jle

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & EDUCATION

HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Contents

Editorial

Gamification as a Field Landmark in Educational Research

Lilia Raitskaya

Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University)

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Lilia Raitskaya, MGIMO University, 76 Pr. Vernadskogo, Moscow, Russia, 119454. E-mail: raitskaya.l.k@inno.mgimo.ru

Elena Tikhonova

National Research University Higher School of Economics;
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Elena Tikhonova, National Research University Higher School of Economics, 26 Shabolovka, Moscow, Russian Federation, 119049.
E-mail: etikhonova@hse.ru

In their editorial review, the JLE editors consider the concept of gamification, its spread in higher education research, and relevance at present. The authors analyse the current Scopus statistics to prove the prominence of the theme for researchers. The JLE scope can be further enriched via more studies on gamification in higher education and games in learning at large. The editorial may prompt the potential authors to proceed with more profound research in gamification learning techniques applicable to education.

Keywords: gamification; game; game-based learning; gamified app; student engagement; virtual environment; flow theory

Gamification in Education

Gamification first turned up as a buzzword and a hot topic in the 2000s. Starting from 2011, articles on gamification have increasingly been indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science (Web of Knowledge) databases. The continued focus on the topic spurs new studies, which are still on the rise (see Figure 1).

As some authors note 'it is difficult to trace the precise origin of the concept' of gamification (Kim, Song, Lockee & Burton, 2018). Anyway, the term was coined some ten years ago. It turns out to be a complex phenomenon. For educational purposes, games have been designed and devised since the 1970s. As a learner's interest in game activities is transformed into engagement, games are potentially alluring and efficient. When academia comes round to thinking about appealing features of games, gamification for learning and game-based learning 'share common ground on the idea that game elements can make learning experiences more engaging' (Welbers et al., 2019). Findings from various studies fed the idea that 'the application of gamification could significantly influence the efficiency of human work and the enjoyment of executing it' (Stieglitz et al., 2017).

The popularity of games in educational contexts is also linked to the flow theory by M.Csikszentmihalui. Under the theory in question, the flow is a special mental state when a participant completely engages in the activity (game), 'applies full concentration of the activity, becomes unaware of the passage of time, does not feel self-conscious' (Kim, Song, Lockee & Burton, 2018). Such deep and permanent engagement is vital for efficient learning.

Thus, gamification is a specially arranged system involving various activities aimed at learning and educational outcomes through game mechanisms. In the monograph 'Gamification in Learning and Education. Enjoy

Learning Like Gambling' (Kim, Song, Lockee & Burton, 2018), game is defined as 'an instructional approach that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of instruction on student learning'. Reiners and Wood (2015) defined gamification as 'a designed behavior shift through playful experiences'.

Games tend to attract attention of researchers in various areas, including business at large, psychology, medicine, social work, etc. But education in addition to computing still remain the main playgrounds and research areas. Games fit educational purposes and learning mechanisms perfectly well. 'The most recent studies have focused on applying gamification in the education sector to promote the learning process' (Hakak, 2019).

Despite the hype around the gamification, more studies are carried out to know in-depth the negative or ambivalent effects of games, especially over-engagement and addiction. The limits for gamification are also on the research agenda.

Scopus Statistics of Gamification Research
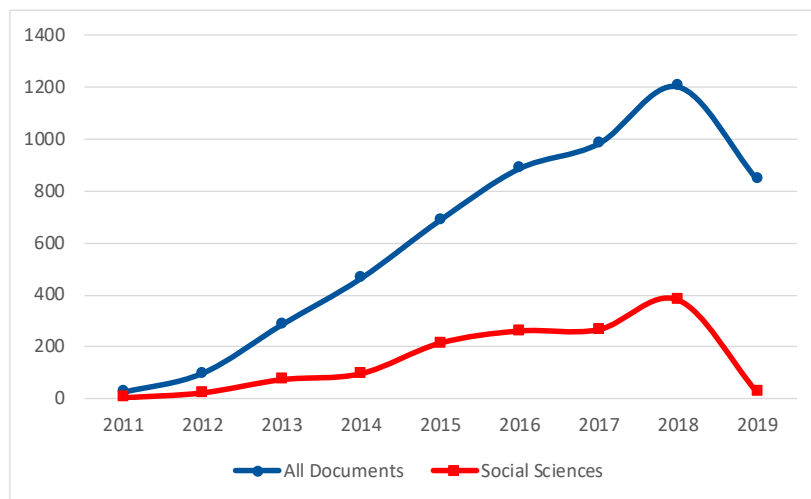
Source: Scopus Database as of September 28, 2019.

Figure 1. Scopus Indexed Documents on Gamification.

The total number of publications amounted to 5,517 (a search with 'gamification' in the field covering titles, abstracts and keywords in the Scopus database, accessed September 28, 2019). The breakdown of the documents proved their permanent rise. With only eight Scopus-indexed documents on gamification in 2011, the topic brought 199 publications in 2014, 481 papers in 2018 and 346 papers in 2019 (the 2019 data are incomplete so far). Of 5,517 documents, 5,322 are published in English, 94 are in Spanish. Social sciences accounted for 1,590 documents; computer sciences amounted to 3,912 papers; Arts & Humanities worked out at 212 documents. The blue graph for all documents on gamification and the red graph for social sciences move in parallel (see Fig. 1). The data from the Web of Science database had 1,689 documents on gamification; the Science Direct brought 1,765 papers; SpringerLink had as many as 5,557 documents, including books and book series.

As for affiliations, the following universities and institutions had the highest counts of over 10 documents on gamification each (see Fig.2), with 18 documents from the Institute of Technology Carlow; 16 documents from the University of Hong Kong; 15 documents from Tampereen Yliopisto; 13 documents from Turun Yliopisto; 13 documents from Curtin University; 11 documents from Technische Universität Graz.

Of 1,590 documents on gamification limited to social sciences, articles accounted for 43.8 percent (697 documents); another 40.9 percent were marked as conference papers (650 documents). The remaining documents also cincluded 112 book chapters and 54 reviews (see Fig. 3).

As one can see from the Scopus statistics, there is a trend to call attention of the scientific community to the new research on gamification not only by articles, but by publications in proceedings volumes of conference reports. The 650 proceedings papers accounted for 40.9 percent of all the documents on gamification, limited to social sciences (see Fig. 3). They came out in 120 sources. The following conferences topped the list by the
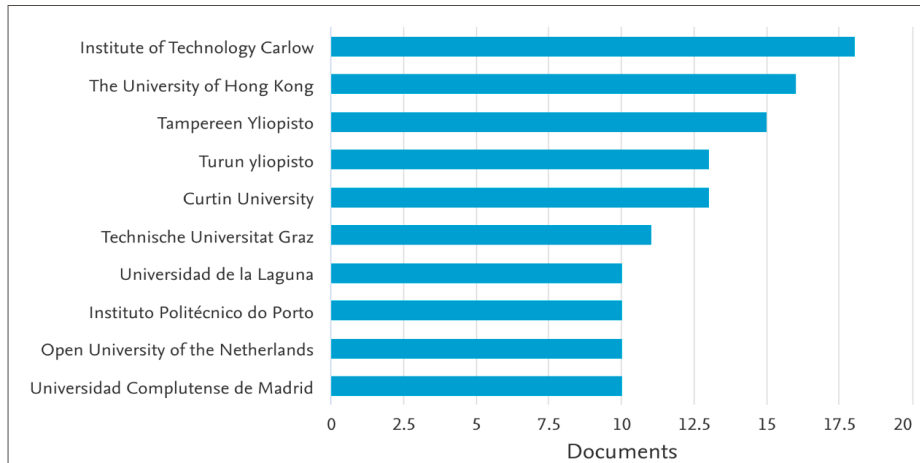
Source: Scopus Database as of September 28, 2019.

Figure 2. Scopus Indexed Gamification Research in Social Sciences: Affiliation Breakdown.
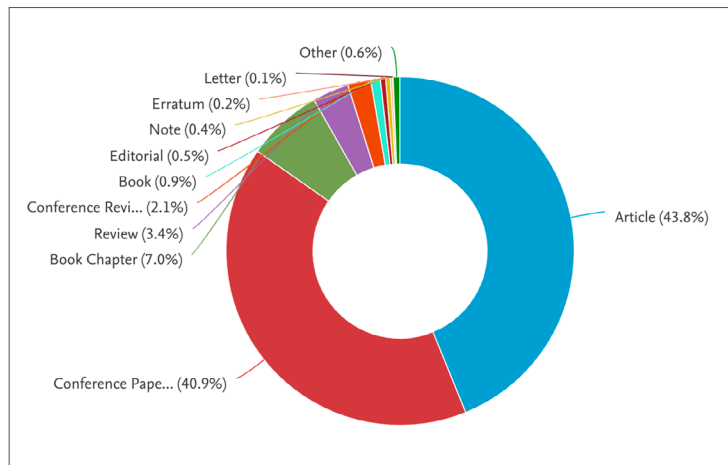
Source: Scopus Database as of September 28, 2019.

Figure 3. Scopus Indexed Gamification Research in Social Sciences: Types of Documents.
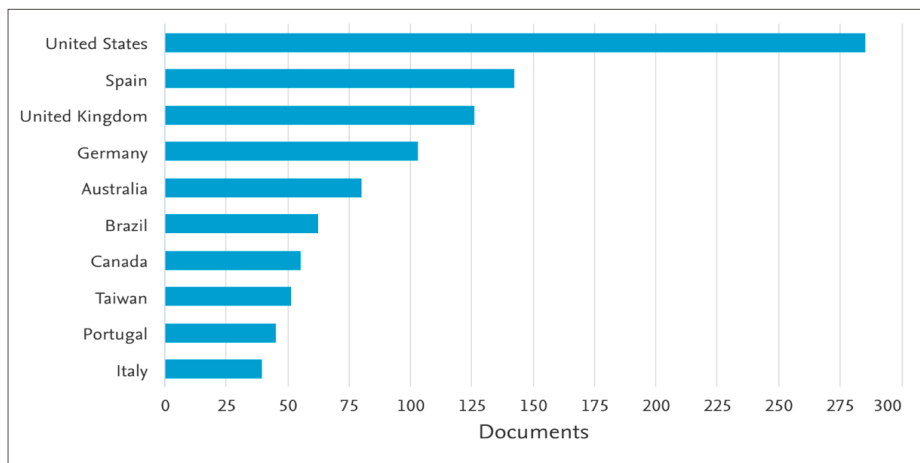
Source: Scopus Database as of September 28, 2019.

Figure 4. Scopus Indexed Gamification Research in Social Sciences: Leading Countries.

number of publications: the European Conference on Games Based Learning, IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference Educon, Annual Conference on Innovation and Technology in Computer Science Education Iticse, International Conference on Computer Supported Education Csedu, International Conference on Interactive

Digital Media Icidm, IEEE International Conference on Teaching Assessment and Learning for Engineering Tale.

The document counts distributed between many countries and territories unevenly (see Fig. 4), with the US (854 documents), Germany (496 documents), the UK (446 documents), Spain (405 documents), Italy (241 documents) being the top runners.

Gamification in Social Sciences and Educational Research: Top 100

The top 100 cited articles on gamification (social sciences) include 64 documents related to education (mainly tertiary, including motivation (11), student engagement (7), language learning (2), professional education (8)) and 36 documents on gamification in other social spheres (tourism and other services (8), health protection and implications for health (5), psychology aspects (10), advertising (2)).

The most cited article on the list brought 552 citations. That is 'Gamifying learning experiences: Practical implications and outcomes' (Domínguez et al., 2013). The empirical article summed up the views of gamification in non-game contexts as of 2013. Its authors had designed a gamification plug-in for an e-learning platform for university students. The findings proved efficiency of the technique by better scores and higher motivation of the student participants (Domínguez et al., 2013).

A Field Landmark

In an attempt to determine the scope of research on gamification in education, viz. tertiary education, we focussed on the research in higher education contexts indexed in the Scopus database. To this end, we singled out all articles with 'gamification' as a keyword in the Scopus-indexed journals with educational scopes. We set the inclusion criteria for articles:

(1) the time span of nearly 10 years starting from the year when gamification research and documents were indexed in Scopus for the first time, viz. 2011 (January 1, 2011 – September 20, 2019) – 5,517 documents;

(2) all research with the 'gamification' in the search field, then limited to 'Social Sciences' (1,590 documents) and additional keywords from the list offered by the Scopus, including: students, education, e-learning, teaching, engineering education, game-based learning, higher education, education technology, learning environment, active learning, student engagement, blended learning, medical education, student motivation, pedagogy, distance education, flipped classroom, teaching and learning, educational games, problem based learning, gamification in education, learning outcome, technology enhanced learning, MOOCs, online learning.

The keywords were selected by each author to compare the results and settle the differences (only three keywords were under dispute, the latter was amicably settled to mutual satisfaction). All the keywords selected were integral to the higher education field. All in all, we found 257 articles of the kind.

At the final stage, each author studied the 257 articles to exclude those that cannot be attributed as research in higher education. Some educational studies of gamification that are not marked as 'tertiary/ higher education/ university-level' but essential for all stages of education remained on our final list. It included 138 documents ranging from 'Factors affecting students' self-efficacy in higher education' (Van Dinther, Dochy & Segers, 2011) with the highest citation of 218 to 30 documents that had not been cited so far, including recently published.

Judging by our previous studies of the educational field at large, the theme in question is not as relevant as other major topics with hundreds and even thousands of documents. But it is under constant and detailed consideration. The research is centred around the following field segments:
- general gamification studies, practical implications and outcomes of gamification in education, students' perceptions of gamified or game-based learning (Domínguez et al., 2013), (Wiggins, 2016), (Erenli, 2013), (Markopoulos et al., 2015), (Brull & Finlayson, 2016), (Rutledge et al., 2018), (Sánchez-Mena & Martí-Parreño, 2017), (Mora, Riera, González & Arnedo-Moreno, 2017), (Surendeleg, Murwa, Yun & Kim, 2014), (Turan, Avinc, Kara & Goktas, 2016), (Buckley, Doyle & Doyle, 2017), (De Byl, 2013), (Laskowski & Wojdyga, 2014), (Lin, Ganapathy & Kaur, 2018), (Signori, De Guimarães, Severo & Rotta, 2018);
- motivation in learning via games and game-based educational technologies (Hanus & Fox, 2015), (Chen,

Liu & Hwang, 2016), (Perryer, Celestine, Scott-Ladd & Leighton, 2106), (Zainuddin, 2018); (Ortiz-Colón, Jordán & Agredai, 2018), (Gómez-Urquiza, 2019), (Rodríguez, Díaz, Gonzalez & González-Miquel, 2018), (Chapman & Rich, 2018), (Delello, 2018);
- student engagement in learning in game-based learning (Macfarlane & Tomlinson, 2017), (Ibanez, Di-Serio & Delgado-Kloos, 2014), (Caton & Greenhill, 2014), (Hew, Huang, Chu & Chiu, 2016), (Brigham, 2015), (Ding, Kim & Orey, 2017), (Ding, Er & Orey, 2018), (Coleman, 2018), (Sanmugam, 2015);
- effectiveness of games in education and learning (De-Marcos, Garcia-Lopez & Garcia-Cabot, 2016), (Yildirim, 2017), (Hakulinen, Auvinen & Korhonen, 2015), (Ab. Rahman, Ahmad & Hashim, 2018), (Soboleva, Sokolova, Isupova & Suvorova, 2017);
- games and individual learning styles (Buckley & Doyle, 2017), (Barata, Gama, Jorge & Gonçalves, 2014);
- gamification in language learning (Kétyi, 2016), (Gafni, Achituv & Rachmani, 2017), (Sun & Hsieh, 2018), (Fogarty, 2019).

Conclusion

With all that ten-year hype around gamification, it has become a field that still needs further scoping studies, but gamification exists and evolves as a research niche in educational research area. The research agenda is far from being straightforward, full of new green shoots. The present-day research goes beyond the early studies on the game potential for education and a limited range of game-based learning technologies. More studies come out to analyse the psychological mechanisms behind gaming for learning purposes and game-based learning; learning theories are explored to find more profound underpinnings for gamification.

JLE looks forward to new studies on the theme raised in our editorial review of gamification.

References

Ab. Rahman, R., Ahmad, S., & Hashim, U. R. (2018). The effectiveness of gamification technique for higher education students engagement in Polytechnic Muadzam Shah Pahang, Malaysia. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 15*, 41. http://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-018-0123-0

Barata, G., Gama, S., Jorge, J., & Gonçalves, D. (2014). Identifying student types in a gamified learning experience. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning, 4*(4), 19-36. http://doi.org/10.4018/ijgbl.2014100102

Brigham, T. J. (2015). An introduction to gamification: Adding game elements for engagement. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly, 34*(4), 471-480. http://doi.org/10.1080/02763869.2015.1082385

Brull, S., & Finlayson, S. (2016). Importance of gamification in increasing learning. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing, 47*(8), 372-375. http://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20160715-09

Buckley, P., & Doyle, E. (2017). Individualising gamification: An investigation of the impact of learning styles and personality traits on the efficacy of gamification using a prediction market. *Computers and Education, 106*, 43-55. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.11.009

Buckley, P., Doyle, E., & Doyle, S. (2017). Game on. Student' perceptions of gamified learning. *Educational Technology and Society, 20*(3), 1-10. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26196115

Caton, H., & Greenhill, D. (2014). Rewards and penalties: A gamification approach for increasing attendance and engagement in an undergraduate computing module. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning, 4*(3), 1-12. http://doi.org/10.4018/ijgbl.2014070101

Chapman, J. R., & Rich, P. J. (2018). Does educational gamification improve students' motivation? If so, which game elements work best? *Journal of Education for Business, 93*(7), 314-321. http://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2018.1490687

Chen, C. - H., Liu, G. -Z., & Hwang, G. -J. (2016). Interaction between gaming and multistage guiding strategies on students' field trip mobile learning performance and motivation. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 47*(6), 1032-1050. http://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12270

Coleman, J. D. (2018). Engaging undergraduate students in a co-curricular digital badging platform. *Education and Information Technologies, 23*(1), 211-224. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-017-9595-0

De Byl, P. (2013). Factors at play in tertiary curriculum gamification. *International Journal of Game-Based*

Learning, 3(2), 1-21. http://doi.org/10.4018/ijgbl.2013040101

De-Marcos, L., Garcia-Lopez, E., & Garcia-Cabot, A. (2016). On the effectiveness of game-like and social approaches in learning: Comparing educational gaming, gamification & social networking. *Computers and Education, 95*, 99-113. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.12.008

Delello, J. A., Hawley, H., McWhorter, R. R., Gipson, C. S., & Deal, B. (2018). Gamifying education: Motivation and the implementation of digital badges for use in higher education. *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies, 13*(4), 17-33. http://doi.org/10.4018/IJWLTT.2018100102

Ding, L., Er, E., & Orey, M. (2018). An exploratory study of student engagement in gamified online discussions. *Computers and Education, 120*, 213-226. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.02.007

Ding, L., Kim, C., & Orey, M. (2017). Studies of student engagement in gamified online discussions. *Computers and Education, 115*, 126-142. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2017.06.016

Domínguez, A., Saenz-De-Navarrete, J., De-Marcos, L., Fernández-Sanz, L., Pagés, C., & Martínez-Herráiz, J. -. (2013). Gamifying learning experiences: Practical implications and outcomes. *Computers and Education, 63*, 380-392. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.12.020

Erenli, K. (2013). The impact of gamification: Recommending education scenarios. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 8*, 15-21. http://dx.doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v8iS1.2320

Fogarty, T. (2019). A description of gamification in teaching second language pharmacy technician students. *Pharmacy Education, 19*(1), 212-218.

