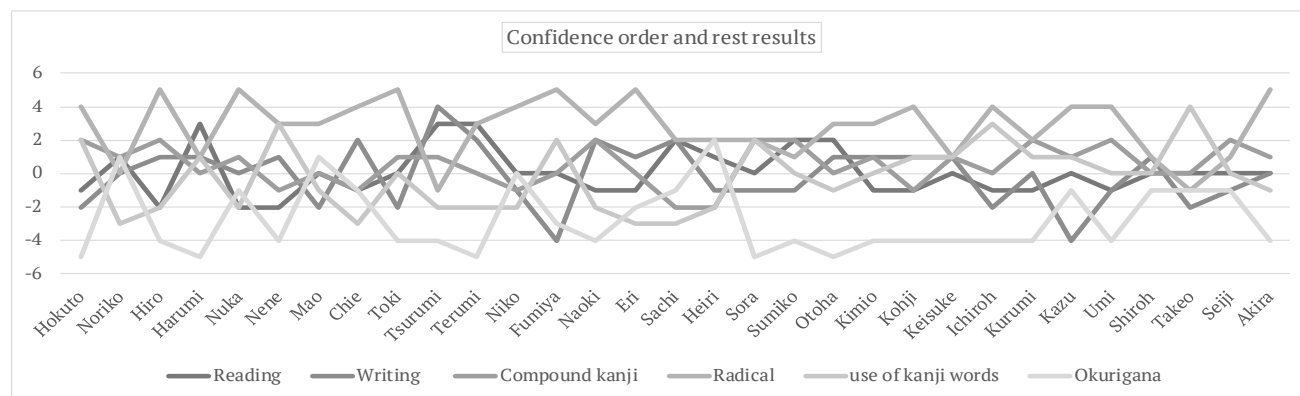


Figure 21. The difference between confidence order and actual test performance order in kanji components.

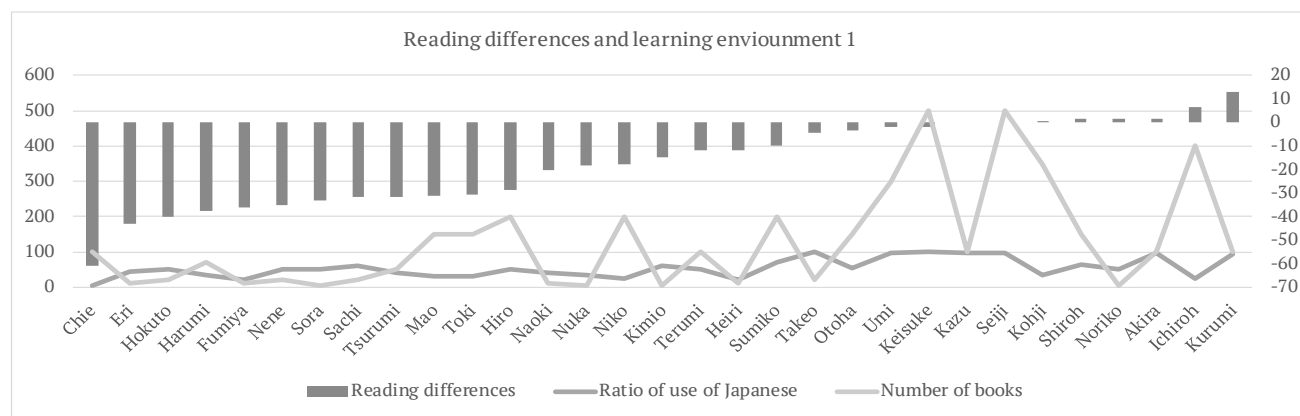


Figure 22. Self-evaluation accuracy in reading kanji and the learning environment 1.

used it more than 60%. This means that the students who used Japanese at home had a better understanding of their own kanji reading skills. Similar trends can be seen for the number possessing books written in Japanese, including manga. Differences between self-evaluation and actual scores were less than 30% for most of the students who had more than 200 books, although variations were observed. Correlation coefficients also indicated a moderate relationship between the possession of books in Japanese and accuracy of self-evaluation in reading kanji.

The next graph (Figure 23) shows the accuracy of self-evaluation in reading kanji, the types of access to Japanese at home, those people the students speak to in Japanese, and the number of friends who speak in Japanese. Twelve students had more than twenty friends who used Japanese when they spoke but the line in the graph has big fluctuations; some students self-evaluated their kanji reading skills relatively accurately while others did not. Correlation coefficients also prove quite weak relations. Also, access to types of media in Japanese at home and people who use Japanese at home did not influence

self-evaluation skills.

Prior research has recognised higher Japanese proficiency amongst students who use Japanese with their siblings (Nakajima, 1998). The differences between self-evaluation and actual scores in kanji reading tests and the use of Japanese among siblings were examined to see if the same could be said for the accuracy of self-evaluation skills. The scores “1” and “0” on the right-hand side of Graph 24 indicate whether students used Japanese with siblings or not, respectively. The graph indicates a weak relationship between the use of Japanese amongst siblings and the accuracy of self-evaluation in reading.

Figure 25, below, shows the accuracy of self-evaluation in writing kanji, the ratio of the use of Japanese at home, and the possession of the number of books written in Japanese. Another graph (Graph 26) shows the accuracy of self-evaluation in reading kanji, types of access to Japanese at home, people that the students speak to in Japanese, and the number of friends who speak in Japanese. Regarding the ratio of the use of Japanese at home, students who used more Japanese at home recorded slightly higher

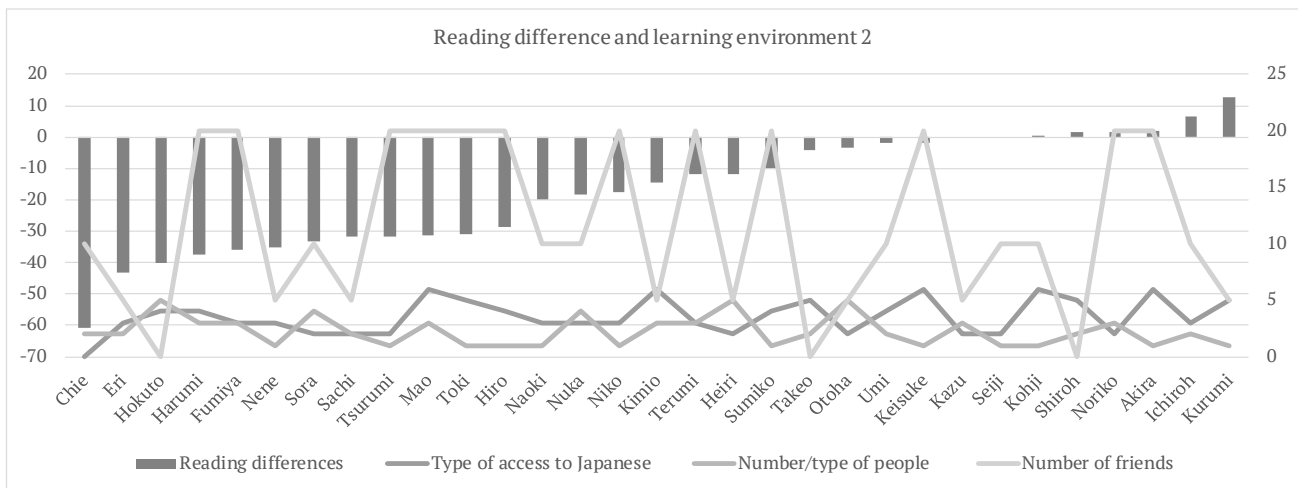


Figure 23. Self-evaluation accuracy in reading kanji and the learning environment 2.

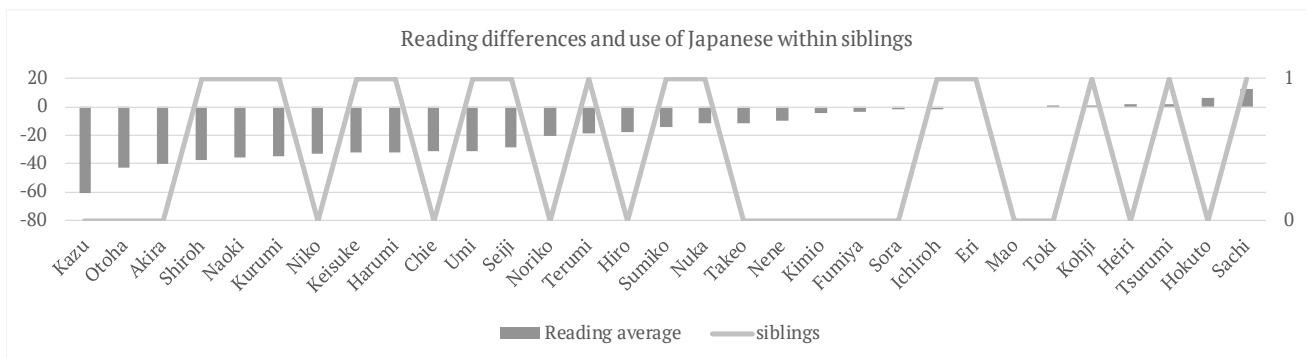


Figure 24. Self-evaluation accuracy in reading kanji and the use of Japanese amongst siblings.

accuracy levels in their self-evaluation than others. In contrast, the opposite trend can be seen in Figure 26 showing the people that students speak to in Japanese. Correlation coefficients for these items indicate they were slightly related. The types of media in Japanese that students have access to at home and the number of friends that students speak to in Japanese did not show any clear relationship in terms of the accuracy of self-evaluation skills. Conversation with siblings also showed no clear relationship with the accuracy of self-evaluation in kanji writing (Figure 27).

### Discussion

In this section, the research questions will be discussed based on the results of the analysis. It was predicted that the more accurately students evaluate their competence, the higher their kanji proficiency. It was also predicted that the learning environment was another condition that influenced the accuracy of self-evaluation. The research questions below were established based on the predictions above.

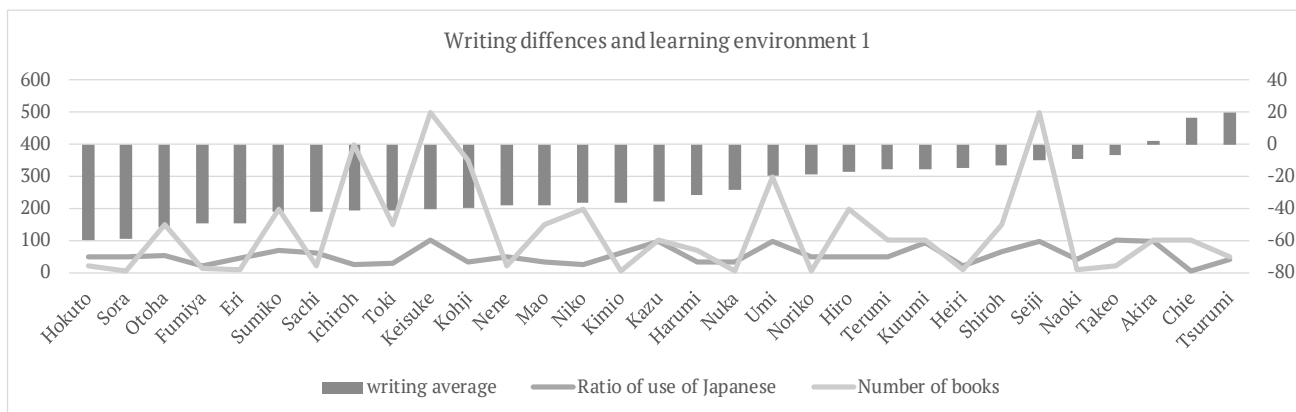


Figure 25. Self-evaluation accuracy in writing kanji and the learning environment 1.

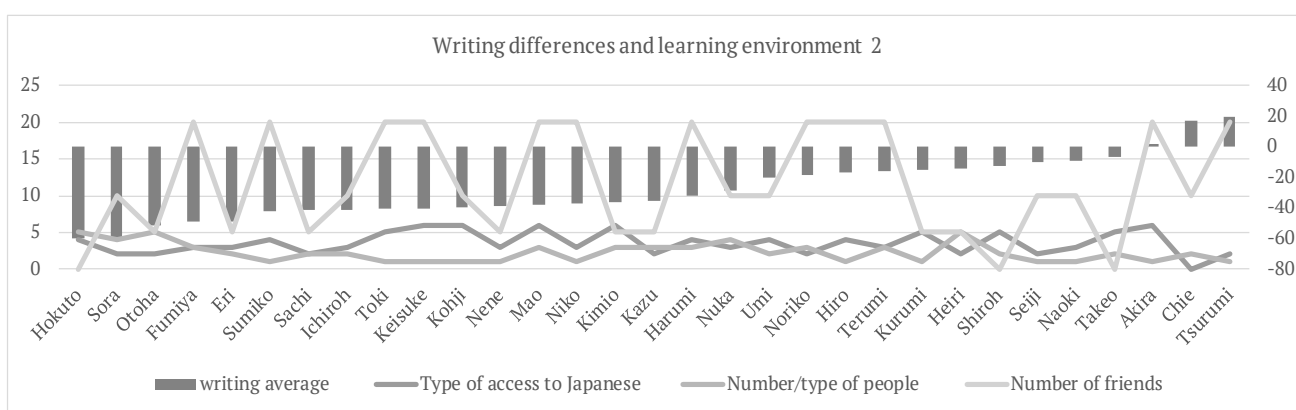


Figure 26. Self-evaluation accuracy in writing kanji and the learning environment 2.

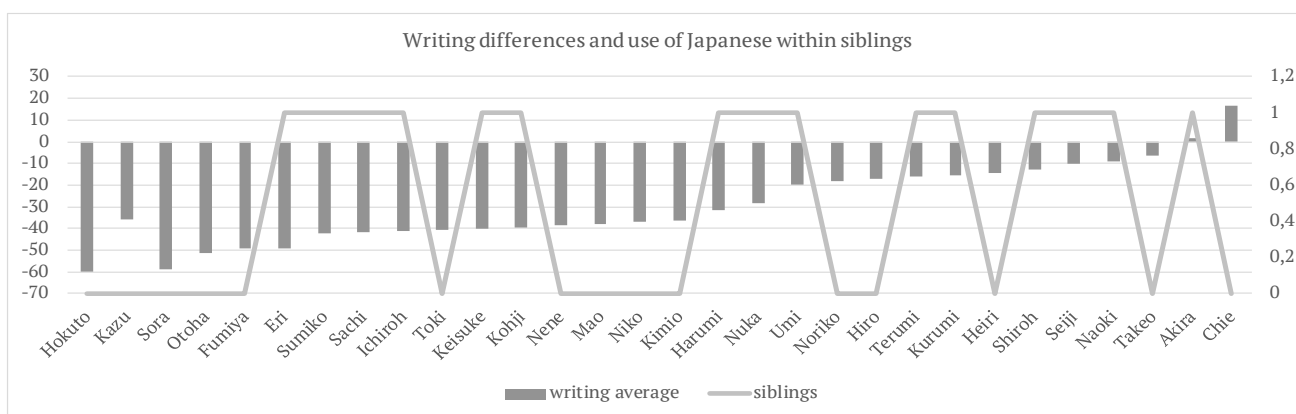


Figure 27. Self-evaluation accuracy in writing kanji and use of Japanese amongst siblings.

*How does self-evaluation of kanji proficiency contribute to improving kanji proficiency?*

### **1. How well does each student understand their own proficiency?**

In order to explore the relationship between self-evaluation skills and kanji proficiency, how each student recognises his/her kanji skills and performance in kanji reading and writing tests was examined. Overall, it was proven that students who could self-evaluate appropriately performed better than others.

Different tendencies in accuracy of self-evaluation were found between kanji reading and writing. First, it can be said that students who had high proficiency tended to understand their own skills relatively accurately compared to other students, which is similar to what Davidson and Henning (1985) insisted (See Procedure 1 in the Results section). However, it seems harder for students to recognise their own proficiency in writing than reading overall, and most of the students overestimated here. That means that the students believed they could write kanji correctly but actually they did not perform as well as they expected.

It is also assumed that students tend to judge their own proficiency based on their kanji reading skills in terms of the accuracy of their self-evaluation in reading was higher than in writing and the difference in the accuracy of their self-evaluation was bigger in writing than in reading. Although Maehr and Stallings (1972) insisted that learners tend to judge their skills more accurately in difficult tasks than easier tasks, this was not observed in the kanji writing tasks; big differences between self-evaluation and actual scores in the tests for higher year levels of kanji were found amongst the students who scored in the middle range. Moreover, some students who recorded in the middle range or lower in the scores for the lower year levels of kanji often overestimated their kanji proficiency. This may be because they believed they understood the use of lower year level kanji, although they sometimes read and wrote them incorrectly. When students feel confident with those kanji, they might not pay enough attention to writing or reading the kanji. However, some students in the middle range underestimated for lower year level kanji. Therefore, quite big variations in the accuracy of their self-evaluation were identified amongst the students in the middle range compared to other students; thus, it would be necessary to devise learning methods for these students (Procedure 2).

### **2. In which components of kanji do students recognise their own skills appropriately?**

Accuracy in the self-evaluation in the components of kanji varied depending on the difficulty of the kanji. Regarding the accuracy of self-evaluation for each year level, different tendencies between reading and

writing were found.

Although lower confidence was found as the year levels increased in reading, it can be said that most of the students reached the levels they believed that they were at for single kanji in the lower year levels but variations were found in compound kanji words and the use of kanji in context regardless of the level of confidence. In the higher year levels of kanji, in contrast, performance levels of single kanji, compound kanji words, and the use of kanji in context drew closer to the confidence levels with some variations amongst the students who performed well in the test. Moreover, it was found that these students could usually read compound kanji words if they could read single kanji, even at higher levels of kanji. In summary, it can be said that the students who had high confidence performed almost the same as their confidence levels for all components of kanji; in contrast, the students whose confidence was relatively low did not reach their confidence levels at any year levels of kanji, except for single kanji. Therefore, it can also be assumed that students recognised their kanji reading skills based on their understanding of single kanji rather than other components (Procedure 4 & 6).

Regarding kanji writing, little correlation was found between confidence and actual performance in the lower year levels of kanji. However, as the year levels became higher, several trends started to be observed: confidence levels became lower and the number of students who reached higher scores than they estimated became smaller, and no clear relations were found between performance and confidence level, even for single kanji. Incorrect okurigana were often found even if single kanji were written correctly in the lower year levels; however, the use of correct okurigana, regardless of accuracy of single kanji, were observed in higher year levels of kanji amongst the students who had relatively high confidence. An imbalance between single kanji and compound kanji words was found in writing kanji for all year levels although some similar performance was found in lower year levels for reading kanji. Confidence in reading corresponded with single kanji reading for all year levels but confidence levels were not achieved in writing for either single or compound kanji words, especially at higher year levels of kanji. Besides this, fewer students did not reach their confidence levels as the difficulty of kanji increased, but differences between performance of single kanji, compound words, and okurigana became smaller amongst the students who had certain levels of confidence (Procedure 5 & 6).

Regarding the self-evaluation of radicals, most of the students underestimated regardless of the actual test scores in radicals and kanji reading and writing tests. Especially, students who obtained relatively high scores in kanji reading and writing tests showed

a high level of underestimation regardless of the scores in radicals tests. This may indicate that most of the students did not have a positive attitude toward learning radicals. Therefore, enabling them to recognise their actual knowledge of radicals would be important to elicit positive perspectives (Procedure 3 & 6).

Thus, it can be said that differences between confidence and actual performance can be identified depending on the components of kanji and different year levels and that the differences are especially big amongst the students who are in the middle range or lower. Regardless of performance in the tests, an underestimation was found in radicals. Therefore, focusing on compound kanji words and okurigana practice for this range of students, and radicals recognition for all students, would be necessary.

### **3. Are there any elements that influence kanji self-evaluation?**

It was predicted that the Japanese language environment at home related to the accuracy of self-evaluation of kanji proficiency. It was found that the number of books written in Japanese that students possessed and the ratio of the use of spoken Japanese at home were positively related to the appropriateness of self-recognition of kanji proficiency in reading, although a clear relationship with the types of people who speak in Japanese, such as parents or siblings, and access to Japanese media such as videos and magazines was not found. No correlation between kanji writing and the learning environment at home in the use of Japanese was found in this research. It is supposed that the students have more opportunities to come across unknown words or be corrected for the wrong use of Japanese when they use more Japanese at home and this may help them in understanding their own proficiency more appropriately. Prior research has proven that the use of Japanese among siblings positively influences Japanese proficiency (Nakajima, 1998); however, this cannot be said for appropriateness of self-evaluation. Regardless, it is expected that the recognition of kanji reading proficiency and the amount of vocabulary would be improved if students had more opportunities to be exposed to Japanese script and communication (Procedure 7).

## **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the results and discussion, implications for further teaching and study will be explored. As it was proven that students who had high kanji proficiency were able to identify their own proficiency more accurately than other students,

it would be necessary to investigate an effective approach to enhance self-evaluation skills, especially focusing on students who are in the middle level.

It was predicted that students tend to have an optimistic view or identify their own kanji proficiency ambiguously and that seems to make students overestimate their own skills. It would be efficient to enable students to develop a habit of using dictionaries all the time, especially in writing composition. The use of okurigana should be carefully checked by teachers or peers. Moreover, adapting regular mini quizzes into PowerPoint slides (for example) as a quick check of the reading and writing skills of each year level of kanji could enhance students' recognition of their own skills and increase confidence. Mini quizzes on slides might give students less pressure compared to formal paper tests.

Moreover, focusing on recognition skills for reading kanji would be helpful to enhance overall self-evaluation skills as students tend to judge their own skills based on reading kanji skills. Therefore, it is expected that reading kanji materials aloud may help students improve their self-evaluation skills. At the same time, letting students write furigana (kanji reading) would be important as minor errors, such as missing double consonants and long vowels, are rarely found by reading aloud. In this way, it is expected that students can identify what they do not understand correctly.

To improve the underestimation on radicals skills, giving students more awareness of radicals when introducing and reviewing kanji regularly in class would be necessary. Providing positive feedback on radicals could be expected to allow students to be more confident.

As it was also found that conversation at home and materials written in Japanese were effective for enhancing kanji reading self-evaluation skills, collaborating with students' families would be also necessary.

Employing the approaches discussed so far could be expected to improve students' self-evaluation skills. This research was conducted based on data collected at the time when students had just finished Year 6 study and it would be valuable if data could be collected one year after this research to see if the approach is effective. A continuous research period over the longer term for the same students would be necessary.

Finally, the amount of kanji for each year level in the tests was limited. It is expected that more accurate data could be obtained if the number of kanji in the tests is increased; however, this could be too much of a burden for students. More accurate figures would be available if data was taken from writing passage tasks and the reading of textbooks throughout the year.

## References

- Aiko, M. (2017). Learning Japanese as a heritage language : The home school environment. *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 2(3), 103-130.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. NY: W.H. Freeman.
- Blanche, P., & Merino, B. J. (1989). Self assessment of foreign-language skills: Implications for teachers and researchers. *Language learning*, 39, 313-338.
- Calder, T. (2008). *Hoshuukoo ni okeru bogoshien: Princeton community Japanese language school no jissen kara. [Hoshuukoo ni okeru bogoshien: Princeton community Japanese language school no jissen kara]*. Paper presented at the Bairiteraru Baikarucharu no Ikusei o Mezashite Jissen to Kadai, Obirin University. Retrieved from <http://harmonica-cld.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/0e59c8c4ee5acced9054666cc29e0b42.pdf>
- Davidson, F., & Henning, G. (1985). A self-rating scale of English difficulty: Rasch scalar analysis of items and rating categories. *Language Testing*, 2, 164-179.
- Dickinson, L. (1987). *Self-instruction in language learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Doerr, N., & Lee, K. (2010). Inheriting "Japanese-ness" diversely: Heritage practice at a weekend Japanese language school in the United States. *Critical Asian Studies*, 42(2), 191-216.
- Doerra, N. M., & Leeb, K. (2009). Contesting heritage: language, legitimacy, and schooling at a weekend Japanese-language school in the United States. *Language and Education*, 23(5), 425-441.
- Douglas, M. (2008). Curriculum design for young learners of Japanese as heritage language. In K. Kondo-Brown. & J. D. Brown. (Eds.), *Teaching Chinese, Japanese and Korean Heritage Language Students: Curriculum Needs, Materials, and Assessment* (pp. 237-270). NY: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Douglas, M. (2010). Analysis of kanji ability of heritage learners of Japanese. *Japanese Heritage Language Education*, 3, 1-24.
- Douglas, M., & Chinen, K. (2014). Keishou nihongo kyouiku. [Heritage Japanese language education]. In Y. Tosaku (Ed.), *Japanese Language Education in the U.S. -- Past, Present, and Future*. Broadway, NY: American Association of Teachers of Japanese.
- Gertsen, C. (2006). *Self evaluation in the Dutch Language portfolio*: Utrecht University Repository.
- Harris, M. (1997). Self-assessment of language learning in formal settings. *ELT Journal*, 51(1), 12-20.
- Harris, M., & McCann, P. (1994). *Assessment*. Oxford, UK: Heinemann.
- Heilenman, L. K. (1990). Self-assessment of second language ability. *The role of response effects. Language Testing*, 7, 174-201.
- Joo, S. H. (2016). Self- and peer-assessment of speaking. *Applied Linguistics and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, 16(2), 68-83.
- Kataoka, H., Koshiyama, Y., & Shibata, S. (2008). Japanese and English language ability of students at supplementary Japanese schools in the United States. In K. Kondo-Brown. & J. Brown (Eds.), *Teaching Chinese, Japanese and Korean Heritage Language Students: Curriculum Needs, Materials, and Assessment* (pp. 47-76). NY: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kataoka, H., & Shibata, S. (2011). Japanese language proficiency and home language use among children of international marriages: Breaking free from common assumptions. *Online Heritage Journal*, 4, 1-40.
- Komori, M., & Fujisawa, Y. (2004). The correlation between the rate of improvement on the achievement test and students' self-assessment in second language learning. *Osaka Shoin Women's University Faculty of Liberal Arts collected essays*, 41, 9-17.
- Konaszewski, K., & Sosnowski, T. (2017). Factors affecting self-esteem among juveniles from youth educational centers *Resocjalizacja Polska*(1), 165-180.
- Maehr, M., & Stallings, R. (1972). Freedom from external evaluation. *Child development*, 43, 177-185.
- Nakajima, K. (1998). *Gengo to kyouiku. [Language and education]*. Tokyo: Kaigaishienzaidanhujin.
- Nakajima, K. (2003). Keishou nihongo gakushuusha no kanji shuutoku to kokugo kyoukasho. [Kanji acquisition of heritage Japanese language and Japanese textbooks]. *Obirin Synergy*, 1, 1-21.
- Nishimura, P. Y. (2012). Keishougo to shite no Nihongo koosu. [Japanese course as a heritage language]. *Journal for Children Crossing Borders*, 3, 129-134.
- Oguro, S., & Moloney, R. (2012). Misplaced heritage language learners of Japanese in secondary schools more. *Heritage Language Journal*, 9(2), 207-221.
- Ootsuki, M. (2010). *Katakana to hiragana*. Paper presented at the Oochou Jidai no Kotoba to Moji (Language and Script in DynastyEera), Kyoto University Tokyo office. Retrieved from [http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/static/ja/news\\_data/h/h1/news7/2010/documents/101201\\_2/03.pdf](http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/static/ja/news_data/h/h1/news7/2010/documents/101201_2/03.pdf)
- Shimizu, H., & Green, K. E. (2002). Japanese language educators' strategies for and attitudes toward teaching kanji. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(2), 227-241.
- Sloan, M. (1996). I love this piece because.... *Instructor*, 105(7), 30-32.
- Wang, S. C., & Green, N. (2001). Heritage language students in the K-12 education system. In J. K. Peyton., D. A. Ramard., & S. McGinnis. (Eds.), *Heritage Languages in America: Preserving a*

## THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ACCURACY OF SELF-EVALUATION

- National Resource* (pp. 167-196). Washington, DC & McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics & Delta Systems.
- Willoughby, L. (2006). Heritage LOTE at VCE level: Student perspectives on current programs. *Monash University Linguistics Papers* 5(1), 3-15.
- Yamaguchi, Y. (2008). *Kanji instruction at Japanese supplementary school in the U.S.* (Master's thesis), University of Hawaii at Manoa, Retrieved from [https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/20517/1/M.A.CB5.H3\\_3511\\_r.pdf](https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/20517/1/M.A.CB5.H3_3511_r.pdf)
- Yoshizawa, K. (2009). To what extent can self-assessment of language skills predict language proficiency of EFL learners in school context in Japan? *Foreign Language Education Research Bulletin*, 17(1), 65-82.

## "West" or "Vest"? Pronunciation of English Consonants [w] and [v] in the Utterances of Slovak EFL Speakers

Rastislav Metruk  
University of Žilina

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Rastislav Metruk, University of Žilina, Univerzitná 8215/1, 010 26 Žilina, Slovakia. E-mail: rastislav.metruk@gmail.com

The paper investigates the pronunciation of the labiodental fricative [v] and the labial-velar approximant [w] in the word-initial position in English utterances by Slovak speakers. The objective of the study is to explore which of the two consonants appear to be more problematic for Slovak learners of English. 40 students from a Slovak university produced spontaneous monologues in English, which were recorded using a computer and a standard microphone. Afterwards, two native English speakers conducted a subjective auditory analysis in an attempt to identify errors in the subjects' pronunciation. The results demonstrate that Slovak learners of English frequently encounter difficulties in pronouncing the two consonants, sometimes substituting [v] for [w] and vice versa. The data obtained indicate that the subjects were beset with problems mispronouncing the two sounds to almost the same degree. Possible causes of the erroneous pronunciation seem to involve native language interference, devoting extra effort to approach authentic English pronunciation, and the neglect of pronunciation instruction.

**Keywords:** consonant [w], consonant [v], phoneme substitution, Slovak EFL learners, English pronunciation

Estimates suggest that approximately one third of the world's population is represented by speakers of English (Crystal, 2008a). This international language is used as a lingua franca among learners from different nations who have studied English as a foreign language (McKenzie, 2010). Thus, English also plays a leading role with regard to foreign language teaching in Slovakia (Bírová & Eliášová, 2014).

Besides other language systems and skills, it appears that English pronunciation represents perhaps the most difficult and puzzling aspect of English for L2 learners. Both segmental and suprasegmental features contain possible pitfalls that foreign language learners need to avoid if they wish to communicate effectively and successfully.

As far as individual sounds are concerned, phoneme substitutions constitute a major source of erroneous pronunciation, which may lead to intelligibility problems (Munro, 2008; Cruttenden, 2014). Replacing certain sounds with others may be caused by the nonexistence of a particular phoneme in an L2 (Zampini, 2008). Furthermore, paying insufficient attention to problematic sounds by both teachers and learners, especially at learners' younger ages, may also produce

## «Уэст»или «Вест»? Произношение английских согласных [w] и [v] в высказываниях носителей словацкого языка EFL

Растислав Метрук  
Жилинский университет

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Растислав Метрук, Жилинский университет, ул. Университетна 8215/1, г. Жилина, Словакия, индекс 010 26. E-mail: rastislav.metruk@gmail.com

В статье исследуется произношение фрикативной [v] лабиодентальной и губно-велярной аппроксимации [w] в словоначальной позиции в английских высказываниях словацких носителей. Цель исследования – изучить какие из двух согласных кажутся более проблематичными для словацких изучающих английский язык. 40 студентов словацкого университета подготовили спонтанные монологи на английском языке, которые были записаны с помощью компьютера и стандартного микрофона. После этого два носителя английского языка провели субъективный слуховой анализ в попытке выявить ошибки в произношении испытуемых. Результаты показывают, что словацкие изучающие английский язык часто сталкиваются с трудностями при произношении двух согласных, иногда заменяя [v] на [w] и наоборот. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что испытуемые испытывали проблемы с неправильным произношением двух звуков почти в одинаковой степени. Возможные причины ошибочного произношения, по-видимому, связаны со вмешательством в родной язык, уделяя особое внимание походу к аутентичному английскому произношению и пренебрежению правилами произношения.

**Ключевые слова:** согласный [w], согласный [v], замена фонемы, словацкие обучающиеся EFL, произношение английского языка

an undesirable effect on one's pronunciation.

This study attempts to shed more light on the issue of replacing the labiodental fricative [v] with the labial-velar approximant [w] and vice versa in word-initial positions by examining the pronunciation of the two consonants in utterances produced by Slovak university students. For the purposes of this study, two native English speakers were asked to perform an auditory analysis of the recorded utterances.

Differences between Slovak and English pronunciation Slovak pronunciation is rather different from its English counterpart, and Slovak learners of English encounter difficulties in English pronunciation for several reasons. Firstly, there is a more direct relationship between grapheme-phoneme correspondence in the Slovak language when compared to English. Next, differences are recognized in terms of the phonemic inventories of the two languages. Thus, counterparts of certain phonemes do not exist in one of the two segmental systems. Finally, it is rather interesting to also contrast Slovak prosodic features with the ones in English since noticeable differences can be detected in suprasegmental phonology of the two languages as well (Ábel – Sabol, 1989; Roach, 2009).



Consonantal differences between [w] and [v]

Some consonants can be found both in English and Slovak phonemic inventories such as the labial-velar plosives [p], [b]. On the other hand, certain consonants can only be found in one of the two languages (the Slovak language does not, for instance, contain the dental fricatives [ð], [θ], and the Slovak nasal [ň] does not exist in the consonantal system of the English language). In connection with this, Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (2010) emphasize that it is vital to recognize which phonemes and which phonemic contrasts have a tendency to cause problems for L2 learners.

As far as [v] and [w] are concerned, the English labiodental fricative [v] has a counterpart in Slovak, but the labial-velar approximant [w] does not.

Consonant [v]

The consonant [v] is a labiodental fricative; it is realized when the lower lip touches the edge of the upper teeth and friction is produced. The contact varies in accordance with the adjacent sound (Crystal, 2008b; Cruttenden, 2014).

Consonant [w]

The consonant [w] is known as labial-velar approximant in English and is fairly similar to vowel [ʊ] (phonetically, [w] is similar to a vowel sound), except that the lips are more rounded in comparison to the vowel [ʊ]. Cruttenden (2014) advises foreign learners of English not to replace [w] with a voiced labiodental fricative sound [v] (as in German or Slovak). Gorozny, Sahakyan & Wokurek (2001) explain that German speakers have difficulties when pronouncing [w] since this consonant does not exist in modern German. They often replace [w] with [v] in words like *workforce*. Moreover, German speakers sometimes tend to replace [v] with [w]. This is called hypercorrection, e.g. [veri wel] is often mispronounced as [weri wel]. The occurrence of [w] to [v] is 2.9%, and the occurrence of [v] to [w] is 1.0%. Thus, it is vitally important that L2 learners protrude and round their lips, making certain that the teeth do not play any part in the articulation of [w] so that this sound is not replaced by [v].

Although the consonant [w] does not exist in the Slovak subsystem of consonants, it is not difficult to learn the appropriate pronunciation of this sound. However, Bázlik & Miškovičová (2012) indicate that Slovak learners of English often ignore the difference between [v] and [w] and vice versa, using [w] instead of [v] (hypercorrection). Thus, words such as *very* ['veri] or *veteran* ['vetərən] are sometimes mispronounced as \*['weri] or \*['wetərən].

It is apparent that improper differentiation between the phonemes [v] and [w] may negatively affect intelligibility. Therefore, substituting [v] for [w] and vice versa could hinder communication as different words are unconsciously pronounced by L2

learners: *vet* [vet] – *wet* [wet], *vine* [vaɪn] – *wine* [waɪn], *vow* [vaʊ] – *wow* [waʊ], etc.

Intelligibility problems

Several studies have indicated that many of the intelligibility issues foreign language learners face result from phoneme substitutions. They tend to replace sounds that are absent from their L1 with the sounds that are close (closest) to the L2 sounds in terms of the place of articulation (O'Connor, 1981; Carter & Nunan, 2001; Gondová, 2012; Hornáčková-Klapicová, 2012; Hassan, 2014; Bui, 2016). Similarly, Munro (2008) and Zampini (2008) claim that pronunciation intelligibility is frequently hampered by the mispronunciation of segmentals. Therefore, it is apparent that pronunciation on a segmental level is also of great importance.

Szpyra-Kozłowska (2015) identifies three types of pronunciation errors for L2 speakers: errors which lead to intelligibility breakdowns, errors leading to amusement or irritation, and errors which result in few such reactions and could even remain unnoticed. The first type of error is of the highest significance because without intelligible pronunciation, communication breakdowns occur. The second type has also proven important – when listeners are irritated or amused, they may be distracted from following the message and the ease of communication is hampered. The third type does not appear to be of considerable significance from the point of view of communicative language teaching (unless L2 learners themselves aim to achieve a native-like accent).

Taking the substitution of one member of a minimal pair for another into account (e. g. *vet* [vet] for *wet* [wet]), it seems that this phenomenon also influences intelligibility. Minimal pair substitution typically leads to communication breakdowns if the following conditions are met: both words belong to the same part of speech, both are likely to appear in the same linguistic context, and both are semantically plausible (Levis & Cortes, 2008).

According to Munro (2011), intelligibility is considered the most important aspect of communication. Clearly, no communication is possible when there is no intelligibility. Therefore, pronunciation deviations that negatively influence intelligibility and hinder communication ought to receive meticulous attention by both learners and teachers.

## Method

### Study

The study concerns the erroneous pronunciation of the consonants [v] and [w] in the English pronunciation

of Slovak university students of English. The objective of the study is to find out the extent to which the learners mispronounce the labiodental fricative [v] and the labial-velar approximant [w], and which of the two sounds poses more problems for the subjects. Furthermore, the causes of erroneous pronunciation are indicated in order to provide more information on why these errors might have occurred.

### Participants

The subjects comprised 40 Slovak university students of Teaching English Language and Literature - 34 females and 6 males. Their level of English was B2 according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). They were chosen randomly from a Slovak university. On average, they were 21 years of age. The native tongue of all the subjects was Slovak, and they had been studying English for more than eight years. Their pronunciation was recorded using a computer and a standard microphone. Afterwards, the audio files were listened to and analyzed by two independent assessors.

### Assessors

Two native speakers of American English were selected to perform an auditory analysis of the recordings. The first assessor (A1) was a male of 25 years of age, and the second assessor (A2) was a female who was also 25 years old. Both of them had already completed phonetic training with regard to English pronunciation prior to conducting their analyses.

### Procedure

The subjects were asked to deliver a spontaneous two-minute speech on a topic of their choice. They were not given any time for preparation in order to preserve authenticity. A computer and a standard microphone were used for recording the utterances. After that, the recordings were sent to the assessors for the analyses.

Before analyzing the recorded material, the assessors were instructed to try to report any inappropriate, incorrect, or strange aspects of the subjects' pronunciation. If possible, they should give concrete examples from the recordings. The assessors were not given any suggestions about the focus of the study so that they could possibly carry out an authentic auditory analysis. Finally, the obtained data were examined and processed.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1 demonstrates the subjects' mispronunciations of [v] and [w] in the initial positions of words (other segmental and suprasegmental errors identified by both assessors are not included in the table since they were not the focus of this study).

The erroneous pronunciation of the subjects, which was recorded by the assessors (A1 and A2), is represented by a black dot. The labiodental fricative [v] was always replaced with the labial-velar approximant [w] and vice versa.

Table 1  
*Mispronunciation of consonants [v] and [w]*

	A1		A2	
	[v]	[w]	[v]	[w]
1.				
2.				•
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.		•		
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				•
14.	•			•
15.	•			•
16.	•			•
17.	•			
18.				
19.	•			
20.	•			
21.				•
22.		•		
23.				
24.				
25.	•		•	
26.	•		•	
27.				
28.				
29.		•		

30.				
31.				
32.				
33.				
34.	•		•	•
35.				•
36.		•		•
37.				
38.				
39.	•			•
40.				
Total	10	4	3	10

According to the first assessor, 10 subjects mispronounced the consonant [v]. As far as the labial-velar approximant [w] is concerned, the data obtained from the auditory analysis of the first assessor show that four subjects pronounced the labial-velar approximant inappropriately. The data retrieved from the analysis of the second assessor revealed that the consonant [v] was mispronounced by three subjects and the consonant [w] by 10 of them.

Examples which demonstrate the substitution of [v] for [w] include words like *visit* ['vɪzɪt], *village* ['vɪlɪdʒ], *video* ['vɪdiəʊ], *very* ['veri], and *victory* ['vɪktəri]. These words were erroneously pronounced as *visit* \*['wɪzɪt], *village* \*['wɪlɪdʒ], *video* \*['wɪdiəʊ], *very* \*['wəri], and *victory* \*['wɪktəri].

On the other hand, examples which illustrate the substitution of [w] for [v] involve words such as *what* [wɒt], *week* [wi:k], *watch* [wɒtʃ], *well* [wel], and *world* [wɜ:ld]. These were mispronounced as *what* \*['vɒt], *week* \*['vi:k], *watch* \*['vɒtʃ], *well* \*['vel], and *world* \*['vɜ:ld].

An analysis of the results in percentage terms indicates the following. Assessor 1 recognized that 25% of the subjects had problems with [v] and 10% with [w]. On the other hand, assessor 2 observed that 8% of the subjects mispronounced [v] and 25% pronounced [w] inappropriately.

According to the first assessor, the labiodental fricative [v], which also exists in Slovak, was mispronounced more frequently (10 occurrences) than the labial-velar approximant [w] (four instances), which does not have a counterpart in the Slovak language. Therefore, this could be regarded as an interesting finding since a sound that is included in the consonantal subsystems of both languages obviously caused more difficulty to the subjects.

Contrary to assessor 1, the data gathered from the second assessor indicate that the pronunciation of the labial-velar approximant [w] caused more problems to the subjects in comparison to the labiodental fricative [v]. Thus, a sound which only exists in one

of the two consonantal subsystems proved to be more complicated, and this is supported by the findings of numerous studies.

Despite the fact that auditory analyses of the two assessors differed to a substantial degree, it is apparent that the consonants [v] and [w] represent a source of difficulties when it comes to phoneme substitution errors.

The study reveals that mispronouncing [w] as [v] occurred nearly as frequently as replacing [v] with [w]. The first instance might arise from language interference. Sinha et al. (2009) claim that the native tongue interferes with the acquisition of a target language. This is also applicable to pronunciation acquisition per se. Slovak learners of English do not have [w] in their L1 phonemic inventory. Therefore, it is highly likely that the absence of this consonant interferes with English pronunciation, and results in mispronouncing the labial-velar approximant [w].

The latter instance raises a rather vexing question since it might be difficult to clarify why the consonant [v], which exists in both languages, is replaced by the consonant [w], which only exists in the English language. Cruttenden (2014) indicates that such a substitution happens because some L2 learners simply tend to use the same consonant ([w]) for both [v] and [w]. Apart from hypercorrection, this could also be explained by the so-called interlanguage process of generalization (Selinker 1972). On the other hand, Bázlik & Miškovičová (2012) suggest that replacing [v] with [w] takes place because L2 learners regard the labial-velar approximant [w] as a more significant representative of authentic English pronunciation. Finally, pronunciation instructors paying scant attention to pronouncing the sounds properly may also occupy a significant role.

Different auditory analysis results demonstrate the individuality of English native speaker assessment with regard to the perception of segmental features produced by Slovak learners of English. Undoubtedly, a study which would employ a larger number of assessors would definitely prove useful when exploring how English native speakers perceive L2 English pronunciation on a segmental level as inter-rater reliability would increase. Nonetheless, in spite of different auditory analysis results delivered by the assessors, it appears that Slovak learners of English encounter difficulties regarding the pronunciation of the consonants [v] and [w]. Apparently, both teachers and learners have to tackle the formidable challenge of paying scrupulous attention to English segmentals, especially to those that do not have counterparts in the learners' mother tongue.

## Conclusion

This study aimed at examining the pronunciation of word-initial [v] and [w] in the English pronunciation of Slovak university students. Assessors' analyses clearly indicated that the subjects encountered problems when pronouncing both sounds in word-initial positions. The first assessor recognized 10 instances of substituting [v] for [w] and four cases of replacing [w] with [v]. Conversely, the second assessor identified three substitutions of [v] for [w] and 10 substitutions of [w] for [v]. Taking the analyses into account, it seems that both consonants pose problems for L2 learners to the same degree.

