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Editorial

An Overview of Trends and Challenges in Higher Education on the Worldwide Research Agenda

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Being a crucial part of the JLE scope, higher education is witnessing an era of supra-national, national, and institutional changes, including massification via massive online open courses (MOOC), politically launched or influenced trends like the Bologna process, increasing academic mobility spurred by globalisation and continued development of internationalised education, interculturality and multiligualism, worldwide innovations in higher education and teaching approaches (deep active learning, blended learning methods, gamification, storytelling, alignments of higher education and work, translanguaging in higher education instruction).
Further, the JLE editors dwell upon other relevant issues, including transformation of universities, student-teacher relationship, social equity and access to higher education, students' engagement and commitment to learning, university excellence factors.
The editorial entails some guidelines for potential authors regarding priority themes JLE is going to promote within its scope.

Keywords: higher education, educational reforms, blended learning, learner autonomy, quality of higher education, active learning, flipped classroom, innovations in education, translanguaging

Present-day transformation of higher education systems, emerging pressures of dramatic limitation of public funding and issues related to the massification of higher education round the globe lead to a transfigured research agenda. With a few eternal themes staying in place, a new swathe of topics are coming to the fore.

Most countries are currently involved in all kinds of higher education reforms. A lot of studies are focused on different aspects of those reforms: starting from neo-liberal foundation and approaches to higher education (Gerrard, 2015; Zepke, 2018), universities' striving for excellence and competitiveness (Mok, 2015; Hostings, 2015; Song, 2018), country-related reform specialities (Coome, 2015; Noyes & Adkins, 2016) to quality revolution in tertiary education (Minina, 2017), re-defining quality of higher education and its factors (Little, 2015; Cheng, 2017; Scharager, Goldenberg, 2018), and pitfalls it faces (Cardoso, Rosa, & Stensaker, 2016). Another popular research niche embraces world university rankings encouraging university transformation into cost-centres with destroyed or distorted primary missions of universities in the society (Brankovic et al., 2018; McCoy et al., 2018; Milian & Rizk, 2018) or, quite on the opposite, into institutions of excellence.

University rankings form an integral part of knowledge economy as a tool of quantitative quality assessment in higher education. They aim to single out the advantages and strengths of the leading world or regional universities and reshape enrolment processes at universities. Some researchers show that

students do not tend to consult ranking publications, relying often 'on reputational information available through their informal networks' (Milian & Rizk, 2018). Rankings influence both educational policy and higher education reforms. With much constructive or blunt criticism and concerns around, university rankings, their methodology, and negative institutional outcomes need further research.

Reforms in higher education ought to be studied within the contexts of globalisation and internationalisation. The former have led to massification in tertiary education via MOOCs, distance learning, and e-learning. It is widely articulated in the literature that massification transforms higher education institutions (Literat, 2015; Akalu, 2016). New challenges and pitfalls relating to massification in higher education cover a paucity of resources for MOOCs, increased workload for the academia at large, partial loss of autonomy for the professoriate, declining quality of education by various criteria (Akalu, 2016). More studies of MOOCs as a social framework enabling a lifelong learning context are beginning to appear.

There is a growing gap between academic and student understandings of education quality (Strielkowski, Kiseleva & Popova, 2018). Moreover, employers tend to expect other sets of skills their future hires to acquire, with social skills being at the top of their wish lists. Social skills, communication skills, employability skills, soft skills and other sets are under academic and research scrutiny worldwide. This direction seems very promising in the light of fierce competition on world and national labour markets.

The inverted or so-called 'flipped' classroom approach has been thoroughly parsed for about a decade. The concept of 'self-studies via technology-based resources (called 'flips')' (Lundin et al., 2018) followed by comprehensive in-class activities has gained popularity at all levels of education. Higher education curricula massively introduce this approach into both bachelor and master programmes. More papers address some chasms in research on flipped classroom method by reporting advantages and weaknesses, techniques, approaches, motivation assessment (Nikitina, Don, & Cheong, 2016) and results (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2018; Lundin et al., 2018; Zainuddin & Perera, 2019).

Higher education policy throughout the world is influenced by political and economic considerations. Some trends in education may be defined as mainly policy-related, e.g. the Bologne process. In Europe, the phenomenon is under a new re-thinking (Leisyte, Zelvys, & Zenkiene, 2015; Ala-Vähälä, 2016), with more research on quality of higher education within increasing academic mobility environment (Baker, 2018; Morley et al., 2018; Siekierski et al., 2018). As the historic developments prove, the process initially aimed to support regional (mainly Eastern European) and small-scale universities in their aligning with the best European universities. Intense academic mobility in EU universities enhances university cooperation and unification of curricula, but poses challenges to quality and traditional approaches and teaching methods.

Though active learning emerged as a research domain in the early 1990s, at present, quite a lot of studies raise issues of case study method, role-playing, gamification, and simulation in higher education (Aparicio et al., 2019; Gatt et al., 2019). Gamification and other active learning methods are widely considered in research to be algorithms associated with 'learner interaction … and positive experience of MOOCs' (Aparicio et al., 2019). In addition, research on deep learning and deep active learning (Engel, Pallas, & Lambert, 2017; Hermes & Rimaniroczy, 2018) come out regularly. Researchers in the neighbouring social fields (education, psychology, applied linguistics, sociology, philosophy) approach social phenomena via a mix of stances and methods, often interdisciplinary at heart. Future research focus is certain to lie within the social science domain, but new interdisciplinary shifts and complex intradisciplinary accents may turn up. Gaps in understanding of the new higher education landscape and its phenomena cannot but arise as a part of the impending research agenda.

Higher education and progressive learning methods have much overlapping with the concept of learner autonomy and self-regulation (Hartley et al., 2016; Hawe & Dixon, 2017). The latter lay foundation for research on lifelong learning and professional or academic development.

Learner autonomy is traditionally attached to language learning. Though it is widely discussed, autonomy is still studied as an educational goal in the contexts of learning styles and learner's personal traits, attitudes, and motivation (Schneider, 2018; Lan, 2018). More papers may be brought out with accents on autonomy of all academic players in various settings.

To end it up, one more priority area of research for JLE cannot be missed out. It is languages as a means of both instruction in higher education and communication in science and research. Often denominated lingua franca or interlingua in both science and education, English gave birth to new promising lines for researchers. Though, translanguaging dates back to the 1980s with its roots in Welsh bilingual education (Conteh, 2018), it is updated through the ways migration and mobility influence pedagogy and education in the globalised world. Scientific and academic literature published mainly in English essentially factors in the process. Some studies on translanguaging in higher education have come out recently to be followed by more focused on language policies, student – teacher relationship,

curricula, and assessment issues (Caruso, 2018; Conteh, 2018).

In research, authors have recently turned to scientific imperialism (Popova & Beavitt, 2017), English as lingua franca in science, English for publication or research purposes (Li, Flowerdew, & Cargill, 2018), English as an intercultural language (Lee, 2018), English vs multilingualism, and other brand-new or revised themes.

Academics worldwide pursue heavy research agendas in the afore-mentioned directions, with JLE being no exception. We hope that the outlined themes may prompt our potential authors to plunge into comprehensive research and share their results with our readers.

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Learner Autonomy through Role Plays in English Language Teaching

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Nowadays, learner autonomy is considered to be a multidimensional and diversified concept. A number of scientists have found support for the importance of learner autonomy but there is little empirical research on using different strategies for promoting and evaluating students' autonomy. Accordingly, in order to become better language learners, students should plan, implement, and evaluate their own learning. This study aims at fostering and evaluating students' autonomy by scaffolding their speaking practices through role plays in an English for Special Purposes (ESP) course. The research suggests that role-play strategies should help students develop their autonomy in acquiring ESP speaking skills. The study argues that developing autonomy is an efficient way to improve students' performance in ESP speaking skills as it provides them with relevant scaffolding. This article provides theoretical grounding for autonomy. The entry-level and post-study speaking scores (IELTS test) are compared across experimental and control groups. A class-based training course of ESP speaking was offered in an institutional setting to 38 (15 male, 23 female) second-year students at a national research university in Russia. A special questionnaire was developed to assess learner autonomy in ESP speaking, which proved that role play promoted learner autonomy and encouraged students to master ESP speaking skills. The results of the study indicate that students who were developing their speaking skills via role play performed significantly better than their peers in the control group. The level of their English language competence improved. The role plays in the ESP speaking course proved to be a viable and productive teaching strategy for fostering autonomy among students.

Keywords: learner autonomy, promotion of students' autonomy, role play, learner-based approach

The effectiveness of students' performance within the field of higher education is significantly determined by learner autonomy. Fostering learner autonomy has received great interest from researches all around the world (Dam, 1995; Holec, 1980; Little, 1991). This issue is closely related to learner-centered methods (Benson, 2011). The methods interpret autonomous learners to possess the ability to control and take responsibility of their learning (Cotterall, 2000). Learners are viewed as active interpreters and processers of knowledge, which is based on their own interests and needs (Littlewood, 1996, Brown, 2006). This interest in the learner's role has given rise to the concept of learner autonomy.

Consequently, this concept has received much attention in research and education (Esch, 2010; Mariani, 1997). In addition to the emergence of learner-centered approaches to teaching, the importance of learner autonomy is justified for various reasons (Dam, 1995). Scientists argue that autonomous learners are more efficient. They consider that being able to take responsibility for one's own learning implies intrinsic motivation, metacognitive skills, and awareness of the subject (Lewis & Reinders, 2008). These issues are

related to efficient learning, which is greatly affected by the development of different factors. One of them is the development of information technology in a competitive market. It has led to the fast exchange of information. Autonomous learning implies the critical evaluation of and reflection on information. Students should be able to process this information on their own, i.e. autonomously (Holec, 1980; Wallace, 1991) in a variety of circumstances, taking into account activities practicing ESP speaking skills.

The context for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) language acquisition via speaking skills is an attempt to highlight the peculiarities of teaching and learning ESP speaking. The specifics of ESP inevitably imply the consistent and complex use of speaking skills. The globalization of business practices with greater emphasis on communication and intrapersonal skills has profoundly influenced the use of ESP speaking. The most notable situations requiring communication skills are discussions, oral presentations, participation in meetings, negotiations, instructions, conversations on the phone, and other similar forms of communication.

Learner autonomy has been studied by many scholars and practitioners (Thanasoulas, 2000; Littlewood, 2007; Hamilton, 2013; Benson, 2008), although it has not been developed much in the field of teaching foreign languages, especially ESP. Its importance is widely recognized but it is difficult to grasp, especially the strategies, which can promote a promising change in the students' level of autonomy (Yang, 1998; Huang, 2006; Gremo & Riley, 1995). The issue of assessing learner autonomy in learning foreign languages is also of great importance, though it has not been studied that widely.

The aim of the present study is to check the assumption that in teaching the English language, in particular developing ESP speaking skills, role-play strategies contribute to learner autonomy and help work out techniques for assessing learner autonomy. In this context, the article foregrounds autonomy as a complex phenomenon and highlights the importance of developing ESP speaking skills via role play. This is followed by an experimental study. The findings of this study can be used as a reference when reflecting on teaching practices that foster learner autonomy. Finally, the authors conclude with pedagogical implications relevant for teaching speaking skills.

Literature Review

Researches have approached learner autonomy from different perspectives. As a result, there exist various views on fostering learners' autonomy. While these points of view may differ from one another, they do share some underlying assumptions. Certain strategies and processes show that learner autonomy can be fostered in an institutional setting. They all view learner autonomy as a learner's innate capacities (Benson, 2001; Errey & Schollaert, 2005; Esch, 2010). All of them describe the promotion of learner autonomy as the provision of circumstances and contexts for language learners that will make the learners more likely to take charge of all or part of their language learning program.

To clarify the theories on the promotion of learner autonomy, Benson (2011) promoted six different approaches to fostering learner autonomy: resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based, and teacher-based approaches. Resource-based and technology-based approaches refer mainly to out-of-class strategies. The four latter approaches consider the issue from within-a-classroom context. That is why they are essential to this study. Learner-based approaches, as Benson (2011) believes, show the relationship of learner training to learner development, the example of which is Ellis and Sinclair's[1] approach. Classroom-based approaches, as Benson (2011) sees them, aim to promote learner autonomy by incorporating learners in the decision-making processes. Curriculum-based approaches, according to Benson (2011), show that learner control is extended to the curricular level, an example of which is Cotterall's (2000) approach. Teacher-based approaches, in Benson's (2011) view, emphasize that learner autonomy takes into account teacher autonomy. Although Benson identified different approaches on the promotion of learner autonomy, the lines between approaches are not clear cut.

Theories on the promotion of learner autonomy in education environment are manifold. Littlewood (1996) offers a special framework for developing autonomy in and through foreign language teaching. The offered framework, according to Littlewood (1996), demonstrates that autonomy is a multidimensional capacity in two different ways. The first variant shows that autonomy consists of three domains: autonomy as communication (autonomy on a task level), as learning (autonomy on learning level), and personally (autonomy on a personal level). The second variant believes that autonomy in any of these three domains covers two obligatory components, namely, ability and willingness, which can further be subdivided into two components: ability into knowledge and skills, and willingness into motivation and confidence. Littlewood's ideas on learner autonomy imply that both willingness and ability are inherent to the majority of other theories.

Littlewood's ideas were then developed by Dam

[1] Ellis, G., & Sinclair, B. (1989). *Learning to learn English: A course in learner training. Teacher's book.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

(2011). His approach is more practical and detailed. The framework offered by Dam (2011), is, in Benson's (2011) terms, a classroom-based approach to the development of learner autonomy. Dam (2011) pays special attention to the teacher's role in the development of learner autonomy. The teacher should have students take over the responsibility of learning, i.e. planning, carrying out the plans, and evaluating the outcome.

Dam (2011) highlights some important principles in the development of learner autonomy. The first principle is the fundamental notion of choice. According to Dam, having a choice enhances motivation, requires reflection which has a positive impact on his or her self-esteem, and scaffolds students to work for themselves. The second one is the need for clear guidelines to be established so that the learners feel secure enough. The third one is the shift from teacher-guided learning to self-guided learning. Dam believes that the teacher's concern should be to help students take an active role in the assessment process. According to Dam, involving the learners in reflection, evaluation, and assessment is important because it provides evidence of progress, enhances motivation, and heightens awareness of learning.

Dam's approach is primarily concerned with improving the abilities related to learner autonomy. It was enlarged by Lewis and Reinders (2008) who concentrated especially on improving the willingness to take responsibility for learning. For Lewis and Reinders (2008), the major obstacle in encouraging learner autonomy lies in a teacher-centered learning approach. According to Lewis and Reinders (2008), teachers and students should value activities related to autonomous learning, such as reflection on and the evaluation of progress as well as engaging higher thinking skills.

Whereas Dam (2011) and Lewis and Reinders (2008) concentrated on learning experiences, Cotterall (2000) approached promoting learner autonomy by taking into account a curriculum-based perspective. According to Cotterall (2000), the major challenge in fostering autonomy lies in the transfer of responsibility for decision making about learning from the teacher to the learners. To overcome this challenge, Cotterall (2000) introduced some principles that aim at promoting self-control over learning. These principles relate to learner goals, motivation, tasks, learner strategies, and reflection on learning.

Cotterall (2000) elaborates on these principles. Any language course that aims at promoting learner autonomy should reflect the learners' goals in their language acquisition, offer special tasks to contribute to learner strategy, and develop motivation and reflection. It is evident that taking everything into account, as Crabbe (1993) suggests, an emphasis should be put on the teacher's role in developing learner autonomy. Some researchers concentrated their work on the teacher and his or her role in learner autonomy. For example, Powell (1988) argues that, while students are usually blamed for being heavily dependent on the teacher in their learning, teachers rely on students in their teaching as well, thinking that it is their job to teach and pass on information. In contrast, Powell (1988) points out that the role of the teacher is crucial in creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence, in which learners can exercise their independent judgement and pursue their interests.

Many researches relate learner autonomy with enhanced motivation as Ellis and Sinclair[2] do in their model. The relationship between the two seems quite obvious; by allowing students to set and act according to their own goals, they become intrinsically motivated to achieve their goals. This is the conclusion of Dickinson (1995), who states that there is a dynamic relationship between such concepts as intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy. However, the direction of the connection has caused some debate. Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002), for example, found that motivation may play an inhibiting or enabling role in the realization of learner autonomy: the connection between motivation and autonomy seems to be bidirectional. Thus, as Spratt et al. (2002) suggest, when facing resistance and avoidance on the students' behalf, rather than immediately pushing those students towards autonomy, the teacher should promote intrinsic motivation and devote time to activities that show the usefulness of language learning.

The research followed the scientists' point of view who analyzed the problem of learner autonomy and considered choice, goals, motivation, metacognition, support, and emotional climate to be the most important issues in fostering autonomy. From these, choice and support were chosen to be analyzed in this study. The authors of the study aim at verifying the supposition that role play in teaching foreign languages is a strategy that incorporates choice and support and contributes to learner autonomy.

Materials and Methods

Background of the Research

When deciding on the methods to be used in the current study, the researches consider key issues in this study as "fit for purpose" (Reinders, 2010). The strategy selected for this study is role-play strategies.

[2] Ibid.

It was chosen for several reasons: it fits well within the theoretical perspective, it provides depth to the research, and it fills a gap in the literature in relation to learner autonomy within the language learning context (Hurd, 1998). The undertaken research recognizes the learner-centered approach to be closely related to fostering autonomy. It was found that several factors contribute to learner autonomy development, which include the role of the teacher, the role of feedback, learner independence, learner confidence in their study ability, experience, and approach to studying (Cotterall, 1995). In the terms of different approaches, the authors of the article are concerned with the idea of introducing some creative elements (role plays) into the process of studying English for specific purposes (ESP). Role-play strategies were chosen due to the fact that role play is one of the staples of English as a foreign language teaching. Role plays are used to allow students to practice speaking in a conversational situation, build confidence and fluency, assess progress, and put learning into action (Brown, 2008). Role-play strategies found their roots in Vygotsky's theory (Brown, 2008). It was stated that the development of language performance occurred during sociocultural interactions in the learning process. Regarding the importance of speaking skills for professional communication, the authors made students communicate within the context of their future profession. After years of teaching experience, the researchers could affirm in this study that students' creative abilities are an inherent part of ESP studies among the students with higher levels of motivation and the teacher's contributions. This research pursues the idea that taking part in role plays can promote students' autonomous learning, thus considering a role play to be a strategy that is very important[3].

Participants

The participants of the study were second-year students of the National Research University Higher School of Economics taking an ESP English course. A total of 38 second-year students (15 male and 23 female, aged 17 or 18, not married) participated in the experiment. 20 participants (9 male, 11 female) were members of the experimental group (the first one) and 18 (6 male, 12 female) were in the control group (the second one).

Materials

To identify the students' starting level an "Objective Placement Test" and the IELTS speaking test were taken by both groups. The core textbook used in the research with the experimental group was "English for Business Studies in Higher Education Studies". Different role plays are presented in this book. It was supplemented with business textbooks and manuals, for example, "Business Vocabulary in Practice" and "Business Benchmark" Upper-Intermediate. The control group was exposed to traditional English language textbooks on business. The authors developed a questionnaire that was focused on assessing autonomy progress from the beginning of the course to the end.

In general, the learning process requires control and assessment. However, there is no consensus regarding the question whether the assessment of learner autonomy is possible or not (Benson, 2010). It is very difficult to assess learner autonomy from an external perspective (Sinclair, 1989; Gardner & Miller, 1999) but self-control and self-assessment of language learning competencies greatly contribute to the autonomous language learning process (Kleppin, 2005). Taking everything into account, the authors of the experiment developed the questionnaire to see how students can assess themselves. The students in both groups were exposed to the questionnaire (Appendix 1).

Research Design and Procedure

The research incorporated several steps. At the beginning and at the end of the course (pre/post-tests), both groups of students were assessed to identify their level of English language competence. They were given the *Objective Placement Test, Variant 3, CUP & FLTRP, 2010* (consisting of 60 multiple-choice questions divided into three sections Language Use (40 items), Reading (10 items), and Listening (10 items)) as well as the *IELTS Speaking Tests 1,3 Cambridge IELTS 10 Student's Book* (4 sections). The next step was designing a special English course for the second-year students. The aim of the teaching program for the experimental group was focused on promoting learner autonomy in formal foreign language teaching and evaluating it.

The designed course took into account two notions contributing to autonomy and covering all the other ideas that were taken into consideration. The first and the most important was choice, since it encompasses all aspects of learning and connects English studies with students' lives, e.g. using topics that are relevant to them. Choice causes inherent motivation that leads students to take responsibility of the learning process. The main advantage of choice is in its offering various task alternatives, from which students can take the one that suits them best. The students in the experimental group were offered the following tasks: choosing information from the resource they selected, building up target language lists that they consider vital for

[3] Knowles, M. (1975). Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers. New York, NY: Cambridge: The Adult Education Company.

making up a role play, and discussing the ideas with the partners and commenting on them.

The second notion that emphasizes the special role of the teacher is support, which means that students are given opportunities to work on their weaknesses and they are also aided in discovering their strengths. The students are allowed to choose either to work individually or with a partner/in groups, for all of the activities types' tasks are specially designed, and they are also guided (if necessary) in finding the relevant resources.

1. Under the terms of the experiment from the beginning of the study the students in the first group are offered tasks with elements of role plays and the teacher's assistance. During the course of instruction, the exercises are fully developed into role plays with a range of tasks and roles. The role of the teacher at this stage comes down to giving advice if necessary or commenting and evaluating, while the teaching program for the control group provided traditional methods.
2. As previously mentioned, a special course was designed for the experimental group. The control group undertook a traditional training course. At the end of the course both groups, experimental and control, were given identical tasks preparing role play, where the teacher only gave the name of the activity and references for the sources.

The role play, "Choosing a business location" was chosen for the experiment. This role play is based on the speaking activity from *"English for Business Studies in Higher Education Studies",* the core textbook for the second-year students. The exercises from the book give information for researching the main types of business location criteria and lists of businesses with products and services. The aim of these exercises is to be able to explain where different businesses should be located. The students should speak fluently and coherently.

Results

As English has become an international and communicative language, a variety of educational aspects are related to its learning. Learner autonomy is considered to be a key element for communication and plays a vital role in English language learning. That is why the results of this research are very important as they will contribute to the fostering of learner autonomy in language studies. A strategy such as a role play in relation to the purposes of this research is used to encourage students to take charge of their own learning.

The experiment started with determining the level of English language competence in both groups. The results showed that the level was equal in both the experimental and control groups.

- The experimental group of 20 students achieved the results which are given in the table.

Table 1
The experimental group results

Number of students	Score (60)
2	56-59
4	53-55
3	50-51
2	47-49
3	40
1	38
2	32-35
1	30
2	27

- The control group of 18 students (whose results were rather close to the first group) showed the results presented below.

Table 2
The control group results

Number of students	Score (60)
2	55-57
2	52-54
3	51
3	47-50
3	40-45
1	37
1	33
1	29
2	27-28

Both the experimental and the control groups were given the IELTS Speaking Test (*IELTS Speaking Tests 1, Cambridge IELTS 10 Student's Book* (4 sections) and evaluated according to the criteria given below[4].

The students' evaluation from the speaking test is presented in the Table.

The pre-test showed that the level of English language competence and the level of speaking skills were practically equal in both groups. These tests were

[4] IELTS Advantage. (2015). *IELTS Speaking criteria.* Retrieved from https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/06/28/ielts-speaking-criteria/

Table 3
IELTS Speaking Test criteria

Aspect	Criteria		
	Fair	**Good**	**Excellent**
Fluency and Coherence	Is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction and hesitation. Uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately.	Speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence. May demonstrate language-related hesitation at times and/or self-correction. Uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility.	Speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language. Develops topic coherently and appropriately.
Lexical Resource	Has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies Generally, paraphrases successfully	Uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics Uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary with some inappropriate choices Uses paraphrase effectively	Uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning Uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary skillfully with occasional inaccuracies Uses paraphrase effectively as required
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	Uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility May make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems	Uses complex structures, with some flexibility Fluently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist	Uses a wide range of structures flexibly Produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/nonsystematic errors
Pronunciation	Uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control Shows some effective use of features, but this is not sustained Can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times	Shows all the positive features of the "fair" answer and some, but not all of the positive features of the "excellent" answer	Uses a range of pronunciation features Sustains flexible use of features with only occasional lapses Is easy to understand throughout; the first language accent has minimal effect on intelligibility

Tbale 4
Speaking test evaluation

	Experimental group (20)	**Control group (18)**
Fair	4	5
Good	10	10
Excellent	6	3

carried out twice in pre- and post-learning activities.

As an activity aimed at preparing for the role play, the teacher for the experimental group introduced a topic and asked students to revise the "*Skills Banks"* from the core textbook for 'reporting information to people'. He or she also provided with references to language materials on the topic (e.g. textbooks, *"Business Vocabulary in Practice", "Business Benchmark" Upper-Intermediate)*. After receiving instructions, the students promptly started the activity. First, they distributed roles and reviewed the information, then they decided on the plot and the outcome. During the next stage, they utilized language materials to do exercises and select the target language, and forty minutes later they were ready to perform their role plays. One of the elements of the role play was "pyramid discussion", where at first the students discussed a suitable location in pairs; after a short while one pair joined another pair and soon this group of four came to an agreement on the issue and joined another group of four until they came up with a single decision.

In both groups, the teacher started the activity by explaining the gist of the key issue. The issue is why location is important for business. This issue was presented in both the experimental and control groups

as a major idea at the beginning of the role play. After that, the control group began discussing information on the types of business location criteria, distributing the roles and doing language exercises as a whole class, under the teacher's supervision. Most of the time was devoted to determining the structure of the role play and its outcome, as the students could not come to one decision, interrupted each other, or sometimes did not have anything to suggest. It was evident that their discussions skills were underdeveloped. It took the control group an hour and fifteen minutes to get ready to conduct their role plays. It was evident that those students lacked skills in autonomous work and were dependent on the teacher's support and assistance.

The students in both groups were evaluated according to the role-play criteria given below. It should be noted that alongside with teacher's evaluation, peer assessment was conducted in the experimental group.

The students in the experimental group got "good" and "excellent" marks in terms of "content", "organization", and "scenario" aspects, while the students in the control group displayed "fair" and "good" results for the same aspects. This can be explained by the fact that the experimental group had been exposed to the role-play practice in the language classroom whenever it took place (at least twice a month).

The results given below show the final marks of the students from both groups.

At the end of the course, the students from both groups were assessed again to see the progress of their English language competence. They were given the *Objective Placement Test, Variant 1 CUP & FLTRP, 2010* (consisting of 60 multiple-choice questions divided into three sections Language Use (40 items), Reading (10 items), Listening (10 items)):

- The experimental group of 20 students achieved the results presented in the Table below.
- The control group of 18 students (whose results were rather close to the first group) achieved the results, shown in the Table.

Table 5
Role-play criteria

Aspect	**Criteria**		
	Fair	**Good**	**Excellent**
Content	Role play was disjointed in content at times, topic covered	Role play was slightly disjointed in content, topic covered	Role play was cohesive and contained all the necessary elements, fully covered topic
Organization	Presentation was only basically organized. The transitions between the role plays and the narrator are omitted sometimes and other presentation components were adequate.	Presentation was fairly well organized. The transitions between the role plays and the narrator and other presentation components flowed smoothly at times.	Presentation was well organized. The transitions between the role plays and the narrator and other presentation components flowed smoothly.
Scenario	Scenario was not very realistic, sometimes inappropriate for class, or developed to some extent. Scenario tried to incorporate course concepts.	Scenario was realistic and class appropriate, Course concepts could be identified.	Scenario was fully realistic, class appropriate, well developed. Scenario clearly incorporated course concepts.
Fluency	Some students showed great difficulty in performing the role play, but were able to complete the task.	Students were able to perform the role play, sometimes with little difficulty.	Students were able to perform the role play clearly with no difficulty.
Language Use	In some cases, speech was awkward but quite comprehensible to understand	Speech was awkward at times but always understandable with the use of target language	Speech was clear and comprehensible at all times

Table 6
Role play assessment in the experimental and control groups

	Experimental group	Control group
Fair	2	6
Good	7	10
Excellent	11	2

Table 7
The experimental group results

Number of students	Score (60)
7	58-60
5	55-57
2	50-53
3	48-49
1	47
1	44
1	38

Table 8
The control group results

Number of students	Score (60)
3	54-58
2	53
3	50-52
4	47-48
4	40-45
1	37
1	33

The final test showed that the level of English language competence and speaking skills improved in both groups. But in the experimental group, the number of students who got high scores surpassed the number of students in the control group.

Both the experimental and the control groups were given the IELTS Speaking Test (*IELTS Speaking Tests 2, Cambridge IELTS 10 Student's Book* (4 sections) and evaluated according to the speaking criteria, which was given earlier.

The students' answers in the experimental group were mainly evaluated as "good" and "excellent" in all aspects except for the "lexical resource" aspect, while the students in the control group generally received "fair" marks in the "fluency and coherence" and "grammatical range and accuracy" aspects. The students' answers from the control group in the terms of "lexical resource" and "pronunciation" aspects were more "fair" than 'good". This can also be explained by the fact that the experimental group students had the opportunity to improve their speaking skills through role-play activities.

Table 9
IELTS Speaking Test evaluation

	Experimental group (20)	Control group (18)
Fair	2	6
Good	9	9
Excellent	9	3

Self-control and self-assessment of language learning competences are key issues in the autonomous language learning process (Kleppin, 2005). The results of the experiment showed that students in the experimental group were more likely to set goals, analyse their needs, plan their learning, and assess their competencies on their own. The students in the control group preferred to do it with the help of either the teacher or their peers.

Statistical Data Processing

Data analysis was carried out on the basis of different students' results as shown by a number of tests. To find out the correlation among different factors, Pearson's coefficient "P" was used. The analysis took into account the correlations with p-value less than 0,05 (p <0,05). Only the results where the probability was equal to or more than 95 (p ⩽0,05) are discussed in the article.

Discussion

In the current study, learner autonomy is viewed from Benson's (2011) and Dam's (2011) views of a learner's willingness and ability to take the responsibility to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate his/her own learning. Two essential components are implied in this point of view: the learner's responsibility and the teacher's role in supporting the learners to develop autonomy. This research examines and discusses the findings of the current study with references to previous studies in the field.

As mentioned earlier, two groups of students took part in the experiment. Their levels of English language competencies were basically equal. This gave us the opportunity to compare the effects of

Table 10
Pre-test and Post-test correlation results

	Pre-test average (max 60)	Mean difference	P-value	Post-test average (max 60)	Mean difference	P-value
Experimental group	45	1	Less 0,05	53	1	Less 0,05
Control group	44	1	Less 0,05	48	1	Less 0,05

role-play strategies and conventional strategies for learning English and fostering learner autonomy. The results indicated that the experimental group showed a significant advantage over the control group. This means that using role-play strategies in EFL classes is worthwhile and more effective for fostering learner autonomy and improving the learning process. This finding is consistent with the results of previous studies showing that role play is an effective strategy for enhancing student vocabulary (Toumpaniari et al., 2015). Learner autonomy incorporates such issues as self-control and self-assessment (Kleppin, 2005). They arouse reflection on and awareness of students' competencies and therefore contribute to promoting their autonomy. According to the results, the participants in the experimental group were more autonomous, showing more self-control and self-assessment than the participants in the control group. The atmosphere in which they worked was more pleasant and engaging than the traditional method. A more creative learning environment was developed, which is consistent with studies on creativity (Piaget, 1972; Vincent & Shepherd, 1998)

When discussing the teacher's role in fostering learner autonomy, it is necessary to mention that the results of the research show that the main peculiarity of the teacher's task in the experimental group classroom is not only developing learner autonomy principles, but also underlining how to put the principles into practice. In terms of teaching, the principles imply a major change in the role of the teacher (Benson, 2001). Instead of merely passing on knowledge, the teacher provides task alternatives for the students because activities facilitating autonomous learning in the language classroom require active participation from each student. In the course of the research, the first group of students was subdivided into three mini groups. To start a role play, the teacher provides an article or two for the first mini group of students to analyze how relevant it is/they are to the topic of the prospective role play. The second group of students looks through the article to identify the main ideas to build the role play on, and the third mini group decides on the target language to be used. It is evident that pair and group work have led to developing language and learning skills and generally contribute to learner autonomy.