Gafni, R., Achituv, D. B., & Rachmani, G. J. (2017). Learning foreign languages using mobile applications. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research, 16*(1), 301-317. http://doi.org/10.28945/3855

Gómez-Urquiza, J. L., Gómez-Salgado, J., Albendín-García, L., Correa-Rodríguez, M., González-Jiménez, E., & Cañadas-De la Fuente, G. A. (2019). The impact on nursing students' opinions and motivation of using a "Nursing escape room" as a teaching game: A descriptive study. *Nurse Education Today, 72*, 73-76. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2018.10.018

Hakak, S. et al. (2019). Cloud-assisted gamification for education and learning. *Computers and Electrical Engineering*, 74, 22-34. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compeleceng.2019.01.002

Hakulinen, L., Auvinen, T., & Korhonen, A. (2015). The effect of achievement badges on students' behavior: An empirical study in a university-level computer science course. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 10*(1), 18-29. http://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v10i1.4221

Hanus, M. D., & Fox, J. (2015). Assessing the effects of gamification in the classroom: A longitudinal study on intrinsic motivation, social comparison, satisfaction, effort, and academic performance. *Computers and Education, 80*, 152-161. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.08.019

Hew, K. F., Huang, B., Chu, K. W. S., & Chiu, D. K. W. (2016). Engaging asian students through game mechanics: Findings from two experiment studies. *Computers and Education, 92-93*, 221-236. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.10.010

Ibanez, M. -., Di-Serio, A., & Delgado-Kloos, C. (2014). Gamification for engaging computer science students in learning activities: A case study. *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies, 7*(3), 291-301. http://doi.org/10.1109/TLT.2014.2329293

Kétyi, A. (2016). From mobile language learning to gamification: An overlook of research results with business management students over a five-year period. *Porta Linguarum,* 45-59. Retrieved from https://www.ugr.es/~portalin/articulos/PL_monograph1_2016/art_4.pdf

Kim, S., Song, K., Lockee, B. & Burton, J. (2018). *Gamification in Learning and Education. Enjoy Learning Like Gaming.* Switzerland: Springer. http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-47283-6

Laskowski, M., & Wojdyga, A. (2014). What can gamified university classroom teach us? *Advanced Science Letters, 20*(2), 402-405. http://doi.org/10.1166/asl.2014.5320

Lin, D. T. A., Ganapathy, M., & Kaur, M. (2018). Kahoot! it: Gamification in higher education. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 26*(1), 565-582.

Macfarlane, B., & Tomlinson, M. (2017). Critiques of student engagement. *Higher Education Policy, 30*(1), 5-21. http://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-016-0027-3

Markopoulos, A. P., Fragkou, A., Kasidiaris, P. D., & Davim, J. P. (2015). Gamification in engineering education and professional training. *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering Education, 43*(2), 118-131. http://doi.org/10.1177/0306419015591324

Mora, A., Riera, D., González, C., & Arnedo-Moreno, J. (2017). Gamification: A systematic review of design frameworks. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education, 29*(3), 516-548. http://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-017-9150-4

Ortiz-Colón, A. M., Jordán, J., & Agredai, M. (2018). Gamification in education: An overview on the state of the

art. *Educacao e Pesquisa, 44*. http://doi.org/10.1590/S1678-4634201844173773

Perryer, C., Celestine, N. A., Scott-Ladd, B., & Leighton, C. (2016). Enhancing workplace motivation through gamification: Transferrable lessons from pedagogy. *International Journal of Management Education, 14*(3), 327-335. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2016.07.001

Reiners, T. & Wood, L.C. (Eds.). (2015). *Gamification in Education and Business*. Switzerland: Springer. http://doi.org/ 10.1007/978-3-319-10208-5

Rodríguez, M., Díaz, I., Gonzalez, E. J., & González-Miquel, M. (2018). Motivational active learning: An integrated approach to teaching and learning process control. *Education for Chemical Engineers, 24*, 7-12. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ece.2018.06.003

Rutledge, C., Walsh, C. M., Swinger, N., Auerbach, M., Castro, D., Dewan, M., . . . Chang, T. P. (2018). Gamification in action: Theoretical and practical considerations for medical educators. *Academic Medicine, 93*(7), 1014-1020. https://doi.org//10.1097/ACM.0000000000002183

Sánchez-Mena, A., & Martí-Parreño, J. (2017). Drivers and barriers to adopting gamification: Teachers' perspectives. *Electronic Journal of e-Learning, 15*(5), 434-443.

Sanmugam, M., Zaid, N. M., Mohamed, H., Abdullah, Z., Aris, B., & Suhadi, S. M. (2015). Gamification as an educational technology tool in engaging and motivating students; an analyses review. *Advanced Science Letters, 21*(10), 3337-3341. http://doi.org/10.1166/asl.2015.6489

Signori, G. G., De Guimarães, J. C. F., Severo, E. A., & Rotta, C. (2018). Gamification as an innovative method in the processes of learning in higher education institutions. *International Journal of Innovation and Learning, 24*(2), 115-137. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJIL.2018.094066

Soboleva, E. V., Sokolova, A. N., Isupova, N. I., & Suvorova, T. N. (2017). Use of training programs based on gaming platforms for improving the effectiveness of education. *Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University Bulletin, 7*(4), 7-25. https://doi.org/10.15293/2226-3365.1704.01

Stieglitz, S., Lattemann, C., Robra-Bissantz, S., Zarnekow, R., Brockmann, T. (Eds.). (2017). *Gamification. Using Game Elements in Serious Contexts*. Switzerland: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-45557-0

Sun, J. C., & Hsieh, P. (2018). Application of a gamified interactive response system to enhance the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, student engagement, and attention of english learners. *Educational Technology and Society, 21*(3), 104-116. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26458511?seq=1

Surendeleg, G., Murwa, V., Yun, H. -., & Kim, Y. S. (2014). The role of gamification in education - a literature review. *Contemporary Engineering Sciences, 7*(29-32), 1609-1616. https://doi.org/10.12988/ces.2014.411217

Turan, Z., Avinc, Z., Kara, K., & Goktas, Y. (2016). Gamification and education: Achievements, cognitive loads, and views of students. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 11*(7), 64-69. Retrieved from https://www.online-journals.org/index.php/i-jet/article/view/5455

Van Dinther, M., Dochy, F., & Segers, M. (2011). Factors affecting students' self-efficacy in higher education. *Educational Research Review, 6*(2), 95-108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2010.10.003

Welbers, K., Konijn, E. A., Burgers, C., de Vaate, A. B., Eden, A., & Brugman, B. C. (2019). Gamification as a tool for engaging student learning: A field experiment with a gamified app. *E-Learning and Digital Media, 16*(2), 92-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/2042753018818342

Wiggins, B. E. (2016). An overview and study on the use of games, simulations, and gamification in higher education. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning, 6*(1), 18-29. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJGBL.2016010102

Yildirim, I. (2017). The effects of gamification-based teaching practices on student achievement and students' attitudes toward lessons. *Internet and Higher Education, 33*, 86-92. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2017.02.002

Zainuddin, Z. (2018). Students' learning performance and perceived motivation in gamified flipped-class instruction. *Computers and Education, 126*, 75-88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.07.003

Pragmatics of Musical Rhetoric in the Post-2015 Elections in Nigeria

Ayodele James Akinola
Chrisland University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ayodele James Akinola, Department of English, Chrisland University, Ajebo Road after FMC, Abeokuta, Ogun state, Nigeria, 23409.
E-mail: james2a2@gmail.com

In linguistics, most studies on rhetoric are approached from the perspective of persuasive ideologies of social actors such as community, religious, and political leaders with a concentration on their speeches and the impacts of the speeches on their followers and society at large. As a result, music as a form of persuasion and political strategy has been under-researched. This paper investigates the rhetoric embedded in politically-motivated musical renditions in the post-2015 elections in Nigeria and identifies ideologies of persuasion, pragmatic choice(s), and implications of the narratives on the Nigerian political landscape. Mey's pragmatic acts serve as the theoretical base. Two popular and viral musical renditions in (Nigerian pidgin) English from social media were selected for the study. Analysis of the selected songs which critiqued the leadership style of President Muhammadu Buhari from two opposing angles was carried out. Both songs exhibited the Pragmemic activity of (in)direct speech acts as well as conversational and psychological acts through their rhythm and lyrics adapted from Harry Song's popular 'Reggae Blues' and re-titled as 'The (Change/Truth) Blues'. Musical political rhetoric relies on co-texts conveyed through verifiable information, (satiric) visuals, history, antecedents, and socio-political realities and sentiments as strategies of persuasion. The pragmatic acts employed include narrating, condemning, accusing and counter-accusing, blaming, justifying, (partial) veiling, threatening, hoping, and praying. The study reveals the political consciousness and conflicting perceptions of some Nigeria citizens in governance and makes a case for 'truth awareness' among the governed. Citizens' active participation and better access to information about the political leadership of the day is, therefore, advocated. All these are invaluable for the reposing of trust in the government and also engender citizens' active participation.

Keywords: Pragmatics, musical rhetoric, post-2015 elections, Nigeria

Introduction

The practice and theory of eloquence and rhetoric, whether spoken or written (Duckworth[1], 2000), has received global attention over the years. Scholars have been interested in the study of how persuasion is used to drive people into action. Classical rhetoric dates to the time of Aristotle and Plato, where oratory prowess is considered a form of spoken rhetoric (Bizzell and Herzberg, 2000). Although the eloquence that Nestor, Odysseus, and Achilles displayed in the *Iliad* by the Greek poet Homer led many Greeks to look upon Homer as the father of oratory (Duckworth, 2000), there are other accounts on rhetoric regarding a group of teachers who arose and were known as Sophists, with the purpose of making men better speakers by rules of art (Nelson, Megill, & McCloskey 1987, Freese, 1926; Meyer, 2012). Simonson (2013) avered that historically, rhetoric as a social practice takes on particular significance in culturally unsettled moments, such as, those marked with disagreements or widespread doubts. He explains that in such moments, rhetorical practices become primary media through which emergent and traditional forms of life make themselves felt upon hearts, minds, and bodies swimming in larger seas of instability or competing voices. From this, it can be deduced that rhetoric defines the rules that should govern all prose composition or speech designed to influence the judgment or the feelings of people. It, therefore, treats all matters relating to beauty or forcefulness of style (Duckworth, 2000). In a narrower sense, rhetoric is concerned with a consideration of the fundamental principles according to which oratorical discourses are composed such as its invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (op. cit). The study of rhetoric often coalesces related issues such as metaphor, persuasion, prevarication, and all manners of appeals (see Otieno, 2016; Taiwo, 2013; Michira, 2014; Clarissa, 2012; Vestermark, 2007; Ngoa, 2011).

---

[1] Duckworth, G. E. (2000). "Rhetoric," Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia. Retrieved from http://autocww.colorado.edu/~toldy2/E64ContentFiles/LiteraryGenres/Rhetoric

Rhetoric in twenty-first century literature

Rhetoric, being a skilful means of influencing and persuading others using all forms of linguistic tools, has continued to attract scholarly attention globally across disciplines and involving inter-disciplinary collaborations. In some of the existing literature in the twenty-first century on the subject, discussions have been based on political personalities and their use of rhetoric to influence opinions of their followers, convince or confuse the opposition, and attempt to gaining the support of neutral observers (see Ike-Nwafor, 2015; Adegoju, 2014). Similarly, other studies focused on rhetoric among religious leaders across the world and as a factor of conflict and resolution (Nwankwo, 2015; Owolabi, 2012; Goldsby, 2011). Many of these researchers construed political and religious leaders as agents of rhetoric. Through these studies, many political or religious key figures and their persuasive use of language became contextualised.

Most of the existing studies considered rhetoric as a form of persuasion embedded in the ideologies of various individuals such as notable or popular political leaders and/or religious personalities. From these, unpopular individuals have enjoyed a paucity of scholarly attention in their linguistic utilisation of persuasion among others. Yet, depending on the chosen style, these individuals are capable of wielding some influences in the socio-political space of any society where they found themselves. Interestingly, the rhetoric of these neglected few can be deduced from any form of arts such as music, interpersonal communication, dance, cinematography, poetry, drama, narration, graffiti, 'latrinalia' (a type of deliberately inscribed markings made on latrines), and many others. Moreover, many of the existing studies on rhetoric approach the subject from the disciplinary standpoint of stylistics, semantics, and other aspects of discourse, ignoring the perspective of pragmatics. In particular, studies on political musical composition of persuasion from the standpoint of pragmatics are rare. In order to reflect on the contextual perception on the subject, a brief review of some of the existing studies on rhetoric, in relation with music and politics, is presented.

Rhetoric, music, and politics

As mentioned earlier, the study of rhetorics has been engaged across various disciplines and has attracted interdisciplinary collaborations. Hence, it has often brought together perspectives from music and politics. This engagement has persisted as scholars continue to discuss the relevance, roles, and interelationship among rhetoric, music, and politics. Such works included Graham and Luttrell (2018); Peterson, (2018); Thompson (2018); Gray (2017); Schwartz (2016) among others. In other instances, Nwankwo (2015); Ike-Nwafor (2015); Adegoju (2014); Owolabi (2012); Goldsby (2011); Taiwo (2013) provided some useful information on the role of rhetoric in society. Some of these will now be briefly discussed.

Graham and Luttrell (2018) emphasised the social semiotic functioning of string arrangements as styles. They demonstrated the working of the rhetoric and its political implications in the context of the counter-cultural forces active during the mid-1960s. Peterson (2018) examined the intersection of music, rhetoric, and politics and explored evolving patterns and trends in campaign music. In the study, she observed that political parties studied largely made use of congruity in their campaign songs and that the use increased over time. The scholar observed that one of the two major political parties had a critical stance towards the (happenings) in the nation while the other expressed a patrotic stance towards the nation being studied (The United States of America). Thompson (2018) investigated Debussy's manipulation of musical materials. He examined ways that both symbolist poets and impressionist composers enact and contend with poems' structures and semantics. The study also inquired into the hypothetical reconstruction of Debussy's "rhetoric of suggestion". It was discovered that the presumed obliviousness in the use of musical topics is instead a hallmark of Debussy's coherent, albeit subversive, musico-poetic strategies—as part of a larger "rhetoric of suggestion". Among the studies being reviewed, this study dwelled more on the aesthetic than it did for politics or culture.

Moreover, Gray (2017) considered the political tendencies in "Hail Columbia". Specifically, he reviews the tagged of "non-partisanship" on the song. He argued that the it is not valid to consider thesong, "Hail Columbia", a spontaneous expression of an embryonic national spiritas . He, therefore, said that the song does not merely reflect a spontaneous popular reaction, but rather represents an effort to equate the French conflict with the American Revolution. Gray claimed that the fame of "Hail Columbia" suggests that the deterioration of Franco-American relations left a deep mark on American public consciousness and that because being American was to be connected to England and France, the song endorsed a partial perspective on those relationships. Schwartz

(2016) brought the Marshallese voices into limelight in terms of material and political representations by defining them. The scholar believes that decolonization as a form of nation building depends on Marshallese politics of the voice. According to Schwartz, politics of the voice serves as a reference to colonial encounters and two political ontologies.

Rhetorics at other intersections

Nwankwo (2015) explored rhetoric and the realities of managing ethnoreligious conflicts in Nigeria. She examined the nature, protagonists, and management mechanisms employed in the deployment of rhetoric and argued that the government and civil societies need to play a proactive role in arresting the negative consequences that ethnoreligious conflicts breed. The need to investigate how texts reproduce and sustain power equations and unequal power relations in campaign texts through the rhetoric of gubernatorial campaign speeches was the focus of Ike-Nwafor (2015) using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the basis. In the study, domination and supremacy were identified as strategies of rhetoric through which opinions of the speakers are imposed on others. Adegoju (2014) studied the speeches of selected political figures in the struggles of the June 12 political power-play that was recorded between the military and civilians. With insights also from CDA, deixis is identified as a discursive strategy deployed in the conflict rhetoric, which helped to reproduce dominance and control. Owolabi (2012) observed the manner in which religious leaders manipulate the English language to persuade their audience. In support of the view being advanced by Babatunde (1998), Owolabi asserted that these leaders adopt rhetorical devices such as personification, oxymorons, puns, rhymes and rhythms, et cetera, which serve "ornamental functions of enhancing the aesthetic quality of speakers…" (Owolabi, 2012: 9).

Goldsby (2011) documented blame as a strategy of rhetoric used during Christian versus Muslim conflicts in Nigeria. Criticising an account of Boer on the root cause of the conflicts being the Muslims, and the interrelationship of religion and politics, the scholar opined that conflict in Nigeria is mainly due to the pre-conception of ideas in the minds of the different adherents of the two religions. The researcher observed that based on the rhetoric of blame imposed on followers by their leaders, Christians will always blame Muslims and vice versa. Mutual understanding of one another's beliefs is, therefore, advocated for peaceful coexistence. Taiwo (2013) identified the rhetorical communication of a political leader (Obafemi Awolowo) in the history of the Nigerian State. He averred that the leader employed the use of the English language as a persuasion strategy so as to gain the support of his audience. Ajewole (2013) examined political speeches made by leaders to persuade, inform, correct and manipulate the audience. Particular attention was focussed on a collection of Awolowo's speeches. The study aligns with others that perceive rhetoric as a major tool used by political figures to influence their followers. Other studies that have been done on the use of rhetoric by political leaders in Nigeria include Akinwotu (2016), Adetunji (2009), Ezejideaku & Ugwu, (2007), Adebiyi (2006), Ayeomoni (2005), among others.

Going by many of the existing studies on rhetoric, it is observed that the concentration of the use of rhetoric is viewed from the leader-followers or leaders-audience approach by scholars whose works were reviewed. This brings about the questions: Do followers deploy rhetoric to show support for their leaders or to influence one another? In what forms is this rhetoric deployed? Are there any pragmatic implications for this? In the succeeding parts of this paper, answers to these questions will be attempted.