Substituting [w] for [v] is a well-known occurrence in the English pronunciation of Slovak learners of English. They typically use the labiodental fricative [v] instead of the labial-velar approximant since the latter does not exist in their native tongue. However, replacing [v] for [w] raises a more challenging question since providing a correct answer may be a rather difficult task. Perhaps the learners simply do not differentiate between [v] and [w], or they regard using [w] per se as a sign of "more" authentic English pronunciation. Furthermore, paying closer attention to teaching pronunciation, particularly to phonemes that do not exist in the L2, would conceivably prove more useful.

Conspicuously, phoneme substitution is a critical issue regarding L2 pronunciation. Both teachers and learners need to focus on this matter since erroneous pronunciation on a segmental level can lead to intelligibility problems, and communication is not possible when there is no intelligibility.

Further studies need to be conducted in this field on a wider sample of subjects, employing a larger number of assessors, or using speech analysis. This would definitely enrich the research into the Slovak-English substitution of [v] for [w] and vice versa. Furthermore, extending the analysis to medial and final-word positions as well as exploring other consonantal substitutions would also be beneficial to applied language studies.

## References

- Bázlik, M., & Miškovičová, J. (2012). Pravidlá výslovnosti britskej a americkej angličtiny [The Rules of British and American Pronunciation]. Bratislava, Slovakia: Iura Edition.
- Bírová, J., & Eliášová, S. (2014). Viacjazyčná a plurikultúrna kompetencia a vyučovanie cudzích jazykov na základných a stredných školách v Slovenskej republike [Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence and Foreign Language Teaching at Primary and Secondary Schools in Slovakia]. *XLinguae European Scientific Language Journal*, 7(1), 75-82.
- Bui, T. (2016). Pronunciations of consonants /ð/ and /θ/ by Adult Vietnamese EFL Learners. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 6(1), 125-134. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v6i1.2744>
- Carter, R., & Nunan, D. (2001). *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D., & Goodwin, J. (2010). *Teaching Pronunciation. A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Cruttenden, A. (2014). *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) Abingdon: Routledge.
- Crystal, D. (2008a). Two thousand million? Updates on the statistics of English. *English Today* 24(1), 3-6.
- Crystal, D. (2008b). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gondová, D. (2012). *Taking First Steps in Teaching English: Teaching Systems*. Žilina, Slovakia: EDIS – vydavateľstvo Žilinskej univerzity v Žiline.
- Gorozny, S., Sahakyan, M., & Wokurek, W. (2001). Is Non-Native Pronunciation Modelling Necessary? *Proceedings of Interspeech*, 309-312.
- Hassan, E. (2014). Pronunciation Problems: A Case Study of English Language Students at Sudan University of Science and technology. *English Language and Literature Studies* 4(4), 31-44. doi:10.5539/ells.v4n4p31
- Hornáčková-Klapicová, E. (2012). Bilingual Lexicography and a Slovak-Spanish-English Theological Dictionary. *XLinguae European Scientific Language Journal* 5(3), 2-41.
- Kráľ, Á., & Sabol, J. (1989). *Fonetika a fonológia*. Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo.
- Levis, J., & Cortes, V. (2008). Minimal pairs in spoken corpora: Implications for pronunciation assessment and teaching. In C.A. Chapelle, Y.-R. Chung, & J. Xu (eds.) *Towards adaptive CALL: Natural language processing for diagnostic language assessment*, 197-208. Ames, IA: Iowa State University.
- McKenzie, R. (2010). *The Social Psychology of English as a Global Language*. London: Springer.
- Munro, M. (2008). Foreign accent and speech intelligibility. In H. Edwards, G. Jette & M. L. Zampini (Eds.), *Phonology and Second Language Acquisition*, 193-218. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Munro, M. (2011). Intelligibility: Buzzword or buzzworthy? In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (ed.). *Proceedings of the 2nd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*, 7-16.

“WEST” OR “VEST”? PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH CONSONANTS [W] AND [V] IN THE UTTERANCES

- Ames, IA: Iowa State University.
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). (2015). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- O'Connor, J. (1981). *Better English Pronunciation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roach, P. (2009). *English Phonetics and Phonology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sinha, A., Banerjee, N., Sinha, A., & Shastri, R. (2009). Interference of first language in the acquisition of second language. *Journal of Psychology and Counseling* 1(7), 117-122. [http://www.academicjournals.org/article/article1379761693\\_Sinha%20et%20al.pdf](http://www.academicjournals.org/article/article1379761693_Sinha%20et%20al.pdf)
- Szpyra-Kozłowska, J. (2015). *Pronunciation in EFL Instruction*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Zampini, M. (2008). L2 speech production research. In H. Edwards, G. Jette & M. L. Zampini (ed.) *Phonology and second language acquisition* (pp. 219-249). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

## Bulgarian University Students' Learning Style Preferences in ESL Classrooms

Flora Komlosi-Ferdinand  
University of Wales Trinity St David

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Flora Komlosi-Ferdinand, University of Wales Trinity St David, Carmarthen Campus, Carmarthen, SA31 3EP, United Kingdom. E-mail: flora.komlosi@yahoo.co.uk

Students' attitudes towards learning and the perception and beliefs behind them may have a profound influence on learning behaviour and learning outcomes. Teachers' awareness of such needs and preferences will result in more realistic and useful teaching strategies which, in turn, will have a facilitative effect on the learning process. Thus, learners should be given opportunities to express their own language learning preferences, especially in reference to the definition of objectives in general and awareness of strategies for learning. Moved with the conviction that learners and their preferences are of crucial importance in the development of learner autonomy, 74 students in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, were asked about their perceptions and preferences on ESL classroom activities. The results showed that learners were not always able to clearly define their preferences. This may be due to the fact that learning a foreign language is a culturally and psychologically different process than learning any other subject via the individual's first language. Thus, educators have the additional responsibility to help learners to find their learning strengths, and by cognitive training help students to expand their learning style preferences. Also, implications from this study clearly display that teacher training programmes should seriously examine and implement innovative ways of teaching English considering students' identity, character, and limitations.

**Key words:** Learning styles, ESL, foreign language education, language transfer, motivation

During the last century, the generally embraced teaching practices were focused on the preparation of a wide assortment of teaching materials that would equally benefit all students in the classroom. This approach assumes that knowledge can be obtained regardless of students' learning abilities and personality, failing to acknowledge the fact that learners have personal preferences and attitudes towards learning a foreign language. Attitudes in the foreign language classroom vary significantly and are conditioned by the students' character, previous experiences at school, and the local education systems' view on the teacher-student power structure. Although university education differs from learners' previous experiences at elementary and secondary school, approaches towards language learning are usually well established by that time. Some individuals may prefer memorising

## Стиль обучения и предпочтения болгарских студентов при обучении в ESL классах

Флора Комлоси-Фердинанд  
Уэльский университет Святой Троицы и Святого Давида

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Флора Комлоси-Фердинанд, Уэльский университет Святой Троицы и Святого Давида, г. Кармартен, Великобритания, индекс SA31 3EP. E-mail: flora.komlosi@yahoo.co.uk

Отношение учащихся к обучению, а также восприятие и убеждения, стоящие за ними, могут оказывать глубокое влияние на поведение в процессе обучения, а также на результаты обучения. Осознание учителями студенческих потребностей и предпочтений приведет к разработке более реалистичных и полезных стратегий обучения, которые, в свою очередь, окажут стимулирующее воздействие на процесс обучения. Таким образом, учащимся должны быть предоставлены возможности для выражения своих предпочтений в изучении языка, особенно в отношении определения целей и осведомленности о стратегиях обучения. Будучи убежденными в том, что учащиеся и их предпочтения имеют решающее значение в развитии собственной автономии, 74 студента в Благоевграде (Болгария) были опрошены касательно их восприятия и предпочтений в отношении учебной деятельности в ESL классах. Результаты показали, что учащиеся не всегда могут четко определить свои предпочтения. Это может быть связано с тем, что изучение иностранного языка является культурно и психологически отличительным процессом от изучения любого другого предмета на родном языке. Таким образом, преподаватели несут дополнительную ответственность за своевременную помощь учащимся в обретении потенциальных возможностей для успешного обучения; когнитивное направление обучения помогает студентам расширить свои предпочтения в стиле образовательной деятельности. Кроме того, результаты этого исследования ясно показывают, что программы подготовки учителей должны быть ориентированы на внедрение инновационных способов преподавания английского языка с учетом индивидуальности, характера и ограничений учащихся.

**Ключевые слова:** стили обучения, ESL, иноязычное образование, языковой трансфер, мотивация

grammar rules or words and phrases and listening to the teacher's explanations and taking notes. Other learners may prefer to be actively involved in learning activities, inclined to participate in more action-based language learning strategies, considering this as a useful tool that enables them to communicate with others who know that language (Oxford, 1993 66-67).

These attitudes towards learning, as well as the perceptions and beliefs which determine them, may have a profound influence on learning behaviours and learning outcomes. Therefore, it seems that language teachers should take into account such learners' needs and attitudes in making decisions about the types of activities they conduct in the classroom. Also, identifying the learners' needs and preferences, and devising and implementing suitable activities will make teaching more successful. This will help students to develop more

active and autonomous attitudes which allow them to take charge of their own learning. However, gaps between teachers' and learners' views may result in negative language learning outcomes (Mehrddad & Ahghar, 2013, pp.102-103).

In this critical time of history, rapid demographic changes are swiftly shaping increasingly diverse societies. Globalization and an extensively technological world generate strong demand for English language learning around the world. Most developing countries assume that if their inhabitants are fluent in English, there will be expanded opportunities in the educational and economic sectors (Moore-Abdool, Yahya & Unzueta, 2009, p.3). Therefore, teaching English and other foreign languages has recently become a world-wide phenomenon at all educational levels for people of all ages and backgrounds. This situation may present a challenge to teachers for developing successful teaching techniques that enhance both students' knowledge and motivation. Although considering students' learning style preferences may be a success factor in the classroom, these individual differences are rarely taken into account. The reason for this is that, except for very obvious cases, teachers may not even realise these differences in personalities. Therefore, deciphering motivation and learning style preferences is of fundamental interest to language programme designers, teachers, and administrators. Ideally, they should not only attract students to their institutions and educational programmes but need to provide them with the opportunity to learn according to their preferences and interests. Therefore, acknowledging different learning needs, demands, and attitudes is crucial for educators and for students themselves. Teachers should strive to use specific pedagogical techniques that strengthen and develop learners' autonomy. On the other hand, students should maintain their motivation in order to persevere and succeed in the challenging task of learning a foreign language (Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy, 1998, p.2).

### **Are learning styles important to consider?**

*"It would seem on the face of it that required ways of using a language might be quite closely related to preferred ways of learning a language"* (Widdowson, 1983, p.33 as quoted in Horowitz, 1986, p. 445).

Taking individuals' learning styles into account is a relatively new approach. Traditionally, it was not even considered as a concept *per se*, therefore, students' learning styles forcedly had to coincide with the educator's teaching style. The power structure in education was strongly teacher centred, while students were expected to grasp the knowledge delivered. It can be said that the history of education had its dawn in households, where parents passed the necessary skills

to their children. In that case, theoretical and practical skills were both sharpened in ideal ways:

1. Parents knew the character, strengths, and limitations of their child(ren) and could find the most suitable approaches to educate them.
2. Social and practical skills were both developed and tailored exactly for the needs of the child, considering the most likely demands he/she could meet later in life.
3. Education was not only focused on general subjects, but aimed for a holistic development with the intention of preparing children for life.

This individual approach grew impossible to maintain when education became accessible, and later obligatory, to the masses. Students with very different personalities, interests, and backgrounds were asked to attend classrooms where the educator's attention was divided in many directions. Moreover, due to some countries' governmental policies, the focus in education shifted towards the goal of children passing the exams with good marks, with an unsatisfactory emphasis on real cognitive development. However, some positive changes in those tendencies can be observed. A growing body of research suggests that in a growing number of institutions, students' learning preferences are taken seriously, and the findings are supported and implemented by educators and administrators alike (Mulalic, Shah & Ahmad, 2009, p.9).

Driven by the desire to place more attention on students' individual (language) acquisition differences and processes, the following seven points were collected as factors that help to improve the speed and quality of learning (Moenikia & Zahed-Babelan, 2010, p.1171)

- Visual (spatial): The using of pictures and images
- Aural (auditory-musical): The using of sound and music
- Verbal (linguistic): The using of words, both in speech and writing
- Physical (kinaesthetic): The use of one's body, hands, and sense of touch
- Logical (mathematical): The use of logic, reasoning, and systems
- Social (interpersonal): Group works, brainstorming, or learning with other people
- Solitary (intrapersonal): Working alone and self-study

The list of these seven points is a valuable tool in order to gain a fuller picture about students' preferences and/or abilities to access and absorb information and knowledge. However, deciphering the learning style of an individual lies in the combination of these points. As Mehrddad and Aghar (2013, p.103) point out, the term 'learning styles' is used to include three behavioural aspects of an individual: 1) cognitive style, describing patterns of inclinations and attitudes that influence what

the student will pay the most attention to in a learning situation; 2) the likelihood to seek situations consistent with one's own learning patterns; and 3) the inclination to apply specific learning strategies and to avoid others.

### Factors determining learning styles

Learning preference and capacity is empowered by many different factors such as (personal) circumstances, changing motivation, teachers' attitudes, and classroom conditions. Since these factors are not completely stable throughout time and evolving personalities, it is safe to say that there is no right or wrong permanent mix of traits that will work for an individual in all domains. Therefore, considering that each student has specific preferences for learning, it is easy to see the trouble of having many small sub-groups in one classroom with a teacher prepared to satisfy the peculiarities of each learning category. The analysis and grouping of the most similar learning style preferences may offer a temporary solution to this challenge. However, after reflecting on their learning, a few students reported that they were able to implement some of their already well-working strategies and, based on them, develop new skills to succeed in their less dominant learning styles over time. This accomplishment may be of great importance, considering that the more an individual is conscious of his/her learning styles, and the more he/she is capable of expanding them, this will lead to more academic achievement and success later in life. Therefore, the value of the consciousness of one's own learning styles goes beyond academic success. This process shapes the students' identity and the way experiences are internally represented and acknowledged, and improves the capability to recall previous material or apply structures in new circumstances (Mulalic, Shah & Ahmad, 2009 p.10).

### Rights versus abilities – can students determine their own learning needs?

Nowadays, many teachers experience student resistance when establishing educational activities in the classroom. Some students prefer more opportunities to participate in free conversation and dialogues, expressing their desire towards a more communicative approach. On the other hand, there are students who would favour more emphasis on grammar teaching. Collaboration can hardly be forced, but it can be negotiated. Although educators often acknowledge the need to decipher the ways in which learners differ in terms of needs and preferences, they may fail to discuss students' opinions when conducting language activities. This reluctance to take such preferences into account may be found in the belief that learners are generally not capable of understanding, analysing, and communicating

what they want or need to learn, and they lack a clear strategy to achieve learning success unless especially directed by an educator. Moreover, in most societies, the teacher-student power structure in the classroom is established in a rather rigid way, leaving no opportunity for learners to participate in decision-making on educational methodology. In most cultures, this would be even seen as highly inappropriate, given educators' established role in society (Bada & Okan, 2000, pp.1-2). Therefore, do students have the right and/or the capacity to express their learning style differences and expect them to be considered? Csikszentmihályi's theory argues that an individual's attentiveness, motivation, and ability to concentrate will flourish when tasks and skills are on equal levels and both are on the high end of the spectrum. However, when the task is too hard and the student's skills are low, the psychological and emotional outcome may result in anxiety. On the other hand, when the challenge is considerably lower than the learner's skills, the completion of the task may produce boredom (Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy, 1998, p.6). Thus, carefully balancing students' learning style preferences, skills, and the learning task may lead to more motivated and engaged individuals, resulting in more fruitful education intellectually, emotionally, and economically.

### First-language influence on second-language acquisition

*“Language from a multilingual perspective can be defined as a system of signs resting upon an underlying conceptual system that is unique to each culture. This definition implies that there is a linguistic and a conceptual level, which operate together in language processing and that the conceptual level is culture-specific. The conceptual system pulls together cognitive constructs and knowledge; language reflects this system”*

(Kecskes, 2008, p. 31)

Second or foreign language students use their first language structures and diverse strategies to accelerate the acquisition of the target language. This action occurs either consciously and intentionally by learners in order to overcome the limitations of their knowledge, or unconsciously because of the complete lack of proficiency in a specific context, or because the material learned was not fully automatized. This process is called “*language transfer*” (Karim, 2003, p.49). This is corroborated by Chomsky's universal grammar theory, in which he argues that individuals process and construct language through a profound structure that allows them to transfer their first language (L1) grammar skills to the target (L2) language (Chomsky, 1979, p.181-184). Since all individuals learn some language skills (including



sign-language) when acquiring their first language, this expertise is naturally transferable to the desired foreign language learning strategies. Therefore, both educators and learners should be aware of the degree L1 structure and skills are transferred in ESL classrooms, enhancing or hindering the acquisition of L2. Consciousness of such practices may be an invaluable tool to determine further educational strategies and instructional methods (Karim, 2003, p.53).

Karim (2003, p.54) proposes six critical points for how to convert students' L1 transfer into an advantage:

1. The careful observation of learners' L1 transfer strategies may help to comprehend the positive influences of such processes, directing them into correct L2 acquisition techniques.
2. Educators considering the advantage of L1 education already received may benefit from students' previous linguistic knowledge, skills, and mental schemata.
3. Once learners' positive transfer skills are identified, teachers may help students to use these skills effectively in L2 acquisition.
4. Educators' in-depth knowledge of their students transfer skills may help them to categorise students into corresponding study-groups according to their needs and abilities.
5. When the L1 and L2 possess similar grammar or structures, students may need additional instruction on how not to rely on L1 transfer in all domains of second-language learning.
6. The study of learners' early transfer abilities or negative transfer practices may help educators to identify possible common mistakes and to develop accurate and effective learning strategies.

Wang (2014, p. 59) reinforces the importance of directing L1 transfer skills wisely. He argues that, from a psychological perspective, learning in general is an accumulative process. Therefore, past educational experiences and activities greatly mould learners' attitudes and the courage to face new tasks where previous knowledge may not be completely useful. Thus, the amount of skills and knowledge acquired by an individual may shape his/her perceptions about new learning processes in the future. It may be of key importance to train learners how to direct their transfer skills from old to new situations. In foreign language learning, this strategy may help students to control their own learning, develop independent learning skills, find their authentic learning style preferences, and expand their intrinsic motivation and grit.

The general concept of first-language influence on second-language acquisition can further be analysed by its application according to the four main skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. It is

also noteworthy to examine students' preferences for working individually, in pairs, in small groups, and in large groups.

### **Individual versus group working preferences**

Some research suggests that individual learning in ESL contexts may be successful in groups of mixed ability, where low-achieving learners may need some additional time to gain sufficient knowledge in order to catch up with their peers. This hypothesis is based on the observance that learners may devote more attention and focus to a greater degree when they are not distracted by the other members of the group but are focusing on their own task (Arias & García, 2013, p.4). However, many other studies maintain that cooperative learning develops not only language learning skills, but builds character, shapes students' emotional intelligence, and develops better strategic skills (Reinders 2010, p. 40). Moreover, as shown in a study with more than one hundred college students, group learning enhanced class attendance and academic performance due to the pressure from the rest of the peers (Grimm, 2004, p. 1, 2). Competition in group-learning settings may be regarded as another factor that intensifies the desire to achieve more, to use the language skills acquired during the lesson, and to develop intrinsic motivation and grit. Also, competing against other groups awakens students' natural instinct to be the best when compared with the rest. This idea seems to be greatly supported by the Situated Cognition Theory developed by Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1998, p. 32), that combines learners' problem solving skills and domain specific knowledge for the success of collaborative learning (Grimm, 2004, p.3). Vygotsky's social cognition theory argues for the benefits of group-learning too (Frawley, 1997, p. 520). In his viewpoint, social interaction and shared problem solving are fundamental for full cognitive development. Vygotsky argues that while working in a group, peers' reactions may provide feedback to the individual on the actions displayed and reinforce acquisition of knowledge. Moreover, every step in the path of learning emerges and solidifies first in the social level and only after the expected reaction from peers or teachers can it become intrapsychological (Grimm, 2004, p. 4). Finally, Long and Porter (1985, p. 208-211) collected at least five points that benefit students during group work.

1. Increased opportunities to practice the language
2. Group work promotes the opportunities for students to polish the quality of their language skills.
3. Emerging errors during group work help educators to correct specific individual needs.

4. Reduces performance anxiety (in contrast with when the student is asked to perform a task alone in front of the whole auditorium)
5. Through the variety of characters (and emerging errors) group work motivates students to express themselves more freely.

### Listening and visual skills

*“Listening, the recognition and interpretation of auditory stimuli is accepted as one of the most important features in children’s learning... Listening skills are generally considered one of the four major components of language arts. However, it is widely recognized that the ability to listen attentively and critically is generic to children achieving success in all academic areas as well as in life in general”*

(Buttery 1980, p.181)

In second language learning, listening is one of the most complex skills to acquire. Listening occurs in a variety of domains and contexts coming from individuals with different accents, volume of voice, verbal versatility, intelligence, and communication skills. Thus, for foreign language learners, listening and understanding the words and the grammar structures used in a particular situation and internalising the message sent can be a tedious and overwhelming challenge. This is particularly true when the learner is not only a passive observant of the events (i.e. watching TV, listening to a lecture, or observing a group of people interacting) but he/she is required to be engaged in a dialogue. Therefore, to be able to minimally function in the target language, it is necessary to develop good listening skills in order to have a general understanding of the situation and to decipher the other speaker’s intention.

Although essential, teaching listening skills effectively in a second-language learning context has been neglected for a long time. Unfortunately, the challenging nature of teaching this skill has led professionals to overlook this problem. The complications of ignoring such difficulties may lead to students never fully developing listening skills, which, in turn seriously hinders further development in the acquisition of the target language. However, teaching listening has started to evolve recently. With new technologies in the classroom, the classical audio tools have given way to new activities that engage multiple senses while sharpening learners’ auditory senses. TV, videos from the Internet, and video clips often with subtitles help students to establish a clearer picture in their minds about the information they heard. Moreover, some research suggests that

audiovisual aids greatly enhance the comprehension of listening materials and have beneficial effects on language processing (Folley, 2015, p. 11-14).

When talking about listening and visual skills, body language, gestures, and facial cues should by no means be neglected. This is particularly true since human interactions and the understanding of the other individual(s) are often based on grasping the non-verbal cues emitted. Empirical studies show that English L2 learners exposed to active communication sessions with an English native speaker over an extensive period of time demonstrated that gestures played a crucial role in learning success (Gullberg & McCafferty, 2008, p. 137). Therefore, gestures and body language in general help with internalising the message, especially when they are used in a culturally comprehensible context.

### Reading and comprehension skills

*“Reading is a conscious and unconscious thinking process. The reader applies many strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author is assumed to have intended. The reader does this by comparing information in the text to his or her background knowledge and prior experience.”*

(Mikulecky, 2008, p. 2)

Samuels (2007, p. 1) states that to fully understand a text, the individual must be able identify the words on the page and construct their definition. Therefore, reading and the comprehension of written material is crucial for the success in the acquisition of a foreign language. Reading instruction constitutes a big part of language learning: the usage of textbooks, worksheets, vocabularies, and online exercises all require the students to understand the meaning of the written text. Researchers Kintsch and van Dijk (1978), Rumelhart and Ortony (1977), Winograd (1977), and Rumelhart (1980) developed an information processing system to better comprehend how individuals process what they read. According to them, there are some facets of humans’ information processing systems that interact continuously. When the individual concentrates on the already-known words and constructions during reading, this action is identified as a “concept-driven” or “top-down” mode. The opposite happens in the “data-driven” or “bottom-up” approaches, when the reader predominantly focuses on the information yet to be deciphered and on the peculiarities of the material to be understood. Therefore, the reader actively processes components of the text, while contrasting and comparing that information with his/her previously acquired knowledge. At this phase of the task, prior understanding and knowledge initiates

a presupposition about the text's full meaning. This reciprocal process extends until the individual has a clear grasp of the text and his/her previous knowledge, eventually leading to comprehension of the material. As seen, reading and comprehension are complex tasks to perform. Reading in a second language, however, has additional complications and barriers to overcome. Most second-language learners use their first-language mental schemata to determine the points to notice and the strategies to apply when constructing the meaning, and ultimately when interpreting the message of the material. However, reliance on the readers' first-language processing system may significantly distort the meaning of the text. Therefore, when teaching how to read in a second language, additional care has to be placed on clarifying surging biases based on the individual's cultural background and first language (Mikulecky, 2008, p. 1-2).

When considering the acquisition of any foreign language, it is important to mention the role, limitations, and accurate definition of *fluency*. Being a fluent reader in the individual's first language should not be automatically assumed that he/she will have the same ability in the foreign language context. According to Lems, Miller, and Soro (2010, p. 148), fluency is defined when a person has native-like proficiency in the target language and has the ability to synchronously decipher, understand, and internalise the message of the text.

Achieving fluency in a second language may be a complicated task. In most cases language, culture, reasoning patterns, and social-behavioural norms are strongly connected, shaping the readers' conceptions of the world. Therefore, readers with diverse cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds may form different opinions on what a text signifies (Karim, 2003, p. 49). Thus, educators should not conclude that individuals who have excellent reading skills in their native language can produce the same speed, quality, and comprehension skills while reading in a foreign language. Consequently, professionals teaching a second language to students should be aware of the importance of not only focusing on vocabulary, syntax, and fluency but advising students to learn the target language within an appropriate cultural context. This "secondary literacy" teaches individuals not to rely on their first language, culture-specific interpretations, or biased cognitive structures when interpreting the text read.

### **Writing and analytical skills**

The number of studies on writing in a second language has traditionally been unsatisfactory in comparison with the data available on the analysis

of the other main skills (Krashen, 1984, p. 41). Some researchers suggest that students' composing processes in a second language are largely similar to the schemata they use in their first language (Raimes, 1985, p. 231). This may concern both students and educators, since writing (along with the other three main skills) largely influences learners' capacity and accuracy in correctly acquiring a second language. Based on empirical research, Williams (2012, p.1) suggests three major areas where writing benefits, consolidates, and polishes a student's L2 development.

1. A comfortable pace – Students usually have more time to analyse, build, and construct the sentences in comparison to listening or speaking exercises.
2. Long lasting record – writing leaves stable and reinforced records in students' memories. This, in turn, enhances further positive cognitive processes in the internalisation of the target language.
3. The demand for greater precision – Writing activities require continuous and careful reviewing of students' explicit knowledge; this leads to more cautious planning, monitoring, and structuring of the material to be produced.

Writing and reading skills in a second language have overlapping dimensions; while readers are required to decipher the formal and cultural/social facets of the text, writers are expected to encode them. Therefore, writing should always be seen as socially and culturally placed. Therefore, during writing exercises, teachers are urged to be aware of the pitfalls of breaking down such tasks into solely component skills, ignoring the cultural significance of the text. Thus, as writing greatly consolidates learners' perceptions and comprehension of the cultural dimensions of the target language, a holistic approach to such exercises is highly recommended (Archibald, 2004). This, in turn, will help learners to consciously develop specific writing skills that will satisfy any reader-sensitivities of the target audience (Myles, 2002, p. 2).

While cultural components are fundamental aspects of writing in an L2, Tsang and Wong (2000, p. 41) propose that explicit grammar instruction enhances writing skills to a great extent. In their research, they state that students with intensive grammar training had increased readiness and ability to use mature syntax in their writing. Furthermore, Yau (1991, p. 268) argues:

*“Although we should not cripple our students' interest in writing through undue stress or grammatical correctness, the influence of second-language factors on writing performance is something*

*we have to reckon with and not pretend that concentrating on the process would automatically resolve the difficulty caused by these factors.”*

### Speaking and creative skills

Speaking is a fundamental part of foreign-language education. Communication, syllabus contents, and any measurable learning outcome would be much more complicated to achieve without the spoken part of the target language in the classroom. According to Burns (2012, p.165) many students display the following attitudes in foreign language classrooms when asked to speak:

1. Most students have the ability to read and write well, but they lack the ability to transfer the same skills to produce speech.
2. Many learners express debilitating fear when asked to talk in the classroom due to shyness and lack of confidence.
3. Some students' speech has more resemblance to the act of reading a book. Natural expressions and intuitive communication seldom take place in foreign language classrooms.
4. Although some students would like to practice more speaking, the hardship of combining accurate vocabulary and grammar prevents them from succeeding.

Speaking in the desired second or foreign language is often regarded as synonymous with apprehension and anxiety among learners. Unfortunately, nervousness to perform well in this skill may even hinder the progress of L2 acquisition and/or have detrimental effects on learners' motivation to practice their communication skills in the target language at all. Nowadays, the use of communication-oriented strategies in foreign language classrooms places a considerable amount of pressure on students. Therefore, it is the educators' responsibility to consider students' individual capacities, limits, and character and to alleviate this anxiety while assisting them to achieve desired performance objectives in the target language (Tanveer, 2007, p. 1).

Researchers and foreign language acquisition specialists also reinforce the idea that there is a specific kind of anxiety while learning and speaking a second language, differentiating this from the nervousness displayed while learning other skills or subjects (Guiora, 1983, p.8). According to them, this may be due to the fact that foreign language acquisition is a “*profoundly unsettling psychological proposition*” because it may pose a threat to the learner's cultural identity and world view. Therefore,

is there a connection between speech anxiety in the learner's first-language and the target language to acquire? Individuals may be nervous in situations involving public speech regardless of whether they use their native language or not. However, as Tanveer (2007, p.3) points out:

*“Anxiety experienced when speaking in a second/foreign language seems to be more debilitating than the anxiety experienced when speaking in the first language. Anxiety while communicating in other than L1 goes a step further with the addition of the difficulties associated with learning and speaking a foreign language. In a foreign language, a speaker has to look for suitable lexis, has to construct an appropriate syntactic structure and needs to use a comprehensible accent, plus the demanding tasks of thinking and organizing ideas and expressing them at the same time”.*

Educators are presented with a great challenge when teaching how to speak a second language. The acquisition of communication and speaking skills from a holistic perspective may enhance students' performance and their motivation to eventually master such skills. However, teachers should be knowledgeable about the proper nature of speaking competence and how diverse aspects of this skill relate to each other (Burns, 2012, p. 166). Johnson (1996, p. 155) points out that “*speaking is a combinational skill that involves doing various things at the same time.*”

In their “Second Language Speaking Competence” framework, Burns and Goh (Burns, 2012, p. 167) present a model that involves language knowledge, core speaking skills, and communication and discourse strategies. According to them, learning to speak in a foreign language implies mastering the above-mentioned skills in order to display fluency, accuracy, and culturally appropriate attitudes.

Therefore, a combination of the following three aspects should be considered to enhance speaking skills in foreign language classrooms:

1. *Knowledge of the language itself:* Correct knowledge of the sound patterns (being able to pronounce the language), grammar, vocabulary (lexis and spoken structures), and the speech's correct pragmatical and social embeddedness
2. *Core speaking skills:* Learners' capabilities to process speech accurately and to improve fluency. It also requires aptness to structure the speech based on previous clues: observing anterior failures in understanding, foregoing utterances and communication-mismatches, as well as directing and controlling the flow of

speech as it develops.

3. *Communication Strategies*: Learning and enhancing cognitive approaches and strategies in order to counterbalance deficiencies of knowledge in the target language. Also, developing metacognitive skills, such as the conscious planning and structuring of the speech, and mastering interaction competence by asking for clarification, repetition, and confirming correct understanding (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 53).

### Hypothesis

The magnitude of the task of deciphering global linguistic behaviour, motivation, and learning style preferences as a whole lays beyond the possibilities of this research. However, in recent times, there has not been such a study carried out on Bulgarian written in the English language. Therefore, the above-mentioned four main skills and the individual versus group working preferences were considered an optimal base where Bulgarian students' attitudes towards L2 acquisition can be analysed.

According to my hypothesis, Bulgarian university students were rather reluctant to participate in most educational activities carried out in the ESL classroom. Prior to this study, during informal discussion with colleagues and learners, most students expressed clear ideas about their dislikes, yet most of them could not identify their own learning strengths or learning style preferences. Only a few students suggested having a clear learning strategy or a learning style preference. However, as a paradox, many declared to be very motivated to learn English well and declared to be working hard in order to achieve this goal. Therefore, I was intrigued to unveil 1) what learning strategies and activities are perceived as the most beneficial by the learners and 2) to what extent students are conscious of their learning style preferences.

### Method

A survey was conducted in order to investigate whether learning style preferences can be considered a decisive factor for success in EFL classrooms among university students in Bulgaria. In order to collect data, quantitative research methodology was used by inviting students to complete paper-based questionnaires.

### Participants

The study was conducted in two universities, one

private and one national, in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. The number of participants was 74: 23 male and 51 female students between the ages of 16 and 57 years old (See Figure 1). For the purpose of this study, a convenience sampling method was used to determine the appropriate subjects. Individuals attending university courses were the most convenient to select because, at least hypothetically, none of them were forced to attend lessons. Therefore, supposedly, they were all motivated to some degree to succeed in their respective studies. At the time of the research the majority of the learners were pursuing bachelor and master's degrees related to linguistics or/and English language in an array of degree programmes at the university and were studying at varied language levels (intermediate and advanced). Some of the students, however, attended specific EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses, while some who participated were enrolled in programmes of English for general purposes.

The wide age gap of the students was not considered an inconvenience in this case since some scholars suggest that attitudes start to appear at the age of 10 and are clarified and consolidated during adolescence (Huget & Llorca, 2001, p.271). Therefore, at the time the study was conducted, all participants theoretically had clear learning style preferences and established learning habits. Moreover, Grimm (2004, p.1) suggests '*generalizations about the whole population can be expanded when more people at different grade levels are studied*'. Before the questionnaires were distributed in the classroom, the research objectives were made clear and the opportunity to participate or withdraw at any moment was given to all participants.

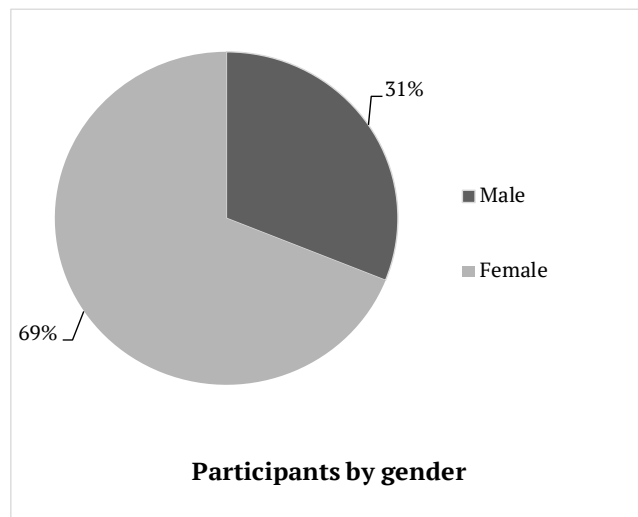


Figure 1. Participants by gender.

The proportion of the genders in this study reflects the general percentage of males and females attending university courses and specific English language

courses in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

## Materials

The data was obtained by a self-completed questionnaire developed by the researcher especially for this study. The chosen quantitative research method aimed to collect self-reported data from students with the intention of describing existing conditions or identifying points of reference to be used for comparing conditions or determining the relationships between specific events (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 74).

The questionnaire itself consisted of some closed-ended questions and some other questions where the answers had to be marked on a five-point Likert-scale (from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree).

Although the study was made in Bulgaria and mostly with Bulgarian students, the questionnaires were written and completed in English. However, before administering the instrument, the students' understanding on the wording and on the meaning of the questions was verified. Moreover, at any time participants could ask, clarify, and have the meaning of some particular words or questions in the questionnaire translated.

## Procedure

To guarantee the scientific validity and understandability of the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted. Two Bulgarian and two foreign researchers on education and linguistics were asked to read the questionnaire and provide advice on the clarity, wording, and content of all of the items. Moreover, a group of six students gave their opinions on the questionnaire. After including some of the suggestions, paper-based questionnaires were administered to the students by the teachers working in the respective institutions. All of the students were informed by their English teachers about the objectives of the research. Therefore, all participants were aware that no monetary compensation or better grades were offered as a reward for participating. Students were also informed about the anonymous nature of the questionnaire and how their names would not appear in any article, study, or statistics. Also, a short paragraph at the beginning of the questionnaire informed students about their right to withdraw at any moment.

The questionnaires were filled out in the classroom; however, no questions were discussed aloud among the students and a respectful attitude could be observed. The distribution of the questionnaires took place

in May 2016. This was considered one of the most opportune moments since learners were not overstressed or too busy with exams.

The results were based on the five-point Likert scale questionnaire, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Two main categories were separated according to gender and percentages were taken for each group/question.

## Results

The data obtained via the '*students' learning styles preferences*' questionnaire was analysed with the intention of shedding light on students' inclinations, biases, and desire to participate in different educational classroom activities. Through the study, gender differences, language anxiety, decisiveness, and learners' choices for working individually, in pairs, small groups, or large groups in the ESL classroom were examined.

### Individual versus team working preferences

The findings showed some clearly marked opinions on individual versus group working preferences among Bulgarian students. To the question "*Do you like learning individually?*" (See Figure 2) females expressed mostly positive attitudes by 59 percent, while males' viewpoints were rather divided on the matter. When asked "*Do you like learning in pairs?*" (See Figure 3) both genders' opinions were divided. The most positive viewpoints could be observed when asked "*Do you like learning in small groups?*" (See Figure 4). Almost half of the participants favoured working in small groups, while the third of the males expressed dislike and 30 percent of the females gave neutral answers. When asked "*Do you like learning in large groups?*" (See Figure 5) viewpoints were inversely proportional to the answers given to the question dealing with working in small groups. Half of both male and female students disliked or strongly disliked collaborating in this format, while one-third of the males expressed positive opinions while almost one-third of the females remained neutral.

### Listening/visual skills

To the general question "*Do you like learning by listening?*" (See Figure 6) 61 percent of male students answered positively, while only the half of the female students were of the same opinion. Females did slightly move towards being neutral on this topic. Opinions were more clearly expressed when asked more in detail about listening exercises. When presented with the question "*Do you like learning from*

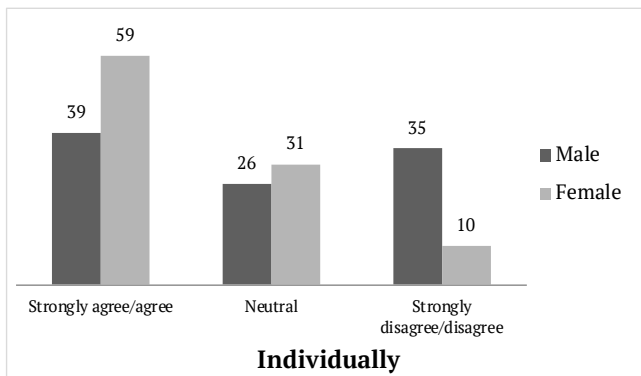


Figure 2. Learning individually (percentages).

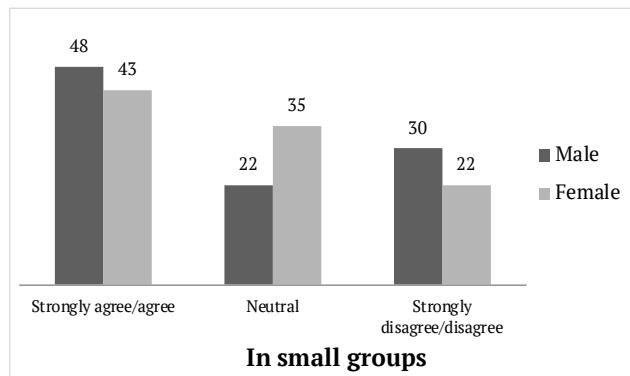


Figure 4. Learning in small groups (percentages).

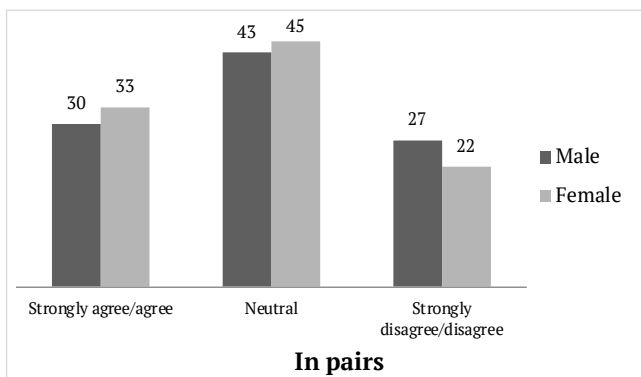


Figure 3. Learning in pairs (percentages).

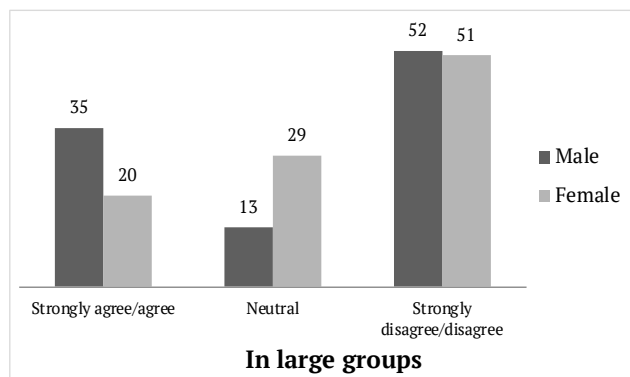


Figure 5. Learning in large groups (percentages).

radio and/or podcasts?” (See Figure 7) both male and female students expressed their dislike by 40 percent. Although on both sides there were 35 percent positive answers, yet the high number of negative answers on only listening without visual aids shows that this option may not be very successful.

When considering the question “Do you like learning from CDs, applications or online?” (See Figure 8) male students’ viewpoints were divided by almost the same number of answers on the positive and on the negative sides leaving 26 percent with neutral standpoints.

When considering the question “Do you like learning from CDs, applications or online?” (See Figure 8) male students’ viewpoints were divided by almost the same number of answers on the positive and on the negative sides leaving 26 percent with neutral standpoints. On the same topic, female learners were more favourable, almost half of them.

About 40 percent showed neutral attitudes on this kind of activity. A positive turning point was clearly observable when answering the question “Do you like learning from television, videos and films?” (See Figure 9). About 75 percent of both sides agreed that listening exercises were enjoyable. Viewpoints on the topic “Do you like songs, karaoke - fill in the missing words?” (See Figure 10) were mostly neutral, clearly moving towards negative in the case of males. When asking students

“Do you like getting information from guest speakers?” (See Figure 11) the answers were divided between neutral and positive, leaving very few opinions on the negative sides. The final question on listening and visual skills “Do you like getting information from planned visits to museums, galleries, etc..?” (See Figure 12) had a rather neutral feedback on both sides, the rest of the opinions being equally favourable and disliked by female students, while male students had a slightly higher number of positive than negative thoughts on this matter.

### Reading/comprehension skills

Bulgarian students’ answers show enthusiasm when asked “Do you like learning by reading?” (See Figure 13). The majority of both male and female students found reading an enjoyable activity. On the other hand, when asked “Do you like learning by reading and taking notes?” (See Figure 14) fewer positive, more neutral, and even some negative answers were given.

The answers to the question “Do you like learning from analysing written material?” (See Figure 15) showed similar attitudes. Half of the male students expressed neutral opinions, while 39 percent liked this activity. Female students showed a more positive approach with 61 percent in favour of analysing

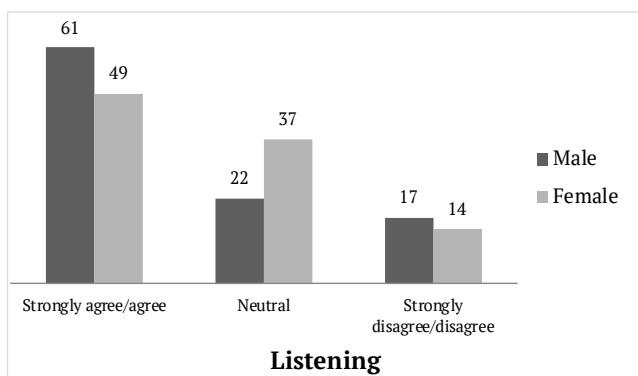


Figure 6. Do you like learning by listening? (percentages)

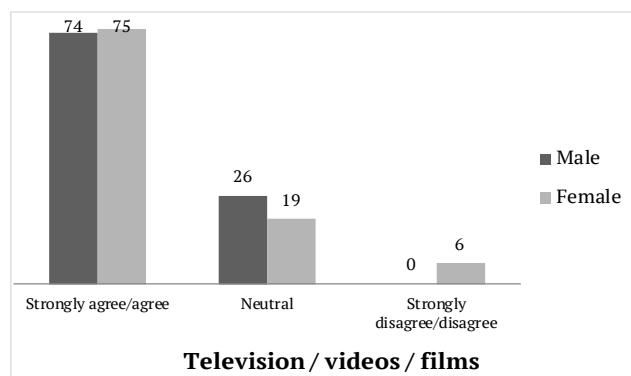


Figure 9. Do you like learning from television, videos and films? (percentages).