Another example of a task that contribute to autonomous learning is when the teacher prepares to make the requirements and guidelines clear for the students. But instead of presenting information like in the control group, he or she gives out cards with slides from the information on them. The students work in pairs, then in groups, to generate the requirements and tutorial guidelines for the course. After a brief study they create a presentation on what the course will be like.

The research reveals that in order to help students discover their strengths and weaknesses, the teacher should promote that peer reviews be written in the form of logbooks, portfolios, and posters. Students might then be able to come up with suitable strategies to overcome problematic issues. The process and progress of learning can give way to self-assessment and make the evaluation of learning easier for the students.

This process seems to be inefficient without the teacher's participation. The primary role of the teacher in the experimental group was to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence, which makes the learners feel free to share their independent judgements and pursue their interests. It is necessary to note that the teacher only acts as a guide by providing starting points without subsequently transporting everyone to a pre-determined destination.

It can be noted that choice and support were very important in encouraging students to ask for help and advice from the teacher or other students in the group. As a consequence, they rendered assistance to others when it was necessary. In other words, it created the emotional atmosphere in the language classroom environment where every student was appreciated and trusted by the teacher and peers, which is critical for promoting learner autonomy.

The experiment showed that learner autonomy can be built from awareness through involvement and intervention to creation where learners become researchers themselves. First learners are aware of the teachers' goals, then they are taught to identify tasks and strategies. Next, learners are involved in selecting their own goals, modifying and adapting them to the learning program. Learners should get experience making choices from a range of options. Overall, they should know how to create their own goals and objectives.

It is evident from the research that for developing learner autonomy in the language classroom, the task of the teacher is to stimulate pair and group work to be interactive and cooperative, which are vital for developing language and the necessary learning skills. Explaining carefully why working with peers is important can ensure the change towards learner-centeredness.

The teacher gives clear general guidelines for the activity, thus laying the groundwork for introducing and conducting the role play, at the same time letting students have a say in time allocation, choosing the topic, discussing group roles, working out strategies, and the outcome of role play. In some cases, the teacher can identify the results that the students should come to, but they are allowed to reconsider the initial prescriptions and come up with their own

variants. After negotiating the information in pairs, then in groups, they are ready to report the results in the form of a role play.

It seems to be important not to start learner autonomy promotion too abruptly; learner autonomy can best be developed only through careful and gradual pedagogical intervention (Nunan, 1997). Furthermore, the teacher should gradually provide guidance and support in this process, so that students can feel secure, even if their abilities are still lacking. The following steps for promoting leaner autonomy are thus proposed:

- making the learners aware of the goals, content, and materials of teaching
- letting the learners intervene in goal-setting procedures
- creating their own goals and objectives
- applying classroom content creatively in the role play

Conclusion

The previous analysis achieved the main purpose of the present study, which was to investigate the effects of using role-play strategies in fostering learner autonomy in ESP speaking. The current study showed that learner autonomy is regarded as a learner's willingness and ability to take responsibility to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate his/her learning. Moreover, to instill autonomy skills among students, teachers should provide an educative environment where students can cultivate their own self-regulative skills. In the present study, the researchers provided such environment in the form of role play during ESP speaking classes. The results of the research emphasized the fact that the role-play strategies are of great importance for promoting learner autonomy. The data collected during the experiment revealed the fact that a battery of tests and materials contributed to developing students' autonomy in their English language classes. Overall, it should be highlighted that to outline the contributions of role play to the process of fostering learner autonomy it is necessary to make learners aware of the goals and content of teaching, let them intervene in goal-setting procedures, and apply classroom content creatively in the role play. Such involvement on the part of the learner is encouraged in the present study by the use of a subjective needs assessment. The learners reflected on their learning experiences and evaluated the opportunities made available to them in class. In terms of assessment and evaluation, the study contributes to the development of autonomy as one of the goals of the research. Therefore, the emphasis is on training students in the fields of self-control and self-assessment. The notion of learner autonomy as the provision of circumstances and contexts relevant to the role plays is more likely when the learners take charge of the whole or part of learner language program. The findings of this study can be used as a reference when reflecting on teaching practices that promote learner autonomy. The research evokes some surpassing issues, including the role of motivation in fostering autonomy, but this requires further research.

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Appendix 1

Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Critical thinking skills	**The level of autonomyin both groups**					
	With the help of a teacher		Together with a classmate/within a group		On my own	
	Experimental Group (20)	Control group (18)	Experimental Group (20)	Control group (18)	Experimental Group (20)	Control group (18)
Can you set goals?	2	9	5	7	13	2
Can you analyze your own needs?	1	12	7	2	12	4
Can you plan your learning?	3	2	4	0	13	16
Can you assess your language competences?	5	14	5	2	10	2
Do you know what you are to do when you are working with this or that task?	1	5	1	8	18	5
Do you know what prevents you from completing the task?	3	13	2	0	15	5
Do you reflect on materials you have used?	2	18	0	0	18	0

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Effects of Mastery Learning Instruction on Engineering Students' Writing Skills Development and Motivation

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This study was aimed to investigate the effects of mastery learning instruction on engineering students' academic writing skills and motivation in an EFL context. The participants were software engineering and computer science first-year students, and they were selected using a multistage sampling technique. Observation, a questionnaire, and pre- and post-tests were employed as data gathering instruments. The research was designed through a time series quasi-experimental research design. The data were analysed through repeated measure ANOVA, independent t-tests, as well as descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that there was a statistical difference between the experimental and the control groups. Hence, students who participated in mastery learning instruction improved their writing skills and achieved better scores in writing skills assessment. Particularly, learners who learned through mastery learning instruction were able to develop paragraphs and essays with clear topic sentences and thesis statements. They also developed paragraphs with proper punctuation and minimized various mechanical errors that were observed during the pre-test. Furthermore, the students who engaged in mastery learning instruction had better levels of motivation. Thus, individualized instruction and continuous feedback helped them improve their engagement in writing activities. Hence, this study calls for more attention to self-paced instruction, regular feedback, assessment, and continuous support in writing classrooms.

Keywords: engineering students, mastery learning instruction, motivation, writing skills, zone of proximity development

Writing skill is one of the most significant skills in learning English as a second and foreign language. It is a fundamental language element that helps students improve their language competence, literacy, and develop cognitive skills (Behizadeh & Engelhard, 2011; Bacha, 2002). Mesfin (2013) also asserts that writing is a very crucial skill for improving learners' thinking and efficiency in the academic world. Particularly, engineering and technology students need this skill to write their projects, reports, and research papers, which helps them become better readers and thinkers and improve their ability to communicate. Above all, according to Prithvi and Caroline (2012), writing is considered a central skill for students in higher education.

However, writing is also one of the most difficult skills to improve (Lazaro, 1996). For instance, Dawit (2013) mentioned that many higher institution students are facing various problems in their attempt to produce simple written texts in the target language. Furthermore, Abiy (2013) and Alfaki (2015) stated that post-secondary-level students and university students face morphological, syntax, and mechanical difficulties, which are essential to writing.

As many researchers have suggested, how effectively writing skills are learned is highly dependent on the teachers' proper use of instructional techniques and relevant activities. For instance, Dawit (2013) explained how the genre approach helps students write argumentative essays, and Karsak, Fer, and Orhan (2014) mentioned that cooperative and individual web blogs, integrated with writing instruction, enhanced students' writing skills. Similarly, Amoush (2015) reported that brainstorming strategies had many positive effects on improving students' writing performance.

In Ethiopian higher education institutions, engineering and technology students take courses such as communicative English skills, basic writing skills, and research and report writing to use the skills

for general, academic, and professional purposes, but students are struggling to use the skills in different situations. Many students are unable to pass these courses. While they take quizzes, a midterm, and a final exam, many students must take the final exam again as a supplementary exam.

The first main reason that the students fail is the teachers' method of instruction. From the researcher's observations, most teachers use a holistic/conventional version of classroom instruction that does not consider individual differences, learning styles, or preferences. Accordingly, students who learned writing in this institute had a lack of motivation and lacked the language competence to engage in writing activities (Amare, 2017).

Similarly, writing skills are one of the neglected skills in Ethiopian elementary and high schools; it was also observed that skills such as reading, grammar, and speaking skills are emphasised more than writing. Students have limited opportunities to use the skills inside and outside the classrooms. As a result, many students are not able to master the writing contents properly or write paragraphs and essays effectively.

Thus, it is important to consider instructions that consider students' learning competency differences and their learning difficulties. Although recently there have been researchers who have conducted studies to enhance students' writing, there is limited research that has dealt with the effects of mastery learning instruction to enhance students' writing skills and motivation. Therefore, the current research was conducted to explore the effects of a mastery learning instructional strategy, which considers individual differences, learning styles, and preferences on learners' writing skills and motivation.

Theoretical Foundation of Mastery Learning Instruction

This instruction was first formally proposed by Benjamin Bloom (1968) with the aim of minimizing students' knowledge gaps. According to Guskey (2007), Bloom observed that having little variation in the instruction could not make students achieve equally with those who were different in background, learning style, motivation, school context, etc. According to this type of instruction, mass instruction does not make students equally competent. Thus, this instruction proposed that teachers have the potential to minimize students' differences and gaps (Shafie, Shahdan, & Liew, 2010; Guskey, 2007; Zimmerman & Dibenedetto, 2008) through more variation in their teaching and applying active teaching strategies.

Researchers mentioned that students' academic achievement can be affected by many affective factors such as gender, age, motivation, school context, student attitude, and behaviour (Akey, 2006; Voyles, 2011; Welch-Deal, 2003). In addition, research conducted by CERI[1], Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsha, Nathan and Willingham (2013), and Boersma (2008) also mentioned other factors like collaborative work, formative assessment, students learning styles, and effective learning techniques that contribute to the academic success of students. Similarly, Amiruddin and Zainudin (2015) argued that the lack of effective teaching and learning contributes to lower student academic achievement.

Accordingly, the concept of mastery learning is to maximize students' academic achievement. The instruction is practiced by considering the individual differences that affect students' academic achievements (Guskey, 2007) and makes many students in schools or classrooms effective learners. Guskey (2007, p. 15) added that "teachers who use mastery learning instruction provide frequent and specific feedback on their learning progress through regular, formative classroom assessments."

Likewise, researchers who conducted research on mastery learning instruction proved that it improves classroom instruction and students' academic achievement (Sadeghi & Sadeghi, 2012; Guskey, 2007; Wambugu & Changeiywo, 2008; Wong & Kang, 2012). In spite of this, researchers such as Horton (1979) argued about the effectiveness of mastery learning instruction in the classroom. Horton claimed that it is difficult to use mastery learning instruction as it is not readily adaptable to regular classes.

However, mastery learning instruction has a flexible approach that can be applied in virtually any classroom to help almost any student master what they are taught. Carroll's 1989 study (as cited in Shafie, Shahdan, & Liew, 2010) asserts that all learners have the potential to learn over different periods of time to achieve a particular subject matter. Kazu, Kazu, and Ozdemir (2005, p. 234) also mention "mastery learning aimed at providing appropriate learning environments by considering the individual differences of the students so that they do not hinder the target learning activity." It is believed that learners achieve the same level of content mastery at different time intervals (John, Ravi, & Ananthasayanam, 2009).

> Theoretically, this instruction is related to social constructivist and mediation theories. Learners acquire the required skills and knowledge through the support of their teachers and peers, and the students who understand the content better can

[1] CERI. (2008). *Assessment for learning formative assessment.* Organization for economic co-operation and development. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/site/educeri21st/40600533.pdf

help other students continuously until they achieve the content objectives.

Furthermore, this instruction blends continuous instruction and assessment. Teachers provide frequent and specific interventions on their learning progress, typically through the use of regular, continuous classroom assessments (Guskey, 2005), and learners do not move on to other sections until they have attained the intended objectives of the current section (Estaji & Fassihi, 2016).

Formative Assessment in Mastery Learning Instruction

Formative or continuous assessment is one of the pioneer aspects of mastery learning instruction, whereby students are assessed formatively to follow up on their mastery level and to give continuous feedback. According to Prithvi and Caroline (2012), formative assessment is crucial for helping them improve their writing skills. Likewise Guskey (2010, p. 4) stressed that "in mastery learning, assessments are not a one-shot, do-or-die experience; instead they are part of an on-going effort to help students learn."

Furthermore, according to Wiliam and Thompson 2007's idea cited in (Black and Wiliam, 2009) it helps to clarify and share learning intentions and criteria for success, engineer effective classroom discussions and other learning tasks that elicit evidence of student understanding, provide feedback that moves forward, activate students as instructional resources for one another, and activate students as the owners of their learning. These help learns to engage actively in the lesson.

Peer feedback is another important strategy that is employed in writing classrooms to enhance students' engagement and to support the learning process. Cho and MacArthur (2010) stated that peer feedback is very crucial and rich comments should be received from multiple peers.

According to social constructivist theory, learning takes place through interactions with parents, peers, teachers, and others. Language learning relies on meaningful social interactions within social and cognitive support systems for helping learners improve their language and conceptual understanding (Dunap & Wiseman, 2007 cited in Betegiorgis & Abiy, 2015). Abiy (2005) also explained that in foreign language contexts teachers and better-performing students mediate their peers' learning. As a result, students can master the given content via frequent assessment and peer and teacher support.

Mastery Instruction and Students Motivation

As discussed above, there are many affective factors that can influence or maximize students learning in the academic context. Among these factors, motivation is the main factor that affects students' academic achievements. According to Wieman (2013), motivation is the most important element of learning that plays a key part in improving students' academic achievement (Peklaj & Levpuscek, 2006).

Thus, in mastery learning instruction, students engage in the classroom lesson and get assistance from both the teacher and their peers. This creates motivation to have active engagement in the lessons they learn. The instruction also helps learners to be motivated in the lesson by changing their thinking and interest towards learning (Ozden, 2008; Kazu, Kazu, & Ozdemir 2005). Likewise, Guskey (2010) affirmed that mastery learning instruction is a powerful motivational tool by giving students continuous chances to succeed. Guskey added that these activities give students exciting opportunities to enlarge and develop their learning.

Williams and Burden (1997, p. 120) stressed that "motivation is a state of cognitive and emotional arousal which leads to a conscious decision to act and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (goals)." Students' motivation is enhanced through their sense of agency, feeling mastery, and control over the learning activity as well as their interests (Lo & Hyland, 2007). Hence, students' motivation and their engagement in writing activities are very interrelated. Accordingly, motivation plays a very paramount role to the development of students' writing as it is a driving force for writing in a meaningful way (Hamidun, Hashim, & Othman, 2012). Mackiewicz and Thompson (2013) also asserted that motivation is the drive to actively invest in sustained effort toward a goal, which is essential for writing improvement. They added that it directs attention toward particular tasks and increases both effort and persistency.

Therefore, this research hypothesised that students need self-paced assistance and instruction accompanied by interactive feedback and formative assessment to consider their writing skills proficiency differences, and it was assumed that it fostered students' writing skills and motivation. As a result, the main objective of this research was to explore pedagogical approaches that consider each student's language competency, exposure differences, and learning preferences. Thus, the objective of this study was to examine the effects of mastery learning instruction on students' writing skills and motivation, and it was aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What are the effects of mastery learning instruction on students' writing skills development?
- What are the effects of mastery learning instruction on students' motivation?

Materials and Methods

Design

This paper reports the effects of mastery learning instruction on students' writing skills development and their motivation. Hence, the research was conducted in basic writing classes, and both qualitative and quantitative data were used. The research considered two groups (experimental and control). The experimental group had eight weeks of intervention with differentiated learning approaches; whereas, the control group was instructed through conventional approaches. Students' writing skills proficiency, levels of engagement, background, and motivation were considered during the instruction process. Tests were also administered repeatedly. Thus, the research was designed through a time series quasi-experimental research design.

Participants and Sample of the Study

The participants of study were first-year students who enrolled in Bahir Dar Institute of Technology, Bahir Dar University in the 2016/2017 academic year. In the institution, there were 28 sections, including first-year students who were assigned in different departments. Therefore, the researcher selected two sections (one section from software engineering and one section from computer science) through a multistage sampling technique. Hence, 53 software engineering students were assigned as the experimental group and 52 computer science students were assigned as the control group.

Instruments

In order to investigate the effects of mastery learning instruction to enhance students' writing skills, pre and post-tests, a questionnaire, and observation instruments were used.

Tests were the major instrument used by the researcher. The researcher administered a pre-test and a post-test for both the control and experimental groups. In Ethiopia, there is no standardized test that can measure students' writing proficiency. The tests were teacher made and the standard and content validity of the tests were checked by English language and literature instructors. The instructors who checked the validity are experts who hold PhD degrees in the field and have been teaching the course for more than 20 years. Hence, some items of the instruments were changed and adjusted based on the comments and results of the pilot study.

Accordingly, the students who were assigned to the experimental group were assessed continuously and repeatedly until they achieved the course objectives; whereas, the control group was assessed according to the assessment assigned (12% quiz, 11% paragraph writing, 12% essay writing, 25% midterm exam, and 40% final exam) by the department. The students' continuous results in each assessment were used to triangulate the end result differences between the control and the experimental groups.

The questionnaire was the other main instrument that the researcher employed to collect the data with regard to the level of student motivation attributed to mastery learning instruction. Students' motivation was measured using criteria such as self-efficacy, active learning strategies, learning environment stimulation, and performance goals.

The questionnaire was adopted from Tuan, Chin, and Shieh (2005), and the items addressed the level and reasons of motivation. Among the participants, 35 computer science and 44 software engineering students filled out and submitted the questionnaire to the researcher.

The researcher also observed classroom practices; the purpose of the observation was to assess regular behavioural changes in students. Particularly, the observation checklists addressed classroom practices (participation in doing classwork and homework, engagement in group and pair discussions, and participation in asking and answering questions), punctuality, regular class attendance, and tutorial and regular class attendance. This was done using open-ended items and was carried out only with the experimental group, which was then used to triangulate what students responded to in the questionnaire data.

Procedure

The purpose of this research was to assess the effects of mastery learning instruction on students' writing skills and motivation in Bahir Dar Institute of Technology, Bahir Dar University. After choosing the study groups, the researcher assigned the two selected groups as control and experimental groups. Then, the researcher had discussions with the experimental group on the new instruction technique. To engage students in repetitive tasks and activities during the intervention, it was mandatory to get consent from the participants.

The pre-test was prepared and administered to

both groups before the intervention took place. The test validity was checked by two PhD experts in the Department of English Language and Literature. The objectives, course contents, and assessment techniques were also clarified to students. Therefore, the students learned each section and assessed repeatedly. The students had various amount of contact time until they achieved the specific section objectives. In addition, the students discussed various activities in groups. These were done based on Guskey's (2007) mastery learning instruction process.

Therefore, learners who participated in mastery learning instruction had been given various enrichment activities, correctives, and formative assessment. The students who participated in these kinds of additional activities were students who scored 80% and below on their assessment. However, students who scored above 80 % were considered to have developed the required level of competence in the course.

Specifically, the lessons that students participated in were effective sentence construction, effective paragraph writing, techniques for paragraph development, and essay writing. They wrote paragraphs and essays after clear conceptual clarifications were given by the teacher. Likewise, students participated in peer feedback; it focused on constructing effective sentences, paragraphs, and essays; developing unified and coherent writing discourse; developing topic and thesis statements; mechanical errors such as punctuation marks; capitalization; and spelling. Thus, students exchanged qualitative feedback using the above criteria with the aim of maximizing their engagement and helping each other's learning. The instructor's role was facilitating and mentoring the peer feedback process, instructing them on how to rewrite their paragraphs and essays, giving feedback on their texts, and marking their paper after final revisions were made by students. This helped the instructor observe the differences between the first draft and the final draft of the texts.

Finally, the post-test was prepared and administered. The validity of the post-test was checked by the same procedure as the pre-test. Then, the experimental and control groups' final (100%) results were input into the students' information management system (SIMS). Their final results were used to compute the statistical differences between the control and the experiment groups. Furthermore, the questionnaire passed through a dual validation process. Hence, it was checked by TEFL PhD candidates and Bahir Dar University, Bahir Dar Institute of Technology instructors. The Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.74, which indicates that the questionnaire was reliable.

Measures

Data gathered from the tests and the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 20. Independent sample t-tests, descriptive statistics, and repeated measure analysis of variances (ANOVA) were used to compute the data. Thus, the data obtained from the questionnaire and students' pre and post results were analyzed through independent t-tests, and the experimental group assessment continuous results were computed through repeated measure ANOVA. Lastly, the data obtained from classroom observations was analyzed qualitatively.

Results

The data which were gathered by quantitative and qualitative gathering tools were analyzed and presented below thematically.

Students' Writing Skills Improvement

In order to assess students' mastery in writing skills, descriptive statistics were run. Accordingly, Table 1 below shows that both the experimental and control groups had similar writing proficiency in the pre-test. The experimental group had a mean score 36.35; whereas, the control group had a 32.94 mean score. Even if it seemed that the students had some discrepancy, the difference they had was not significant. This indicates the students had similar levels of understanding or skill before the intervention.

However, the intervention brought a significant difference between the control and the experimental groups in the post-test. The mastery group showed more improvement in their academic writing skills and writing score.

As seen in Table 1, a 58.17 mean score was observed on the experimental group post-test, and the control group's post-test mean score value was 45.05. Therefore, the data revealed that although both groups of students improved, the experimental group

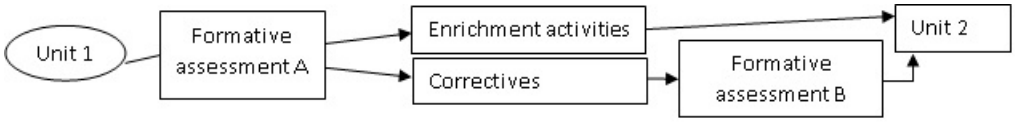

Figure 1. The mastery learning instruction process (Guskey, 2007, p. 14).

showed greater improvement.

In addition, an independent t-test was run to see the final result's statistical difference between the control and the experimental groups.

Table 2 also reveals that students who participated in mastery learning instruction outperformed in their writing skills and academic writing proficiency. The independent t-test indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group (t=4.417, df=103, P<.05).

As a result, students who engaged in continuous assessment as well as peer and teacher feedback improved their writing skills. According to Bloom's (1971, 1976, and 1984) studies cited in Guskey (2010), although students vary widely in their learning, if teachers are able to provide the necessary time and use appropriate learning conditions, students can reach a high level of achievement. Accordingly, the data showed that mastery learning instruction helped students to improve their writing skills in an EFL context.

Thus, mastery learning instruction could be one of the best forms of instructions to give learners comprehensive input, especially when they have limited opportunities to practice the target language outside the classroom; similarly, the instruction can help them be more engaged in the classroom and achieve the course content objectives.

In the same way, a repeated measure ANOVA was run to determine the mean statistical differences among the time series results of the experimental group (mastery learning instruction students). The assessments were administered to see if there was an improvement in students' results with more frequent (time series) assessment.

The data in Table 3 (F=42.960, df=3, and P<.05) confirmed that students improved their writing scores using different assessments. The students used good diction, sentences structure, and mechanics, and they were also able to develop good topic sentences, thesis statements, and supportive ideas when they wrote different paragraphs and essays repeatedly. These are observed as the result of comprehensive input, continuous support, and feedback. Hence, long-term and regular assessment, peer instruction, and support can help students earn a better grade and improve their writing skills. It can also give them a chance to identify and fill in their gaps.

Students' Motivation Towards Learning Writing Skills

The independent t-test was run to compare motivation between students who learned using mastery learning instruction and students who learned via holistic instruction to motivate them in basic writing skills classes. The students' level of motivation was measured by four measurement criteria: self-efficacy, active learning strategies, learning environment stimulation, and students' performance goals.

Table 4 shows that students who undertook mastery learning instruction had better motivation levels than students who learned via the holistic/conventional approach. These differences were observed in students' participation in their writing classes as well. Particularly, the experimental group had better levels

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of the experimental and the control groups

Participants		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental group	Pre-test	52	36.35	7.162	.993
	Post-test	52	58.17	11.982	1.662
Control group	Pre-test	53	32.94	7.533	1.662
	Post-test	53	45.04	17.860	2.453

Table 2
Independent t-test of the experimental and control groups

	F	Sig.	t	df.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Std. Error	Diff
Total results	Equal variance assumed	10.526	.002	4.417	103	.000	2.974
	Equal variance not assumed			4.433	91.103	.000	2.963

Table 3
Repeated measure ANOVA within-subjects

Source		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
factor1	Sphericity Assumed	3	135.641	42.960	.000

of self-efficacy (t=3.209, MD.3328 and P<.05). This made learners participate more actively in writing skill activities. Several researchers (Chang & Chien, 2015; Dogan, 2015; Kanaparan, Cullen, & Mason, 2017) explained that self-efficacy is highly correlated with learners' engagement and academic achievement. Therefore, students who learned via mastery learning instruction had better motivational levels than the control group.

In addition, the experimental group (mastery learning instruction group) had better active learning participation. Students who participated in mastery learning instruction participated more actively in different active learning strategies (t=2.085, MD.3188, P<0.25). Hence, students played an active role in improving their skills and they engaged more in the writing lessons, and this made students more motivated in classroom. Soltanzadeh, Hashemi, and Shahi (2013) stated that active engagement by the students leads to improvement in learners' academic achievement. Similarly, a marked difference was observed in learning environment stimulations. Tuan, Chin, and Shieh (2005) stressed that learning environment elements such as students, teachers, curriculum, and classroom influenced learners' motivation. Accordingly, it was observed that students who learned through mastery instruction were highly motivated (t=9.5, MD 1.39 and P<.05).

The other students' motivation indicator was performance goals. When students wanted to solve their writing skills problems, they were more likely to be motivated to participate in each and every activity. This helped increase learners' engagement in order to achieve their learning goals and to meet the course and section objectives using the skills in their professional and academic contexts.

In addition to the questionnaire data mentioned above, classroom instruction was observed in order to triangulate and prove student motivation, and it was shown that students were highly engaged and participated during classroom instruction Many students actually changed their views towards improving writing skills, or now believed that it was possible to improve writing skills if they continuously practiced, assessed, and supported each other.

Furthermore, the majority of students participated in tutorial classes more actively than regular class and they tried to fill their knowledge gaps from their colleagues and their teacher, and were highly engaged in the writing activities. Generally, the above data indicated that mastery learning instruction is one of the favoured methods of instruction to enhance engineering and technology students' writing skills and motivate them to engage in various writing activities in EFL classrooms.

Discussion

Writing is one of the most significant skills in students' academic context and it requires systematic instruction and mastery learning experiences. Consequently, the aim of this research was to investigate the effects of mastery learning instruction on students' writing skills and motivation. The data obtained from the questionnaire and tests were discussed through independent sample t-test, repeated measure ANOVA, and descriptive statistics.

Particularly, the data that showed students who learned through mastery learning instruction improved their writing skills, t(103)=4.417, p<.05, and the pre- and post-test showed sizeable differences between the control and the experimental groups. Likewise, the experimental group showed better improvement in the post-test than the pre-test (mean=36.35 in the pre-test and mean=58.17 in the post-test). This indicated that self-paced mastery learning instruction helped learners improve their writing skills and motivation.

This finding agrees with similar research by Amiruddin and Zainudin (2015), Kazu, Kazu, and Ozdemir (2005), Gokalp (2016) and Udo and Udofia (2014). These researchers concluded that the instruction was effective for successful students

Table 4
Comparison of mastery instruction learners and holistic instruction learners' motivation

Items	Groups	N	Mean	Mean Difference	t	Sig (2 tailed)
Self-efficacy of students	Experimental group	44	3.545	.3328	3.209	.002
	Control group	35	3.213			
Active learning strategies	Experimental group	44	4.2015	.3188	2.085	.040
	Control group	35	3.886			
Learning environment	Experimental group	44	3.962	1.3193	9.500	.000
stimulation	Control group	35	2.643			
Performance goals	Experimental group	44	4.282	.6825	4.101	.000
	Control group	35	3.600			

learning, knowledge acquisition, and academic achievement, and Kulik, Kulik, and Bangert-Drowns (1990) proved in their meta-analysis that the instruction had a positive effect on examination performance. Furthermore, Hill-Miller (2011) reported similar findings that mastery learning instruction improved students' academic achievement.

Although researchers such as Horton (1979) argued that it is difficult to apply mastery learning instruction within a fixed time schedule and with different teaching goals, but this research found that mastery learning instruction principles such as individualized instruction and progress monitoring through formative assessment and feedback helped students improve their writing skills. The instruction combined self-paced learning strategies, peer feedback, and formative assessment to achieve the intended course objectives. Similarly, research such as Barone (1978) also mentioned that it is possible to teach writing and reading skills through the mastery learning model.

Moreover, learners could develop their learning through mediation and the zone of proximal development when students were assisted in their learning by their peers and teacher (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Hence, the students who participated in mastery learning instruction participated in peer feedback, corrective procedures, and formative assessment, and these helped them enhance their writing skills results. Here, researchers such as Gamlem and Smith (2013) and Titova and Samoylenko (2017) reported that feedback and formative assessment are essential for learning and teaching. Students develop the positive perception that they can do better when they get support from their classmates and they engage actively with the designed objectives.

Furthermore, researchers (Amiruddin & Zainudin, 2015; Zimmerman & Dibenedetto, 2008; Ozden, 2008) have reported that mastery learning instruction motivates students through an encouraging environment and appropriate teaching methods. Similarly, this research showed that students who were taught via mastery learning instruction were highly motivated to participate in learning writing skills. Hence, proper mediation by considering individual differences and language competence are very crucial for enhancing learners' motivation and to help them engage more in writing activities.

Conclusion

The differentiated instruction approach that was proposed in this study had a great impact on students' writing skills development. The research showed that this form of instruction helped learners maximize their writing skills through self-paced learning, mediation, formative assessment, and differentiated instruction. It also confirmed that the instruction was very important for considering students who had less writing skills exposure, competence, and engagement. Particularly, students who engaged in mastery learning instruction improved both their writing skills and their motivation.

Hence, students developed unified and coherent texts and were able to write paragraphs and essays with a clear thesis statement and complete sentences; the topic sentences and the supportive details were also consistent. Furthermore, students used various cohesive devices and transitional markers, which made their written discourses interesting to read and easier to comprehend.

Furthermore, the study proved that students who enrolled in this instruction outperformed the others in the final written assessment. Classroom activities like teacher and peer feedback practices, gap filling instruction, and continuous assessment highly motivated the students to engage in the lesson, acquire the desired skills, and earn a better grade.

Accordingly, the findings of this research have a wider implication for teachers and students. Particularly, it implied that mastery learning instruction helps students acquire high-level competency in writing skills. It also helps learners assess each other's learning and achievement. Furthermore, the research implied that this type of instruction helps encourage students to participate in activities and achieve the course objectives. Thus, the researcher recommends that English language teachers adopt mastery learning instruction and interactive assessment to enhance their students' writing ability. Teachers should also encourage students to get feedback from their peers as well as the teacher.

According to Zimmerman and Dibenedetto (2008), all students can learn as long as they have sufficient time. Thus, this research indicates that teachers have to give enough time to mediate students learning and assist them to master the course contents. Similarly, it suggests to students that they need to use different mastery learning instruction strategies in order to improve their language learning in general and their writing competence in particular.