Materials and Methods

Materials

The materials used for this study are digital videos: "Change Blues" and "The Truth Blues-Corruption Fights Back" downloaded from YouTube. The two renditions are a parody of popular Harrysong[2] song which was released in 2015 titled "Reggae Blues" (see Harrysong and Adasa, 2015). This song had over 6,000,000 views on YouTube at the time this researcher visited the channel. It was from "Reggae Blues" the song "Change Blues" was adapted. "Change Blues" was published on YouTube on July 28, 2016 (see Kuro[3], 2015) before going viral on other social media platforms. The rendition lasted 5:01 and has over 40,000 views. The composition criticises

---

[2] Harrysong & Adasa C. (2015). Reggae blues. Nigeria. Five Star Music. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4nT3Od5cxI

[3] Kuro (2015). Change blues. Nigeria. Zoo Music. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nL_gRW2t68

President Muhammadu Buhari's promised change and style of governance since he was elected. The second adaptation used as Text B with the title "The Truth Blues-Corruption Fights Back", serves as a response and defence of the All Progressives Congress (APC)–led government of President Muhammadu. The song attempted to remind the audience that previous members of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) were the root cause of every difficulty being faced by Nigerians at the time of the rendition. This song was published on August 23, 2016, after which it also went viral on other social media platforms. It has a duration of 2:48 and about 11,000 views at the time of the collection of data for this study.

The transcriptions of both songs are presented below:

Text A: "Change Blues" Lyrics

    Chorus:
1. *After the election wey dem do, Dem do… Dem Do* [After the election that was conducted]
2. *We still dey wait for the change, The change… the change* [We are still waiting for the change]
3. *All the promise wey dem make, Dem make… dem make* [All the promises that they made]
4. *Edon dey be like say na fake, Na fake…. na fake* [It's like they are fake]
5. *Where the money? where the food?, The food… the food* [Where is the money, where is the food]
6. *'Cos everybody wan improve, Improve… improve* [Because everybody desires improvement]
7. *Since you come na tears and pain, And pain … and pain* [Since you arrived (became president), it is tears and pain]
8. *We don tire to complain oooo, Ah… Ah* [We are tired of complaining)]

    Solo 1a:
9. *Baba see the bad wey you bin do, You don tear Nigeria into two, In two… in two* [Baba, see the bad things you have done. You have divided Nigeria into two]
10. *97% and 5%, Percent… percent*
11. *You no bin talk like President, Like President…* [You don't talk like the President]
12. *You dey rule Nigeria with sentiment, With sentiment…* [You are ruling Nigeria with sentiment]
13. *And take your office do revenge, Revenge… revenge* [And use your office to seek revenge]

    Solo 1b:
14. *Oya now, Oga Buhari we dey begi o, Make Nigeria no scatter for your headi o* [Now, Mr Buhari, we are pleading (that) you should not let Nigeria disintegrate during your reign]
15. Jesu!

    Solo 2a:
16. *No employment for the youth, The youths… the youths*
17. *And security no improve, Improve… improve* [And not improved security]
18. *Inflation don dey hit the roof, The roof… roof* [Inflation is getting so high]
19. *Still government no dey say the truth, The truth… the* truth [Yet, the government is untruthful]

    Solo 2b:
20. *Oya my brother this change na yawa, We don too dey suffer, We pray God for Nigeria,* [Now, my (brother) people, this change is a fraud. We are suffering a lot, we pray to God for Nigeria]
21. *Oya my sister this government na yawa, And you don too dey suffer, We pray God for Nigeria.*

    Solo 3a:
22. *See as economy just dey fall, Dey fall… dey fall* [See the economy taking a downturn]
23. *And you just dey travel around the world, The world … the world* [And you are globetrotting]
24. *Abi your office dey for sky…..? Or For sky… for* sky [Do you have your office in the sky?]
25. *Coz na time to work you dey take dey fly, Dey fly… dey fly* [Because the time you were supposed to spend working is spent flying]

    Solo 3b:
26. *We no give you the vote you take am, take am* [We did not vote for you, you stole it]
27. *Certificate sef you fake am, fake am* [You even forged a certificate]

14

28. *Baba Buhari, election criminal* [Baba Buhari, (you are) an election criminal]
29. *Amechi collect am you hail am, hail am* [Amechi looted (the treasury), you hail him]
30. *Dasuki collect am you jail am, jail am* [Dasuki looted (the treasury), you put him in jail]
31. *Baba Buhari, you too dey partial o.* [Baba Buhari, you are partial!]

Solo 4:
32. *Only you and your people dey chop all the loot wey you gather* [Only you and your associates are enjoying all the loot you recovered]
33. *Na enjoyment you dey you no come presidency to suffer, eh eh* [You have only come to enjoy, not to suffer]
34. *You dey rule Naija like say na war, na war… na war* [You are ruling Nigeria as if there is a war]
35. *You dey fight corruption dey break the law, the law… the law* [You are fighting corruption while breaking the law]
36. *Buhari it's better you withdraw, withdraw… withdraw*
37. *Than to blame Jonathan for all your flaws… your flaws… your flaws*
38. *Jonathan don give you power, the man wey no like wahala, Yeba! [*Jonathan has transferred power to you, the man who does not want trouble]
39. *We no believe in your policy. Pack up and let us be.* [We have no confidence in your policy. Pack up and let us be]

Text B: "The Truth Blues" Lyrics

Chorus:
1. *Before the election wey dem lose, dem lose, dem lose* [Before the election where they were defeated]
2. *Oil price still boku, boku, boku* [Oil prices are still high (valuable)]
3. *Na so so dem thief-thief and loot iyo! and loot, and loot* [(But) there was stealing and looting galore]
4. *Even thief money for guns and boot, and boot, and boot* [They even stole the funds for guns and boots]
5. *Dem buy the jet and cash vamoose, vamoose* [They bought a jet and funds went missing]
6. *20 billion join remove, remove* [20 billion was removed]
7. *Enjoy themselves dey groove and booze, and booze, and booze* [They enjoyed themselves travelling and drinking]
8. *Naira and Naija just dey wail oooo. aaah aah!* [Naira and Nigeria are wailing]
9. *Boko thief Chibok girls pikin, pikin pikin* [Boko Haram (terrorists) kidnapped Chibok children]
10. *Dem still dey dance, loot and steal, and steal and steal* [They were (busy) dancing, looting and stealing]
11. *Dem steal today and tomorrow join o, e join, e join* [They steal the present and even the future]
12. *15 billion dollars remove, Ahhh aahhhh* [15 billion dollars was stolen]
13. *Sotey, nothing dey for account, account, account* [To the extent the account got emptied]
14. *Too much suffer for the land, the land, the land* [There is so much suffering in the land]

Solo 1:
15. *Oya na, Oil come dey fall, Naira come dey fall* [(As a result), oil (prices) started falling, The naira started losing its value]
16. *Naija no go follow dem fall at all at all.* [Nigeria will not fall alongside it]

Solo 2
17. *After the election come the news, the news, the news* [After the election came the news]
18. *Dem thief like say na we be fool, be fool, be fool* [They have stolen as if we are fools]
19. *Return the loot or go to jail,to jail, to jail*
20. *Thiefy thiefy people dey cry and wail o aahhh ahh* [The looters are the ones crying and wailing]
21. *Dem say armed robber get im right, im right* [They claimed armed robbers (looters) are entitled to their (fundamental human) rights]
22. *Dem no care say people dey die, dey die,* [They are not concerned that people were dying]
23. *Baba find money go abroad o, abroad, abroad* [Baba went abroad in search of foreign investment/looted funds from abroad]
24. *So Naija money go return, ah ah* [So that recovery can be made]

Solo 3
25. *After the election come the news, the news, the news* [After the election came the news]

26. *Dem thief like say na we be fool, be fool, be fool* [They stole as if we are fools]
27. *Return the loot or go to jail, to jail, to jail*
28. *Thiefy thiefy people dey cry and wail o aahhh ahh* [The looters are the ones crying and wailing]
29. *Dem say armed robber get im right, im right* [They claimed armed robbers (looters) get their (fundamental human) rights]
30. *Dem no care say people dey die, dey die, ,* [They are not concerned that people were dying]
31. *Baba find money go abroad o, abroad, abroad* [Baba went abroad in search of foreign investment/and or looted funds abroad]
32. *So Naija money go return, ah ah* [So that recovery can be made]

   Solo 4:
33. *As corruption dey fight back* [As corruption is fighting back]
34. *Dem begin bomb our pipelines* [They started bombing our pipelines]
35. *To cripple our power and economy*
36. *So that Baba go relax for im fight o* [So that Baba will relax in his fight against corruption]
37. *Dem even sponsor song iyo* [They even sponsored a song]
38. *Naija people make we no gree* [Nigeria people, we must not accept (that)]

   Chorus 2
39. *Before the election wey dem lose, dem lose, dem lose* [Before the election where they were defeated]
40. *Oil price still boku, boku, boku* [Oil prices are still high (valuable)]
41. *Na so so dem thief-thief and loot iyo! and loot, and loot loot* [(But) there was stealing and looting galore]
42. *Money wey be for me and you, for me and you* [Money meant for you and I]
43. *After the election come the news, the news, the news!* [After the election came the news]
44. *Baba no dey for cock and bull, and bull* [Baba does not tolerate this cock and bull story]
45. Return the loot or go to jail, the jail, the jail.

Methods

A purposive sampling method was adopted for the study. Through this, content analysis was applied to two Nigerian popular music videos that advanced divergent views on the leadership and governance in the country. The renditions were contextually translated into the English language. These were analysed using Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory. The timeline in which the videos went viral on various social media sites (Facebook, Nairaland, YouTube, and Whatsapp, etc) was between 2015 and 2017.

Procedure

The videos of both songs were downloaded from the internet (YouTube.com). Each of the renditions was stored on a computer hard drive. Thereafter, the researcher watched and listened to each of them and transcribed their lyrics into written texts. The linguistic type deployed in the music videos (Nigerian pidgin) was retained in their original form during transcription. The contents were then subsequently analysed using the pragmatic acts construct of Mey (2001).

Results and Discussion

Pragmemic activities and choices

In Mey's (2001) pragmemic assumptions, the application of pragmatics is of two inter-related branches. One of these two parts is the activity part, which involves the interactants in a discourse. It describes the types of activities deployed in achieving the communication goal(s). The other part, called the textual part, provides the choices that are available to the interactant. This can be construed as the basis of the interactions or the situation of communication also known as the context. Therefore, the analysis of data in this study is cognizant of these assumptions.

The pragmatic events

Conversational acts: Conversation involves an exchange of thoughts, ideas, or messages between one and another person or persons. In songs, both follow call and response patterns, especially in the solos. This is seen in most of the lines of these compositions. Here, the lead singer renders his lines and the backup singers complete the rendition by saying the last word uttered by the lead singer. This strategy is used for emphasis and to provide aesthetic value to the flow of the music. It is also used to perform the pract of *taunting* the supporters on each side and expressing two opposing views as seen in line 1 of each of the songs: "After the election wey dem do, Dem do... Dem Do" (Text A), and "After the election wey dem lose, Dem lose... Dem lose" (Text B). Attention here is on "lose" and "do". The use of "do" in the conversational context points to a refusal by the singer in Text A to acknowledge that the other party (represented by the singer in Text B) actually won the election. The conversation act produced pract [4]of *narrating* in the sense that both songs follow the linear narrative method with an identifiable starting point and ending. In the starting point, the main issue, which was alluded to the "election" as seen in "after the election wey dem (do/lose), with the ending showing some forms of allegiance to the personalities being supported by each of the songs. For example, Text A eulogises Jonathan (the former president) in A:38 "Jonathan don give you power, the man wey no like wahala" and reject the incumbent president in A:39 "We no believe in your policy. Pack up and let us be". In the ending of Text B, the incumbent president was eulogised as in "Baba no dey for cock and bull (story)" while threatening the "looters" as in "Return the loot or go to jail". Generally, both songs tell the story of the state of governance in Nigeria.

(In)Direct speech acts: In Mey's pragmatic postulations, acts of speech (spoken or written) are not a necessary signifiers of the specific speech acts that can be held accountable for the action (Mey, 2001, p.212). In line with this, a direct speech act is derivable from the tenor of the conversation (texts) (:213). From the texts being studied, direct speech acts are used as practs of *asserting*, *accusing*, and *blaming* respectively. This is seen in: A:8 "Since you come na tears and pain", A:12 "You dey rule Nigeria with sentiment", A:26 "We no give you the vote you take am" etc. It is also in the other text; B:3 "Na so so dem thief-thief and loot". The response of the composer(s) of Text B is a pointer to the effect the composition of Text A has on the audience who felt indirectly addressed, and as a result, did give a response in a similar fashion. This buttresses the role of indirect speech as "pre-sequences" in discourse (Mey, 2001, p. 144).

Psychological acts: For the audience of the compositions, the musical renditions deploy psychological acts through their use of the visuals in the videos to enhance the messages being conveyed. For example, the visuals and sounds of violence, hunger, and destruction of properties are strategies deployed to serve as practs identifying and empathising with the stories being told by each of the musicians. See extracts A:7, 10, 17, and 18; and B: 2, 4, 7, 10 etc. It should be noted that while Text A uses those lines as pract of empathising with the perceived suffering the citizens now must endure, the other text in B uses it as a pract of *identifying* and *commending* the effort of the president in governing the country. These are found in B:1-8, etc.

Physical acts: These are expressed implicitly through the melody and corresponding dances. Here, choreographed monkeys were used in the videos. The significance of this is subject to many interpretations. However, in this paper, they serve as a reference to the government of the day as behaving like animals in the depiction of Text A. The same appears used in depicting the previous government in Text B. From these, the physical acts produced the practs of dancing, wailing (A:8), and praising (B:44). These also align with the notion of body movements, which include gestures as explicated in Mey (2001, p. 222).

Moreover, the hidden identities of both singers produced the pract of veiling. While the actual images were not used in the video, except the introductory pseudo-name, Kuro (Zoo Music) and Zoom[5] Entertainment, Text A's composer performed the physical act of veiling by way of masking himself as portrayed in the picture below.

---

[4] Practs (that is, pragmatic acts,) refer to acts that work not just by their wording but also by their being embedded in a situation in which humans act, with every communicative cue brought to their (humans) interactional context. These include intonation, body movements, facial expressions,emotions, and so on (see Mey, 2001: 208-209, 223).

[5] Zoom Entertainment (2015). The truth blues "corruption fights back". Nigeria. Zoom Entertainment. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoiQUOkYSTw
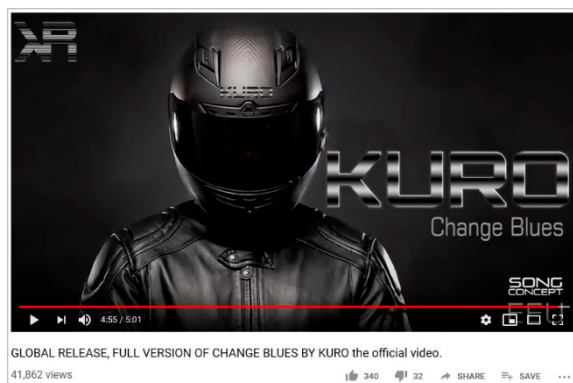
Figure 1. An image of a masked man used to conceal the real identity of the singer.[6]

The pseudo-name "Zoo Music" is also subject to many interpretations. The closest being an unsavoury alias ascribed to the Nigerian nation by one of the secessionist groups from one of the regions that makes up the country[7].

Prosody: This is reflected in the emphatic repetition of the ending phrases in the solos in many parts of the Texts A and B. The pragmatic functions that this serves include the practs of *emphasising, mocking,* and achieving melodious aesthetics.

Contextual significance of the songs

The following are the identifiable choices utilised by participants in the texts:

Inference: A *counter-informing* pract is used as a rhetorical strategy in Text B: as the singer draws inference from the poor socio-economic situations in Nigeria as mentioned by the singer in Text A: 1-8. Here, the other singer in Text B: 1-8 debunks the message being conveyed (in Text A) that the poor economic situations and hardships being experienced in Nigeria are caused by the previous government who enjoyed abundance but squandered the resources on frivolities. This also produces the pract of *blaming* and *denying* among others.

Reference: Mention was made to issues such as the "certificate, election, change, promise, money, food," etc., as referential elements in Text A. These provide concrete evidence and clarify the aim of the musical rhetoric. Through these, the audience has a clear idea of the message being championed by the composer(s). The strategies produce practs of *convincing*, *blaming,* and *accusing*. For example, in reference to "certificate" (in A:27), the singer is alleging that the president who was elected mainly due to his integrity and uprightness had committed perjury. According to the singer, the president was not qualified to vie for the office because he did not possess the minimum requirement of a secondary school certificate as required by the Nigerian law. In Text B, the signifiers are "election, oil price, money, loot, Chibok girls," etc. All these serve as strategies of reasoning, so as to absolve the government of blame in the scenario. Through these, the practs of *appealing, denying,* and *counter-accusing* are produced.

Relevance: At the place of relevance, both musical renditions converge at the point of Nigeria's political realities, in the sense that the time of both songs portrays a trying period in the history of the Nigerian nation. During the period being debated, general elections had taken place and winners and losers have emerged. In the history of the nation, an incumbent president had lost a re-election bid. Thereafter emerged the new leadership during which there are social and economic challenges bedevilling the nation. To this, the citizens of the country were divided as to whom to blame. This narrative is what these singers are championing. These narratives are of a significant relevance to the national discourse at the time.

Shared Situation Knowledge: In the songs, both found commongrounds in the rhetoric of defeat versus victory in a historic election in modern Nigeria. Additionally, both songs provided shared knowledge of happenings in the country immediately after the 2015 elections. However, this common knowledge is presented with diverse

---

6 ibid
7 "The 'Zoo' called Nigeria". The Nation Newspaper, June 20, 2017. Retrieved from https://thenationonlineng.net/zoo-called-nigeria/

point of views that the fans or listeners on either sides of the argument can relate with as true or untrue state of affairs in Nigeria at the time.

Metaphor: Physical objects are used as metaphor to advanced the views being expressed in both songs. These included visuals of people in affluence to depict enjoyment by looters in Text B, and some other people in torn clothes to depict suffering in both Text A and B. Also included are pictures of notable individuals, in both vdeos, to point to real names and faces of political actors related with the narratives; choreographed monkeys to reiterate the suggestion of the zoo alias[8] ascribed to the Nigeria State.