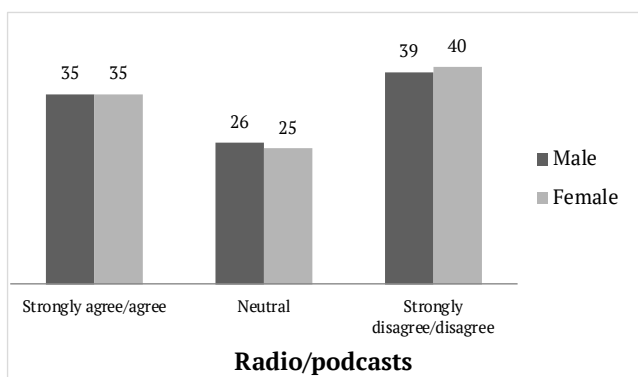


Figure 7. Do you like learning from radio and/or podcasts? (percentages)

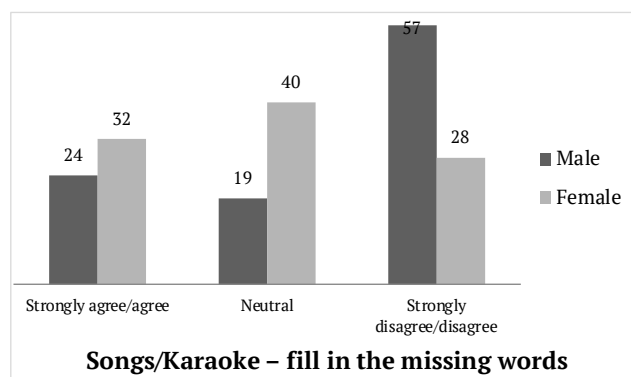


Figure 10. Do you like songs, karaoke - fill in the missing words? (percentages).

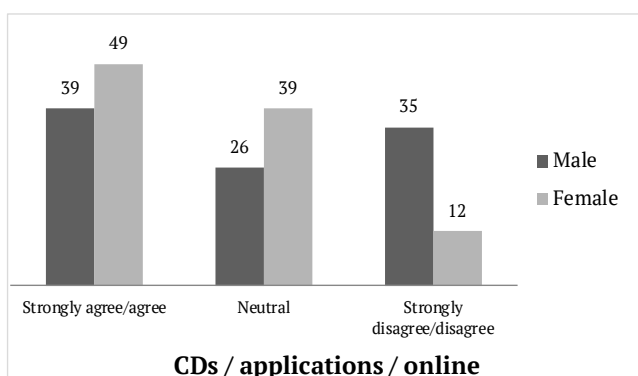


Figure 8. Do you like learning from CDs, applications or online? (percentages).

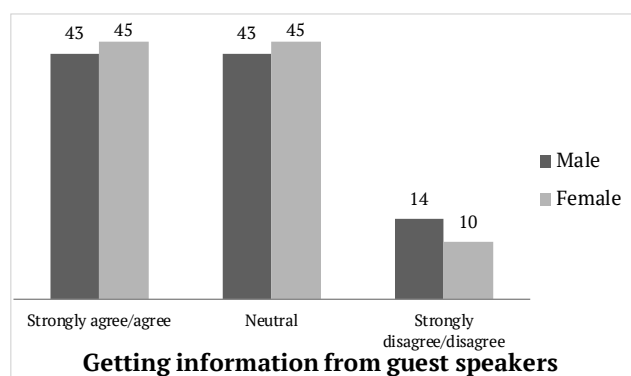


Figure 11. Do you like getting information from guest speakers? (percentages).

written material, while the rest’s viewpoints were divided among neutral or negative answers. The question with the most negative answers was “When learning new vocabulary do you like learning by reading without looking up or translating words?” (See Figure 16). Both male and female students agreed by about 40 percent that assuming or guessing the meaning of new words (even if placed in an already familiar text) was not preferred by them. To the same question about

25 percent of both genders reacted neutrally and only an average of 32 percent enjoyed this challenge. When asked “Do you like learning from the whiteboard?” (See Figure 17), students showed evenly neutral attitudes, except female students where 61 percent were favourable of such an activity. Lastly, when asked “Do you like learning from pictures, posters and/or cards?” (See Figure 18) half of the students agreed or strongly agreed on the likeability of this activity. However, 39



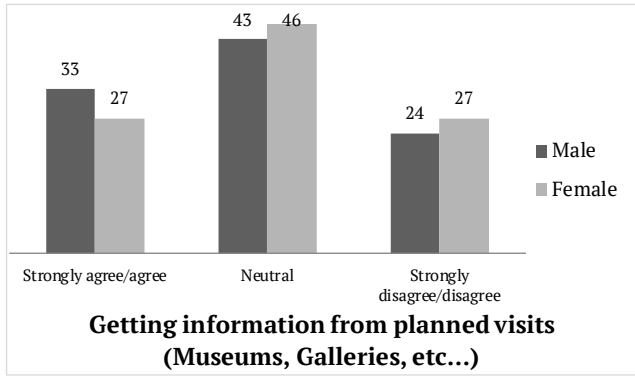


Figure 12. Do you like getting information from planned visits to museums, galleries, etc..? (percentages).

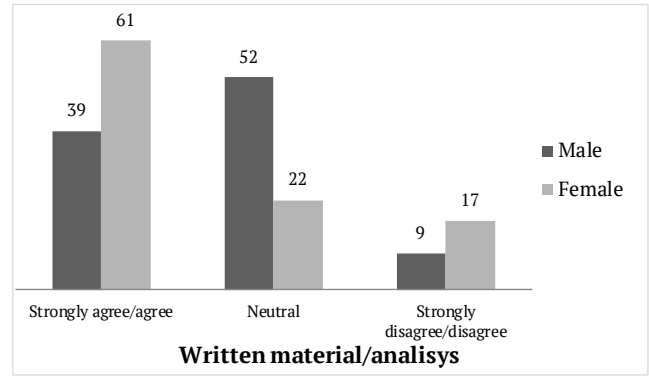


Figure 15. Do you like learning from analysing written material? (percentages).

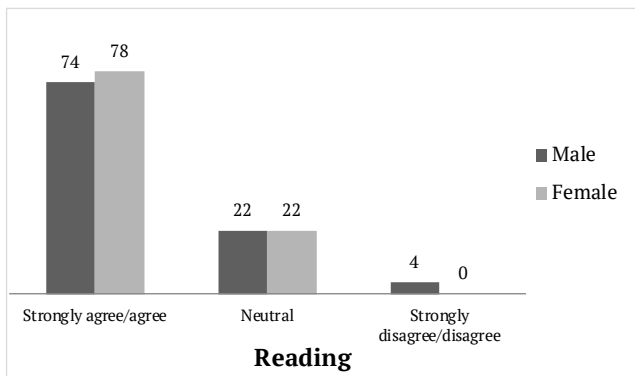


Figure 13. Do you like learning by reading? (percentages).

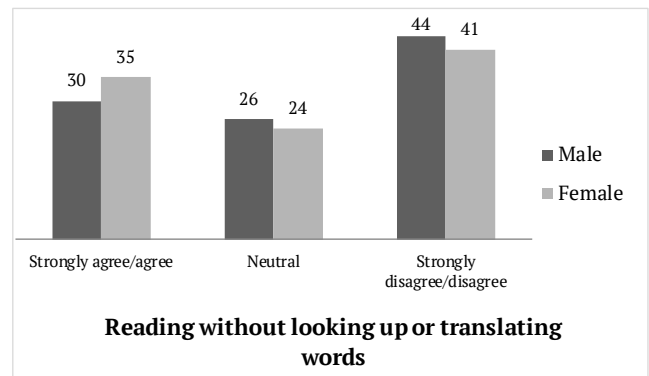


Figure 16. When learning new vocabulary do you like learning by reading without looking up or translating words? (percentages).

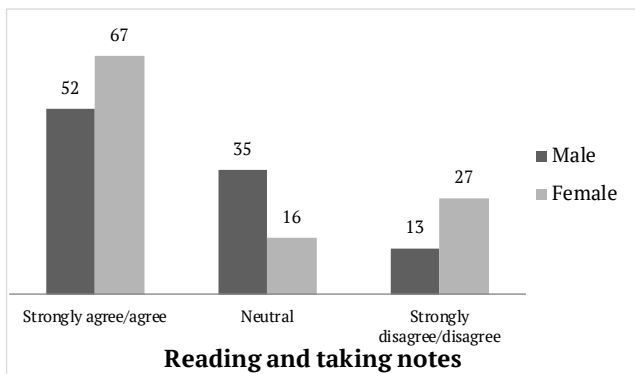


Figure 14. Do you like learning by reading and taking notes? (percentages).

percent of the males and 29 percent of the females showed neutral attitudes, which left the category of disagree/strongly disagree with rather weak support.

### Writing/analytical skills

Bulgarian students' preferences on writing activities varied considerably between rather negative and some surprisingly positive answers. When asked, "When learning new vocabulary, do you like learning by saying or writing words several times?", female students

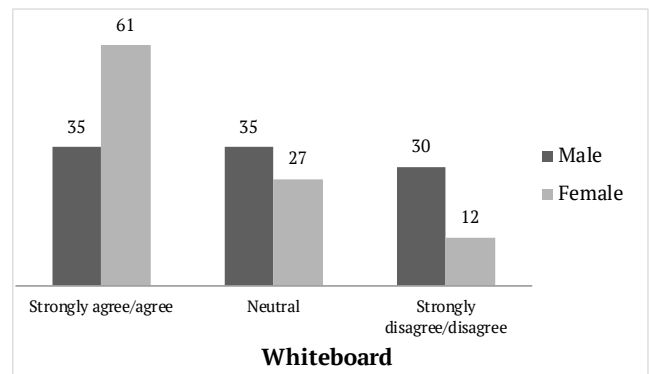


Figure 17. Do you like learning from the whiteboard? (percentages).

expressed positive attitudes with 43 percent agreeing, while male students' opinions tended to be more on the negative end of the spectrum with 48 percent (See Figure 19).

The question "Do you like learning by making summaries?" showed strongly divided opinions. Forty-five percent of the males liked this activity, but females' opinions tended to be neutral at 42 percent, while the negative answers amounted to 32 percent on the males' side and to 24 percent on the females' (See Figure 20).

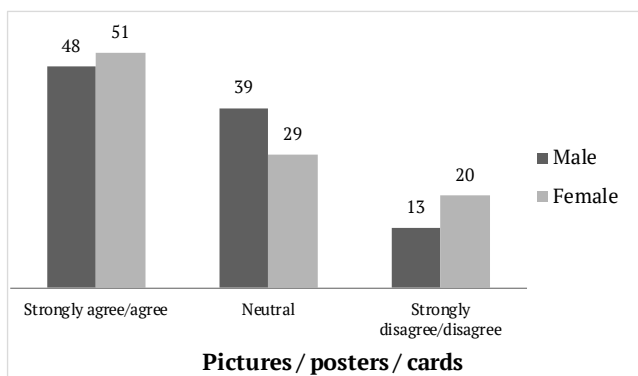


Figure 18. Do you like learning from pictures, posters, and/or cards? (percentages).

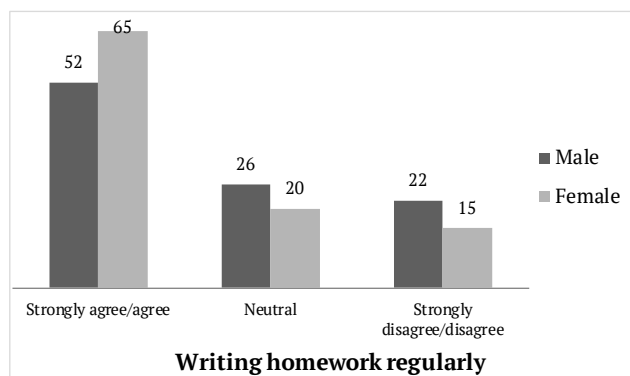


Figure 21. Do you like learning by writing homework regularly? (percentages).

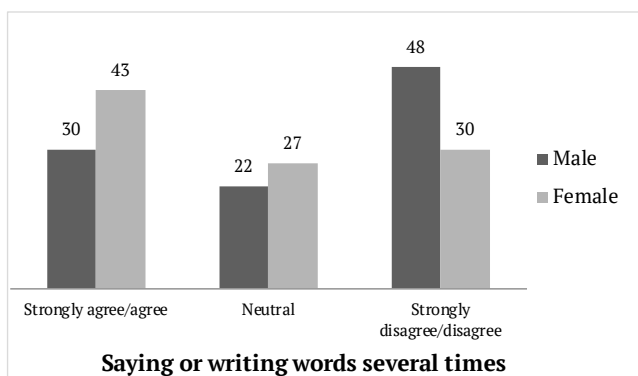


Figure 19. When learning new vocabulary, do you like learning by saying or writing words several times? (percentages).

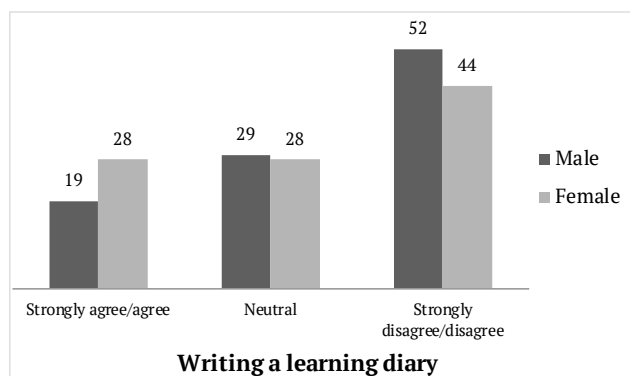


Figure 22. Do you like writing a learning diary? (percentages).

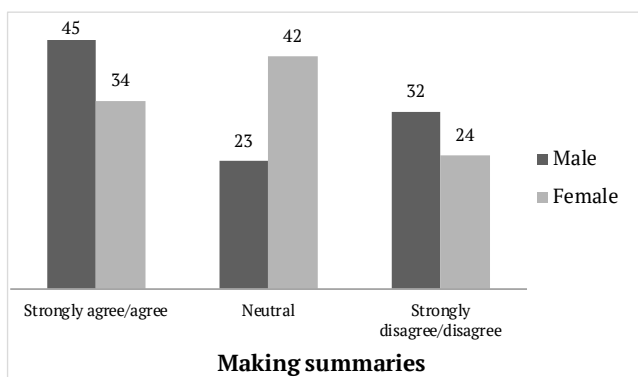


Figure 20. Do you like learning by making summaries? (percentages).

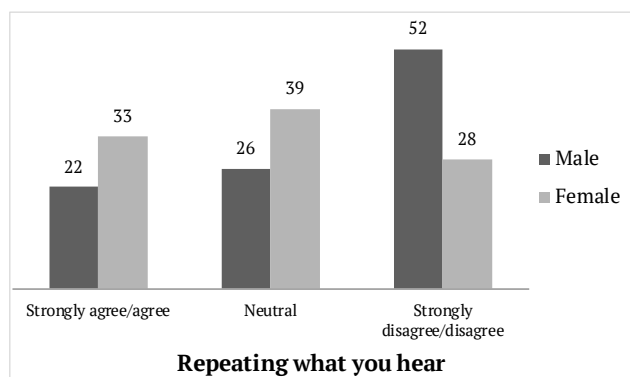


Figure 23. Do you like repeating what you hear? (percentages).

One of the most unexpected results emerged from the answers to the question “Do you like learning by writing homework regularly?” Half of the male students agreed or strongly agreed on the usefulness and likeability of this task, while the other half’s opinions were evenly distributed between neutral and negative answers. Also, the majority of female students had high esteem for writing regularly homework, while 20 percent were neutral and only 15 percent had negative viewpoints

on the attractiveness of such a task (See Figure 21). The answers to the question “Do you like writing a learning diary?” were moderately positive. Fifty-two percent of the males and a 44 percent of the females clearly disliked this activity, while between 28 and 29 percent were neutral. Only 19 percent of the males liked writing a learning diary, while females’ responses were somewhat more positive at 28 percent (See Figure 22).

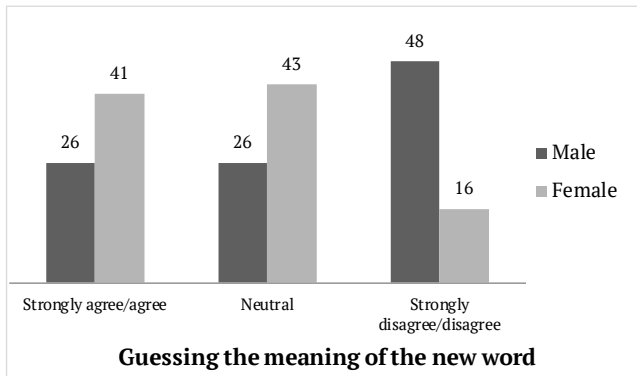


Figure 24. When learning new vocabulary, do you like guessing the meaning of the new word? (percentages).

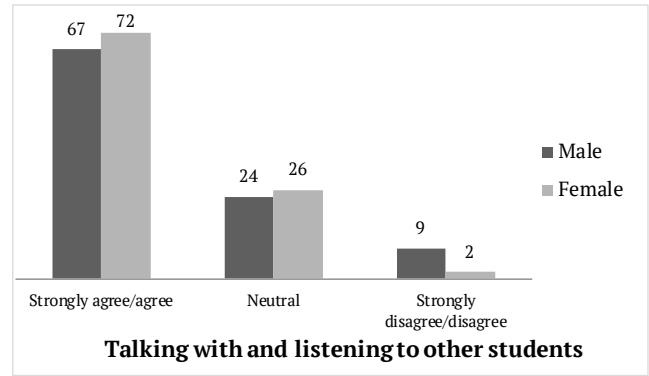


Figure 27. Do you like talking with and listening to other students? (percentages).

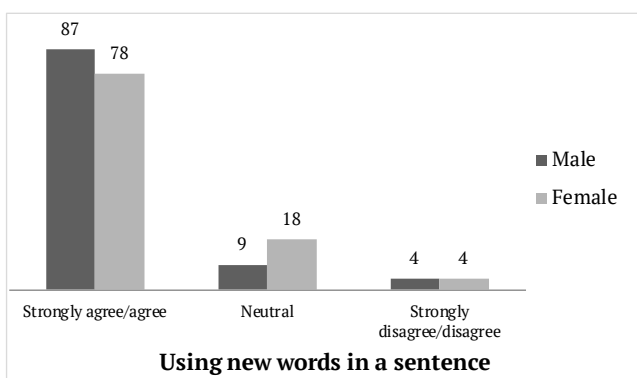


Figure 25. When learning new vocabulary, do you like using new words in a sentence? (percentages).

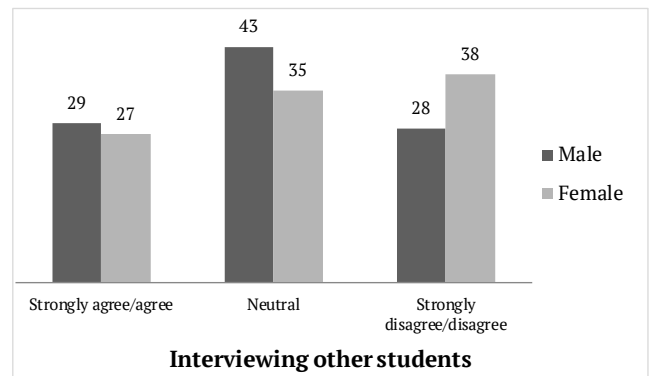


Figure 28. Do you like interviewing other students? (percentages).

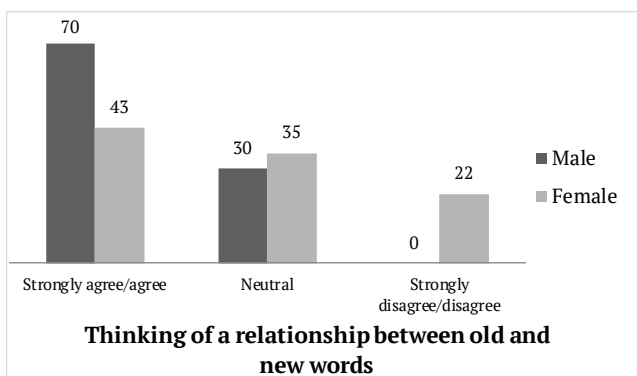


Figure 26. When learning new vocabulary, do you like thinking of a relationship between old and new words? (percentages).

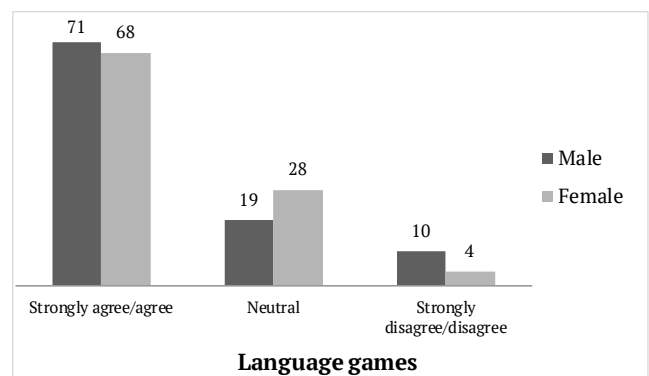


Figure 29. Do you like language games? (percentages).

### Speaking/creative skills

Bulgarian students' opinions on speaking activities reflect the above-mentioned language anxiety to a certain degree. To the question "Do you like repeating what you hear?", half of the males expressed negative opinions, while females showed neutral attitudes at 40 percent (See Figure 23). Similarly, to the question "When learning new vocabulary, do you like guessing the meaning of the new word?", almost half of the male

participants' answers reflected dislike, while female participants were mostly divided among positive and neutral opinions (See Figure 24).

Although guessing the meaning of new words was clearly not favoured by the majority, answers to the question "When learning new vocabulary, do you like using new words in a sentence?" reflected more positive attitudes on both parts (See Figure 25). These opinions may suggest that once the basic vocabulary and language skills are developed, students enjoy

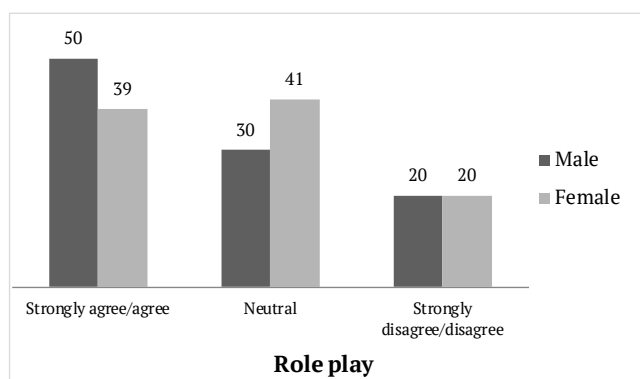


Figure 30. Do you like role playing? (percentages).

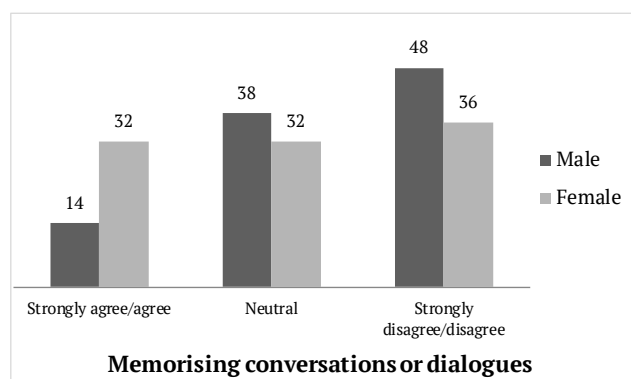


Figure 31. Do you like memorising conversations or dialogues? (percentages).

building speech strategies and increasing fluency. The question “*When learning new vocabulary, do you like thinking of a relationship between old and new words?*” divided opinions, this being the strategy more successful among males, while females’ opinions were rather mixed, tending to be slightly more positive and neutral (See Figure 26). Both male and female students expressed favourable viewpoints when asked “*Do you like talking with and listening to other students?*” (See Figure 27). However, when asked “*Do you like interviewing other students?*”, viewpoints pointed towards the neutral and negative end of the spectrum (See Figure 28). When asked “*Do you like language games?*”, most respondents expressed very favourable opinions (See Figure 29). Similarly, to the question “*Do you like role playing?*”, half of the males were positive, while most of the females’ opinions were divided among positive and neutral (See Figure 30). However, in rather sharp contrast, the majority of the participants disliked or had neutral attitudes when asked “*Do you like memorising conversations or dialogues?*” (See Figure 31).

## Discussion

The results, in percentages, were analysed according to the four main skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The individuals’ genders and individual versus group working preferences were also taken into account. The findings obtained from this study offer some notable insights, suggesting that learning style preferences are of vital importance to consider. According to the data, learners’ most preferred ways of learning English were in small groups, and in the case of most females, individually. On the other hand, at least half of the participants clearly disliked studying in large groups. In any case, some figures showed that a noticeable number of students had no clear preference on working individually, in pairs, or in groups. If taken positively, this may indicate the

adaptability of Bulgarian students for the sake of learning. However, the number of neutral answers may be due to either a lack of interest on the topic while filling out the questionnaire or a lack of motivation in attending the lessons altogether.

As for the listening activities, the results showed that most students preferred listening activities when accompanied by visual aids, in particular TV, videos, or films, yet, karaoke and lyrics fill-in activities were an obvious exception to this. The opinions showed that learners liked, or at least were neutral, when guest speakers (using body language and gestures) delivered information, but listening activities that required solely listening skills, such as in the case of the radio or podcasts, were viewed as mostly negative.

The case of reading in a second language is definitely a favoured activity among the participants, particularly when accompanied by visual materials that may help deciphering and constructing the meaning of the text. However, opinions were more neutral in the areas where students were supposed to use their capacity to guess the meaning of new words, or using their ability to predict the general message of the text by relying on their previous knowledge.

Writing activities were viewed with moderate success. Students disliked repetitive tasks, such as writing words several times for the sake of memorising them. However, writing homework and making summaries were among the most enjoyable tasks. It seems that writing activities that rely on students’ previous knowledge or the production of short synopses of texts encourage learners to move out of their comfort zones with secure steps.

Speaking exercises caused a division of opinions as well. Students mostly disliked repeating words and expressions to be learned, memorising dialogues, guessing the meaning of a new word, and interviewing other students. More positive attitudes could be observed when the activity was related to using words in a new sentence, thinking of relationships between old and new words, talking to other students, role play, and language games. Therefore, it is safe to say

that inspiring, amusing, and brainstorming activities that are placed in a relaxed atmosphere were largely favoured by both genders.

The often diverse opinions suggest that learners are not fully aware of their learning strengths and learning style preferences. Therefore, both educators and students should consider ways to uncover and recognize the areas where learning strengths can be reinforced and learning styles can be expanded for the sake of enhancing foreign language learning strategies.

The findings were sometimes unexpected. The result that corroborates previous theories is that many learners were not aware of their learning style preferences, and had no clear learning strategies in the context of learning a foreign language. Also, language anxiety prevented some students from liking and/or readily participating in certain activities that could further enhance their achievement. However, the eagerness of writing homework and engaging in small-group talking and problem solving suggests that students had rather strong intrinsic motivation to learn English. Therefore, these results may be interpreted as a lack of proper guidance in discovering, understanding, and developing the student's individual learning style preferences. With the educators' assistance, these skills could open new horizons in foreign language learning, enabling learners to better comprehend and widen their cognitive capacities.

### Conclusion

Given its strong psychological and cultural implications, learning a second/foreign language is a highly complex task to undertake. Therefore, it is important to notice that, although learners may have consolidated learning style preferences in other subjects or domains, their approach may need to be re-negotiated and expanded when learning a new language. Addressing and comprehending students' learning style preferences and competence is a dual responsibility. Educators should facilitate diverse activities, educational materials, and assessment methods in order to help students find the most appropriate learning styles to gain and strengthen knowledge. During this process, students should consolidate and internalise concepts, build new strategies on already acquired knowledge, and utilize opportunities to engage in practicing English with their peers. Also, advising students on their learning strengths may eventually empower them to overcome new challenges and persevere in remembering new structures and difficult information while maintaining focus, motivation, and grit. Teacher training

institutions should place more emphasis on certain psychological aspects of teaching, such as student motivation and paralanguage. These skills may help future teachers decipher students' attitudes in order to guide learners according to their individual needs and teach students to be more self-conscious of learning strategies. Mutual respect between students and teachers is fundamental in this area, since learning style preferences are part of students' character and identity (Mehrdad & Ahghar, 2013, p.105). Although this research provides readers with practical data, the limitations are not to be overlooked. Further research is needed to better determine how English teachers' nationality, teaching style, student motivation skills, attitude, and capability to guide learners to find and develop their learning strengths affect learning success. The second part of this research will attempt to answer to these questions.

### References

- Archibald, A. (2004). Writing in a Second Language. Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies Guide to Good Practice. Retrieved from: <https://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/2175>
- Arias, Y, B. & García, O.L.N. (2013). How effective is cooperative learning in EFL/ESL Teaching/Learning Process? Retrieved from: <http://repositorio.utp.edu.co/dspace/bitstream/handle/11059/4038/42840712B642.pdf?sequence=1>
- Bada, E. & Okan, Z. (2000). Students' Language Learning Preferences. *TESL-EJ*, 4(3). Retrieved from: <http://tesl-ej.org/ej15/a1.html>
- Brown, J.S., Collins, A. & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning, *Educational Researcher*, 18(1), 32-42.
- Burns, A. (2012). *A Holistic Approach to Teaching Speaking in the Language Classroom*. Paper presented at: 25th ETA-ROC Anniversary Conference: Epoch Making in English Language Teaching and Learning, Taipei, Taiwan. Retrieved from: [http://www.andrasprak.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.204517.1411636356!/menu/standard/file/Anne\\_Burns.pdf](http://www.andrasprak.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.204517.1411636356!/menu/standard/file/Anne_Burns.pdf)
- Buttery, T. J. (1980). Listening: A skill analysis. *Education*, 101(2), 181.
- Chomsky, N. (1979). *Language and responsibility*. New York, NY: Martin's Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. & Csizér, K. (2012). How to design and analyse surveys in SLA research? In A. Mackey & S. Gass (Eds.), *Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition: A Practical Guide* (pp. 74-94). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

- Folley, S. (2015). The Effect of Visual Cues in Listening Comprehension: Pedagogical Implications for Non-Native Speakers of English. *Culminating Projects in English*, 39. Retrieved from: [http://repository.stcloudstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=enl\\_etds](http://repository.stcloudstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=enl_etds)
- Frawley, W. (1997). *Vygotsky and Cognitive Science: Language and the Unification of the Social and Computational Mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Goh, C. C. M., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Grimm, D. (2004). *Individual learning versus group learning in a suburban second grade classroom* (Unpublished MA thesis), Rowan University, Glasboro.
- Guiora, A. Z. (1983). The Dialectic of Language Acquisition, An Epistemology for the Language Sciences. *Language Learning*, 33(5), 3-12.
- Gullberg, M. & McCafferty, S. (2008). Introduction to gesture and SLA: Toward an integrated approach. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 30(2), 133-146.
- Horowitz, D. M. (1986). What professors actually require: Academic tasks for the ESL classroom. *Tesol Quarterly*, 20(3), 445-462.
- Huguet, À., & Llorca, E. (2001). Language Attitudes of School Children in Two Catalan/Spanish Bilingual Communities. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 4(4), 267-282.
- Johnson, K. (1996). *Language teaching and skill learning*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Karim, K. (2003). *First language (L1) influence on second language (L2) reading: The role of transfer*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mmduvic.ca/index.php/WPLC/article/download/5164/2136>
- Kecskes, I. (2008). The effect of the second language on the first language, *Babylonia*, 2, 30-34.
- Krashen, S. D. (1984). *Writing: Research, theory, and applications*. Oxford, Pergamon Press.
- Lems, K., Miller, D. L., & Soro, M. T. (2010). *Teaching reading to English learners. Insight from Linguistics*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press.
- Long, M. H., & Porter, P. A. (1985). Group Work, Interlanguage Talk, and Second Language Acquisition. *TESOL QUARTERLY*, 19(2), 208-229.
- Mehrdad, A. G., & Ahghar, M. R. (2013). EFL Students' Language Learning Preferences at Islamic Azad University-Hamedan Branch. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93, 102-106.
- Mikulecky, B. S. (2008). *Teaching reading in a Second Language*. Retrieved from: <http://www.longmanhomeusa.com/content/FINAL-LO%20RES-Mikulecky-Reading%20Monograph%20.pdf>
- Moenikia, M., & Zahed-Babelan, A. (2010). The role of learning styles in second language learning among distance education students. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 1169-1173.
- Moores-Abdool, W., Yahya, N., & Unzueta, C. H. (2009). *Learning preferences of Saudi university students with native English speaking teachers*. Paper presented at the International Conference of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Association of Language Teachers (KSAALT), Al-Khobar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED510952>
- Mulalic, A., Shah, P.M., & Ahmad, F. (2009). Learning-Style preference of ESL students. *ASEAN Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 1(2) 9-17.
- Myles, J. (2002). Second Language Writing and Research: The Writing Process and Error Analysis in Student Text. *TESL-EJ*, 6(2), 1-20.
- Oxford, R. (1993). Instructional implications of gender differences in second/foreign language (L2) learning styles and strategies. *Applied Language Learning* 4, 65-94.
- Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: A classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(2), 229-225.
- Reinders, H. (2010). Towards a Classroom Pedagogy for Learner Autonomy: A Framework of Independent Language Learning Skills. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(5), 40-55.
- Samuels, S.J. (2007). The DIBELS tests: Is speed of barking at print what we mean by reading fluency? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 42(4), 563-566.
- Schmidt, R., Boraie, D., & Kassabgy, O. (1998). Foreign Language Motivation: Internal Structure and External Connections. In R. Oxford (Ed.), *Language Learning Motivation: Pathways to the New Century* (pp.9-70). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i
- Tanveer, M. (2007). *Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language*. (Unpublished MA Thesis), University of Glasgow, Glasgow.
- Tsang, W. K., & Wong, M. (2000). Giving grammar the place it deserves in process writing. *Prospect*, 15(1), 34-45.
- Wang, Z. (2014). Review of the influence of L1 in L2 acquisition. *CS Canada, Studies on Literature and Language*, 9(2), 57-60.
- Williams, J. (2012). The potential role(s) of writing in second language development. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21, 321-331.
- Yau, M. (1991). The role of language factors in second language writing. In L. Malave & G. Duquette (Eds.), *Language, culture and cognition: A collection of studies in first and second language acquisition* (pp.266-283). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

## Appendix A.

### Questionnaire

#### HOW DO YOU LIKE LEARNING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE?

I would like to ask for your help by answering the following questions concerning English language learning. Don't worry, this is NOT a test and you DON'T have to write your name. Moreover, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. I am very interested in your personal opinions. Please give your answers sincerely. Thank you very much for your help!

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you:  Male /  Female?

#### IN CLASS DO YOU LIKE LEARNING...

- individually?
- in pairs?
- in small groups?
- in a large group?

#### DO YOU LIKE LEARNING BY...

- listening?
- reading?
- copying from the board?
- listening and taking notes?
- reading and making notes?
- repeating what you hear?
- making summaries?
- writing homework regularly?

#### WHEN LEARNING NEW VOCABULARY, DO YOU LIKE LEARNING BY...

- using new words in a sentence?
- thinking of relationships between old and new words?
- saying or writing words several times?
- guessing the meaning of a new word?
- reading without looking up or translating words?

#### DO YOU LIKE LEARNING FROM...

- Television / videos / films?
- Radio / podcasts?
- CDs / applications / online?
- Written material / analysis?
- The whiteboard?
- Pictures / posters / cards?

#### DO YOU LIKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES IN YOUR CLASS?

- Role play
- Language games
- Songs/Karaoke – fill in the missing words
- Talking with and listening to other students
- Interviewing other students
- Memorising conversations or dialogues
- Getting information from guest speakers
- Getting information from planned visits (Museums, galleries, etc...)

With the advent of communications technology, many aspects of life have been in a state of a flux, including

## Impact of Mobile Assisted Language Learning on Learner Autonomy in EFL Reading Context

Abduljalil Nasr Hazaea, Ali Abbas Alzubi  
Najran University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Abduljalil Nasr Hazaea, Department of English, Najran University, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: agaleel@gmail.com

Traditional classrooms confine English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading to the textbook and the classroom setting, something that demotivates active reading. With the advent of mobile technology, however, such boundaries can be broken to include external reading materials where students could read and share anytime and anywhere. This paper investigates the role of mobile technology in enhancing Learner Autonomy (LA) in the EFL reading context among students in the Preparatory Year (PY) of Najran University in Saudi Arabia. A reading class of 30 students utilised mobile applications (WhatsApp and internet search engines such as Google) to access external reading materials and interact with their peers and teachers outside the classroom. Qualitative data collection underwent a number of procedures. The baseline data was constructed from the students' portfolios, which reported the participants' traditional reading practices and use of mobiles. Then, the participants were encouraged to use internet search engines and WhatsApp group to share their readings. Finally, five participants were interviewed. The data analysis revealed that the participants' LA is improved through the use of selected mobile applications in terms of taking responsibility for and making decisions about reading materials and the time and place of reading. The study recommends further investigation into the role of mobile applications for generating learners' own tasks and writing skills.

**Keywords:** EFL reading, learner autonomy, MALL, mobiles, motivation, Saudi Arabia

language learning systems. This change is brought about by young people, technology of communication (Buckingham, 2001), and the worldwide use of the English language. English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners can enjoy their own learning through innovative learning methods. Learner Autonomy (LA) is an approach that involves learners in mediated mental activities, so they become in charge of their own language learning (Benson & Voller, 2014).

In traditional EFL classes, Saudi learners show low levels of motivation in reading skills. This is because the nature of teaching and learning, reading practices is mostly confined to the textbook and the classroom settings at schools where most reading is done in the form of intensive reading (Al-Nujaidi, 2003). Based on the researchers' experience, students join universities as exam-driven learners. This is because they are used to being spoon-fed with knowledge, and thus almost zero interaction occurs. This phenomenon has

## Влияние мобильного обучения языку на автономию обучающегося в контексте чтения EFL

Абдулджалил Наср Хазааи, Али Аббас Альзуби  
Университет Наджран

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Абдулджалил Наср Хазааи, Департамент английского языка, Университет Наджран, г. Наджран, Саудовская Аравия. E-mail: fagaleel@gmail.com

Традиционные занятия ограничивают формирование навыка чтения при изучении английского языка как иностранного (EFL) посредством ориентирования на учебник и оснащенность аудитории, что демотивирует саму активность обучающихся при занятии чтением. С появлением мобильных технологий, однако, такие ограничения могут быть разрушены, чтобы иметь возможность подключения внешних материалов для чтения, чтобы студенты могли читать и делиться в любое время и в любом месте. В данной статье исследуется роль мобильных технологий в повышении автономии учащихся (LA) в контексте чтения EFL среди студентов подготовительного года (PY) Наджранского университета в Саудовской Аравии. Аудитория по классу чтения из 30 студентов использовала мобильные приложения (WhatsApp и поисковые системы Интернета, такие как Google) для доступа к внешним материалам для чтения и взаимодействия со своими сверстниками и учителями за пределами класса. Качественный сбор данных прошел ряд процедур. Исходные данные были получены из портфолио студентов, в которых сообщалось о традиционной практике чтения и использовании мобильных телефонов. Затем участникам было предложено использовать поисковые системы Интернета и WhatsApp group для обмена своими примерами. Наконец, были опрошены пять участников. Анализ данных показал, что автономность участников совершенствуется за счет использования отдельных мобильных приложений с точки зрения принятия ответственности и принятия решений о чтении материалов и времени и месте для их прочтения. В исследовании рекомендуется продолжение изучения роли мобильных приложений для создания собственных задач и выработки навыков письма.

**Ключевые слова:** чтение EFL, автономия обучающегося, MALL, мобильные телефоны, мотивация, Саудовская Аравия

caused learners to become educationally isolated, less interactive, and less motivated (Nezami, 2012). Learning a foreign language in a country where almost all of the people speak only the mother tongue dramatically reduces the possibility of mastering that language and makes it almost impossible to have constant and immediate access to people who can assist learners with practicing, learning, and communicating in the new language (Kukulaska-Hulme, 2016).

Furthermore, it has been noticed that although smartphones are often prohibited in the classroom, there are attempts by students to use them secretly for learning inside the classroom (Hazaea & Alzubi, 2016). This utilisation can be considered a sort of motivation. EFL learners could use mobile applications to improve a sense of LA (Castillo & Bonilla, 2014; Leis, Tohei, & Cooke, 2015) in EFL reading if urged to access and reflect on extra reading materials in connection with the reading textbooks or various materials of their own choice. It is



assumed that if students are encouraged to employ certain mobile applications for EFL reading, they may be motivated in terms of choice of reading materials, time, and place of reading.

In the Saudi context, the role of mobiles in fostering LA has not been directly addressed. The review of literature shows a dire need to highlight a student-centred learning approach in order to promote more independence, confidence, and freedom of material choice inside and outside the classroom (Al-Jarf, 2012; Al-Shehri, 2011; Farooq, 2013; Palfreyman, 2012; Thabit & Dehlawi, 2012).

Therefore, this may be the time to explore the role of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in enhancing the learning process in Saudi Arabia. MALL emerged from Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and its appropriateness has proved to be of great value for learning (Chinnery, 2006; Kukulska-Hulme, 2009, 2012). MALL provides EFL learners with the chance to experience new learning modes that go beyond the classroom context, offering them more flexibility, choices in terms of language content, ways of delivery, learning space, and time, thereby enhancing autonomy (Djoub, 2014; Kukulska-Hulme, 2016).

The present qualitative paper is part of a large project on the efficiency of using mobiles in EFL reading contexts (Hazaea & Alzubi, 2016). It employs an action research design to investigate the use of selected mobile applications (namely; WhatsApp and internet search engines) for enhancing LA in EFL reading contexts in the Preparatory Year of Najran University in Saudi Arabia through a) the search for reading materials, and b) the flexibility of time and place of reading.

### Research Questions

1. What is the role of internet search engines in motivating students' choices of reading materials?
2. What is the role of WhatsApp in motivating students to read regardless of time and place constraints?

### Literature Review

In light of the research questions, this section scrutinizes the existing literature about Learner Autonomy (LA) in the EFL context. Then, it develops a conceptual framework of MALL with relevant mobile applications. In so doing, it focuses on two dimensions of LA: the choice of reading materials, and the flexibility of time and place of reading.

### Learner Autonomy in the EFL Context

Learner autonomy (LA) refers to the capacity of learners to learn actively in independent settings (Little, 1991). This capacity involves the motivation (Little, 2006) to learn without the constraints of time and place of learning. LA is also defined as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981 p. 3). This paper subsumes these two definitions and operationalises LA as the ability of EFL learners to take charge of their reading in independent settings. This definition entails learners being responsible for making decisions about their learning in terms of finding reading materials regardless of time and place of reading.

LA motivates learners. Little (1991) argues that learners are highly motivated once they take charge of their learning. In this case, the role of teachers becomes paving the way and empowering learners to establish a sense of responsibility and freedom to choose what and how to learn without the constraints of time and place of learning (Benson, 2001). Motivation can also be seen in a reader's independence, responsibility, and choice of reading materials (Dickinson, 1995). It falls into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation entails only the free will of the reader for being interested in doing an activity or reading a topic as the only motive to do it. Extrinsic motivation indicates an external pressure to do an activity like the promise of a reward. This motivation is likely to work in foreign language learning settings where learners have not developed intrinsic motivation yet (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In a word, autonomous EFL readers must acquire both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Oxford, 2003) to perform well.