Finally, since the researcher's conclusions were based on both subjective and objective data, the research has some limitations. First, the numbers of participants were small and focused on one (computing technology) department. Accordingly, these students' results may not represent all of the students who enrolled in the engineering and technology institute during that academic year. Additionally, the data compared the control and the experimental groups' writing skills and motivation, and it was difficult to

control other variables that may have contributed to the students' writing skills improvement outside the classroom. It was also difficult to observe students' motivation and engagement in writing skills other than through the classroom practice.

Hence, further research needs to be conducted on mastery learning instruction involving larger samples and including other departments' students to add depth to the literature on teaching writing skills through mastery learning.

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Functional and Linguistic Characteristics of Donald Trump's Victory and Inaugural Speeches

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The current research is devoted to the comparative and contrastive analysis of Donald Trump's victory and inaugural speeches. Its objective is to identify their similarities and differences from the functional and linguistic points of view. The research consists of several stages. First, the two genres of discourse in question are defined. Then, an overview of their functions is provided. Next, the linguistic means of performing them are analyzed. The results of the research indicate that, due to their main goals, the genres in question express certain functions, which can be verbally expressed in various ways: in Trump's victory speech the inspirative function comes to the fore, while in his inaugural address the integrative and the performative functions dominate the other ones. Furthermore, in each case linguistic peculiarities correlate with the functions: in the victory speech the focus is on the 'greatness' of everything and everyone, whereas in the inaugural speech words connected with patriotism prevail, which is expressed mostly by means of personal pronouns. The results of the current research may function as a basis for further analysis of the genre of the victory speech, as it has not received enough scholarly attention yet, and of the peculiarities of Donald Trump's political discourse.

Keywords: political discourse, inaugural speech, victory speech, functional approach, Donald Trump, CDA

Political discourse has been the center of everyone's attention for decades. This may be explained by the fact that politics plays a crucial role in people's lives: the future of countries and the relations between them depend greatly on politicians' decisions. Political discourse rather often becomes a tool for manipulating people (Fairclough, 1989; Charteris-Black, 2005), expressing dominance or discrimination (van Dijk, 2013; Blackledge, 2005), and persuading and influencing people's opinion (Baranov, & Kazakevich, 1991; Berezhnaya, 1986; Golodnov, 2008), which is why the identification and the definition of such methods of influence has gained special importance in modern linguistics. This can also be one of the reasons why, at present, several refereed journals publish research in this area (Discourse and Society; Journal of Language and Politics; Discourse, Context & Media; and others).

According to Weiss (2003), discourse reflects the social, political, and cultural characteristics of its creators, which provides scholars with an opportunity to single out the main concepts and ideas of a person's worldview (Whorf, 1956; Maslova, 2001). Political discourse is presented by a diversity of genres (Chudinov, 2011). As there is no common definition of this term across disciplines and as a number of genre theories can be singled out, it is necessary to clarify its notion in the current research. Following Chilton and Schäffner, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) scholars, by 'genres' we mean "global linguistic patterns which have historically developed for fulfilling specific communicative tasks in specific situations" (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002, p. 18). In other words, genres refer to types and structures of discourse which are meant to accomplish a specific purpose. This understanding has its roots in Bhatia's (1993) genre model, which emphasizes the importance of communicative purposes in shaping the genre itself. In his works he argues that if such purposes undergo a significant change, the genre changes as well.

The two genres of political discourse relevant to the current research are the victory speech and the inaugural speech. Both of them are similar to what Aristoteles called 'epideictic rhetoric'. He defined it as a solemn speech that is made in order to appeal to the audience's emotions. An epideictic speech is usually delivered at a certain important official occasion and marks a crucial moment in the history of a country or the whole world. This is the reason for its elevated

style of lexis and syntax, the avoidance of clichés, and a wide use of rhetorical devices (Aristoteles, 1978).

The victory speech is the election night speech of the winning presidential candidate, which presents his/her first reaction to the election results. It serves as an intermediate stage between being a candidate for presidency and being inaugurated as the president. The main purposes of the victory speech are expressing gratitude to all those who have supported the candidate throughout the campaign and those who voted for him/her; reminding people of the key ideas of the presidential campaign, picturing the bright future ahead (Chanturidze, 2014); and displaying emotions aroused by the event (Gornostayeva, 2018; Lara, Márquez, & Fuentes-Rodríguez, 2016, p. 130).

As far as the inaugural address is concerned, it has been part and parcel of the inauguration ceremony, and has been witnessed by a large audience since the inauguration of George Washington. Campbell and Jamieson define it as "an essential element in a ritual of transition in which the covenant between the citizenry and their leaders is renewed," in which "a newly elected president is invested with the office of the presidency" (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990, p. 14). It does not contain much new information because there is no need for it, due to the focus of people's attention being on the event itself rather than on the words. Not going into detail, the newly elected president summarizes his/her promises made during the campaign, pursuing the goal of emphasizing the crucial character of the moment and linking it to the past and the future of the country. The inaugural speech is also aimed at reminding people of the unity and the greatness of their country (Sheygal, 2002) and at persuading the citizens of the country that the new president is fit for the political role and that he/she is entitled to achieve his/her objectives (Liu, 2012, p. 2409). Therefore, as the components of the inaugural address are set by tradition, it is the choice of words and the manner of speaking in front of the audience that matter most and that can let the speech be remembered for decades (Sheygal, 2002).

The tradition of speaking in public has been developing since ancient times, forming the set or rules of most effective rhetorical means. A significant number of American presidents and politicians in general have followed these rules so brilliantly that they are still renowned for their rhetorical skills (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990; Lim, 2002; Harandi & Jahantigh, 2017; Sameer, 2017; Alemi, Latifi, & Nematzadeh, 2018).

The election of Donald Trump to the presidency in the USA has stimulated further interest in modern political discourse due to Trump's manner of speaking (Lamont, 2017) Thus, it is particularly essential to conduct a functional analysis of some samples of his discourse. In order to do this, his victory and inaugural speeches have been subjected for analysis in order to define the ways the functions are realized in them and to identify their peculiarities from the point of view of the linguistic means used.

Being analysis-driven, the study pursues the objective of answering the following research questions:

1. What linguistic and discursive means are used by Trump in order to express functions of the genre of the victory speech?
2. What linguistic and discursive means are used by Trump in order to express functions of the genre of the inaugural speech?
3. Is there any regularity in Trump's use of expressive means that may be typical of his discourse in general?

Materials and Methods

Materials

The research is based on the analysis of Donald Trump's following speeches:

1. The victory speech delivered in New York on the 9th of November, 2016 on election night;
2. The inaugural address made in Washington, D.C., on the 20th of January, 2017.

The choice is explained by the fact that both speeches signify the beginning of a new president's term and, thus, are meant to impress the audience in order to make people feel that their choice was the best possible. Even though both addresses are usually created by speechwriters, the genre of the victory speech allows improvisation to a certain extent due to the unofficial, more intimate character of the event, which contributes to defining the style of public speaking the president adopts.

In contrast to the victory speech, every word of the inaugural address is carefully thought out as it always draws the attention of not only the people within the borders of the country but also around the world.

Methods

To conduct this research, the following analytical methods were applied:

1. A functional analysis on the basis of valuable research on inaugural speeches conducted by a Russian linguist in the field of political discourse, Ye. I. Sheygal (2000), and previous research into the genre of the victory speech

(Chanturidze, 2014). At this stage the linguistic means that help to perform these functions were identified and used as illustrative material for comparing and contrasting the genres in question.

2. A semantic analysis of the functionally active samples with the aim of identifying the implicit and explicit connotations imposed on them.
3. A critical discourse analysis of most prominent features, which contributes to identifying the speaker's ideology through analyzing the language peculiarities. As pointed out by Chilton (2004), the text itself does not contain its meaning because it is the broader social, discursive, and historical context that helps the listener make sense of what they hear. Therefore, discourse analysis was applied in order to define the context of the speeches and to illustrate how interdiscursive links can help to create such context.

Procedure

In order to perform the analysis, several research stages were singled out:

1. As the author was already familiar with the set of functions commonly fulfilled by the genres in question due to previous research, the first step consisted of reading the official transcripts of the speeches thoroughly to check whether the usual set of functions was present in the speeches. One more aim of this stage included the identification of linguistic means that explicitly or implicitly perform these functions.
2. In the next stage, all linguistic means were grouped according to the function they carry out. Then, a semantic analysis was performed in order to identify the connotations these linguistic items can possess, which can contribute to expressing a certain message. This was done for every function that had been singled out. When it seemed necessary, numerical data in graphic form were introduced into the analysis to compare and contrast the speeches in question. Furthermore, the semantic context of the linguistic means was analyzed as collocations could help in understanding the colouring of a word.
3. The final step of the current analysis was directly connected with the author's 'background knowledge' as it is possible to identify interdiscursive links only in those cases when the researcher possesses rather profound cultural and historic knowledge of the field under analysis. In other words, one can analyze only those links which he/she can single out on his/her own and/or on the basis of articles on the subject. For example, if it is clear that the speaker emphasizes a certain word of his/her speech prosodically or repeats it several times, it is necessary to search for its connotations or other contexts in which this word had appeared before. Such links to other discourses could serve as a source of extra information for interpreting the speeches. Moreover, the extralinguistic context of speeches can be taken into account.

Results and Discussion

Functional peculiarities of various discourse genres can be investigated from two points of view. First, it is essential to see what language functions come to the fore in the genre under analysis. Then, more specific information can be received if several genres of the same type of discourse are compared and contrasted with each other. This explains why two genres of Donald Trump's political discourse have been subjected for analysis – the victory speech and the inaugural speech. They mark the end of the presidential campaign and the beginning of a presidential term.

As mentioned previously, each genre of discourse performs its own set of functions. Here we take Sheygal's research into the semiotics of political discourse in general and the American presidents' inaugural addresses in particular as the basis for the current analysis. It should be noted that the functions identified by Sheygal correspond to the genre characteristics of the inaugural address described by Campbell and Jamieson (1990). The same approach was applied in Chanturidze's research into the victory speech (2014), where functional characteristics of this genre were identified and described.

The Integrative Function

The first function to be mentioned is the integrative one, which consists in uniting people together (Sheygal, 2000). When analyzing samples of political discourse, it is crucial to pay attention to the image the speaker creates linguistically.

One thing that should be taken into consideration at this point is the use of personal pronouns as Wilson (1990) states, pronominal choices can reveal crucial information about the speaker and his/her attitude to the listener. The fact is that pronouns can contribute to expressing the opposition 'we' – 'they', which forms the basis of perceiving the world in categories (Abid & Manan, 2017) and is typical of political discourse

in general (Levenkova, 2011, p. 115). Within such an opposition the former component is usually marked as positive whereas the latter one is negatively coloured (Ma, 2012). It seems crucial to pay attention to this opposition as it is there where the methods of critical discourse analysis can help to reveal a more comprehensive picture of the peculiarities of Trump's victory and inaugural speeches.

In American political discourse the integrative function is most frequently realized with the help of the first person plural pronoun 'we' and its possessive form (Levenkova, 2011, p. 126), which means that the speaker identifies him/herself with a certain group of people, for example, members of the party or citizens in general.

The inclusive 'we' and its possessive form 'our' are found in both of Trump's speeches under analysis.

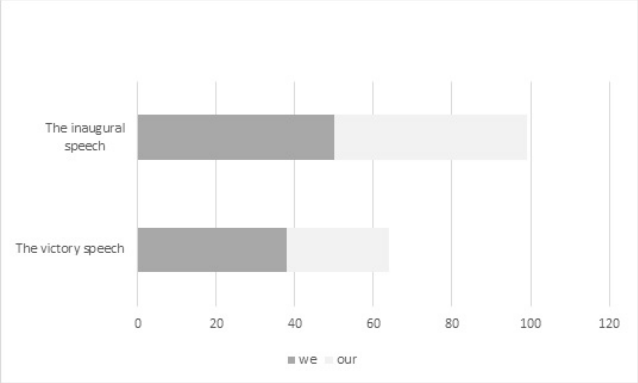

Figure 1. The number of uses of 'we' and 'our' in Trump's victory and inaugural speeches.

As seen in Figure 1, the inaugural speech contains almost twice as many instances as the victory speech does, which makes the idea of integration more emphatic. The following example, taken from the inaugural speech, can illustrate the extent to which the integrative function is fulfilled in it:

> *We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams. We will build new roads, and highways, and bridges, and airports, and tunnels, and railways all across our wonderful nation. We will get our people off of welfare and back to work – rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor.*[1]

In this case, pronominal choice is accompanied by demographic nomination – 'American', which underlines the reliance on the country's inner resources excluding interference from the outside. In other words, preferring 'American hands and American labor', Trump implicitly underlines the difference between the American people and others, which again contributes to expressing the opposition 'we' – 'they'.

Moreover, the idea is often emphasized by a combination of the pronoun with such intensifiers as 'one', 'together', and 'united':

> *I say it is time for us to come together as one united people.*[2]
> *We are one nation.*
> *Together, We Will Make America Strong Again.*
> *And, Yes, Together, We Will Make America Great Again*.[3]

In addition, in his inaugural address Trump reminds people of the necessity of accepting the absence of differences between them by mentioning two children born in two completely different surroundings in America but looking into the same sky and dreaming about the same things, which is a rather common means of making public addresses more personalized and people-oriented, and by recalling military wisdom:

> *… our soldiers will never forget: that whether we are black or brown or white, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots, we all enjoy the same glorious freedoms, and we all salute the same great American Flag*.[4]

In his victory speech, Donald Trump also expresses the same idea:

> *It is a movement comprised of Americans from all races, religions, backgrounds, and beliefs…*[5]

However, in the former example more powerful and vivid imagery is used because, first, the reference to certain physical objects makes it easier for the listeners to imagine the situation described in the example (people bleeding, people saluting the flag) so there may not be any discrepancy in understanding the idea. Secondly, the topic of war is strong in its nature as, indeed, the differences between people do not matter when it comes to war. In other words, at this point people's 'backstage knowledge' (Chilton, 2004, p. 154) (especially that about recent wars) is activated.

[1] Trump, D. (2017, January 20). *The inaugural address*. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/the-inaugural-address/

[2] Trump, D. (2016, November 9). The Victory Speech. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/10/us/politics/trump-speech-transcript.html

[3] Trump, *The inaugural addres*…

[4] Ibid.

[5] Trump, The Victory Speech…

Being a crucial notion of critical discourse analysis, it comprises the knowledge and experience shared by people due to similarities in their background, culture, education, etc. (Kubryakova, 1997). As a result, all of the information gained from other discourses or experience and stored in the human mind is activated. This usually happens accidentally but may as well be used purposefully by proficient public speakers in order to influence the audience's attitude to the topic (Chanturidze, 2014a).

As far as one more implicit expression of the opposition 'we' – 'they' is concerned, it is essential to examine the following utterances taken from Trump's victory speech:

> *… I congratulated her (H. Clinton) and her family on a very, very hard-fought campaign. <…> As I've said from the beginning, ours was not a campaign but rather an incredible and great movement, made up of millions of hard-working men and women who love their country and want a better, brighter future for themselves and for their family*.[6]

Here the focus is moved from 'them' being the people of other countries to 'them' being Hillary Clinton and the representatives of the Democratic Party. This is done using a careful choice of words. While calling Hillary Clinton's actions to win the election a 'campaign', which is defined by the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English as 'a series of actions intended to achieve a particular result relating to politics or business, or a social improvement'[7], to define his own undertaking, the speaker instead prefers the word 'movement', which means 'a group of people who share the same ideas or beliefs and who work together to achieve a particular aim'[8]. Thus, this action is represented as the one to have united people, not as a purely personal desire to achieve a certain aim but as a collaboration. In contrast to how Hillary Clinton is presented, Donald Trump is portrayed as a leader chosen by people believing in the same things and pursuing the same ideals.

One more peculiarity of critical discourse analysis is taking interdiscursive links into account. Such links enable authors to interconnect discourses by appealing to the audience's 'backstage knowledge'. As defined by Blackledge, 'interdiscursivity refers to the intertextual relations of genres and discourses within a text' (Blackledge, 2005, p. 11). Such links contribute to the representation of a politician's worldview (Demata, 2007). One of the most illustrative examples of interdiscursive links can be found in Trump's victory speech, where the use of the word 'movement' may activate an interdiscursive link to the civil rights movement, which helps to portray Trump as a person who is eager to defend the rights of his people and care about their future.

As a result, such a variety of means for expressing the idea of unity in the two genres under analysis shows that the integrative function is one of the most essential and powerful in political discourse.

The Inspirative Function

The next function of both the inaugural address and the victory speech that can be singled out is an inspirative one (Sheygal, 2000), which consists in inspiring the whole nation or a certain group of people to some action.

This function can be expressed, for example, by means of emphasizing the fundamental character of the current moment.

> *I say it is time for us to come together as one united people. It is time*[9].

> *That all changes – starting right here, and right now…*
> *The time for empty talk is over. Now arrives the hour of action*[10].

All examples adduced above show that the function is fulfilled with the help of two tools: the lexical items 'now' and 'time' and syntax (sentences are often short, incomplete, words are often repeated). Trump's syntax has been widely discussed since the beginning of his campaign. Some journalists still state that, in contrast to Barack Obama's speeches (Kienpointner, 2013), it is fairly hard to follow Donald Trump's thoughts and call his style 'word salad'[11]. Others believe that Trump's syntax resembles that of Twitter posts (Kreis, 2017; Sergeeva, 2017). However, there are some people, for example the prominent linguist George Lakoff, who explain this characteristic as a peculiarity of Trump's exceptionally elaborate style[12]. Therefore, these two tools of expressing the inspirative function can be seen collaborating with each other in these examples.

One more example deserves attention:

[6] Ibid.

[7] Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE). Retrieved from https://www.ldoceonline.com.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Trump, The Victory Speech…

[10] Trump, *The inaugural address*…

[11] Cilizza, C. (2015, September 15). An amazing Donald Trump word salad. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/09/15/an-amazing-donald-trump-word-salad/?utm_term=.6add3908d9b3

[12] Lakoff, G. (2016, August 19). Understanding Trump's use of language. *George Lakoff blog*. Retrieved from https://georgelakoff.com/2016/08/19/understanding-trumps-use-of-language/

> *Today's ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today we are not merely transferring power from one Administration to another, or from one party to another – but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People. <…> January 20th 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again*[13].

These words can function both as a means of unifying people with their president, who is chosen by them to present their interests and act on their behalf, and as a means to remind people that they too are responsible for the change because power is given not to a single man, i.e. the president, but to the whole nation. That is why, it is inferred, only if people take action can they achieve results and change their lives and their country for the better.

In comparison to other sub-genres of political discourse, the inspirative function is especially strong in electoral discourse as a new president's aim is to raise hope for a better future, for a change, and for proper solutions. People have voted for a certain candidate, which means that they are ready to entrust their lives to him as well as the future of their country and the values they have. Therefore, one of the biggest parts of both speeches is usually devoted to promises. In contrast to the programme offered by the candidate, this time the plans for the future are more general and are put in a more emotional form. The president does not go into detail because the goal is to make people believe they have made the right choice.

> *We will double our growth and have the strongest economy anywhere in the world. At the same time, we will get along with all other nations willing to get along with us. We will be*[14].
> *We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams*[15].

In order to underline the importance of a united effort, the speaker employs the structure 'we will' in both of his speeches (14 times in the victory speech and 24 times in the inaugural address), thus making people understand that without them he will not be able to achieve success and thus urging people to act alongside with him. This becomes an implicit call for action. The latter example is especially strong due to the use of anaphora and parallelism in it.

The predecessors' experience, enhanced by the opportunities of the modern world and the new president's programme, is supposed to provide America with a chance to reach a new level of development. This idea is often expressed with words from the semantic field of novelty and change. It should also be noted that, as Donald Trump has been involved in the real estate business, it is possible to come across words related to this field in his speeches, but used metaphorically.

> *Working together, we will begin the urgent task of rebuilding our nation and renewing the American dream.*
> *We must reclaim our country's destiny*[16].
> *From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land.*
> *We will get our people off of welfare and back to work – rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor.*
> *… we will rediscover our loyalty to each other*[17].

Apart from using different words belonging to the same field of use, Trump's tendency towards repeating the same words can be noticed. This can be well illustrated with the help of the Wordle created by Jonathan Feinberg in 2004[18]. This is a programme, which presents numerical data in the visual form of a cloud of words. While eliminating prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, particles, and articles, the programme counts the number of instances of each word within a certain text uploaded to it and chooses its font size: the more frequently a word is used in the text, the more space it occupies in the word cloud.

Both Trump's victory and inaugural speeches were uploaded to the website of the programme so that the word clouds could be generated. The results are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 respectively.

Figure 2. Word cloud of Trump's victory speech.

[13] Trump, *The inaugural address…*
[14] Trump, The Victory Speech…
[15] Trump, *The inaugural address…*
[16] Trump, The Victory Speech…
[17] Trump, *The inaugural address…*
[18] Feinberg, J. (2014). Wordle. Retrieved from http://www.wordle.net

The same can be shown in a chart:

WORD	*USE*
People	*24 times*
Great	*22 times*
Want	*13 times*
Country	*9 times*
Time	*8 times*
Unbelievable	*7 times*

Figure 3. The chart of word use in Trump's victory speech.

Figure 4. Word cloud of Trump's inaugural speech.

The same information can be presented in a chart:

WORD	*USE*
America	*18 times*
American	*16 times*
Country	*9 times*
People	*9 times*
Great	*6 times*

Figure 5. The chart of word use in Trump's inaugural speech.

It is seen in Figure 2 and Figure 3 that the adjective 'great' appears in the victory speech the most often – 22 times to be more precise, whereas his next most popular adjective in this speech – 'unbelievable' – appears only 7 times. This makes it possible to speak about Trump's idea of America being great as a country and people because one of the president's priorities is the protection of the image of the country in the world, the enhancement of its position, and its greatness in comparison to other countries. That is why one can frequently come across the adjective 'great' in Trump's victory and inaugural speeches. For example, in the former speech it is used 22 times, while in the latter one – 6 times (Figure 5), which could be explained by a more formal character of the genre so the constant repetition of this word might seem inappropriate.

Since the adjective 'great' has a positive connotation, Donald Trump uses it to characterize America, veterans, his economic plan, future relations with other countries, his friends, his parents, and the work he is going to do. As a result, it may seem that the president divides the objects of the world into 'great' and 'not great' ones. Hence, the predominance of the positive adjective automatically sets the listeners' mood and defines the way they perceive the addresser's words (Sidiropoulou, 2018) since the more a word is repeated, the more eager people are to believe it (Lakoff, 2016).

At this point it should also be noted that the word 'great' appears to have a special meaning in Trump's discourse because it is even included in his campaign slogan - 'Make America Great Again', which he has been using since 2012, when it was registered. The phrase also serves as a subtitle of his book *Time to Get Tough*, first published in 2011 with the subtitle 'Make America #1 Again' and then reissued in 2015 with a new subtitle. Since then Trump has been experimenting with the phrase, making slight alterations to fit the context. For example, in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention in 2016 he finished his address with the four syntactically parallel phrases, in which every new adjective evokes a positive association.

> *We will make America strong again.*
> *We will make America proud again.*
> *We will make America safe again.*
> *And we will make America great again!*[19]

Preferring words with positive connotations can also serve as a way of inspiring people: *wealth, to win, friendship, to benefit, to thrive, to prosper*[20]; *potential, great, success, appreciate, wonderful, fantastic, unbelievable, incredible*[21] and so on. Furthermore, being more emotionally expressive, Trump's victory speech also contains a number of superlative adjectives, which contribute to increasing the degree of expressivity of this address: *the best, the brightest, the strongest, the greatest, the fullest*[22].

Other words that stand out in the cloud of the victory speech (Figure 2) are '*people*', '*country*', and '*want*'. The use of the former two is explained by the genre of discourse: the winner of election is talking to the people about the country they live in, whereas the latter one deserves attention. The preference of the verb 'want' over other possible equivalents of expressing the idea of desiring something may show that Trump's and common people's desires are plain

[19] Trump, D. (2016a). Acceptance speech. *Politico*. Retrieved from https://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/full-transcript-donald-trump-nomination-acceptance-speech-at-rnc-225974
[20] Trump, *The inaugural address*...
[21] Trump, The Victory Speech...
[22] Ibid.

and simple and that he does not need any sophisticated words to express them.

As far as the word cloud of the inaugural address (Figure 4) is concerned, it shows several similarities with that of the victory speech. For example, it also contains the words '*country*' and '*people*' accompanied by '*America*' and '*American*', which cannot be avoided in this genre of discourse. Moreover, this corresponds with the peculiarities of the genre as in the inaugural speech the focus is on the country and its people, which evokes patriotic feelings.

One more effective stylistic means employed in both speeches consists in a contrasting description of the situation before the election and the future one. This is aimed at creating a more favourable attitude to the new president by showing that he/she is going to correct the mistakes of the former president, thus setting an example for all the people to follow.

> *The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer.* <…> *We will also finally take care of our great veterans…* <…>. *America will no longer settle for anything less than the best* (2016). *For too long, a small group in our nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost. Washington flourished – but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered – but the jobs left, and the factories closed.* <…> *That all changes – starting right here, and right now…* <…> *The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer*[23].

The Performative Function

Apart from the functions mentioned above, a performative function should be mentioned as well. The role of this function consists of performing a concrete act in which the speaker is seen not as an individual but as the bearer of a certain social status (Sheygal, 2000).

Such a shift of focus, which differs the genres in question from general speaking in public, enables the speaker to alter the language and mention those topics that could not be included in the speech in other cases. For example, when delivering a victory speech, a former candidate for the presidency addresses the audience already as the winner of the election. The victory speech is the winner's first reaction to the results of the election. Therefore, the speaker can share his/her emotions, making the speech highly colourful and expressive. In contrast, the inaugural speech has a more formal character because of the official status of the event. That is why the inaugural speech is less expressive but better structured and thought over.

The victory speech marks a significant event – the victory of one of the candidates – and the beginning of a preliminary stage before the presidential term begins. The speech is made as soon as the results of the election day have been announced and summarizes the main points of the winner's campaign. At the same time, it may function as a rehearsal for the future inaugural speech as it anticipates what is going to be said in several months.

> *I look very much forward to being your president…*[24]

The inaugural speech in its turn marks a momentous event in the history of a country – the official acceptance of the presidency by a new person. The role of the performative function in this genre of political discourse consists of providing the speaker with an opportunity to show his/her eagerness and readiness to occupy this official position.

> *The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.*
> *I will fight for you with every breath in my body – and I will never, ever let you down*[25].

The importance of this function is also defined by the absence of new information as the speaker just repeats the main promises. Therefore, the attention of the audience is shifted to the manner of speaking in public, to a so-called 'show' rather than to new information (Arkhangelskaya, 2018), so the addresser has an opportunity to show his/her mastery of rhetorical means, for example, syntactic parallelism and anaphora.

> *We Will Make America Wealthy Again.*
> *We Will Make America Proud Again.*
> *We Will Make America Safe Again*[26].

The Declarative Function

The next function that deserves attention is the declarative one. It consists of presenting a new president as the ruler of the country, the one who is going to establish new laws and implement new plans (Sheygal, 2000). In order to do this, a set of actions must be taken. Therefore, one can find statements about work and challenges in both of Trump's speeches under analysis.

[23] Trump, *The inaugural address*…

[24] Trump, The Victory Speech…

[25] Trump, D. *The inaugural address*…

[26] Ibid.

> *And I can only say that while the campaign is over, our work on this movement is now really just beginning. We're going to get to work immediately for the American people…*[27]
> *We will face challenges. We will confront hardships. But we will get the job done*[28].

Another essential idea of the declarative function is connected with the president giving advice to the listeners about the responsibilities that they have as citizens. In Trump's inaugural address this is done with the help of modal verbs of obligation.

> *We must speak our minds openly, debate our disagreements honestly, but always pursue solidarity*[29].

As seen from the analysis, Donald Trump devoted much time of his public addresses to promoting the unity of the nation and proclaiming the greatness of the United States of America. All functions considered, it can be concluded that the genre of the victory speech and that of the inaugural speech have a number of functional peculiarities in common, although the degrees to which some functions are fulfilled in each of them may be different. Being inextricably connected with the functions, the aims of each genre exert considerable influence on the language that is chosen by the speaker. Therefore, there are more linguistic means that perform the integrative and the declarative functions in Donald Trump's inaugural address, whereas those carrying out the inspirative function prevail in the victory speech, allowing more room for emotions. The performative function is typical of both of Trump's speeches.

As far as the connotations of certain words and some interdiscursive links are concerned, it has become clear that with their help, Trump managed to create a positive image of himself while implicitly contrasting himself with his main opponent – Hillary Clinton.

Problems and Limitations

While conducting the analysis of any president's public speech, it should be kept in mind that leading politicians usually receive help with speechwriting. There are always professional speechwriters that either advise the speaker on the most suitable words and expressive means or write full speeches. That is why one can hardly know for sure which parts of the address were helped with and which were created by the politician on his/her own. In the current article it will be assumed that, even though such information cannot be obtained, the politician is fully responsible for his/her words, which is why the peculiarities that are singled out are treated as characteristics of the politician's style, not the style of his/her speechwriters.

[27] Trump, The Victory Speech…
[28] Trump, *The inaugural address*…
[29] Ibid.

Conclusion

The overview of the functions of two genres of political discourse – that of Trump's victory speech and that of his inaugural speech – has shown the similarities and differences between them. From the functional point of view, the genres under analysis have a number of functions in common. However, they cannot be called identical as their aims define the set of functions and their positions on the scale of importance.

The main target of the victory speech is showing the winner's immediate reaction to the results of the election, finishing the campaign, summarizing the main points of the winner's plan, expressing gratitude, proving that people have made the right choice as a new president will lead people into a better world. Hence, the predominant function of this genre of discourse is the inspirative one. In addition, the victory speech is highly expressive so it is this genre of political discourse that shows the true character of a politician.

As far as the inaugural address is concerned, its main goal is mostly performative, i.e. announcing the beginning of a new president's term and being this beginning at the same time, but also integrative, as it is crucial for the new president to unify the people and show no traces of neglect or discrimination. The tradition of addressing the nation with an inaugural speech has a long history so its components and ideas are set in advance. Being an official speech, it is not so emotional, yet it is often impressive and remembered for decades.

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Job Focus: Revisiting Students' Communicative Needs and Industrial Demands

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In an attempt to develop students' employability skills through a job-specific, needs based English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course, this paper investigated conducting a needs analysis to understand the perceptions of the final-year technical students, alumni, and Human Resources (HR) managers for promoting placements in the campus recruitments. By employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, an open-ended questionnaire was conducted with final-year information technology students and structured and unstructured interviews with the HR managers and the alumni respectively. In this study, the communicative needs of the final-year technical students were specifically addressed to provide them with career education and placement training and raise employment opportunities in their course of study. Based on the results of the questionnaire-based survey and subsequent observations in the structured and unstructured interviews, it is widely examined that all of the HR managers reflected on the importance of English language in corporate communications. The findings of the survey also reflected that the perceptions of the alumni and the expectations of the HR managers on verbal and nonverbal skills were well received by the final-year technical students. This is a positive development on the part of students as they were found to be thoroughly aware of their workplace needs and were keen to develop language, communication, and soft skills for successfully entering into the job market. This research implies that connecting institution and industry is a significant factor in helping students obtain job offers and develop the job-specific skills that meet the requirements of the industry.