Voice: The voices depict that of the opposition versus supporters in Nigeria's democratic narrative following the 2015 elections. These voices represent the Nigerian individuals with self-belief and alignments with who is to blame for the unfavourable situation. Although, commentators on the links where the videos were posted accused both of the composers of being sponsored, others praised the "creativity" deployed in each instance. In B:37, the composer alleged that the song in Text A was sponsored. This strategy was to discredit the music in Text A as "corruption fight(ing) back" in order to gain credibility for Text B. From the voices of the texts, practs of *persuading,* which conform with the Aristotelian's three forms of persuasion in rhetoric were deployed. These are ethos (which appeals to the audience's sense of honesty and/or authority), pathos (appeals to the audience's sense of emotions), and logos (which appeals to the audience's sense of logic). According to Aristotle (350 BCE):

> Persuasion is clearly a sort of demonstration… achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible… may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions… effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive argument suitable to the case in question.[9]

Going by the aforementioned and from the voices and other pragmatic activities and contexts, the following practs were produced:

Persuading: In this, both ethos and pathos in the Aristotelian persuasion forms are utilized, for example, "Jonathan don give you power, the man wey no like wahala, Yeba!" (A:38). This conveys a sense of truth but lacks in the consideration of logos, because the "power" was not transferred as the singer makes it look, but was earned through the popular votes gathered by the eventual winner. However, in the face of pathos, the relinquishing of power by Jonathan is a heroic feat. This strategy utilised in Text A:38 aligns with the general acceptance of the personality depicted even by the eventual winner and earns him the status of a gentleman.

On the other hand, in Text B, the pract of persuading runs across many lines of the music as it tries to absolve the government of blame for the situation. For example in B:33-38: "As corruption dey fight back, Dem begin bomb our pipelines, To cripple our power and economy, So that Baba go relax for im fight o, Dem even sponsor song iyo, Naija people make we no gree". Here, the singer, as an acceptance of reality, aligns with the true situation at the time which has to do with the bombing of oil pipelines, which nearly led to the crippling of the economy. Although this may have been used to depict ethos and pathos forms of persuasion, however, this may also fail the logos test as the situations described are not necessarily new to the audience and may not be accepted as the major cause of the situation in the country at the point in time.

Rejecting: This pract is used as a strategy of condemning the emergence of the Buhari-led APC government. It is identifiable in the last line of Text A:39 "We no believe in your policy. Pack up and let us be", and serves as a direct address to the government and a form of rejection. However, the Text B pract of rejecting seen in B:37-38 is strategically used as a call on Nigerians to reject the rhetoric of the singer of "Change Blues". Using these lyrics "Dem even sponsor song iyo, Naija people make we no gree", "The Truth Blues-Corruption Fights Back" discards, in entirety, the rejection expressed by the "Change Blues" and goes further to persuade other Nigerians that they should not accept the lack of belief in the Buhari-led APC government being advanced by the former.

Associating: This pract is used as a strategy of persuasion in both of the songs. For example, in A:20 "Oya <u>my brother</u> this change na yawa, <u>We</u> don too dey suffer", the Text A composer identified with the suffering people of

---

[8] "The 'Zoo' called Nigeria". The Nation Newspaper, June 20, 2017. Retrieved from https://thenationonlineng.net/zoo-called-nigeria/
[9] "Modes of persuasion". Retrieved from https://psychology.wikia.org/wiki/Modes_of_persuasion

Nigeria as a result of the perceived "change" in the leadership of the nation whose only hope is in prayer, as in A:20-21 "We pray God for Nigeria". The other in Text B:26, "Dem thief like say na we be fool", portrays a rejection of the former while associating themselves with a perceived corruption-free posture of the government of the day. This is buttressed in B:42 -45: "Money wey be for me and you… Baba no dey for cock and bull… Return the loot or go to jail…"

Dissociating: Here, each singer separates him/herself from various subjects such as the election, corruption, and government policies. For example, the singer of Text B deploys the pract of dissociating from "the election" that was lost "wey dem lose" by the opposing party. On the other hand, the singer of Text A strategically avoided acknowledging that the election was "won", instead, he reduced it to the mere stage of "conduct" or "doing" by saying "…the election wey dem do". Here, he rejects and dissociates himself and his fellow supporters from the credibility that might be attached to the conducted election and victory that brought the government to power.

Condemning: From the pract of condemning deployed in each instance, neither personality, that is, former President Jonathan nor incumbent President Buhari, is incompetent when the opposing views are considered in isolation. In another but similar sense, one of the two should be absolved of blame while the other is considered guilty. This rhetoric runs throughout the lines of each song, thus serving as a major motivation throughout each of the renditions.

Other pragmatic acts and examples are presented in the tables below.

Table 1
Samples of pragmatic acting in the selected songs

Practs	Examples	Locations	Comments
Dissuading:	Buhari it's better you withdraw, …Than to blame Jonathan for all your flaws"	A:36	With reference to the economy
	"Return the loot or go to jail,	B:45	
Accusing	We no give you the vote you take am… Certificate sef you fake am.	A:26-27	Concerning the president's educational qualifications and the recovered loot
	Only you and your people dey chop all the loot wey you gather	A:32	
counter-accusing	Thiefy thiefy people dey cry and wail o aahhh ahhh Dem say armed robber get im right, im right	B:28	Referring to the "Change Blues" composers, social media commentators, etc
Blaming	Since you come na tears and pain	A:7	Directed at Buhari's government
	Dem steal today and tomorrow join o… 15 billion dollars remove…Sotey, nothing dey for account	B:11-12	Directed at Jonathan's government
Discrediting	We no believe in your policy…	A:39	Directed at the performance of Buhari's government
	Dem even sponsor song iyo. Naija people make we no gree	B:37	Expressed to discredit the song and its message in Text A

From the corpus utilised in this study, which is highlighted above, it can be deduced that musical political rhetoric (MPR) is deployed in a variety of ways. It is used as a presupposition of Stockholm syndrome. Stockholm syndrome is an idea that describes followers' rationalisation of the inefficiency of leadership or governance despite the challenges being experienced by the followers through the actions of the leaders (see Jameson, 2010). In other words, it is a situation where the oppressed support and defend their oppressors. The contents of both songs advance a verbal defence of the leaders from both supporters and opposition vice versa in each narrative.

Moreover, while one of the two songs serves as a criticism, the other functions as a reaction. For example, "Truth Blues" was composed and sung as a reaction to the criticisms in "Change Blues". In both cases, they attempt to engage their listeners in order to persuade them and justify the actions or explain the reasons for the inactions of the political actor(s) that are being promoted.

Table 2
Additional samples of pragmatic acting in the selected songs

Practs	Examples	Locations	Comments
Justifying	Since you come na tears and pain... We don tire to complain	A:7-8	Explaining the essence of the song
	Baba find money go abroad o... So Naija money go return...	B:31-32	Absolving the president of junketeering
Commending	Jonathan don give you power, the man wey no like wahala	A:38	With regard to the historic transition of the government in 2015
	Baba no dey for cock and bull, and bull	B:44	Extolling Buhari's personality
Rejecting	We no believe in your policy. Pack up and let us be	A:39	Referring to Buhari's government policies and capability
	Ø	B	-
	Ø	A	-
Threatening	Return the loot or go to jail	B:	To the various people being tried for various corruption charges
Presupposition	Amechi collect am you hail am, hail am Dasuki collect am you jail am, jail am	A:29-30	Perception of the government's fight against corruption ("lopsided")
	Dem say armed robber get im right, Dem no care say people dey die... As corruption dey fight back...	B:21-22 and 33-37	Perception of Buhari's fight against corruption ("justifiable")
(mis)informing and admitting	Only you and your people dey chop all the loot wey you gather	A:32	Acknowledgement of the recovery of loot and the perception of the utilisation of the loot.
	Oil price still boku, boku, boku.	B:2	Acknowledgement of the economic downturn with a justification attempt.
Abusing	Oya my brother/sister this change na yawa, We don too dey suffer, We pray God for Nigeria.	A:20-21	With moderate levels of pessimism
	Oil come dey fall, Naira come dey fall, Naija no go follow dem fall at all at all.	B:15-16	Sees the other critics as those who "fell". It evokes some levels great optimism

In the study, it was discovered that the reference to "economy, power, missing funds, recovered loot", etc are pointers to the social, political, and economic realities. All these fit correctly into the narrative of the Nigerian State. The rhetorical reference serves as a persuasive strategy used by the followers to influence the perception index of their leaders. In other words, it helps the leaders to clearly understand how their followers are perceiving their activities or performance in the governance of their common patrimony. Additionally, the songs serve as opportunistic leveraging. In this sense, both songs are an adaptation of trending music by one artist to another. It also satirises the Nigerian society through the use of satiric visuals such as the use of choreographed monkeys among others.

As can be seen in the study, politically-motivated musical renditions can function as a safe-box of history. Here, both songs indirectly preserved post-2015 election events and serve a referential purpose in the history of Nigeria. Similarly, they are a potential tool for antecedents recalling events before and after the elections.

Another deduction that can be made is that these renditions exhibit and preserve the socio-political realities of Nigeria as a developing nation. In the songs, issues such as hunger, poor economic policies of the past and present, activities of militants, kidnapped Chibok girls, election victories and losses, and many others are foregrounded and as such, preserved in the texts of the songs for future reference. Finally, the deployment of the lyrics from the two songs serves as a means of protestation as well as expressing sentiments. This is typical of followers of political actors in most parts of the world. The songs used in this study display the situation and divergent opinions of many Nigerians on issues that concern them and the nation.

Significantly, all of the aforementioned constitute the strategies of persuasion as used by the musicians, who themselves are followers of their preferred political leaders. These indicate that the followers can be used as agents of persuasion. MPR, therefore, can be construed as a genre of rhetoric in contemporary discourse and

pragmatic studies, most especially as a tool through which followers persuade one another and through which the performance rating of the political leadership can be measured.

Conclusion

The study revealed the peculiar utilisation of music for advancing narratives among two opposing sides of the Nigerian populace. This is a result of the change in political leadership after the 2015 general elections, most especially the president. Rhetoric, in this study served two purposes: as as a mark of loyalty to the 'idolised' political figure(s) for whom admiration is expressed; as a parody for whom so much disgust is communicated. Both of these situations were musically exhibited using Pidgin English to sing two pragmatically distinct lyrics of an imitated song with the same music. In both cases, the issue of objectivity of ideas embedded in the attempted persuasions was eroded and became problematised. In other words, each singer posed more questions than answers in their attempts to persuade listeners to their side. Through these, the study helps reveal the political consciousness and conflicting perceptions of some Nigerian citizens on governance and quality of political leadership. The same scenario provides the basis for describing political narratives and the burden of governance in a typical African state. It can be deduced that the lack of awareness of a true state of governance at every point in time from the leaders to the governed and vice versa plays a major role in the rhetorical engagement cum argument among the followers in many forms. Hence, 'truth awareness' by the leaders to the governed is advocated. This awareness needs to be complemented with citizens' active participation and better access to information about the political leadership of the day. This, among others, is invaluable to enhancing trust and confidence in the government and its policies. Further research is, however, necessary in order to ascertain the impacts of music as a tool of influence or otherwise for political participation in Nigeria and other parts of the world.

References

Adebiyi, C. O. (2006). Mood and style in public speaking: A critique of a president's inaugural speech in Mood. In T. Ajiboye & W. Osisanwo (Eds.), *Language and literature* (pp. 111-124). Lagos, Nigeria: Femolus Fetop.

Adegoju, A. (2014). Person deixis as a discursive practice in Nigeria's "June 12" conflict rhetoric. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics,* 3(l), 45-64.

Adetunji, A. (2009). Speech acts and rhetoric in the second inaugural addresses of Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo and American President, George Bush. In A. Odebunmi, A. E. Arua & S. Arimi (Eds.), *Language, gender and politics: A festschrift for Yisa Kehinde Yusuf* (pp. 257-296). Lagos, Nigeria: Centre for Black African Arts and Civilisation.

Ajewole, O. C. O. (2013). A stylo–rhetorical analysis of Obafemi Awolowo's "it is not life that matters". *International Journal of Asian Social Science, 3*(1), 216-228.

Akinwotu, A. (2016). Rhetoric in selected speeches of Obafemi Awolowo and Moshood Abiola. *Ihafa: Journal of African Studies*, 8(2), 36-58.

Ayeomoni, M. O. (2005). A linguistic-stylistic investigation of the language of Nigerian political elite. *Nebula, 22,* 153-168.

Babatunde, S. T. (1998). Persuasion in Christian Religious Speeches—A Speech Act Analysis. Studies in Stylistics and Discourse Analysis, *1*, 45-56.

Bizzell, P., & Herzberg, B. (2000). *The rhetorical tradition: Readings from classical times to the present*. New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Clarissa, V. (2012). Mafumbo: Considering the functions of metaphorical speech in Swahili contexts. *Selected proceedings of the 42nd annual conference on African Linguistics: African languages in context* (pp. 277-290). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

Ezejideaku, E., & Ugwu, E. (2007). The rhetoric & propaganda of political campaigns in Nigeria. *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria,10*, 9-26.

Freese, J. H. trans. (1926). *Aristotle. Art of rhetoric*. Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press.

Goldsby, A. (2011). *Nigerian Christians vs Nigerian Muslims: Secularism, violence, and the rhetoric of blame*. Retrieved from https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/handle/10066/7490

Gray, M. (2017). A partisan national song: The politics of "Hail Columbia" reconsidered. *Music & Politics*, *2*(2), 1-20. http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0011.201

Graham, P., & Luttrell, B. (2018). A rhetoric of style: Eleanor Rigby and the reordering of popular music. *Social Semiotics*, 29(2), 222-239. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2018.1434971

Ike-Nwafor, N. G. (2015). Critical discourse analysis of selected political campaign speeches of gubernatorial candidates in south-west Nigeria 2007-2014 (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.

Jameson, C. (2010). The short step from love to hypnosis: A reconsideration of the Stockholm syndrome. *Journal for Cultural Research*, *14*(4), 337–355.

Mey, J. L. (2001). *Pragmatics. An introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing

Meyer, M. (2012). Aristotle's rhetoric. *Topoi*, *31*(2), 249–252. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-012-9132-0

Michira, J. N. (2014). The language of politics: A CDA of the 2013 Kenyan presidential campaign discourse. *International Journal of Education*, *2*(1), 1-18.

Nelson, J.S, Megill, A., & McCloskey, D. N. (1987). *The rhetoric of human sciences: Language and argument in scholarship and public affairs*. London, UK: University of Wisconsin Press.

Ngoa, S. N. (2011). A review & analytical narrative of propaganda activities: A Nigerian perspective. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *1*(16), 237-248.

Nwankwo, B. O. (2015). Rhetorics and realities of managing ethno-religious conflicts: the Nigerian experience. *American Journal of Educational Research*, *3*(3), 292-300.

Otieno, R.F., Owino, F. R., & Attyang, J. M. (2016). Metaphors in political discourse: a review of selected studies. *International Journal of English and Literature, 7*(2), 21-26.

Owolabi, D. (2012). Rhyme, rhythm and rhetoric in religious discourse in Nigeria's ESL environment. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 2(5), 1-10.

Peterson, L. E. (2018) A rhetorical analysis of campaign songs in modern elections (Unpublished master's thesis). Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Retrieved from https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/6718

Reames, R. (Ed.). (2017). *Logos without Rhetoric: The arts of language before Plato* (pp. 209 - 212). Columbia , SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Schwartz, J. A. (2016) Matters of empathy and nuclear colonialism: Marshallese voices marked in story, song, and illustration. *Music & Politics*, *2*(2), 1-16. http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0010.206

Simonson, P. (2013). On digital religious eloquence and other rhetorical pathways to thinking about media and religion. In K. Lundy (Ed.), *Religion across media: From early antiquity to late modernity* (pp. 7-104). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Taiwo, R. (2013). Metaphors in Nigerian political discourse. In N. Johannesson & D. C. Minugh (Eds.), *Selected Papers from the 2008 Stockholm Metaphor Festival* (pp. 193-205). Stockholm, Sweden: Stockholm University Press.

Thompson, T. M. (2018). *The Rhetoric of suggestion in Debussy's Mélodies: A contingent poetics of thematicity, temporality, and agency* (pp. vii – 311). Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University

Vestermark, I. (2007). *Metaphors in Politics*. A study of the metaphorical personification of America in political discourse, an extended essay, Department of Language and Culture. Lulea University of Technology and Culture, Lulea, Sweden.

The Impact of Vocabulary Knowledge on the Reading Comprehension of Saudi EFL Learners

Fadi Al-Khasawneh
King Khalid University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Fadi Al-Khasawneh, King Khalid University, P.O.Box: 960, Asir - Abha, Saudi Arabia, 61421. E-mail: falkhasoneh@kku.edu.sa

Vocabulary knowledge is the building block of learning a second language and the degree of success for learning any language depends on the amount of vocabulary a learner possesses. Vocabulary knowledge contributes to mastering language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking). Therefore, the present study aims at determining the role of vocabulary size in reading comprehension among Saudi EFL learners. The participants of this study included 64 male students who studied at the first level in the academic year 2018/2019 at King Khalid University. Both the Vocabulary Size Test developed by (Schmitt et al.) and reading comprehension test taken from the TOEFL preparation manual were used to collect the necessary data for the study. The results of the study revealed that the overall vocabulary size of Saudi EFL learners was 2025 word families. This amount helps students to comprehend 90% of written texts as pointed out by many researchers in this field. The results also showed a significant relationship between vocabulary size and reading comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor for comprehending written texts. The study provides some implications for educational stakeholders such as putting more emphasis on teaching vocabulary and using different teaching strategies that assist in the acquisition of vocabulary in general and academic vocabulary in particular.

Keywords: vocabulary knowledge; vocabulary depth; vocabulary breadth; reading comprehension; Saudi EFL learners

Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge performs a significant role in the process of language learning/acquisition and cannot be neglected in second or foreign language research (Nouri & Zerhouni, 2016). Learners of English as a foreign language are aware that their limited vocabulary knowledge might cause serious problems in language communication. This lexical restriction bans language comprehension as well as language production (Nation, 2001). Success in an academic environment and language proficiency are highly related to vocabulary knowledge (Adamson, 1993; Collier, 1989). Lexical knowledge is a very important element in improving proficiency in the four language skills (Bernhardt, 2005). The role of lexical knowledge in reading comprehension has been one of the major interests in foreign language research for the last two decades. Vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension are highly related since lexical knowledge can assist foreign language learners in grasping the meaning of written texts. In addition, reading may help in developing learners' lexicons (Nation, 2001).

Cooper (1984) depicts vocabulary knowledge as the key component for successfully reading English paragraphs and texts, while Laufer (1997, p.20) points out that "no text comprehension is possible, either in one's native language or in a foreign language, without understanding the text's vocabulary". He also indicates that the low possibility of comprehending a text relates heavily to the high percentage of obscure vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in predicting reading performance. Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) compared lexical coverage, vocabulary size, and reading scores on the English Psychometric Tests, and concluded that an adequate level of reading comprehension is possible at an optimal lexical coverage of 98% (or 8000 word

families). Yorio (1971) surveyed language learners regarding the main barriers to reading comprehension. The students stated that insufficient vocabulary was the main obstacle they faced in reading comprehension.