Previous research shows that LA motivates learners. Wang and Palincsar (1989) found that the more learners are responsible for their own learning, the more they are motivated to learn. Dickinson (1995) argues that motivation and LA share certain key features: reader independence, responsibility, and choice. Chia (2005) found that the ability to self-access learning materials helped students slightly improve autonomy; the students welcomed the idea of making decisions and taking charge of their own reading. Haseborg (2012) claimed an increase in students' motivation based on the autonomous learning choices. Castillo and Bonilla (2014) reported Colombian school students' enhancement in making decisions for learning, doing homework, increasing reading awareness, and motivation upon giving them the choice of reading materials.

A review of the literature also shows an existing gap for EFL reading autonomy in the Saudi context. Some studies focused on teachers' and students' perceptions on the use of LA. In a survey of EFL undergraduates' reading interests, Al-Nafisah (2011) showed that

the students read for improving their language and academic achievements; they read to keep in touch with local, economic, cultural, scientific, and political developments, improving their local status, and maintaining up-to-date knowledge of what had been taking place. Farooq (2013) revealed that teachers are aware of the concept of LA, but most of them do not practice it due to the curriculum and physical constraints. On the other hand, students want to be the best in the class, but they lack motivation and training to be autonomous learners. Similarly, teachers expect learners to work independently and take responsibility for their learning; however, teachers themselves lack proper training and expertise in this area (Al Asmari, 2013). The lack of teachers' expertise in employing LA is reflected on the learners' lower motivation and reluctance to take responsibility for their own learning, an over-reliance on the teachers, and the spoon-feeding habit (Tamer, 2013).

### Previous Research on MALL

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is concerned with the implementation of learning theories and approaches to deliver English language learning via mobile technology. According to Kukulska-Hulme (2016), MALL provides the opportunity to extend language learning outside the classroom settings; it delimits the time and space settings of traditional classrooms. MALL also promotes language skills, including reading skills, and helps support a student-centered approach. MALL can be more effective if learners are equipped with certain tools: support from teachers, and technologies and materials (Kukulska-Hulme, 2016) that may finally result in learners taking responsibility for perceiving a new language.

English language learning can be fostered by MALL. Language is considered an active and continuous process and cannot be restricted by time and place. EFL learners always need to interact and communicate in English for better learning outcomes. Mobile social networking could maintain an effective learning environment and create meaningful learning opportunities (Almekhlafy & Alzubi, 2016) that cater to students' needs and promote student-centeredness (Kim & Kwon, 2012) and collaborative learning outside the classroom (Al-rahmi, Othman, & Musa, 2014; Huang, Jeng, & Huang, 2009). Al-Shehri (2011) concluded that mobile Facebook would enhance EFL instruction methods to help them become more collaborative and enjoyable.

Mobile technology plays an important role in enhancing reading skills. Previous research shows that MALL affects vocabulary learning strategies, autonomy, and reading comprehension (Nosratinia, Saveiy, & Zaker, 2014; Zarei & Gahremani, 2010). Technology improved autonomous learning through

an English learning model that included short stories, newspaper and magazine articles, letters, and internet articles (Wang, 2010). The same author found that learners promoted English language competence, and they became more active and positive in English language learning (Wang, 2010). Learners can also express themselves in a virtually-enhanced, socio-cultural context for communicating and learning with handheld technology (Walters, 2012). Similarly, vocabulary self-selection strategies develop learners' autonomous learning; learners were motivated to learn on their own and helped encode new items effectively (Ogawa, Nation, Webb, Daulton, & Swenson, 2012).

The use of mobile technology improves LA in the EFL context. Almekhlafy and Alzubi (2016) found that students developed a sense of independency to choose what to interact on through WhatsApp in the Saudi EFL context. In India, Ramamurthy and Rao (2015) argued that the use of mobiles pushed EFL undergraduates towards autonomous learning. In Japan, Leis et al. (2015) found that learners showed a tendency toward being autonomous in the sense of investing their free time and taking charge of their own learning. Moreover, in a questionnaire on the potential of mobiles to support learning aspects, Djoub (2015) indicated that the limited use of mobiles is not likely to help learners improve autonomy since it does not go beyond the objective of enhancing their knowledge of the language.

Therefore, EFL learners must depend on other ways to manage and ensure that they receive enough language practice and support. Technology that does not have any borders in terms of time, place, open sources, and preferences may be capable of motivating, supporting, assisting, and even fostering learning (Selwyn, 2010).

The present paper discusses EFL readers' use of some mobile applications, namely WhatsApp and internet search engines outside the classroom to improve their autonomous learning skills in EFL reading. Readers are motivated through enabling them to take charge of and make decisions about their learning in terms of the choice of reading materials, time, and place for reading. The following table (Table 1) shows the aspects of LA focused on in this paper.

*Table 1*  
*Conceptual Framework of Learner Autonomy in EFL Reading*

MALL	Learner Autonomy
Internet search engines	Choice of reading materials
WhatsApp	Flexibility of time and place for reading

In Table 1, it is hypothesized that the learners' use of internet search engines through their own mobiles would motivate them to expand their choice

of reading materials. The use of WhatsApp would also help students practice reading regardless of time and place.

## Method

This paper reports on a qualitative action research that was conducted with a reading class at the Preparatory Year of Najran University in Saudi Arabia. An available EFL reading class of male students was encouraged to use their mobiles for EFL reading. The treatment lasted for 14 weeks during which the data were collected via students' portfolios, a semi-structured interview and WhatsApp group.

### Setting and Participants

The Preparatory Year (PY) at Najran University prepares new comers for selected university undergraduate programs. In so doing, it bridges the existing gaps between school outcomes and university needs. Some gaps are related to teaching and learning practices such as rote learning, teacher-centred learning, spoon-feeding habits. The Department of English Language Skills introduces six courses in the English language including Reading Skills.

Around eight hundred students are enrolled every year, and they are categorised into sections. In this paper, an available EFL reading class of 30 students enrolled in the PY was encouraged to use mobiles for learning purposes. The participants shared similar characteristics (e.g. age, gender, English educational background). All participants were males because of gender separation in the Saudi education system, and their age ranged between 18-20 years. English is considered a foreign language for them, with some basic English background in high school.

### Procedure

The research employed the following methods and techniques. Students' portfolios were used to construct the baseline data. At a later stage, a WhatsApp group and semi-structured interviews with five participants were used. The participants were allowed and encouraged to use mobiles to search for and report on reading materials. In so doing, they were involved in taking responsibility for the decision making for reading materials. They could work outside the boundaries of the classroom in terms of selecting reading materials of their own choice where they can enjoy reading what they like and read regardless of time and place.

The research was conducted in three stages. In stage 1, three types of information were collected. First,

information on the students' current employment of mobiles to assist in learning a new language as well as reading practices were surveyed as a starting point. In this stage, the participants were briefed about the nature of the experiment regarding what, where, when, and how to employ the selected mobile applications. Second, in the orientation session, the students were oriented about the potential uses of mobiles for learning purposes, and how they could be utilised. Third, the students received sample exercises on how to search the internet for more information. In other words, the students came to know how to get more information about reading by sharing, interaction, and getting teachers' feedback through the use of the WhatsApp group.

In stage 2, students took the experiment of using mobiles outside the classroom to enhance their sense of independent learning for 14 weeks. The program included tasks and assignments executed by learners outside the classroom. They were required to search the internet about topics of their choice and share them in the WhatsApp group for interaction with other peers and teachers' feedback.

In stage 3, after the interventional program, students' uses of mobiles in reading outside the classroom were collected through a semi-structured interview with special attention to the motivational aspects of reading materials, place, and time.

## Materials

As a skill-based reading material, *Interaction 1 Reading* Diamond Edition, 2012 was deemed appropriate for this study. According to the course syllabus breakdown, some parts of the textbook were left as self-study materials. For assessment, external reading materials were expected to appear in the tests. As the participants would be motivated by the tests, they would search for the online external materials suggested by the textbook. The textbook also reflects real and actual utilisation in relation to everyday topics such as academic life, home, culture, etc. Each chapter includes activities and assignments that demand learners search the internet for relevant materials. According to the authors of the textbook, these activities aim to encourage autonomous reading among learners. In more detail, the teacher urged the participants to search the internet for extra texts based on the textbook and reflect on them in terms of summaries, discussions, and notes with their peers. Lake and Holster (2011) showed that teachers could monitor participants through summaries of reading texts, a task that examines reading speed, reading motivation, and positive reading identity.

## Students' Portfolios

Students' portfolios assist in reflecting the level of learner autonomy (Rao, 2006). Before the treatment, the participants were asked about features and applications they usually utilise, and their interaction with teachers and peers outside classroom settings. The idea was to find out the current use of mobiles in learning in order to construct the starting points for later analysis. More specifically, the participants responded to the following five questions to identify their views on using mobiles for learning EFL reading inside as well as outside the classroom.

- 1) Are you allowed to use mobiles for reading in English inside the classroom?
- 2) Do you use mobiles for learning reading outside the classroom? Please explain.
- 3) Do you use mobiles for learning English outside the classroom? If yes, Why?
- 4) Do you interact with the teacher and peers outside the classroom? Please explain.
- 5) Do you think that mobiles can be useful for reading in English? Please explain.

## Mobile Applications

Nowadays, many applications and features can be installed on our mobile phones. Two mobile applications are utilised in this paper: Internet search engines and WhatsApp groups.

Internet search engines are applications used to search the internet for information on a certain topic. These applications were made available through mobiles to access the internet. The most popular engines are *Internet Explorer*, *Google Chrome*, and *Firefox*. Learners can utilise such applications to extend their reading choices in connection with the textbook. That is to say, they can read more about certain topics and do more tasks on their own in their free time wherever they wish.

WhatsApp is a well-known application with many features for external group work and interaction. It might be a challenge to monitor external tasks of a textbook outside the boundaries of a traditional classroom, but WhatsApp can help as a communication tool that enables teachers to monitor participants' self-study activities and reflections in a non-traditional classroom (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014). Therefore, a WhatsApp group was used in this experiment for two purposes. It was used as an application that enhances LA by providing and reporting flexibility for time and place of reading. It was also used as a platform for the teacher-researchers to monitor the interactions among the participants in an EFL reading context.

A WhatsApp group was initiated and named with the course name (Reading-1), section number, and the reading textbook's cover as the group profile picture.

The participants joined the group through their mobile numbers. The teacher-researchers were nominated as the group supervisors.

The 30 participants were informed about the purpose and conditions of participation in the group: to be in contact with each other at any time and from any place with regard to the reading class; to share textbook exercises and external reading materials; and to increase reading practice using WhatsApp. It was also stipulated that all comments and postings be in English language. To motivate the participants to learn the textbook, a teacher-researcher posted a passage about the school life of Asian universities followed by a set of comprehension questions and requested that the participants answer them in the WhatsApp group.

For the data analysis, interactions on a topic for one week were considered one segment. WhatsApp shows the date and time of each posting. For time slots, a day is divided into four slots: morning, afternoon, evening, and night. As for locations, they are revealed through various expressions of adverbial phrases such as *in the bus*, *at the gym*, *in the cafeteria*. A coding system was also used. For example (WTW-8) stands for the teacher-researchers' participation, and (WSW-8) stands for a student's participation; where WTW stands for the abbreviated form of WhatsApp Teacher Week and WSW for WhatsApp Student Week.

## Semi-structured Interview

Guided by the theoretical orientation on MALL and LA, a semi-structured interview was developed to elicit information from five of the participants on the motivational aspects of choice regarding reading materials, time, and place for reading. The interview included questions such as: Does using an internet search engine and WhatsApp give you other places than the classroom to improve your reading skills? Where? Do you find that these applications help you overcome preparing for the lesson at home? Did you find that the online reading materials helped you understand the relevant topics in your textbook? How? What were the challenges you faced when you participated in this reading processes outside the classroom?

The participants were interviewed individually and informally. Five to ten minute semi-structured interviews were conducted. The respondents' preferences of reading materials, time, and place to read were targeted in semi-structured interviews. A coding system was used; For example, (SSI-1) stands for Semi-Structured Interview and the sequence number stands for the interviewee.

## Data Analysis

The data analysis showed that the participants were

motivated to learn outside the classroom in terms of choosing their own reading materials, time, and place for reading.

### Analysis of Students' Portfolios

The results of the data analysis of students' portfolios showed that prior to the treatment, the participants' use of mobiles either inside (Hazaea & Alzubi, 2016) or outside the classroom was at a lower level with regard to EFL reading and interaction with others for learning purposes. Students are not allowed to use mobiles inside the class; however, they sometimes use them secretly. They also use mobiles for learning reading outside the classroom in a very limited manner. They mostly use mobile dictionaries to get meanings of new words. They use their mobiles to call their friends and ask about class times, exams, homework. However, real interaction with their peers and teachers were reported negatively outside the classroom.

This research, as a part of a project on the utilisation of mobiles in learning EFL reading, is concerned with the potential of mobiles outside the classroom to enable students with more freedom in the choice of materials, time, and place of reading. These three motivational aspects could contribute to the learners' overall autonomous learning atmosphere in which they depend on themselves to practice reading outside the classroom.

Therefore, students' keenness and wish to learn a new language using the latest technology of mobiles geared this study. They have the belief that their own mobiles could be useful to encourage them to extend learning outside the border of the classroom, thus allowing them more roles of responsibility and control.

### Analysis of Mobile Applications

Before posting in the WhatsApp group, the participants used their search engines to find information. This is manifested through the links copy/pasted from the search engine and shared in the WhatsApp group. Because of this technical interference between the two applications, the data analysis collected by both applications is considered one unit.

The data analysis revealed that although participation was low at the beginning, the participants' interactions increased as the intervention was going on. The participants read and shared external materials from the internet in line with those tasks assigned in the textbook. The materials were shared and reflected in the form of summaries, notes, links, tables, charts, maps, etc.

The data analysis of the WhatsApp group revealed that the participants improved their learning time of

EFL reading. The content analysis of the participants' posts and interactions proves the variance of time to learn EFL reading. At the week level, the highest level of interaction was noticed on the weekends and on exam days. At the day level, most of the interactions were conducted in the evenings. A good amount of interaction happened at noon and in the afternoons. Less interaction occurred in the mornings and most of it at that time was irrelevant to reading purposes. That is to say, the morning interaction was usually about issues such as enquiries about school and holidays. The least interaction was at nights and was often about urgent matters such as exams and the late submissions of assignments.

The participants have become able to search the internet for some relevant topics and share their reflection with their peers. The shared tasks include topics on community living, weather, favorite foods, history, culture, health, TV shows or movies, friendship poems or quotes, and sports. Participants were required to provide the links to the website addresses. The teacher motivated the participants to read external materials in connection with the textbook as evidenced in the following excerpt on community living:

#### Excerpt 1

*'Hi All. Today, I want you to use your mobile search engines and find information about community living situations on campus. Here are some suggestions: surviving dorm life, residence hall living, campus housing, or student housing. Your reflection on the topic should be in form of notes to be shared and discussed with other classmates. Good luck.'*  
(WTW-1)

Some students were motivated to do the assignment and shared their notes with peers in the WhatsApp group as shown in the following excerpt.

#### Excerpt 2

*'Hello teacher, hello students. I searched on residence hall living of University of Central Missouri and made these notes. Main idea: To maximize student success, first-year and second-year students are required to live on campus. Supporting details: making friends, getting used to college life, sleep later, cook less, and experience more.'*  
<https://www.ucmo.edu/housing/reshall/>  
(WSW-1)

One more assignment was to do an internet search about weather in two parts of the world.

#### Excerpt 3

*'Good Evening everybody. I would like you to compare weather in two countries and reflect on which one seems more pleasant to you.'*

(WTW-2)

One student provided the following comparisons in the form of a table:

Excerpt 4

*'Date: 5/10/2016  
Place: Najran & Abha  
Temperatures: Najran/ 38- Abha/ 25  
Conditions: Najran/ sunny- Abha/ partially cloudy  
My favourite one is Najran coz I like it as making me feel more comfortable'  
<http://sa.arabiaweather.com/> (WSW-2)*

The students were asked to access the internet to look for recipes of food they liked.

Excerpt 5

*'I hope you're having a very nice weekend. Use your smartphones to look up a recipe including ingredients and say why you chose this food.'* (WTW-4)

A student replied and provided the following excerpt:

Excerpt 6

*'Pls. follow link provided to see my favourite recipe. It is falafel. I like it coz it is yummy and available everywhere.'  
<http://www.vegrecipesofindia.com/falafel-recipe-chickpea-falafel-recipe/> (WSW-4)*

The participants were requested to get information about a different culture in the world.

Excerpt 7

*'Dear students, I want you to write five things (food, sport, language, music, greetings, gestures, money, architecture, etc.) about a culture of your own choice from the internet and compare them with your culture.'* (WTW-7)

The participants responded to the teacher's request and provided the following excerpt:

Excerpt 8

*'I checked the Japanese culture and got the next info. Religion/ Shinto, get married Christian and die Buddhist. Sports/ karate and kendo. Social conventions/ owing, taking off shoes. Food/ sushi, Osaka, Kobe beef. Drinks/ golden gai, green tea. (WSW-7)  
In my culture, we like football, we shake hands and kiss noses, kabsa is most famous. Our favourite drink is shambania and religion is Islam.'  
<https://www.insidejapantours.com/japanese-culture/> (WSW-7)*

Teacher asked the participants to find health advice on the internet on one aspect of health as evidenced in the following:

Excerpt 9

*'Pls do an internet search for advice about any of health aspects. You can look for tips on healthy eating, running, walking, dieting, doing yoga, living a long life, quitting smoking, or anything else interests you. Then express your agreement or disagreement on three aspects.'*(WTW-11)

A student in response to the teacher's request provided the following:

Excerpt 10

*'I fnd some tips on how to stop smoking again and want u to look at them. I a with tak up a new hobby, get a stress ball, and reduc your caffeine. I don't support clean home drink water a lot.'  
<https://quitday.org/quit-smoking/quit-smoking-tips/> (WSW-11)*

### Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews showed that the participants utilised WhatsApp and internet search engines outside the classroom freely. They communicated in their free time and from different places.

To illustrate more, a student provided the following answers about using mobiles to learn independently:

*'Using WhatsApp helped me to ask for feedback whenever I wish and at any place on any information with friends in order to improve my writing.' ... 'I use my mobile to access reading materials on the internet regardless time and place.'* (SSI-1)

When asked the following question: When and where to use the mobile for learning? The interviewees (SSI-3.5) respectively answered,

*'When I am free I use mobile at home for learning. (SSI-3)  
I can use mobile at gym and on bus whenever I feel free to read more. (SSI-5)*

The interviews revealed that participants have learned how to acquire knowledge and search for information using mobiles, which has become as an outside of the classroom teacher; e.g. (SSI-2) explained,

*'Mobile has become a great help for me. (SSI-2),  
Mobile is like a portable teacher for me.'* (SSI-4)

WhatsApp and online access on mobiles has reinforced the participants' autonomy as they have started to read more newspapers, magazines, stories, etc. of their choice than before, for example, (SSI-1) said,

*'Whenever I am free, I use my mobile to read some newspapers in English.'* (SSI-1)  
*'I also read articles in English.'* (SSI-5).

WhatsApp encouraged the participants to use mobiles under the teacher's direction and supervision, as they believe that mobiles have become valuable tools in learning. In more detail, (SSI-5) provided,

*'I really think mobile is very helpful, but it should be used under the control of the teacher.'* (SSI-5)

The data analysis also showed that mobile features were used outside the classroom to scan the reading exercises and tasks to be posted in the WhatsApp group (SSI-1, 2, 3, 5). The participants used mobile notes outside the classroom to write difficult words as indicated in the SSI-1 interviewee's answer:

*'When I am outside I use mobile memos to copy down any important thing.'* (SSI-1).

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews showed that the participants used their mobiles for reading texts and messages (SSI-1, 2, 3, 4, 5). It was also found that participants utilised WhatsApp to chat in English with native speakers and access reading sources (SSI-1, 3, 5). Participants felt free with their mobiles regarding place and time; they claimed that mobile applications like WhatsApp and internet search engines among other features could be of great help for the EFL learning process when doing homework, assignments, and tasks at any place such as the gym, home, and/ or on public transport (SSI-1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

The interviews revealed that the participants have developed a higher level of independence in terms of getting and searching for information using mobile features (SSI-1, 2, 3, 4, 5). WhatsApp and online access via search engines have reinforced the participants' LA in the EFL context as they have started reading external texts in newspapers, magazines, and stories (SSI-1, 4, 5).

It was also found that a participant faced some challenges trying to get the appropriate authentic reading materials as reported in the following excerpt:

*'I find difficulty in choosing and selecting some reading texts from the internet.'* (SSI-2)

Another participant was afraid that mobiles might distract his attention and consume his time, especially during exams as shown in the following excerpt.

*'Your friends send you a message and you will leave the study and start chat with them.'* (SSI-3).

In general, the participants showed that they were interested in sharing their comments about assignments. It was also found that the participants usually shared their tasks in the form of attachments. More time and efforts were saved for the central delivery of the course outcomes and the learning atmosphere inside the classroom was no longer spoiled, i.e., students kept focused on the lesson objectives and aims rather asking about meanings of new vocabulary and grammar.

## Findings and Discussion

It was found that the participants were highly motivated and more interacted. The study findings also showed that the participants increased a sense of independence in terms of choosing reading materials. The participants used WhatsApp and internet search engines to look up some materials of their choice and reflect on them in the form of summaries, note making, critical thinking, and mind mapping and then suggested online reading passages. Moreover, the participants extended their self-study reading outside the traditional classroom. These findings are reported in line with the research questions.

### **RQ1. What is the role of internet search engines in motivating students' choice of reading materials?**

The participants have learned how to acquire knowledge and search for more information via mobiles, which acted as an outside classroom teacher. WhatsApp encouraged participants to use mobiles under the teacher's direction and supervision inside and outside the classroom as they believe that mobiles are becoming more valuable day by day.

These findings are in agreement with relevant findings in the Saudi context that call for the need to highlight student-centered learning approaches in connection with more independence, confidence, and freedom of material choice inside and outside classroom (Al-Jarf, 2012; Palfreyman, 2012; Thabit & Dehlawi, 2012). Similarly, Al-Shehri (2011) emphasised the role of social networks like Facebook in allowing students to improve and promote their own choice of materials.

The findings of this study have enhanced and facilitated the need to act autonomously and communicate with the world so as to practise the use of the new language and make decisions about their

language learning. Therefore, the use of mobiles in this study addressed the lack of practice in the findings of a number of studies by Al Asmari (2013), Farooq (2013), and Alrabai, (2014), which highlighted the learners' internal motivation to take charge of and make decisions about language learning, but the constraints of the lack of qualified teachers' training, the curriculum, and physical constraints have made the level of learner autonomy very low.

**RQ2: What is the role of WhatsApp in motivating students to read regardless of time and place constraints?**

The findings confirmed flexibility among participants in terms of reading anytime and anywhere. The study findings showed that the participants developed self-reading in terms of time and space. It was also found that they overcame the challenge of missing points if they were late or absent. They could request that their classmates share the missing parts such as solutions, exercises, assignments, or any further explanations in the WhatsApp group. Similarly, the participants utilised WhatsApp and online reading resources outside the classroom such as at home, at the gym, at the playground, and on the bus; to keep connected with their teacher and other classmates regarding doing assignments and homework, and explaining any difficult or confusing points.

The findings of the study totally correspond with what Alshammari, Parkes, and Adlington (2017) argued, that WhatsApp can encourage the modes of peer and autonomous learning in the EFL context, provided that they are accompanied by guidelines on the teachers' contact hours and free time in order to guarantee more chances of success and encourage more learner autonomy (LA). The findings of this study are in agreement with Lake and Holster (2011) in that autonomous learning conditions that can help students improve as self-regulated readers. The findings of the current study also support what Leis et al. (2015) reported, an increase in the awareness of the benefits that mobiles can have for EFL learning. Students extended their learning outside the classroom in their private time and became more autonomous. The findings are also in line with Joseph and Uther (2009) who strongly supported and confirmed the positive sides of technology (photos and videos) in promoting vocabulary skills autonomy. However, the study showed that autonomy can be best utilised outside the classroom as a supplementary and complementary part of what is missed or cannot be completed inside the classroom.

Unexpectedly, although the participants have improved a high level of LA motivation in terms of choices of materials, time and space, it was found that

some participants faced challenges when trying to get appropriate authentic reading materials, and others were worried that mobiles may distract their attention and consume their time, especially on exam days.

**Conclusions and Implications**

This paper reports findings on the effects of mobile internet search engines and WhatsApp on the mode of autonomous learning in the EFL reading context. It focuses on the pedagogical aspects of mobiles and making them available for non-traditional language learning settings. It can be concluded that learners have developed a sense of learner autonomy (LA) that is relevant to the choices of external reading materials and the use of mobile internet search engines and WhatsApp.

In addition, students are no longer confined to the classroom setting; rather they advantageously have extended their learning outside classroom. WhatsApp has formed an interactive and reflective platform that kept participants in touch both synchronously and asynchronously with their peers and teacher. They were able to share summaries, notes, diagrams, links, mind maps, extra readings, assignments, homework, and tasks.

With the use of mobiles, the participants extended their EFL learning in terms of reading materials and time and place of reading. Students utilised WhatsApp to reflect on the self-study parts with their classmates and teacher and to access reading materials of their choice. The participants were guided to establish a sense of self-learning and confidence. Now, they are no longer asking about word meanings, parts of speech, or pronunciation. Teachers have saved more time and effort during the traditional class for the central delivery of the course outcomes. In addition, the learning atmosphere inside classroom is no longer spoiled. The participants focused on the lesson objectives rather than asking about the meanings of new words and grammar. The results of this study could strengthen the utilisation of MALL inside and outside the classroom

This paper is not without limitations. As is the case in any study, the findings are limited only for the participants of the study where a homogeneous small size sample participated. In addition, the participants slightly violated the rules of using the WhatsApp group beyond the stipulated conditions of the group. Moreover, it was a challenge to keep the students' determination and motivation to sustain learning outside the classroom.

This study recommends that the teaching load should be reconsidered by the higher authorities to



include not only on-campus hours but also outside university campus hours. Further research is needed to test the role of mobile features and applications in generating learners' own tasks and writing skills.

## References

- Al Asmari, A. (2013). Practices and prospects of learner autonomy: Teachers' perceptions. *English Language Teaching*, 6(3), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n3p1>
- Al-Jarf, R. (2012). Mobile technology and student autonomy in oral skill acquisition. In J.E. Díaz-Vera (Ed.), *Left to my own devices: Learner autonomy and mobile-assisted language learning* (pp.105-130). Bingley, West Yorkshire: Emerald Group. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9781780526478\\_007](https://doi.org/10.1163/9781780526478_007)
- Almekhlafy, A., & Alzubi, A. A. F. (2016). Mobile-Mediated communication a tool for Language Exposure in EFL Informal Learning Settings. *Arab World English Journal*, 7(1), 388- 407. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2804018>
- Al-Nafisah, K. (2011). Saudi EFL students' reading interests. *Journal of King Saud University-Languages and Translation*, 23(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksult.2009.07.001>
- Al-Nujaidi, A. H. (2003). *The relationship between vocabulary size, reading strategies, and reading comprehension of EFL learners in Saudi Arabia*. Oklahoma State University Stillwater, OK.
- Alrabai, F. (2014). Motivational practices in English as a foreign language classes in Saudi Arabia: Teacher's beliefs and learners perceptions. *Arab World English Journal*, 5(1), 224-246.
- Al-rahmi, W. M., Othman, M. S., & Musa, M. A. (2014). The improvement of students' academic performance by using social media through collaborative learning in Malaysian higher education. *Asian Social Science*, 10(8), 210-221. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n8p210>
- Alshammari, R., Parkes, M., & Adlington, R. (2017). Using WhatsApp in EFL Instruction with Saudi Arabian University Students. *Arab World English Journal*, 8(4), 68-84. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3094526>
- Al-Shehri, S. (2011). *Context in our pockets: Mobile phones and social networking as tools of contextualizing language learning*. Paper presented at the 10th world conference on mobile and contextual learning, Beijing, China.
- Benson, P. (2001). Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning. Contents, purpose, origin, reception and impact. *Language Teaching*, 39(3), 167-190.
- Benson, P., & Voller, P. (2014). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Routledge.
- Bouhnik, D., & Deshen, M. (2014). WhatsApp goes to school: Mobile instant messaging between teachers and students. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 13(1), 217-231. <https://doi.org/10.28945/2051>
- Buckingham, D. (2001). Media education a global strategy for development. A paper presented at the UNESCO Seville seminar, February 14-17,2001 [http://www.mediaculture-online.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Medienbildung\\_MCO/fileadmin/bibliothek/buckingham\\_media-education/buckingham\\_media-education.pdf](http://www.mediaculture-online.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Medienbildung_MCO/fileadmin/bibliothek/buckingham_media-education/buckingham_media-education.pdf) [February 6, 2018]
- Castillo, A., I., & Bonilla, S., J., (2014). Building up autonomy through reading strategies. *Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development*, 16(2), 67-85. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v16n2.39904>
- Chia, S. C. C. (2005). *Learner autonomy: A case study on People's Republic of China (PRC) scholars studying in a university in Singapore*. University of Leicester, England.
- Chinnery, G. M. (2006). Emerging technologies. Going to the mall: mobile assisted language learning. *Language learning & technology*, 10(1), 9-16.
- Crookes, G., & Schmidt, R. W. (1991). Motivation: Reopening the research agenda. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 469-512. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1991.tb00690.x>
- Dickinson, L. (1995). Autonomy and motivation a literature review. *System*, 23(2), 165-174. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0346-251x\(95\)00005-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0346-251x(95)00005-5)
- Djoub, Z. (2014). Mobile technology and learner autonomy in language learning. In J. Keengwe (Ed.), *Promoting Active Learning through the Integration of Mobile and Ubiquitous Technologies* (194-212). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-6343-5.ch012>
- Djoub, Z. (2015). Portfolio Training: Getting Learners Actively Involved. *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education*, 19(1).
- Farooq, M. U. (2013). Effects of learner autonomy on teaching practices and outcomes in an ELT classroom. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 94, 316-330.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). London: Longman
- Haseborg, H. E. (2012). *Principles of learner autonomy in action: Effects and perceptions in a college-level foreign language class*. West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia.
- Hazaea, A. N., & Alzubi, A. A. (2016). The Effectiveness of using mobile on EFL learners' reading practices in Najran University. *English Language Teaching*, 9(5), 8-21. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n5p8>

- Holec, H. (1981) *Autonomy in foreign language learning*. Oxford, UK: Pergamon.
- Huang, Y., Jeng, Y., & Huang, T., (2009). An Educational Mobile Blogging System for Supporting Collaborative Learning. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 12(2), 163-175. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.12.2.163>
- Joseph, S. R., & Uther, M. (2009). Mobile devices for language learning: Multimedia approaches. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, 4(01), 7-32. <https://doi.org/10.1142/s179320680900060x>
- Kim, H., & Kwon, Y. (2012). Exploring smartphone applications for effective mobile-assisted language learning. *Multimedia-Assisted Language Learning*, 15(1), 31-57.
- Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2009). Will mobile learning change language learning? *ReCALL*, 21(2), 157-165. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0958344009000202>
- Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2012). Mobile-Assisted Language Learning. *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0768>
- Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2016). Mobile assistance in language learning: A critical appraisal. In Palalas, A. and Ally, M. (eds.), *The international handbook of mobile-assisted language learning*. Beijing: China Central Radio & TV University Press, 138–160.
- Lake, J. & Holster, T. (2011). Developing autonomous self-regulated readers in an extensive reading program. *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal*, 5(4), 394-403.
- Leis, A., Tohei, A., & Cooke, S. D. (2015). Smartphone assisted language learning and autonomy. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (IJCALLT)*, 5(3), 75-88. <https://doi.org/10.4018/ijcallt.2015070105>
- Little, D. (1991). *Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Little, D. (2006). *Learner autonomy: Drawing together the threads of self-assessment, goal-setting and reflection*. Retrieved 7 January, 2018, from [http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp\\_tt/Results/DM\\_layout/00\\_10/06/06%20Supplementary%20text.pdf](http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp_tt/Results/DM_layout/00_10/06/06%20Supplementary%20text.pdf)
- Nezami, S.R.A. (2012). A critical study of comprehension strategies and general problems in reading skill faced by Arab EFL learners with special reference to Najran University in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal Social Science and Education*, 2(3), 306-316.
- Nosratinia, M., Saveiy, M., & Zaker, A. (2014). EFL learners' self-efficacy, metacognitive awareness, and use of language learning strategies: how are they associated? *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(5), 1080-1092. <https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.4.5.1080-1092>
- Ogawa, K. (2012). EFL learner autonomy and unfamiliar vocabulary learning. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Temple University, America.
- Oxford, R. L. (2003). Language learning styles and strategies: Concepts and relationships. *Iral*, 41(4), 271-278. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2003.012>
- Palfreyman, D. M. (2012). Bringing the world into the institution: Mobile intercultural learning for staff and students. In J.E. Díaz-Vera (Ed.), *Left to my own devices: Learner autonomy and mobile-assisted language learning* (pp.163-181). Bingley, West Yorkshire: Emerald Group. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9781780526478\\_009](https://doi.org/10.1163/9781780526478_009)
- Ramamurthy, V., & Rao, S. (2015). Smartphones promote autonomous learning in ESL classrooms. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 3(4), 23-35.
- Rao, Z., (2006). Helping Chinese EFL students develop learner autonomy through portfolios. *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, 5(2), 113-122.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary educational psychology*, 25(1), 54-67. <https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020>
- Selwyn, N. (2010). Looking beyond learning: Notes towards the critical study of educational technology. *Journal of computer assisted learning*, 26(1), 65-73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2009.00338.x>
- Tamer, O. (2013). A Dissertation on students' readiness for autonomous learning of English as a foreign language. *Unpublished Master Theses*. University of Sunderland, England.
- Thabit, K., & Dehlawi, F. (2012). Towards using MP4 players in teaching English language: An empirical study. *Journal of Engineering*, 2(8), 25-28. <https://doi.org/10.9790/3021-02832528>
- Wang, J. (2010). How to develop college students' autonomous English learning skills-take reading course in joint-program in HCFT as an example. *English Language Teaching*, 3(3), 221-228. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v3n221>
- Wang, M. C. and Palincsar, A. S. (1989) Teaching students to assume an active role in their learning. In Reynolds, M. C. (ed.), *Knowledge Base for the beginning teacher*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Walters, J. L. (2012). English language learners' reading self-efficacy and achievement using 1:1 mobile learning devices (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, San Diego.
- Zarei, A., & Gahremani, K. (2010). On the relationship between learner autonomy and reading comprehension. *TELL*, 3(10), 1-20.

## A Study on the Attributes of Effective English Lecturers as Perceived by EFL Learners: The Case of Indonesia

Heri Mudra

State Islamic Institute of Kerinci

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Heri Mudra, English Language Department, State Islamic Institute of Kerinci, Kerinci, Provinsi Jambi, Indonesia, 37112. E-mail: mudraheri@gmail.com

This study aims to uncover the attributes of effective English lecturers and any significant differences between male and female EFL learners in determining the attributes of effective EFL lecturers. The study utilized a descriptive study design by asking 52 EFL learners to be respondents by filling in a questionnaire. The results depicted that the attributes associated with the 'rapport' category were friendliness, relationship, experiences, positive attitudes, and sense of humour. An independent t-test also showed there was no significant difference between male and female EFL learners in determining these attributes. The attributes of the 'delivery' category included enthusiasm, clarity, correction, and encouragement. The attributes of the 'fairness' category included treatment and standard. The attributes of the 'knowledge and credibility' category included proficiency and knowledge. The attributes of the 'organization and preparation' category included preparation, course contents, objectives, and materials. As for the implications, the attributes enable EFL lecturers to figure out various strategies for teaching English. Moreover, it is advantageous for EFL learners in that they can adjust their learning styles with the attributes.

**Keywords:** attributes of effective EFL lecturers, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, EFL lecturer style and competence

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia has become a more popular activity for learners. Due to the importance of communicating in a global context, EFL learners strive for better and deeper English knowledge and skills. To achieve such goals, EFL teachers play a prominent role in ensuring that learners become skilled users of English both formally and informally. Many EFL teachers are able to act as better models for their learners. Moreover, those EFL teachers are highly competent in teaching English to the EFL learners.

EFL learners who are motivated to become skilled English users have to be aware of which teachers are competent in teaching English and which teachers are not competent. In the Indonesian context, EFL teachers are expected to be competent in teaching English. According to A.S. Canagarajah, teachers whose language is not English and who tend to teach English properly do not have to be like a native speaker (1999).

A. Yilmaz (2011) investigated students' perceptions toward effective teachers in a Turkish university, revealed that the characteristics of effective teachers include those who are affectionate, warm, generous,

## Изучение атрибутов эффективных английских лекторов, воспринимаемых обучающимися EFL: пример Индонезии

Хэри Мудра

Государственный исламский институт Керинчи

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Хэри Мудра, Департамент английского языка, Государственный исламский институт Керинчи, г. Джамби, Индонезия, индекс 37112. E-mail: mudraheri@gmail.com

Это исследование направлено на выявление атрибутов эффективных преподавателей английского языка и значимых различий между мужчинами и женщинами, изучающими EFL, в определении атрибутов эффективных преподавателей EFL. Исследование имеет описательный характер и представляет опрос 52 учащихся EFL-респондентов, прошедших анкетирование. Результаты показали, что атрибуты, связанные с категорией «взаимопонимание», были дружелюбие, отношения, опыт, позитивные отношения и чувство юмора. Независимый t-тест также показал, что не было выявлено какой-либо существенной разницы между мужчинами и женщинами в определении этих атрибутов при обучении EFL. Атрибуты категории «доставка» включали энтузиазм, ясность, исправление и поощрение. К атрибутам категории «справедливость» относятся обращение и стандарты. К атрибутам категории «знания и доверие» относятся квалификация и знания. Атрибуты категории «организация и подготовка» включали подготовку, содержание курса, цели и материалы. Что касается последствий, атрибуты позволяют преподавателям EFL высунуть различные стратегии обучения английскому языку. Кроме того, есть польза для учащихся EFL в том, что они могут корректировать свои стили обучения с помощью атрибутов.

**Ключевые слова:** атрибуты эффективных преподавателей EFL, изучающие английский язык как иностранный, стиль и компетентность преподавателя EFL

earnest, hospitable, inspiring, enthusiastic, and active. Another study, Chen and Lin (2009), summed up the 'effectiveness' of teachers being mainly related to their personality and their relationship with learners, as opposed to their instructional competence. Moreover, they revealed that effective teachers should be energetic, affectionate, objective, deferential, and kind.

Koc (2012) explored the characteristics of good language teachers as perceived by students. The study revealed that affective characteristics play an important role in shaping good English language teachers. These characteristics include: being patient with what the students do, inspiring the students, fulfilling the students' needs, maintaining a good relationship with them, and establishing contact with their parents. The students surveyed were elementary, junior, and high school students categorized by level. Another study on effective English language teachers conducted by Wichadee (2010) found that there are four categories associated with effective English language teaching: English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, organization and communication skills, and socio-affective skills.

The attributes of effective EFL teachers were adapted

by Faranda and Clarke (2004). They organized the attributes into five categories: rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization and preparation. Rapport is concerned with how a teacher becomes friendly, affable, vehement, and approachable. Delivery is concerned with how a teacher delivers a lesson with particular strategies or techniques. This includes enthusiasm, methods, correction, encouragement, questioning, and motivation. Fairness focuses on how a teacher treats learners, which includes treatment, examination, grading, and hard work. Knowledge and credibility focus on intelligence, qualification, and mastery. Organization and preparation focus on preparation, comprehension, and delivery materials (Faranda & Clark, 2004, p. 279).

The focus of the present study was to apply Faranda and Clarke's (2004) model to identify the attributes of effective English lecturers as perceived by EFL learners. To this end, two research questions were proposed:

- 1) What are the attributes of effective English lecturers as perceived by EFL learners in an Indonesian context?
- 2) Are there any significant differences in the attributes of effective English lecturers between male and female EFL learners in an Indonesian context?

## Methods

### Design of the study

A descriptive study design was employed in this research. Descriptive research is a kind of research that uses an instrument such as a scale or a questionnaire and particular samples during data collection (Robson, 1993). More specifically, data in descriptive research are collected by undertaking the steps of administering and collecting, categorizing, estimating, and analyzing the data (Glass & Hopkins, 1984).

### Participants

This study was conducted by asking fifty-two senior EFL learners to fill in a questionnaire. The participants consisted of EFL learners who were learning English in a public institute in Kerinci, Indonesia. They consisted of 22 (42.3%) male and 30 (57.6%) female learners. A convenience sampling technique was employed to select the participants for this study. This sampling technique enabled the researcher to select the participants due to their readiness, willingness, availability, and accessibility (Dörnyei, 2007).

### Data collection tool

This study used a modified questionnaire as the instrument for collecting the data. The Effective English Lecturers questionnaire was developed by Faranda & Clarke (2004) and modified by Barnes (2008) to measure the characteristics of effective English lecturers. The Effective English Lecturers questionnaire consists of 42 items using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). The questionnaire consists of five categories which include rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization and preparation (Barnes, 2008). The result of pilot studies revealed that the Cronbach alpha of the questionnaire is .87, which proves that the questionnaire has high rate of reliability.

### Data analysis

The purpose of the data analysis was to estimate the Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviation (SD) of the attributes of effective English lecturers and find out significant differences between male and female EFL learners' choices of the attributes. As the results of normality tests proved that the data were normal, an independent t-test was employed. The data were estimated by dividing them into each category employed by Faranda and Clarke (2004): Rapport, Delivery, Fairness, Knowledge and Credibility, and Organisation and Preparation. The quantitative data were analyzed by using SPSS 16.

## Results

### The characteristics of EFL lecturers based on each category of the questionnaire

The following table shows frequency details in terms of percentages of learners' preferences for effective English lecturers.

Table 1 depicted levels of percentages viewed by the EFL learners towards characteristics of effective English lecturers' rapport items. As for the first item "are friendly," more learners (53.8%) slightly agreed that their English lecturers considered them as partners in the classroom. The smallest number (3.8%) of learners did not find their lecturers friendly to them. The learners (50%) believed that their lecturers have developed good relationships with them. Having a good relationship supports each learner to learn English in better ways. The third item "share personal experiences" can be an additional prize for EFL learners as their lecturers' personal experiences become a good example for them to follow. A larger number of learners (48.1%) got more personal experiences from their lecturers and they found the experiences useful

Table 1  
Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Rapport category

Items	Frequencies (%)							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1.are friendly	7.7	9.6	53.8	9.6	3.8	11.5	3.8	3.42	1.473
2.develop good relationship with students	11.5	19.2	50	5.8	7.7	1.9	3.8	3.00	1.358
3.share personal experiences	26.9	48.1	9.6	5.8	5.8	1.9	1.9	2.29	1.362
4.care about students	1.9	5.8	9.6	50	19.2	7.7	5.8	4.25	1.219
5.are patient	0	7.7	7.7	7.7	46.2	21.2	9.6	4.94	1.305
6.listen to students	5.8	9.6	11.5	7.7	48.1	11.5	5.8	4.40	1.537
7.have a positive attitude in general	23.1	46.2	17.3	5.8	1.9	1.9	3.8	2.38	1.402
8.have charisma	5.8	5.8	5.8	51.9	9.6	11.5	9.6	4.27	1.483
9.understand the students' English education background	3.8	21.2	51.9	3.8	7.7	3.8	7.7	3.33	1.491
10.understand the different student levels	3.8	9.6	53.8	7.7	7.7	9.6	7.7	3.65	1.532
11.have a sense of humour	5.8	11.5	55.8	1.9	11.5	7.7	5.8	3.48	1.502

Note: 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Slightly Agree, 4= No Feelings, 5= Slightly Disagree, 6= Disagree, 7= Strongly Disagree

for their English learning. A number of learners (50%) doubted that their lecturers cared about their English learning. Furthermore, nearly half of the learners (46.2%) did not agree that their English lecturers were patient with them.