Keywords: employability skills, learning outcomes, needs analysis, placement, syllabus design, job-specific learning

Engineering and technical students are on the urge of getting placements in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and Information Technology Enabling Service (ITES) companies. The major aim and scope of this study was to analyze the language and communication skills of the technical students that are needed to get placements in the IT industry. A needs based questionnaire was carried out to analyze the job-specific needs of their present and target situations. As English is widely used in global business contexts, oral and written English communication skills are vital for executing their jobs (Rogerson-Revell, 2007; Kassim & Ali, 2010; Spence & Liu, 2013). This is specifically reflected through the campus recruitment drives conducted in the professional and technical colleges of Tamil Nadu, India.

Analyzing needs in terms of students' present and target situations is inevitable for designing an ESP course today (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; West, 1994). Students need to have considerable awareness and desire to get placements during on-campus recruitments. It is necessary for them to prepare themselves for facing the recruitment board and getting job offer letters while they study. It is crucial for them to display their cognitive abilities, communication skills, and technical expertise and develop relevant employability skills to sustain their jobs in any workplace (Pavlin & Svetlik, 2014). In the final year of the course, technical students need to get placements in campus interviews as the reputation of the students and the institution always revolves around their achievements in the academic programmes and the placement they obtain in reputed first-tier Multinational Corporations (MNCs). This has been the concern of students, teachers, syllabus designers, and institutional authorities as they expect the final-year technical students to get job offers in their course of study. The employers are also found to be anxious to hire capable students and specifically they expect the students to be competent and employable (Rhoder &

French, 1994; Ehrich et al., 2010; Lester, 2014). This research focuses on understanding the reflections of the technical students, alumni, and HR managers regarding the development of skills relevant for employment.

Review of the Literature

The present study aimed to conduct a job-specific needs analysis to identify the skills required to get job offers during on-campus recruitments. Needs analysis is an investigation tool to systematically analyze the needs of the learners and their learning needs to competently perform in a target communicative situation (Berwick, 1989). As Nunan (1996, p. 13) observes, "Techniques and procedures for collecting information to be used in syllabus design are referred to as needs analysis. These techniques have been borrowed and adopted from other areas of training and development, particularly those associated with industry and technology". Needs analysis will help language experts design the language course according to the perceived needs and demands of both academics and industry (Long, 2005). While discussing the significance of needs analysis in designing and developing an ESP course, Chaudhury (2009) emphasizes the importance of conducting a formal needs analysis and evaluation of the tertiary level communication course to meet the demands of the workplace.

The use of English language in the present educational and professional context is indispensable. English is globally recognized as the formal language in which job interviews are conducted. Communicating efficiently in English has become the basic requirement for a job and hence it is directly associated with the career prospects of any professional. While investigating the needs of the learners, Kayi (2008) found that the educational, survival, and job requirements are the major factors for learning English. Crosling and Ward (2002) found that communication skills and prominently oral skills are very important to prepare the students for placement. Belcher (2006) exemplifies the use of face-to-face communication, oral presentations, classroom presentations, discussions, and oral reports. These interpersonal communicational activities help to develop discursive empowerment among students to develop strategic skills in oral communication. As prospective employers are found to be dissatisfied with the written performance in writing emails and reports, Davies and Birbili (2000) explored that the employees are not sufficiently trained to develop their writing skills in their studies. In a research study conducted at Massey University, Gray et al. (2005, p. 432) found "the ability to express ideas clearly in writing" is the first-ranked choice of employers and the students consider "the ability to present information accurately" as the top priority for developing written communication. The employers considered clarity, accuracy, and brevity as the significant features of effective writing. Although employers consider 'report writing' as the required genre to develop business writing skills, they equally emphasize clarity, accuracy, and brevity in their writing.

It is generally accepted that both native and non-native English-speaking students are really unprepared and unfit to commit to their services. Tucker (2011, p. 116) reflected on the unpreparedness of the US students in schools, saying, "The Common Core State Standards are based on an imaginary college candidate or job applicant, not on the students we teach in the K–12 classroom." It is obvious that the students are found to be disillusioned and unfit as they are not given adequate training to prepare for higher learning or to enter into the workforce. Tucker (2011, p. 115-116) further explains the present status of unsuccessful students as follows, "The discourse of the dream deferred, rather than inspiring students to prepare for the future, often promotes disillusionment with the present.... The amorphous goal of 'College and Career Readiness' may sound visionary, but it creates a kind of far-sightedness, in the optical sense of the word. ... The discourse of the 'dream deferred' distorts our vision of literacy and disheartens the students we actually teach." It can be specifically noted that the students need to be properly trained in terms of language and vocation in schooling itself.

Erling and Walton (2007, p. 38) reported on the use of English language skills in multinational companies in Germany, "The ability to read and understand the essential meaning of English texts was considered to be crucial for employees. ... Another essential skill is the ability to follow and take part in discussions." It is widely considered that fresh employees, irrespective of their position, are expected to communicate in English. The employers, especially, demanded that the new professionals joining the company be fluent in both speaking and writing. They expected them to interact and report in English. In the article "Fit for Work?" (Cheater, 2006), the reflections of the managing director of a London-based international trading company was revealed as, "'The quality of French and Japanese work placement students is a lot higher than UK students, not least in the quality of their second language, which is English.'" The article further sheds light, revealing that the language and social skills of the UK students were found to be very substandard and they were not able to work with the pace of time. The British employers unanimously expected the job seekers to be efficient in displaying academic literacy, social skills, and professionalism.

In an attempt to propose a job-specific, needs based ESP course, this study investigates the communicative needs of final-year technical students and the demands of HR Managers to develop relevant skills for seeking employment during on-campus recruitments.

Materials and Methods

Background

To find out the target demands for developing sufficient employability skills, communicative needs analysis was conducted for final-year Information Technology (IT) students of a technical institution in Tamil Nadu. In the present on-campus recruitment scenario, the technical students failed to successfully communicate in group discussions and personal job interviews. They were not competent enough to convince or negotiate with the recruiters as they faced severe language and communication problems to express themselves clearly in English. Most students lacked effective English communication skills and hence they struggled to organize their thoughts and ideas in English (Sarudin et al., 2009). It was also widely prevalent that most students faced communication apprehension problems like fear, anxiety, and shyness and so they remained reticent and hesitated to actively participate in any oral tasks (Kim, 2006). To understand the target needs of the technical students, needs analysis was conducted with the final-year IT students to help them perform successfully during on-campus interviews. It is considered that industrial and institutional collaboration will be found useful in understanding the perspectives of the employers on their industrial demands (Taillefer, 2007; Lester, 2014; Dickinson & Griffiths, 2017; Sin & Amaral, 2017). This research probes to understand that the technical students will be more successful in practicing employability skills with the information sought from the industrial personnel. With the responses of alumni students on their fresh experiences in the software industry, this study focuses on understanding the significance of professional communication and workplace culture.

Participants

This research was explored on the qualitative ethnographic triangulated perspectives of the final-year Information Technology (IT) students (38), HR managers (16), and college alumni (7). All of the participating students were 21 years old. The majority of the students (33 boys and 5 girls) were all motivated to obtain employment through campus recruitment. Most of the students were multilingual and few of them hailed from neighbouring states. Some of the students had English as their medium of study. For understanding the real demands of the workplace, HR managers and college alumni working in core industries were the major sources of this research. All the HR managers had more than six years of experience and most of them had technical degrees as their basic qualification. The alumni had a minimum of one year of experience and they were all employed in both Tier I & II companies. Two English faculty members, along with the present researcher, acted as participant observers in this study.

Materials

Final-year technical students' learning needs were investigated with a survey based open-ended questionnaire (Please refer to Appendix A). Structured interviews were conducted with the HR managers of the software companies to understand their actual requirements in hiring the candidates (Please refer to Appendix B). Unstructured interviews are conducted with the alumni of the institution to discuss about the real situation in the workplace. In an attempt to gain more insight on the research enquiry, casual interactions and formal discussions with all the participants were undertaken throughout the study.

Research Design

This research was undertaken with a qualitative ethnographic approach to explore contextual influences through the emic perspectives of the participants (Friberg, 2016). An ethnographic approach can be adopted as a research tool as it helps to understand the subjective and objective reflections of the key players as it depicts the realities of heterogeneous academic and workplace culture. Oanh (2007) compares and contrasts the use of conducting formal and informal needs analysis and considers formal needs analysis to be an effective tool for course design. An informal needs analysis is considered equally important as it facilitates the stakeholders to reflect upon their perceptions and count their experiences in detail. As both formal and informal needs analysis are crucial to observe the job-specific communication needs and demands of the industry, this study specifically intends to elicit more information and working knowledge from both HR managers and working alumni. The survey based open-ended questionnaire was designed to prompt more ideas from the technical students to opine, share, and discuss their needs and expectations while facing job interviews during on-campus recruitment drives.

Procedure

The stakeholders of this study were final-year technical students, working alumni, and HR managers. An open-ended needs based questionnaire was administered to the final-year technical students to analyze their employment needs. Their willingness and involvement to share their knowledge and information regarding on-campus recruitments and their expectations for how to be successful in getting into a job market helped the researcher to extend group and pair discussions in both inside and outside classrooms. Casual interactions with the students took place in extra office hours as they remained in the college to attend special coaching classes. Students' contributions in discussions were found to be particularly useful as the open-ended questionnaire met the objectives of the survey to elicit adequate information from them. The alumni were continuously contacted and unstructured interviews were conducted to keep abreast with their professional developments. The final-year technical students were encouraged to communicate with the alumni to create awareness about the prevailing job-related conditions in different workplace environments. The HR managers were contacted directly to conduct structured interviews in their office. As the present researcher considered their insights to be useful in helping the students to prepare for job interviews, all the HR managers affirmed their cooperation and were found to be keenly interested to participate and respond to the interview questions. The purpose of eliciting profound information from the questionnaires and the structured and unstructured interviews was to assess the employment needs of the students while seeking placements during on-campus recruitment events. To acknowledge the original discussions of the stakeholders, their comments were not edited.

Data Analysis

An ethnography approach to research design was more substantial to gather information of all the HR managers and alumni as their subjective and open-ended statements helped to understand the recruitment process and the prevailing job demands in software companies. The validity of the research can be analyzed through the concept of triangulation – the use of multiple data sources and methods (Jasso-Aguilar, 1999). Questionnaire based surveys and structured interviews were used to conduct a formal needs analysis and the unstructured interviews, casual observations, and discussions were used to conduct an informal needs analysis (Gimenez, 2001; Oanh, 2007). The formal needs analysis was conducted with an open-ended questionnaire to analyze the employment needs of the final-year IT students and the structured interviews were conducted with the HR managers to analyze their target demands in meeting communication requirements to execute jobs effectively. With the alumni, the unstructured interviews were found to be a flexible informal needs analysis research tool to elicit their professional experiences and the challenges they face in the working environment. As both formal and informal needs analysis informs the practicality of the present and target situational context, this research is more benefitted with the observations gained from questionnaire based survey, structured and unstructured interviews.

Results and Discussion

Conducting a Questionnaire Based Job-Specific Needs Analysis Survey – Final-Year IT Students' Responses

In response to the first question on the importance of communicating in English, most students had a general awareness about the role of corporate English in global commerce. All the students expressed their willingness to accept that English, being the global language, they need to communicate with it (Huh, 2006). To enter into any industry and sustain their professionalism, they considered communicating in English to be indispensable.

> To survive in an industry English is more important, so we need to improve English.
> (S. Lakshmi Priya, IV year, IT student)

> English is the link language between different countries in the world and hence MNC companies facilitate global communication through English.
> (Sharatha Devi, IV year, IT student)

> English plays a vital role in today's world. It is a worldwide language; hence it is necessary to learn English. Moreover, it is a professional language so that communicating in English is very important.
> (Abirame, IV year, IT student)

All of the students considered the necessity of learning and communicating in English as it is the most instrumental language in commerce and technology. When eliciting a response to the basic skills required for business communication, all of

the students reported that they consider speaking and writing in English as the most essential skills for business communication.

> Speaking and writing is the basement for corporate communication. As without practicing productive skills, communication skills cannot be developed.
>
> (Sneka, IV year, IT student)

> It is so important nowadays to get a job. For attending phone interviews and group discussion, speaking skill is very essential. Writing with good language is important for business document preparation.
>
> (Dona Matthew, IV year, IT student)

All of the students responded positively that both speaking and writing skills are the core skills used in every sphere of business and at all levels of professional communication and thus they need sufficient training in it.

In order to understand how speaking and writing skills influence one's opportunity in getting employed, students expected to get trained on how to perform in job interviews. As responding to job-specific interview questions are not specifically practiced, they expected interview skills to be developed to face the recruitment board. While discussing the importance of mock interviews, Kanchana, a IV-year IT student, claimed that the present syllabus is devoid of practical implementations, "Only GDs are conducted. No interviews are there". As interviews are the basic requirement of the placement process, most students expect that it needs to be practically conducted.

In response to preparing students for workplace culture, most of them reflected that they need to get acquainted with the alumni to know more about work shifts, proper attire, and both formal and social communication. As most colleges do not encourage conversations between boys and girls within the campuses, the students are highly motivated by the alumni describing the collaborative working environment between the genders in the workplace. It is asserted that in workplace contexts, irrespective of the gender, all of the employees need to work as a team for the successful completion of a project. Irrespective of gender and time, work shifts are planned to achieve the project goal. In this context, Sukumar, a IV-year IT student, reported,

> Some of my expectations are activities like a mock interview and a boy-girl conversation, which is much needed for working in companies.

The students expected that they need to engage in oral presentations and group discussions so they could interact with their peers to exchange information on any topic. It is believed that these task-based activities will help them to participate and perform better in teamwork in a future workplace.

While discussing the improvements that can be done in career education and placement training, most students confessed that merely understanding important tips for interview questions is not sufficient. They wish that they had the opportunity to practically perform mock interviews in the practical sessions. Balaji, a IV-year IT student, remarked, "To seek better jobs, productive skills are necessary". As the effect of schooling can be found in shaping their communicative ability, the institution needs to be more responsible for engaging the students to perform relevant job-specific tasks to face workplace requirements. Shalini, a IV-year IT student, reflected that the present academic syllabus needs to be updated with the specification of skills related to workplace contexts,

> The present syllabus is based on theoretical knowledge and not a practical one. It must be transformed as a practical session having mock interviews, face-to-face chatting, and presentations with maximum minutes.

D. Ramya, a IV-year IT student, argued that the allocation of time for oral presentations and group discussions should be increased. Aarthy, a IV-year IT student, revealed that more practical sessions in communication are needed and special teaching on technical writing, project guidance, and mock interviews will be helpful for their future career. All of the students expected ample guidance on understanding the expectations of their future employers.

Conducting Unstructured Interviews – Alumni Responses

All of the alumni specifically reported that the students need to be given sufficient insight into understanding the requirements of the workplace as fresh professionals should be capable of interacting via both teleconferencing and video conferencing, sending and receiving emails, and reporting their progress on their projects (Nickerson, 2005). They consistently emphasized the need to be able to sell ideas to other people, convince the colleagues and team leaders, and hold the listener's attention when they speak. Most of the alumni also stressed the need for writing professional emails and technical reports.

> Fresh employees are placed to work

> collaboratively in a team. They need to communicate with their colleagues and team leaders. They need to closely work with their associates to understand about their project. They need to discuss and report their progress in their job.
>
> (Iliyas Ahmed, Alumnus)

> As professionals are often sending and receiving emails, they need to be brief and precise in reporting their job related information. They need to be very focussed with their job and should be very clear and concise while attending and answering calls.
>
> (Ananya Suraj, Alumnus)

Most of the alumni reflected that as employees need to interact with international clients, they should be aware of both UK/US pronunciation and accent variations. They should be familiar with the differences found in the international accents of English. In this context, most of the alumni stressed the importance of both UK and US accents, as they are preferred by the respective UK and US-based multinational companies. Even in the interview rounds, students are tested for speaking as well as understanding the international accents. While discussing the importance of international accents, V. Keerthana Selvam, an alumnus, revealed, "Most companies expect the students to speak and understand US accents. They are specifically tested for communicating with US clients". S. Ram Kumar, an alumnus, reported on the testing of international accents, "Communication skills are tested. US accents on audio recordings will be played and the emerging professionals will be tested on them". When discussing the students' deficiencies in oral and written communication, all of the alumni insisted that the students need to be given sufficient training on the mechanisms of both speaking and writing. While pronunciation problems are encountered while speaking, spelling mistakes are widely seen in writing. Committing spelling errors has become a worldwide issue indistinct to both native and non-native users of English. Hence, all of the alumni put a great deal of emphasis on developing error-free writing skills, particularly in business emails and reports.

Conducting Structured Interviews – HR Managers' Responses

In the structured interviews, all of the HR managers specifically mentioned that new engineering professionals lack both oral and written communication skills (Ehrich et al., 2010). Some believe that their oral communication is better than their writing ability and others reported that they are able to write better than they speak. As their language skills are found to be not satisfactory, a large decrease in English language ability has been seen over the last decade. It is a common expectation that job seekers need to have excellent English communication skills. When discussing the vital role of communication skills in job interviews, Goutham, an HR executive of Sellasynergy India Ltd., revealed, "Both speaking and writing skills are important. Verbal, non-verbal, and personality elements tag with one another. As a whole, verbal and nonverbal communication skills build the personality of an individual". Further, in this context, Rajaraman. R, an HR manager of First Source Solution Ltd., also stressed,

> Communicating in English is very important. Grammar is necessary. Listening is pivotal. If a client is an international client, communication is to be done in English only; otherwise it is in terms generally bilingual. Customers should understand their language. Literally, professionals are lacking in productive skills and particularly in writing.

Most of the prospective and emerging professionals are aware that language and communication skills are the basic requirement to seek a better position (Eraut, 2004). As most students fail to communicate effectively in English and also lack adequate communication skills, they are unsuitable for the prevalent on-campus job opportunities, thus leading to unemployment. All of the HR managers reported that English has become the basic requirement when hiring a candidate. As top level managers and service personnel need to interact with international clients in English, the HR managers specifically emphasized that prospective employees need to develop presentation skills to discuss, persuade, convince, and negotiate in English.

> Managerial-level meetings will be only in English. When the candidates are put with the foreigners, they are not able to cope up with the situation to speak in English. They need to be better trained to develop presentation skills in English. (Mani. S, HR manager, Vee Technologies Ltd.)

All of the HR managers were found to be generally concerned with the objectives of the curriculum as they often discovered the relevant knowledge and skills were not transferred from academic to workplace contexts. They expected that the learning of employability skills should be practically found in their degree programmes. As work-based learning was

not covered in the curriculum, students were unable to meet the requirements of the employers. They opined that a communications department should be established to provide constant awareness and training on developing necessary skills to transfer from academic to workplace contexts. HR managers reflected that the level of communication they expect from the professionals was generally lacking in the educational market today. They should know the right way to speak and how to speak with colleagues and subordinates. They should be able to communicate in English and keep rapport with everyone from the top cadre to the bottom-level employees. HR managers stated that new professionals lack adequate knowledge and information on current affairs. As they lack sufficient information, they were found to be devoid of good communication skills. They are unable to confidently participate and engage in both professional and casual interactions. They were not adequately prepared with their technical knowledge and they lacked practical communication skills. In this context, Goutham, an HR Executive of Sellasynergy India Ltd., reported that students are oriented towards their technical subjects and general awareness and knowledge of current affairs is missing.

Regarding the contributions of university education in helping the students more employable, most of the HR managers revealed that the university curriculum is more theory based and so the engineering graduates are specifically lacking practical knowledge in their subject. As the students are not able to interpret and discuss the technical content, all of the HR managers anticipate their practical working knowledge on those theories. It is their contention that the technical subjects are taught with more theoretical underpinnings and hence they expect employees with more practical knowledge than on their theoretical expertise. All of the HR managers unanimously agreed that the areas of immediate concern are the students learning discrepancies in acquiring sufficient technical knowledge, language fluency, and strategic skills. These learning discrepancies need to be specifically addressed in university education. They reported that in the academic studies, presentation skills and interpersonal and group communication skills are seldom encouraged. They stressed that the curriculum should be application oriented to meet their workplace needs. Vinod, an HR manager of Kumaran Systems, revealed, "The present university educational system should stress more on business communication. Language skills could be taught practically in a business context. For example how to draft mails, documents, etc. should be necessarily practiced by the students". It is explicitly emphasized that language and communication skills should be practiced through writing business letters, emails, and reports. Further, all of the HR managers considered that oral presentations, group discussions, and mock interviews as well as writing business letters, emails, and reports need to be practiced rather than just giving guidelines in the classes.

In response to the role and significance of verbal and nonverbal skills in professional communication, all of the HR managers considered developing speaking and writing skills as the core verbal skills as they are crucial for communicating in both oral and written business transactions. The companies strive to organize team work and create professional networks to undertake projects effectively. They revealed that the internal and external communication of any organization is solely possible only through the skills of speaking and writing (Cowling, 2007). Goutham, an HR Executive of Sellasynergy India Ltd., stressed, "Soft skills on par with verbal skills can be assigned to develop better communication skills. Neatness and perfectness is the hallmark of one's personality and it displays one's disciplined behaviour and positive attitudes". In the unstructured interviews, many alumni reported that their companies consider verbal and nonverbal skills equally important when distinguishing the positive and negative traits of the individual.

In order to determine how the students can shape themselves to become a more attractive prospective employee, the HR managers revealed that professionals need to understand where they should be brief and objective in their tone and thoughts and when they should describe and explain in more detail on any subject. They anticipated that their employees would know how to interact in both formal and social contexts, and disapprove of unnecessary and superfluous communication. They recommended that students improve their soft skills and managerial skills for developing a strong and optimistic personality. In this context, Anitha Nancy, an HR executive (Training) of Thales Software India Pvt. Ltd., revealed, "Interpersonal, negotiation, and convincing skills are important. Building team spirit and time management are essential among the workforce. To develop soft skills is to develop personality". Further, Ambikapathi, an HR manager of Precision Equipments Pvt. Ltd., also reported,

> Soft skills are absolutely needed to perform in better way. Most of the freshers are afraid to speak in English. They should be self-confident. We provide training on technical, communication skills and soft skills to our employees. Self-exaggeration in speech is not good. Honesty pays for a better personality.

Most of the HR managers believed that analytical

thinking and aptitude skills need to be improved. Marketing skills, customer relationship skills, convincing and negotiating skills are necessary to develop interaction and strategic skills. They expected that job seekers need to be self-confident and self-reliant in executing their business tasks. For improving the students' business etiquette, soft skills are considered the most wanted skills, on par with communication and technical knowledge. Hence, technical, verbal, and soft skills are considered the three-tiered skills for augmenting employability. Admitting the credentials of soft skills over productive skills, Dr. Padmavathy Srinivasan, CEO, Winspire Language World, reflected, "Soft skills are more important than productive skills. Soft skills can get you what you want. It credits the character and personality. They need to know when to soft/hard peddle in the business situation".

In response to the measures that academies can take to provide career education and placement training to the students, K.S. Balaji, Project Engineer, Wipro Technologies, reflected that the process of teaching and learning of content and skills should be done on par with the training of the requirements of the companies. The HR managers were generally concerned about developing teachers' competencies to teach and communicate in English with the students. All of the HR managers considered the importance of providing job-specific training to the employees. Santhosh Raj, an alumnus, reflected that almost all companies provide pre-service and in-service training to their employees for the smooth progress and functioning of their projects. As the employees are often lacking sufficient technical and business acumen, they generally consider providing job-related training pertained to their area of job-specific domains to be essential.

Most of the HR managers stressed that prospective employees should be able to draft documents for written correspondences (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). Their writing skills need to be developed to globalize business transactions. Their interpretations through both verbal and graphical modes need to be strongly practiced as they should be able to display their technical knowledge through interactive and visual communication. This will help them transfer their knowledge and skills in undertaking technical and business projects (Forey, 2004; Dovey, 2006). As all of their speaking and writing skills relevant to business communication were often found to be neglected in the university curriculum, this should be updated (Dolton & Vignoles, 2002). The revised syllabus needs to satisfy the students' job-specific needs as they should emerge prepared to meet the professional demands of the workplace.

In response to promote campus placements, all of the HR mangers claimed that education and training should be synergized effectively. They commonly shared that if the university syllabus matches with the trends of professionalism required in the present job market, the students will get sufficient awareness and time to understand and practice the required skills meant for their employment. As high school has the biggest impact on students, communication and soft skills need to be integrated in the academic curriculum. If the syllabus matches with career-oriented objectives and adequate teaching and training is provided, engineering students will be more prepared to face the job market (Basturkmen, 2012; Edwards, 2014). If the technical subjects are taught through communicative activities such as group discussion and seminars, students will be able to reduce their communication apprehension. As new professionals need to interact with onshore and overseas clients, they need to confidently present and discuss their ideas. The students need to develop both critical and emotional intelligence to work in any business environment. Emerging professionals need to transfer their educational insights into professional pursuits as the transition from academic environment to the workplace cannot be ignored (Andrews & Russell, 2012; Donald et al., 2018).

Suggestions for Designing a Needs Based ESP Course

Analyzing the communicative needs of the final-year IT students, the perceptions of the alumni and the demands of the HR managers, it is proposed that the following factors need to be considered when designing a syllabus for a needs based ESP course for seeking placements.

1. A job-specific, needs based communicative syllabus should be devised.
2. Implementing, revising, and incorporating necessary changes in the syllabus to the needs of both academics and industry should be performed continuously.
3. Eclectic and pragmatic approaches should be practiced.
4. Appropriate teaching methodologies and techniques need to be followed in language pedagogy.
5. Students need to participate and perform job-specific communicative tasks.
6. Practicing speaking skills through individual oral presentations as well as dyadic and group communication activities should be made compulsory.
7. Reading newspapers, watching English

documentaries, and using Internet resources should be practiced.

8. Teachers should identify the communicative level of the students and should provide consistent feedback on the tasks.
9. With the concurrence of the teacher, students need to select relevant themes and topics for language learning.
10. Teachers need to prepare necessary worksheets, handouts, and other supplementary materials for teaching and practicing LSRW skills.
11. Authentic work-based resources should be used for language learning.
12. Mechanics of speaking and writing should be practiced.
13. Adequate practice of business writing skills should be compulsory.
14. Students need to be encouraged to be more dynamic and assertive in their behaviour.
15. The teaching and testing of speaking should be done through speaking only.
16. Testing and evaluation should be done genuinely by examining the real performance of the students.
17. Adequate training should be given to both teachers and students to enrich interaction skills.
18. Employability skills need to be constantly practiced for proving job effectiveness in their work.

All of the HR personnel expected the technical students to develop relevant employability skills. As they regularly observed the grammar, vocabulary, and spelling mistakes that are often found in writing, they encouraged students to practice basic language skills. They also expected the students to be provided sufficient training on the role of corporate culture (Ahiauzu, 1984). They should be given sufficient awareness on the necessity to manage time and stress when discharging their duties. They need to be constantly reminded on their urgency to achieve their target goals. They need to be more pragmatic to update their general and technical knowledge and job-domain skills. It is expected that the technical students' aspirations must balance with their capability, knowledge, and skills (Tymon, 2013; Lester, 2014; McCowan, 2015; Clokie & Fourie, 2016). As their personal and professional development is based on knowledge, ability, language, and communication and management skills, they need to prove themselves through their stability and integrity in action.

Conclusion

This study discusses the personal and professional needs of final-year IT students. The perceptions of HR managers were observed to analyze the employment demands of the industry. All of the HR managers unanimously considered the role of both verbal and nonverbal skills for expressing one's views in business, technical, and social interactions to be vital. They agreed that it has become crucial on the part of professionals to execute their job with relevant discursive, social, and technical skills. This research reflects on developing students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes that could cater to the needs of the working environment. With the findings of the research, it can be implied:

- Academic and professional awareness of workplace can be sought while discussing the job and company profile. Further, engineering students can be encouraged to undertake industrial visits along with faculty members for gaining sufficient exposure to workplace culture.
- Alumni meetings can be officially conducted once in a semester, where they can share their professional experiences on their technical progress, promotions, and the frequent shifting of jobs. This will help the students better understand the company' top priorities and job functions.
- Information regarding job prospects, recruitment ideologies and the effect of globalization on the economy and commerce can be gathered through both HR managers and alumni.

Assessing the language needs of students both in the context of the present and target situations will help syllabus experts to design a specific needs based ESP course (Fatihi, 2003). This study implies the positive development of institutional and industrial collaboration in meeting the purpose of the job-specific, needs based courses. It was found that offering suggestions, instructions, directions, and recommendations facilitate corporate dynamics. Team building and leadership qualities are emphasized to develop managerial skills. Understanding the workforce, building rapport, and team support are some of the significant interpersonal elements that any business management is connected with. Emerging professionals need to be acquainted with these traits and should possess sufficient knowledge and the capability to work collaboratively. As English language ability and communicative competence are

vital in both academia and industry, this research recommends developing verbal, nonverbal, and management skills to successfully communicate in target situations.

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Appendix A

Needs analysis on employability skills for placement
Open ended questionnaire for analyzing the employment needs of the final-year IT students

Name of the Student:
Name of the Institution:
Branch & Year:
Date:

1. Why do you consider communicating in English to be important?
2. What are the basic skills for business communication?
3. How far do speaking and writing skills influence one's opportunity in getting a placement? How can they be developed?
4. How can the students develop workplace culture in academia?
5. How can the students be successful in getting placements in their course of study?

Appendix B

Needs analysis on employability skills for placement
Open-ended questionnaire for conducting structured interviews with the HR Managers

Name of the Professional:
Designation:
Name of the Organization (with address):
Educational Qualification:
Professional Experience:

1. How much are English communication skills considered to be an important requirement for employability? Why?
2. How much has university education succeeded in helping students become more employable?
3. What is the role of verbal and nonverbal skills in professional communication?
4. How can students shape themselves to become more attractive to a prospective employee?
5. How can academies provide career education and placement training to students?

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The Mother Tongue of Turkish Immigrant Children in Berlin: To Be or Not to Be?

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How do bilingual Turkish children develop their mother tongue knowledge in German kindergartens and what are some of the difficulties they face? These are the questions which this paper tries to answer. For this purpose, a study with Turkish kindergarten children from Berlin, Germany was conducted.
A total of 40 children were divided into two groups between 3 and 6 years old and tested twice in a year with the TEDIL Test[1]. The test consists of pictures and measures the knowledge of Turkish nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, and syntax. All of the children were tested individually by a native Turkish speaker and by the researcher. The testing was done in the kindergarten setting.
The results showed that the knowledge of both age groups on different grammatical categories in Turkish was equal on the first test and there were no statistical differences. However, during the second test the group of older children showed a decrease in their knowledge of the grammatical categories in their mother tongue. This paper discusses the factors that influenced the regression in the knowledge of Turkish.
This study is one of only a few on bilingual Turkish children and it presents new information about mother tongue loss among kindergarten children, discusses the reasons, and suggests that kindergartens and families should cooperate and work together in order to prevent mother tongue loss from a very early age as well as its effect on the cognitive development of bilingual children.

Keywords: Turkish, mother tongue, kindergarten, language loss

Turkish spoken in Germany and one of the migrant languages has a low status in German society. Although there are kindergartens and schools where Turkish is taught a few lessons per week and there are published journals, newspapers, and radio programs, still Turkish, together with other migrant languages such as Russian and Arabic, has not been accepted in German society (Giray, 2015). An adequate level of acquisition of German the official language still seems to be a huge obstacle for most Turkish-speaking children living in Berlin. Several theories try to explain the reasons for this situation, which is not only a problem in Germany. In this work I will focus on the mother tongue and its importance for acquiring and learning further languages, especially the official language of the host country.

Turkish mother-tongue education in Berlin kindergartens has not been integrated into the regular curriculum. Moreover, there are no pre-school structured options for children to develop their use of and proficiency in their home language (NIER, 2018). The kindergartens do not value Turkish in the learning contexts, although there is a large Turkish community in Berlin. When there are offerings of Turkish courses decided upon individually by the kindergartens themselves, then the number of lessons and pedagogical quality are generally limited. There is no idea or conception regarding the mother tongue as a resource for attaining better competence in the second language, a solid foundation for a child's overall literacy, self-confidence, and cognitive development [2] (Mongeau, 2018; NIER, 2018).