Reading is a prime source for getting more knowledge in all areas of study. Students in higher education are expected to read thoroughly in English in their area of study as it is internationally recognized as the medium of instruction in most fields of study. Carrell & Grabe (2002) emphasized the vital role of reading in language learning; they affirmed the necessity of becoming a good reader. They view reading as one of the most important skills people need in international and multicultural settings, academic learning, and self-study situations. Reading is considered the most important skill for university students to master in order to obtain knowledge in their own discipline (Carrell & Grabe, 2002).

However, students are likely to face difficulties while reading in English (Nouri & Zerhouni, 2016). One reason for those difficulties is attributed to the students' ignorance of the efficient strategies they need to help them with reading comprehension. Another reason is that students are unaware of systematic approaches for confronting vocabulary vagueness. Students rely heavily on context in order to understand the meaning of words and this indicates poor reading comprehension skills (Nouri & Zerhouni, 2016). Therefore, the current study aims at examining the role of vocabulary knowledge on the reading comprehension of Saudi EFL learners at King Khalid University.

Literature Review

Vocabulary Knowledge

The process of how vocabulary learning takes place is still unclear as it requires various components of knowing a word, taking into consideration that the process of learning vocabulary is gradual in nature leading to continuity (Schmitt, 2000). The accurate use of words can be achieved through the knowledge of the words' pronunciation and spelling; however, it is clear that the real knowledge of words goes beyond these two aspects (Schmitt, 2008). Firth (1957) stated, "You shall know the word by the company it keeps" (p.11). The intended message of Firth's citation here is to classify words not only on the basis of their meanings, but also on the basis of their co-occurrence with other words. Word collocation includes the distribution of word uses and senses, comparing the use of synonymous words, and dictionary definitions. Investigating the use of synonymous distribution enables learners to determine the contextual preferences associated with other collocates (Firth, 1957).

Nation (2001) provides a comprehensive framework of the information that is necessary to improve word use at different levels. The information consists of three components: form, meaning, and use. Each class encompasses three different aspects of knowing a word, in which he also split the knowledge of words into two types: receptive and productive knowledge. These components and sub-components are made to enable learners to differentiate their capabilities to receive language input through reading or listening and understand it. In addition, the aforementioned components help to distinguish the learners' ability to produce oral or written words in an appropriate context, utilizing the proper spelling and pronunciation. The 'form' aspect involves the written and spoken knowledge that learners should take into consideration when learning new words. The aspect of 'meaning' includes words' meanings, concepts, referents, and the association of words. The aspect of 'use' covers the grammatical functions of words, their collocations, and their use restrictions. The following table illustrates Nation's framework (2001) regarding vocabulary knowledge.

As illustrated in Table 1, Nation (2001) classified vocabulary knowledge into 18 questions grouped into three categories, in which each category contains receptive and productive aspects. The framework defines vocabulary knowledge from different perspectives: pragmatic, semantic, and morphological perspectives and it shows that all of the aspects are closely interrelated. For instance, the meaning of a word could be derived from the context or the form of that word (Gu, 2017). However, Nation realizes that this framework is incomplete and needs modification. He indicates the difficulty of measuring vocabulary knowledge by only using this classification. He also added that the aspects of this classification are interrelated with each other, which makes differentiating between certain words difficult.

Table 1
Components of vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001, p. 27)

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelled?
	Word Parts	R	What parts are recognizable in this word?
		P	What words parts are needed to express meaning?
Meaning	Form and Meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and References	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
		R	What others words does this word make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical Functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
		R	What words or types of word occur with this one?
		P	What types of words must we use with this one?
		R	Where, when and how often would we meet this word?
		P	Where, when and how often can we use this word?

Note: R= receptive, P= productive

Vocabulary Size

Vocabulary size refers to the amount of vocabulary needed to understand and use the language (Karakoce & Kose, 2017). Language learners need to expand their vocabulary size since "vocabulary is a continually changing entity with new words and new uses of old words being added and old words failing into disuse" (Nation & Waring, 1997, p. 6). There is no accurate number of words to be known for native speakers or language learners since the number of words is continuously changed (Karakoce & Kose, 2017). Learning high-frequency words is one of the vocabulary challenges facing EFL learners. In order to help learners overcome this, West (1953) created a word list known as the General Service List (GSL). GSL words were obtained from a 2.5 million-word corpus. West's selection of those words was primarily based on frequency, assuming that these words are the most essential words for foreign language learners. The selection of those words has also taken into consideration the words' universality (words are that are used across countries where English is the primary medium of communication), utility (words that cover a broad range of genres), and usefulness (words that are useful when attempting to define other lexical items) of the words selected (Gilner, 2011). Other researchers have turned to pedagogical word lists to help learners prioritize their vocabulary learning. Many attempts have been made to create academic word lists. Campion & Elley (1971) and Praninskas (1972) created academic word lists based on small corpora, in which they counted words by hand. Ghadessy (1979) devised an academic word lists based on notes made in textbooks by students, indicating words they faced for the first time. Xue & Nation (1984) used the lists from the aforementioned studies and created a large-scale academic word list, which they called the *University Word List* (UWL). This list was widely used for several years in a variety of teaching and research contexts. Coxhead (2000) used a more representative list of academic words based on the principles of corpus linguistics. She selected academic words representing a wide variety of academic disciplines, taking into consideration the different linguistic features that may differ across those disciplines. This large corpus has been divided into roughly equal sections to calculate the range of academic vocabulary across the entire corpus, and then the size of the corpus is considered. The researchers who created small-scale corpora (Campion & Elley, 1971; Ghadessy, 1979; Praninskas, 1972) included between 300,000 to 500,000 words due to manual word counts, while Coxhead's (2000) scale included around 875,000 words across four disciplines (arts, science, law, and commerce).

Goulden, Read & Nation (1990) pointed out that a native speaker of English would have around 17,000 word families. Adolphs & Schmitt (2004) indicated that foreign language learners need to have at least 2000-3000 word families to understand and use 90-94% of the language; while Nation (2006) claims that language learners need around 6000-7000 word families to comprehend the target language. Gungor & Yalyli (2016) suggest that learners need 8000 words to comprehend texts, and this is supported by Nation's (2006) claim that it is adequate quantity to read a newspaper. Laufer (1997) suggests 5000 word families in order for EFL learners to read texts; and to reach a native-like level, learners need to have 15,000-20,000 word families (Nation, 2001).

Schmitt (2008) suggests that the previously mentioned figures include different word forms such as the root, the word inflections, and the word derivations. To explain, a vocabulary of 6000 word families involves knowing 28,015 individual words, while 8000 word families entails knowing 34,660 words (Nation, 2006). The threshold of complete comprehension is not absolute, but it is logic to say that a limited knowledge of vocabulary leads to poor understanding of English (Karakoce & Kose, 2017). It is worth mentioning that not all words are equally beneficial in vocabulary learning and the measure of a word's usefulness is word frequencies (Karakoce & Kose, 2017). This means that the most 2000 frequent words are easier to learn compared to 10,000 low-frequency words that rarely occur in discourse (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2012).

Vocabulary Size and Reading Comprehension

Vocabulary size seems to play a vital role in reading comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge is one of the contributing factors for comprehending reading texts (Nation & Coady, 1988). A number of scholars and authors have emphasized the relationship between vocabulary size and reading comprehension. Zimmerman (1997) pointed out that extensive reading on various texts leads to expanding the vocabulary knowledge. Hills & Laufer (2003) indicated that post-reading tasks that focus on target vocabulary lead to better vocabulary knowledge. Hsueh-Chao & Nation (2001) emphasized the relationship of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension as well as the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. In addition, many researchers and authors claim that vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension are strongly related and several studies have confirmed such a relationship between the two (Hsueh-Chao & Nation, 2000; Schmitt, 2000; Nation, 2001; Zhang, 2012; Karakoce & Kose, 2017. Pringprom (2012, p.1104) stated, "Learners will have difficulty comprehending the text if their vocabulary size is far from the required threshold". It is also pivotal to remember that there are also additional factors that affect reading comprehension other than vocabulary knowledge, such as the impact of L1 transfer, individual variance, and the difficulty of texts (Thomas & Healy, 2012).

Previous Studies on Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension

This section highlights some studies that have been conducted on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Karakoce & Kose (2017) investigated the relationship between vocabulary development and reading performance among 175 students studying in an intensive language program in Anadolu University, Turkey. The researchers used a 2000-word-level receptive vocabulary knowledge test adopted from (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001), and a 2000-word-level productive vocabulary knowledge test adopted from (Laufer & Nation, 1999) for collecting the data used in their study. The results of this study showed that the students' receptive vocabulary knowledge was higher than their productive vocabulary knowledge. The results also revealed a significant relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

Gu (2017) explored the impact of vocabulary knowledge dimensions (i.e. breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension tasks namely standard multiple-choice questions and summary writing in the Chinese EFL context. The sample of this study included 124 English major students from Sichuan University. The author employed various measurements to investigate the students' vocabulary depth and breadth. The results of this study revealed that the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge contributes significantly to reading comprehension. The breadth of vocabulary knowledge had a greater impact on multiple-choice questions while vocabulary depth had a greater impact on summary writing task. This study recommends that teachers should draw more attention to vocabulary knowledge and encourage their students to improve their reading skills through expanding their vocabulary knowledge.

Gungor & Yayli (2016) investigated the relationship between vocabulary coverage and reading comprehension among a group of Turkish EFL learners. The sample of this study included 178 university students who completed a vocabulary checklist based on the vocabulary items of two different expository texts. The reading comprehension level was measured through two reading comprehension tests. The findings of this study revealed that their text-based vocabulary knowledge moderately correlated with reading comprehension with a relatively linear relationship between them. The findings also showed that the 98% vocabulary coverage is necessary for learners to understand academic texts, and this coverage, in fact, refers to approximately the most frequent 8000 word families based on the related studies.

Nouri & Zerhouni (2016) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between the dimensions of vocabulary knowledge (size and depth) and students' performance in reading. The sample of this study included 32 students who are studying at the National Institute of Posts and Telecommunication in Rabat-Morocco. The researchers employed three instruments, which included a) a vocabulary size test, b) a vocabulary depth test c) and a reading comprehension test. The results disclosed a significant relationship between the size and depth of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

Anjomshoa & Zamanian (2014) studied the role of vocabulary knowledge on EFL learners' reading comprehension. The study recruited 81 students who were studying English at Azad University of Kerman, Iran. The researchers used a questionnaire to collect the data for their study. The results of this study revealed a significant correlation between vocabulary knowledge and the students' performance in reading comprehension. The results also suggest focusing students' attention on vocabulary knowledge due to its significant contribution in comprehending reading texts.

The present study aims at achieving the following objectives: (1) Determine the vocabulary size of Saudi EFL learners; (2) Examine the relationship between vocabulary size and reading performance among Saudi EFL learners.

The present study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions: (1) What is the extent of the vocabulary size of Saudi EFL learners? (2) To what extent does vocabulary knowledge contribute to reading comprehension among Saudi EFL learners?

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the role of vocabulary size in reading comprehension among Saudi EFL learners. The independent variable of the study is vocabulary size whereas the dependent variable is reading comprehension. Therefore, the design of this study is correlational as it aims to investigate the relationship between two variables. The correlational design is used to investigate the relationship or correlation between variables (Arikunto, 2010). The degree of correlation between two variables is classified in the form of a correlation coefficient. Creswell (2014) states that researchers use correlational research design to describe and measure the degree of association between two variables or set of scores. This implies that researchers do not intend to manipulate the variables, but they use the correlation statistics of two or more scores.

Participants

The current study involves 64 freshmen students enrolled in the Department of English Language at King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia. The participants included male students only as the researcher conducted the study at the male campus.

The educational system in Saudi Arabia does not allow mixing between male and female students. Although they sometimes belong to the same university, male and female students are segregated and taught by professors

of the same sex. The participants were taught English as a foreign language for six years at intermediate and secondary schools before enrolling in university programs. The participants were all native speakers of Arabic, and two tests were administered to them, Vocabulary Size Test (Schmitt et al. 2001) and Reading Comprehension Tests.

Research Instruments

Studies on investigating vocabulary size rely heavily on collecting data from tests. The current study adopted two tests to determine vocabulary size, and to investigate the relationship between vocabulary size and reading comprehension among Saudi EFL learners.

Vocabulary Size Test. The Vocabulary Size Test employed in this study was originally developed by Nation (1983) and later it was amended and revised by Schmitt et al. (2001). The modified version of the Vocabulary Size Test has proved that 30 items per level was more reliable than the 18 items found in Nation's (1983) test. This test includes four parts, which provide estimate of vocabulary size at 2000, 3000, 5000, and 10,000-word frequency levels. The first two parts (2000 and 3000-word frequency levels contain only high frequency words in English; the 5000-word frequency level falls between high-frequency words and low-frequency words; and the 10,000-word frequency level includes low-frequency words. This vocabulary test was chosen because it reduces the guessing to one response among six choices. It also includes all the words in each group that represent the same type of word with no syntactic clues for the accurate matches (Varnaseri, 2016). This version of the test contains ten clusters in which six words and three definitions are provided. The testees are expected to match the word with its correct definition. The following is an example taken from the 2000-word frequency level:

l. Business
2. Clock   __6__ part of a house
3. Horse   __3__ animal with four legs
4. Pencil   __4__ something used for writing
5. Shoe
6. Wall

Reading Comprehension Test. The reading comprehension test was the second instrument used in the present study. The test encompassed two reading passages and they were taken from one TOEFL preparation manual. The first passage was about *British Columbia* and had 117 words; and the second passage was about *Rain* and was 242 words in length. The two reading passages are associated with 10 multiple-choice questions, and each correct answer was assigned one point; so the maximum possible score of the reading comprehension test was 10 points. These two reading passages were chosen due to their suitability to the students' level. In addition, the content vocabulary items in the reading passages were found in the vocabulary lists in the participants' university textbooks, which represents content validity in the reading passages.

Data Collection and Analysis

Both tests (i.e. Vocabulary Size Test and Reading Comprehension Test) were piloted with a group of 10 students from outside the sample of this study. The main purpose of the pilot tests was to have an idea about the suitable time to allocate the students for completing both tests. The students needed 60 minutes to complete the vocabulary size test and 45 minutes to complete the reading comprehension test. For the main study, both tests were administered to students during their normal classes in the 13th week of the first semester of the 2018/2019 academic year. The students had been informed about the objectives of the study and told that these two tests would not affect their total mark in the said course. Furthermore, they had been informed about the way to complete both tests and were given examples before the commencement of the official tests. The students received the reading comprehension test after they had submitted the vocabulary size test. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18 was used to analyze the data of the present study. Descriptive statistics were utilized to show the vocabulary size of Saudi EFL learners. Pearson Correlation analyses were also employed to find any potential relationship between students' vocabulary size and reading comprehension.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results obtained from this research. The results are shown according to the research questions posed earlier in this study.

Results Related to the First Research Question

This section presents the results related to the first question: *What is the extent of the vocabulary size of Saudi EFL learners?* To answer this question, descriptive statistics were calculated to find out the size of vocabulary knowledge. Descriptive statistics of the four sections of the vocabulary size test are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of the vocabulary size test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level2000	64	0.00	8.00	3.33	2.354
Level3000	64	0.00	8.00	1.18	1.150
Level5000	64	0.00	8.00	0.89	1.1415
Level10000	64	0.00	4.00	0.56	0.990
Valid N (listwise)	64				

The participants sat for the 2000-word level of the vocabulary size test. The mean score of this section was (3.33). This section contains 10 items and each item was awarded one point for each correct answer. The average number of known words in this section was 3 out of 10 words. This shows that the vocabulary size of students in this section was about 666 words. The participants also responded to the 3000-word level of this test. The responses for this section of the test show a mean of (1.18); which means that the students know only 1 out of 10 words in this particular level. This indicates that the vocabulary size knowledge among the students in this level was 354 words. The students were unable to answer most of the questions in this level correctly.

Regarding the 5000-word level, the mean score of the participants was (0.89), which implies low knowledge of the words in this level. The participants' vocabulary size estimate was 445 words, which interestingly shows more knowledge compared to the 3000-word level. The last section of the vocabulary test dealt with the level of 10,000 words. The participants scored very low in this level and their mean score was (0.56), which means the majority of students were unable to answer any question correctly. This mean score suggests a vocabulary size of 560 words in this level. After examining the descriptive statistics regarding the first question of this research, we can conclude that the overall vocabulary size among the students was 2025 word families.

Laufer (1997) suggests 5000 word families in order for an EFL learners to read and fully understand texts. Nation (2006) stated that learners need to know 9000 word families to cover 98% of a text when reading novels, 8000 word families when reading newspapers, 7000 word families to understand most spoken words in English, and 6000 word families for understanding most words in children's movies. Nation & Beglar (2007) indicated that the vocabulary size of undergraduate non-native speakers is around 5000-6000 word families.

 Nguyen and Nation (2011) found that Vietnamese third-year English major students' average vocabulary size was 6,661 English word families. In comparison, it seems that the vocabulary knowledge of the participants of the current study was far from that level. Therefore, students should be presented with vocabulary learning strategies in an attempt to foster their lexical knowledge.

Results Related to the Second Research Question

Concerning the second research question, *to what extent does vocabulary knowledge contribute to reading comprehension among Saudi EFL learners?* The researcher used the Pearson Correlation Test to find any significant relationships between vocabulary size and reading comprehension. The students' scores in the reading comprehension test were correlated with each vocabulary level (2000-word level, 3000-word level, 5000-word level, and 10,000-word level), and the students' scores in the overall vocabulary size knowledge test. The results of the correlation test are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3
Correlation between vocabulary size and reading comprehension

		RC	Level2000	Level3000	Level5000	Level10,000	VS
RC	Pearson Correlation	1	.726**	.336**	-.225	-.271*	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.007	.074	.030	.000
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64
Level2000	Pearson Correlation	.726**	1	.404**	-.101	-.303*	.739**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001	.426	.015	.000
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64
Level3000	Pearson Correlation	.336**	.404**	1	-.096	-.218	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.001		.451	.083	.000
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64
Level5000	Pearson Correlation	.301**	-.101	-.096	1	.237	.378**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.426	.451		.059	.002
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64
Level10000	Pearson Correlation	.271*	-.303*	-.218	.237	1	.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.015	.083	.059		.725
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64
VS	Pearson Correlation	.477**	.739**	.667**	.378**	.045	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.002	.725	
	N	64	64	64	64	64	64

As shown in Table 3, there was a significant correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary size at the 2000-word level, r= .726, *p*< .001. There was also a significant correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary size at the 3000, 5000, and 10,000-word levels, r= .336 (3000-word level), r= .301 (5000-word level), r= .271 (10,000-word level) *p*< .001. Concerning the relationship between the reading comprehension test and overall vocabulary size test, the results showed a significant correlation between them r= .477, p< .001. It can be inferred from these results that the more vocabulary students know, the better they perform in reading comprehension tests. The present results concur with the findings of some prior studies on this topic (Karakoce & Kose, 2017; Gu, 2017; Nouri and Zerhouni, 2016; Anjomshoa & Zamanian, 2014). The consistent results regarding the relationship between vocabulary size and reading comprehension affirm the important role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. Vocabulary size and reading comprehension are interrelated since reading contributes to vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary knowledge assists in understanding written texts (Nation, 2001; Anjomshoa & Zamanian, 2014).