English lecturers might find more problems during their teaching. One of the problems was related to what their learners experienced. The sixth item revealed that the learners (48.1%) found their English lecturers did not accept their requests or complaints. Fortunately, more learners (46.2%) believed that their lecturers have positive attitudes toward their learning. Another item (51.9%) showed that the learners were doubtful that the lecturers come to the classroom with charisma. The ninth item (51.9%) proved that the lecturers managed their teaching by considering learners' educational backgrounds. This can be helpful for learners with different English abilities. Moreover, more lecturers (53.8%) knew how to face learners with different levels. As for the last item in the rapport category, lecturers with a better sense of humour were considered more positive for teaching English. The learners (55.8%) found that lecturers who were able to give some humour could break any kind of pressure during difficult tasks.

The lowest score, which revealed positive views toward the characteristics of English lecturers, was the item "share personal experiences" (M= 2.29 & SD= 1.362). The participants were able to see that their lecturers shared any experiences they had when they delivered a lesson. Such experiences were deemed helpful contributions for them as they could learn more good things from those experiences. The English learners reported that there were positive attributes showed by their lecturers in the classroom (M= 2.38 & SD= 1.402). The lecturers developed good

relationship with their learners (M= 3.00 & SD= 1.358).

The Delivery category consists of item 12 – item 28. Each of the items describes the process of delivery in the classroom. In item 12, it is seen that English lecturers were enthusiastic about the teaching and learning process. A bigger number of EFL learners (57.7%) agreed that their EFL classroom was full of enthusiasm, which is the most basic motivation for both teachers and learners. However, the result of item 13 showed that the learners were doubtful about whether their lecturers explained any English lessons clearly (61.5%). A small number of learners (13.5%) got better explanations from their lecturers than expected. Even though some learners were still in doubt about the explanation, more learners (55.8%) were sure that good examples given by their lecturers replaced unclear explanations. Moreover, the lecturers did not use different teaching methods during the delivery (36.5%). Some of the learners (23.1%) still hoped their lecturers would use more teaching methods in their lessons.

Based on the result of item 16, it was revealed that the lecturers managed to use both Indonesian and English properly (23.1%). They used Indonesian as the mother tongue selectively (19.2%). This helps learners with low English aptitudes adjust themselves to an English class. To support the learners increasing their English skills, some direct actions were performed. Item 17 showed that most learners (59.6%) got written correction from their lecturers when they wrote any sentence in English. The lecturers also corrected the learners' oral production when they used English either in a discussion or in a question-answer session.

Table 2  
Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Delivery category

Items	Frequencies (%)							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
12. are enthusiastic about EFL lecturing	13.5	57.7	11.5	7.7	3.8	3.8	1.9	2.50	1.336
13. give clear explanations	5.8	13.5	1.9	61.5	7.7	7.7	1.9	3.83	1.279
14. use good examples	7.7	17.3	55.8	1.9	7.7	7.7	1.9	3.15	1.349
15. use a variety of teaching methods	3.8	5.8	9.6	17.3	23.1	36.5	3.8	4.75	1.480
16. use Indonesian selectively	17.3	19.2	23.1	13.5	11.5	11.5	3.8	3.33	1.757
17. correct writing errors	9.6	13.5	59.6	3.8	1.9	9.6	1.9	3.12	1.353
18. correct speaking errors	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	3.00	.000
19. teach grammar	13.5	23.1	26.9	11.5	11.5	9.6	3.8	3.29	1.673
20. use group work	9.6	19.2	30.8	9.6	13.5	9.6	7.7	3.58	1.742
21. encourage student participation in class	5.8	11.5	50	13.5	9.6	9.6	0	3.38	1.270
22. encourage the participation of students with low confidence	1.9	13.5	57.7	5.8	11.5	5.8	3.8	3.44	1.305
23. talk slowly in English	3.8	3.8	5.8	3.8	67.3	7.7	7.7	4.81	1.269
24. use easy words	5.8	63.5	11.5	5.8	7.7	5.8	0	2.63	1.284
25. use questions frequently	3.8	5.8	7.7	65.4	7.7	7.7	1.9	3.98	1.111
26. ask questions then wait for volunteers to answer	3.8	5.8	5.8	67.3	7.7	7.7	1.9	4.00	1.103
27. ask individual students to answer questions	1.9	1.9	17.3	58	48.1	15.4	9.6	4.81	1.329
28. give students plenty of time to answer questions	5.8	9.6	15.4	5.8	59.6	3.8	0	4.15	1.349

Note: 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Slightly Agree, 4= No Feelings, 5= Slightly Disagree, 6= Disagree, 7= Strongly Disagree

All of the learners (100%) agreed that the speaking correction was beneficial for their oral skills. In line with that, the lecturers (26.9%) provided good grammatical examples and the learners were asked to use such grammatical rules in their writing and speaking activities.

One of the most popular methods as experienced by the learners (30.8%) was group work. Group work was believed to be effective for the learners as they were often asked to work in a team. Each learner collaborated with other group members by asking them to work with one subtopic. The purpose of this technique was to let them participate in the lesson. Most learners (50%) were encouraged to take part in a discussion during a lesson. Furthermore, more

learners with low confidence (57.7%) were involved in class discussions, which motivated them to do so in other English classes. What made the learners worried about English class was the use of fast English. The learners (67.3%) could not understand a topic when the lecturers spoke faster than they expected. The good news was seen in item 24 in which the learners (63.5%) deemed it enjoyable for them to listen to the lecturers' lectures as they used easy words.

To grab learners' attention, questioning techniques could be more effective. Item 25 showed that the lecturers (65.4%) did not ask questions to the learners frequently. The learners (67.3%) were doubtful that their lecturers offered sufficient time for them to think of any answer for the questions. The questions were

Table 3  
Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Fairness category

Items	Frequencies (%)							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
29. treat all students fairly	5.8	13.5	7.7	55.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	3.83	1.396
30. prepare students well for examinations	11.5	13.5	5.8	3.8	55.8	5.8	3.8	4.12	1.676
31. give students clear grading guidelines	3.8	9.6	9.6	3.8	53.8	9.6	9.6	4.62	1.510
32. require students to work hard during class	7.7	13.5	5.8	7.7	42.3	15.4	7.7	4.40	1.706
33. require students to do homework	3.8	5.8	67.3	5.8	9.6	3.8	3.8	3.38	1.223

Note: 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Slightly Agree, 4= No Feelings, 5= Slightly Disagree, 6= Disagree, 7= Strongly Disagree

never addressed to a particular learner. So, the learners (48.1%) did not believe they were expected to answer. The fact was, based on the item 28, the learners needed more time to think of an answer (59.6%).

As for the most positive views of the characteristics of effective English lecturers, it can be seen from the lowest scores of the Means and SD. The first positive view was “are enthusiastic about EFL lecturing” (M= 2.50 & SD= 1.336). This positive view was interconnected with other characteristics because of how learners can be more motivated. Another positive view was “use easy words” (M= 2.63 & SD= 1.248). The item “correct speaking errors” was the most positive view as all of the learners (M= 3.00 & SD= .000) got their speaking corrected.

The third category, fairness, was explained in the above table. Fairness is about how lecturers see their learners as objectively as possible. The item 29 “treat all students fairly” was seen as a very important item by which learners were able to motivate themselves to interact with their lecturers more professionally. The learners (55.8%) were in doubt whether their lecturers treated them fairly. In this case, some learners (13.5%) believed that they got proper treatment from their lecturers. Improper treatment was proved in item 30, which revealed that most learners (55.8%) did not get proper and clear instructions to prepare for their exams. Moreover, the guidelines of the scoring system were to given to many of the learners (53.8%). The learners (42.3%) were not motivated to work

more seriously during class. Fortunately, the lecturers (67.3%) asked each learner to undertake practical and useful activities as homework.

Two positive views of the characteristics of effective English lecturers were identified. Some learners were treated fairly, but others were not (M= 3.83 & SD= 1.396). Another positive view was that learners were required to do homework (M= 3.38 & SD= 1.223). Other items depicted negative views.

In the knowledge and credibility category, the first item showed that the learners (15.4%) believed that their English lecturers were qualified for teaching English. More learners (32.7%) were doubtful with their lecturers’ qualifications. A small number of learners (11.5%) did not see them as qualified lecturers. Fortunately, most of the learners (67.3%) believed that their lecturers were knowledgeable in grammar. This means that most lecturers used grammatically-correct utterances during their English utterances. A smaller number of learners (7.7%) did not trust their lecturers’ grammar knowledge. The last item revealed the same belief. The learners (61.5%) found that their lecturers were highly qualified when using vocabulary. Not many learners (9.6%) disagreed with this.

The lowest score (M= 3.12 & SD= 1.182) was concerned with a strong ability to use grammar. It was followed by item 36, which focused on a strong ability to use vocabulary. The only negative view was good qualifications for lecturing (M= 3.58 & SD= 1.637).

The table above describes organizations and

Table 4  
Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Knowledge and Credibility category

Items	Frequencies (%)							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
34.are well qualified for EFL lecturing	13.5	15.4	13.5	32.7	11.5	9.6	3.8	3.58	1.637
35.have a good knowledge of grammar	7.7	9.6	67.3	1.9	7.7	3.8	1.9	3.12	1.182
36.have a good knowledge of vocabulary	3.8	11.5	61.5	3.8	9.6	7.7	1.9	3.35	1.266

Note: 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Slightly Agree, 4= No Feelings, 5= Slightly Disagree, 6= Disagree, 7= Strongly Disagree

Table 5  
Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Organization and Preparation category

Items	Frequencies (%)							M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
37.are well prepared every lecture	3.8	7.7	61.5	5.8	5.8	11.5	3.8	3.52	1.393
38.provide a syllabus detailing course content week by week	3.8	13.5	57.7	11.5	9.6	1.9	1.9	3.23	1.113
39.explain instructional methods to the class	5.8	11.5	9.6	46.2	13.5	9.6	3.8	3.94	1.406
40.tell students the lesson objectives each lesson	5.8	15.4	46.2	7.7	15.4	5.8	3.8	3.44	1.434
41.stick to the syllabus	3.8	11.5	13.5	3.8	53.8	9.6	3.8	4.37	1.456
42.make their own supplemental material	11.5	63.5	9.6	1.9	5.8	5.8	1.9	2.52	1.407

Note: 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Slightly Agree, 4= No Feelings, 5= Slightly Disagree, 6= Disagree, 7= Strongly Disagree

preparation as the last category of the characteristics of effective English lecturers. The category, which includes item 37- item 42, depicts how well the English lecturers organize and prepare for their delivery. The first item showed that the learners (61.5%) found their lecturers prepared for a lesson appropriately. A smaller number of learners (5.8%) did not agree that their classes were well prepared. In line with the first item, the second item in this category depicted the lecturers providing a syllabus including course contents a long time before the lectures began (57%). Some learners (9.6%) were not sure that they could understand the syllabus. However, more learners (46.2%) could not follow any of the instructional methods utilized in the classroom. As stated in item 40, the learners (46.2%) believed that they understood the lesson objectives well. An interesting item to note was that the lecturers followed the syllabus (53.8%) during the lesson. They also created their own supplemental materials (63.5%).

As for the mean scores, the lowest mean was “make their own supplemental material” (M= 2.52 & SD= 1.407). Supplemental materials were considered proper sources of learning. The lecturers could adjust the materials to their learners’ English levels. Another lowest score (M= 3.23 & SD= 1.113) was providing a syllabus and its contents for the learners before they began learning. Both were positive characteristics viewed by the learners.

**Significant differences between male and female EFL learners**

The following tables are the results of independent t-tests for each category: Rapport, Delivery, Fairness,

Knowledge and Credibility, and Organization and Preparation.

Having completed an independent t-test, the results of Table 6 showed that there was no significant differences (0.094 > 0.05) between male and female learners’ views toward the rapport category for effective English lecturers. The views on the characteristics of effective English lecturers between male and female EFL learners were somewhat similar when considering rapport.

Table 7 depicts no significant differences between male and female EFL learners in determining the characteristics of effective English lecturers (0.668 > 0.05). It can be concluded that male learners’ views are somewhat similar to female learners’ viewson the characteristics of EFL lecturers regarding delivery.

The results of an independent t-test depicted that no significant differences (0.653 > 0.05) were identified between male and female EFL learners in viewing the characteristics of effective English lecturers in terms of fairness. It can be said that male learners’ responses were not different from female learners’ responses towards the characteristics of effective English lecturers regarding fairness.

Having conducted an independent t-test, it was found that the values of equal variances assumed (0,951 > 0,05). No significant differences were found between male and female learners’ views on the knowledge and credibility characteristics of effective English lecturers.

Having finished the independent t-test, the result revealed that no significant differences were identified between male and female learners in viewing the organization and preparation of effective English

Table 6  
*Independent t-test of the Rapport category*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	f	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	2.918	.094	1.054	50	.297	1.630	1.546
Equal variances not assumed			.988	33.456	.330	1.630	1.650

Table 7  
*Independent t-test of the Delivery category*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	f	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	.187	.668	1.278	50	.207	2.245	1.757
Equal variances not assumed			1.255	42.148	.217	2.245	1.790



Table 9  
*Independent t-test of the Knowledge and Credibility category*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	f	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	.004	.951	-.568	50	.573	-.303	.534
Equal variances not assumed			-.569	45.796	.572	-.303	.532

Table 10  
*Independent t-test of the Organization and Preparation category*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	f	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	1.956	.168	.049	50	.961	.045	.935
Equal variances not assumed			.047	40.098	.963	.045	.963

lecturers. To verify this, the result of equal variances assumed was high (0.168 > 0.05).

### Discussion

The present study revealed attributes of effective English lecturers in the Indonesian context. As for the first category, Rapport, several important characteristics or attributes were found. The attributes were friendliness, personal experiences, positive attitudes, awareness, and sense of humour. This is in line with previous studies that identified friendliness as one of the characteristics of ideal teachers and effective teaching (Feldman, 1976; Kotsoulis, 2003). Arikan, Taşer and Saraç-Süzer (2008) stresses the power of a good relationship between teachers and learners. Some students' positive attitudes toward disciplines can enable a teacher's effectiveness regarding classroom management (Zheng, 2011). Such attitudes and beliefs on teaching are paramount if compared with some common profiles of a teacher (Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2004). To do that, there is a need for more experiences, support, and intelligence (Guskey, 1986). An effective teacher also needs to have a sense of humour (Calabria, 1960; Malikow, 2006) and use it during delivery.

As for the Delivery category, the study depicted several important attributes or characteristics as being important. This includes lecturers' enthusiasm, good examples, writing correction, speaking correction, grammar focus, group work, encouragement, and easy words. Previous studies also found that effective language teachers have enthusiasm for teaching their

learners (Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, & Minor, 2001; Malikow, 2006) and motivate and encourage learners (Feldman, 1988; Brosh, 1996; Cruickshank, Jenkins, & Metcalf, 2003).

The attributes or characteristics of the Fairness category were fair treatment and a requirement of hard work. These two attributes were selected by the learners among five attributes. The learners did not rank the other three attributes highly as they reported that they never experienced such characteristics from their lecturers. The importance of the attributes in the Fairness category has been proved in several previous studies. A study by Brosh (1996) found that one characteristic of an effective language teacher is treating learners fairly. Brown (2001) focused on individual attributes of an effective language teacher such as flexibility or fairness.

Furthermore, Knowledge and Credibility as the fourth category consisted of two identified attributes of effective language lecturers: proficiency and knowledge. A number of studies have found that the characteristics of an effective teacher include mastery of a subject matter or field knowledge (Calabria, 1960; Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; Arikan, 2010), knowledge and professional skills (Pettis, 1997), as well as proficiency and knowledge in English as the target language (Brosh, 1996; Park & Lee, 2006).

The last category, Organization and Preparation, showed several other characteristics of effective English lecturers. They are prepared for their lectures, providing detailed course contents, having clear lesson objectives, and making supplemental materials. Every lecturer is expected to prepare for their course properly. Studies found the attributes of effective English teachers include standards, control, discipline

(Calabria, 1960), being well organized (Brown, 2001), being flexible (Fettis, 1997), the ability to organize (Brosh, 1996), and procedural knowledge (teachers' own practical knowledge of what steps and techniques have worked well in the past) (Walls, Nardi, Von-Minden, Hoffman, 2002).

## Conclusion

TVarious attributes or characteristics of effective English lecturers were identified in this study. The attributes of the Rapport category are friendliness, good relationships, personal experiences, positive attitudes, awareness, and a sense of humour. As for the attributes of the Delivery category, they include enthusiasm, clarity, correction, grammar focus, group work, and encouragement. The attributes of the Fairness category are fair treatment and work requirements. The attributes of the Knowledge and Credibility category are proficiency and knowledge. The attributes of Organization and Preparation are preparation, clarity, and supplemental materials. Based on the data analysis, no significant differences were identified between male and female EFL learners in determining the attributes of effective EFL lecturers.

## References

- Anderson, L. M., Evertson, C. M. and Brophy, J. E. (1979). An experimental study of effective teaching in first-grade reading groups. *The Elementary School Journal*, 79(4), 193-223.
- Arıkan, A., Taşer, D., & Saraç-Süzer, H. S. (2008). The effective English language teacher from the perspectives of Turkish preparatory school students. *Education and Science*, 33(150), 42-51.
- Arıkan, A. (2010). Effective English language teacher from the perspectives of prospective and in-service teachers in Turkey. *Electronic Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(31), 209-223.
- Barnes, B. D. (2008). *Perceptions of students from a Korean university about the attributes of effective lecturers of English as a foreign language* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia.
- Brosh, H. (1996). Perceived characteristics of an effective language teacher. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29(2), 25-38.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York, NY: Pearson Education.
- Calabria, F. M. (1960). Characteristics of effective teachers. *Educational Research Bulletin*, 39(4), 92-100.
- Campbell, J., Kyriakides, L., Muijs, D., & Robinson, W. (2004). *Assessing teacher effectiveness*. New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). Interrogating the "native speaker fallacy;" Non-linguistic roots, non-pedagogical results. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 77-92). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Chen, Y.-J. and Lin, S.-C. (2009). Exploring characteristics for effective EFL teachers from the perceptions of junior high school students in Tainan. *STUT Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2, 219-249.
- Cruickshank, D. R., Jenkins, D. B., & Metcalf, K. K. (2003). *The act of teaching*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Faranda, W. T., & Clarke I. (2004). Student observations of outstanding teaching: Implications for marketing educators. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 26(3), 271-281.
- Feldman, K. A. (1976). The superior college teacher from the students' view. *Research in Higher Education*, 5(3), 243-288.
- Feldman, K. A. (1988). Effective college teaching from the students' and faculty's view: Matched or mismatched priorities? *Research in Higher Education*, 28(4), 291-344.
- Gao, M., & Liu, Q. (2013). Personality traits of effective teachers represented in the narratives of American and Chinese preservice teachers: A cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(2), 84-95.
- Glass, G. V., & Hopkins, K. D. (1984). *Statistical methods in Education and Psychology* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Guskey, T. R. (1986). Staff development and the process of teacher change. *Educational Researcher*, 15 (5), 5-12.
- Koc, E. M. (2012). Affective characteristics and teaching skills of English language teachers: Comparing perceptions of elementary, secondary and high school students. *Creative Education*, 4(2), 117-123.
- Koutsoulis, M. (2003). *The characteristics of the effective teacher in Cyprus public high school: The students' perspective*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.
- Malikow, M. (2006). Effective teacher study. *National Forum of Teacher Education Journal*, 16(3), 1-9.
- Park, G. P. & Lee, H. W. (2006). The characteristics of effective English teachers as perceived by high school teachers and students in Korea. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 7(2), 236-248.

## A STUDY ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LECTURERS AS PERCEIVED BY EFL LEARNERS

- Pettis, J. (1997). Developing our professional competence; Some reflections. *TESL Canada Journal*, 16(2), 67-71.
- Robson, C. (1993). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioners-Researchers*. London, UK: Blackwell.
- Senior, R. M. (2006). *The experience of language teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Shishavan, H. B., & Sadeghi, K. (2009). Characteristics of an effective English language teacher as perceived by Iranian teachers and learners of English. *English Language Teaching*, 2(4), 130-143.
- Walls, R. T., Nardi, A. H., Von Minden, A. M., & Hoffman, N. (Winter, 2002). The characteristics of effective and ineffective teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 29(1), 39-48, .
- Wichadee, S. (2010). Defining the effective English language teacher: Students' and teachers' perspectives. In A. M. Stoke (ed.), *JALT 2009 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 27-35). Tokyo, Japan: JALT.
- Witcher, A. E., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Minor L. C. (2001). Characteristics of effective teachers: Perceptions of pre-service teachers. *Research in the Schools*, 8(2) 45-57.
- Yilmaz, A. (2011). Quality problem in teaching profession: Qualities teacher candidates feel to be required of teachers. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(14), 812-823.
- Zheng, J. F. (2011). A case study in Hsinchu area: the relations between class management effectiveness, classroom ambience and positive discipline (Unpublished Master's dissertation). University of Hsinchu, Taiwan.

## Androcentrism of English proverbs and Anti-Proverbs with Gender Components

Maria Kirsanova

National Research University Higher School of Economics

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Kirsanova Maria, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Old Basmannaya, 21/4, building 4, off. B-209, Moscow, Russia, 105066. E-mail: mkirsanova@hse.ru

Since the 20th century with the birth of feminism, gender studies have undergone analysis in many areas of knowledge. Special attention has been paid to the theory of androcentricity in the English language and the deficiency of female images in speech. In this article, the images of men and women presented by English proverbs and anti-proverbs are analyzed. The objective of this research is to find out if proverbs are androcentric and present male mindsets and world views. The other aim is to check whether anti-proverbs reflect the changing role of women in society. To fulfill these purposes, proverbs with gender components (man/woman, wife/husband, he/she etc.) were selected and underwent a semantic analysis. In order to reveal the evolution of the images of men and women we compared the images of men and women illustrated in proverbs with those shown in anti-proverbs with the same gender components. As a result, we came to the conclusion that both proverbs and anti-proverbs are androcentric; however, in anti-proverbs female opinions are more representative when compared to proverbs. To sum up, it is obvious that the role of women is changing and the changes are reflected in the language.

**Keywords:** gender, proverbs, anti-proverbs, male, female, androcentrism

With the beginning of the twentieth century, the issue of androcentricity and gender asymmetry in the English language has become one of the most debatable in society.

The term androcentrism was introduced by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in the research “The Man-Made World or, Our Androcentric Culture”, published in 1911. According to Perkins Gilman, androcentrism can be understood as cultural perspectives where the male is generically taken to be the norm of humanness. It means that masculinity is normative and all things that do not refer to masculinity are defined as other. Thus, masculinity is normative and all things outside masculinity are defined as other.

In 2015-2016 the problems of self-identification provoked vehement debates and put the focus back on the gender representation in a language. According to many researchers (Lakoff 1975, Spender 1980) the English language is androcentric and expresses male-centered culture and an unequal position of men and women in society.

The problem of representation of gender in a language has been studied in a wide range of disciplines such as cultural studies, anthropology, education, art history, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and psychoanalysis

## Андроцентризм английских пословиц и анти-пословиц с гендерными компонентами

Мария Кирсанова

Национальный исследовательский университет  
Высшая школа экономики

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Мария Кирсанова, НИУ “Высшая школа экономики”, город Москва, ул. Старая Басманная 24/4, стр.4, каб. В209, Россия, индекс 105066. E-mail: mkirsanova@hse.ru

С 20-го века с рождением феминизма гендерные исследования подверглись анализу во многих областях знаний. Особое внимание уделено теории андроцентричности в английском языке и дефициту женских образов в речи. В этой статье анализируются образы мужчин и женщин, представленные английскими пословицами и анти-пословицами. Целью этого исследования является выяснение того, являются ли пословицы андроцентричными и представляют собой мужское мышление и мировоззрение. Другая цель состоит в том, чтобы проверить, отражают ли пословицы изменение роли женщин в обществе. Для достижения этих целей, пословицы с гендерными компонентами (мужчина/женщина, супруга/супруг, он/она и т.д.) были отобраны и подвергнуты семантическому анализу. Для того, чтобы выявить эволюцию образов мужчин и женщин, мы сравнили образы мужчин и женщин, проиллюстрированные в пословицах, с изображениями, показанными в анти-пословицах с одинаковыми гендерными компонентами. В результате мы пришли к выводу, что как пословицы, так и анти-пословицы андроцентричны, однако в анти-пословицах женские точки зрения более выражены по сравнению с пословицами. Подводя итог, очевидно, что роль женщин меняется, и изменения отражаются в языке.

**Ключевые слова:** гендер, пословицы, анти-пословицы, мужчина, женщина, андроцентризм

(Wilhelm von Humboldt (1836), Mills (1995), Roman, Juhanz, and Miller (1994).

The study of connection between language and sex dates back to the ancient times when the grammatical category “gender” started to be considered. For a long time, researchers connected biological sex with the grammatical category gender. In other words, it was believed that the grammatical category of gender arose because of the existence of different sexes. This theory was supported by scientists such as W. Humboldt and others.

At the beginning of 20th century the problem of sex reflection in a language attracted the attention of F. Mautner. In 1901-1903, F. Mautner’s work on criticisms of the language was published. He emphasizes the metaphorical nature of the language. It means that native speakers transfer their non-linguistic experience into linguistic expression, and, thus, it determines the subjectivity of our picture of the world. Having studied the grammatical gender of nouns in German, F. Mautner concludes that the grammatical division into gender is a metaphor as it associates an object with masculine of feminine characteristics.

O. Jespersen (1922) in his book “Language: Its Nature

and Development, and Origin” stated the idea that women’s language is deficient and subordinate.

In 1949, a book by Simone de Beauvoir entitled “The Second Sex” appeared in France. According to the author of this book, stereotypes of men and women are fixed in history. The author connects a man with the sphere of “constructing the meaning of life” - culture and society, and women take part in such spheres of life as reproduction and nature.

In the late 60’s and 70’s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scientists began to pay attention to gender studies thanks to the “New Women’s Movement” (as cited in Potapov, 2002). This movement gave birth to a new branch of linguistics - feminist linguistics, or feminist criticism of the language.

Among the main works on feminist criticism of the language the study of R. Lakoff “Language and Woman’s Place”, which was published in 1975, plays the main role. This work proves androcentricity (an orientation toward men) and the defective image of a woman in the world picture reproduced in the language. This theory is called the theory of “deficiency” of female speech. R. Lakoff examines the notion of “female language” and “male language” (Lakoff, 1975). According to this work, a woman’s speech is characterized by the following traits: she is insecure, her speech is less aggressive than a man’s speech, she is more humane in relation to the interlocutor. Men try to take a dominant position, they are more aggressive, unwilling to compromise.

The theory of “deficiency” of female speech, introduced by R. Lakoff, was developed in the “theory of two cultures”, implemented by her student, the famous American scientist D. Tannen. In the work “You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation” (1990), D. Tannen analyzes male and female speech tactics and concludes that the dialogue between men and women is a dialogue between two opposite worlds and cultures. It means that the same conversation can be understood by men and women differently and lead to quarrels and misunderstandings.

In feminist linguistics there are two branches: the first and the main branch is devoted to the identification of the language asymmetry, reflecting the male picture of the world, i.e. language sexism. In this case, patriarchal stereotypes that give women a subordinate and dependent role are under analysis.

The basis for the study of feminist linguistics has become the lexicon of European languages, since it most clearly traces the subordinate position of women. For example, in a number of European languages, the same lexical unit is used for the notions of “man” and “person”. In English, the word “man” has both meanings (The Oxford English dictionary).

The second issue, which feminist linguistics concentrate on, is problems and characteristics of gender communication in mixed and same-sex groups.

Material for analysis was drawn from a variety of sources, for example, conversations between doctors and patients, talk shows, and socializing in the family. The studies of feminist linguistics were based on the assumption that the strategies of speech behavior of men and women differ from each other. Moreover, they differ depending on whether the conversation takes place in a same-sex or in a mixed-sex environment (Hancock & Rubin, 2014).

A special place in language and culture studies is occupied by proverbs, since cultural and national traditions are recorded via proverbs in order to be passed on through generations.

In this article, proverbs are considered as aphoristic sayings with an instructive meaning and are rhythmically organized (Koonin, 1996). Proverbs are a list of rules and norms of behavior, in which the national cultural code that regulates people’s relations and gives a base for self-identification are displayed. Using this source, a native speaker generalizes and assimilates experience, values, moral norms, and prescriptions for the society. Therefore, by analyzing the proverbs of the English language with gender components, it is possible to draw a conclusion about the stereotypes of men and women fixed in this culture.

For example:

*A woman’s tongue wags like a lamb’s tail*  
(Kerшен, 1998, p.180).

This proverb has a negative connotation and illustrates the assumption that women are too talkative and they never control their speech. Because of this, a man should not treat a woman seriously.

Being subject to various changes by extra- and intralinguistic factors, proverbs adapt to new problems and circumstances. Dealing with this or that situation, a person correlates it with a similar situation, illustrated in a proverb, and follows the example. However, proverbs are continuously used and undergo changes adapting to new realities. It should be mentioned that, despite the seeming randomness of such substitutions, they meet a kind of “social order”, reflecting the changes of reality in a language. Thus, the formation of anti-proverbs is taking place which means adjustment of “old” proverbs to new life situations.

The term “anti-proverb” is quite new in linguistics. An analysis showed that, by 2005, it was quite actively used in paremiological studies (Mieder (1989); Gossler (2005); Foldes, A., Litovkina A.T., Mieder W. (2006) Batulina (2009); Smirnova (2009); Antonova (2010), etc.). However, it was not fixed in any terminological dictionary of the corresponding disciplines (Walter & Mokienko, 2005).

This term is a calque from the German Antispruchwort, was first introduced by W. Meader, one of the well-known modern scientists who, since 1982,

has published (one or in co-authorship) several large dictionaries of anti-proverbs in German and English (Mieder 1989; Mieder, 2002). W. Meider characterizes anti-proverbs as twisted (warped, distorted) wisdom (German *verdrehte Weisheiten*, English *twisted wisdom*) (Walter, Mokienko 2005,). In this paper anti-proverbs are defined as transformed paremia, which have undergone structural and semantic changes.

For example:

*Man proposes – but not always marriage / Man proposes, God disposes (Mieder, 2002, p.137).*

This anti-proverb is formed by cutting one part and adding a new one, completely different from the original one. In this case, it is necessary to note the change in the semantic of the lexical unit “man”. So, if in the traditional paremia the lexeme “man” has the meaning “person”, since in this proverb does not contain a direct indication of gender, then in the anti-proverb lexical unit “man” clearly indicates a male human. Thus, in this anti-proverb has an absolutely different meaning. In this case this paremia plays a role of a warning that men do not always keep their word.

The difference between proverbs and anti-proverbs is demonstrated by the fact that anti-proverbs are variations of traditional proverbs and they are ironic and humorous. They can elicit humorous effect only if the violation of expectation is applied: the original proverb is well known, thus the reader is able to perceive and understand the discrepancy.

In this study, attention is paid to gender-marked anti-proverbs because they reflect the changes that take place in society.

This research contributes to identifying gender asymmetry in the English language as it is devoted to studying gender asymmetry, which is reflected by means of English proverbs and anti-proverbs with gender components.

The first goal of the research is to analyze proverbs in the English language with gender component and prove that the English language is androcentric and this is reflected in proverbs. Moreover, it is necessary to understand whose assessment, men’s or women’s, is reflected in the proverbs.

It is common knowledge that nowadays men and women are becoming more and more equal in their rights and society is endeavoring to treat them equally. Therefore, it seems very interesting to find out if the paremiology of the English language reflects this tendency and if the images of men and women represented by proverbs are different from the images represented by anti-proverbs. Thus, the second aim of the research is to compare the images of men and women presented in proverbs with the images presented in anti-proverbs in the English language with gender components to find out if there have been

any changes in the picture of the world.

The relevance of this research is that proverbs with gender components reflects national ideas and traditions about men and women’s roles in society, about requirements which representatives of both sexes have to meet, and about differences in character and behavior of men and women. These images, which have been formed over centuries, define modern gender relationships. Moreover, the evolution of these relationships is illustrated by means of anti-proverbs, so it allows us to analyze the representation of men’s and women’s images in modern language. Thus, in this research for the first time proverbs with gender components are separated from proverbs with components “man” meaning “person”. In addition, the images reflected in proverbs are compared with images illustrated in anti-proverbs. The hypothesis of the research is that proverbs and anti-proverbs in the English language are androcentric and reflect the male perspective.

## Method

### Materials

To conduct the analysis 353 proverbs and 83 anti-proverbs were selected from such dictionaries as Clay Doyle, Mieder W. *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (2012), Preston. *A Dictionary of English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (2012), Simpson, J., Speake J., *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (1994), Mieder W., Steward W., Kingsbery A., and Kelsie B *A Dictionary of American Proverbs* (1992), Titelman G. *Random House of America’s Popular Proverbs and Sayings* (2000), Stevenson B. *The Macmillan Book of Proverbs* (1948), Kershen A. *American Proverbs about Women* (1998), Fergusson R, *The Penguin Dictionary of Proverbs* (2001), Apperson G. L, *Wordsworth Dictionary of Proverbs*. (1993), Gratian V. *The Sterling Book of proverbs* (1998), and Bartlett J.W *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (1977).

For the purpose of selecting the linguistic material, the following criteria were taken into account: 1) the correlation with the topic 2) cultural value, 3) the presence of a gender component in the semantics.

There are different forms of gender representation in English paremiology. First of all, it is impossible to take into consideration only gender differences, since in English there is no gender as a grammatical category. Consequently, the gender component can be fixed only with the help of gender-marked lexical units. A set of lexical units that are gender-marked can be divided in three groups:

1. anthropometric lexical units. For example,

*man-woman, boy-girl, gentleman-lady, he-she.* While analyzing proverbs with the components “man” and “woman”, it should be mentioned that the word “man” has two meanings according to the Oxford English Dictionary: 1. A human being (irrespective of sex and age); 2. The meaning “person” occurs only in general or indefinite application; in modern application man primarily denotes the male sex [http://public.oed.com]. The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language provides two definitions as well: 1) An adult male human 2) A human regardless of sex (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language). Thus, it is necessary to analyze proverbs and anti-proverbs with the component “man” meaning “person” and component “man” meaning “male human” separately.

For example,

*A man can do no more than he can*  
(Apperson, 1993, p.364).

In this case, a person in general is characterized but not a man.

2. kinship terms. For example, *wife-husband, daughter-son, mother-father.*
3. anthroponymic lexemes (proper names). For example, Jack-Jill.
4. In a separate group, we can distinguish components that are not gender markers by themselves: fool, flower. For example:

*The handsomest flower is not the sweetest*  
(Stevenson, 1948, p.835).

In this proverb there is no direct indication of the gender of the referent. This example can be applied to both men and women. The proverb warns against hasty conclusions, which can only be made based on appearance.

## Methodology

To conduct this research we applied a semantic analysis in order to distinguish proverbs and anti-proverbs containing typical characteristics of men and women that native speakers of the English language possess.

This semantic analysis of proverbs and anti-proverbs helps divide the paremeological units into three groups describing various characteristics of humans:

- biological characteristics including age, appearance, and sexuality.
- moral and psychological characteristics containing such traits as intelligence,

feeling, emotions as well as such behavioral characteristics as bravery, grumpiness, chattiness, etc.

- social characteristics including stereotypical roles of men and women in their societies and families, spheres of human activity.

Then, the images of men and woman belonging to each group underwent analysis in order to evaluate these images and find out how societies treats men and women.

## Procedure

The research is divided into two parts. Firstly, we studied proverbs with the component “man” meaning “a person” in order to differentiate the proverbs describing people in general and the ones describing male humans. Secondly, proverbs with gender components belonging to each group underwent analysis and the images of men and women were compared in order to find out the qualitative characteristics. For example, concerning the first group, which includes biological characteristics, we analyzed how society treats age and appearance of men and women. In order to evaluate the images we focused on the meaning of proverbs and on the traits and characteristics of the people that these proverbs criticize or praise.

For example,

*When an ass climbs a ladder, we may find wisdom in women* (Apperson, 1993, p.28)

This proverb illustrates the belief that women cannot be intelligent: women are compared to a donkey which cannot climb a ladder. As a donkey is not able to climb the ladder, it is impossible for women to become wise. Furthermore, the usage of the modal verb “may” shows that a donkey climbing a ladder is more likely to happen.

The next step was to analyze anti-proverbs. Like traditional paremias, they were divided into three groups according to the characteristics they reveal. Then, we analyzed the images of men and women illustrated by these anti-proverbs and compared them to the images reflected by the proverbs in order to see if the evolution of these images can be discerned. Then, the conclusion about androcentricity of English paremias was made.

## Results and discussion

The analysis of English proverbs and anti-proverbs with gender components has allowed us to make the following conclusions.

First of all, the quantitative analysis shows that

the proverbs which describe women are the most numerous (see Table 1).

Table 1  
*The Number of Proverbs with Gender Components*

Proverbs	Quantity (%)
Proverbs about a person in general	13
Proverbs focusing on men	20
Proverbs focusing on women	67

The analysis of the proverbs with the component “man” meaning “person” found that very few proverbs describe biological characteristics such as appearance and age. It should be noted that proverbs with the component “man” meaning “person” account only for about 1% of the selected material. This situation seems reasonable, as approaches to the male and female appearance and evaluations of the attractiveness of men and women are completely different. That is why the proverbial standard of beauty is not fixed in proverbs. The same situation is relevant to the evaluation of age.

*The handsomest flower is not the sweetest*  
(Stevenson, 1948, p.835).

This proverb does not contain the component “man”, yet the metaphor is used and a person is meant.

*Men’s years and their faults are always more than they are willing to own* (Bohn, 1855, p. 452).

In this proverb the comparison between faults and age is obvious so it proves that the age is negatively evaluated.

In proverbs that describe moral and psychological characteristics of such qualities as intelligence, hard work, honesty, and strong will are praised. The qualities that are criticized by society are envy, laziness, selfishness, cowardice, despondency, and anger

*An honest man is the noblest work of God*  
(Mieder, 1992, p.504).

*Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise* (Mieder, 2002, p.73).

*An angry man opens his mouth and shuts his eyes* (Bohn, 1855, p.310).

*An envious man waxes lean with the fatness of his neighbor* (Apperson, 1993, p.175).

Social characteristics are reflected in proverbs conceptualizing roles of people in family and society.

It should be noted that proverbs belonging to this level have not been identified. It can be explained by the fact that women and men were assigned different social roles, since they held different positions in a society.

The analysis of English proverbs shows that they reflect the male picture of the world and male authority.

Focusing on the paremiological units with gender

components it should be stated that in general, the stereotype of a man, expressed in the language, includes those qualities that are highly appreciated in patriarchal-type cultures, for example: physical strength, intellectual superiority, rationality, aggressiveness, sexual activity, independence, and power over others. The stereotyped image of a woman is represented by qualities that are assessed negatively in the patriarchal world, namely: dependence, sexual attractiveness, emotionality, and sensitivity.

Concerning physical and biological characteristics, it should be stated that there are different attitudes towards appearance. For men, appearance is not as important as for women. There is only one proverb describing men’s appearance and at the same time, the number of proverbs giving positive characteristics to women’s appearance is not large – only 1%.

*A man is a man if he has but a nose on his face* (Fergusson, 2001, p.235).

*A fair face is half a portion (wedding - portion)*  
(Bohn, 1855, p.285).

However, even physical attractiveness can be assessed negatively (5%).

*Three things breed jealousy: a mighty state, a rich treasury and a fair wife.*

Like appearance, society also treats the age of men and women differently: an old man is wise. It is proved by 4% of our material. There are several proverbs that criticize man illustrating the lack of power and their uselessness for a society, yet they are not numerous (2%). In contrast, the stereotypical image of an old woman is negative as not a single proverb with positive characteristics of old women was identified. Moreover, negative traits of character increase while she is getting older.

*Men grow weaker and wiser* (Stevenson, 1948, p.2139).

*A woman is an angel at ten, a saint at fifteen, a devil at forty, and a witch at fourscore*  
(Stevenson, 1948, p.2569)

Speaking about moral characteristics, proverbs with gender components meaning “women” are found in larger numbers than proverbs about men, 13% and 26% respectively. Moreover, it should be noted that in comparison to women, men are less evil and dangerous.

*Man, woman, and devil are the three degrees of comparison* (Bohn, 1855, p.448).

*A bad woman is worse than a bad man*  
(Kerhsen, 1998, p.75).

In English proverbs such traits of women’s character as unpredictability and insidiousness are emphasized. Moreover, the image of a woman is closely connected with the image of the devil and hell.

*Women are the snares of Satan* (Mieder, 1992,



p.445).

*A wicked woman and an evil are three halfpence worse than the devil* (Bohn, 1855, p.45).

According to proverbs, women are not intelligent.

*Women have long hair and short brains* (Mieder, 1992, p.441).

However, women are respected for their intuition but not logical thinking.

*A man thinks he knows, but a woman knows better* (Kershen, 1998, p.152).

*Women's instinct is often truer than men's reasoning* (Gratian, 1998, p.184).

It should be noted that the number of proverbs about female stupidity is not much greater than the number of men's.

*Men talk wisely but live foolishly* (Stevenson, 1948, p.508).

*If men talked about what they understood, the silence would be unbearable* (Mieder, 1992, p.679).

However, it must be taken into account that often stupidity is regarded as a universal vice, and the intelligence is regarded as mostly a male characteristic.

In general, the superiority of the male mind is proclaimed in English proverbs not in the number of corresponding units, but through the emphasis on female stupidity.

As mentioned above, a positive image of men prevails in the picture of the world presented by proverbs. Such characteristics of men as courage, fidelity, strength of character, and persistence are praised by the society (6%).

*A man without purpose is like a ship without a rudder* (Mieder, 1992, p.674).

*Man is a lion in his own cause* (Stevenson, 1948, p.304).

*A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds* (Stevenson, 1948, p.2615).

It is impossible to claim that men are absolutely free of vices, yet most of these vices characterize humanity as a whole:

*An angry man opens his mouth and shuts his eyes.*

*A man wrapped in himself makes a very small bundle* (Mieder, 1992, p.674).

*A man can smile and smile and still be a villain* (Mieder, 1992, p.872).

*An envious man waxes lean with the fatness of his neighbor* (Apperson, 1993, p.175).

Among purely male vices a special place is occupied by drunkenness and lechery.

*A man takes a drink and then the drink takes the man* (Mieder, 1992, p.238).

*Gaming, women and wine make men pine* (Apperson, 1993, p.226).

At the same time, there are a lot of proverbs

(24%) that give a negative assessment to women. A woman is characterized by such features as a weak and illogical mind, immaturity, extreme emotionality, unpredictability, danger, insidiousness, and chattiness.

*Women are as wavering as the wind* (Gratian, 1998, p.183).

*Swine, women, and bees cannot be turned* (Kershen, 1998, p.71).

*A woman's tongue is the last thing about her that dies* (Stevenson, 1948, p.2580).

*A woman's thoughts are afterthoughts* (Gratian, 1998, p.183).

*Women are saints in church, angels in the streets, and devils at home* (Mieder, 1992, p.915).

In proverbs reflecting the images of women such characteristics as beauty and youth are assessed politely but there are some paremiological units that shows that virtue and goodness are more important.

*A fair woman without virtue is like palled wine* (Fergusson, 2001, p.181).

*A wife is not to be chosen by eye only* (Kershen, 1998, p.63).

An analysis of proverbs that reflect social characteristics show that there was a clear division of labor in society: men support a family, and women engage in the households.

*When Adam delved and Eve span who was then a gentleman?* (Apperson, 1993, p.12).

It is interesting to mention that professional achievements are not always evaluated positively from the female point of view

*The worse the husband, the better the soldier* (Stevenson, 1948, p.2157).

*The better workman, the worse husband* (Apperson, 1993, p.53).

Concerning women, it should be mentioned that the analysis of the proverbs showed that the only sphere of activity available to women and reflected in paremia is housekeeping. A woman is a mother, a wife, a mistress in the kitchen, and a sexually attractive object. According to traditional ideas, the woman is the keeper of the hearth who should provide comfort in the house and this is one of the most important roles of a woman. This idea is supported by proverbs:

*A woman's place is in the home* (Mieder, 1992, p.856).

*Men build houses, women build homes* (Mieder, 1992, p.525).

Due to the fact that the main aim of women was to get married, there are a lot of proverbs that show the qualities an ideal wife should possess. Such qualities as kindness, good faith, economic management, fidelity, etc. are positively evaluated. A good wife is a pride for her husband. The atmosphere in the house and the life of husband depend on a wife. The importance of a wife is proved by 8% of proverbs.

*A good wife and health is a man's best wealth* (Kershner, 1998, p. 21).