The present paper discusses this situation and presents the findings of a research project with

[1] Güven, S., & Topbaş, S. (2014). *Türkçe erken dil gelişimi testi (TEDİL)* [Turkish early language development test]. Ankara, Turkey: Psychology Press.

[2] Rutgers Today. (2018, May 26). New pre-k report finds state policy for young dual language learners needs improvement. *Rutgers Today*. Retrieved from https://news.rutgers.edu/new-pre-k-report-finds-state-policy-young-dual-language-learners-needs-improvement/20180418#.WwzugNR94sY

Turkish children who are in effect DLLs (dual-language learners) conducted 2016-17 in two Berlin kindergartens in different districts on the city with substantial Turkish immigrant populations (Wedding & Neukölln). The children in the study come largely from middle-class families in terms of socio-economic status (SES). Their parents in most cases try to speak with the children in German only, thinking that in this way they help them to be better prepared for school. But the German of their parents very often is sub-standard spoken German. They make typical errors in case markers and especially in the noun category (i.e. gender), aspects of German morphology, and lexis that is difficult to learn. Moreover, children in the kindergartens do not obtain permission from the teachers to speak Turkish among themselves. In most cases the teachers are also from a Turkish background but have been instructed not to allow the children to use their mother tongue even at play at school or in different activities. Teachers have not been trained to encourage DLLs to develop literacy both in their L1 and in German (NIER, 201; Mehmedbegovic, 2009).

The attitude of society towards a minority/migrant/refugee language is an important factor for the language development of young children. This attitude consciously or unconsciously can motivate or demotivate the children from learning their mother tongue and building positive or negative attitudes towards their own mother tongue, and a kind of subliminal "linguicism" at work has been institutionalized (Skuttnabb-Kangas, 1995; Templer, 2016). Mehmedbegovic (2009), from a Bosnian immigrant background, stresses that for young learner education in the UK, this needs to be struggled against and policies must be changed, underscoring the priority of recognizing and fighting against the domination of the cultural capital of certain elites as "symbolic violence" in Bourdieu's sense, where dominated groups "accept a social construct like marginalization of first languages as a necessity of the same order as the law of gravity" (p. 250).

Considering multilingual children, it is important not to lose sight of the influential role of their mother tongue. It has an impact on the social and personal development of the child (Cummins, 2001, p. 17), and also on a learner's cognitive development (Cummins, 2009). Children who gain an adequate mother-tongue education or sufficient mother-tongue language input in their early childhood "develop stronger literacy abilities" in the school language (Cummins, 2001, p. 17). But it is not just important to provide a mother-tongue education or bilingual learning programs in the kindergarten, it is also significant to support and "advise parents and other caregivers to spend time with their children and tell stories or discuss issues with them" which are preconditions preparing the children for learning the school language and being successful in their educational way (Cummins, 2001, p. 17). Cummins stresses that two languages are "interdependent and nurture each other when the educational environment creates the requirements" for the children. "Well-implemented bilingual programs can promote literacy and subject matter knowledge in a minority language without any negative effects on children's development in the majority language." Learning the home language (minority language) not only impacts the cultural and personal identification, which makes it easier for learners to identify "with the mainstream culture and learning the mainstream language" (Cummins, 2001, p. 16), it also helps with "learning concepts and intellectual skills that are equally relevant to their ability to function in the majority language" (Cummins, 2001, p. 18). Developing literacy in both or more languages enables the children to "compare and contrast two language systems," meaning that they have access to more solidly grounded reality interpretations (Cummins, 2001, p. 17). Bilingual children quickly acquire conversational skills in the majority language (Cummins, 2001, p. 19; Vivian, 2015; Kroll & Bialystok, 2013) and can easily and quickly participate in the majority society.

There are "[S]trong affirmative messages about value of knowing additional languages and the fact that bilingualism is an important linguistic and intellectual accomplishment" (Cummins, 2001, p. 19; Cummins, 2009). For example, children then develop the ability to obtain access to information via a range of sources in different languages. The pre-school years are important not just for socialization and the development of personality and character; this period also includes the critical phase that is important for the foundation of mother-tongue skills, providing a basis for future success not just for adequate competence in the home language but also for second-language acquisition and other languages that may be acquired or later studied (NIER, 2018; Mongeau, 2018). In data from the UK, Mehmedbegovic (2009) discusses equality issues for children with skills in languages other than English in the schools in England and Wales with recommendations for policy and teacher training, changing the school ethos toward a "culture of recognizing an all-encompassing communication competence developed by the use of different languages" (p. 243).

According to Yazici, Ilter, & Glover (2010) there is a relation between mother-tongue competence and reading readiness. A rich lexicon in the mother tongue facilitates easier literacy achievement (Yazici, 1999). But to benefit fully from education in the second language, providing more opportunities for using the mother tongue has to be the aim in order to raise levels of mother-tongue competence. Benson (2002,

p. 303), looking at the effects of bilingual education in Africa and Latin America, notes that "Use of the mother tongue in primary schooling offers a number of documented benefits such as valorizing the mother tongue, bridging the gap between home and school cultures, and raising student identity consciousness and self-esteem." Benson[3] also notes: "Transfer of linguistic and cognitive skills is facilitated in bilingual programs. Once students have basic literacy skills in the L1 and communicative skills in the L2, they can begin reading and writing in the L2, efficiently transferring the literacy skills they have acquired in the familiar language. [...] Mother tongue-based bilingual education not only increases access to skills but also raises the quality of basic education by facilitating classroom interaction and integration of prior knowledge and experiences with new learning."

Citing Cummins (2001), Ileri (2000) and Saracho (1983), Yazici et al. (2010) argue that pre-school children should use their mother tongue, a foundation for developing literacy that is needed to support the second language both at home in school and in social interactions in the broader society. This is also strongly stressed by research findings in the US (NIER, 2018; Mongeau, 2018). Parents should help their children improve their native language skills. They should acquire picture books and other children's books in the L1 in order to build up a basis for a child to read and learn to love to read in the home language. Local libraries need to build up collections of such books for young learners in languages widely spoken by migrants living and attending schools in a given neighborhood. Findings also reflect the negative effects on self-esteem, which may lead to disharmony between the school and home cultures[4]. Parental reports can exaggerate the amount of mother-tongue use, as noted by Tannenbaum (2003), so the figures may show a higher level of mother tongue use than is actually the case. Empirical ethnographic research is needed to establish the actual realities of such L1 use and a child's competency in the L1.

The Role of the Mother Tongue in the Development of Bilingualism among Children

De Houwer (2011) argues that many of the differences between individual bilingual children's use of their two languages can be attributed to differences in the language input environments for each of the languages. These language input environments concern, amongst others, language use patterns in the parent pair, the age of first regular exposure to each language, relative and absolute frequencies of input for each language, and interaction strategies. If indeed it is the case that differences in language input environments can explain much of the variation between one child's use of two languages (and, by extension, inter-individual variation between bilingual children), this has important repercussions for the assessment of bilingual children in school and elsewhere. Dixon, Zhao, Quiroz, & Shin (2012) investigate the influence of home and community factors in predicting ethnic or heritage language vocabulary of Singaporean children whose ethnic languages (or mother tongues) were Chinese, Malay, or Tamil, and who were also learning English. The results indicated that (1) parents speaking an ethnic language to children had a strong positive effect on children's ethnic language vocabulary, whereas parents speaking only English had a negative effect; (2) the language community had an effect on children's ethnic language vocabulary, which may reflect community support for the language among the broader community; (3) family income worked differently depending on the language community; and (4) watching television in English mostly/only had a negative effect on children's ethnic language vocabulary. These findings lend support to other studies among language-minority children indicating that maintaining an ethnic or heritage language requires home support when schooling is through a societally dominant language.

Another study by Becker, Klein, & Biedinger (2013) analyzes the longitudinal development of differences in academic skills between children of Turkish origin and children of native-born German parents from age 3 to 6 in Germany with a focus on the role of immigrant parents' acculturation to the receiving society. Growth curve models show that Turkish-origin children start with lower test scores at the age of 3 regarding German language skills and cultural knowledge but not with respect to cognitive skills. The difference in the language domain decreases until the age of 6, while it increases regarding children's cultural knowledge. Immigrant parents' acculturation to the receiving country is positively related with all three academic skill domains. The results point to the importance of early intervention strategies.

The home environment, the language input by the parents and family members, and a positive attitude of the society towards the minority language are extremely important factors for the development of the mother tongue of bilingual children.

The Berlin Study

An empirical investigation was conducted by the author in 2016-17 among 40 Turkish children 3 to 6

[3] Benson, C. J. (2004). The importance of mother-tongue based schooling for educational quality. *UNESCO, EFA Global Montoring Report 2005*. P. 17. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001466/146632e.pdf

[4] Ibid.

years old attending two kindergartens in Berlin (in the districts of Wedding and Neukölln). There are kindergartens in Berlin that usually have children from age 2 until age 6. They have the freedom to choose the curriculum, methods of teaching, teachers, and textbooks. There are kindergartens where only German is used as the language of instruction, but there are also bilingual kindergartens such as Russian-German, English-German, or Spanish-German; however, there are no Turkish-German kindergartens where both languages are used half-half in everyday activities with children. In some kindergartens with predominantly Turkish children, there are once-a-week lessons in Turkish as a mother tongue, but this is not in all kindergartens with Turkish children.

The goal of the study was to determine key aspects of the linguistic knowledge of children whose mother tongue was Turkish. They were tested twice in their L1 home language in November 2016 and June 2017. The children from the two kindergartens from two different parts of Berlin had one-hour lessons in Turkish with a Turkish language teacher once a week.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The study has the following research questions:

1. Which grammatical categories did the children know when Turkish was their L1?
2. How much did the knowledge of grammatical categories in the L1 increase between the first and second testing considering the children's age?

Hypothesis

The lessons in Turkish, which the children had in the kindergartens, would help them increase their knowledge of their L1 (Turkish).

Materials and Methods

Participants

Two groups of children were tested twice. The age of the children between first and second testing differed by 6-7 months. The age of the children during the first testing was:

Group 1: 3 years, 6 months to 4 years, 5 month of age - 20 children (10 from each kindergarten)

Group 2: 4 years, 6 months to 5 years, 6 months of age - 20 children (10 from each kindergarten)

The kindergartens did not differ. Both have children from mixed ethnic backgrounds, but the number of Turkish speaking children was high. The kindergartens were selected based on the fact if they offer organized lessens in Turkish as an L1. Both kindergartens have Turkish mother-tongue teachers and Turkish lessons are given once in a week to the children.

The children included in the study were selected according to three criteria:

- to speak Turkish as their mother tongue;
- to be in the age range between 3 and 6 years old;
- to be normally developing children without any delays or disabilities.

All the children were born in Germany and they knew German as well. Most of the parents of the children were also born in Germany, but some of them – very few, were born in Turkey and came to Germany as children. The socio-economic status of the families was low. Most of the parents had completed secondary school education in Germany. In their home environment, according to self-reports from the parents, most of them spoke mixed German-Turkish with their children.

Materials

The children in the study were tested with a test adapted from English and standardized for Turkish: "Test of Early Language Development - Third Edition (TELD-3)[5]. The test has two parts – comprehension and production of different grammatical categories: *nouns, verbs, adjectives, preposition, syntax (comprehension and creating sentences with given words), and the comprehension and production of narratives*.

The test is a booklet with colorful pictures, and each page has a picture. Here are some examples from the test.

Nouns

[5] Güven, S., & Topbaş, S. (2014). *Türkçe erken dil gelişimi testi (TE-DİL)* [Turkish early language development test]. Ankara, Turkey: Psychology Press.

Verbs

Prepositions

Procedure

Each child was tested in a separate room where the researcher and a teacher were present. The testing with each child took between 15 and 20 minutes. The children's answers were partly audio recorded and partly filled in on a paper form. For each correct answer the child got 1 point and for a wrong answer – 0 points.

Analysis

The results of the children were coded and analyzed with ANOVA.

Results

First Testing

Comprehension Test. In the first test on comprehension, the children from both locations showed similar results. Both age groups had the same understanding of the tasks and there were no statistically significant differences in the level of understanding of the grammatical categories. In the domain of Turkish morphology, children were examined for their understanding of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and prepositions, and in syntax they had to understand the sentences and text in their mother tongue. This is shown in Table 1.

The Table shows that the values of F-criteria and p for all factors and all kind of interactions are very low. That means that none of the three factors (gender, location, and age group) and their interactions are statistically significant for the total score of the comprehension test. This indicates that the children from both age groups understood all of the grammatical and syntactic categories equally well.

Production Test. However, there were statistically significant differences in production. Both age groups of children from the first location, Wedding, showed similar results in production and there were no statistically significant differences in their knowledge. However, the results of the children from the second location, Neukölln, showed that there were statistically significant differences for both age groups. The next figure shows the total scores of the production test as a function of the independent factor "location."

Figure 1 shows that the children from Wedding were much better in production, i.e. they knew the grammatical categories in Turkish much better than the children from Neukölln. The differences are statistically significant F (1,32)=6, 6258 and p=.01488 (p< 0.05).

If we compare the results of the children by age group and location we see that these two factors mutually interact, as displayed in Figure 2.

There were no statistically significant differences in the production of the children from the first and second age group from Wedding. In this location the knowledge of the children regarding grammatical categories of Turkish morphology and syntax was similar. However, this was not the case with the children tested in Neukölln. There were statistically significant differences between the two age groups. The children comprising the older group produced all grammatical categories much better then the younger children (F (1,32)=5,6113, p=.02405 (p< 0.05). There were also differences between the younger group of children (3;6 - 4;5 years old) from both locations. The children from Wedding were much better in production than the children from Neukölln. There were no statistical differences in producing the grammatical categories between the children in the older group (4;6 – 5;6 years old). The children from both locations knew the categories equally well.

Figure 2 shows that there were no differences between the total scores of both age groups in Wedding regarding the factor "location," but there were significant differences in the total scores of both groups from Neukölln (8,2 for 4;6 – 5;6 years old and 6,2 for 3;6-4;5 years old. The other factors did not influence the results statistically. These can be seen in the next Table 2, where the values of F- criteria and p are given.

Table 1
Total scores on the comprehension test

	F	p	Partial eta-squared	Non-centrality	Observed power (alpha=0,05)
Intercept	730,7462	0,000000	0,958046	730,7462	1,000000
Location	0,1240	0,727022	0,003861	0,1240	0,063482
Gender	1,0003	0,324740	0,030312	1,0003	0,162875
Age group	3,5101	0,070153	0,098848	3,5101	0,443334
Location*Gender	0,1240	0,727022	0,003861	0,1240	0,063482
Location*Age group	0,7384	0,396574	0,022554	0,7384	0,132636
Gender*Age group	0,0335	0,855854	0,001047	0,0335	0,053625
Location*Gender*Age group	0,0335	0,855854	0,001047	0,0335	0,053625

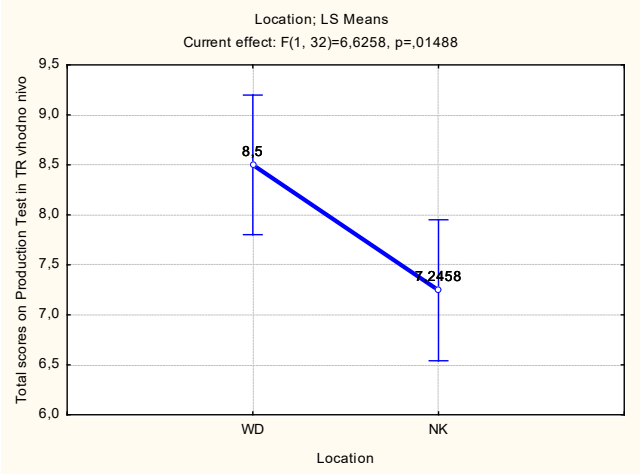

Figure 1. Total scores on the production test as a function of the independent factor "location".

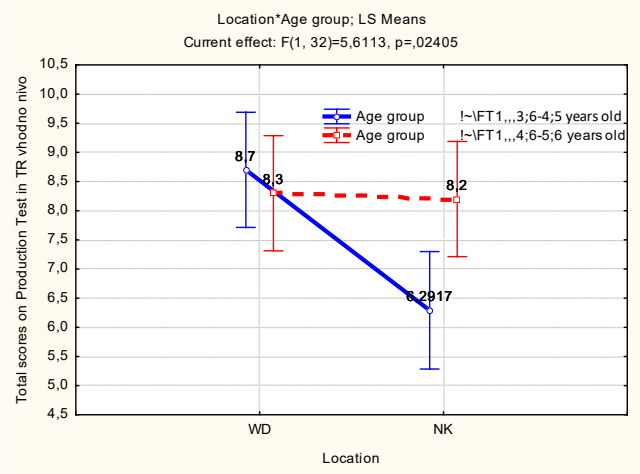

Figure 2. Total scores on the production test as a function of the interaction between factors "location" and "age group".

Second Testing

Comprehension Test. At the end of the school year, the children were tested once more. Between the first and second testing there was a time span of 6-7 months. The results are shown in Table 3.

From Table 3, the factor with significant differences on the comprehension test is the age group. However, there were no gender differences between the children taking this test. This can be seen clearly in Figure 3.

The children from the second age group (4;7-6;0 years old) were much better on the comprehension test than the children from the first age group (3;0-4;6 years old). With the increase in the age of the children, their comprehension abilities increased as well. The differences between the groups are statistically different F (1,35)=13,889; p=.00068 (p< .001).

Production Test. The results in the production test are presented in Table 4.

Again the significant factor here is the age group. The older children were better on the production test than the younger children. There were no gender differences between the children on the performance of this test. These differences are shown in Figure 4.

The differences between the age groups are statistically significant F(1,35)=4,0533; p=.05182, (p< 0.05).

When we compare the results of the comprehension tests between the first and second testing, we see that age group as a factor plays an important role. The children understand more about their L1. However, when we compare the production test between the first and second testing, we see that the children's knowledge in the production test decreased. The average raw score of the children from the second group on the first testing was 8.2, and by the second testing six months later, the raw score was 6.4. The differences are statistically significant (p<0.05). The children's knowledge about *nouns* was good to some extent, but their knowledge about *verbs, adjectives,* and

Table 2
Total scores of the production test

	F	p	Partial eta-squared	Non-centrality	Observed power (alpha=0,05)
Intercept	1044,382	0,000000	0,970271	1044,382	1,000000
Location	6,626	0,014885	0,171538	6,626	0,704106
Gender	0,579	0,452169	0,017781	0,579	0,114433
Age group	2,396	0,131490	0,069656	2,396	0,323580
Location*Gender	0,123	0,728171	0,003827	0,123	0,063362
Location*Age group	5,611	0,024048	0,149192	5,611	0,632083
Gender*Age group	0,309	0,582172	0,009563	0,309	0,083937
Location*Gender*Age group	0,309	0,582172	0,009563	0,309	0,083937

Table 3
Gender and age group on the raw scores on the comprehension test

	F	P	Partial eta-squared	Non-centrality	Observed power (alpha=0,05)
Intercept	337,2376	0,000000	0,905974	337,2376	1,000000
Gender	0,0216	0,884094	0,000616	0,0216	0,052341
Age group	13,8889	0,000683	0,284091	13,8889	0,951818
Gender*Age group	2,2866	0,139475	0,061325	2,2866	0,312644

prepositions appeared to be worsening. At the same time, their ability to *create sentences with given words* and the production of a *narrative* was also very poor.

Discussion

This study showed that the children from the first and second testing knew the *nouns* well but as their age increased their knowledge of the *verbs, prepositions, and sentence/narrative creation* worsened. Unfortunately, my hypothesis that the lessons in Turkish as a mother tongue would help the children increase their knowledge of their mother tongue was not fulfilled.

The principal questions raised by the findings are: Why does the competence of the children in production decline as they grow a bit older? Why can the children not speak their Turkish L1 as well as they grow somewhat older? What are the reasons for the children not knowing their mother tongue well as they progress in school? In the kindergartens there are mother-tongue lessons once a week where a teacher comes and speaks with them in Turkish, reads books, and they are taught to sing songs in Turkish, but during the rest of the time the children are not allowed to speak Turkish. The teaching staff, some of whom are also of Turkish origin, forbid the children to speak their mother tongue and put demonstrable pressure on the children to speak German only. In addition, the teachers explain to parents that for the good of their children, they should not speak with them at home in Turkish but should try to use only German.

The probable hypothesis here is that the children growing up in such an environment start to think that their mother tongue is something negative. They unconsciously develop negative attitudes toward their L1, feeling ashamed that they speak it, and they get the impression from the teachers that if they speak German only, that will be better for them. They are being acculturated by the educational system to

Table 4
Gender and age group on the raw scores on the production test

	F	p	Partial eta-squared	Non-centrality	Observed power (alpha=0,05)
Intercept	181,4692	0,000000	0,838314	181,4692	1,000000
GenderPr	0,1501	0,700820	0,004269	0,1501	0,066423
Age group Pr	4,0533	0,050000	0,103790	4,0533	0,499231
GenderPr*Age group Pr	2,1541	0,151120	0,057977	2,1541	0,297561

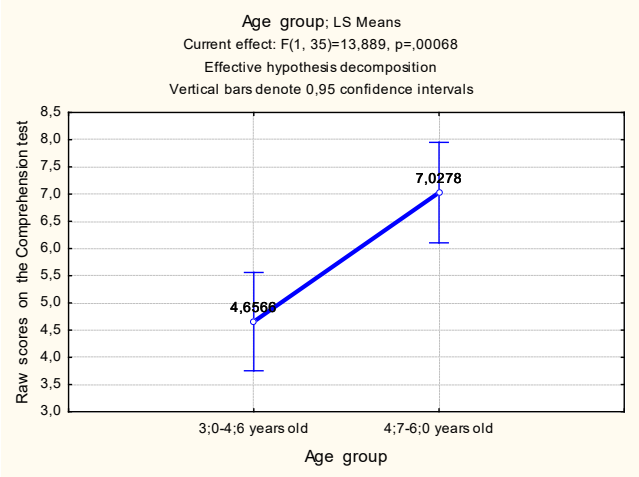

Figure 3. Raw scores on the comprehension test as a function of age group as an independent factor.

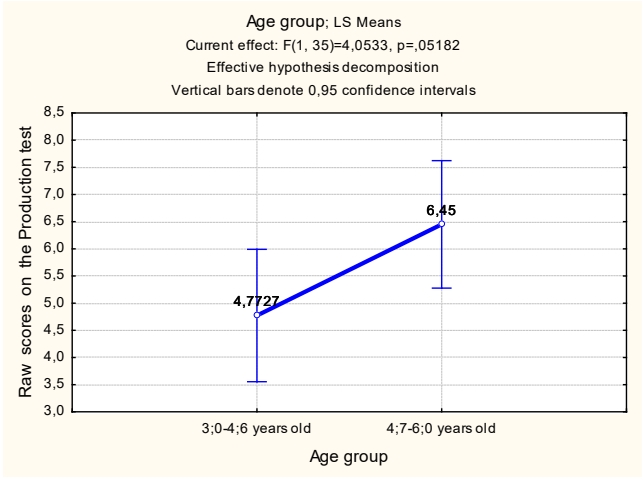

Figure 4. Raw scores on the production test as a function of age group as an independent factor.

value a knowledge of German and at the same time to devalue the knowledge of their natural home language. Many of the teachers, it can be argued, do not realize the kind of deleterious impact such an approach has on the children and their development of literacy skills at this age. That is because the children speak Turkish at home in communication with their parents and grandparents but very often the parents also speak some dialect of Turkish or they speak "broken" Turkish. So the only place where the children can learn proper and correct standard Turkish is in kindergarten or at school. However, there the children do not receive proper support either. Growing up with "broken" colloquial Turkish, however defined linguistically, i.e. Turkish deviating from more standard forms, is an obstacle for better understanding and learning of the official language as well, i.e standard German. The gaps in the knowledge of the mother tongue from pre-school age constitute an obstacle for learning the grammatical categories in the second language as well (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Cummins, 2001, 2009).

So are Turkish children losing their L1 growing up? According to Haynes (2010) "language loss can occur on two levels. It may be on a personal or familial level, which is often the case with immigrant communities in the United States, or the entire language may be lost when it ceases to be spoken at all." National and official languages can sometimes differ. In some cases there are countries that do not have an official language (such as the United States) but have a national language (Haynes, 2010). The use of the national language is reinforced through government and educational institutions, television and radio, and private businesses. Often the national language takes over absolute prominence at all levels of social and economic life and excludes other languages, which are minority or migrant/refugee languages. This is termed "linguicism" in international research on bilingualism. In Skutnabb-Kangas' classic definition (1995, p. 42), linguicism is defined as "ideologies and structures that are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their mother tongues)." Templer (2016) discusses such current "linguicism" in state educational policy today directed against speakers of Turkish and Romani as a home language in Bulgaria.

MacGregor-Mendoza (2000) reports about the experiences of Spanish-speaking immigrants in US schools, where some teachers would punish them for speaking even a word of their home language. Her informants came to feel that Spanish was inappropriate or inferior (some were told explicitly that it was "dirty"), and many reported that they abandoned it when raising their own children.

Another example from the US pertains to Native American students who historically are a classic example of assimilation to English. Beginning in the late 1800s, mandatory boarding schools were established for the purpose of eradicating Native American languages and cultures. The founder of the boarding school system, General Richard C. Pratt, is famous for saying of his schools that they would, "kill the Indian to save the man." Students were kept away from their families and communities for years and were punished, often harshly, for speaking their home languages (Child, 1998). As a result of their experiences, many Native American parents refused to teach their children their heritage languages to protect them from similar hardships. Smitherman (1995) has discussed this issue in the US and elsewhere, phrased as "students' right to their own language," a classic formulation in terms of basic educational rights (see also Templer, 2016, p. 155-156).

Another example is the case of Yiddish, in the USA,

where English was strictly required of children by their teachers early in the 20th century, and Yiddish, the mother tongue of Eastern European Jewish immigrants was thus lost.

The situation in Europe with minorities is not different. For example, a highly authoritarian, nationalist example of assimilation was the practice initiated for supposedly "integrating" the sizable Turkish-speaking minority in socialist Bulgaria in the 1980s, where Turkish and Muslim Roma family and first names were changed by force (1984) and it was forbidden for them to speak Turkish or Romani between 1984 and 1990. The minority languages were forbidden to be used in public places and in schools. Anyone who was 'caught' even saying a single word in their mother tongue was punished and arrested by police or state secret services. The children in kindergartens and in schools were beaten or punished for speaking their mother tongues at school.

After the democratic changes in Europe in 1990s the situation did not change much in actual fact, despite lip service to being paid to adopting democracy, such as in Bulgaria today (Templer, 2016). The Hungarians in Slovakia, the Roma in many European countries, and the Turks in Germany still face discrimination in society for using their mother tongue, although official documents say that they have the right to study their language and they are free to use it. The author has personally witnessed how kindergarten and primary school teachers forbid the children to use their mother tongue between themselves during class activities or during the free recess time in the playground in several countries around Europe. Many times I have heard teachers saying to Turkish children in Berlin: "Do not speech Turkish! Speak German! This is Germany!" Such attitudes and their reinforcement by school authorities serve to lead to language loss and perhaps an undermining of a solid foundation for such learners to develop literacy to a strong sustained level even in their second language, German.

The results from the research advances several hypotheses about why children appear to begin to 'unlearn' their L1 as they grow somewhat older, and why children in one kindergarten investigated differed in their production competence in Turkish compared to children of the same age in another Berlin-district kindergarten. Also significant is the situation of home language neglect in Berlin, and across most of the US currently, in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs, as well as early grades of school. As a 2018 report by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University in the US states: "More than 20 percent of all preschool-aged children in the United States speak a language other than English at home, yet most state pre-K programs do not collect data on children's home language, making it nearly impossible to design effective supports for young dual language learners (DLLs)"[6].

Another factor requiring empirical research not touched on here is access to books in the L1 at home and in libraries in their Berlin localities. To what extent are children reading picture books and other appropriate children's texts in Turkish outside of school? To what extent do school libraries seek to acquire a collection of such books where there are significant proportions of children speaking Turkish as an L1? Empirical research on this is necessary and would probably show significant neglect in Berlin and other German cities. An entirely separate issue whole separate question is communicating with parents of such pupils as key literacy development stakeholders also to involve their children in voluntary reading of picture books, for example, in their home language at an early age and reading such books to them (NIER, 2018).

The research here, although conducted with a limited number of children, shows indirectly a clear tendency in the attitude of the teaching staff in German schools towards the mother tongue of the migrant children. Large numbers of Turkish migrants have been in the German Federal Republic since the 1960s and there is already a third generation, but still the children in kindergartens are not provided with adequate mother-tongue education and a foundation for literacy in their home language. Moreover, there are few in any state initiatives at the pre-k level, as are currently being called for in the US7 (NIER, 2018).

Conclusion

The research findings showed that the children's knowledge in their mother tongue is not increasing but exactly the opposite – it is decreasing. My hypothesis that the lessons in Turkish that the children get once a week in the kindergartens will help them to increase their knowledge in their L1 Turkish was not proven. Although the kindergarten in Wedding encourages children to speak Turkish, encourages the parents to talk to their children in Turkish in their home environments, to read books and to play using Turkish among themselves with the expectation that it helps the children develop much better knowledge in their mother tongue, still the results of the children from the second testing was not so high.

[6] Rutgers Today. (2018, May 26). New pre-k report finds state policy for young dual language learners needs improvement. *Rutgers Today*. Retrieved from https://news.rutgers.edu/new-pre-k-report-finds-state-policy-young-dual-language-learners-needs-improvement/20180418#.WwzugNR94sY

[7] Ibid.

The situation in the kindergarten in Neukölln was markedly different. There the teachers do not allow the children to speak Turkish among themselves and there is no such support as in the kindergarten in Wedding. The results of the children from Neukölln between the two groups showed significant statistical differences. Their knowledge was worse than the knowledge of the children from Wedding.

The research findings are alarming, and action should be taken to preserve the mother tongue among bilingual preschool children because the mother tongue is one of the important tools for cognitive development at an early age. The lack of knowledge of some important grammatical categories in the mother tongue gives later in the preschool difficulties with the literacy process in the primary classes.

The limitations of the study are the small number of the children included in the testing process and the small numbers of test batteries. However, the results still show some important tendencies that should be considered because the phenomenon of language loss among children in early ages is known from scientific literature on other languages.

This study should be repeated with a larger number of Turkish children growing up in different social surroundings – in small towns and in villages. Then perhaps the picture will be fuller and more information about the knowledge of children on their mother-tongue grammar will come out.

In order to develop the mother tongue of these children, the kindergartens should increase the lessons to at least four lessons per week. One lesson per week is not enough for the development of the children's knowledge. More training for parents should be done on the importance of speaking and reading books in Turkish in the home environment. The parents should be educated about the importance of the mother tongue in the cognitive development of the children.

From the other side, the teaching staff should be more supportive for children, encouraging them to speak their mother tongue freely in the kindergarten. The policymakers should introduce special lectures about the importance of mother-tongue education in the cognitive development of the child in universities and other institutions preparing preschool teachers.

For the time being all the activities to promote mother-tongue education are private initiatives. The research suggests that not much can be done when relying only on private initiatives. The children begin to "unlearn" their mother tongue already at a fairly young age, likely impacting their cognitive development. So, the question of L1 maintenance and the deepening of solidly grounded literacy therein, both for comprehension and production (spoken and written) remains a question "to be or not to be."