The previous research on the relationship between vocabulary size and reading comprehension has revealed that vocabulary knowledge is highly correlated with L2 reading comprehension (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003; Eskey, 2005; Hsueh-Chao & Nation, 2000; Pike, 1979; Qian, 2002; Schmitt, 2000; Schoonen, Hulstijn, & Bossers, 1998; Stahl, 2003). Subsequently, the findings of the present study are expected to provide a comprehensive image of the relationship between the vocabulary size and reading comprehension of tertiary level Saudi EFL learners. The correlation value shows a positive relationship between the two variables. To reach a deeper comprehension level, readers are required to have some reading skills such as making coherent connection between ideas, inferencing, understanding the author's rationale, and activating their background knowledge (Graesser, 2007). Hsueh-Chao & Nation (2000) suggested that vocabulary knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for reading comprehension. Learners need to know at least 98% of the content words to comprehend a text, which does not mean that learners can understand the text 100% (Schmitt et.al, 2011). Laufer (1989) states that below 95% coverage does not mean that a learner cannot understand the text since several factors are involved in the understanding process. Readers could increase their understanding of a text by utilizing their background knowledge about the topic, the text type, and grammatical clues. On the other hand, understanding demonstrative/expository texts may still be a real challenge for learners. The reasons for this might be attributed to the text's organization, lack of knowledge of key terms, and the lack knowledge of the text's topic (Graesser, 2007).

Limitations of the Study

The present study aimed at investigating the extent of vocabulary knowledge and the relationship between the vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension of Saudi EFL learners in the southern region of Saudi Arabia. The researcher does not claim that the results are representative as regional academic differences may exist between students from different places in the Kingdom. The present study does not focus on any vocabulary acquisition problems that learners might face, but seeks to investigate the level of their vocabulary knowledge and its relationship with reading comprehension. The participants of the present study included male students only as the educational system in Saudi Arabia does not allow male and female students to be together on the same campus. This could lead to more research investigating the gender differences regarding vocabulary size and its relationship to reading comprehension. Finally, the present study used quantitative methods to elicit information concerning vocabulary size and reading comprehension achievement. Thus, qualitative studies are recommended to get in-depth understanding of Saudi teachers, students, and curriculum designers of their needs and problems regarding vocabulary acquisition and reading problems.

Conclusion

The current study reveals a positive correlation between vocabulary size and reading comprehension. Vocabulary size is considered to be an important predictor of the ability to comprehend written texts and they are strongly related. In view of the results of this study, some pedagogical implications for EFL learning and teaching can be suggested. One of the key steps that should be taken into consideration is that vocabulary teaching should surpass the superficial level. High-frequency words should be introduced deeply and in a way that learners can acquire full knowledge of the core vocabulary. In addition, teachers and students should be aware of some major aspects of learning vocabulary such as the definitions of words, synonyms, antonyms, word collocations, and semantic and pragmatic characteristics. The use of various methods of teaching are highly recommended for assisting EFL learners in enlarging their lexical knowledge. Instructors should increase their awareness of the usage of lexis in the classroom. They also should teach students how to get benefits from corpus approaches in the classroom. Accordingly, the lexical knowledge of learners can be improved, and, in turn, enhanced lexical knowledge might lead to higher levels of reading comprehension.

Furthermore, various vocabulary learning strategies should be introduced and practiced by the students in order for them to become autonomous learners. EFL teachers at Saudi universities should introduce academic vocabulary to students to enhance their lexical knowledge. EFL teachers could provide separate vocabulary classes focusing on academic vocabulary and the most frequent 2000 words. It would also be beneficial to spend extra time teaching students academic vocabulary to acquire the most frequently used academic words since knowing those words will improve the coverage of academic texts.

Acknowledgement

References

Adamson, H. D. (1993). *Academic competence, theory and classroom practice: Preparing ESL students for content courses.* New York, NY: Longman.

Adolphs, S., & Schmitt, N. (2003). Lexical coverage of spoken discourse. *Applied Linguistics, 24*(4), 425-438. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/24.4.425

Anjomshoa, L., & Zamanian, M. (2014). The effect of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners in Kerman Azad University. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and*

Literature, 2(5), 90-95.

Arikunto, S. (2010). Research procedure: A practice approach. Jakarta, Indonesia: Rineka Cipta.

Bernhardt, E. (2005). Progress and procrastination in second language reading. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 25,* 133-150. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190505000073

Campion, M., & Elley, W. (1971). *An academic vocabulary list*. Wellington, New Zealand: Council for Educational Research.

Carrell, P. L., & Grabe, W. (2002). Reading. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics* (pp. 233-250). London, UK: Arnold.

Collier, V. P. (1989). How long? A synthesis of research on academic achievement in a second language. *TESOL Quarterly, 23*(3), 509-531.

Cooper, M. (1984). Linguistic competence of practiced and unpracticed non-native readers of English. In J.C. Alderson & A.H. Urquhart (Eds.), *Reading in a foreign language* (pp. 122-138). New York, NY: Longman.

Coxhead, A. (2011). The Academic Word List 10 years on: Research and teaching implications. *TESOL Quarterly, 45*(2), 355-362. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2011.254528

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Droop, M., & Verhoeven, L. (2003). Language proficiency and reading ability in the first and second language learners. *Reading Research Quarterly, 38*(1), 78–103. https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.38.1.4.

Eskey, D. E. (2005). Reading in a second language. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 563–580). New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195384253.013.0006

Firth, J.R. (1957). *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ghadessy, P. (1979). Frequency counts, words lists, and materials preparation: A new approach. *English Teaching Forum, 17*, 24-27.

Gilner, L. (2011). A primer on the general service list. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 23*(1), 65.

Goulden, R., Nation, I. S. P., & Read, J. (1990). How large can a receptive vocabulary be? *Applied Linguistics, 11*(4), 341-363.

Graesser, A. C. (2007). An introduction to strategic reading comprehension. In D. S. McNamara (Ed.), *Reading comprehension strategies: Theories, interventions and technologies* (pp. 3-26). New York, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Güngör, F., & Yaylı, D. (2016). The interplay between text-based vocabulary size and reading comprehension of Turkish EFL learners. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 16*, 1171-1188. https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2016.4.0078

Gu, T. (2017). The Effect of Vocabulary Knowledge on Chinese English Learners' Reading Comprehension. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 7*(4), 45-55. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v7n4p45

Hills, M., & Laufer, B. (2003). Type of task, time-on-task and electronic dictionaries in incidental vocabulary acquisition. *International Review of Applied Linguistics, 41*(2), 87-106. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2003.007.

Hsueh-Chao, M. H., & Nation, P. (2000). Unknown vocabulary density and reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 13*(1), 403-430.

Karakoc, D., & Kose, G. (2017). The impact of vocabulary knowledge on reading, writing and proficiency scores of EFL learners. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 13*(1), 352-378.

Kennedy, G. (1998). *An introduction to corpus linguistics*. London, UK: Longman.

Laufer, B. (1989). What percentage of text-lexis is essential for comprehension? In C. Lauren & M. Nordman (Eds.), *Special language: Form human thinking to thinking machines* (pp. 316-323). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Laufer, B. (1997). The Lexical plight in second language reading: Words you don't know, words you think you know, and words you can't guess. In J. Coady & T. Huckin (Eds.), *Second language vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 20-34). Cambridge: UK, Cambridge University Press.

Laufer, B., & Nation, P. (1999). A vocabulary-size test of controlled productive ability. *Language Testing, 16*(1), 33-51.

Laufer, B., & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, G. C. (2010). Lexical threshold revisited: Lexical text coverage, learners' vocabulary size and reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 22*(1), 15-30.

Nation, P. (1983). Testing and teaching vocabulary. *Guidelines, 5*(1), 12-25.

Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, P. (2006). How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? *Canadian Modern Language Review, 63*(1), 59-82. https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.63.1.59.

Nation, P., & Coady. J. (1988). Vocabulary and reading. In R. Carter & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary and language teaching* (pp. 97-110). New York, NY: Longman.

Nation, P., & Waring, R. (1997). Vocabulary size, text coverage and word lists. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary, description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 6-19). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, I. S. P., & Beglar, D. (2007). A vocabulary size test. *The Language Teacher, 31*(7), 9-13.

Nguyen, L. T. C., & Nation, P. (2011). A bilingual vocabulary size test of English for Vietnamese learners. *RELC Journal, 42*(1), 86-99. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688210390264

Nouri, N., & Zerhouni, B. (2016). The relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension among Moroccan EFL learners. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 21*(10), 19-26. https://doi.10.9790/0837-2110051926.

Pike, L. (1979). *An evaluation of alternative item formats for testing English as a second language.* TOEFL (Research Reports No. 2). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Praninskas, J. (1972). *American university word list.* London, UK: Longman.

Pringprom, P. (2012). Exploring relationship between students" vocabulary breadth and their reading proficiency. *US-China Foreign Language, 10*(4), 1098-1105.

Qian, D. D. (2002). Investigating the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and academic reading performance: An assessment perspective. *Language Learning, 52*(3), 513–536. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9922.00193

Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language Teaching Research, 12*(3), 329-363. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168808089921.

Schmitt, N., Schmitt, D., & Clapham, C. (2001). Developing and exploring the behavior of two new versions of the Vocabulary Levels Test. *Language Testing, 18*(1), 55-88. https://doi.org/10.1177/026553220101800103

Schmitt, N., Jiang, X., & Grabe, W. (2011). The percentage of words known in a text and reading comprehension. *The Modern Language Journal*, *95*, 26–43. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01146.x

Schmitt, N., & Schmitt, D. (2012). A reassessment of frequency and vocabulary size in L2 vocabulary teaching. *Language Teaching, 47*(04), 484-503. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444812000018

Schoonen, R., Hulstijn, J., & Bossers, B. (1998). Metacognitive and language-specific knowledge in native and foreign language reading comprehension: An empirical study among Dutch students in grades 6, 8, and 10. *Language Learning*, *48*, 71–106.

Stahl, S. A. (2003). Vocabulary and readability: How knowing word meanings affects comprehension. *Topics in Language Disorders*, *23*(3), 241–247. http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/00011363-200307000-00009

Thomas, K. H., & Healy, A. F. (2012). A comparison of rereading benefits in first and second language reading. *Language Learning, 62*, 198-235. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00688.x

Varnaseri, M. (2016). The relationship between depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge and writing performance of Iranian MA students of TEFL. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods, 6*(2), 544-545.

West, M. (1953). *A General service list of English words.* London, UK: Longman, Green & Co.

Xue, G., & Nation, P. (1984). A university word list. *Language Learning and Communication, 3*, 215-229.

Yorio, C. (1971). Some sources of reading problems for foreign language learners. *Language Learning, 21*, 107-115.

Zhang, D. (2012). Vocabulary and grammar knowledge in second language reading comprehension: A structural equation modeling study. *The Modern Language Journal, 96*(4), 558-575. https://doi.org/10.2307/23361716

The Effects of an EFL and L2 Russian Teletandem Class: Student Perceptions of Oral Proficiency Gains

Jennifer Bown
Brigham Young University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Jennifer Bown, Department of German and Russian, Brigham Young University, 3117 JFSB, Provo, Utah, USA. E-mail: jennifer_bown@byu.edu

Laura Catharine Smith
Brigham Young University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Laura Catharine Smith, Department of German and Russian, BYU, 3117 JFSB, Provo, Utah, USA. E-mail: laurasmith@byu.edu

Ekaterina V. Talalakina
National Research University Higher School of Economics

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Ekaterina V. Talalakina, Department of Foreign Languages, HSE, Malaya Ordynka, 17/1, Moscow, Russia. E-mail: etalalakina@hse.ru

In response to the growing demand for highly proficient foreign language (L2) speakers in professional work settings, scholars and educators have increasingly turned their attention to methods for developing greater fluency in their learners who aspire to such jobs. Engaging in persuasive writing and argumentation has been shown to promote both written and oral proficiency among advanced L2 learners (Brown, 2009). This study focuses on the application of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines and standards to the design of teletandem courses in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and Russian as a Foreign Language developed to promote Advanced and Superior-level language gains. ACTFL Can-Do statements were used to evaluate learners' self-reported language gains as a result of participating in the course. The results indicated that such an approach can indeed yield significant perceived gains, especially for spoken language, for all the participants regardless of their target language and home institution.

Keywords: Proficiency, ACTFL Standards, English, Russian, teletandem

Introduction

As the world becomes ever more globalised, the demand for global professionals competent in both foreign languages (L2) and cultures continues to grow as well. Consequently, the newly globalised economy requires even higher levels of foreign language proficiency. Martin (2015) notes that more and more employers require learners with Advanced and Superior-levels of proficiency according to the scale established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, cf. also Swender, 2012), the descriptions of which are outlined below. This demand for higher levels of proficiency has created a critical challenge for many language programs where it is not uncommon for some graduating language majors to fall short of this proficiency threshold. With a shift in recent years towards teaching for proficiency, scholars have increasingly turned their attention to better facilitating the development of these professional levels of language proficiency, moving students towards Advanced (and to some extent Superior) levels of proficiency. To this end, at least three volumes dedicated to promoting advanced levels of proficiency have appeared in print over the past two decades

(Brown, & Bown, 2015; Leaver & Shektman, 2002; Murphy & Evans-Romaine, 2017) in addition to other studies in journals (e.g., Darhower, 2014; Donato & Brooks, 2004).

One method of instruction that has proven effective for promoting high levels of proficiency is the use of debate and argumentation (Brown, 2009; Brown, Talalakina, Yakusheva, & Eggett, 2012). As Brown (2009) points out, the task of defending and supporting opinions is a core function of the Superior level, and the criteria for Superior as outlined in the ACTFL proficiency guidelines dovetail with functions emphasized in public speaking and debate. Moreover, using the L2 as a medium for debate represents a form of task-based instruction, where learners are focused on conveying a message and persuading their audience, rather than on manipulating forms or simply learning to survive in the target culture. In foreign language learning, a task is defined as "an activity conducted in the foreign language that results in a product with a measurable result such that students can determine for themselves whether or not they have completed the assignment" (Leaver & Kaplan, 2004, p. 47). Nunan (2004) adds to that definition a number of other criteria, emphasizing that, in a task, learners must be focused on expressing meaning, rather than manipulating form. Moreover, like Leaver and Kaplan, Nunan notes that a task should have a "sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right" (p. 4). In task-based foreign language instruction, language becomes a means to an end, rather than an end in and of itself. Debate in the foreign language classroom allows learners to use language as a vehicle for communicating ideas for a meaningful purpose - persuading others, rather than viewing language merely as an object of study (Coyle et al., 2010; Long, 2007; van Lier, 2005).

Debate can be made even more effective when learners have the opportunity to extend their language learning beyond the classroom. To that end, instructors from the U.S. and Russia designed a course based on previously published research demonstrating the effectiveness of debate as a means of promoting Advanced-level proficiency, as well as the emergence of Superior-level functions (Brown, Talalakina, Yakusheva, & Eggett, 2012; Brown, Bown, & Eggett, 2015). An important component of the collaborative course involved the use of teletandems, in which L2 English learners and L2 Russian learners communicated on a weekly basis about topics related to the course to practice their L2 skills.

In this study, we explore the effect of this curriculum design on perceived L2 proficiency gains by examining students' self-perceptions of language gains in two parallel debate courses: one focusing on L2 English (taught in Russia) and the other on L2 Russian (taught in the United States). Students at both universities followed a parallel curriculum, focused on oral and written debate. Additionally, students were expected to engage in weekly teletandems. A teletandem, as defined by Telles (2015), is a "virtual, collaborative, and autonomous context in which two speakers of different languages use the text, voice, and webcam image resources of VOIP technology (Skype) to help each other learn their native language" (p. 603). Regardless of the platform used, whether Skype or a similar technology, teletandems are traditionally viewed as contributing to the students' language proficiency (Cardoso & Matos, 2012; Consolo & Furtoso, 2015; Marques Spatti Cavalari, & Aranha, 2016). Similarly, in our project, teletandems helped students practice tasks carefully designed to push their language proficiency and facilitate cultural understanding. To examine the effect of this debate curriculum on students' perceived language gains, students were asked at the end of the semester to rate their ability to perform a series of functions both at the beginning and end of the course. Presented in the form of Can-Do Statements based on those developed by the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), these Can-Do Statements permitted insights into how students responded to tasks reflecting different levels of proficiency, i.e., Advanced vs. Superior-level proficiency, and different modes of communication, i.e., interpersonal vs. presentational communication that were practiced in the course. The following research questions guided our study:

RQ1: *Language gains over the course:* Did students feel like they made language gains during a single-semester course focusing on debate?

RQ2a: *Effect of proficiency level and mode of communication on overall performance:* Did students rate their ability to perform at one level (Advanced or Superior functions) or one mode of Can-Do statement (interpersonal vs. presentational) better than another regardless of time? In other words, were some types of Can-Do statements inherently easier for students to perform?

RQ2b: *Effect of proficiency level and mode of communication on language gains:* Did students report more gains on

some types of Can-Do Statements than others, e.g., Can-Do Statements associated with Advanced vs. Superior functions, or with presentational vs. interpersonal statements?

RQ3: *Impact of university:* What differences, if any, were noted in participants' self-assessments between the institutions in the two countries?

This article is organized as follows. First, it offers a theoretical framework for the inclusion of teletandem learning and debate in the foreign language classroom, drawing on recent research on the benefits of such an approach to language teaching and learning. It also introduces the reader to the underlying features of Advanced and Superior proficiency levels as opposed to Novice and Intermediate. Next, it presents the results of the study, examining the effects of a parallel debate course offered at two universities, one in the United States and one in Russia. Before concluding, we present the implications of the study for the classroom in promoting language gains at the Advanced and Superior levels as well as directions for future research on promoting higher levels of language proficiency.

Teletandem in Language Learning

Systematic reviews of online intercultural exchange projects stress the great variety of theoretical paradigms and pedagogical approaches used in such projects, making it difficult to generalize about their effects (Lewis & O'Dowd, 2016). Nevertheless, analyses of the existing evidence suggest that telecollaboration has a positive influence on second language development (Belz, 2003; Chen & Yang, 2014; Vinagre, 2005). However, scholars have expressed concern that the majority of the published research on telecollaborative projects has been carried out between European and North American classrooms (Akiyama & Cunningham, 2018). Thus, the present research aims to fill in the gap in case studies on less common teletandems, in which the differences go beyond 'Western' culture.