*A cheerful wife is the joy of life* (Gratian, 1998, p. 110).

*Two things do prolong life: a quiet heart and a loving wife* (Apperson, 1993, p. 601).

Such qualities of wives as grumpiness, inability to conduct business, extravagance, etc. are severely criticized. This criticism is illustrated by 18% of the proverbs.

*A sloppy, wasteful woman will waste and carry out more in her apron than an ambitious man can haul in a wagon* (Mieder, 1992, p. 908).

*It's better to dwell in the corner of a housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house* (Cordy 2005, p. 130).

*Three things drive a man out of his house – smoke, rain and a scolding wife.*

It is interesting to notice that there are no proverbs which give any recommendations to men. This fact proves that the English language is androcentric.

Another very important role of a woman is motherhood, which is respected by society (2% of the analyzed proverbs). Women's roles as mothers are traditional roles and associated with traditional gender attitudes. It is the most important role of women in patriarchal societies (Zhou, 2017). In English, proverbs featuring the kindness and affection of mothers are illustrated.

*A mother's heart never grows old* (Preston, 2012, p.102).

*The mother's breath is always sweet* (Preston, 2012, p.102).

*A man's mother is his own God* (Preston, 2012, p.102).

To sum up, it is obvious that women and women's activities are opposed to men and men's activities. The evaluation of activities reflects the male perspective, reflecting androcentrism of the linguistic picture of the world. The main results of this research can be illustrated by the following graphs.

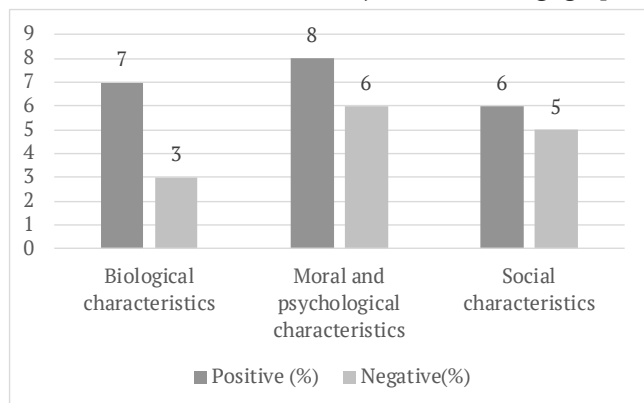


Figure 1. Characteristics of Men Reflected in Proverbs with Gender

Components.

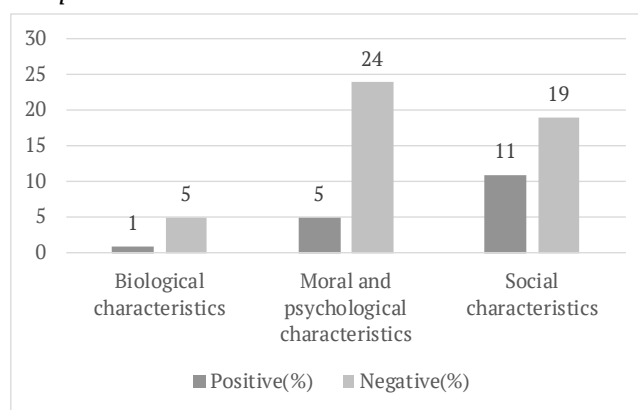


Figure 2. Characteristics of Women Reflected in Proverbs with Gender Components.

The study shows that English proverbs emphasize negative characteristics of women, which are more numerous.

In English proverbs, women, in contrast to men, are characterized mainly negatively. The value asymmetry of gender concepts can be traced in most frames and reflects the general tendency of patriarchal culture to rate a man higher than a woman. According to the representativity of negative assessments of women, the psychological layer is leading (see Figure 2). The overwhelming majority of the proverbs that form this layer attribute negative moral and moral qualities and low intellect to women. Such qualities as attractiveness, youth, and motherhood are respected.

Men are attributed both positive and negative moral and personal qualities: courage, honesty, integrity, cunning, a quick temper, etc., yet positive characteristics prevail (See Figure 1). The assessment reflects either a male or a universal perspective. However, the assessment from the female point of view is rare.

Thus, proverbs in the English language reflect a predominantly androcentric worldview, i.e. male perspective, negligent, consumer attitude towards a woman.

Concerning anti-proverbs it should be stated that this analysis shows that anti-proverbs about women still prevail (See Table 2). Moreover, we did not find proverbs with component "men" meaning "person" as the word "person" is used.

Table 2 The Number of Anti-Proverbs with Gender Components

Proverbs	Quantity (%)
Anti-proverbs focusing on men	38
Anti-proverbs focusing on women	62

The analysis of anti-proverbs, including biological

and physical characteristics, which account for 24% of the material, showed that significant changes in this area have not occurred. There are no anti-proverbs focusing on the appearance of men. As for women, in anti-proverbs the close attention to women's appearance is reflected. Thus, these paremias also reflect an androcentric worldview.

*Hell has no fury as a woman unadorned / Hell has no fury like a woman scorned* (Mieder, 2002, p. 97).

Like in proverbs, in anti-proverbs the ages of men and women are treated differently.

*A man is always as young as he reels.*

*A man is as old as his arteries.*

*A man is as old as she feels.*

*A man is as young as he feels after playing with children.*

*A man is as old as he looks before shaving, and a woman is as old as she looks after washing her face.*

*A woman is as old as she looks before breakfast.*

*A woman is as old as she looks until she puts her face on* (Mieder, 2002, p.15).

Men's ages are assessed according to their physical activity while for women looking young is still the most important problem. All these anti-proverbs prove that appearance comes first when we speak about woman. Age is assessed according to how she looks.

It is emphasized that appearance can be deceptive, and beauty is false.

*Appearances are deceiving: many a girl who puts up a swell front in public is flat-chested at home / Appearances are deceptive.* (Mieder, 2002, p. 43).

For men, appearance, as before, does not play a primary role; status and financial position do, and appearance is determined by physical endurance and self-perception. There were no anti-proverbs focusing on male vices, which suggests that there have been no significant changes at this level.

The anti-proverbs which illustrate the moral and psychological characteristics of men, unlike traditional proverbs, show mostly women's points of view due to the fact that most of them are ironic. However, they do not appear in large numbers and account for 11% of the analyzed anti-proverbs.

*A good man is hard to find / Good men are scarce* (Clay Doyle, 2012, p.17).

*Men are only good for one thing – and sometimes they aren't even good for that/ Men are only good for one thing* (Clay Doyle, 2012, p.101).

The anti-proverbs representing the moral and psychological characteristics of women are numerous (32%) and mostly ironic. Moreover, an emphasis is placed on negative qualities, such as capriciousness, laziness, vindictiveness, etc. Therefore, anti-proverbs also reflect the androcentric picture of the world.

*Beware of women bearing gifts: remember Eve / Beware of Greeks bearing gifts* (Mieder, 2002, p. 53).

*A woman's word is never done / A woman's work is never done.* (Mieder, 2002, p. 28).

*A woman on time is one in nine / A stitch in time saves nine.* (Mieder, 2002, p.24)/

In the English anti-proverbs characterizing men, the female ironic view of men is reflected. The anti-proverbs which represent social characteristics illustrate that the most obvious changes have happened in the social sphere of life (29%).

First of all, men and women are becoming equal in their rights and, nowadays, keeping a home is not only women's responsibility.

*A man's home is his castle; let him clean it / A man's home is his castle.*

*A married man's home is his castle, with him being the vassal* (Mieder, 2002, p.18).

*No man can serve two masters, unless he has a wife and a grown-up daughter / No man can serve two masters* (Mieder, 2002, p.154).

*A married man and his money are soon parted / A fool and his money are soon parted* (Mieder, 2002 p.10).

Secondly, this group is characterized by anti-proverbs, indicating the expansion of women's activities.

*A woman's place is in the car / A woman's place is in the home* (Mieder, 2002 p.26).

However, the opinion about women's ability to drive a car is very ironic.

*A woman driver is known by fenders she keeps / A man is known by the company he keeps* (Mieder, 2002, p. 16).

*Hell hath no fury like a woman driver / Hell has no fury like a woman scorned* (Mieder, 2002, p.97).

According to these anti-proverbs women have the opportunity to drive cars but it is obvious that they cannot do it properly. It should be mentioned that we were not able to find any anti-proverbs criticizing men's ability to drive a car.

Now a woman can enter any profession, and she is able to climb to the top of the career ladder.

*A Woman's Place Is in the House. . . and in the Senate / A woman's place is at home* (Mieder, 2002 p.26).

The sphere of family life has undergone significant changes too, so these changes are reflected in anti-proverbs. On the one hand, there are anti-proverbs declaring the independence of women and the lack of the usefulness of marriage. On the other hand, a number of anti-proverbs emphasize the importance of a happy family life.

*A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle / A woman without a man is like a handle without a pan* (Mieder, 2002, p. 25).

*A man's castle is his home, and his wife has the key to all the rooms / A man's home is his castle* (Mieder, 2002, p.18).

It should be noted, that having conducted the research, we did not find any anti-proverbs about a woman as a mother. This fact can be explained by the idea that anti-proverbs are a kind of humorous saying, and the image of a woman as a mother cannot be ridiculed. Since anti-proverbs are humorous in nature, they serve as a way of ridiculing women's shortcomings, such as gossip, non-punctuality, etc. Estimates reflect mainly the male perspective.

The results of the analysis are illustrated in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

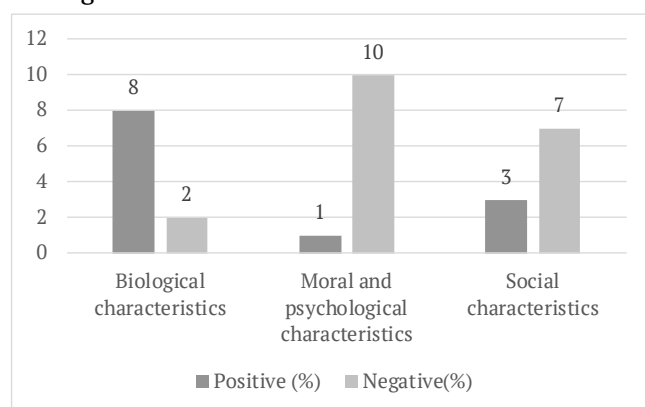


Figure 3.  
*Characteristics of Men Reflected in Anti-proverbs.*

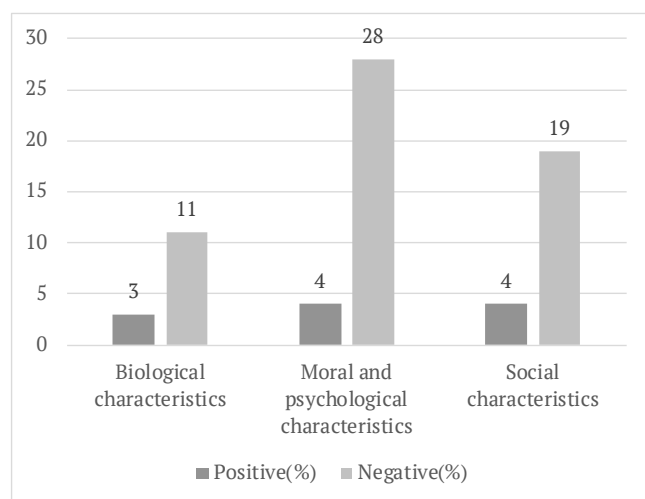


Figure 4.  
*Characteristics of Women Reflected in Anti-proverbs.*

To sum up, it should be mentioned that the analysis of anti-proverbs with gender components proves that the English language is still androcentric and in anti-proverbs, women characteristics, especially negative ones, prevail and are emphasized. However, there is a tendency to criticize men as well. Figure 3 illustrates that in the groups of biological characteristics and moral

characteristic the emphasis is on the criticism of men.

## Conclusion

The comparative analysis of proverbs and anti-proverbs with gender components leads us to the conclusion that there are asymmetrical representations of "male" and "female" in proverbs. Women and women's activities are opposed to men and men's activities. The image of women is characterized mostly by negative traits while the negative traits of men are often attributed to people in general. Assessment characteristics are asymmetric and, as a rule, reflect the male perspective. This fact proves that proverbs and anti-proverbs in the English language are androcentric.

It appears promising to continue studying anti-proverbs in order to distinguish and analyze the changes that are happening in the social roles of men and women. It seems obvious to compare images of men and woman represented by proverbs in the English and Russian languages, since the methods of studying parameology can be used with other languages as well.

## References

- Antonova, O.N. (2012). Funkcionalnye svoystva paremij transformov v angloyazychnom publicisticheskom diskurse [Functional peculiarities of transformed proverbs in the English-language in publicistic discourse] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation thesis). Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, Russia.
- Apperson, G. L. (1993). *Wordsworth Dictionary of Proverbs*. Ware, Hertfordshire, GB: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.
- Bartlett, J. W. (1977) *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial phrases*. Harvard, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Batulina, A. (2009). Techniques of Creating Humorous Effect in Anti-proverbs. *Bulletin of Voronezh State Agricultural Academy*, 2(12), 94-103.
- Beauvoir, S. (1949). *Le Deuxième Sexe* [The Second Sex] (vol. 2). Paris, France: Gallimard.
- Bohn, H. G., & Ray, J. (1855) *A Hand-book of Proverbs: Comprising Ray's Collection of English Proverbs*. London, GB: H.G. Bohn.
- Clay Doyle, Ch., Mieder, W. (2012). *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*. Yale: Yale press.
- Cordy, V. H. (2005) *The Multicultural Dictionary of Proverbs*. London, GB: McFarland & Company Inc. Publishers.
- Fergusson, R., & Law J. (2001). *The Penguin dictionary of proverbs*. London, GB:

- Penguin Books.
- Foldes, A., Litovkina A.T., & Mieder W. (2006). *Old Proverbs Never Die, They Just Diversify: A Collection of Anti-proverbs*. Burlington, Canada: The University of Vermont.
- Gossler, E. (2005). *Besser arm dran als Bein ab. Anti-Sprichwörter und ihresgleichen* [Anti-proverbs and others]. Wien, Austria: Edition Praesens.
- Gratian, V. (1998). *The sterling book of proverbs*. New Delhi, India: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Hancock, A.B., & Rubin, B.A. (2015) Influence of Communication Partner's Gender on Language. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*. Vol. 34, Issue 1, p. 46-64. doi:10.1177/0261927X14533197
- Humboldt W. (1999). *On Language: On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and Its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University press.
- Jespersen, O. (1922). *"The woman". Language: Its nature, development, and origin*. London, GB: Allen and Unwin.
- Kershen, L. (1998) *American proverbs about women: A reference guide*. Westport, CT: Greenwood publishing group.
- Koonin A. (1996). *Kurs frazeologii sovremennogo anglijskogoazyka* [Course phraseology of modern English]. Moscow, Russia: Higher education.
- Lakoff R. (1975). *Language and Woman's Place*. New York, USA: Harper.
- Mauthner F (1901-1903). *Beitrage zu einer Kritik der Sprache* [Contributions to a Critique of Language]. Stuttgart, Germany: J.G. Cotta.
- Mieder, W. (1989). *American proverbs: A study of texts and contexts*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.
- Mieder, W, Steward, W. Kingsbery, A., & Kelsie, B. (1992). *A dictionary of American proverbs*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Mieder, W. (2002). *Twisted wisdom modern anti-proverbs*. Hobart, Tasmania Australia: DeProverbio.com.
- Mills, S. (1995). *Language and gender: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. London, GB: Longman.
- The Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/>
- Perkins, G. C. (1911). *The man-made world: Or, Our androcentric culture*. New York, USA: Charlton.
- Potapov, V. (2002). Mnogourovnevaya strategiya v lingvističeskoj genderologii [Multilevel strategy of linguistic gender studies]. *Voprosi yazikoznaniya*, 1, 103-130.
- Preston, T. (2012). *A dictionary of English proverbs and proverbial phrases*. London, GB: Whittaker & Co.
- Roman C., Juhasz S., & Miller C. (1994). *The woman and language debate. A source book*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University press.
- Simpson, J., & Speake, J. (1994). *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Smirnova O. (2009) *Obrazy materi i otca vo frazeologii raznostrukturnyhazykov (sopostavitelnyj analiz semantičeskikh harakteristik na material anglijskogo-persidskogo russkogo i francuzskogoazykov)* [Images of the mother and father in the phraseology of the difference-structured languages (comparative analysis of semantic characteristics on the material of English, Persian, Russian and French languages)] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation thesis). Pyatigorsk: Stavropol State University, Russia.
- Spender, D. (1980). *Man Made Language*. London, GB: Routledge and Regan Paul.
- Stevenson, B. (1948). *The Macmillan Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases*. N.Y., USA: The MacMillan Company.
- Tannen, D. (1990). *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York, USA: Ballantine.
- The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language. Retrieved from <http://ahdictionary.com/>
- Titelman, G. (2000). *Random House of America's Popular Proverbs and Sayings*. New York, USA: Random House Information Group.
- Zhou, M. (2017) Motherhood, Employment, and The Dynamics of Women's gender attitudes. *GENDER&SOCIETY*, Vol.31 №6 p.751-776. Doi: 10.1177/0891243217732320
- Walter H., & Mokienko V. (2005). *Anti-proverbs of t Russian people* (2nd ed.). St. Petersburg, Russia: Neva.

## French Grammatical Accents: Practices, Sociolinguistic Foundations, and Pedagogical Implications in a Multilingual Setting

Antoine Willy Ndzotom Mbakop, Sonia Laurel Emalieu Kanko, Michelle Adrienne Tida  
University of Maroua

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Antoine Willy NDZOTOM MBAKOP, BP 46, Maroua, Far North Region, Cameroon. E-mail: awnmbakop@gmail.com

The present paper probes the use of French grammatical accents by English-speaking learners of French in a multilingual country: Cameroon. Its aim is twofold. First, it highlights the extent to which the various appropriative uses of French by French-speaking Cameroonians influence the form of the language spoken by their English-speaking counterparts. Then, it checks the effect of the language spoken by these learners on their written language. The data were collected among 160 Form 3 and Form 4 pupils from two high schools in the town of Maroua, Far North Region, Cameroon. Six tests and fifty tape recordings were carried out among the target population. Also, four French teachers were tape recorded during the exercise. The analysis of the errors made by the informants revealed significant patterns of acute and grave accents in the spoken language of respondents. These patterns of oral usage were found to strongly correlate with their written production. It therefore appears that Cameroon French displays some specific phonological characteristics, which severely spoils the acquisition of grammatical accents by English-speaking Cameroonians. These findings may revive the debate over whether French in former colonies should adapt to its contexts or keep its native purity.

**Keywords:** grammatical accents, multilingualism, second language acquisition, French, Cameroon, language teaching

Although Cameroon is, by its Constitution, an officially French-English Bilingual country, space dynamics reveal the overwhelming importance of French. In fact, the language is spoken in 4/5 of the territory, while English is spoken in 1/5. French is the dominant official language in Cameroon. It is the major language in the administration, the army, and most official spheres in the country. In addition to French and English, there are about 300 indigenous languages shared among six to eight ethnic groups (Lewis, 2009; Kouega, 2007; Altapedia online, 2003; Grimes, 2000; Ngoh, 1987; Dieu & R. Renaud, 1983). The French-English distribution was based on the Mandate granted to France and England by the League of Nations, following the Treaty of Versailles that marked the defeat of Germany in World War I (Mendo Ze, 1992). Another aspect of its Constitution is that the two official languages have no territorial right,

## Французские грамматические акценты: практики, социолингвистические основы и педагогические импликации в многоязычной среде

Антуан Уилли Ндзотом Мбакоп, Соня Лорел Эмалье Канко, Мишель Эдриэнн Тида  
Университет Маруа

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Антуан Уилли Ндзотом Мбакоп, Университет Маруа, г. Маруа, Дальнесеверный округ, Камерун.  
E-mail: awnmbakop@gmail.com

В настоящей статье исследуется использование французских грамматических акцентов англоязычными учащимися французского языка в многоязычной стране: Камерун. Цель исследования двоякая. Во-первых, подчеркивается, в какой степени различные виды надлежащего использования французского языка франкоязычными камерунцами влияют на форму языка, на котором говорят и их англоязычные коллеги. Далее изучается влияние языка, на котором говорят учащиеся, на его письменный эквивалент. Данные были собраны среди 160 учащихся 3 и 4 классов двух средних школ в городе Маруа, региона крайнего севера (Камерун). Среди целевой группы населения было проведено шесть тестов и сделано пятьдесят магнитофонных записей. Кроме того, четыре учителя французского языка были записаны на пленку во время учений. Анализ ошибок, допущенных информантами, выявил существенные закономерности острых и серьезных акцентов в разговорной речи респондентов. Было обнаружено, что эти модели устного употребления сильно коррелируют с их письменным производством. Таким образом, представляется, что камерунский французский язык обладает некоторыми специфическими фонологическими характеристиками, что серьезно затрудняет усвоение грамматических акцентов англоязычными камерунцами. Эти результаты могут оживить дискуссию о том, должны ли французы в бывших колониях адаптироваться к своим условиям или сохранить свою естественную чистоту.

**Ключевые слова:** грамматические акценты, многоязычие, овладение вторым языком, французский, Камерун, обучение языку

although the Francophone/Anglophone dichotomy is very strongly felt. This distinction is felt even more in the educational system where two sub-systems of education co-occur at nursery, primary, and secondary level.

In a context where French is numerically, and even politically and socially the dominant language, major human agglomerations are French-inclined. Unfortunately, the language, through its various statuses in the country, namely first, second, official, and foreign language, has undergone several appropriative uses in Cameroon. These uses are determined by a few interferences, which sometimes result in impressive lexico-semantic and stylistic creativity by its speakers. These interferences were investigated by Wamba & Noumssi (2003), who probed four regional accents of French, as well as a few creative processes in the uses of the language. The four regional accents were the

Bamileke, the Northern, the Centre/South, and the Littoral accents. In the Bamileke accent, back sounds tend to be replaced by front ones for functional reasons. In that vein, Bamileke speakers usually fail to pronounce /ʁ/ in final positions as in the excerpt '*Il n'est pas mon frère*' /inɛpamõnfʁɛ/. Also, as the previous excerpt shows, when the phonemes /l/, /ʁ/, and /n/ occur in implosive situations, they are not clearly pronounced or are simply not pronounced. The Centre/South accent is marked, among other things, by a slow and melodic intonation where consonants that precede the vowel 'o' tend to be labialised. The Northern accent has a characteristic lengthening of the phoneme /r/, while the Littoral accent, especially the Basaa trend displays the difficulty to pronounce such vowel sounds as /y/, /o/, /œ/, and /ø/ which are not found in that language. The creative processes included collocational change, denotational modification, and translation (Fosso, 1999). In the case of collocational change, a lexeme is inserted in an environment where it does not naturally collocate to build a new meaning. An expression like '*à la sueur de son front*' [to work hard and sweat] is turned into '*à la sueur de son sexe*' [to earn something through sex] where '*sexe*' does not collocate with '*sueur*'. In denotational modification, the denotational meaning of a lexeme is replaced by another one, so that a verb like '*assurer*', literally meaning the ability to carry out one's duty as expected, is changed into having sex with a woman. Translation is used here to refer to a metaphorical or metonymic naming of things (the woman vagina is referred to as *la forêt* [the forest] for example. Each accent is peculiar regarding specific sounds in the language, and underscores the fact that the French phonetic system differs quite significantly from that of most Cameroonian languages (Mendo Ze, 1992; Zang Zang, 1999). The problems faced by Cameroonians are not limited to phonology. (Onguene Essono, 2012) showed that the use of prepositions by some journalists revealed the influence of their mother tongue, although some of the errors made could not be traced to any Cameroonian language. A key aspect of this misuse of prepositions is the overgeneralization of *à*, which, to the author, is coherent with the structure of many local languages that usually do not have more than four prepositions (especially Bantu languages). The above-mentioned examples have raised the dangerous effects of these deviant uses, while others have championed the benefits of the appropriative use of the language. In that vein, Nzesse, in 2008, had this to say:

*Normalement, pour que le français langue d'origine étrangère, devienne fonctionnellement la langue du camerounais dans la praxis quotidienne, il faut bien qu'il l'adapte à sa culture, à l'environnement qu'il côtoie, c'est-à-dire qu'il finisse par se donner une variété vernaculaire, sorte d'interlangue grâce à laquelle il peut communiquer avec les autres, se reconnaître et se particulariser.* (p.308)

[Normally, before Cameroonians can functionally

use French, a foreign language, in their daily practices, they must adapt it to the culture, the environment around them; that is, they should eventually create a local variety, a sort of interlanguage through which they can communicate with others, self-identify, and particularize]

To Manessy (1979), French in Africa appears as a continuum with one extreme featuring the 'very pure language' (p. 93) used by many writers and intellectuals, and another one where the language can hardly be traced to the original French that fathered it. This can be explained by the fact that linguistic features can serve to distinguish social, racial, and language groups (Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974). Unfortunately, although errors made by French-speaking Cameroonians in the use of French have been highly investigated, no researcher seems to have ventured, to the best of our knowledge, into the area of investigating errors made by English-speaking Cameroonians in the use of French, especially from the perspective of the influence of Cameroonian French on the written production of this population. This gap owes a lot to a number of factors. First, French is theoretically one of the languages that requires the least number of instructional hours in order for an English speaker to reach a high level of speaking proficiency; the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center regards French as a Category 1 language in that respect (Bullock, 2009). Next, the putative problems French can pose to an English-speaking learner seem to be obvious enough to Cameroonians, some of which include phonological variations between the languages of some phonemes, grammatical variations in terms of verbal structure, and lexical gaps, just to name a few. Bullock, for example, lists some French sounds that English speakers usually fail to pronounce well, including /y/. An English speaker will also have problems with French gender, as French proceeds quite differently from English (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1977). This awareness of differences and similarities between French and English is the consequence of habit, as well as some language awareness developed through Contrastive Studies of English and French in most State universities through such coursebooks as *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* by Vinay and Darbelnet (1977). This course book is studied in Cameroon at the undergraduate level in the Bilingual Studies Department in most state universities. It is a stylistic comparison of French and English, which covers general differences and similarities between French and English. Many other works have underscored the differences and similarities between English and French, as well as the implications of such differences and similarities on the acquisition of the other language. Studies of the acquisition of the postverbal location of L2 French manner and frequency adverbs by L1 English-speaking learners (White, 1989), the structure of English and French clauses (Pollock,

1989), and the acquisition of French verb movement by native speakers of English (Hawkins, Towell, & Bazergui, 1993) are a few illustrations of the interest in the use of French by English speakers. The case of Cameroon requires a different perspective on the issue. Most works along these lines were carried out in Canada, a French-English bilingual country like Cameroon. Unlike Cameroon, English-speaking Canadian learners of L2 French are usually exposed to a specific variety of French, which, although it differs slightly from the Parisian variety, differs greatly from the variety spoken in Africa, as shown by Cameroonian researchers. For example in Cameroon, the English-speaking Cameroonian has a local language as his or her mother tongue, Pidgin-English as a vehicular language, and then English. The French he or she is exposed to comes from people who do not have French as a mother tongue and for whom several appropriative uses have evolved that have 'polluted' the original language. In fact, after WWI, France took possession of one part of Cameroon where French became the main language. However, as Wamba & Noumssi (2003), Onguene Essono (2012), and Mendo Ze (1992) have demonstrated, Francophone Cameroonians have evolved a local brew of French. Given that the main contact Anglophone Cameroonians have with French is through their Francophone counterparts (either via direct contact or through teaching, French teachers either having been trained by Francophones or being themselves Francophones), they learn or acquire a form which is not like the original (polluted). Therefore, in the process of acquiring L2 French, the learners' upheavals are doubled, mainly because of incorrect exposure both on the playground and even during French classes.

Two approaches to the analysis of errors faced by second and foreign language learners have generally been adopted, namely contrastive analysis and error analysis. Error analysis emerged in reaction to the shortcomings of contrastive analysis, and intends to study the problems faced by second language learners as 'errors' whose origins are not only found in the source language of the learners, but also in their target language (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Studies in error analysis usually group the sources of errors into three broad categories, namely interlingual, intralingual (Gass & Selinker), and teaching-induced errors (Filipovic, 1972). Interlingual factors mean errors in a learner's performance that can be attributed directly to interference from his or her mother tongue (Selinker, 1972). This has been the main cause of errors made by Francophone learners of French in Cameroon, as highlighted above. According to Tarone (1969, 1979), interlingual factors lead to three types of transfer: negative, positive, and divergent negative transfers. With negative transfer, the learner uses inappropriate

sound patterns and other elements from his or her mother tongue in place of the target language model. There is positive transfer when no difficulty is displayed by the learner. Divergent negative transfer occurs when the learner perceives the target language element as the most difficult. Generally, interlingual factors have usually been blamed on the mother tongue. In that respect, several scholars have recognized the impact of the mother tongue on the acquisition of a second language (Lado, 1957; Ferguson, 1975; Selinker). Intralingual factors, on the other hand, are usually 'developmental' since they are related to the L2. They are usually broken down into overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesis (James, 1998; Scovel, 2001). Teaching-induced errors have been acknowledged by Corder (1974) and Filipovic. These errors are usually attributed to 'bad teaching' or 'incorrect exposure'. In that vein, the problems faced by students are usually believed to be due to the fact that they are more in contact with poor models than good models of English.

The present paper builds on the incorrect exposure perspective, from the postulate that errors can start in one group (first generation) and then spill over to a second (second generation) through contact. In first generation errors, the difficulties faced by the learner are directly associated with either the L2 or the L1 of the learners, where the L2 maintains all of the original properties. This is the case when an Anglophone learner of French as a second language has problems with French pronunciation (/y/ for example is a major challenge to those learners), verbal complements, gender, etc. (Onguene Essono, 2012; Bullock, 2009; Nzesse, 2008; Wamba & Noumssi, 2003) The problem lies in the intrinsic nature of French, as opposed to English, which is their first language. In fact, with intralingual factors, the learner is still the initial cause, since there is no mediator between the learner and the problem he or she faces. However, when the problem the learner faces is neither of his or her direct making, nor that of the language, one can rightfully speak of a second-generation source. In fact, if the language s/he is exposed to has already been perverted by a first generation of users (in this case Francophone Cameroonians who speak or teach French with or to their Anglophone counterparts), the problem becomes more complex since solving it would require solving language problems faced by Francophones first. The work assumes that the various appropriative uses of French by Francophone Cameroonians hamper the acquisition of the language by their Anglophone counterparts. These learners of French do not have a native model to begin with, French being their second official language and a de facto foreign language for most of them. They are exposed to an already "polluted"



version of the language, a second-level pollution that adds to the very difficulties learners of a foreign language are faced with such as overgeneralization, poor implementation of the rules, etc. This study therefore hypothesised that the oral form of the language spoken around the learners, and which they reproduce in their daily communication, influences their written production. This position is established in relation with grammatical accents. These accents are believed to influence the spelling of words they belong to. In fact, consonant doubling is often influenced by the “accentedness” or not of a letter, especially “e”, which, when accented or not determines the doubling or not of the following consonant. Thus, this work intends to establish that appropriate pronunciation can be associated with proper writing, at least to some extent. The difficulty to cope with this aspect of French may stem from the fact that the grave and the acute accents display very complex features in their usage. The present paper therefore aims to probe the effects of the pronunciation of French grammatical accents on the written performance of Anglophone learners of French as a second language in Cameroon.

## Materials and Methods

The data for this investigation were collected and analysed following Corder (1975), with a focus on errors induced by incorrect exposure. In a typical Corder’s (1975) model, the first step is the description of learners’ errors. Next, the errors are classified, and finally the sources and causes of the errors are examined. This study follows a similar pattern. First, the errors are identified and classified into patterns; finally the sources and causes of the errors are discussed.

### Participants

In all, 160 secondary school students and four French teachers were case-studied in this research paper; 95 Form III and 65 Form IV students from the only two schools that offered an Anglophone sub-system of education in the town of Maroua, namely The Government Bilingual High School Maroua and *Jacques de Bernon* Bilingual College Maroua. The choice of these students was not fortuitous. In fact, after Form 4, students get into more specialised classes where very few continue to take French lessons. The four teachers were in charge of the classes in both schools (so their students were used to them), two at Government Bilingual High School Maroua and two at Jacques de Bernon Bilingual College Maroua, respectively. However, although all 160 students took the written

test, only 45 took part in the oral evaluation, given its difficulty and time constraints.

### Materials

The instruments were a test, a tape recorder, and participant observation. The test was actually a two-stage dictation comprising four different texts (see Appendix). Each text was devised to display the different accent variations for each of the four patterns identified for the verbal forms involved with the grave and acute accents on the “e” grapheme. The dictations were tape-recorded to describe the teachers’ handling of the accents in a bid to sort out possible mistakes they made and the effect this could have on their learners. Two other texts were submitted to the learners for reading. The reading was read aloud and tape-recorded. The researchers took part in all the testing operations through participant observation, sitting at the back of the class with the tape recorder.

### Administration

In each of the four classes selected for the investigation, the students underwent two different dictations, one by their French teacher and another by a “model reader” (the researcher). The dictation was carried out as follows: the text read once for acquaintance, a second time for writing, and a third time for verification. The tape recording took place after the class with 45 students over four days, with many being reluctant to undergo the second phase. They were asked to read the two texts they were subjected to, and their production was recorded for analysis. The teacher’s dictation was tape-recorded as well.

### Measures

The error count was the most difficult part of the endeavor. For each test, one item was chosen to represent one pattern, and all the informants were evaluated on that item. This means that for each pattern, good performance referred to the number of respondents who provided the correct spelling. The oral production was measured against the International Phonetic Alphabet recommendations. The respondents’ productions were therefore transcribed as heard. The analysis of the data involved identifying the errors made by the learners and the teachers. Next, the source of the errors made by the learners was sorted in connection with the language they were exposed to through their teachers. Although the focus was not the first language of the learners, its effect was also examined.

## Results and Discussion

This section deals with the patterns of grammatical accents in French as classified for the purpose of this study. Next the learners' oral and written performance and the sources of errors are considered. Finally, the sociolinguistic and pedagogical implications of the endeavour are discussed.

### Patterns of variations of grammatical accents in French

French grammatical accents include the acute accent (*accent aigu*), the grave accent (*accent grave*), and the circumflex (*accent circonflexe*) (Grevisse & Goose, 2011). These accentuation marks are referred to as grammatical accents in that they discriminate among otherwise similar words. They also contribute to the "grammaticality" of conjugation.

The placement of grammatical accents is a major area of difficulty in French, both to Francophone and Anglophone Cameroonians. The number of rules that govern this placement is huge and unstable. In addition, the oral rendition of some of them can vary significantly. The absence of an accent can sometimes be very difficult to anticipate. However, in Cameroon French, data have shown the tendency for some local accents of French to distort the rules of pronunciation in one way or another. One, which may be pertinent in this regard, is the difficulty for most Cameroonians, and not just Bamileke, to use the *schwa* in certain areas. Wamba and Noumssi (2003) highlighted, for example, the unexpected insertion of a *schwa* in certain words, especially in final position, after a nasal vowel, even in an environment where one is not expected. Thus, 'Il mange' [He eats] will be rendered as /ilmãʒə/, where the final vowel is not necessary.

In fact, the presence or not of an accent (acute and grave) may be very difficult to predict. Grevisse and Goose lists a few rules that can guide spelling in French as follows:

1° Pour les voyelles toniques, l'opposition entre é et è est nette : (...) Il n'y a plus d'exception (...) que pour certaines formes verbales suivies de je (...) 2° Pour les voyelles atones, où l'opposition phonétique est moins marquée, on a en principe è quand la syllabe suivante est formée d'une consonne et d'un e muet, et é dans le cas contraire (...) 3° Sauf devant s final, on ne met pas d'accent aigu ou d'accent grave sur un e qui ne termine pas la syllabe graphique (...) 4° Dans une syllabe ouverte (...) le son [e] s'écrit é et non e.

[1° There is a clear-cut opposition between é and è for strong vowels : (...) Exceptions are limited to a few verbal forms followed by je (...) 2° For weak vowels, where phonetic opposition is less marked, è is obtained in principle when the following syllable is formed by a consonant and a silent e, and é is obtained otherwise

(...) 3° With the exception of a following final S, there is no acute nor grave accent on an e that does not end the graphical syllable (...) 4° In an open syllable (...) the sound [e] is written é and not e.]

(pp. 109-110)

On the grounds of these rules, along with the numerous exceptions and variations, four patterns of variation of grammatical accents were established in this work, and are discussed in detail below. Note that the list is illustrative, and was established by the authors for the purpose of the present study.

#### Pattern I

This pattern comprises nouns and their derivatives in which the grapheme "e" is not accented in the penultimate position because the final syllable is accented, as described in Rule 2 above (Grevisse and Goose). They are actually very few in number and are sampled in Table 1.

Table 1  
Pattern I type of accent variation

Word	Transcription
Médecin [Medical doctor]	/mɛ(e)dsɛ̃/
Pèlerin [Pilgrim]	/pɛlrɛ̃/

Table 1 shows that the second "e" is silent in all four words, however, they are usually pronounced with an acute accent by Francophone Cameroonians. Their derivatives: Pèlerinage/Médecine.

#### Pattern II

Pattern II is made up of verbs whose accentuation varies per tense and person. They usually change from silent in the infinitive to grave or silent (or reduced to /ə/) when inflected (cf. Rule 2, Grevisse & Goose). Some of those verbs are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2  
Pattern II type of accent variation

Word	Transcription
	<i>J'emmène</i> /ãmɛn/ =ɛ [I bring]
<i>Emmener</i> /ãmne/	<i>J'emmènerai</i> /ãmɛnre/ =ɛ <i>J'emmenais</i> /ãmne/ =Ø
	<i>Tu harcèles</i> /aʁsɛl/ =ɛ [You harass]
<i>Harceler</i> /aʁsle/	<i>Tu harcèlerais</i> /aʁsɛlɛ/ =ɛ <i>Tu harcelais</i> //aʁsle/ =Ø
	<i>Il soulève</i> /sulɛv/ =ɛ [I lift up]
<i>Soulever</i> /sulve/	<i>Il soulèverait</i> /sulɛvɛ/ =ɛ <i>Il soulevait</i> /sulvɛ/ =Ø
	<i>Je sème</i> /sem/ [I sow]
<i>Semer</i> /səme/	<i>Je sèmerais</i> /sɛmɛ/
	<i>Je semais</i> /səme/

## FRENCH GRAMMATICAL ACCENTS

	<i>Tu crèves /cʁɛv/</i> [You starve/You yearn for]
<i>Crever /cʁəv/</i>	<i>Tu crèverais /cʁɛvrɛ/</i>
	<i>Tu crevais /kʁəv/</i>
	<i>Il enlève /ãlev/</i> [He abducts/removes]
<i>Enlever</i>	<i>Il enlèverait /ãlevrɛ/</i>
	<i>Il enlevait /ãlve/</i>

The change from /Ø/ to /ɛ/ is noticeable, although there is no major orthographical implication. It appears that the accentuation of the grapheme “e” depends on whether the following syllable is accented or not. When it is accented, the grapheme is not, and when it is not accented, the grapheme is accented. This principle also applies to nouns derived from these verbs: *enlever* [to abduct] takes a penultimate unaccented “e” and an accented final “e”, while its derived noun, *enlèvement* [abduction], reverses the order of accents. The “accentedness” is also useful in discriminating the noun *grève* /gʁɛv/ [striking action] from the verb *grever* /gʁəv/ [to negatively affect], which are wrongly used interchangeably by many Cameroonians to mean “a striking action”.

### Pattern III

This pattern is made up of verbs whose infinitives are not accented, but whose conjugated forms display various accents as well as some orthographic changes, namely consonant doubling when the accent is concealed. It is especially the case of verbs with “eter” and “eler” such as: *projeter/prɔʒte/* [to project], *appeler/aple/* [to call], *renouveler/vənuvle/* [to renew] and *atteler/atle/* [to hitch up/to couple]. They are recapitulated in Table 3 below.

Table 3  
Pattern III type of accent variation

Word	Transcription
	<i>J'appelle /apɛl/</i>
<i>Appeler /aple/</i>	<i>J'appellerai /apɛlɛ/</i>
	<i>J'appelais /apɛ/</i>
	<i>Tu renouvelles /vənuvɛl/</i>
<i>Renouveler /vənuvle/</i>	<i>Tu renouvelais /vənuvɛ/</i>
	<i>Tu renouvellerais /vənuvɛlɛ/</i>
	<i>Il projette /pʁɔʒɛt/</i>
<i>Projeter /pʁɔʒte/</i>	<i>Il projetterait /pʁɔʒɛtɛ/</i>
	<i>Il projetait /pʁɔʒɛ/</i>
	<i>Ils attellent /atɛl/</i>
<i>Atteler /atle/</i>	<i>Ils attelleraient /atɛlɛ/</i>
	<i>Ils attelaient /atɛ/</i>

One major feature of this pattern is that the grapheme “e” moves from silent in the infinitive to either silent or /ɛ/. Just like the preceding pattern, the absence or presence of the accent is determined by the

“accentedness” of the following syllable. But unlike Pattern 2, there is consonant doubling and the accent is always implicit through that doubling.

However, the above-mentioned rules have a few nuances. They are presented below:

1. Nouns derived from these verbs can be included in accent changes. This is the case of the words: *appel* [a call], *projet* [a project] that are written with an accent but in oral production are pronounced /apɛl, pʁɔʒɛ/. Nevertheless their verbs are /aple/, /pʁɔʒte/. For the verb *renouveler*, its noun form takes the grave accent: *renouveau* /rənuvɛlmã/ [renewal].
2. The rule stated above does not apply to the verb *sceller* [to seal]. The infinitive *sceller*, instead of being pronounced /sɛle/ is pronounced /sele/, and the conjugated form is /sele/ in all the tenses and persons of conjugation except in the past participle where some changes occur depending on whether it agrees with a masculine or a feminine noun.

Example:

- (1) *Un seau scellé /œ̃sɔsɛle/* [a sealed bucket]
- (2) *Une porte scellée /ynpɔʁtsɛle/* [a sealed door]

What is very significant here is the fact that the accent is never physically present, something that makes sense in a French-English bilingual context like Cameroon. Having two languages with clear-differences in the use of grammatical accents may be difficult to handle. Anglophone Cameroonians, because of their exposure to English, are not well acquainted with those accents, although they are aware of their existence. In that vein, hearing an accent where one is not physically present can be very troublesome to such learners.

### Pattern IV

Pattern IV is made up of verbs which, in the infinitive, take the acute accent and whose conjugation in some tenses and persons may change the acute accent to the grave one. It is the case with the verbs: *pêcher/peʃɛ/* [to fish], *sécher/seʃɛ/* [to dry], *alléger/aleʒɛ/* [to alleviate/lighten], *empiéter/ãpiɛtɛ/* [to encroach on], *révéler/vɛvɛle/* [to reveal] and *aérer/aeʁɛ/* [to air] as highlighted in Table 4 below.

Table 4  
Pattern IV type of accent variation

Word	Transcription
	<i>je pêche /peʃ/</i>
<i>Pêcher /peʃɛ/</i>	<i>Je pêcherai /peʃɛ/</i>
	<i>Je pêchais /peʃɛ/</i>

<i>Sécher</i> /seʃe/	<i>Je sèche</i> /sɛʃ/
	<i>Tu séchais</i> /seʃɛ/
<i>Lécher</i> /leʃe/	<i>Je lèche</i> /lɛʃ/
	<i>Tu léchais</i> /leʃɛ/
<i>Alléger</i> /aleʒe/	<i>J'allège</i> /alɛʒ/
	<i>J'allégeais</i> /alɛʒɛ/
	<i>J'allégerais</i> /alɛʒɛʁ/
<i>Révéler</i> /ʁevele/	<i>Je révèle</i> /ʁevɛl/
	<i>Je révélais</i> /ʁevɛlɛ/
	<i>Je révélerai</i> /ʁevɛlɛʁ/
<i>Aérer</i> /aɛʁe/	<i>J'aère</i> /aɛʁ/
	<i>J'aérais</i> /aɛʁɛ/
	<i>J'aérerai</i> /aɛʁɛʁ/

Table 4 above presents a particular point that somehow opposes this pattern to other patterns. Actually, the accent is usually easily identified through pronunciation, and the occurrence of the unaccented /ə/, which seems to be the most troublesome sound throughout this analysis, does not come into play in different variations.