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Role Playing in Storytelling Classes and Its Impact on Iranian Young EFL Learners' Narrative Writing

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The present study aimed to investigate the effect of role playing in storytelling classes on Iranian young EFL learners' narrative writing. Forty-seven pre-intermediate young EFL learners who were within the age range of 9 and 16 participated in this study. They were members of four intact classes, which consisted of two classes of boys and two classes of girls. One class of boys and one class of girls were randomly assigned to the experimental groups and the other two to control groups. The researchers used the role-playing technique for storytelling classes in the experimental groups and only reading stories aloud for storytelling classes in the control groups. After the treatment, the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to compare the four groups' improvement on narrative writing. The results signified that the use of role playing in the storytelling classes had a significant impact on the narrative writing of Iranian young EFL learners as compared to the reading stories aloud technique. Furthermore, the findings showed that using role playing in storytelling classes enhanced learners' understanding of the narrative writing style and patterns of the target language.

Keywords: narrative writing, reading a story aloud, role play, storytelling, young EFL learners

The act of writing as a multifaceted process requires the coordination of numerous low and high-level skills (Smith, 2011) no matter which type of writing; that is, expository, descriptive, persuasive, or narrative is employed. When authors write in a narrative style, they do not merely try to impart information, but they attempt to construct and communicate a story, complete with characters, conflict, and settings[1]. The present study aimed to examine whether the use of the role-playing technique in storytelling classes affects Iranian young EFL learners' narrative writing. In line with Huang (2008), we believe that the technique can change the atmosphere of EFL classes and help students learn to use the language more realistically and practically.

Writing instruction usually occurs after children enter school, whereas children's oral language skills begin to develop long before children receive their first writing lesson. Therefore, we believe that storytelling can help teachers manipulate oral skills for the improvement of the writing skill, which is usually difficult for EFL learners. One source of difficulty emerges from the fact that writing cannot be practiced through real-life conversations or situations (Raftari, Ismail, & Eng, 2016).Another severe problem in teaching writing, as pointed out by Cook (2000), is that some learners refuse to undertake any writing tasks. We believe that this problem can be solved by resorting to the role-playing technique because it can encourage learners to participate in writing tasks eagerly.

For improving young learners' writing skill, we believe that strategies should be used that engage students in the process of instruction and we should

[1] Jeffrey, R. (2016). *About writing: A guide*. Austin, TX: Open Oregon Educational Resources.

also teach writing implicitly. By employing role playing, as Smith (2011) put forward, we manipulate oral language to become a natural foundation for the writing skill. However, the research literature exploring the relationship between oral language and text-level writing is limited, and few studies have examined the impact of oral language on composition writing. The results of this study suggest teachers consider the technique for teaching narrative writing.

Literature Review

Narration has been the basic model of recounting information throughout history, and it is through narration that human ideas and emotions are shared (Fraser, 2015). Narrative writing is something like writing a story or report of events, personal experiences, or any similar events, whether they are real or fictional[2]. As Harmer (2004) maintained, limitations of certain genres influence the process of writing, and writing is a process with different stages that needs planning and training. Also, Boardman (2002) pointed out that writing is a process of thinking and organizing, rethinking, and reorganizing. As a result, planning and models are necessary for writing a good story.

Narrative writing is a difficult skill for learners in EFL classrooms because they do not know where to begin and how to organize the materials, and thus put things in inappropriate places, which makes their products meaningless[3]. Thus, Birjandi and Malmir (2009) signified that the task-based approach was more effective for teaching narrative writing compared to the traditional approach. They asserted that one of the reasons for the outperformance of the task-based classes in comparison to the traditional classes is the collaborative and interactive nature of the task-based approach where language use and language learning take place simultaneously. Moreover, Abbasi (2017) investigated the effect of using task-based activities on the narrative writing performance and showed that such activities enhanced the narrative writing of Iranian EFL learners. Also, Adam (2015) studied the effect of short stories on the narrative writing of EFL learners in Al-Baha University and concluded that using short stories in EFL classrooms positively contributes to the progress of students' narrative writing.

As stated above, this study investigated the impact of the role-playing technique on improving learners' narrative writing. In this regard, we can refer to constructivism as one of the theories that shaped the theoretical basis of the study. Constructivists believe learning occurs through social intervention in which learners construct knowledge from their environment (Ormrod, 2012). One outcome of constructivism is the communicative approach to language instruction (Canale, 1983), and its central tenet is the need to practice language functions in different situations to achieve communicative competence in written and oral discourse. Role playing, as one of the techniques that is employed in the communicative approach to teaching a second language, involves giving a real or fictional role to one or more members of a group and assigning an objective or purpose that the participants must accomplish (Brown, 2001). It provides different situations for learners to communicate with each other and practice the language. The interactive feature of role playing makes the target language comprehensible with support systems like body gestures, and positive and negative feedback alerts. Like other types of play (Rogers & Evans, 2008), role playing can foster the healthy growth and development of young children and can support learning.

It is worth mentioning that there are two types of learning; that is, active and passive. Active learning engages learners directly in the learning process in some way and at differing degrees of interaction, whereas passive learning occurs indirectly and without interaction. Active learning is preferred because it triggers cognitive functioning and is related to the theory of situated cognition where one's actions and understandings are governed by environmental clues in physical and social settings (Rogers, 2017). The role-playing technique is in the category of active learning as it involves the participation of learners in tasks or draws their attention to the flow of events in the classroom. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), within the framework of flow theory, eight components are needed to produce the optimal conditions for learning; they include: manageable tasks, deep concentration, clear goals, immediate feedback, effortless involvement, learner autonomy, a metamorphosis of self, and suspension of time. Most of these seem to be present in role playing.

The critical feature of role playing is that learners can become someone they want for a short time, for example, a captain, an old man, a prisoner, or a wealthy man, which may reduce the fear of speaking because it is the characters that make mistakes, not them (Golebiowska, 1987). Role-play strategies have shown their effectiveness in teaching English to learners, as role play can increase students' enthusiasm, self-confidence, and empathy, and encourage critical thinking (Alabsi, 2016). A review of the literature shows that several researchers have indicated the benefits of employing the role-playing technique. For example, Tompkins (1998) used the role-playing

[2] Baldick, C. (2008). *Oxford dictionary of literary terms*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

[3] Kies, D. (1995). *Coherence in writing: The hyper textbooks*. Retrieved fromhttp://papyr.com/hypertextbooks/comp1/coherent.htm

technique for teaching conversation and found out that it is an extremely valuable method for L2 learning; it encourages thinking and generates creativity. Tompkins believed that role playing could help students practice the new language in a relatively non-threatening setting. Also, Sadeghi and Sharifi (2013) who studied the effect of role playing, games, narrative writing, and speaking tasks on the vocabulary gain of elementary Iranian EFL learners showed that role play leads to the highest vocabulary gain compared to other strategies. Besides, Toumpaniari, Loyens, Mavilidi, and Paas (2015) indicated that learning by embodying words through physical activities boosts children's learning. Additionally, Altun's (2015) case study on the implementation of role-playing activities discovered that such activities enhanced the participants' self-confidence, motivation, and the foreign language speaking skills.

On the other hand, the rationale behind the use of role playing to teach narrative writing via short stories can relate to implicit learning. Implicit learning plays a role in language acquisition and often involves learning a set of rules of some paradigm. As originally conceptualized by Reber (1967), studies of implicit learning focus on the acquisition of the underlying structure of a context, such as the acquisition of rules of an artificial grammar that underlie strings of letters, without intention or awareness. Implicit learning has been broadly defined as learning without awareness or the ability to derive information about the world in an unconscious, non-reflective way (Winter & Reber, 1994). Ellis (1994) attributed specific characteristics to implicit learning. As Ellis argued, implicit learning is accessible, abstract and structured, and it can be analyzed and transferred into explicit knowledge. According to Ellis, implicit learning happens through the use of language naturally. Different scholars (e.g., Evans, Saffran, & Robe-Torres, 2009; Leung & Williams, 2011) have conducted studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of implicit learning is SLA. The present study investigated whether the participants implicitly learned concepts like style, pattern, and organization from role-playing techniques and used them in their narrative writing.

It is difficult to imagine that one could comprehend written texts or construct written sentences without having some knowledge of the various aspects of oral language such as vocabulary and grammar; thus, children who are not strong enough in oral language skills may be limited in their ability to express themselves adequately in writing (Smith 2011). Teitelbaum and Gillis (2004) insisted that drama instruction is an arts-based teaching method and it is positively correlated with writing quality. Moore and Caldwell (1990, 1993) examined the value of drama work as a rehearsal for writing and looked at how drama promotes narrative writing with primary school children. One of the values of developing drama with young learners is that it engages them in thinking, doing, and imagining so that when they begin to compose texts, they weave these threads together in unexpected and exciting ways (Crumpler, 2005).

Thus, the following research question and null hypothesis were formulated to serve the purpose of the study, which was investigating the effect of role playing in storytelling classes on the narrative writing of young EFL learners. Does the employment of role plays in storytelling classes affect the narrative writing of Iranian young EFL learners? According to the authors' hypothesis, there is no statistically significant difference between the narrative writing of Iranian young EFL learners who engage in role playing of short stories and those who read them aloud.

Materials and Methods

Participants

The participants in this study included 47 pre-intermediate young EFL learners within the age range of 9 to 16 in an English language institute in Tehran. They were members of four intact classes, which consisted of two classes of boys and two classes of girls. Participants were selected based on convenience sampling. One class of boys consisted of 12 learners, and one class of girls consisted of 13 learners randomly assigned to the experimental groups. The other two classes assigned to the control groups consisted of 13 boys and 9 girls. The participants were screened via the placement test administered by the institute, and all participants were in pre-intermediate level (studying the final part of American English File 1); thus, no general proficiency test, as a homogenizing test, was administered.

Instruments

The Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) eighth-grade writing rubric (Appendix A) was the instrument that the researchers used for assessment of the narrative writing of the participants in the Pre-test and Post-tests. The GADOE rubric was developed in 2007 and is a holistic tool to produce an analytic score providing information about students' writing performance including areas of strength and challenge[4]. The GADOE narrative writing rubric is

[4] Georgia Department of Education (GADOE). (2014). English Language Arts (ELA) writing rubrics (pp. 63-65). *Georgia Milestones Grade 8 EOGStudy/Resource Guide for Students and Parents*. Retrieved from https://www.clayton.k12.ga.us/UserFiles/

designed to analyze the domains of writing and reflects the students' overall performance on a composition, using predetermined scoring criteria on a four-point scale in each domain; ideas, organization, style, and conventions[5]. Rubrics assist the raters by providing articulated expectations and scales for measuring the achievement and well-constructed rubrics provide a common language that clarifies expectations, benefiting both teachers and students (Miller, 2010).

Materials

The present study employed a collection of stories that the researcher had gathered from different websites (Appendix B). The selection of the stories was based on the applicability of assigning the characters of the story to students that then employed the role-playing technique in the experimental groups. The English teacher in this research used this collection of stories for both participants in the experimental and control groups.

Design and Variables

The present study was a quasi-experimental study because the participants were not selected randomly. The design selected for the study was the non-equivalent control group Pre-test/Post-test design. This is one of the designs used for quasi-experimental studies in which two independent groups are selected non-randomly. The study intended to investigate the effect of role playing in storytelling classes on Iranian young EFL learners' narrative writing. Role playing was the independent variable and narrative writing was the dependent variable in this study.

Procedure

There were two experimental groups and two control groups in this study. The experimental groups consisted of one group of boys and one group of girls. The control groups also comprised one group of boys and one group of girls. This study was implemented during one term in an English language institute in Tehran. Each term in the institute consisted of 16 sessions, and each session took 90 minutes The whole term took eight weeks, and there were two sessions each week. The researchers used the role-playing technique for storytelling classes in the experimental groups and only reading stories aloud for storytelling classes in the control groups.

Experimental groups

The experimental groups consisted of one group of boys and one group of girls. Participants in these groups were exposed to the treatment that involved role playing while reciting the stories. In each session, the teacher handed out the stories and gave a general view of the stories and the characters. Then the teacher assigned different characters to volunteers based on the story that had to be practiced the following session and explained about the realia that they could use and how they had to play their roles. Participants could use photos, masks, and other aids for their performance. Those who volunteered memorized the dialogues and practiced their roles at home. Similar to the control groups, the teacher asked the participants to read the stories at home in advance. The following session, the teacher asked volunteers to play the roles in the story in front of their classmates. Players were permitted to write their dialogues on cards and, if they forget what to say, they could use the cards.

For the initial sessions, most of the participants did not tend to volunteer to play the roles in the stories in front of their classmates; therefore, the teacher selected the stories that needed only two or three main players for the initial sessions. After three sessions, most of the participants eagerly volunteered to play the roles in the stories. There were some differences between the performances of the boys and girls. The players in the boys' group were often looking for opportunities to say something outside of the story to make their classmates laugh or to perform something outside of the predetermined roles to have fun. In contrast, the girl players frequently stuck to their dialogue and roles to do their best. Another difference was related to reciting the dialogues of the stories. Most of the players in the boys' group did not recite their dialogues from memory and looked at the role cards.

In comparison, most of the girl players recited their dialogues from memory and seldom needed to look at the role cards. After the role play, the teacher asked the participants to discuss the story and make their comments. Participants were exposed to the treatment for 13 sessions over seven weeks.

Control groups

The control groups consisted of one group of boys and one group of girls. Participants in the control groups read the stories aloud in the class. They had to read the stories in advance at home. In each session, the teacher first asked the participants to define the new vocabulary items and then gave more explanations if it was necessary to clarify the meaning of the new vocabulary items. Some problems were noticed in the

Servers/Server_54431/File/Resources/GMASGuides/Grade%208/Grade%208%20Language%20Arts%20-%20Sample%20Rubrics.pdf

[5] Ibid.

control groups by the teacher. Most of the participants in the control group classes did not read the stories in advance at home or find the meaning of the new vocabulary items. Participants in the control groups got bored because they had to read the stories several times in the classroom. Reading the stories aloud in the control groups was less time-consuming than role playing in the experimental classes; thus, the participants in the control groups had extra time to practice. After reading a story, the teacher asked the participants to discuss the story and comment on its content.

Pre-test. The teacher administered the Pre-test during the first session. She gave a topic to all of the participants in the experimental and control groups, and they wrote a story about *a memory that they will never forget* as the Pre-test. At the beginning of the Pre-test, the teacher explained that they could write either real or fictional stories or the combination of the two.

Post-tests. In order to compare the efficiency of the teaching method in each of the groups, the teacher administered the Post-tests immediately after the completion of the treatment with the same topic from the Pre-test and with a different topic during the following session. In the first session after the treatment, the teacher asked students to write a story about *a memory that they will never forget,* and during the following session, the teacher asked them to write a story about *a scary dream they had*. The teacher chose a time limitation of one hour for writing the stories, which could be real or fictional or a combination of the two.

Results

Different statistical analyses were conducted to answer the research question of this study that stated: 'Does the employment of role plays in storytelling classes affect the narrative writing of Iranian young EFL learners?' An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the narrative writing of the experimental and control groups on the Pre-test before the advancement of the study. The results in Tables 1 and 2 illustrate that there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of the experimental (M=10.84, SD=1.95) and control groups (M=11.27, SD=1.86) on the Pre-test, t(45)=2.89, p=0.44.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the mean differences between the experimental and control groups on the two Post-tests.

It is apparent from Table 3 that the means of the experimental groups on the first and second Post-tests (M=13.40; M=13.00) are higher than the control groups (M=11.91; M=11.32).

Table 4 reports the normality of the distribution of the scores. To ensure that the participants were normally distributed in each of the experimental and control groups, and due to the number of the participants totaling fewer than 100, a Shapiro-Wilk test was run. The results indicated no significant differences between the two groups; thus, it could be concluded that the scores in both groups were normally distributed. According to Table 4, the experimental groups for the first Post-test (p=.105) and second Post-test (p=.058); the control groups for the first Post-test (p=.115) and second Post-test (p=.066) showed a normal distribution of scores.

In the next step, it was necessary to ensure that, for each of the levels of the between-subject variables, the pattern of intercorrelation among the levels of within-subjects variables was the same. Box's M statistic tested the null hypothesis that the observed covariance

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Groups

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Experimental	25	10.8400	1.95107	.39021
	Control	22	11.2727	1.85631	.39577

Table 2
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		t-test for Equality of Means		
F		Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	.614	.437	-.776	45	.442	-.43273	.55759

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics

	Gen	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre-test	Male	Experimental	11.0000	2.13201	12
		Control	11.9231	1.38212	13
	Female	Experimental	10.6923	1.84321	13
		Control	10.3333	2.12132	9
	Total	Experimental	10.8400	1.95107	25
		Control	11.2727	1.85631	22
First Post-test	Male	Experimental	13.0833	2.10878	12
		Control	12.4615	1.33012	13
	Female	Experimental	13.6923	1.65250	13
		Control	11.1111	1.96497	9
	Total	Experimental	13.4000	1.87083	25
		Control	11.9091	1.71573	22
Second Post-test	Male	Experimental	13.0000	1.90693	12
		Control	12.0769	1.44115	13
	Female	Experimental	13.0000	1.73205	13
		Control	10.2222	1.92209	9
	Total	Experimental	13.0000	1.77951	25
		Control	11.3182	1.86155	22

Table 4
Shapiro-Wilk's Tests of Normality

Group	**First Post-test**		**Second Post-test**	
	Statistic	**Sig.**	**Statistic**	**Sig.**
Experimental	0.922	0.105	0.913	0.058
Control	0.929	0.115	0.917	0.066

matrices of the dependent variables were equal across groups. Table 5 indicates that the assumption was met (F=1.349, *p*=.146).

Table 5
Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

Box's M	28.022
F	1.349
df1	18
df2	5193.052
Sig.	.146

Table 6 indicates that there was a change in the narrative writing ability of the participants in the Post-tests (Wilks' Lambda value=0.194, F=56.652, *p*< .001). The eta squared value was 0.806, showing a large effect size (utilizing the commonly used guidelines by Cohen, 1988, namely, 0.01= small, 0.06=moderate, 0.14=large).

Table 7 shows the results of the Levene's test for the homogeneity of variances (*p*>.05) which legitimizes conducting the test of between-subjects effects.

As Table 8 indicates, there was a significant difference between the narrative writing of the participants in the experimental and control groups on both Post-tests (*p*<.05). The partial eta squared values for the first Post-test (η2=0.180), and second Post-test (η2=0.232) show that using role playing in storytelling classes by itself accounted for 18% of the overall variance on the first Post-test and almost 23% on the second Post-test.

a. Squared = .221 (Adjusted R Squared = .167)

b. Squared = .283 (Adjusted R Squared = .233)

As Table 9 shows, the experimental groups outperformed the control groups on both Post-tests (MD1=1.601; MD2=1.85; *p*<.05).

Discussion

The results obtained from the statistical analysis showed that the use of role playing in storytelling classes had a more significant effect on the narrative writing of Iranian young EFL learners than the reading a story aloud technique. The finding can be related to constructivism, which is the dominant learning

Table 6
Multivariate Tests

	Effect	Value	F	df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.985	912.086	3.000	41.000	.000	.985
	Wilks' Lambda	.015	912.086	3.000	41.000	.000	.985
	Hotelling's Trace	66.738	912.086	3.000	41.000	.000	.985
	Roy's Largest Root	66.738	912.086	3.000	41.000	.000	.985
Groups	Pillai's Trace	.806	56.652	3.000	41.000	.000	.806
	Wilks' Lambda	.194	56.652	3.000	41.000	.000	.806
	Hotelling's Trace	4.145	56.652	3.000	41.000	.000	.806
	Roy's Largest Root	4.145	56.652	3.000	41.000	.000	.806

Table 7
Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
First Post-test	1.594	3	43	.205
Second Post-test	.822	3	43	.489

Table 8
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	First Post-test	38.024[a]	3	12.675	4.073	.012	.221
	Second Post-test	51.394[b]	3	17.131	5.646	.002	.283
Intercept	First Post-test	7278.262	1	7278.262	2338.956	.000	.982
	Second Post-test	6697.877	1	6697.877	2207.325	.000	.981
Group	First Post-test	29.456	1	29.456	9.466	.004	.180
	Second Post-test	39.324	1	39.324	12.960	.001	.232
Error	First Post-test	133.806	43	3.112			
	Second Post-test	130.479	43	3.034			
Total	First Post-test	7755.000	47				
	Second Post-test	7192.000	47				
Corrected Total	First Post-test	171.830	46				
	Second Post-test	181.872	46				

Table 9
Pairwise Comparisons Between the Post-tests

Dependent Variable	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
First Post-test	Experimental	Control	1.601*	.521	.004	.552	2.651
	Control	Experimental	-1.601*	.521	.004	-2.651	-.552
Second Post-test	Experimental	Control	1.850*	.514	.001	.814	2.887
	Control	Experimental	-1.850*	.514	.001	-2.887	-.814

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

paradigm of this study. Also, this study confirms the effectiveness of implicit instruction (Ellis, 2009), which provides learners with conditions to infer rules without awareness. Role play gives learners the opportunity to learn the rules while they are involved in language activities. The findings of the present study showed that the narrative writing of the participants was enhanced implicitly by engaging in the role-playing classes. They implicitly learned concepts like style, pattern, organization, characters, relationships, and imaginative thinking from the role-playing technique and used them in their narrative writing.

Moreover, the study showed the superiority of active learning over passive learning (Rogers, 2017). Role playing as the subset of active learning could encourage learners to participate more actively in the classroom tasks, either as observers or actors. The cognitive involvement of the students helped them to write what they had observed in the classroom. Likewise, the findings of the study can find support from flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), as role playing was successful in producing the required conditions for learning.

The results of the present study could also be verified by Crumpler (2005), who asserted that drama engages young learners in thinking, doing, and imagining so that when they begin to compose texts they weave these threads together in unexpected and exciting ways. The findings of this study are also in line with Teitelbaum and Gillis (2004), who found a positive correlation between role playing and writing ability. Additionally, this study finds support from Moore and Caldwell (1993) who examined the value of drama work as a rehearsal for writing and looked at how drama promotes the narrative writing of the primary school children. However, this study contradicts Bitchener and Ferris (2012), who asserted that strategies relevant to reading and writing should be taught explicitly.

After three sessions, most of the participants eagerly volunteered to perform the roles. The reason could be that role playing reduces the fear of the learners to participate in the activities, which is in line with Golebiowska (1987).

After the treatment, participants took two Post-tests; one was identical to the Pre-test and the second one was on an unseen topic. The reason for this design was to examine the difference between the participants' writing ability from the Pre to the Post-test. However, to control the effect of test-wiseness, the participants wrote on an unrehearsed topic, as well. The analysis of the results indicated that the difference between the experimental and control groups was larger in the second Post-test than the first Post-test. The primary reason could be that the topic of the second Post-test 'write a story about a scary dream you had' was narrower in scope than the topic for the first Post-test 'write a story about a memory that you will never forget' and it demanded more capability in the narrative writing on the side of the learners. The topic for the first Post-test was a broad topic and most of the participants wrote their stories based on a real memory (the researcher asked the students whether their stories were real or fictional). On the contrary, in the second Post-test, most of the participants wrote fictional stories because some of the participants asserted that they never remembered their dreams and some of them claimed that they had never experienced a scary one. As a result, the differences between the narrative writing of the two groups were more evident in the second Post-test, and those who engaged in the experimental groups performed better than the control groups. The second reason could be that the topic for the first Post-test was the same as the topic in the Pre-test and both groups in the experimental and control groups were familiar with it, and they did not try to improve their stories. Maybe they only tried to copy what they had remembered from the Pre-test because it was boring for them to write about the same topic. As a result, the differences between the narrative writing of the participants in the experimental and control groups were less evident in the first Post-test than the second one.

Conclusion

Writing is a complex task and EFL learners have to deal with too many variables, including coherence, cohesion, and organization, in addition to grammar and content, while engaged in a writing activity. Iranian EFL learners are confronted with a plethora of problems in writing in a second language because it is rarely utilized in real life conversations or situations (Raftari, Ismail, & Eng, 2016). Narrative writing, as one of the four main types of writing (expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative), occurs when an individual recounts an event or experience from his/her point of view (Carter, 1993). There are different ways to improve the narrative writing ability of EFL learners. The present study aimed to examine whether role playing in storytelling classes could affect Iranian young EFL learners' narrative writing ability. The analysis of the results signified that the use of role playing in the storytelling classes had a significant impact on the narrative writing of Iranian young EFL learners as compared to the reading a story aloud technique.

Furthermore, the findings signified that using role playing in storytelling classes enhanced learners' understanding of the narrative writing style and

patterns of the target language. By using the role-playing technique, all of the learners including the most silent and timid members participated in some way, either as observers or as actors. Using role playing in storytelling classes shortens the energy that is needed for teaching writing and reduces the negative impact of too many corrections. By using this technique, teachers can provide a learning atmosphere in which learners can actively participate in the process of instruction. Learning will take place in a joyful setting for both teachers and learners. We suggest researchers investigate the impact of role playing in storytelling classes on learners' interest and enthusiasm for writing. It would also be a good idea to study the effect of different genres of role playing on the narrative writing of EFL learners.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that when teachers want to use role playing in storytelling classes, they should select stories based on the applicability of assigning the characters of the stories to the learners who are participating in the role-playing activity.

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Appendix A

GADOE Eighth Grade Writing Rubric- Genre: Narrative

Points	Criteria
4	*The student's response is a well-developed narrative that fully develops a real or imagined experience based on atext as a stimulus.* • Effectively establishes a situation, a point of view, and introduces a narrator and/or characters • Organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally • Effectively uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, pacing, and reflection to develop rich, interesting experiences, events, and/or characters • Uses a variety of words and phrases consistently and effectively to convey the sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events • Uses precise words, phrases, and sensory language to convey experiences and events and capture the action • Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events • Integrates ideas and details from source material effectively • Has very few or no errors in usage and/or conventions that interfere with meaning*
3	*The student's response is a complete narrative that develops a real or imagined experience based on a text as a stimulus.* • Establishes a situation and introduces one or more characters • Organizes events in a clear, logical order • Uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, pacing, and reflection to develop experiences, events, and/or characters • Uses words and/or phrases to indicate sequence, signal shifts from one time or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events • Uses words, phrases, and details to convey events • Provides an appropriate conclusion • Integrates some ideas and/or details from the source material • Has little or no errors in usage and/or conventions that interfere with meaning*
2	*The student's response is an incomplete or oversimplified narrative based on a text as a stimulus.* • Introduces a vague situation and at least one character • Organizes events in a sequence but with some gaps or ambiguity • Attempts to use a narrative technique, such as dialogue. description, pacing, or reflection to develop experiences, events, and/or characters • Uses occasional signal words inconsistently and ineffectively to indicate sequence, signal shifts from one time or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events • Uses some words or phrases inconsistently and ineffectively to convey experiences and events and capture the action • Provides a weak or ambiguous conclusion • Attempts to integrate ideas or details from the source material • Has frequent errors in usage and conventions that sometimes interfere with meaning*
1	*The student's response provides evidence of an attempt to write a narrative based on a text as a stimulus.* • Provides a weak or minimal introduction of a situation or character • Maybe too brief to demonstrate a complete sequence of events, or signal shifts in time or setting, or show relationships among experiences and events • Shows little or no attempt to use dialogue or description • Uses words that are inappropriate, overly simple, or unclear • Provides few if any words that convey experiences or events and capture the action • Provides a minimal or no conclusion • May use few if any ideas or details from the source material (8.W.9) • Has frequent major errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning*
0	• The response is completely irrelevant or incorrect, or there is no response. • The student merely copies the text in the prompt. • The student copies so much text from the passages that there is not sufficient original work to be scored.

* Students are responsible for language conventions learned in their current grade as well as in prior grades. Refer to the language skills for eachgrade to determine the grade-level expectations for grammar, syntax, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Also, refer to the Progressive Skillschart for those standards that need continued attention beyond the grade in which they were introduced.

Appendix B
Name of the Stories

	Name of the Story	Author	Publisher	Website Address
1	Sara Says No!	NormanWhitney	Heinemann ELT	zabanAmoozan.com
2	Alissa	C.J. Moore	Macmillan Readers	zabanAmoozan.com
3	A Song for Ben	Sandra Slater	Oxford University Press	zabanAmoozan.com
4	Paul and Pierre in Paris	H.Q. Mitchell	mmpublications	zabanAmoozan.com
5	Six Sketches	Leslie Dunkling	Penguin Readers	penguinreaders.com
6	Robin Hood	John Escott	Oxford University Press	zabanAmoozan.com
7	Pirates of the Caribbean	Irene Trimble	Penguin Readers	penguinreaders.com

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An Examination of Relative Clauses in Argumentative Essays Written by EFL Learners

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Syntactic complexity has received a great deal of attention in the literature on second language writing. Relative clauses, which function as a kind of noun phrase post-modifier, are among those structures that are believed to contribute to the complexity of academic prose. These grammatical structures can pose difficulties for EFL writers even at higher levels of proficiency, and it is therefore important to determine the frequency and accuracy with which relative clauses are used by L2 learners since understanding learners' strengths and weaknesses in using these structures can inform teachers on ways to improve the process of their instruction in the writing classroom. This paper reports on a corpus-based comparison of relative clauses in a number of argumentative essays written by native and non-native speakers of English. To this end, 30 argumentative essays were randomly selected from the Persian sub-corpus of the ICLE and the essays were analyzed with respect to the relative clauses found in them. The results were then compared to a comparable corpus of essays by native speakers. Different dimensions regarding the structure of relative clauses were investigated. The type of relative clause (restrictive/non-restrictive), the relativizer (adverbial/pronoun), the gap (subject/non-subject), and head nouns (both animate and non-animate) in our two sets of data were manually identified and coded. The findings revealed that the non-native writers tended to use a greater number of relative clauses compared to their native-speaker counterparts.

Keywords: relative clauses, learner writing, argumentative essays, ICLE, LOCNESS

Understanding syntactic complexity in second/foreign language writing can be a major step towards improving the overall quality of teaching this important register in the university setting. It has recently been proposed that complexity in academic writing arises not from clausal subordination, but rather from phrasal embedding (Biber, Gray, & Poonpon, 2011). Corpus studies have shown that clausal subordination, which is used as a measure in calculating a number of complexity indices (e.g., the T-unit), is in fact more characteristic of registers such as conversation than academic writing (Biber et al., 2011). Research into noun phrases can be based on one of two possible definitions of this structure. A "noun

phrase can be used as a cover term for two major types of constructions: noun-headed phrases and pronoun-headed phrases"1. According to Biber et al.2, noun-headed phrases consist of four main components as shown below:

"Determiner + (premodification) + head noun + (postmodification and complementation)" This study focused on one type of noun phrase postmodification, namely the relative clause.

Relative clauses, which are characterized as a kind of noun phrase postmodifier, are generally classified into different categories. Diessel and Tomasello (2000) defined a relative clause as a "subordinate clause that modifies a noun or noun phrase in an associated main clause" (p. 132).

To date, there has been little agreement on whether a relationship exists between the frequency of relative clauses in learner writing and the learners' respective writing ability. For instance, in a study by Taguchi, Crawford, and Wetzel (2013), the authors found that there are more instances of that and wh-relative clauses in non-native essays of 'lower quality' compared to those of 'higher quality'. In stark contrast to this particular finding, Ferris (1994) reported that some syntactic features, among them relative clauses, were more frequent in papers written by more proficient ESL students. Similarly, Parkinson and Musgrave (2014) compared the frequency of noun phrase features in the writing of two groups of international students representing two different levels of proficiency and found that students of higher proficiency in writing tend to use more relative clauses compared to their lower-proficiency counterparts. While the previous research has mostly analyzed the use and role of relative clauses by spotting the differences between academic writing and conversation or among different academic writing sub-registers, fewer studies have compared English native and non-native speakers' writing in terms of using relative clauses.