An important focus of the research on teletandems concerns questions of culture. For instance, Furstenberg, Levet, English, & Maillet (2001) explore the mentality associated with a foreign culture to show that focusing on culture in the language class can contribute to the development of cross-cultural literacy. Conversely, Ware (2003) concludes that teletandems do not readily promote cultural understanding, emphasizing that a number of factors play into the ultimate success of any telecollaborative project. Belz (2002), for example, in examining telecollaboration through the lens of social realism, suggests that instructors must raise students' awareness of the very concept of intercultural communication and to the varying social norms and practices inherent to particular cultural groups. The importance of promoting cultural literacy notwithstanding, this project focuses primarily on the perceived language gains of the participants. Nevertheless, one of the goals of the teletandem project was to create an environment for cross-cultural understanding as learners debated hot-button social topics.

Proficiency-Based Language Teaching and Debate

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, developed in the 1980s based on the U.S. Civil Service Commission's 1952 Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) proficiency scale (Herzog, 2003), describe what individuals can do in real-world situations using various language modalities (speaking, writing, listening, and reading). The ACTFL guidelines have become the gold-standard for assessing language skills in the United States and bear some resemblance to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) developed in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Bärenfänger & Tschirner, 2008; see Tschirner, 2012, for correspondences between the ACTFL descriptors and the CEFR levels).

As a framework to assess L2 skills, the Proficiency Guidelines have transformed language teaching by informing pedagogical decisions, from course design to classroom instruction (Omaggio-Hadley & Terry, 2000). As with the CEFR, the ACTFL guidelines have helped shift the focus of language teaching from what learners *know* about the language to what they can actually *do* in the target language, making the ultimate goal of language teaching the development of communicative competence with regards to specific functions at each proficiency level. Consequently, the ideal language classroom of the 21st century now focuses on task-based instruction (Little, 2006). Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2013) define a task as "an activity which requires learners to use language with emphasis on meaning to obtain an objective" (p. 11). In task-based instruction, learners are

engaged in goal-oriented communication that resembles real-world activities (Ellis, 2003; Pica, 2008; Skehan, 2003). Foreign language educators are increasingly designing tasks that help learners fulfill the global functions at each level of the proficiency scale. Table 1 delineates each of the four major levels of the ACTFL proficiency scale, detailing the global functions of each level, the text type (or organization of discourse), the time frames in which learners can function, their level of accuracy, the range of topics they can discuss (perspective), and their comprehensibility. The characteristics outlined in Table 1 inform both writing and speaking. The separate delineations of each of these characteristics sets the ACTFL guidelines apart from the CEFR in which many of these characteristics are found in the corresponding levels, but without being separately addressed to the same extent, particularly as they pertain to text type.

Table 1
Characteristics of ACTFL Proficiency Levels

	Novice	**Intermediate**	**Advanced**	**Superior**
Text Type:	Lists of words, memorised chunks and phrases	Simple sentences, series of sentences	Paragraph (an organised paragraph with transition words and complex sentences)	Organised series of paragraphs and detailed extended discourse
Timeframe:	Present	Present	All (past, present, future)	All (Past, present, future) Subjunctive/Conditional
Perspective:	Personal	Everything is on the personal level	Can discuss home and local community	National and international themes without taking discussion back onto oneself; idiomatic and may even add in cultural references
Functions:	Can communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists and phrases; little functional ability	"Create with language" (simple descriptions and conversations); can pose and answer simple questions; can handle simple transactions	Detailed descriptions; give and explain opinions (without supporting); narrations; give directions; handle a transaction with a complication	Discuss themes in detail and deeply; propose hypotheses and think abstractly; and support opinions
Accuracy	No grammatical control	Emergent control over basic grammar structures in present tense	Sufficient control of grammar across all time frames using grammatical structures which add to the complexity of the language and generic vocabulary with some patterns of errors in the language	No pattern of error in basic structures; specialised vocabulary; can handle linguistic complications
Who can understand them?	May be difficult to understand even by sympathetic interlocutors used to non-native speech	Understood by interlocutors used to dealing with non-native learners of the language	Can be understood by native speakers including those who are not used to non-native speech	Can be understood by native speakers including those who are not used to non-native speech; organisation and accuracy allow listener to focus on message and not on form of language being used

Of relevance for the current discussion are the characteristics that set Advanced and Superior proficiency levels apart from the lower proficiency levels as well as from each other. Indeed, these features provide insight into the reasons why debate and argumentation can help move students into these higher levels of proficiency. The first and most critical feature for our discussion here is function. The Advanced level requires students to be able to discuss topics with substantial detail, providing narrations and descriptions while also offering the beginnings of opinions. The ability to handle details on concrete topics at this level lays the foundation for later shifting to more hypothetical and abstract discussions where opinions must be grounded in evidence, a hallmark of both the Superior proficiency level and good debate technique. Second, in Advanced and Superior level discourse,

language learners shift from talking about topics related to their lives (Novice and Intermediate) to topics relevant to the local community (Advanced) and ultimately to those of national and international importance (Superior). These Superior level topics serve well as the focus of debate, particularly in public discourse. Third, such discussions require the speaker to handle more complex text types, initially in terms of paragraph-level speech (Advanced) before graduating to the multiple paragraphs of extended discourse of Superior-level speech. The final critical feature setting these two higher proficiency levels apart deals with accuracy, where students can still have some patterns of errors but have adequate control of the grammar and vocabulary at the Advanced level to be able to function without miscommunication. Learners are able to implement circumlocution at this level when specific and specialized terminology is lacking. At the Superior level, though some errors may persist, consistent patterns of errors have disappeared. More importantly, Superior-level speakers have developed a specialised vocabulary sufficient to handle in-depth discussions on topics of global relevance.

Supporting and defending opinions is a core task for Superior-level speakers and writers. Thus, the criteria outlined in the ACTFL descriptions of Superior-level L2 users correspond to qualities emphasized in public speaking, debate, and persuasive writing (e.g., writing/speaking in a variety of content areas, cohesive texts of multiple paragraphs, control of a range of grammatical structures, and an extensive vocabulary, allowing the user to select words that reflect subtle differences of meaning). Indeed, progressing towards Superior-level proficiency involves not only improving language skills, but also developing cognitive skills to perform more demanding functions. Indeed, research conducted by Massie (2005) and Connor (1987) identifies the task of argumentation and debate as a valuable strategy for improving both L2 oral and written proficiency, particularly at the Advanced level. Moreover, recent studies by Brown and colleagues (Brown, 2009; Brown, Bown, & Eggett; 2009; Brown & Bown, 2015; Brown, Talalakina, Yakusheva, & Eggett, 2012) have further demonstrated that debate can lead to significant oral proficiency gains within the space of one semester. This burgeoning body of research emphasizes the benefits of carefully designed tasks aligned with proficiency standards.

It is worth noting one further difference highlighted in the research questions, namely the contrast between presentational and interpersonal speaking. This distinction is captured by the CEFR as "spoken production" and "spoken interaction" respectively in the self-assessment grids ("Self-assessment grid – Table 2 (CEFR 3.3)", n.d.) and in the NTSSC-ACTFL Can-Do Statements. Presentational communication involves one-way communication in which the speaker simply conveys information to a listener. This mode of communication is reflected in many classroom settings where student give formal presentations on a topic to an audience, e.g., classmates. On the other hand, interpersonal speaking involves two-way communication requiring the negotiation of meaning between two or more individuals. Unlike presentational speaking where the speaker maintains control of the discourse by speaking, interpersonal speaking requires both speaking and listening as part of a conversation. Both (or all) individuals must listen to what is being said to be able to respond appropriately to the conversation. While presentational speaking can be prepared in advance, interpersonal speaking by its very nature is more spontaneous in nature making it much more difficult to prepare in advance. One must listen to be able to respond. Moreover, while presentational speaking is often associated with more formal contexts and longer discourse, interpersonal communication is often more informal and typically involves shorter durations of speech in each response and turn taking. While some instructors focus more on conversational exchanges on topics, i.e., interpersonal speaking, others may involve students giving more formal presentations to their classmates.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, and corresponding assessments have influenced the teaching of languages in the United States for many years, and the effort to translate the guidelines into classroom practice can be traced to the development of the "World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages," the most recent version of which was published in 2015. As the document states, these serve as a "roadmap to guide learners to develop competence to communicate effectively and interact with cultural understanding." The Standards outline five goal areas, known as the "5C's", that describe the links between communication and culture, as they are applied in making connections and comparisons and in using this competence to participate in local and global communities.

The Standards include:
1. Communication: Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations for multiple purposes.
2. Cultures: Interact with cultural competence and understanding.

3. Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations.
4. Comparisons: Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence.
5. Communities: Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

A well-designed collaborative debate course can facilitate the achievement of these standards, offering students opportunities to engage in all three modes of communication, as well as to make connections with other disciplines. Incorporating teletandems allows learners to participate in multilingual communities around the world. Not only is such a course poised to facilitate the development of oral proficiency and the achievement of important language learning competencies, but it can also enhance student engagement, motivation, and cultural awareness.

Materials and Methods

The study outlined in this section sought to investigate how the debate course with teletandem interactions using Skype impacted the perceptions of the language gains of the students enrolled in the course at both universities. In this section, we provide an overview of the study. The overview includes a description of the students who participated, the survey used to collect data on the self-perceptions of their progress over the course of the semester, and how the data were analyzed.

Participants

Students participating in the study were undergraduate senior students enrolled in the Global Debate class at their respective institutions. In total, 18 students (6F, 12M) at a large private university in the United States and 19 (13F, 6M) students at a large university in Russia completed the survey. The American students, whose ages ranged from 22 to 25, were all native speakers of English learning Russian as a foreign language (RFL). All were in their fourth year of undergraduate studies majoring in Russian (including those completing a double major in Russian and another field) and most had spent 16 to 22 months abroad in Russian-speaking milieux. The students in Russia, whose ages ranged from 20 to 22, were all native speakers of Russian learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and completing undergraduate degrees in World Economy and International Affairs. Although proficiency was not formally tested before or during the course, both instructors were familiar with the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. It is estimated that students from both groups had proficiency levels ranging from Intermediate High to Superior, with most falling within the Advanced proficiency range, i.e., Advanced Low to Advanced High.

Course Design

The two courses taught in the U.S. and Russia were based on parallel textbooks, *Mastering Russian through Global Debate* (Brown, Balykhina, Talalakina, Bown, & Kurilenko, 2014) and *Mastering English through Global Debate* (Talalakina, Brown, Bown, & Eggington, 2014) respectively. The primary objective of these textbooks is to facilitate development of Superior-level language skills via oral debates and written position papers. Although the two textbooks follow a similar structure and contain the same topics (including Economy vs. Environment, Interventionism vs. Isolationism, Wealth Redistribution vs. Self-Reliance, Cultural Preservation vs. Diversity, Security vs Freedom, and Education vs. Real-World Experience), the exercises and texts within each volume were developed separately. Information about the philosophy and design of the textbooks can be found in Brown and Bown (2015).

Although the teletandem exchanges represented the distinguishing feature of this transnational course, students engaged in a number of other activities, allowing them to meet the "World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages" described earlier. They engaged in interpretive communication as they read and listened to news reports and opinion pieces on the topics of discussion. Learners participated in presentational communication as they presented their arguments for or against particular topics, and in interpersonal communication as they

communicated in their teletandems and discussed opinions and current events in class. Students engaged directly with culture as they discussed perspectives on various current events and the values underlying those perspectives. Connections to disciplines such as economics, history, and political science were important in order to effectively argue for a position. During teletandem exchanges, students made comparisons across cultures as they compared the perspectives underlying such sayings as "from rags to riches" and "из грязи в князи." Finally, as they participated in teletandem exchanges, learners engaged with multilingual communities beyond their classroom.

Over the course of the semester that this study was conducted, students in Russia and in the United States debated four of the six topics within their respective courses: Environment vs. Ecology, Interventionism vs. Isolationism, Wealth Redistribution vs. Self-Reliance, and Cultural Preservation vs. Diversity. The course syllabi were not identical; that is, the learning outcomes and assignments for each of the two courses varied. For example, the Russian students engaged in more formal individual presentations, while the American students' presentations were limited to the team debates. What the courses had in common, however, was the use of authentic listening and reading material, discussions and debates, and persuasive writing assignments on each topic. Although the Russian and U.S. students did not engage in team debates via video conferencing, the courses were designed so that students in Russia and in the United States simultaneously discussed the topics listed above. The shared schedule facilitated teletandem exchanges, in which students in the U.S. and Russia participated in focused conversation exchange via the internet.

Once a week, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students from Russia engaged in a 30-minute conversation exchange with their counterparts learning Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) in the United States. These one-on-one synchronous exchanges focused on interpersonal communication skills at the Advanced level and beyond. The students were engaged in a once-a-week exchange for 10 weeks with conversation partners rotating each week. Each session lasted 30 minutes with target languages switching after 15 minutes. To better focus student conversations, the instructors identified a series of questions--both in English and in Russian--related to each topic. Sample questions included, "Describe the Russian or U.S. tax system. What kinds of taxes are paid and by whom? Are there any tax exemptions?" Students were instructed to decide in advance on two questions for discussion - one would be posed in English by the native English speakers for the EFL learners to answer, while the Russia-based students would pose a question in Russian to be answered by their U.S. counterparts. Because the topics typically involved research, the pairs of students decided in advance which topics they would discuss. As a follow-up to their conversations and to ensure that students attended to each other's speech, students then wrote a summary in their L2 of what they had learned from their conversation partner.

Survey: Self-Assessment of language gains during the course

The primary instrument employed in this study was a self-assessment survey designed by two of the authors to examine whether students felt they made progress in their L2, i.e., Russian or English, over the course of the semester. The survey was administered once via Qualtrics at the completion of the course. The first two self-assessment questions directly asked students whether the course helped them with their spoken and written language skills. To respond, students were asked to note their agreement with the statements using a five-point Likert scale where 1= "strongly agree" to 5= "strongly disagree":

- This course helped me make progress in my spoken language.
- This course helped me make progress in my written language.

Next, students were asked to rate how confident they were in their ability to perform a series of tasks, reflected in Can-Do Statements. They reflected back on what they believed they could do at the beginning and reflecting on where they were at the end of the course. See below for a discussion of the advantages of this type of survey for self-assessment. Their responses were given using a five-point Likert scale:
1. Could not do this even with extensive preparation.
2. Unsure as to whether I could or could not do this.
3. Could do this with extensive preparation.
4. Could do this with minimal preparation.
5. Could do this without any preparation.

The Can-Do statements presented in the survey were derived from the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (ACTFL, 2013). These Can-Do Statements represent self-assessment checklists that allow learners to assess what they are able "to do" in the L2. According to ACTFL, the "current Can-Do Statements are strategically aligned with the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* and the *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners,* both of which remain the standard for assessing foreign language learning in the United States. These Can-Do Statements describe the specific language tasks that learners are likely to perform at various levels of proficiency" (p. 2) in each of the three modes of communication: interpersonal, presentational, and interpretive. An example Can-Do statement from the Superior level is as follows: "I can skillfully relate my point of view to conversations about issues, such as foreign policy, healthcare, or environmental and economic concerns to those made by other speakers."

The Can-Do statements used in this survey represent presentational and interpersonal tasks at both the Advanced and Superior proficiency levels. A total of 33 separate Can-Do Statements were presented in the survey administered online via Qualtrics, eight Advanced Interpersonal Can-Do statements, eight Superior Interpersonal, six Advanced presentational, and 11 Superior presentational. Samples of each variety are provided in Table 2 with sections highlighted that are relevant for the proficiency level classification:

Table 2
Distribution of Can-Do Statements used in study

	Advanced	**Superior**
Interpersonal	8 statements Sample: "I could resolve an unexpected complication that arose in a familiar situation."	8 statements Sample: "I could support my opinions clearly and precisely and construct hypotheses."
Presentational	6 statements Sample: "I could deliver short presentations on social and cultural topics."	11 statements Sample: "I could present a viewpoint with supporting arguments on a complex issue."

As noted, students were asked to respond to their perceived ability to perform each of those Can-Do Statements at the beginning and end of the semester using the five-point Likert scale outlined above. Since students were asked at the end of the course, the wording was changed from "can" to "could" as illustrated in Table 2. The researchers administered the survey just once at the end of the course, employing a "then-now", i.e., a post + retroflective survey to evaluate students' perceived gains rather than administering pre- and post-course surveys. In a post + retrospective self-assessment, learners are asked at the conclusion of a program to retroactively evaluate their abilities prior to the learning experience as well as to rate their abilities following the experience (Brown, Dewey, & Cox, 2014). This type of survey design has the advantages of the pretest and posttest model, in which learners are asked to evaluate their abilities in two different sittings—one prior to the learning experience and once again following the learning experience (Meara, 1994). However, research indicates that learners' perceptions often undergo a significant shift between pretesting and posttesting. The perspective shift usually occurs as a result of learners' standards changing from pretest to posttest (Gilovich, Kerr, & Medvec, 1993). As Brown, Dewey, and Cox (2014) state, "Prior to the learning experience, [learners] may overestimate or underestimate their abilities due to a lack of experience, but following the experience, they know better what the tasks entail on which they are asked to rate themselves" (p. 265). Moreover, Rohs and Langone (1997) argue that "then-now" assessments allow learners to "[evaluate] themselves with the same standard of measurement or level of understanding on both their posttest responses (how they feel now) and how they felt before the program (then)" (p. 156).

The research literature indicates that self-assessment can promote greater learner awareness and self-regulation. Moreover, involving students in the assessment process can increase learner motivation and participation in the learning process (Dickinson, 1987; Oscarson, 1997; Ross, 1998, 2006). Additionally, self-assessment is relatively easy to design, administer, and score. Self-assessment represents a cost-effective method of evaluating progress, especially when compared with such pricey alternatives as the OPI or Test of Russian as a Foreign Language. Though they do not eliminate the need for certified assessments at different times, self-assessments can help monitor progress between such formal assessments. Finally, as Badstübner and Ecke (2009) note, self-assessment is "representative of students' perceptions, which in the end, determine a [...] program's success and survival, perhaps more so than proficiency tests" (p. 42).

Research has also shown that self-assessments are most useful when they are tied to tasks that are familiar to learners or that learners can imagine engaging in (Oscarson, 1997). Moreover, as Oscarson notes, learners are better able to assess their ability in relation to "concrete descriptors of more narrowly defined linguistic situations" (p. 183), such as those used in the ACTFL Can-Do statements employed in this study. This is confirmed by Grahn-Saarinen (2003), who noted that students overestimate their skills when asked to assess their language abilities against abstract standards since they do not understand what type of linguistic knowledge they still lack. However, when asked to rate themselves on their ability to use the language, students have a good understanding of what they can do with the language in different situations and contexts.