These four patterns of accent variation in connection with the grave and acute accents reveal one major parameter: in the conjugation of verbs, the presence or absence of an accent is very significant, especially to orthography. In fact, the presence of an accent may determine the doubling of the grapheme “l” in some verbs, while the “accentedness” of the penultimate “e” of the root of the verb usually determines the “unaccentedness” of the last grapheme. This has a tremendous didactic implication that doubles with a sociolinguistic one. A good knowledge of these accent variations can contribute to alleviating mental tension on the part of the learner when faced with words involving such structures. However, they are faced with an exposure problem whereby the model they are usually exposed to comes from a speech community where a variety of the language that diverges from the native accent has already evolved.

### Learners’ performance

This section discusses the oral and written performance of the learners. The learners’ oral performance is discussed first.

### Learners’ oral performance

The learners were asked to read one of the six texts used for the collection of the data. Their performance is summarized in Figure 1 below.

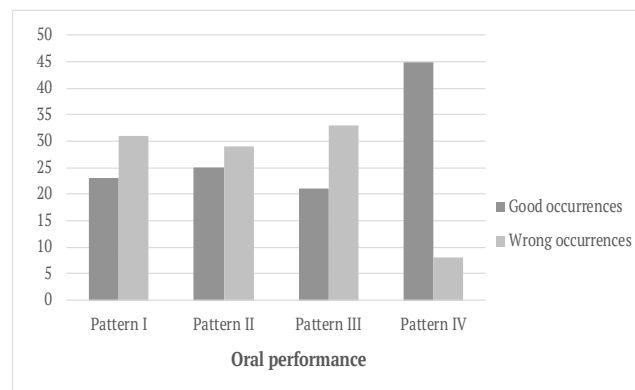


Figure 1. Learners’ oral performance.

Figure 1 above shows that only Pattern IV seemed easy to the learners. This pattern comprises verbs whose infinitive changes from acute to grave in their finite forms, and displays the least variability. Pattern III appears to be the most complex, probably because of the orthographical change induced by the “accentedness” or not of the preceding “e”. Also, the accent did not physically appear, so as to indicate whether an acute or grave accent was required. It was rather the following consonant that was usually doubled. In general, the learners faced some difficulty with this unstable structure of grammatical accents in French. For each pattern, a number of wrong or improper cases were identified.

Table 5  
Major deviant forms identified in association with Pattern I

Correct form	Learners' pronunciation	Number of occurrences
/medsẽ/	/medesẽ/	26
/pɛlɛrinaʒ/	/pelerinaʒ/	19

These forms are congruent with impressionistic observations (/medesẽ/;/pelerinaʒ/) among Francophone Cameroonians. Pattern II revealed a high occurrence of /e/ before an accented final “e” grapheme. Such examples were /ãmenɛ/, /suleve/, /semɛ/, and /afetɛ/. This clearly breached the general tendency for the penultimate “e” to be unaccented in French. Similarly, Pattern III underscored the tendency for the informants to pronounce the penultimate “e” with an acute accent in such words as *appeler* /apele/ and *atteler* /atele/.

**Learners’ written performance**

The written performance of the learners, although it contrasted a little with their oral performance, seems to meet our expectations as Figure 2 below shows.

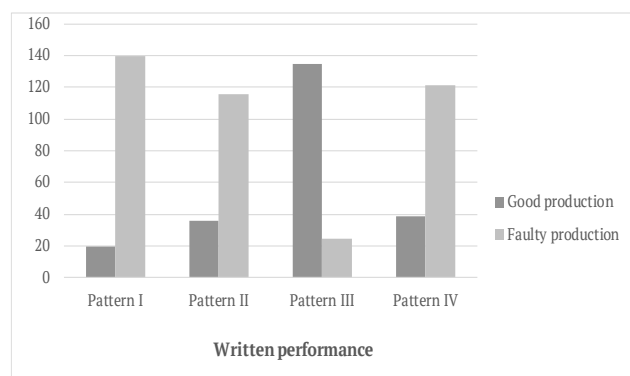


Figure 2. Learners’ written performance.

In general, as Figure 2 above shows, faulty productions overwhelmingly outdid good or proper production in the written performance of the learners. The difficulties learners faced with Patterns I, II, & IV can be seen in the variability of the accents involved. However, what is striking is the very high number of good productions in Pattern III. In fact, this is the only pattern with a specific characteristic, namely that of physically featuring no accent. This is due to the fact that once a consonant is doubled the preceding accent is allowed. Perhaps most importantly, the absence of grammatical accents, which doubled with the absence of grammatical accents in their first language, can better decipher this complexity. Actually, it was found that most informants avoided the accent when in doubt. Therefore, it can be intimated that although they could not properly pronounce words using this

pattern, they accidentally performed well because of their general penchant for not accenting letters, which in turn is due to the absence of grammatical accents in their first language (English).

The major errors connected with each pattern clearly highlighted the poor mastery of accentuation rules, and the influence of both Cameroonians French and English. The absence of accents in English is shown in the very high frequency of the forms \**pelerinage* and \**medecin* in Pattern I, as well as their good performance in Pattern III. All of these revealed important sociolinguistic and pedagogic stakes associated with the use of grammatical accents by Anglophone learners of French in Cameroon.

**Sources of errors**

In this section, the errors are globally tackled in terms of interlingual, intralingual, and errors induced by incorrect exposure.

**Interlingual errors**

It is difficult to identify any error that could be said to depend on the differences between French and English, although as a general matter grammatical accents in essence constitute an aspect where the two languages sharply differ. However, none of the errors made by the learners could be directly attributed to that difference, mainly because one of the two languages (English) does not feature grammatical accents, except with a few foreign words of French origin. Very contradictorily, English contributed positively (accidentally) to the good performance of the learners in the production of the Pattern III type of accent variation. As Figure 2 shows, 135 good occurrences were found with this pattern, while only 25 wrong occurrences were noted. In fact, this pattern featured no grammatical accent at all. The accent, when it occurred, was concealed by the doubling of the following consonant (*appeler/appelle*, *renouveler/renouvelle*). Given that English does not make use of grammatical accents, learners can be said to have accidentally performed well by leaving out the accent as they usually do when they write English texts. This cannot be called a positive transfer since it is not the result of an existing rule for grammatical accents in English. If one considers that in cases where the accent was not displayed, many learners failed to double the following consonant, then this cannot definitely be called a positive transfer, nor can it be considered an intralingual error.

**Intralingual errors**

This category of errors could be said to be the most important in the data collected. In the case of the Pattern I type of accent variation, the major problem was ignorance of rule restrictions. As a general rule,

accents in French are consistent with both spelling and writing. In that vein, Grevisse & Goose (2011) point out “*l’accent aigu et l’accent grave se mettent sur la lettre e pour indiquer la prononciation: é pour [e], è pour [ɛ]*” [the acute accent and the grave accent are placed on the letter *e* to indicate the pronunciation: *é* for [e], *è* for [ɛ]] (p. 109). However, there are a few cases like *médecin* where the acute accent is rendered as a grave one. The analysis of the learners’ written productions revealed 140 wrong occurrences against 20 good ones. But again, as will be seen later, one can hardly relate this to the rule alone. In Pattern II, the learners seemed to clearly have a poor mastery of the rules, and this can be understood given the complexity of those rules as described above. Although orthographic memory is important too, it appears that they did not only lack knowledge of the rule, but they also overgeneralized the little they thought they knew. The following occurrences underscore the fact that they had very poor knowledge of the words as well as the rules that govern the variations of the grammatical accents with different patterns:

- *Emméné*
- *Harcélais*
- *Sémaïs*

The same can be applied to Pattern IV where they usually mixed up acute and grave accents for such words as *allege/allégeais* and *lèche/léchais*. However, as this work intends to show, the main cause of those errors can be traced to the environment of the learners.

### Errors induced by incorrect exposure

This paper hypothesised that the learners were exposed to a low-quality language. More than ‘bad teaching’, it is ‘incorrect exposure’ that is highlighted here. In effect, learners’ spoken performance is strongly in favour of this stance given that it correlated with their written performance. Also, some of the mistakes seemed to be a mixture of the teacher’s pronunciation, the learners’ background, with the learners’ background overdoing teacher’s pronunciation. However, this teacher-induced error cannot be related to bad teaching. In fact, teachers themselves, as the literature has revealed, belong to the Francophone community, whose French has been shown to display several faults (Wamba & Noumssi, 2003; Onguene Essono, 2012).

Figure 1 above showed that only Pattern IV was easy for the learners. This is certainly due to the fact that there were little accent variations as compared to other patterns. However, this was not the easiest as far as writing was concerned. This means that the influence of oral production on written production is not glaring with this pattern.

On the other hand, although Pattern III was troublesome in the oral form, the informants did not

face major difficulties when putting it into writing. But, as mentioned earlier, this is an ‘accidental’ positive transfer, and their oral performance clearly reinforces this stance. It is accidentally positive in the sense that the learners did not consciously implement any rule to achieve that performance. It was their reluctance to use accents that resulted in that apparently good achievement. As for Patterns I and II, the presence of the silent vowel or the *schwa* was a breakthrough in this study. Actually, this phonological detail had a tremendous impact on vowel variation. The learners were found to have as much difficulty in the oral production as the written production of grammatical accents when this was involved. A comparative table of learners’ performance upon teacher’s reading and model readings revealed very interesting facts in that respect. This is summed up in the Table 6 below.

Table 6  
*Comparative learners’ written performance in Pattern I*

Total Students	Teacher Reading		Model Reading		Total
	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	
Number of students	55	105	23	137	160
Percentage	34,37%	65,63%	14,37%	85,63%	100%

The table highlights the fact that, in Pattern I, the model reading induced many more mistakes on the part of the learners than did the teacher readings. This can be accounted for by the fact that teacher readings were closer to the local variety that corresponded to the mental model the learners had constructed as a referent to that physical shape. A word like ‘*Médecin*’ which was found to be consistent in the teacher readings and the local pronunciation /medesẽ/, was a real challenge to a learner when pronounced /medsẽ/ or /medsẽ/. This falls in line with the correlation established by Grainger & Hannagan (2014) between the mental image of words and the way their phonetics are shaped. Therefore, it can be postulated that pronunciation X triggers spelling Y. In cases where the pronunciation changes, the spelling is likely to differ, leading to the type of mistakes obtained with this pattern of grammatical accents. According to Grevisse & Goose (2011), the presence of a silent ‘e’ in the penultimate syllable is due to the ‘accentedness’ of the vowel of the last syllable, as in the word ‘*appeler*’. Each time the ultimate syllable features an accented vowel sound, the ‘e’ in the penultimate syllable is silent. This rule, which combines elements of phonology and orthography, can be significant in solving accent-related orthographic problems in non-native settings. It is a rule that is generally breached in the local variety (as observed in the data and also impressionistically), so that when it was respected by the model reader, the learners potentially felt some

embarrassment, since the phonetic shape that was provided to them did not match any known physical shape in their visual repertoire.

### Sociolinguistic foundations

Linguistic features have been established in renowned literature as major classifying elements among different social, racial, and linguistic groups (Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974). However, the use of French grammatical accents by English-speaking learners of French in Cameroon, as displayed by the current work, points to the assimilation of one language group (let us call it group A) by another (let us call it Group B) in a contact situation, and where Group B was originally assimilated by another language group (let us call it Group C). These labels refer to Anglophone Cameroonians (Group A), Francophone Cameroonians (Group B), and Frenchmen (Group C). As a reminder, part of Cameroon was mandated to France by the League of Nations after WWI, while another part went to England. The French colonial masters imposed French as the language of education and administration (Mendo Ze, 1992) on its possession. Therefore, Cameroonians living in French Cameroon were assimilated. Today, decades after independence, many Anglophones are rejecting what they call the Francophone assimilation of Anglophones (Takam, 2003). Knowing that Francophone Cameroonians have developed some appropriative forms of French, the latest assimilated group (the Anglophones) has been exposed to a mediated form of the language that has already been transformed by the second generation of its users.

In fact, and this has not been highlighted in previous works, even the Cameroonian elite seems to speak a Cameroonian variety of French, at least to a certain extent. This can be illustrated by a number of neologisms invented by Cameroonians to stigmatise those who speak with a Parisian accent. Some of those expressions identified in Telep (2017) and also observed impressionistically include:

- *Whitiser* (Meaning: to speak like a Frenchman)
- *Chirac, sors de ce corps!* (Literally meaning that the person speaking has a Frenchman's spirit that speaks through him; Chirac, one former French president, epitomizes the Frenchman in this case)

The existence of such expressions to refer to those speaking with a Parisian accent simply reveals that the accent Cameroonians are versed with differs from the native accent. It also reveals the negative attitude people have towards those who want to affect when speaking the language. This attitude, although it has not been clearly linked to either people's poor performance or the attitude towards the former colonial power, potentially anticipates the accents

used in the country.

Therefore, the English-speaking Cameroonian who learns French is exposed, right from the beginning, to a non-native accent. This can be illustrated both by their personal oral performance, which betrayed the quality of the language they are exposed to, and by the major oral errors made by the French teachers who read out the dictation to their students. The tendency to produce accented "e" when none was required was highlighted in their oral production as illustrated below.

Table 7  
*Major deviant forms associated with Pattern I*

<i>Médecin</i> */medesɛ̃/, <i>emmenait</i> */ãmene/, <i>relevait</i> */ʁelevɛ/
<i>Revela</i> */ʁevela/, <i>attelions</i> */ateljõ/, <i>projétaient</i> */pʁɔʒɛtɛ/
<i>Élevage</i> */elevaz/, <i>appela</i> */apela/, <i>achetai</i> */aʃɛtɛ/, <i>projeter</i> */pʁɔʒɛtɛ/
<i>Élevage</i> */elevaz/, <i>renouvelait</i> */renuvələ/, <i>harclait</i> */arsele/

The analysis of the learners' performance correlates this use of accents by their teachers. This sociolinguistic environment therefore seems to determine what the language learners are exposed to. This language he or she is exposed to, in turn, influences the language he or she writes, as the analysis has shown. The problem is therefore not in French per se. There seems to be only a loose link between the mistakes made by the learners and the structure of the language itself. The problem lies in the quality of the input the learners are usually exposed to. This input later influences their written production. On the other hand, the first language of the learners surprisingly reduced the number of mistakes, especially when no physical accent was required. This means the mistakes made here are not to be blamed on the first language of the learners.

This language use may revive the issue of the purity of French. Although neither party seems to be wrong, it seems that the way French is spoken may have tremendous implications far beyond the appropriative use point raised by those for the development of a local form of French (Nzesse, 2008) and the purity of the language raised by the guardians of the norm (Mendo Ze, 1992). Actually, if one could establish the link between the proper use of a language and the written productions of learners, *whitising* (approximating standard French accent (Telep, 2017) or speaking with a Parisian accent could appear a necessity.

### Pedagogical implications

Although this paper does not intend to solve the debate over the appropriative use of French in Cameroon, it clearly shows that the use of the correct phonological features of a language affects the spelling of that language, especially with a syllabary language

like French. The problem arises in non-native settings where French is both a second and a foreign language. As a second language in Cameroon (to Francophone Cameroonians) it is said to have gone through a number of appropriative uses that have transformed it. This transformed French is then taught to those for whom French is a foreign language, namely Anglophone Cameroonians, by Francophone teachers. These teachers have already adopted a form of the language that is very much corrupt and which they teach to their Anglophone students. Their students are thus exposed to a non-native accent that affects their written language, as this paper has shown. Hence, a Parisian accent could definitely influence the mastery of some aspects of French orthography, especially those related to accents. Actually, the analysis above has established beyond a reasonable doubt that the pronunciation of certain words influences their writing and that French orthography is deeply rooted in the mastery of its phonology. There seems to be an apparent neglect for this aspect of literacy, in most works focusing on reading, and orthography as a major aspect of literacy (Bouma, 1971; Chanceaux & Grainger, 2012).

Yet, phonological consciousness, which should not be confused with linguistic pretention or arrogance, may contribute to a certain extent to the mastery of such areas of French. This means that teachers of French should create this linguistic awareness in their learners that could ignite in the latter the development of mnemonic techniques in relation to those words. It can be foretold that a child who is taught that there is a strong correlation between the “accentedness” of the last vowel and the “unaccentedness” of the penultimate vowel would use oral clues to identify the appropriate grammatical accent. This will surely be incremental in the development of orthographical skills, although it will not solve all the learners’ problems.

Furthermore, the consciousness of the role of accents in the doubling or not of consonants can help guide students during conscious reading. In fact, when one reads, the brain captures the picture of words that are being read, before the phonological shape of the word itself is produced. This may be because ‘orthographic processing in humans makes use of a small part of a brain region (ventral occipital-temporal cortex) known to be involved in the identification of various kinds of visual objects’ (Grainger & Hannagan, 2014, p.13).

“Whitising” in this form shifts from the sociolinguistic sphere to the pedagogical one, mainly because it neither prevents the appropriate use of the language in former colonies, nor does it foster it. It is even more so because it can intrude into the intercultural knowledge of the learners and wipe out some of the prejudices linked to a certain form of

French, especially the one spoken by Africans living in France who are believed to affect it in order to highlight their French heritage and their success. The major challenge of this situation may reside in the fact that it could only be solved permanently after two generations, teachers as well as their learners having to be trained in an appropriate way, so that neither could later transfer these errors into the next generation. Actually, not only should learners be aware of these slight variations, but teachers also should be made to understand that their speech greatly influences the acquisition of some aspects of the language they teach. They should expose learners to correct input by reducing their own errors so the learners’ errors could be significantly reduced.

## Conclusion

This paper aimed at probing the potential link between spoken and written language in a multilingual setting. It specifically examined the influence of spoken French on the use of grammatical accents by English-speaking learners of French in Cameroon. It was hypothesised that the language used by those learners would be influenced by the quality of the input they are exposed to. The case revealed some interesting facts. Firstly, the French language those learners are exposed to is already “polluted”, as shown by previous works as well as impressionistic observations and data collection. Then, this polluted language is transposed in the learners’ written and spoken language. This shows that the problem is not the internal structure of the language per se that hampered the mastery of this aspect of the language. This sociolinguistic foundation to the errors English-speaking Cameroonians make in the use of grammatical accents in French announced the pedagogical stake of the purity of French. The work finally portended that the use of standard French could help curb the tide of the errors learners made in using grammatical accents. This study underscores the fact that the use of a Parisian accent is not just a luxurious choice, but a reasonable one.

## References

- Altapedia online. (2003). *Countries A to Z: Cameroon*. <http://www.atlapedia.com>. Accessed on October 11, 2009.
- Bouma , H., & Legein, C. P. (1971). Visual recognition of isolated lower-case letters. *Vision Research*, 11, 459-474.
- Bullock, B. (2009). *The French Language Initiative:*



## FRENCH GRAMMATICAL ACCENTS

- French Language Advocacy Kit. *American Association of Teachers of French (AATF)*.
- Chanceaux, M., & Grainger, J. (2012). Serial position effects in the identification of letters, digits, symbols, and shapes in peripheral vision. *Acta Psychologica*, 141, 149-158.
- Corder, P. (1975). *Error analysis and language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corder, S. P. (1974). Error Analysis. In J. L. Allen, & S. P. Corder, *Techniques in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dieu, M., & R. Renaud. (1983). *L'Atlas linguistique du Cameroun [The Linguistic atlas of Cameroon]*. Paris: CERDOTOLA-Agence de coopération culturelle et technique.
- Ferguson, C. A. (1975). Towards a characterisation of English foreigner talk. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 17, 1-14.
- Filipovic, R. (1972). Some problems in studying the English elements in the main European languages. *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 4, 141-158.
- Fosso. (1999). Créativité lexicale sur le campus universitaire de Yaoundé I: Etude du champ lexical de la sexualité [Lexical creativity on the Yaoundé I university campus: A study of the lexical field of sexuality]. *Le français en Afrique noire*, 13, 50-57.
- Gass, S. M., & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course, 3rd edition*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Grainger, J., & Hannagan, T. (2014). What is special about orthographic processing? *Written Language and Literacy*, 17(2), 225-252.
- Grevisse, M., & Goose, A. (2011). *Le Bon usage, 15ème édition [The Good usage]*. Bruxelles: Editions de Boeck Université.
- Grimes, B. (2000). *The Ethnologue: The languages of the world, 14th edition*. Texas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Hawkins, R., Towell, R., & Bazergui, N. (1993). Universal Grammar and the acquisition of French verb movement by native speakers of English. *SAGE Journals*, Vol. 9, Issue 3, 189-233.
- James, C. (1998). *Error in language learning and use*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Jikong, S., & Koenig, E. (1983). Language usage in Cameroon urban centres. In E. Koenig, E. Chia, & J. Povey, *A sociolinguistic profile of urban centers in Cameroon* (pp. 55-77). Los Angeles: Cross Roads Press.
- Kouega, J.-P. (2003). English in Francophone elementary grades in Cameroon. *Language and Education*, 17, 408-420.
- Kouega, J.-P. (2007). The language situation in Cameroon. *Current Issues in Language Planning (CILP)*, 8(1), 1-94.
- Krashen, S. D. (1976). Formal and informal linguistic environments in language acquisition and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 10(2), 5-16.
- Labov, W. (1966). *The Social stratification of English in New York City*. Washington, DC: Centre for Applied Linguistics.
- Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures: Applied linguistics for language teachers*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lewis, M. P. (2009). *The Ethnologue: The languages of the world, 16th Edition*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.
- Manessy, G. (1979). Créolisation et français régionaux [Creolisation and regional varieties of French]. In P. Wald, & G. Manessy, *Plurilinguisme: norme, situations, stratégies*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Mendo Ze, G. (1992). *Une crise dans les crises: Le français en Afrique noire francophone [A crisis among crises: French in francophone sub-Saharan Africa]*. Paris: ABC.
- Ngoh, J. V. (1987). *Cameroon, 1884-1945: A hundred years of history*. Limbe: Navy Group Publication.
- Nzesse, L. (2008). Le français en contexte plurilingue, le cas du Cameroun: appropriation, glottopolitique et perspectives [French in a plurilingual context, the case of Cameroon: Identification, glottopolitics and perspectives] didactiques. *Francofonia*, 17, 302-323.
- Onguene Essono, L. M. (2012). Innovation morphosyntaxique en presse écrite francophone: analyse de quelques emplois de la préposition dans les médias camerounais [Francophone newspapers morphosyntactic innovation: Analysis of the use of some prepositions in Cameroonian media]. *Le français en Afrique*, N° 27, 137-151.
- Orsenna, E. (2007). *La Révolte des accents*. Montréal: Stock.
- Pollock, J.-Y. (1989). Verb movement, universal grammar, and the structure of IP. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 20(3), 365-424.
- Scovel, T. (2001). *Learning New Languages: A guide to second language acquisition*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle.
- Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 10(3), 209-31.
- Takam, A. F. (2003). Bilinguisme officiel et promotion de la langue minoritaire en milieu scolaire: Le cas du Cameroun [Official bilingualism and the promotion of the minority language in education: The case of Cameroon]. *Sudlangues*, 7, 26-48.
- Tarone, E. (1969). *A selected annotated bibliography on social dialects, for teachers of speech and English, (Lab report series C / Washington)*. Washington: Unknown binding.
- Tarone, E. (1979). Interlanguage as chameleon. *Language Learning* 29(1), 181-191.
- Telep, S. (2017). Speaking without an accent : ideologies about phonetic accommodation

- among Cameroonian immigrants in Paris. <http://phonetiquedufle.canablog.com/archives/2013/09/23/28072866.html>.
- Trudgill, P. (1974). *The Social differentiation of English in Norwich*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vinay, J.-P., & Darbelnet, J. (1977). *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais [Comparative stylistics of French and English]*. Paris: Marcel Didier.
- Wamba, R., & Noumssi, G. M. (2003). Le français au Cameroun contemporain: statuts, pratiques, problèmes sociolinguistiques [French in contemporary Cameroon: Statuses, practices, sociolinguistic problems]. *Sudlangues*, 2, 1-20.
- White, L. (1989). The adjacency condition on case assignment: do L2 learners observe the subset principle? In S. Gass, & J. Schachter, *Linguistic perspectives on second language acquisition* (pp. 134-158). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zang Zang, P. (1999). Le phonétisme du français camerounais [Cameroonian French phonetism]. In G. Mendo Ze, *Le français langue africaine*. Paris: Publisud.

## Appendix

### Dictation 1

Après le dîné organisé par le médecin à l'occasion du **renouvellement** des vœux de **fidélité** à l'endroit de son épouse, il **révéla** à l'assistance que le **scénario** de cette **scène** si réussie était grâce à sa femme. Après ce discours, nous nous **attelions** à **alléger** la tâche du nettoyage aux domestiques qui **emmenaient** tour à tour la vaisselle à la cuisine. Ce geste du couple **relevait** d'une confiance totale en nous. Ceux d'entre nous qui **projetaient** de vivre le célibat encore longtemps ont descellé les portes de l'amour.

### Dictation 2

Un samedi soir où nous étions tous **crevés** de fatigue, après la longue journée de **pèlerinage** et de jeûne, nous dégustions des cerises quand la secrétaire **appela** pour nous informer d'un incendie à l'usine. A la **grève** de la journée, les employés avaient décidé de mettre le feu à l'usine. Ce geste **semait** ainsi la haine entre tous, un **péché** très dangereux. Les urgences dépêchaient les blessés à l'hôpital et **emmenaient** les morts à la morgue. C'est ainsi que **s'acheva** cette journée de **soulèvement** dans la plus grande des tristesses.

### Dictation 3

Mon papa, grâce à l'appui de son frère **géomètre**, investit dans l'élevage du gros et du petit bétail. Il **appela** du village cinq autres cousins pour lui **alléger** la tâche. Chaque semaine, il **achetait** de nouveaux produits, **renouvelait** ses techniques de travail afin de rendre son élevage plus rentable. Pour le bon suivi des animaux, il **harcelait** ses cousins en ces paroles : « on élève un animal tel un enfant qu'on aime ; on éloigne de lui tout ce qui **achèverait** ou **empièterait** sur sa croissance ». A l'âge de 40 ans il dit alors à son frère : « tout ce temps je me suis consacré à mes animaux et j'ai formé des personnes capables d'en prendre soin. Il est temps pour moi de **projeter** autre chose, je ne ferai pas la géométrie mais plutôt la **poésie**. » Aussitôt, je compris pourquoi malgré les occupations de mon papa il restait tant accroché aux vieux **poèmes** d'Hugo et de Shakespeare.

### Dictation 4

Des amis, j'en ai eu. Des **scènes**, j'en ai vécu. Des expériences, j'en ai aussi vécues; mais la plus grande fut la disparition de grand-père. Lui, c'était un vrai, grand ami, toujours **fidèle**. Tout le monde **pèche** ; mais ses **péchés**, étaient-ils plus grands que les nôtres pour qu'il s'en aille si tôt ? Était-il tout simplement vieux pour continuer à vivre ? Si seulement j'avais eu assez de force, je l'eus **soulevé** lorsqu'il tomba de sa chaise roulante. Même la **médecine** n'a pu lui redonner vie. Il y' aurait certainement eu quelque chose qui **allègerait** sa peine. Hélas ! Il n'est plus. Je me souviens encore de ses paroles « fais toujours le bien ». C'était un vrai **semateur** de joie et d'amour. Mon cœur est en **grève** de joie depuis qu'il est parti. On dirait que le vent de la mort a tout dévasté en moi. Comme un **pèlerin** je me promets de faire renaitre en moi l'amour et je le **sèmerai** en chacun de mes frères pour le bien de mon grand-père

## Overcoming the Grammar Barrier in Foreign Language Learning: The Role of Television Series

Deborah Azaryad Shechter  
Tel Aviv University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Deborah Azaryad Shechter, Division of Foreign Languages, Tel Aviv University, P.O. Box 39040, Tel Aviv 6997801, Israel. E-mail: deborah.shechter@gmail.com, ushechte@post.tau.ac.il

Mastering the grammar of a foreign language requires learning the rules as well as the contexts within which the structures are used. Formal grammar instruction should therefore be augmented by exposing learners to authentic language. According to the literature, watching television series in the target language improves listening comprehension and enhances vocabulary acquisition. No study to date, however, has investigated the recursive use of one series, in the classroom and over an entire course, to explicitly teach grammar. Presenting apt pedagogical arguments substantiated by the literature on grammar instruction and evidence from the classroom, this article maintains that a television series can be an invaluable source of authentic language and an excellent means to teach grammar in context. It recommends using the dialogues in the scenes to teach and illustrate grammatical structures, especially those that are very different or do not exist in the learners' mother tongue. The article also proposes giving students pertinent writing tasks and adequate corrective feedback to help them internalize these structures. Consistent with recent studies indicating a strong connection between emotion and cognition, this method raises the students' motivation and enhances grammar learning; as such, it can supplant or complement conventional practices of grammar instruction and thereby warrants empirical studies. Finally, the article delineates directions for future research to elucidate how television series contribute to the teaching and learning of grammar.

**Keywords:** grammar learning, television series, communicative language teaching

Research has generally explored television with regard to incidental language learning. Drawing upon the findings of several studies, Richards (2015) reports that extensive television viewing as an out-of-class activity fosters listening comprehension and vocabulary development. He points out the higher level of English fluency in countries where television films are not dubbed, indicating the effectiveness of extensive viewing. According to the literature, watching films in the target language improves listening comprehension (Cakir, & Kana, 2015; Danan, 2004) and enhances vocabulary learning (Frumuselu, De Maeyer, Donche, & Colon Plana, 2015; Linebarger, Moses, Garrity Liebeskind, & McMenamin, 2013; Yuksel & Tanriverdi, 2009). Studies also show that watching television series contributes to cultural

## Преодоление грамматического барьера в изучении иностранного языка: роль телесериала

Дебора Азарьяд Шехтер  
Тель-Авивский университет

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Дебора Азарьяд Шехтер, Тель-Авивский университет, кафедра иностранных языков, а/я 39040, г. Тель-Авив, Израиль, индекс 6997801. E-mail: deborah.shechter@gmail.com, ushechte@post.tau.ac.il

Овладение грамматикой иностранного языка требует изучения правил, а также контекстов, в которых используются структуры. Поэтому формальное обучение грамматике должно быть дополнено предоставлением учащимся возможности изучать аутентичный язык. Согласно литературе, просмотр телесериалов на изучаемом языке улучшает восприятие на слух и способствует усвоению лексики. Однако ни одно исследование до сих пор не изучало рекурсивное использование одной серии в классе и в течение всего курса для более точного обучения грамматике. Представляя точные педагогические аргументы, обоснованные литературным обзором по грамматическому обучению и фактическими данными из класса, данная статья утверждает, что телесериал может быть бесценным источником аутентичного языка и отличным средством обучения грамматике через контекст. Статья рекомендует использовать диалоги из сцен для преподавания и иллюстрации грамматических структур, особенно тех, которые отличаются или не существуют в родном языке учащихся. В статье также предлагается дать студентам соответствующие письменные задания и адекватную корректирующую обратную связь, чтобы помочь им усвоить эти структуры. В соответствии с недавними исследованиями, указывающими на сильную связь между эмоциями и познанием, этот метод повышает мотивацию студентов и повышает изучение грамматики; как таковое, оно может подменять или дополнять традиционную практику преподавания грамматики и, таким образом, требует эмпирических исследований. Наконец, в статье очерчиваются направления дальнейших исследований, направленных на выяснение того, как телесериалы способствуют преподаванию и изучению грамматики.

**Ключевые слова:** грамматическое обучение, телесериал, коммуникативное обучение языку

awareness (Hammer, 2008; Iscan, & Akturk, 2014). A comprehensive and insightful overview of the studies investigating the effects of films on language learning and critical accounts of their strengths and weaknesses can be found in Vanderplank (2010, 2016).

While previous studies have acknowledged the beneficial effects of television series on listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, their potential as a resource to explicitly teach grammar has been largely overlooked. One study attempted to see if children incidentally acquire grammatical rules following a short, subtitled movie and did not find any evidence for grammar learning (Van Lommel, Laenen, & D'Ydewalle, 2006). The authors suggest that future research should examine whether grammar acquisition occurs 'with a sequence of several movies, spread over

a longer period of time' (p. 255). A more recent study found that watching an enhanced subtitled video, combined with explicit teaching, helped students to better understand the context of the past perfect in English (Mohammed, 2013).

This article draws upon the performance and attitude of a second-year Turkish class (equivalent to A2/B1 of CEFR - the Common European Framework of Reference) at Tel Aviv University to present pedagogical arguments supporting the effectiveness of television series for grammar instruction, and thus attempts to fill an important gap in the literature. Scenes from a popular Turkish television series (Karadayı) that the author selected and transcribed became an integral part of our classroom lessons for the entire academic year. Approximately three times a month, we dedicated about half the class time (45 minutes) to watching a scene without captions or subtitles, reading the transcript, understanding the language, focusing on the grammatical structures, eliciting or explaining the rules, illustrating with more examples, and watching the scene again while rereading the transcript. The successful case of second-year Turkish, both in terms of the students' positive attitude and their high achievement levels indicates that this method merits empirical studies. Therefore, this article is also an attempt to arouse the interest of the academic community to explore this arena more thoroughly and shed light on this promising resource for teaching grammar.

## **Issues in the Teaching of Grammar**

### **2.1. Different Approaches to Grammar Instruction**

Grammar is often a source of controversy among teachers and learners. Some students say they absolutely need rules and drills to learn grammar; others vehemently oppose rote learning, claiming that more intuitive and less structured ways work better for them. Although similar extreme positions may exist among teachers, many are looking for ways to reconcile the different learning preferences and help students from both camps within the same classroom. Research shows that teaching grammar works, while students can also learn a great deal of grammar naturally (Ellis, 2006). Ellis crystallizes the key issues in grammar instruction that still lack clear-cut solutions and recommends combining a variety of approaches to teach the grammar of a foreign language. He urges teachers to recognize why certain approaches work and others do not, so they can develop their own theories of grammar instruction.

### **2.2. Grammar and Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative language teaching (CLT) basically refers to language teaching practices that aim to foster a learner's ability to communicate in the target language. Richards (2006), in his comprehensive review of CLT and its relevance today, writes that grammatical competence, i.e., the knowledge of grammar rules and structures that enable the learner to produce correct sentences in the target language, is an essential step in language learning, but not sufficient by itself for communicative competence, i.e., the ability to use language for meaningful communication. According to Thornbury (1999), grammar is a resource for authentic communication, and in order to achieve communicative competence learners need to focus on form as well as on meaning. Likewise, Nassaji & Fotos (2011) claim that form-focused instruction is particularly effective when incorporated into a meaningful communicative context. Within the CLT framework, grammar learning does not drive teaching practice but results from it. Prominent researchers in the field agree that grammar instruction must be included in CLT programs (Cullen, 2012; Ellis, 2006; Richards, 2006; Richards & Reppen, 2014; Thornbury, 1999).

### **2.3. The Gap Between Grammatical Knowledge and Grammatical Ability**

According to Richards & Reppen (2014), we can view grammar both as knowledge and as an ability. Grammatical knowledge helps us produce grammatical sentences. Grammatical ability, on the other hand, helps us use grammar as a communicative resource to create spoken and written language. Similarly, according to Cullen (2012), grammar is a communicative resource that enables us to understand the language that we read or hear, and to be understood when we speak or write. As such, it is at the service of the language user, and communicative grammar instruction should reflect this. He explains that we exhibit grammatical ability when we use the correct grammatical forms in the correct context; that is, when we make the correct choices, not merely at the sentence level, but at the text level, both in speech and in writing (Cullen, 2012). Hence, when grammar is taught not in isolation but in a communicative context with real life examples, learners have a better chance to connect theory with practice, so that they will not only be able to read a text and understand it, but also understand spoken language, and speak pertinently and in a way that native speakers can understand. A communicative context can help learners bridge the gap between their grammatical knowledge and their grammatical ability.

The skill to make the correct choices when speaking and writing in a foreign language is not something one can take for granted. It often requires years of steady effort and practice. A foreign language is probably best learned in the country where it is spoken. However, a

long-term stay in a foreign country is often a luxury that few foreign language learners can afford. Thus, many people study foreign languages in their country of residence where teachers do not only need to teach the grammar rules, structures, and vocabulary of the language, i.e., deliver formal language instruction, but also face the challenge of bringing the language to life for their students in a setting where the language is rarely heard or spoken. In less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) such as Turkish, the gap between grammatical knowledge and grammatical ability is often more acute.

The question arises as to what is an authentic communicative context that can bring a language to life for learners in a foreign country. In the past, classic audio-visual lessons attempted to simulate real life conversations to illustrate language use. Today, however, in our post-technological age where the Internet is ubiquitous, language teachers have easy access to authentic resources including spoken language through podcasts, commercials, news items, songs, and films. All of these can become excellent teaching materials, taking into account among others, the students' levels, fields of study, and the time available. An additional resource that language teachers can easily access on the Internet is television series. They constitute an authentic communicative context to assist with bridging the gap between the learners' grammatical knowledge and their grammatical ability.

## **Television Series and Grammar Instruction**

### **3.1. Rationale for Teaching with Television Series**

Television series in LCTLs like Swedish, Danish, Korean, Turkish, and others have achieved international success in recent years and can be watched freely on television in many countries. This article focuses on series and not on films or other programs. The recursive use of the same series which interests the class is an effective means to promote grammar learning. When the students are fascinated by the story and the characters, they look forward to these lessons. Unlike a film, which tells a story in two hours, the plot in a series develops more slowly and continues for many episodes. The teacher thus has a huge bank of scenes, rich in authentic language, from which lessons can be designed. Television series break the monotony of traditional classroom lessons and they can entertain and motivate the students. Some extremely popular series ensnare the viewers, who happily follow them season after season. For our purposes, the addictive nature of a television series is an advantage. This is one addiction that has a positive outcome: learning a foreign language.

Until now, research has generally overlooked the potential of television series for teaching the grammar of a foreign language. Yet, when appropriately chosen for the student population and duly integrated into classroom instruction, they are an invaluable source of authentic language and an excellent means to teach and reinforce grammatical structures (e.g., word order, subordinate clauses) and verb forms (e.g., tenses, passives, subjunctives, conditionals), especially when these structures do not have an equivalent or are very different in the learner's mother tongue. This is the case for LCTLs such as Turkish, where the syntax is drastically different and completely counterintuitive to most learners. Teachers can avail themselves of television series as an innovative means to teach and illustrate grammar in a communicative context.

### **3.2. Why Television Series Can Foster Grammar Learning**

This section is an account of why a television series is an effective tool for teaching grammar and why future research should investigate this resource more thoroughly. The discussion below is a dialogue with the literature on grammar pedagogy: first, the statements of previous research are presented and then, in order to clarify how they bear on television series, my arguments are conveyed in the bulleted paragraphs.

The need to bridge the gap between grammatical knowledge and grammatical ability is a recurring issue in recent research. In their practical book, Gerngross, Puchta & Thornbury (2006) address the difficulty of transferring grammatical knowledge to effective use. In the opening, they state that the 'discrepancy between knowledge and putting it to use' (p. 5) led them to look for alternative ways to practice grammar more efficiently. They found the solution in language awareness activities and creative grammar practice imbued with imagination and humor. Advocating that grammar learning can be fun, the authors emphasize the importance of making the language in these activities as memorable as possible for effective learning.

- Grammar learning can indeed be fun. Television series have an infinite supply of memorable dialogues, enhanced with memorable acting and drama, in memorable settings, that contribute to effective learning. Evidence of this is the fact that students often remember chunks of speech and even full sentences from scenes that impressed them the most and later use these in speech or in writing.

Thornbury (2002) argues that a grammar-focused pedagogy enhanced and perpetuated by commercial grammar books delivering an 'atomized view of language' (p. 99), precludes authentic language use.

A core assumption of current CLT is that ‘meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging’ (Richards, 2006, p. 23). In CLT, ‘meaning is viewed as the driving force of learning’ (p. 26).

- When students watch a television series, they experience authentic language. Their interest in the developing plot and the plight of the leading characters makes them want to understand everything. Meaning indeed becomes the driving force of learning, and thus grammar is neither the sole focus of the lesson, nor a deterring factor for students who are “afraid” of it. Television series help students move away from the fragmented view of grammar books and acquire an integral view of the language. This exposure to real language prepares students for real communication in the target language by also developing their sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence.

A good pedagogy of grammar instruction should ‘develop awareness of differences between spoken and written language’ (Richards & Reppen, 2014, p. 9). According to Cullen (2012), EFL course books are predominantly based on written grammar and generally ignore the distinctive features of spoken grammar.

- This is no doubt also true about course books in other languages. Yet, certain syntactic structures occur only in speech. When we adhere to grammar books, our students do not learn very important aspects of spoken language. Thanks to television series, students become familiar with the spoken grammar of the language, which is essential to achieve grammatical ability. For instance, although Turkish is categorized as SOV, verb-initial sentences are common in speech. Such sentences in the dialogues help students become aware of the pragmatic functions of Turkish word order. Another idiosyncrasy of Turkish, the suffix *-miş* (conveying the meaning of “I heard that” or “it turns out that”) is very common and best illustrated in spoken language. Besides noticing syntactic differences between written and spoken language, students begin to make a connection between the written word and how it is pronounced. For instance, in spoken English ‘going to’ is often pronounced ‘gonna’. Similar changes occur with many Turkish words or phrases, where the written form is different from the spoken form: *değil mi* sounds *dimi*; *gideceğim* sounds *gidicem*; *ne yapıyorsun* sounds *naapyosun* etc.

While discussing content-based instruction as an extension of CLT, Richards (2006) enumerates a number of processes from which language learning results. One of these is ‘paying attention to the language one hears (input) and trying to incorporate

the new forms into one’s developing communicative competence’ (p. 28).

- Television series have an infinite supply of auditory input with new structures for students to incorporate into their developing communicative competence, and therefore can contribute greatly to grammar learning.

‘Learners need to be able to notice features of grammar in natural, realistic contexts of use’ and classroom instruction should aim to speed up this process (Cullen, 2012, p. 260). Similarly, according to Richards & Reppen (2014), teachers should ‘provide opportunities for guided noticing’ (p. 13). Furthermore, since noticing is ‘fleeting’, like attention (Vanderplank, 2016, p. 242), ‘and very far from internalizing’ (p. 243), the teacher should make sure that the students do not just notice the form but also learn its meanings and uses (Ellis, 2006). Thornbury (1999) calls this process of becoming aware of grammar ‘consciousness-raising’, and emphasizes that it is essential for learning to take place.

- Noticing is an important process in foreign language learning and a basic principle in grammar pedagogy. Television series provide ample opportunities for students to notice features of the foreign grammar as they occur in natural, realistic contexts. The students may notice and point out the structures to the teacher, or the teacher may lead the class to notice certain forms. If a structure has several uses/meanings, teachers can raise the students’ consciousness by reminding them of other instances encountered, or illustrate the structure with examples from additional scenes and other authentic resources, such as online newspapers. This helps students internalize the new forms and promotes learning.

According to Cullen (2012), learning results from opportunities to form hypotheses about how grammar works. Ellis (2006) and Cullen (2012) propose using both inductive and deductive methods. Similarly, Richards & Reppen (2014) suggest that we use a variety of pedagogical approaches for teaching grammar.

- Television series afford students repeated opportunities to discern characteristics of the target language and to develop their own notion of how the language functions. They may reappraise and revise their hypotheses based on additional forms that they notice, and again when they become more proficient in the language. As in the case of noticing, the teacher can accelerate this process. When we use an inductive approach, we can try to elicit the rules from the students, which causes the class to be more alert and the lesson livelier. This process also gives the students a sense of achievement, increasing perceived self-efficacy which contributes to their motivation to learn

(Bandura, 1993). When necessary, teachers can rephrase the rules and give additional examples to corroborate what the students have formulated. If the grammatical structure is one that can be more easily understood deductively, then teachers should choose that approach and save time.

Ellis (2006) holds that instead of trying to teach the entire grammar of a language, teachers should try to focus on grammatical structures that are known to be particularly problematic to learners. Similarly, Gerngross, Puchta & Thornbury (2006) highlight English structures widely known to be difficult for learners of a variety of nationalities and show ways to teach these structures imaginatively and with humor.