Through this study, we hope to provide readers with a better understanding of the types of relative clauses that are frequently used by language learners and whether these patterns of use are similar to those used by writers who speak English as their first language. Previous studies have broadly looked at phrasal complexity in learner writing (e.g. Ansarifar, Shahriari, & Pishghadam, 2018; Kreyer & Schaub, 2018; Martínez, 2018; Parkinson & Musgrave, 2014; Staples, Egbert, Biber, & Gray, 2016; Yang, Lu, & Weigle, 2015), but few have narrowed down their focus to a particular feature, such as relative clauses. As mentioned by Vyatkina, Hirschmann, & Golcher (2015), "not only ubiquitous global measures of syntactic complexity but also more specific measures, namely frequencies of syntactic modifiers, can serve as developmental indices at beginning L2 proficiency levels" (p. 28). A more focused analysis of features contributing to phrasal complexity in learner writing can greatly enhance our understanding of syntactic complexity as a whole. Therefore, in the present study, instead of examining complex noun phrases in general, we seek to analyze relative clause constructions in particular. Our study will also shed light on common errors in the use of relative clauses by learners in their argumentative essays.

The present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How frequently do Iranian EFL writers make use of relative clauses in their argumentative essays?
2. How frequently do Iranian EFL writers make use of pied-piping relative clause structures in their argumentative essays?
3. How frequently do Iranian EFL writers make use of restrictive and non-restrictive relative clause constructions in their argumentative essays?
4. What kinds of head nouns (animate vs. non-animate) are frequently modified by relative clauses found in argumentative essays by Iranian EFL writers?
5. What kinds of gaps can be observed in relative clause constructions found in argumentative essays by Iranian EFL writers?
6. Is there a significant difference between the frequency of relative clauses found in argumentative essays written by Iranian EFL writers and those written by L1 English writers?

While the first five questions are aimed at providing a descriptive account of the frequency with which various types of relative clauses are used by non-native learners and native speakers of English, the final research question is central to the present study. The descriptive data will allow readers to interpret the final research question with a greater depth of understanding. For the last research question, a null hypothesis is formulated stating there is no significant difference between the frequency of relative clauses found in the two groups of essays.

Review of the Literature

According to Biber et al.3, relative clauses that modify a noun phrase can be considered as a form of

[1] Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Harlow, UK: Longman. P. 574

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

finite clausal postmodification, while nonfinite clausal postmodifiers include ed-clauses, ing-clauses, and to-clauses. As Biber (2006) noted, there is also a kind of relative clause that is called the reduced relative clause. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) proposed a different classification of relative clauses. They suggested that there are three kinds of relative clauses, which they named adnominal relative clauses, nominal relative clauses, and sentential relative clauses. "Nominal relative clauses are unique…in that they 'contain' their antecedents"4. In sentential relative clauses, a clause is the antecedent of the relative clause5. Finally, the adnominal relative clause, which is the focus of this study, is the one that is used to modify a noun phrase6.

In terms of function, relative clauses fall into two major categories: restrictive and nonrestrictive. A restrictive relative clause adds information that is of significance for identifying the head noun; a nonrestrictive relative clause, on the other hand, adds extra information to further elaborate upon the head noun; and in the latter case, a comma is used to separate the head noun from the nonrestrictive relative clause[7]. Similarly, Parideaux and Baker (1987) mentioned that "non-restrictive relative clauses are more along the lines of *parenthetical*" (p. 50). Fabb (1990) also noted that due to the fact that a restrictive relative clause is a "predicate, it must modify a nominal, and so cannot take a wide range of categories as antecedents (as NRRs can)" (p. 76).

Regarding the frequency of relative clauses, it is explained that "overall, restrictive relative clauses are much more common than non-restrictive clauses (marked by a comma) in all written registers"[8]. The following are two examples of (a) a restrictive and (b) a nonrestrictive relative clause taken from Biber et al.'s[9]:

(a) *The capital outlay may not be justified by the area* ***which may be expected to benefit by the improvement****. (ACAD)*
(b) *He looked into her mailbox,* ***which she never locked.*** *(FICT)*

Three main components of relative clauses are the head noun or antecedent, the gap, and the relativizer[10]. The head noun can either be animate or non-animate. Apparently, no research has been undertaken to examine the nature of head nouns in relative clauses and the frequency of each type of head noun in the various sub-registers of academic writing. Relative clauses can either have a subject or a non-subject gap. Compared to subject gaps, which are more difficult, non-subject relative clauses are found to be more frequent in written registers[11]. Relativizers, which are another component of relative clauses, comprise two categories: (a) relative pronouns and (b) relative adverbs[12]; and each include the following sub-categories: "a relative pronoun--*which*, *who, whom, whose, and that*--or a relative adverb--*where, when, and why.* The relative pronoun can sometimes be omitted altogether (the zero relativizer)"[13]. Concerning the distribution of relativizers, Biber et al.[14] found that the relativizers *which* and *that* are more commonly used in written registers.

English Relative clauses have been examined in different studies to compare different registers and/or languages (e.g., native vs. non-native speaker) and even to make comparisons within a sub-register of one language; and different studies have presented different pictures of the function and use of relative clauses. For instance, a study of spectroscopic articles in Physical Review showed that the percentage of relative clauses decreased from 54% of subordinate clauses in 1893-95 to 17% in 1980 and the author mentioned that this grammatical structure does not add to the 'intellectual complexity' (Bazerman, 1984). But in 1998, Kopple's study, which was a replication of Bazerman's study (1984) with some changes in the methodology and selection of the papers, indicated a slight drop (less than three percentage points) in the frequency of relative clauses from the earliest articles to the later articles, but dramatic differences in what they modified were observed (Kopple, 1998). Regarding the frequency of relative clauses, similarly, Biber and Clark (2002) noted that relative clauses are the most common type of clausal postmodifiers in written discourse, but as for their frequency through time, subtle changes were detected over the past 100 years.

Many studies have analyzed the use of relative clauses in academic writing for the purposes of drawing comparisons with spoken English or among the sub-registers of written discourse. For example, Biber and Gray (2010) indicated that more cases of relative clauses are observed in academic writing than in conversation, although this difference in frequency is not so great compared to prepositional phrases as noun postmodifiers, which are much more frequent in academic writing than conversation. In another study, it was noted that "finite relative clauses are much more common in writing than in conversation, but they are most common in newspaper writing and

[4] Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language.* London, UK: Longman, 1244
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, *Longman grammar* ..
[8] Ibid, 603
[9] Ibid, 602
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid, 608
[14] Ibid.

fiction rather than academic prose" (Biber, 2006, p. 14). Allen (2009) analyzed the role of relative clauses in a corpus of simplified news texts from three different levels, namely elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The results of his study showed that "although many RCs are retained in unmodified form across the levels, RCs are also found to be unique to specific levels, highlighting their role as simplifying devices used to modify lower level texts" (Allen, 2009, p. 585). Although traditionally many studies have considered clausal subordination measures and length of T-unit as features related to grammatical complexity in L2 writing, recently, especially after the Biber et al.' (2011) study, the focus has shifted to the noun phrasal features for predicting complexity in writing development in which relative clauses are part of the hypothesized stages proposed in this respect.

While there has been some effort to further our understanding of the use of relative clauses in learner writing, there is still much work to be done in this domain and the results from previous studies on the relationship between the use of relative clauses and the level of learners' proficiency are also somewhat inconsistent, indicating the need for a more thorough examination of the use of relative clauses in different genres of learner writing.

One important and widely-investigated register of writing is the argumentative essay. Regarding the importance of the argumentative essay, Parkinson and Musgrave (2014) point out that such essays "introduce students to the rhetorical device of presenting an argument which is very common across a range of academic disciplines and which students may be expected to use in a wide range of assignment genres" (p. 52). Nippold, Ward-Lonergan, and Fanning (2005) also note that this type of writing is a "demanding task that requires the use of complex language to analyze, discuss, and resolve controversies in a way that is clear, convincing, and considerate of diverse points of view" (Nippold et al., 2005, p. 125). Finally, Crowhurst (1990) mentions that argumentative writing is significant "both for academic success and for general life purposes" (p. 349).

Many university programs now require students to practice their academic writing skills by composing argumentative texts, and the "educational challenge that many university EFL students face is the production of written academic arguments as part of their required essays" (Bacha, 2010, p. 229). As a result, numerous studies have been carried out to provide a better understanding of the lexico-grammatical features of learner writing in argumentative essays. Since the elements of persuasion and critical evaluation are of crucial importance in argumentative essays (i.e., the writer has to support his/her position regarding a particular issue) and because relative clauses have been said to perform an evaluative and persuasive function in writing (Tse & Hyland, 2009), an investigation of these structures in argumentative essays by second/foreign language learners can be of particular interest and significance. In spite of this, relatively little attention has been paid to the role of relative clauses in this particular register.

Materials and Methods

Data collection

The corpus used in this study consisted of 60 learner-written argumentative essays (199,215-word tokens). One sub-corpus of this study consisted of 30 essays written by students majoring in English as a foreign language both at the undergraduate and graduate levels at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. In this regard, students were asked to write their essays in at least 700 words on a predefined topic and under untimed conditions. In addition to writing the essay, participants were also asked to complete a learner profile form (see Appendix) in which they were required to answer some questions about their language learning background, such as the languages they knew, the number of years they had studied English and whether or not they had formerly resided in an English-speaking country. They were also asked to mention the resources they had used in composing the essay. The topic of the 30 essays included in the learner corpus was: The prison system is outdated. No civilized society should punish its criminals; it should rehabilitate them. Finally, by signing the learner profile form, they consented to having their essay used for research purposes. A parallel corpus of argumentative essays by native speakers of English was also used. This corpus also consisted of the same number of essays randomly selected from the Louvain Corpus of Native-speaker Essays (LOCNESS) with approximately the same number of words. Argumentative essays in the LOCNESS were written by undergraduate students for whom English was a native language. The topics of the 30 essays from LOCNESS dealt with issues related to capital punishment, crime, and feminism. LOCNESS includes also includes literary essays, which were not included in the present study. Table 1 shows the details of the two corpora used in the present study.

Table 1
The NS and NNS Corpus of the Study

Corpus	Number of essays	Average essay length	Total number of words
NS	30	585.40	17,562
NNS	30	656.10	19,027

Coding

As mentioned in the Review of the Literature, relative clauses can be either restrictive or non-restrictive15, and in our analysis, whenever a relative clause served to add extra information to the head noun, it was identified as a non-restrictive relative clause. The *reduced relative clauses and sentence relatives* were not featured in the present study; and pied-piping relative clauses were separately categorized due to their different structure and analyzed in our two sets of writing. Relativizers are divided into two categories based on Biber et al.'s16 classification: relative pronouns (*which, who, whom, whose, and that*) and relative adverbs (*where, when, and why*). Zero-relativizers were not included in our analysis. As for head nouns, we used Biber's (2006) semantic classification of nouns which incorporates eight categories: *animate, cognitive, concrete, technical/ concrete, place, quantity, group/institution, and abstract/ process*; but the difference was that in this study, just two categories for the head nouns were considered, which were animate head nouns (humans or animals) versus non-animate head nouns.

Procedure

First, all relative clauses and pied-piping relative clauses were manually highlighted and checked in the two sets of essays. Then, the frequency of restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses was separately calculated manually. Among the identified relative clauses, the frequency of instances with relative pronouns and those with relative adverbs were compared. As suggested by Biber (1988), *that* relative clauses were checked in order to exclude instances of *that* complements and any instances of *that* which functioned as a demonstrative pronoun. To identify the type of head noun (animate vs. non-animate) that is more frequently modified in relative clauses within learners' writing, their frequency was calculated. Finally, the occurrence of each subject gap in all the identified relative clauses was manually coded to differentiate between subject and non-subject gaps in our two sets of essays.

Results and Discussion

The total number of relative clauses (both restrictive and non-restrictive) in 30 argumentative essays written by Iranian EFL writers was 232 (about 12 cases per 1,000 words and about three cases in every essay). A similar frequency count was carried out for the corpus of essays written by native English speakers, through which 137 relative clauses were identified (approximately seven cases per 1,000 words and about two cases in every essay; see Table 1). Overall, the frequency of relative clauses was higher in essays written by Iranian EFL writers than in native speaker essays.

Table 2 presents the overall frequency of relative clauses in argumentative essays written by Iranian writers and native English-speaking writers.

Table 2
Number of Relative Clauses per 1000 Words

Feature	NNS	NS
Relative clause	12	7

The results shown in Table 2 may be explained by the fact that more explicit instructions regarding the use of relative clauses might have been offered to Iranian learners compared to native speakers of English. This would lead to the greater use of these structures for the modification of nouns compared to other forms of noun modifiers (i.e., appositives, participle- and prepositional post-modifiers) that are commonly observed in English written discourse17.

Regarding the frequency of pied-piping relative clauses, which were separately analyzed in our study, frequency counts suggest that pied-piping structures were rarely used by both native speakers (about one case per 1,000 words) and Iranian students (0.6 instances per 1,000 words). Table 3 represents the frequency of pied-piping relative clauses.

Table 3
Number of Pied-piping Relative Clauses per 1000 Words

Feature	NNS	NS
Relative clause	0.6	1

According to Richards and Schmidt[18], pied-pining structures "are felt by many speakers of English nowadays to be quite unnatural and in some cases unacceptable" (p. 414). Therefore, the rare use of pied-pining relative clauses is not unexpected.

Excerpts from essays of both non-native and native speakers of English:

> *…the idea of "group therapy"* ***in which*** *a number if criminals gather together…*

> *…the ways* ***in which*** *knowledge is conveyed….*

The third research question of this study pertains to the frequency of restrictive and non-restrictive

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

relative clauses (see Table 4).

Table 4
Proportions of Restrictive and Non-restrictive Relative Clauses

Feature	NNS (232 rel. clauses)	NS (137 rel. clauses)
Restrictive relative clause	88.79%	91.97%
Non-restrictive relative clause	11.20%	8.02%

As can be seen in Table 4, the percentage of relative clauses that are restrictive in Iranian argumentative essays is approximately 88.79%; while it constitutes about 91.97% of relative clauses in essays by native English-speaking writers. This finding suggests that in argumentative essays written by both groups, restrictive relative clauses are used more frequently than non-restrictive relative clauses. However, a comparison between the two corpora reveals that native English speakers have used a slightly greater percentage of restrictive relative clauses in their essays. These results are in line with Biber et al.'s[19] finding that "restrictive relative clauses are much more common than non-restrictive clauses (marked by a comma) in all written registers" (p. 603). However, approximately 15% of relative clauses are non-restrictive in academic prose and fiction[20]. On the other hand, in essays written by Iranian EFL writers, only about 11.20% of relative clauses are non-restrictive and this type of relative clause forms about 8.02% of relative clauses in native speakers' essays.

Excerpts from essays of both non-native and native speakers of English:

> *A person* ***who does not like a certain minority*** *avoids being around that minority… (Restrictive relative clause)*

> *Another novel* ***that shows transmission of cultures*** *is Walker's The Color Purple. (Non-restrictive relative clause)*

Out of 232 relative clauses in Iranian essays, 12 cases (about 5.17%) included relative adverbs; and out of 137 relative clauses in native speaker essays, nine cases (about 6.56%) of relative adverbs were observed (see Table 5).

Table 5
Number and Percentage of Relativizers Across Argumentative Essays Written by Iranian EFL Writers and Native English-Speaking Writers

Feature	NNS (232 rel. clauses)	NS (137 rel. clauses)
Relative pronoun	220 (94.82%)	128 (93.43%)
Relative adverb	12 (5.17%)	9 (6.56%)

As can be seen in Table 5, both groups of writers were found to use relative pronouns more frequently as compared to relative adverbs. This observation is consistent with the results shown in Figure 8.17 in Biber et al.'s[21] study, which indicates that in academic prose, relative adverbs such as *where, when, and why* are not as frequent as relative pronouns (i.e., who, which, that).in academic prose.

Among relativizers, the results indicated that Iranian writers used the *that* relativizer more frequently (90 cases out of 232 relativizers). In essays written by Iranian writers, after *that*, the relativizer *who* (70 cases out of 232 relativizers) was more frequent and the third most frequent relativizer was *which* (44 cases out of 232 relativizers). These results differ from Biber et al.'s[22] findings which found that in academic prose, the *which* relativizer is the most frequently-observed relativizer; they also noted that *that* relativizers are very frequent as well, but not as much as *which;* and after these two relativizers, *who* is quite frequently observed in academic prose. Therefore, Iranian EFL writers seem to use the relativizer *who* more frequently, and they appear to use *which* less frequently than *that.* A possible explanation for this tendency towards using *that* might be that they have used more restrictive relative clauses in their essays, and as suggested by Biber et al.[23], *which* is mostly used with non-restrictive relative clauses and "*that* rarely occurs with non-restrictive clauses" (p. 615). Another possible explanation for this is that both groups in our study used more non-animate head nouns. Again, it was noted by Biber et al.[24] that *which* relativizers are rarely used with relative clauses containing animate head nouns. A further possible explanation for this is that the *that* relativizer is used more frequently in conversation and this may be due to the influence of conversation that led both groups of writers in our study to use it more frequently because according to Biber et al.[25], "in conversation, *which* is relatively rare, while *that* is moderately common" (p. 611). It could thus be argued that the reason Iranian writers used *who* more than *which* is due to this fact that they used more animate head nouns in their argumentative essays.

The fourth research question required analyzing the type of head noun (animate vs. non-animate) that

[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

is more frequently modified in relative clauses used in argumentative essays written by both Iranian and native English-speaking writers (see Table 6).

Table 6
The Frequency and Percentage of Head Nouns Modified in Relative Clauses Across Argumentative Essays Written by Iranian EFL Writers and Native English-Speaking Writers

Feature	NNS	NS
Animated head noun	5 (43.10%)	3 (41.60%)
Non-animated head noun	6 (56.89%)	4 (58.39%)

Note. Frequency counts are normed to 1,000 words

The results, as shown in Table 6, indicate that both groups in our study used more non-animate head nouns in their essays. The normalized frequency counts suggest that there were five (43.10%) animate head nouns versus six (56.89%) non-animate versus per 1,000 words in Iranian essays and three (41.60%) animate head nouns versus four (58.39%) non-animate per 1,000 words in essays written by native English-speaking writers. Furthermore, the proportion of animate head nouns to non-animate head nouns in both datasets was remarkably similar.

Excerpts from essays of both non-native and native speakers of English:

> *...the **individuals** who supply drugs in a country.... (Animate head nouns)*
> *The first **thing** that someone might imagine... (Non-animate head nouns)*
>
> *...**people** who speak a wide variety of languages.... (Animate head nouns)*
> *...**hardships** that they went through... (Non-animate head nouns)*

Regarding the fifth research question, this study found that the majority of the relative clauses in both cohorts had subject gaps. Table 7 summarizes the frequency of subject versus non-subject gaps in relative clauses that were used in essays by Iranian and native English-speaking writers.

Table 7
Number and Percentage of Subject and Non-Subject Gaps in Relative Clauses Across Argumentative Essays Written by Both Groups

Feature	NNS (232 rel. clauses)	NS (137 rel. clauses)
Subject gaps	188 (81.03%)	94 (68.61%)
Non-subject gaps	44 (18.96%)	43 (31.38%)

As can be seen in Table 7, subject gaps in relative clauses are more commonly used than non-subject gaps among essays written by both Iranian writers (188 cases out of 232 relative clauses; about 81.03%) and native English-speaking writers (94 cases out of 137 relative clauses; about 68.61%). These results are consistent with the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English[26], which reported that although subject gaps are reportedly processed more easily, they are more commonly used in writing than in conversation. Generally, native English-speaking students use more non-subject gaps than Iranian students and this result may be explained by the fact that non-subject gaps are more difficult to form, as claimed in Biber et al.'s[27] study.

Excerpts from essays of both non-native and native speakers of English:

> *...someone who has killed one... (Subject gap)*
> *... the first thing that someone might imagine...(Non-subject gap)*
>
> *...children who did not realize what a gun could do... (Subject gap)*
> *...reality that we experience... (Non-subject gap)*

Table 8 shows the mean value for relative clauses per 1000 words. To determine whether the mean values of relative clauses for NS and NNS groups differ significantly from each other, an independent-sample t-test was run. The t-test results are also summarized in Table 8.

The results reveal statistically significant differences ($p < .005$) in the mean values of total relative clauses and both restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses.

As shown in Table 8, Iranian NNS used a significantly greater number of relative clauses (both restrictive and non-restrictive) compared to their NS counterparts. This is largely consistent with findings reported in previous studies. Biber et al. (2011), in their proposed developmental stages of syntactic complexity, predicted that finite dependent clauses (e.g., relative clauses) are acquired during the early stages of writing development, while non-finite dependent clauses (e.g., -ed and –ing clauses) are not observed until later stages of writing development. This particular difference in the use of relative clauses by the two groups of writers in our study supports Biber et al.'s (2011) proposed model of syntactic complexity. In other words, the Iranian writers relied more on an early-stage grammatical feature (i.e., relative clause) compared to NSs, whose writing proficiency lies

[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

at the more highly developed end of the spectrum. Staples et al. (2016) also argued that there are clear developmental trends in writing development: as proficiency levels increase, there is a reduction in the clausal features and a concurrent increase in phrasal features. What these studies suggest is that writing from lower levels tends to rely more heavily on clausal features (e.g., relative clauses) while the higher levels tend to include more phrasally complex features. The more frequent occurrence of relative clauses in the corpus of NNS essays supports this hypothesis.

Biber, Gray, and Poonpon (2013) argued that the greater use of relative clauses by ESL/EFL students is due to the instruction they receive on this structure. They noted that even advanced levels of ESL grammar books, such as Focus on Grammar 3, Grammar Sense 3, and Grammar Links 3, extensively cover finite dependent clauses (e.g., conditionals and relative clauses).

Our findings also support a recent study by Staples, Egbert, Biber, and Gray (2016) in which the development of phrasal and clausal features in the writing of university students across different academic levels was examined. The authors of the latter study concluded that there are "clear developmental trends in the academic writing of L1 university-level writers" (p. 30-31). The lower-level students in their study were found to mainly use clausal features (particularly finite clauses), while the higher-level students produced more phrasal features.

Conclusion

This study investigated the frequency of relative clauses in 30 argumentative essays randomly selected from the Iranian sub-corpus of the ICLE and the results were then compared with the same number of essays written by American university students (randomly selected from the LOCNESS argumentative corpus). Different dimensions of relative clauses such as restrictive vs. non-restrictive relative clauses, relativizers, subject vs. non-subject gaps, and head nouns were analyzed in this study. Our findings showed that upper-intermediate to advanced Iranian EFL writers in this sample generally tended to use more relative clauses in their essays compared to native English-speaking writers.

The findings of this study can be of great importance to L2 writing instructors and material developers since it sheds light on differences between writing by L2 learners and writing by NSs by drawing a comparison between the use of relative clauses in the two. These differences must be carefully taken into account when designing appropriate pedagogical materials to facilitate NNS learners' syntactic development.

Given the scope of this study, a number of issues should be mentioned so they can be considered in future studies. First, due to the small sample size of the two datasets used in this study, we could not provide a detailed explanation for less common kinds of relative clauses such as pied-piping. Such features can be examined in greater depth in future investigations. A further limitation of this study is that we compared our results, which are based on argumentative essays, with results obtained from academic writing in general. One reason for this is that very few resources based exclusively on argumentative essays are available for us to make more detailed comparisons in this respect.

In addition, since Biber et al. (2011) have argued that clausal structures are more characteristic of spoken rather than the written language, future investigations can analyze relative clauses in NNS spoken discourse and compare them to written registers. This would allow us to see whether the same differences are observable between spoken and written discourse by NNSs. Third, the present study examined essays by upper-intermediate to advanced-level writers; future studies can explore the use of relative clauses across different proficiency levels. Finally, this study attempted to examine relative clauses in essays by Iranian EFL students. Lu and Ai (2015) argued that the L1 background plays an important role in the development of syntactic complexity. Therefore, future studies can investigate the use of relative clauses in the writing of learners from other L1 backgrounds.

Table 8
Statistical Analysis of Relative Clauses in the NS and NNS Corpora

Grammatical Structure	NS		NNS				
	M	SD	M	SD	t	df	p
Relative clause	7.705	3.495	12.388	4.861	-4.284	58	.000
Restrictive relative clause	7.076	3.283	11.031	4.838	-3.704	51.035	.001
Non-restrictive relative clause	.628	1.066	1.356	1.566	-2.105	51.133	.040

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Appendix

LEARNER PROFILE

==========
Text code: (do not fill in)

Essay:
Title:
Approximate length required: -500 words 0 +500 words
0
Conditions: timed 0 untimed
0
Examination: yes 0
No 0
Reference tools: yes 0 no
0

What reference tools?
Bilingual dictionary:-
English monolingual dictionary:
Grammar:-
Other(s):-
==========
Surname: First names:
Age: Male 0
0

Nationality:
Native language:
Father's mother tongue:
Mother's mother tongue:
Language(s) spoken at home: (if more than one, please give the average % use of each)

Education:
Primary school - medium of instruction:
Secondary school - medium of instruction:

Current studies:
Current year of study:
Institution:
Medium of instruction:
English only 0
Other language(s) (specify) 0
Both 0
==========
Years of English at school:
Years of English at university:

Stay in an English-speaking country:
Where?

When? How long?

==========
Other foreign languages in decreasing order of proficiency:

==========

I hereby give permission for my essay to be used for research purposes.
Date: Signature:

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Innovations in Integrating Language Assistants: Inter-Collaborative Learning

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A language assistant (LA) program was introduced into a university-level Japanese program. The LAs in this program consisted of Japanese study abroad students, that is English as a second language students, coming to study from Japanese universities for either one semester or one academic year, as well as American learners returning from a one-year academic study abroad program in Japan. In the southeastern region of the United States, the Japanese language is not yet considered a major foreign language, thus few opportunities exist for American learners to connect with native speakers of Japanese. The LA program endeavors to ease this limitation. It has been extremely beneficial for our American learners to have opportunities to communicate regularly with Japanese study abroad students in the classrooms. Furthermore, it was found tremendously valuable for Japanese study abroad students and greatly helpful for the instructors as well. This paper describes the procedures and examines the effectiveness of introducing an LA program into Japanese language classes. To analyze the program, questionnaires were distributed to LAs (*N*=20); five department instructors wrote comments concerning the program; and five Japanese language learners submitted reflection papers. Analyses of the qualitative data indicate that the LA program has many advantages for everyone participating.

Keywords: language assistant, teaching practicum, study abroad students, Japanese as a foreign language

Innovations in Integrating Language Assistants: Inter-Collaborative Learning

While there is much research indicating the importance of interacting with native speakers of a target language when learning a language (Ellis, 1985; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992), providing such opportunities to speak and listen to develop their oral and aural abilities (Blake, 2008; Towndrow & Vallance, 2004) can often be difficult. This is particularly true in learning a foreign language rather than in learning a second language[1] because there are few occasions for JFL learners to meet with Japanese natives, especially in the southeastern region of the United States, and little opportunity to utilize their target language in their daily lives. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) pointed out that speaking with others who have more linguistic resources than the learners, such as native speakers, is imperative to develop the target language. In order to create opportunities to meet with native speakers and to solve the problem, a language assistant (henceforth, "LA") program was introduced into the Japanese as a foreign language (henceforth, "JFL") program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (henceforth, "UNC Charlotte"). Japanese students coming to the United States to study abroad from Japanese universities were recruited to attend Japanese language classes as LAs and to communicate regularly with JFL learners. The LA program provides both the JFL learners and the Japanese study abroad students with meaningful interactions to improve their interpersonal language abilities, thus enhancing the language learning of both the JFL learners and the Japanese LAs, who usually come to UNC Charlotte to learn English.

While it might seem obvious that JFL learners would benefit from greatly from having Japanese university students regularly attended their Japanese language classes, some may question whether the Japanese LAs benefit from participating in the program as well. The majority of LAs in UNC Charlotte classes do not intend to be teachers, nor do they have any interest in Japanese language education. In addition, most of them have little to no knowledge of teaching

[1] A foreign language is a language originally from other country and is not spoken in the native country of the person, whereas a second language is not the native language of the speaker, but is used by the locals.

methodologies. However, the course developed for the LA program was designed as a teaching practicum and entitled thusly. One reason for this was to provide LAs with two opportunities to teach a practicum during the semester so that they could learn how to teach Japanese to American students. Furthermore, the activities incorporated into the program were not only designed to assist JFL learners, but also for the LAs to learn teaching methods. Without activities like the teaching practicums incorporated into the course, LAs may not have enough motivation to observe and learn how to teach during the class hours. However, since all of the LAs are required to teach two practicums in their classes, their attitude toward attending and actively participating during all of the classes became more serious.

This study reports how all of the participants involved in the program (i.e., LAs, JFL learners, and instructors) benefited from the LA program. Special attention was given to the LAs' perception of the program. To research the benefits of the program, surveys were distributed to the LAs to collect their opinions, and they were asked to write reflection papers at the end of the semester on their experiences. Five Japanese Program instructors' views on the program were solicited and five advanced JFL learners whose classes participated in the LA program wrote papers on their impressions of the process involved in learning Japanese as assisted by an LA. Through analyzing the qualitative data collected by the three kinds of the participants, the results show what specific advantages were found. This study also shows the procedures of how an LA program was introduced and the methods of how it was implemented into Japanese language classes at a southeastern United States university.

A Brief History of LAs at UNC Charlotte

For the first time in the 2016 spring semester, the JAPN 3400 "Teaching Practicum" course was offered as part of the Japanese language curriculum. Prior to this, students could register for an "Independent Study" course in which they could function as LAs. At that time, there were not enough LAs to provide student assistants for all Japanese language classes, so LAs were generally offered for classes at the elementary and intermediate levels. However, since that time, over the past two decades, the Japanese government has encouraged Japanese university students to participate in study abroad programs. During this period, university exchange partnerships proliferated. Consequently, the numbers of Japanese students studying abroad at UNC Charlotte has been gradually increasing, creating a larger pool of potential LAs. At this point, a need to create a course to train LAs arose, and we began to offer a new course called "Teaching Practicum."

In the early 2000s, as mentioned above, there were not many American study abroad students coming back from Japan, and so only a small number of advanced Japanese language learners could work as LAs. Unlike the LA program in the past, currently LAs are assigned to almost all Japanese language classes. In 2016, the UNC Charlotte Japanese Program was gratified that a total of 30 Japanese university students had come to UNC Charlotte as study abroad students. In addition, the number of American students studying abroad in Japan has also been growing, with returnees having been immersed in Japanese for one academic year, and some of these returning students became interested in being LAs after returning. With these numbers, we became able to provide two LAs for every language class, each with approximately 20 students enrolled. Although Japanese language learners may still have few opportunities to communicate with Japanese natives outside the classroom or in their community, with the addition of two LAs per class, students are given more opportunities to interact with Japanese native speakers or speakers with more linguistic resources in their classes or socially after class.

The Roles of LAs

The length of a teaching practicum is generally one week (Willard-Holt, 2001), three weeks (Ozek, 2009; Sakai, 1995), or two months (Sahin, 2008), and the purpose is usually to learn teaching methods through actual teaching in order to earn a teacher's license or to receive credit for becoming a teacher in the future. For example, in the United States, many universities have a system under which students can assist instructors with classes to aid learners in laboratory classes or generally help the teacher. Undergraduate students in this system are referred to as teaching assistants (henceforth, "TAs"), and graduate students are labeled graduate teaching assistants (henceforth, "GTAs"). Both TAs and GTAs are paid per hour and their tasks often include preparing classes, grading student tests or quizzes, teaching classes under the supervision of the instructor, or answering students' questions (Kost, 2008; Murray, 1996). However, the LAs in the Japanese Program at UNC Charlotte are different in a number of ways.