- Television series provide an ideal context to achieve these goals. The dialogues in the scenes represent authentic, spontaneous language and, as such, they contain not only the most common structures that learners need in order to communicate, but also those that are challenging, completely different, or even inexistent in the learners' mother tongue. In the selected scenes, teachers can focus on the grammatical structures that they know to be problematic or that students point out as challenging. More time can be dedicated to the study of these structures depending on the students' needs and interests. This exposure to linguistic structures in their authentic communicative contexts, besides raising the students' awareness, helps them confirm what they already know and correct their previous misconceptions of these structures.

According to Richards & Reppen (2014) grammar and vocabulary are often intertwined and making connections between grammar and vocabulary contributes to learning how to use grammar as a communicative resource.

- The authentic everyday conversations in the scenes often include grammatical structures that the students originally learned as vocabulary. For instance, students know colloquial expressions such as *görüürüz* (see you), *teşekkür ederim* (thank you), *geçmiş olsun* (get well), *kolay gelsin* (good luck) before they learn the grammar in these expressions. When such grammatical structures occur in the dialogues, a language segment initially learned as a lexical item is now taught as grammar. The communicative context of the scene makes it easier for the students to understand the meanings/functions of the grammatical structure.

According to Thornbury (1999), effective grammar teaching is one that arouses attention, provides good contextual information, and is memorable; to achieve this, teachers must create optimal conditions for learning with relevant and engaging materials that motivate the students.

- Scenes from a favorite television series that are highly engaging, reasonably challenging, and relevant to the students' needs fulfill the above conditions for effective grammar instruction. Thanks to the dramatic events and the authentic dialogues enhanced by the visual medium, grammar is no longer a set of rules to produce correct sentences yet divorced from other components of the language, but an integral part of successful communication.

The arguments above present a strong case for teaching grammar with television series. Any 21<sup>st</sup> century instructional pedagogy that focuses on grammar as a communicative resource should integrate grammar with the four skills - reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Richards & Reppen, 2014 among others). A television series constitutes an efficient method to achieve this goal, using a relatively small proportion of class time. Watching a scene and listening to the dialogue, reading the transcript and focusing on the grammar, followed by pertinent writing tasks and speaking activities can help students bridge the gap between their grammatical knowledge and their grammatical ability.

### 3.3. Affective Aspects of Learning Grammar with Television Series

Learning a language has a strong emotional side, similar to learning to play a musical instrument. It is common wisdom that in order to play an instrument well one has to love it. This view is also supported by research on neurobiology indicating a strong connection between emotion and cognition with clear implications for the role of affect in learning (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). In any kind of learning one has ups and downs, and learning a language is no different. To be able to sustain the right atmosphere conducive to learning is perhaps a teacher's greatest challenge. Students are often tired from other courses or distracted due to personal reasons. Sometimes the language just becomes too much. This is especially true when learning a LCTL drastically different from one's mother tongue; students cannot rely on linguistic similarities that make the learning process easier. The teacher must acknowledge how challenging the language actually is and make it manageable for the students. When teachers are aware of their students' state of mind they can fine-tune the lessons accordingly.

A sound psychological argument supporting the use of television series in the classroom comes from popular science. In her New York Times bestseller, psychology professor Angela Duckworth (2016) writes that the secret to achievement is not talent or IQ, but a combination of passion and perseverance that she calls 'grit'. Based on empirical studies and interviews



with high achievers, she concludes that loving what we do and working hard to achieve it account for our success more than any other attribute.

It has been my experience that particularly in the case of a LCTL like Turkish, the inability to cope with the grammar of the language can discourage students to the point of wanting to drop the course. When grammar is learned as a by-product of a fun activity, such as watching a fascinating television series, students develop perseverance of some kind. Because they are engaged in something they enjoy, they sustain an intrinsic motivation to learn the language. This, in turn, increases their willingness to try harder to understand the grammar in the dialogues. This quality of a television series makes it an invaluable resource for teaching a foreign language and specifically, its grammar.

The connection between emotion and cognition, and the importance of emotion in learning is also acknowledged in a recent article on Spanish as a foreign language. The author discusses the importance of affect in grammar learning and stresses the need to create optimal emotional conditions conducive to effective and long-lasting learning. While the article does not deal with television series, it has a similar approach to grammar instruction. The author suggests breaking the classroom routine by teaching grammar with innovative methods, such as games that surprise the students and arouse their curiosity (Mendez Santos, 2016).

### 3.4. The Importance of Choosing the Right Series

Television series have a universal appeal and many countries produce original series in the local language. Therefore, teachers of most LCTLs have a variety of series to choose from. When classes consist of students studying the same academic subject, teachers can choose field-specific series appropriate for their student population: youth series for teenagers, hospital series for nursing students, law series for law students, historical series for history students, etc. When students come from different disciplines, the series should be chosen with care to appeal to the entire class. An engaging story guarantees learning in a pleasant atmosphere. When the students love the series, they will be motivated to learn.

Before watching the first scene, it helps to give students some background information. The teacher can write a brief synopsis in simple language and familiarize the class with the main characters. I chose *Karadayı*, a crime drama taking place in Istanbul in the 1970s. I was watching it with great interest and it was appropriate for my class, consisting mostly of students in Middle East History, some of whom also take courses on Modern Turkey. In *Karadayı*, universal values such as integrity, honesty, the quest for justice, respect for

parents, together with the suspense of the plot, the excellent acting, the beautiful Istanbul locations, and the developing romance between the hero and the heroin enchanted my students. When students form an emotional bond with the lead characters, follow the actors on social media, and watch the series in their leisure time, the teacher has surely made the right choice.

Anonymous language teachers all over the world are probably using television series in their lessons for different purposes, including grammar. In a post in the British Council magazine, an English teacher describes how she uses two minutes of a film to illustrate a grammar point that she is teaching (Urisman, 2014). She shows a clip to explain 'neither do I' from *Sherlock*, another clip that illustrates the use of tag questions from *Mad Men*, etc. However, I believe that using isolated scenes from many different series does not have the same motivating effect. My students' familiarity with the characters and their interest in the developing story created a low-stress, high-involvement environment that is perfect for language learning. They were looking forward to our *Karadayı* lessons and were always happy to watch a new scene. They did not even pay attention to how hard they were working on the language. Grammar learning was an outcome, enjoying the film came first.

Throughout the academic year, we viewed a total of 18 scenes that were rich in tension, aroused curiosity or induced laughter. In addition, they were not extremely complex in terms of linguistic structures. The length of the scenes varied from two to six minutes. Depending on its length, a scene had a word count between 120 to 480 words approximately (see Appendix B for a sample scene and transcript). Before the viewing, I gave the students a little background information to put the scene in the right context. Using one series throughout the course is crucial for meaning-driven learning; each scene is another piece in the puzzle. The series constitutes a content unit and is an integral part of the course curriculum. This is in line with content-based teaching, which better reflects the learners' needs and where language is used as a means to acquire information and not as an end in itself (Richards, 2006).

In the Internet era where learning management systems are increasingly replacing textbooks, we can turn a television series into teaching material by transcribing the dialogues and putting links to the relevant episodes/scenes on the course website. Most series are freely available on YouTube and dedicated websites. Ideally, the course website should have a separate unit for the series where all the links and the dialogue transcripts can be easily accessed. For a detailed account of a course site layout and how to incorporate a thematic unit, see Azaryad Shechter

(2016).

### **From Grammatical Knowledge to Grammatical Ability**

The ultimate purpose of learning grammar is to be able to use it to communicate. According to Richards & Reppen (2014), a pedagogy of grammar instruction should 'provide opportunities for meaningful communicative practice' (p. 14) where learners share real information. Similarly, according to Cullen (2012), in order for learning to take place, one must practice using grammar in meaningful contexts. Cullen further asserts that practice is essential for the learner to acquire 'the ability to access language more or less automatically, without undue attention or conscious thought' (p. 261). Whereas learners of English, the lingua franca of the Internet and most of the world, may attain this ability after a few years of study, such a level of automaticity is an extremely ambitious goal for the learner of an LCTL like Turkish. Considering that the students in question are only in their second year of Turkish, they cannot be expected to have such a spontaneous ability in the spoken language. A more modest and realistic goal would be to expect the students to be able to use the grammatical structures for *writing* in meaningful communicative contexts. The writing assignments should be done outside the classroom, so as not to waste precious class time that can be dedicated to teaching and practicing. Furthermore, students should not feel pressured to think that they need to access language automatically. They can decide how much time to dedicate for the writing task, with as much care and conscious thought as they like. I always gave writing tasks for homework and was not concerned about their using machine translations, since digital translations from Hebrew or English into Turkish produce ungrammatical and often unintelligible sentences.

The various writing tasks that they were required to do throughout the year gave my students opportunities to put into practice the grammatical structures we studied in class. Furthermore, these performance tasks were an excellent means to assess their progress and to adjust my teaching goals. It was rewarding to see in their essays, words, expressions, verb forms, and other grammatical features that they had picked up from the dialogues in the scenes. The students reported that only when they attempted to actually write, did they begin to discover their weaknesses and where they needed more explicit teaching. Since each writing task was about 150 words and the topics were interesting and relevant, they wrote willingly and asked for more. They felt that their grammar improved greatly thanks to these tasks and the corrective feedback they were given. In my opinion, correcting student errors individually,

or as a class activity (with the student's consent or in anonymity) is an indispensable component of a good pedagogy of grammar instruction. This is in line with Ellis (2006, 2008), who delineates the importance of corrective feedback in the teaching of grammar. Similarly, Richards & Reppen (2014) recommend using student errors 'to inform instruction' (p. 18).

At the end of the year, the progress that some students had made was phenomenal. They were able to produce grammatically correct sentences putting into practice the most challenging aspects of Turkish grammar that we had targeted in the dialogues (e.g., word order, subject and object participles, passives, causatives, subordinate clauses, the uses of certain tenses). A detailed account of the writing tasks is beyond the scope of this article. I recommend Richards & Reppen (2014) for a thorough discussion of pedagogically sound classroom practices to enhance language production.

### **Directions for Research**

As previously stated, the literature so far has primarily explored the effects of extensive television viewing on incidental language learning *outside* the classroom. By contrast, this article argues in favor of *selective-intensive* viewing to *intentionally* teach grammar *in* the classroom. The arguments presented here rely on one teacher's successful experience with a small class, as evidenced by the students' enthusiasm in the classroom, their high performance levels, and the unanimous positive feedback that they gave during and at the end of the course. See Appendix A for a detailed account of the students' feedback.

What emerges is that watching television series indeed improves listening comprehension and enhances vocabulary acquisition, as previous studies have attested. What also emerges is that television series provide an excellent communicative context for explicit grammar instruction, an area that researchers have not yet probed. Often, the realities of the classroom inform theory and research. The literature on grammar instruction reviewed in this article and the successful experience of the second-year Turkish class at Tel Aviv University provide adequate grounds for further research on television series as a resource for teaching grammar.

Are transcripts of dialogues in a television series pedagogically superior to other texts? Empirical studies are called for with additional classes and control groups to compare the performance levels achieved by learners who are taught grammar with a television series and those who are taught using other resources. Future research should also try to explain if

and how learning a foreign language with a television series helps students bridge the gap between their grammatical knowledge and their grammatical ability. In order to test the effectiveness of this method, studies must be carried out during an entire course and not for a brief instructional period. Furthermore, the differences in students' attitudes and achievement levels must be quantified with structured measures. Standardized questionnaires and performance tasks are needed to assess the differences in attitude and achievement, respectively. It may be particularly interesting to conduct a study with three groups, whereby the same grammatical structures are taught by (a) watching scenes from a television series and reading the transcripts, (b) reading the transcripts of these scenes like a play, without telling the students that this is actually from a television series, and (c) using grammar books and texts.

To help students internalize the grammatical structures, studies can also incorporate productive tasks, such as writing. In this case, the same writing tasks must be assigned to all three groups described in the previous paragraph, followed by the same types of corrective feedback as Ellis (2008) mapped out in his insightful typology. Alternatively, studies can be carried out with two groups, where both groups are taught the same grammatical structures with a television series but only one group receives supplementary writing tasks. In addition, at least one of the issues that Ellis (2006) raised in the conclusion of his article can be adapted to television series: How does teaching grammar with television series affect the acquisition of implicit knowledge?

Studies can also investigate the effect of viewing scenes from one series as opposed to scenes from many different series. I do not know how this will influence achievement outcomes, but I believe affective differences will emerge favoring the consistent use of only one series throughout the course. In other words, the bond that students form with the characters and their interest in the story have a motivating effect which cannot be achieved by showing a scene from a different series each time to teach or illustrate a particular grammatical structure.

Using a television series throughout a language course opens new research directions for investigating different aspects of language learning. For instance, how does this method affect the students' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence? Learning is surely not a compartmentalized process. While we were focusing on the grammar in the scenes, the students were also paying attention to words, colloquial expressions, songs, poems, historical events, Turkish culture, traditions, etc. On many occasions, students expressed how much they appreciated this diversity of input and how helpful the series were in

enriching their vocabulary and familiarizing them with Turkish values. With regard to vocabulary acquisition, field-specific series such as legal and medical dramas can surely enhance the learning of professional vocabulary. Researchers can investigate whether the use of the same series throughout the course has a stronger effect on vocabulary learning and retention. Studies can also explore the topic of cultural awareness among learners who were taught a foreign language with a television series and those who are taught with other methods. While learners of English can readily familiarize themselves with American culture or Western values in general, the cultures of many LCTLs are not as accessible. It is not surprising, therefore, that a television series in a LCTL contributes more significantly to the learners' cultural awareness.

The effects of teaching grammar with a television series can also be examined across populations. Studies can compare high school pupils with university students or adult learners in language classes. Researchers can also try to clarify the implications of using transcripts, as described in this paper, as opposed to captions or subtitles. Transcripts are convenient as students can take notes, highlight words, and read the entire dialogue again and again. Captions, if available, usually change too quickly for learners to be able to read. Are transcripts more effective for teaching grammar than captions or subtitles? Studies can also compare the use of captions in the target language with the use of subtitles in the learner's mother tongue.

An additional parameter and arguably the most important one in the success of any type of instruction is the teacher. Future research should take this into account, and if the same teacher does not teach both the experimental and the control groups then every effort must be made to assign to each group a highly enthusiastic teacher who will earn the trust of the students and motivate them to work hard. Ideally, teachers should be assigned to the groups where they will teach grammar through their preferred method. Thus, researchers will be assured that the teachers in the groups are doing their utmost, wholeheartedly.

The possibility should not be ruled out that my passion for Karadayı, my enthusiasm in class, and my conviction that this was a sound way to teach grammar played a role in my students' motivation and how they performed throughout the course. While my belief is grounded in intuition, it is also supported by leadership studies. In their highly acclaimed book on leadership, former U.S. Navy SEALs Willink and Babin (2015) convincingly argued that when all other variables are controlled, the team leader is the sole factor that determines success or failure. Hence, when we, as 'leaders', slacken, it affects our students negatively; when we love and believe in what we do, we

inspire and motivate our students. Therefore, future studies must also try to elucidate the teacher's role in the effectiveness of any teaching method, including the use of television series for grammar instruction.

A television series sometimes causes social and linguistic repercussions which researchers can look into. The universal appeal of a television series and its unifying effects are particularly salient in the Facebook forum titled 'Karadayi for English speakers'. Greeks, Turks, Arabs, Israelis, South Americans, and Canadians, along with fans from many other nationalities devotedly wrote on this forum to interpret the events, predict what will happen in the next episode, reassure one another with regard to worrying developments, criticize the scriptwriters, etc. It was a true support group that I silently followed, amused but also with admiration. Most of the fans around the world did not know any Turkish and they were nevertheless watching Karadayi directly from the Internet when it was aired on Turkish television, or as soon as it was on YouTube. The forum administrator would initially post a quick summary of the episode in English and some days later, the entire episode in English which she had translated. The passionate fans would wait for these translations impatiently and thank her ceremoniously. This social phenomenon was also linguistically interesting. Fans had acquired new jargon using Turkish words from the series, correctly and in the right context, particularly words with strong emotional connotations, to season their posts that were often in broken English.

The aforementioned is by no means an exhaustive list of research directions. The possibilities for research are vast and no doubt scholars will come up with creative ideas and conduct empirical studies with different populations, in a variety of languages, and with bigger samples that will contribute greatly to our understanding of television series as a teaching and learning tool.

## Conclusion

Learning a foreign language is an exciting experience. It is a fantastic journey into a new culture, a means to get in direct contact with different customs and different people. Television series are a fun way to learn a language. They break the monotony of classroom lessons, arouse curiosity, and help students who are apprehensive about learning grammar. The authentic communicative context of the dialogues brings the language to life for the students, exposing them to the grammar of spoken language and familiarizing them with native pronunciation and intonation. Besides improving their linguistic competence, students also develop sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence in

the target language. Watching scenes from a television series in the classroom raises the students' motivation and contributes to effective learning.

This article discussed television series as a communicative resource that can transform well-known practices of grammar instruction and called on teachers and scholars of foreign language acquisition to explore how television series promote the teaching and learning of grammar. I encourage teachers to use television series for intentional language teaching and learning, in particular, to enhance the acquisition of grammatical structures and to improve grammatical ability. Although watching a film is a receptive task, reading the dialogues out loud, paying attention to grammatical forms, and learning their meanings and functions in an authentic communicative context, reinforced with writing tasks and speaking activities, can foster the learners' grammatical ability along the path to communicative competence. When we do not follow a particular grammar book, we let the dialogues in the scenes introduce the grammatical structures and delight in the serendipitous teaching opportunities that constantly come our way.

## References

- Azaryad Shechter, D. (2016). Blended learning course format on Moodle : A model for beginner level foreign language courses in higher education. *Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages*, 19, 183–209. Retrieved from <http://www.ncolctl.org/files/jncolctl-vol-19/Blended-Learning-Course-Format-on-Moodle.pdf>
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2), 117–148. [http://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep2802\\_3](http://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep2802_3)
- Cakir, A. & Kana, F. (2015). Yabancı Dil Olarak Türkçe Öğretiminde Video Kullanımının
- Dinleme Becerisine Etkisi. [The effect of using video on listening skill in teaching Turkish as a foreign language.] *International Journal of Language Academy*, 3(3), 50–65. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.18033/ijla.278>
- Cullen, R. (2012). Grammar instruction. In R. J. (eds) Burns A (Ed.), *Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (pp. 258–266).
- Danan, M. (2004). Captioning and subtitling: Undervalued language learning strategies. *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs*, 49(1), 67. <http://doi.org/10.7202/009021ar>
- Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. Penguin, Random House, Ebury

- publishing.
- Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 83–107. <http://doi.org/10.2307/40264512>
- Ellis, R. (2008). A typology of written corrective feedback types. *ELT Journal*, 63(2), 97–107. <http://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccn023>
- Frumuselu, A. D., De Maeyer, S., Donche, V., & Colon Plana, M. del M. G. (2015). Television series inside the EFL classroom: Bridging the gap between teaching and learning informal language through subtitles. *Linguistics and Education*, 32, 107–117. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2015.10.001>
- Gerngross, G., Puchta, H., & Thornbury, S. (2006). *Teaching grammar creatively*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hammer, J. E. (2008). *Culture via television : Investigating the effects of a German television serial on the perceptions of fourth-semester German language classes*. University of Texas at Austin.
- Immordino-Yang, M. H., & Damasio, A. (2007). We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 1(1), 3–10. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-228X.2007.00004.x>
- Iscan, A. & Akturk, Y. (2014). Televizyon dizilerinin Türkçenin yabancı dil olarak öğretiminde kullanımı: Seksenler dizisi örneği. [The use of television series in teaching Turkish as a foreign language: the example of Seksenler series.] *International Journal of Language Academy*, 2(4), 234–246. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.18033/ijla.154>
- Linebarger, D. L., Moses, A., Garrity Liebeskind, K., & McMenamin, K. (2013). Learning vocabulary from television: Does onscreen print have a role? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 609–621. <http://doi.org/10.1037/a0032582>
- Mendez Santos, M. (2016). Gramática afectiva en contextos de instrucción formal de español como lengua extranjera (ELE). [Affective grammar in contexts of formal instruction of Spanish as a foreign language (ELE).] *Nuevas Perspectivas En La Enseñanza Del Español Como Lengua Extranjera. Hesperia. Anuario de Filología Hispánica*, 19(2), 51–84.
- Mohammed, R. F. (2013). *The effectiveness of using subtitled video to teach grammar*. (Unpublished M.A. thesis). Iowa State University, IA. Retrieved from <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/13057>
- Nassaji, H., & Fotos, S. (2011). Teaching grammar in second language classrooms integrating form-focused instruction in communicative context. *Teaching Grammar in Second Language Classrooms Integrating Form-Focused Instruction in Communicative Context, I*, 1–16.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). Communicative language teaching today. *Language Teaching*, 25(2), 1–47. Retrieved from <http://www.cambridge.org/elt/teacher-support/pdf/Richards-Communicative-Language.pdf>
- Richards, J. C. (2015). The changing face of language learning: Learning beyond the classroom. *RELC Journal*, 46(1), 5–22. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0033688214561621>
- Richards, J. C., & Reppen, R. (2014). Towards a pedagogy of grammar instruction. *RELC Journal*, 45(1), 5–25. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0033688214522622>
- Thornbury, S. (1999). *How to teach grammar*. Longman.
- Thornbury, S. (2002). Training in instructional conversation. In G. Trappes-Lomax, H. & Ferguson (Ed.), *Language in Language Teacher Education*. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Urisman, S. (2014). How to use TV series, trailers and films in language class. *The Voices Magazine, British Council*. Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-to-use-tv-series-trailers-films-language-class>
- Van Lommel, S., Laenen, A., & D'Ydewalle, G. (2006). Foreign-grammar acquisition while watching subtitled television programmes. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76(Pt 2), 243–58. <http://doi.org/10.1348/000709905X38946>
- Vanderplank, R. (2010). Déjà vu? A decade of research on language laboratories, television and video in language learning. *Language Teaching*, 43(1), 1–37. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444809990267>
- Vanderplank, R. (2016). “Effects of” and “effects with” captions: How exactly does watching a TV programme with same-language subtitles make a difference to language learners? *Language Teaching*, 49(2), 235–250. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444813000207>
- Willink, J. & Babin, L. (2015). *Extreme ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs lead and win*. St. Martin's Press, Macmillan Publishers.
- Yuksel, D., & Tanriverdi, B. (2009). Effects of watching captioned movie clip on vocabulary development of EFL learners. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 8(2), 48–54. <http://doi.org/1303-6521>

## Appendix A

### Student feedback

#### 1. Questionnaire responses

One month before the end of the year, I asked the class to give me feedback on our lessons with Karadayı. Out of the six students enrolled (five young women and one young man), four women were present on that day.

I told them they could write their answers anonymously and in their mother tongue. I was interested in their “gut feelings” and did not want the language difficulty to affect their writing. I hoped they would write spontaneously, the first thing that came to their mind, without putting their thoughts through any filter and without embellishing them. Furthermore, writing in their mother tongue would only take about five minutes. They complied willingly and wrote sincerely. Three of the students wrote their names on their response sheets. The truth is, since I knew them so well, I would have guessed who wrote what anyway.

#### I showed the following questionnaire on the screen.

*What is your opinion on the use of Karadayı in the Turkish lessons? Write freely what comes to your mind. You can write in isolated words or in partial or complete sentences.*

*Did you like the lessons with Karadayı? Why?*

*Did they contribute to the learning of the Turkish language? Explain.*

*In your opinion, are there any other reasons for using Karadayı besides the language? Explain.*

*In your opinion, how often should it be used? If you think it should be used less often than we did this year, or not at all, please explain why.*

**Student A:** Learning Turkish through Karadayı is great for a number of reasons:

1. To learn new syntactic structures that are used in spoken language.
2. To hear other Turkish people speak (besides Deborah) sharpens our hearing.
3. Vocabulary, of course.
4. It adds interest to the lesson and it's not dry like textbooks/worksheets.
5. It teaches a lot about Turkish culture, beyond the language.
6. If it were up to me, we would watch the entire lesson © but I am biased.

7. Suggestion for improvement. It could be time-consuming, maybe it can be given as homework: give us a scene to try to transcribe by ourselves. It's much more challenging and will teach us a lot, in my opinion.

**Student B:** Very, very beneficial. Besides adding variety to the lesson contents that are diverse regardless of Karadayı, the series allowed us to experience the language as it is spoken. In other words, the way it is actually spoken in real life, as opposed to the lesson where the teacher speaks slowly and clearly. I enjoyed the lessons with Karadayı for the reasons above. With regard to frequency, I think during the semester we watched one scene every week. This, in my opinion, is a logical frequency. Once every two weeks can also be fine, but less frequently than that seems a pity to me.

**Student C:** I enjoyed very much the fact that Karadayı was incorporated into our Turkish lessons. First of all, it creates an immediate connection with the characters and a desire to get closer to Turkish culture and to understand daily life in Turkey.

Secondly, listening to speakers who speak freely (even if their Turkish is a little old-fashioned) contributes a huge lot to the learning of the language. It turns the language into something alive, changing, human, practical. It's really fun!

Likewise, listening to Turkish regularly helps to acquire common expressions and to begin to think in Turkish. That's what happened to me when I began watching the series at home, after the initial stimulation of watching it in class.

And I think it's an interesting and wonderful way to teach grammatical phenomena in the language.

I warmly recommend to continue this way!

**Student D:** The use of Karadayı has contributed a lot to my learning of Turkish. Reading the accompanying transcripts and watching the film helped me to connect the knowledge gained from reading with the spoken language, and I could identify the words in speech.

The series is interesting and teaches us not only the pronunciation of words, but also gives us an inside look into Turkish culture.

The frequency of three times a month worked well in my opinion, and helped a lot to foster my understanding and learning of the language.

In general, viewing a series contributes greatly to learning, and studying the language becomes a pleasant, light, and relevant experience. Thank you!

Student A was completely carried away by the series

and also watched it at home, often without subtitles, as soon as a new episode was available on YouTube. She chose and transcribed a beautiful scene after the course had ended and emailed it to me for corrections. She and Student C (who also watched the series at home) had better speaking skills than the other four students in the class. The male student also watched the series outside the classroom. Thus, 50% of the students were watching Karadayı in their leisure time.

### 1. End-of-the-year feedback

As an essay-writing task and a component of the final grade, students were required to choose three tasks/activities in the course that they found particularly beneficial for their language learning and to write a brief essay in Turkish on each one, describing its benefits. Karadayı was mentioned by five of the six students as one of the three most beneficial language learning activities. Students A, B, C, and D rewrote and elaborated on the questionnaire responses in Turkish that they had written in their mother tongue a month earlier. The male student also chose Karadayı as one of the three most beneficial activities and emphasized, among others, the importance of exposure to daily spoken language.

### 2. Oral comments

The comments that the students occasionally made during the year reinforced my conviction that showing scenes from a television series is a sound method for teaching a language.

Student A commented that she watched a particularly emotional scene countless times and kept missing a word. One day, when she was watching with her earphones on, she finally discerned the word. It was a common word that she knew (*hakikatler* “realities, truths”) but in a quickly uttered sentence she had been unable to make it out. On another occasion, she said that she wanted to ask me a grammar question,

but she got her answer from Karadayı. It was about the location of the conditional suffix, and a conditional sentence in the episode she was watching that evening answered her question. The sentence was *Karadayım dediyse, yapar* “If my Uncle Kara said it, he will do it.”

Student B said that even if one does not continue to watch the series outside the classroom, it makes the lessons more interesting.

Student C said that she continues to think in Turkish and has Turkish words in her mind for a few hours after she watches an episode. Many months after the course had ended, she told me that she was beginning to forget her Turkish, so she went back to watching the series and her Turkish quickly started to come back.

The male student contributed with his excellent grammatical/syntactic observations during the reading of the transcripts. For instance, he would point out the yes/no question particle *mi* in the middle of a sentence, rather than at the end, where it normally occurs. This would be a good opportunity to explain the pragmatic function of word order in Turkish and how the meaning/focus of the sentence changes when a different word order is used. He also paid attention to grammar in the episodes that he watched at home and asked perceptive questions.

The female student who did not give any written feedback clearly enjoyed the Karadayı lessons very much and told me so. She described herself as “not an intuitive learner” and that as far as syntax was concerned, she benefited particularly from grammar rules and traditional grammar drills.

Student D who described herself as “an intuitive learner” said that she was especially relieved when I started to teach grammar through Karadayı, because she did not like even the occasional fill-in-the-blank or transformation exercises. She commented that the series brought life to her learning and that her mind opened up to the language.

## Appendix B

### Sample scene and transcript

We viewed “the interrogation scene” from minute 49:19 to 51:32 in episode 77.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wMi-tqZXCK>

After viewing the scene, I distributed the transcript of the dialogue. The students took turns reading the dialogue out loud. This short scene is rich in verb suffixes and other interesting grammatical features. We focused on the uses of *-mİş*, the place of the question particle *mİ*, causatives, passives, and subjunctives. The students asked to view this scene three times.

Savcı: Bu sükûnetiniz beni daha da şüphelendiriyor, Mahir Bey.  
Neticede baş şüpheli sizsiniz.  
Cüneyt Yanbal'ı öldürmek isteyecek yegâne insansınız.  
Söyleyin hadi! Hastaneden nasıl çıkardınız adamı?

Mahir: Ben mi çıkarmışım?  
Kim görmüş?  
Var mı şahidiniz?

Savcı: Soruları ben soruyorum, Mahir Bey!  
Sizin vazifeniz hakikati söylemek!  
Mahkûmu hastaneden kaçırdınız mı, kaçırmadınız mı?  
Ona cevap verin!

Kemal: Savcı Bey...

Savcı: Bu ne densizlik efendi! Sorgu var burada sorgu!

Kemal: Kusura bakmayın!  
Yasin Komiserim konuyla alâkalı olarak gönderdi beni efendim.  
.....

Savcı: Anlaşıldı. Çıkabilirsin.  
.....  
Tanıdık geldi mi bunlar, Mahir Bey?  
İsterseniz daha yakından bakalım.  
Bunlar Cüneyt Yanbal'ın eşyalarıymış.  
Boğaz'da bulmuşlar.  
Gerçi siz biliyorsunuzdur.  
Yalnız iyi akılmış!  
Adamı tut, Boğaz'a at. Sulara gömülüp gitsin.  
Ne ölüsünü bulsunlar, ne dirisini.  
İş burada kapansın, sizin de içiniz soğusun.



**Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education. Yasemin Kirkgöz & Kenan Dikilitaş (Eds.), Vol. 11. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018. 353 pp. ISBN 978-3-319-70213-1**

**Lilia Raitskaya**

Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University)

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Lilia Raitskaya, MGIMO-University, 76 Prospekt Vernadskogo, Moscow, Russia, 119454. E-mail: l.raitskaya@mail.ru

**Ключевые вопросы профессионально ориентированного английского языка в высшем образовании. По ред. Ясемина Киркгеца и Кенана Дикилиташа, Том. 11. Швейцария: Springer International Publishing, 2018. 353 с. ISBN 978-3-319-70213-1**

**Лилия Раицкая**

Московский государственный институт международных отношений (университет) Министерства иностранных дел Российской Федерации

Адрес для направления корреспонденции по данной публикации: Лилия Раицкая, МГИМО Университет МИД России, город Москва, проспект Вернадского д. 76, Россия, индекс 119454. E-mail: l.raitskaya@mail.ru

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an established and fast-developing discipline. ESP got a boost in the early 1960s, when it became integral to most university curricula.

The reviewed volume entitled 'Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education' was published in 2018 in the English Language Education Series of Springer International Publishing.

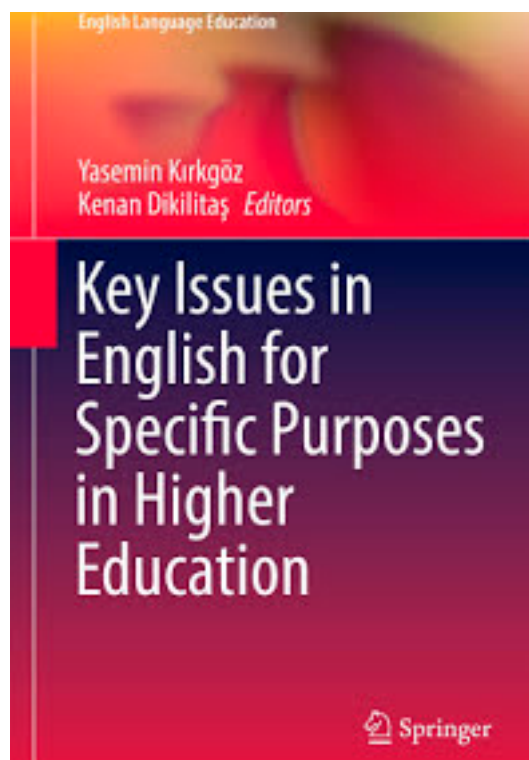
The book provides a panoramic analysis of the major trends in ESP and ESP's position in the foreign language learning continuum in English Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts.

The volume is divided into four parts, starting from an introductory chapter with a general overview of the field and Part I focusing on ESP materials design and development, progressing toward ESP teacher development, analyzing curricular issues in ESP courses, and ESP correlation with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and EMI.

The introductory chapter 'Recent Developments in ESP/ EAP/ EMI Contexts' by the volume editors Y. Kirkgöz and K. Dikilitaş dwells upon the history of ESP, which arose after World War II as an approach to language teaching for academic or occupational needs of learners.

Kirkgöz and Dikilitaş successfully attempted to introduce the main concepts and current developments in ESP in the framework of English as the world's lingua franca and the new needs of learners of English in the globalized world. The authors underline that ESP is concerned with real communication rather than formal language use.

Kirkgöz and Dikilitaş delineate the emergence of new global phenomena (EMI and CLIL), underlining that each of the approaches bring different sets of outcomes for learners. The authors consider various



definitions (by M. Aguilar, J. Dearden, D. Graddol, and others) of ESP/ EAP/ EMI/ CLIL to show their scope and peculiarities. They highlight that ESP is also important in securing employment for university graduates.

The first strand of the book (*Part I. Materials Design and Development in ESP*) bifurcates into four empirical studies in the form of chapters. They deliver a deep and evidence-based analysis of material design processes and beliefs of experienced university ESP teachers; innovative ESP teaching practices for materials development; corpus-based approaches to the selection of medical vocabulary for an ESP course,

and the selection of grammatical structures for ESP/ EAP materials.

The first chapter of Part I by H. Baştürkmen and A. Bocanegra-Valle reports a case study in university settings in Spain. The authors draw on data from in-depth interviews with experienced ESP teachers. A generic problem typical of ESP materials, i.e. most of the published materials are not always relevant to the needs of their learners, was found and confirmed by all the interviewees. They underlined that most of the published materials are not always relevant to the needs of their learners.

The chapter '*Innovative ESP Teaching Practices and Materials Development*' by F. L. Stoller and M. S. Robinson concentrates on the transition from general academic English to ESP. The authors use two approaches to ESP instruction (read-and-notice approach; read-analyze and write approach) as innovative teaching practice for chemistry majors, helping them make a transition to the ESP genres of their field of study.

The following two chapters are based on corpus-based approaches. The chapter '*Using a Corpus-Based Approach to Select Medical Vocabulary for an ESP Course*' by B. Quero and A. Coxhead makes an interesting point about the use of multiple corpora and high-frequency word lists in a ESP course, using the twofold approach (corpus comparison and semantic rating scale). The authors suppose that the lexical component of any ESP course is a key to efficient meaning-focused and language-focused activities and fluency development.

In the chapter '*Selecting Corpus-Based Grammatical Structures for ESP/ EAP Materials*', H. Farhady, K. Tavassoli, and F. Haghighi Irani cover an often ignored aspect of ESP, the selection of grammatical structures with reliance on a corpus of professional texts. The objective of the research is to bring to the fore the most significantly frequent grammatical structures. The research shows that, in addition to the use of diverse grammatical structures in 6 macro and 29 micro disciplines, many of them show a preference to a set of limited structures. The findings of the chapter urge ESP course developers to concentrate on introducing more frequent and common grammatical structures.

Part II entitled '*ESP Teacher Development*' comprises five chapters and starts with a study on an innovative form of collaborative teacher development, Lesson Study. The form originates from Japan. It implies that a group of teachers share subject-specific and teaching content knowledge via the joint planning of a lesson, teaching a lesson to a control group in front of their colleagues, peer evaluation, teaching to another groups of students, and a final joint evaluation. The chapter by J. Norton highlights the potential of Lesson Study for ESP teachers to foster collaborative engagement and strengthen ESP practitioners' subject

knowledge as well as increase their awareness of the student learning process.

T. Lehtonen, in the chapter headlined '*Practitioner Research as a Way of Understanding My Work: Making Sense of Graduates' Language Use*', describes how research helps individual teachers grow professionally. The author highlights the supportive environment as a requisite for doing or following research. Although the findings of the chapter cannot be generalized due to the limitations of the study, they may be of help to ESP practitioners in self-development and gaining new insights into ESP.

The chapter '*Expanding Possibilities for ESP Practitioners Through Interdisciplinary Team Teaching*' by T. Stewart attempts to define the place of ESP practitioners within academia. A special model called '*Collaborative Interdisciplinary Team Teaching*' was used to reflect on the issue of the professional identity of ESP practitioners, whose professional profile is often perceived as quite low in academia due to the comparative novelty of the profession and it is still an unclear professional area. The latter is often referred to as the periphery of the curriculum. Stewart's model suggests a technology providing for collaborative work on an ESP course of ESP teachers with discipline specialists that enhances the professional status of ESP practitioners.

The chapter '*Perceptions of Students, Teachers and Graduates About Civil Aviation Cabin Services ESP Program: An Explanatory Study in Turkey*' is based on data received via semi-structured interviews and pattern-coding. The findings reveal similarities in the perceptions of the participants (students, teachers, graduates) regarding the expectations, problems, and improvements in an ESP course (i.e. Aviation English Course).

Part III '*Curricular Issues in ESP*' consists of five chapters. The first of them headlined '*Introducing Innovation into an ESP program: Aviation English for Cadets*' presents a comprehensive analysis of the ESP course stakeholders (graduates, experts, instructors, and cadets), evaluating the New Turkish Air Force Academy Curriculum. The authors – M. Er and Y. Kirkgöz – show that aviation English curricula need to be constantly revised and updated to reflect the fact that aviation is a fast changing industry.

The next chapter entitled '*From EFL to EMI: Hybrid Practices in English as a Medium of Instruction in Japanese Tertiary Contexts*' by N. Fujimoto-Adamson and J. Adamson explores the methodological aspects of teaching sociolinguistics to Japanese undergraduate students in EMI contexts. The research is based on teaching practices and evidence extracted from a collaborative autoethnographic account of the perceptions of the two practitioners concerning their professional practices connected with their shift into

teaching content using EMI.

The chapter *'Fostering Active Learner Engagement in ESP Classes'* written by N. Mačianskienė and V. Bijeikienė touches upon an important aspect of teaching ESP that urges learners to be actively involved in the learning process. The study follows the Mixed Method Approach and analyzes ESP courses in respect to course descriptions, learner needs, ESP course methods and activities, and opportunities. Mačianskienė and Bijeikienė suggest that ESP courses can be enhanced with a learner-centered approach and active learning and teaching methods, the pillars of ESP practitioners' practice.

Another chapter *'Are We Really Teaching English for Specific Purposes, or Basic English Skills? The Cases of Turkey and Latvia'* explores ESP as an essential sub-field of English language education, ranging from academic to professional and vocational areas. The authors handle the touchy subject of insufficient resources, lack of skilled teachers, and other challenges and problems an ESP course may face. The chapter is based on a study carried out in two universities in Turkey and Latvia to find out the teachers' evaluation of their ESP practice. The findings demonstrate that the obstacles and limitations related to poor planning, overcrowded classrooms, students' low level or lack of basic English skills, and others often prevent students from going beyond a general English course. The authors suggest some improvements for overcoming the existing deadlock.

The final chapter of Part III headlined *'Listening Comprehension Strategies of EMI Students in Turkey'* discusses the peculiarities of EMI in higher education, with a listening comprehension strategy survey at the core of the research which aims to reveal the preferences of EMI students when listening to their lecturers in English. The strategies turn out to depend on gender, context, major, and other aspects. The study also found that there is a correlation between higher student scores and better comprehension.

Part IV entitled *'ESP, CLIL and EMI'* covers issues of interrelations and overlappings of the basic approaches in English language instruction. The chapter *'ESP/ EAP in University Programs in a Non-target Language Community – Issues and Challenges'* by J. O'Dwyer and H. Handan Ath looks into the strengths and weaknesses related to EMI in universities in non-English speaking countries. O'Dwyer and Handan Ath outline the complexity of the system that students have to enter while sometimes at an elementary level. Concerns are also expressed about lecturers with little EMI experience and other negative factors. The authors discuss the role of language instructors in EMI contexts and the training of content and language teachers.

I. Alonso-Belmonte and M. Fernández- Agüero in their research *'The C of Cognition in CLIL Teacher Education: Some Insights from Classroom-Based Research'* aim to consider foreign language (FL) practice in state bilingual schools in Spain in the CLIL context with the goal of mapping the key classroom tasks to encourage critical thinking. Their findings show that, at present, the prevailing practice boils down to low-order thinking skills. Thus, the research confirms the discord within the CLIL teaching community over the adequacy of CLIL routines in the primary classrooms and calls for a broader discussion about further CLIL application.

The sensitive issue of widening EMI contexts with more disciplines delivered in English is studied by J. Dearden in the chapter *'The Changing Roles of EMI Academics and English Language Specialists'*. As universities worldwide seek to become internationalized by attracting more foreign students and giving local students a competitive edge on the labour market, they urge academics and lecturers to teach their academic subjects in EMI settings. The transition cannot be smooth and problem-free, as subject specialists do not tend to be ready and willing to teach in English. As Dearden underlines 'going EMI' for universities implies structural changes (a new language policy; training and re-training, etc.) and takes time.

The final chapter of Part IV and the volume *'Quality Assurance of EAP Programs in the EMI Context'* by D. F. Staub scrutinizes the mechanisms assuring compliance with high quality standards for EAP programs. Staub indicates that today's systems of quality assurance often lack expertise and know-how. That leads to failures or inadequate depth of assessments. Staub suggests using some established accreditation model implies getting the involved staff members well prepared for possible variations within the framework. Thus, professional development enhances the efficiency of quality assurance.

The book makes a significant empirical contribution to ESP teaching and learning. Some of the chapters are too narrow-focused, and their findings cannot be generalized for the ESP field. But they prompt the readers to revise their attitudes and reflect on some ESP challengers. Overall, this is a well-researched and well-designed book. The authors have successfully presented a comprehensive and insightful narrative on the key trends in ESP and the related realms of EMI, CLIL, and EAP.

The potential audience of this volume includes researchers, postgraduate and graduate students majoring in the field of applied linguistics, as well as university teachers and ESP practitioners.

# 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.
  3. The double blind peer review of each manuscript is carried out in the normal manner via JLE submission and peer review system by the Guest Editor.
  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.**
- Please, do not hesitate to email us in case of any questions: [jle@hse.ru](mailto:jle@hse.ru)

## Статьи

Мизу Айко

Взаимосвязь между точностью самооценки, владением иероглифами и средой обучения для подростков, изучающих японский язык ..... 6

Растислав Метрук

«Уэст»или «Вест»? Произношение английских согласных [w] и [v] в высказываниях носителей словацкого языка EFL .....24

Флора Комлоси-Фердинанд

Стиль обучения и предпочтения болгарских студентов при обучении в ESL классах.....30

Абдулджалил Наср Хазаи, Али Аббас Альзуби

Влияние мобильного обучения языку на автономию обучающегося в контексте чтения EFL .....48

Хэри Мудра

Изучение атрибутов эффективных английских лекторов, воспринимаемых обучающимися EFL: пример Индонезии .....59

Мария Кирсанова

Андроцентризм английских пословиц и анти-пословиц с гендерными компонентами .....68

Антуан Уилли Ндзотом Мбакоп, Соня Лорел Эмалье Канко, Мишель Эдриэнн Тида

Французские грамматические акценты: практики, социолингвистические основы и педагогические импликация в многоязычной среде .....78

Мнение эксперта

Дебора Азаръяд Шехтер

Преодоление грамматического барьера в изучении иностранного языка: роль телесериала .....92

Обзоры

Лилия Раицкая

Ключевые вопросы профессионально ориентированного английского языка в высшем образовании. По ред. Ясемина Киркгеца и Кенана Дикилиташа, Том. 11. Швейцария: Springer International Publishing, 2018. 353 с. ISBN 978-3-319-70213-1 .....105

Рекомендации для авторов .....108