First, the eligibility and primary task of LAs are different. To be eligible to be an LA, participants must be Japanese study abroad students, returnees from studying abroad in Japan for one academic year, or advanced learners who are interested in being an LA. The Japanese Program currently offers six kinds of standard Japanese language classes: elementary Japanese I and II, intermediate Japanese I and II, and

upper intermediate Japanese I and II. LAs are assigned to one of these classes and attend the class three times per week with the learners in those classes. As it is the first time for most LAs to teach Japanese using English as the instructional language, their primary task is to learn the methods of teaching Japanese in the United States.

Second, the roles the LAs serve in the classrooms are somewhat different from standard TAs and GTAs, and include: 1) partnering with the instructor to demonstrate dialogues in Japanese, 2) supervising learners in pair or group work activities, 3) proctoring chapter tests, 4) delivering and collecting papers for class quizzes, and 5) collecting and checking homework assignments. Furthermore, LAs teach a whole class under the guidance of the instructor twice per semester, once in the first half of the semester, and once in the second half. Another important difference in duties is that while TAs and GTAs often assist instructors by marking tests and grading their scores, LAs are forbidden from doing so, as they are often similar in age to the students and study together every class, and thus it is easy for them to become friends. Additionally, although TAs and GTAs are usually paid per hour, LAs do not receive money, but instead receive credit hours for fulfilling their tasks.

Finally, LAs differ from TAs and GTAs in that they are given tasks to complete outside of the class hours. One such task is an "LA session" that must be held twice per semester. During LA sessions, LAs are required to meet individually with all of the learners in the class that they are in charge of for 15 minutes each. In the session, LAs ask questions that include grammar points that they studied in previous classes to review and practice. These sessions are carried out face to face in Japanese. After finishing with the review, learners may ask questions on the grammatical points and then they are allowed to converse freely on any topic. Japanese study abroad students may speak about their own university in Japan or Japanese pop culture. Returnees may speak about their experience in a study abroad program in Japan. LAs in these sessions are required to keep a brief record of each session conducted with each learner, and these records, including students' attendance information, are submitted as a report to their instructor. Another task that LAs must attend to outside of the classroom is to attend Japanese Program events, such as speech contests or "Year-End Presentations." LAs must cooperate with the instructor and assist the learners who are participating. For example, LAs help students who participate in the speech contest by giving them pointers and helping them improve their speech outside of regular class hours. The Japanese Program held Year-End Presentations at the end of each year and it is their biggest event. Most students attend and do several performances, e.g., perform plays based on Japanese folktales, parts of Japanese movies or skits, give cooking demonstrations, or sing Japanese songs. LAs are encouraged to help students in their classes by performing with them in their presentations for this exciting event.

This paper hopes to address the participants' views on the LA program by analyzing the answers of survey questions and post-program reflection papers to answer the following research question:

How useful, beneficial, and practical is the LA program for the three parties involved, i.e., instructors, American students, and LAs in their respective positions?

Evaluations of the LA Program

Data collected from the LAs in the fall semester 2016 were analyzed to evaluate the LA program. There were 20 LAs registered for the "Teaching Practicum" course at the time, consisting of 15 Japanese study abroad students and 5 returnees from study abroad programs in Japan. As the author was in charge of this course, the author recruited Japanese study abroad students from exchange partner universities by sending e-mails and advertising the course to all of the expected Japanese study abroad students in August 2016. All of the Japanese study abroad students and returnees who registered for the Teaching Practicum class were assigned to a Japanese language class, attended an orientation, and had a meeting with their instructors before commencing their duties as LAs. In the fall semester of 2016, 12 Japanese language classes were offered. Two LAs were assigned to the eight language classes with over 20 students enrolled, and one LA each was assigned to the four language classes with fewer than 19 students enrolled. All of the LAs responded to the questionnaire (N=20) for the purpose of evaluating the LA program and submitted their reflection papers (N=20).

The outcomes of the qualitative analysis of the LA surveys and reflection papers are reported first. Next, descriptions of the instructors' impressions are detailed. Finally, opinions collected from the American students' reflection papers are described.

Reflections from the LAs

This section reports the LAs' perception of the LA program, as per their answers to questionnaires and what was written in their reflection papers.

Outcomes of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed after the students finished the first half of the semester. At

this stage, as all of the LAs had experienced both the LA session and one teaching practicum, questions regarding the LA session and the teaching practicum were also included. The questionnaire consisted of five Likert-type questions (strongly agree 5 to strongly disagree 1) asking about the course as a whole. Table 1 shows the statements regarding the LA program and their responses.

Many LAs (85%) responded that the course was just as they expected and that American learners' attitudes in the class were excellent. Additionally, 80% reported through the questionnaire that they were able to make friends through the LA program. One issue of concern in this program was that the LAs may feel they are given too many homework assignments for grading, but only 15% of LAs agreed with this issue.

Although a total of 12 statements regarding the LA session were included in the questionnaire, only specific sets of data leading to a general conclusion or indicating noteworthy issues were focused on this section. Respondents were asked to select all of the statements with which they agreed. Table 2 shows the results of the LAs' perceptions of the LA session and the number of respondents.

Table 2 shows that the LAs generally viewed the LA session activities favorably. Many LAs (75%) enjoyed the LA sessions and reported that they could get to know the students in their classes better than before (75%). Over one half of the LAs responded that it became easier for them to conduct the class activities after their first LA session and were looking forward to the second LA session. As there are always a few students who do not attend the LA sessions every semester, instructors frequently warn students if they do not come to the LA session, they will lose points. However, less than one third of American learners did not heed the instructors' warning. It is necessary to emphasize this issue with their students repeatedly. Although there was some concern that the LAs would dislike the LA sessions because of the amount of time

Table 1
LAs' Perceptions of the Course (N=20)

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Course content was just as I expected.	7	10	3	0	0
There were too many HW assignments I needed to check.	0	3	9	7	1
Students' attitudes in my class were excellent.	13	4	1	1	0
I think I could assist my instructor as an LA.	0	9	9	2	0
I had many American friends due to being an LA.	2	14	3	1	0

Table 2
LAs' Perception on "LA Session" (N=20)

LA Session	No.	%
There were a few students who didn't appear at the appointment time.	6	30%
I enjoyed speaking with students one-to-one.	15	75%
I know students much better than before.	14	70%
I could do activities much easier after an LA session.	10	50%
I do not like the LA sessions due to their being held outside class hours.	0	0%
I am looking forward to the second LA session.	10	50%

Table 3.1
Reflection on Teaching Practicum (N =20)

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was really nervous.	9	6	1	3	1
I could teach well.	0	3	9	8	0
I did not have good time management.	1	2	7	10	0
I am looking forward the second one.	3	10	6	1	0
It was really difficult.	4	5	5	6	0
I could speak loudly enough.	2	10	5	2	1
It was a really good experience.	15	4	1	0	0

Table 3.2
Regarding Teaching Practicum (N =20)

Statements	No.	%
I had done a teaching practicum before.	3	15%
I borrowed a lesson plan from my instructor.	17	85%
I made the lesson plan by myself.	5	25%
I received instruction on the teaching practicum from my instructor in advance.	13	65%
I received feedback from my instructor.	16	80%

required outside of class hours, fortunately, no LAs reported having such feelings.

In terms of the questions regarding a teaching practicum, seven Likert-type questions (strongly agree 5 to strongly disagree 1) and five multiple choice questions were included. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 show the results of LAs' perception of the teaching practicum.

In general, most of the LAs also viewed the classroom teaching practicums favorably. Approximately two thirds of the LAs were looking forward to their second teaching practicum and 30% responded neutrally, with only one LA not viewing the classroom teaching practicum favorably. This LA wrote in her comments that she was terribly nervous about teaching in front of others, could not speak in a loud voice, and could not teach well. She also commented that she did not have any confidence in her ability to teach because of her poor English ability so she did not find the teaching practicum to be an enjoyable activity. However, in her reflection paper from the end of the semester, she reported having made lesson plans by herself for her second teaching practicum and even though she felt nervous at the beginning of the class, her nervousness gradually disappeared because she was familiar with the students in her class from seeing them several times a week and could enjoy the second half of her second teaching experience. Ultimately, she commented in her reflection paper that she had "an amazing experience" through this activity. All of the LAs, except the one who reported being neutral to the teaching practicum, agreed that the first teaching practicum turned out to be a wonderful experience. The LA who did not note the experience as being positive reported that he was not nervous, could teach well, had good time management, did not think it was difficult, and was looking forward to the second one.

Table 3.2 reveals that two-thirds of the LAs received instruction on the teaching practicum beforehand and many of the LAs received feedback from their instructors afterwards, indicating that not all of the LAs received instruction before or feedback after the teaching practicum. There is a need to ask instructors to pay attention to this issue, i.e., giving instruction before and feedback after the activity.

Outcomes of the Reflection Paper. All of the LAs (*N*=20) submitted their reflection papers with the assigned title, "What I learned through being an LA" at the end of the semester. Their reflections were analyzed through conceptually clustered matrix analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1944), and in total 104 opinions (87 general opinions, 11 opinions about teaching practicum, and 6 opinions about the LA session) were extracted.

General Opinions. In total 87 general opinions extracted were categorized into 16 kinds of similar general opinions that were given by at least two respondents. The 16 kinds of general opinions were further categorized into four sub-categories: 1) personal experience, 2) Japanese class, 3) students in the class, and 4) other. Table 4.1 shows the 16 kinds of contents of general opinions and the numbers of responses.

Table 4.1 shows several merits of this program. In this section, only reflections that over five students mentioned were highlighted. Most of the LAs' perceptions on the program (80%) were very positive and they expressed their pleasure that it was a wonderful and an amazing experience, with representative comments such as, "I had a priceless experience because teaching Japanese to Americans at the university could not have happened for me without having a teaching license or technique," "It was a precious asset in my life," and "It was the most amazing experience so far." Although many found it difficult to teach a class (45%), over one-third of the LAs noted that it was their first experience to do so, and that it taught them a lot. One-quarter of the LAs also reported in their reflection papers that being an LA was a worthwhile and fantastic experience. In line with this, 40% of the LAs wrote that they wanted to "use the experience gained through being an LA in their future."

Another beneficial point of the program reported by one-quarter of the LAs was that getting a chance to observe American students' active attitudes increased their motivation toward their own studies. For example, many noted that American students "ask questions if they are unclear" and "state their opinions in a dignified manner without being afraid of failure." Other LAs noted that American students' attitudes are "serious and enthusiastic toward learning the Japanese language" and are "active to learn not only the Japanese

Table 4.1
General Opinions on Being an LA (N = 20)

Sections	General Opinions	No.	%
Personal experience	Wonderful experience	16	80%
	Teaching was difficult.	9	45%
	It was my first time to do something like this.	7	35%
	Learned many things	7	35%
	Impressed with students' active attitudes	5	25%
	Being an LA was worthwhile.	5	25%
	Have become confident	2	10%
Japanese class	Enjoyed the Japanese class	6	30%
	Learned Japanese teaching methods	3	15%
	Could have a review of Japanese (Japanese learners n=5)	3	15%
	Noticed the importance of homework assignments	2	10%
Students in the class	Studied actively	6	30%
	Increased American friends	3	15%
	Felt responsibility for the Japanese learners	2	10%
Other	Will use this experience in my future	8	40%
	Discovered new merits of Japan	5	25%

Note: Opinions extracted from over five students are in bold type font.

Table 4.2
LAs' Perception on the Teaching Practicum (TP) and the LA Session (LAS) (N=20)

	Reflection on the Teaching Practicum and the LA Session	No.	%
TP 1	The Teaching Practicum was difficult and I was nervous.	7	35%
TP 2	The Teaching Practicum was useful.	4	20%
LAS 1	I enjoyed the LA sessions.	4	20%
LAS 2	The LA sessions were useful.	2	10%

language itself, but also Japanese culture." In terms of the Japanese classes they attended, over one-third of the LAs were fond of the Japanese class that they were in charge of, making comments such as "I always looked forward to attending the class." Therefore, when the semester was over, one LA wrote that she "terribly missed the class." As it was the first time for Japanese study abroad students to learn methods for teaching Japanese, one-quarter of the LAs reported discovering new aspects of the Japanese language itself, and noted that being an LA was a catalyst for them to take a fresh look at Japan.

Reflections on the Teaching Practicum and the LA Sessions

In total, 17 opinions regarding the teaching practicum and LA sessions were extracted (11 on the teaching practicum and 6 on the LA sessions). Table 4.2 shows the titles of their reflections on the teaching practicum and the LA sessions and the numbers of LAs that wrote about the two issues.

As Table 4.2 shows, over one-third of the LAs found the teaching practicum difficult and said that it made them nervous, writing, "It was much more difficult than I expected," "It was the most tough experience for me since I was really poor at speaking in front of people," and "It was the most challenging activity for me." However, regardless of the difficulty, they also reported that the experience turned out to be very useful and they found they had improved their shortcomings through the activity.

The LAs really enjoyed their LA sessions, with some describing them as "the happiest time." Some of them were impressed with students' attitude of "trying to understand and solve their problems through my explanation in English." They discovered various aspects of the students' personalities during these sessions that they could not observe in the classroom. Twenty percent of LAs wrote that they wanted to have more LA sessions. Two LAs noted that due to having the LA sessions, they had become closer to the students and also found it easier to engage in social interactions with them.

Reflections from Instructors

Five instructors provided their opinions on the LA program. Overall, they found the program to have many effective features and to have been very helpful because it offered one or two LAs for every class hour. These opinions were categorized into the four sections below.

Advantages to Having Japanese Study Abroad Students as LAs. American learners generally do not have opportunities to listen to the Japanese language except from their instructors, but the LA program afforded them another opportunity to speak and listen to the Japanese language. Some students who were nervous to speak with their instructors found it easier to speak with the LA because they were closer in age and it felt more relaxed. Second, students felt what they learned was authentic because they could speak directly with university students from Japan. Third, it was easy for LAs to become aware of problems that students had because they had one-on-one communication with each student during the LA sessions and on other occasions outside of the classroom. Reporting such problems to instructors helped because the instructor could then give a review of the difficult points again in the class or help the troubled student directly. Fourth, as mentioned earlier, the Japanese Program has a "Year-End Presentations" event. The LAs also practice and perform together with the students, so instructors did not have to take on all of the supervision of their performances by themselves. Finally, since Japanese study abroad students created strong friendships with the American students, the American students who plan to visit Japan in the future can maintain contact with their former LAs and have someone to visit abroad.

Advantages Within the Class Hour. Having an assistant at all times during the class hour produced several benefits. First, the LAs could support the instructors by supervising students, assisting with explanations of exercises, and giving feedback on assignments. For example, while the instructors were explaining the elements of kanji characters, the LAs could write the characters on the blackboard and demonstrate the correct stroke order, or check students' writing by moving around the class. They could also point out errors written in the students' notes promptly. Through these activities, the LAs increased student engagement. By taking on various roles to assist the instructors in the class hour, as described in the section "The Roles of LAs," the instructor could focus on teaching itself and manage the classwork more smoothly.

Advantages Outside the Class Hour. The American students received a number of benefits through communicating with Japanese study abroad LAs. For example, they learned and acquired various daily expressions that they couldn't learn during the class hour. There were also benefits for the instructors outside of the class hours because LAs would check students' homework assignments, which instructors noted was the greatest assistance they provided. Most classes had many students, so before the LA program was implemented it took a significant amount of time for the instructors to check the homework assignments by themselves. Having the LAs help check homework assignments allowed the instructors to spend more time preparing lessons for class.

Advantages for Japanese Study Abroad Students. One common problem for Japanese study abroad students is that they only form groups with Japanese study abroad students and end up communicating less with the local university students, returning to Japan without having made many gains in their English ability (Kato, 2016). The most significant reason for this seems to be the language barrier. However, Japanese study abroad students who became LAs attended a class with American students and had to be active in helping local students in the class. These activities lead them to have more confidence in their ability to communicate with the American university students and to increase the value of their study abroad experience. Furthermore, LAs who were interested in Japanese language education could also learn valuable classroom management skills and teaching methods through the program, which was an added benefit for them.

However, a few issues were raised that should be addressed in the future. For example, there was an LA with low motivation toward their duties, who was inattentive during the class hour, and exhibited behavior unfavorable for an LA. One instructor reported that it is difficult to reprimand or give directions to this LA during or after the class hour because the instructor was too busy responding to their students in the class.

Opinions from JFL Learners

Five American returnees from studying abroad in Japan became LAs in Fall 2016. These five LAs wrote their impressions toward learning together with the LAs, their process of learning Japanese in the past, and their desire to become an LA in the future based on their learning experiences. According to their responses, they learned many things from their Japanese LAs, understood the Japanese language better, and deepened their knowledge of Japanese

culture by asking questions to their LAs. They also commented that they learned less common Japanese colloquialisms and slang from their LAs.

Students wrote that they admired the American LAs who were advanced language learners or returnees from studying abroad in Japan and noted that the American LAs conversed with their instructors in fluent Japanese and fulfilled their duties satisfactorily. The American LAs advised students about their future prospects for Japanese learning based on their experiences mastering Japanese. Many such students were very impressed with their LA's experiences and many stated that they want to become an LA someday. Furthermore, many reported that they wish to be regarded as a good LA by the students in the class like they admired their own LA. The American LAs said that they would like to encourage students to attend a Japanese study abroad program and also push them to continue learning Japanese until they obtain a Japanese BA degree. One such LA wrote that she wants to be a teacher in the future and she registered for this course to learn teaching methods.

Discussion

The results of the analyses of the questionnaire and the reflection papers collected from the LAs indicated that the LA experience turned out to be a meaningful and beneficial one in their lives. Most were delighted to attend their Japanese language classes, felt fortunate to be able to make many American friends because of it, and enjoyed the interpersonal communication that was a part of the program. Specifically, the LA sessions were found to be an effective way for Japanese LAs to become closer to the students in their assigned class and this is in turn helped LA to work more efficiently. Japanese LAs were also impressed with the American students' learning attitudes, which greatly influenced them to develop a more active learning style. Prior to the study, there were two concerns with this program: 1. Would the LAs accept the LA session task conducted outside of the class hours? 2. Would the burden of correcting students' homework assignments be too great for the LAs? However, neither concern seemed to be an issue when the LAs were surveyed after their duties had finished. Although some LAs reported that the teaching practicum was difficult and made them nervous at first, they found it to be an advantageous and worthwhile experience because they would not have had such an opportunity in Japan or other parts of the United States.

The second most common opinion was that the LAs acknowledged the experience as valuable, regardless of them feeling the amount of duties to be overwhelming at first. They noted that after overcoming the workload, they gained significant knowledge through the program, and would like to apply what they learned in the future. As such, most reflections written by the LAs were largely positive.

Instructors noted that the program provided their students with exposure to communicating with similar-aged Japanese university students or advanced students. They were of the opinion that the LAs greatly influenced their students, who could receive significant information about Japan and Japanese culture directly from Japanese natives. All of the instructors reported numerous advantages of the LA program, and all were very welcoming of this program. They pointed out huge benefits in assisting students and the instructors within the class hours, and found great merit in the program through the LAs communicating with students outside the class hours. They were particularly positive regarding the Japanese LAs.

However, it should be noted that a few instructors did express some negative attitudes towards some LAs. To help remedy their concerns, in the future, all LAs will be asked if they are eager to perform all of the tasks instructed during the orientation session, held at the very beginning of the semester, after explaining the tasks and duties required of them. Additionally, class rules, expectations, and manners expected of LAs will be explained, e.g., no eating meals or using a cell phones during the class hours and wearing professional clothing. Students who are uncomfortable with the guidelines of the course will be recommended to drop it in the future.

American LAs who had studied Japanese with the LAs in the past and returned from Japan after finishing a study abroad program were thrilled with their preparation for becoming an LA. Most American students were satisfied with the teaching/learning style assisted by the LAs in the when they had studied Japanese previously, so they were eager to become an LA themselves. They tried to mimic the LAs who encouraged them to continue studying Japanese and enhance their motivation of their students to attend a study abroad program. Having the experience of studying Japanese with LAs was found to greatly influence and foster American students' motivation to study Japanese.

Conclusion

Although it took two decades to set up the LA program, opinions collected and analyzed from the LAs, instructors, and students revealed that it is very beneficial for all those involved. Currently, one course

specifically for LAs has been integrated into our curriculum, and the course has been systematically offered every semester since 2016. However, regardless of the systemization of this program, one instructor (the author) still needs to advertise the program, recruit study abroad students from the exchange partner universities one or two months prior to the beginning of the semester, provide course registration information, assign LAs to certain language classes following their schedule, and provide them with an orientation at the very beginning of the semester to explain what will be required of them. This is not a simple task. However, considering the great advantages for the students, LAs, and instructors, it is a very worthwhile undertaking.

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Multimodal Pragmatics and Translation. A New Model for Source Text Analysis. Dicerto S. , London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 178 pp. ISBN 978-3-319-69343-9

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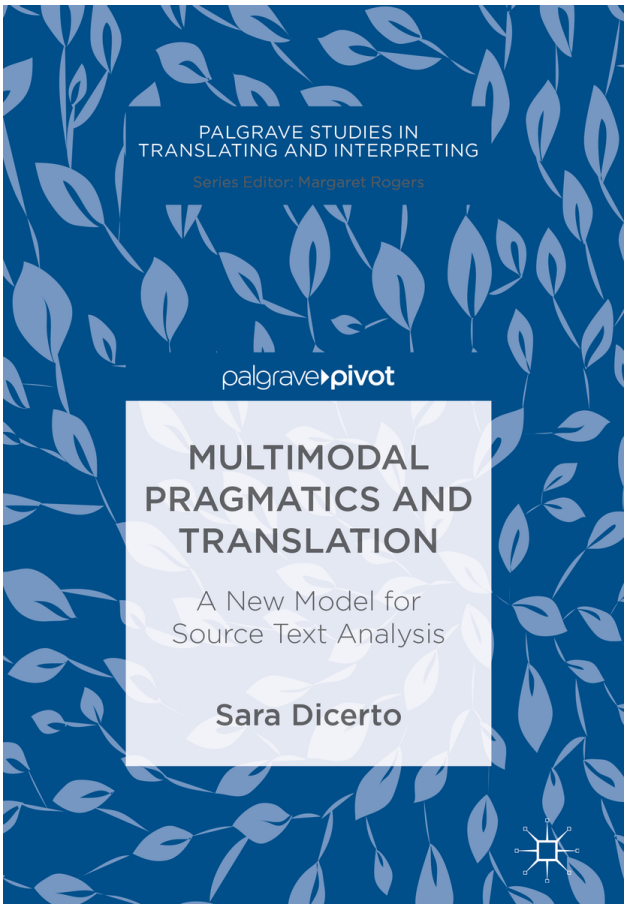
Translation and its main principles have always attracted attention of researchers in either theoretical or practical fields. There are a lot of theories and guidelines with a long history which have different orientations. They aim to provide translators with different views of the translation process and to help them make adequate translation choices.

Consideration of what is most important in translation has undergone many changes over time. What is also being evolving is the way translation is approached. The alterations in such approaches, as the present volume delineates, are explained by some reasons. First of all, being a rather complex activity, translation cannot be accounted for only in linguistic terms. Besides, modern translators agree to the fact that translation implies working on texts in which the message is communicated beyond words. Another point here is that source texts have changed, too. Up-to-date technological advancements give an opportunity to weave into texts resources other than language, i.e. the combination of words and images, which are now largely under-researched in translation studies. But still they can provide the text with new form of communication or will increase the communicative potential of forms previously available. Subsequently, such a notion as *multimodality* is coming to the fore.

Having analyzed a general picture of multimodal translation in the literature, Dicerto claims the necessity of a new study providing a move towards a more comprehensive understanding of translation, namely from the standpoint of multimodality.

The aim of this research is to offer a model for multimodal source text (ST) analysis. It will help, on the one hand, to improve understanding of the organization and structure of multimodal texts and their impact on conveying of the meaning, and, on the other, to comprehend the peculiarities of their translation. It is the multimodal focus that distinguishes this book from other works in the same



field. The author shifts the spotlight from language to a detailed analysis of how a variety of multimodal text types convey meaning.

The book is arranged in six chapters, each of them containing several sections.

Chapter 1 *A New Model for Source Text Analysis in Translation* and Chapter 2 *On the Road to Multimodality: Semiotics* are mainly conceptual. They give some theoretical frameworks of existing approaches to translation, features of texts and of translating

norms. The analysis of the literature on the research problem allows the author to state that there is no comprehensive study on multimodality which could link verbal-visual relations of the text not only to issues connected to meaning but also to translation matters. As a consequence, the challenges translators deal with should be looked at from a perspective of multimodal text and their translation in general terms. For this, in her research Dicerto uses genre-specific viewpoints and a composite approach.

More theoretical concepts relevant to this interdisciplinary study are also given in Chapter 2. They concern semiotics – in particular, social semiotics – and multimodality. It is emphasized that semiotic research on sign systems provides full comprehension of signs (verbal, visual, aural) in communication which, in its turn, helps grasp the general multimodal picture. This chapter probes the organization of individual modes, their differences and overlaps; investigates the meaningful interaction between modes and general multimodal messages formation; examines contextual meanings.

Based on the studies of the role of semiotics in multimodal translation, the chapter draws readers' attention to a paucity of common ground in the organization of the semiotic modes and the impossibility of dealing with them homogeneously. So, semiotics is stated to not be enough for building up a full picture of multimodal texts and the peculiarities of their translation. As a conscience, 'communication glue', as the author calls it, binding together different systems, and the overarching multimodal principles sought beyond semiotics are suggested. To this end, the analysis of multimodal texts comprises cognitive-pragmatic approaches, to which Chapter 3 is devoted.

Chapter 3 *Multimodal Meaning in Context: Pragmatics* continues analyzing multimodal meaning in the context of pragmatics. The author tries to find out the contribution of this discipline to the study of multimodal communication. In this connection, she presents and discusses the literature on the relationship between multimodality and pragmatics with reference to major pragmatic theories, in particular, Grice's theory (1989) of cooperativeness and Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (1986/1995). The chapter also investigates the links with multimodal issues found in pre-existing work on pragmatics and translation studies. As it is shown, pragmatics can help analyze what a speaker means by their utterances in a specific context. It proves the importance of the role of contextual factors, i.e. contextual interpretation, in the comprehension of multimodal texts. While studying it, Dicerto tries to find an answer to the question - *To what extent pragmatics can contribute to a model of multimodal meaning for translation purposes*?

This chapter also takes up the justifiability of application of pragmatics to a written text and gives its main characteristics helping bring text (its author) and its reader close together. It seems to be rather important since differences between the context of the source text and target text cause a major concern.

In Chapter 3 the author concludes that applying pragmatics to multimodal issues is the key to the world of multimodality as it has a greater influence on translation than other areas of linguistics.

Chapter 4 *Analysing Multimodal Source Text for Translation: A Proposal* confirms that the most viable and logically justifiable approach to multimodality in the context of this study is, by all means, relevant and theoretical. The chapter dwells upon the development of the model for translation-oriented multimodal text analysis progressing from the most general to the most specific dimension of meaning in multimodal texts. As the most general dimension, the chapter highlights pragmatic perspective which helps to categorized multimodal meaning in terms of explicit and implicit meaning contributing, in its turn, to leading the recipient towards the recognition of the sender's intention. More specific dimensions include the meaningful interaction among modes and the meaning contributed by individual modes with reference to visual and verbal modes. As the author sees it, taking the enumerated dimensions into account leads to the integration of a developed picture of the multimodal textual organization reflecting the interaction among textual resources. The chapter directs the readers' attention to the importance of collaboration of all dimensions for building up a pragmatic-based model for analysis of a multimodal text.

The next what is dealt with in this chapter is a transcription tool capable of organizing the results of a textual analysis in a clear, orderly and accessible fashion suitable for its purpose of translation-oriented source text analysis.

Furthermore, the author studies a semantic representation of multimodal messages moving on to discussing the ability of multimodal texts to generate explicatures and implicatures. Then the chapter presents some relationship models helping to understand how the meaning of a multimodal text is conveyed.

Chapter 4 also sets the general boundaries for the scope the model applies. Dicerto specifies the groups of professionals for whom the proposed model can be useful and the types of texts it can be applied to.

The practical application of the model for multimodal source text analysis is delivered in Chapter 5 *Multimodal ST Analysis: The Model Applied*. The author probes the multimodal organization of the text in order to identify potentially problematic areas for its translation. Potential solutions to individual translation challenges are suggested and an impact of

the applicable strategies on the level of interpretive resemblance between source and target texts is described. Since the author sees it rather important, at the beginning of the chapter, she highlights the model method of application. It encompasses details relating to selection of the multimodal texts, analytical procedures and coding system used.

The actual analysis of multimodal texts is conducted on three text types, namely: expressive, informative and operative texts. Text types, as it is outlined in the chapter, are the initial criterion for selection as the model can be applied to a broad range of texts, in terms of genres and purposes. For the study, Dicerto selects text in English, which are analyzed and then translated into Italian.

Having exemplified the model applied to the specific texts, the author finds out a strong link of multimodal textual organization to the author's personal style (expressive texts); the relation, and even dependence, to the textual resources (informative texts); and the consistency of the text organization to the certain multimodal text type and challenges for their translation (operative texts).

Chapter 6 *Multimodal ST Analysis: Current Status, Opportunities, Way Forward* introduces a few reflections on the analysis of the selected texts regarding the model validity and application to the three text types. The author also shows the ways the developed model contributes to the advancement of literature on multimodality, potential modifications for its improvement and its future applicability within translation studies and beyond.

Summing up, let us resume the main results of the present research. The author of the reviewed volume:

- brings together the findings of previous, more specialized work and moves towards a more comprehensive understanding of multimodality in translation;
- studies and gives specific characteristics and features of multimodality and multimodal text;
- appeals to pragmatics as to a key factor in multimodality which can provide definite answers for translation;
- develops a model for the textual analysis for multimodal texts for translation purposes and gives the scope of its applicability;
- describes translation problems in three dimensions of the model – semantic representation of individual modes, semantic representation of the multimodal text and inferential meanings;
- identifies potentially problematic areas for the translation into Italian;
- proposes solutions to the translation challenges, specifying the requirements that ought to be met by a target text in order to achieve interpretive resemblance regarding the source text.

The author of the present volume has achieved the main goal of the research by developing a model of multimodal texts analysis for translation purposes combining the aspect of pragmatics, studies on multimodality, translation studies and semiotics. This new model for source text analysis is capable of recording aspects related to individual modes as well as to their interaction and to the pragmatic meaning. The model resulted from this study is an analytical tool that can be used to investigate particular types of translation and to analyze translation strategies.

Let us also touch upon the structure and style in which the material in the monograph is introduced. The volume presents a user-friendly structure with some kind of guidance in a form of abstracts at the beginning of each chapter. This outline makes it easy for readers to follow the issues in the chapters. The chapters are divided into sections that can be helpful for readers who would like to re-visit particular chapters and see some highlights of any chapters at a glance.

The material of the research is presented in a rather simple style; however, it does not belittle the scientific way of narration. The author gives her definitions and explanations to all the terms and specific notions; illustrates the theoretical issues with an abundance of practical examples and guidance; summarizes the results of the analysis in tables. All this makes it easier for readers to comprehend the information and increase their awareness of the problems studied.

In addition, the author concludes each chapter with a list of additional references for readers who may seek further reading on the topics explored in the chapters. These sources may also guide readers to further explore issues in multimodality and translation.

The book not only presents research-based findings with regard to issues explored throughout the book but also provides practical advice on how to deal with such issues in a realistic manner.

The volume can be useful for scientists who deal with problems of text translation, for teachers of higher education establishments and for students as well.

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Editorial

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