Data Analysis

To begin our analysis, subjects' retroflective ("then") and post-course ("now") responses were subjected to a reliability analysis in SPSS since the data are based on self-ratings. Next, to answer the research questions, results of the survey data were analyzed using a series of (Mixed) ANOVAs. Two sets of survey data were examined in this way. First, the assessments students gave for their perceived improvements in both writing and speaking were examined using a one-way ANOVA to determine whether perceptions differed as a function of the university in which each student was enrolled. The second set of data examined were the self-assessments students provided for their ability to perform the 33 Can-Do statements at the beginning (Pre) and end of the course (Post). These data points, namely the Pre and Post, were analyzed using a Mixed ANOVA to determine the effect of the university where students were enrolled, whether students were more likely to improve on one mode of Can-Do statements, e.g., presentational or interpersonal, and whether students were more likely to feel they made improvements on the Can-Do statements targeted for either Advanced or Superior levels as well as any interactions between these factors.

Results

In this section, we begin by presenting a reliability analysis of the students' self-perceptions of their ability both prior to and following the course before presenting the results of statistical analysis of the self-perception survey data collected from the students at the end of the course and reflecting their perceptions of their ability to perform the various functions both at the outset of the course and at the end of the course.

Reliability of Students' Responses to Can-Do Survey

Since this study relies on the self-perception of students, the reliability of the Can-Do survey was calculated. Students' retroflective responses regarding how well they thought they could perform certain tasks at the beginning of the semester and their Post responses (at the end of the semester) were found to be highly reliable and stable (Pre: 37 students; α=.94; Post: 37 students; α=.93).

Student Self-Perceptions on Progress in Writing and Speaking

A series of one-way ANOVAs were run to determine whether the university where students were enrolled had an effect on the self-reported progress students made for writing and speaking. There was no significant effect for university on the amount of progress students reported in speaking ($F(1,36)$= .055, p= .816). U.S. university students (M=1.50, SD=.71) and Russian university students (M=1.55, SD=.60) both reported very similar gains in speaking. The means demonstrate that students either agreed (2) or strongly agreed (1) that the course helped them make progress in their spoken language. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below by the blue bars. Here, the closer the bar is to 1, the more students felt the course helped their speaking.

The one-way ANOVA run to determine if university impacted the progress students felt they made in their writing approached but did not reach significance ($F(1,36)$ = 3.955, p=.055). Although not significant, the Russian students reported making smaller gains in writing (M=2.70, SD=.98) as illustrated by the higher bars in Figure 1, than their U.S. university counterparts (M=2.11, SD= .83). The lower responses closer to 2 represent agreement with the statement that the course helped them improve their writing, while higher bar responses closer to 3 indicate responses neither agreeing or disagreeing.
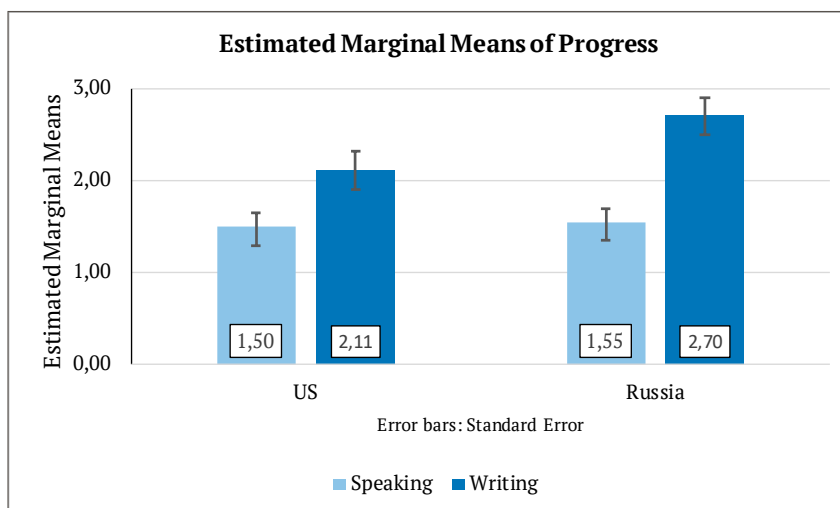
Figure 1. Students' self-report of progress in speaking and writing.

Next, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the perceived progress students made in writing and speaking. Students reported making significantly more progress for speaking (M=1.53, SD= .65) than for writing (M=2.42, SD= .95) during the course, t(37)= -6.39, =p< .001, d = -1.10, 95% CI (-1.18, -.61). Recall that the closer the rating (and the means of the rating) is to 1, the more students agreed that the course had helped them improve their language skills.

Student Self-Perceptions on Progress on Can-Do Statement Functions

A 2*2*2*2 mixed-design ANOVA was conducted with time (Pre and Post ratings), Proficiency Level (Advanced and Superior), and Mode (interpersonal and presentational) as within-subjects factors and University (U.S. university and Russian university) as the between-subjects factor. The ANOVA revealed a main effect for all variables. Time was found to be significant, F (1,35) = 153.66, p < .001, η^2 = .814, 95% CI [-1.04, -.75], where post-course self-assessments were significantly higher (*M*=4.092, *SD*= .35, 95% CI[3.975, 4.21]) than the self-assessments of abilities for the beginning of the course (*M*=3.201, *SD*= .499, 95% CI[3.035, 3.368]). This demonstrates that students did perceive that they had made improvements from the beginning to the end of the semester regarding their ability to perform the functions associated with the Can-Do Statements. Proficiency level was also found to be significant, *F* (1,35) = 38.32, *p* < .001, η^2 = .523, 95% CI [.242, .479], where students rated their ability to perform the Advanced level Can-Do Statements significantly higher (*M*=3.83, *SD*= .38, 95% CI[3.698, 3.956]) than their ability to perform the Superior level Can-Do statement functions (*M*=3.47, *SD*= .44, 95% CI[3.32, 3.61]). A main effect was also found for the mode of the Can-Do statements *F* (1,35) = 5.78, *p* = .022, η^2 = .142, 95% CI [.02, .21], where students rated their ability to perform the Interpersonal Can-Do statement functions significantly higher (*M*= 3.703, *SD*= .41, 95% CI[3.57, 3.84]) than their ability to perform the presentational level Can-Do statement functions (*M*= 3.59, *SD*= .39, 95% CI[3.46, 3.72]) regardless of time, proficiency level, or the university where they were taking the course. University was also found to be significant, *F* (1,35) = 5.83, *p* = .021, η^2 = .143, 95% CI [-.545, -.047], where Russian students rated their ability on the Can-Do statements higher (*M*=3.795, *SD*=.375, 95% CI[3.621, 3.968]) than the U.S. university students (*M*= 3.499, *SD*= .373, 95% CI[3.32, 3.677]).

Three additional interactions related to improvement over the course of the semester, i.e., involving time were also found to be significant. First, a two-way interaction between time and proficiency level was significant, F(1, 35)= 4.396, *p*= .043, η^2 = .112 (cf. Figure 2.) Here the label "Beginning" refers to their retroflective estimates of their ability at the beginning of the semester versus how well they rated their ability at the end of the semester.
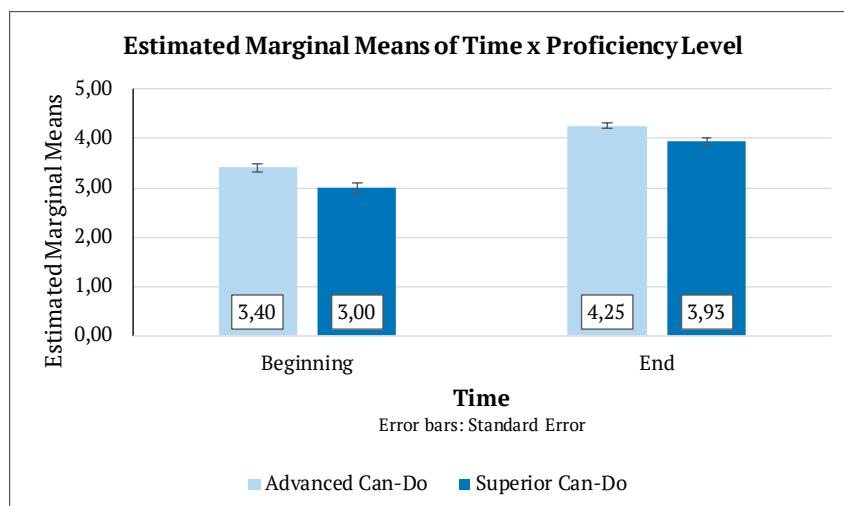
Figure 2. Students' self-report of ability to perform Advanced and Superior Can-Do Statements at the beginning and end of the course.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the Advanced Can-Do statements were rated higher at both the start (*M*= 3.4, *SD*= .54, 94% CI [3.23, 3.58]) and end of the course (*M*= 4.251, *SD*= .33, 95% CI [4.14, 4.36]) than the Superior level Can-Do Statements at the beginning (*M*=2.999, *SD*= .55, 95% CI [4.14, 4.36]) and end (*M*= 3.93, *SD*= .44, 95% CI [3.79, 4.08]). While students noted improvement on both levels of Can-Do Statements, they reported marginally (albeit significantly) more improvement for the Superior Can-Do statements (difference between pre and post means = .934) than for the Advanced statements (difference between pre and post means = .848).

Moreover, a three-way interaction between time x proficiency level x university was also found to be significant, $F(1, 35)= 6.26, p=.017, \eta^2 = .15$. To further explore the source of this difference, two additional 2*2 within-subject ANOVAs were run for each university to test for an interaction between time and level. No interaction was found between time and proficiency level for the U.S. university students, $F(1, 17) = .84, p= .37$. Students reported having made statistically similar gains on both the Advanced (Pre: *M*= 3.23, *SD*= .52; Post: *M*= 4.14, *SD*= .37, mean improvement= .91) and Superior level Can-Do statements (Pre: *M*= 2.89, *SD*= .52; Post: *M*= 3.75, *SD*= .47, mean improvement = .86). However, when the time x level ANOVA was run for the Russian university students, a significant interaction was found, $F(1, 18) = 7.75, p= .012$. Students made a slightly, yet nevertheless statistically significant greater improvement on the Superior level Can-Do statements (Pre: *M*= 3.11, *SD*= .56; Post: *M*= 4.09, *SD*= .396, mean improvement = .98) than the Advanced level statements (Pre: *M*= 3.59, *SD*= .56; Post: *M*= 4.38, *SD*= .29, mean improvement = .79). When the improvements between students at the two universities were compared, the Russian students made more improvements on the Superior level statements (although marginally more than the Advanced statements, the difference is significant), while the U.S. university students made marginally more improvements on the Advanced level Can-Do statements (where the difference between the Advanced and Superior-level statements were not significant). Thus, the universities differed in which statements underwent greater improvement.

And finally, a three-way interaction between time x mode (interpersonal vs. presentational) x university was also found to be significant, $F(1, 35)= 4.78, p= .036, \eta^2 = .12$. To explore the source of the interaction, two additional 2*2 within-subject ANOVAs were run for each university to test for an interaction between time and level. Among the U.S. university students, there was a significant interaction between time and level, $F(1, 17) = 9.92, p = .006, \eta^2 = .37$. U.S. students reported significantly more improvement on the interpersonal Can-Do statements (Pre: *M*= 3.034, *SD*= .55; Post: *M*= 4.00, *SD*= .42, mean improvement = .97) than the presentational level statements (Pre: *M*= 3.04, *SD*= .46; Post: *M*= 3.84, *SD*= .45, mean improvement = .80) (cf. Figure 4.), although the size of the difference itself is small. It is notable that performance at the start of the semester was similar for the U.S. students on both the presentational and interpersonal statement functions. Students reported improvements on both types of statements, but the improvements for Interpersonal were significantly greater (cf. Figure 4a).

Figure 3a. Russian university students' self-report of ability to perform Advanced and Superior Can-Do Statements at the beginning and end of the course.
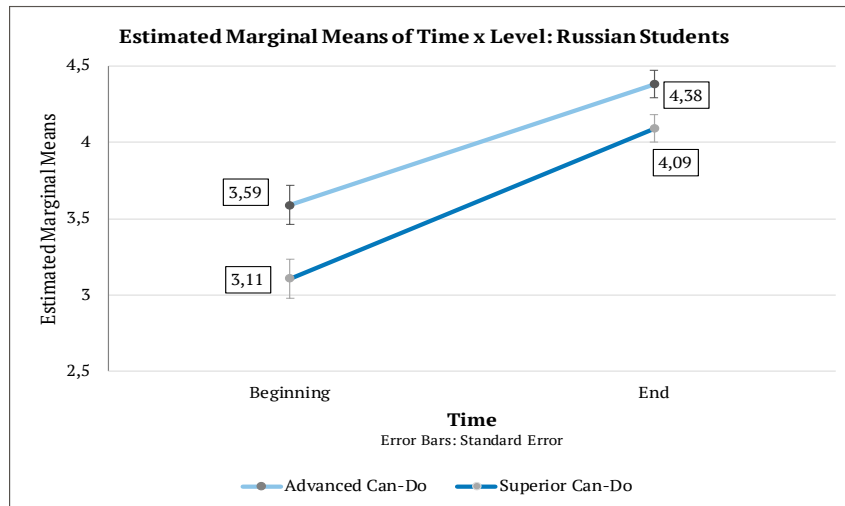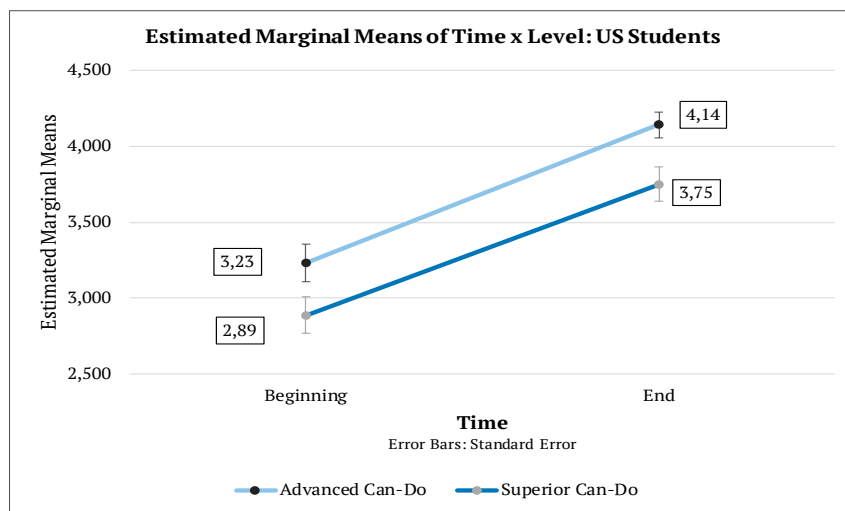

Figure 3b. U.S. university students' self-report of their ability to perform Advanced and Superior Can-Do Statements at the beginning and end of the course.
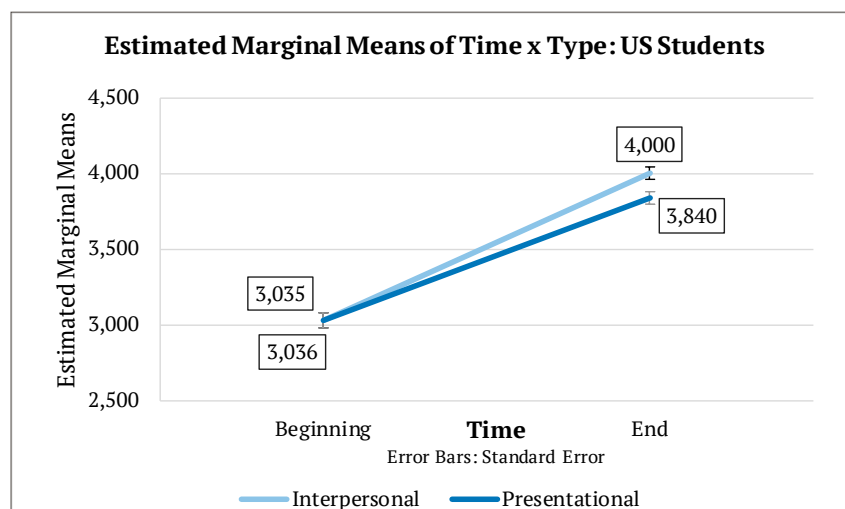

Figure 4a. U.S. university students' self-report on their ability to perform interpersonal and presentational Can-Do Statements at the beginning and end of the course.
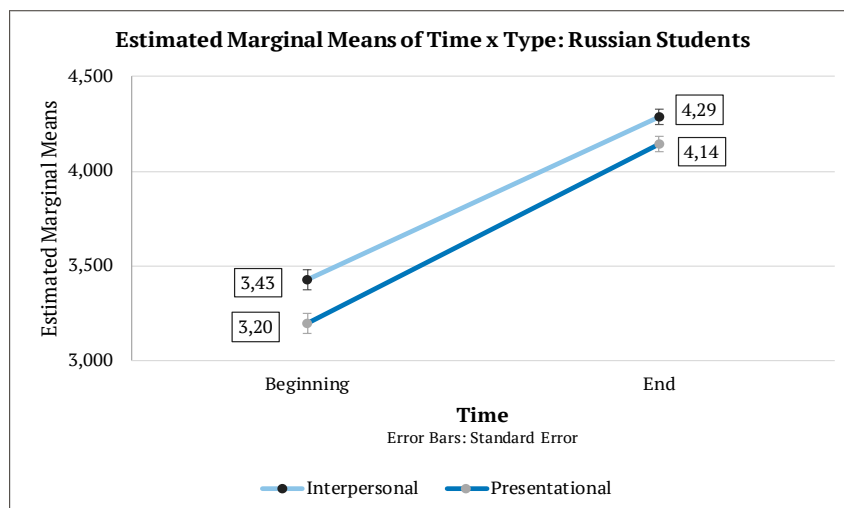
Figure 4b. Russian university students' self-report on their ability to perform interpersonal and presentational Can-Do Statements at the beginning and end of the course.

Among the Russian students, however, no significant difference was found between their self-ratings of the interpersonal and presentational Can-Do statements, $F(1, 18) = .903$, $p = .36$, $\eta^2 = .05$. However, it is worth noting that, contrary to the improvement made by the U.S. students (cf. Figure 4b), Russian students reported making marginally more improvement for presentational Can-Do statements (Pre: $M= 3.20$, $SD= .53$; Post: $M= 4.14$, $SD= .38$, mean improvement = .95) than for the interpersonal Can-Do statements (Pre: $M= 3.43$, $SD= .56$; Post: $M= 4.29$, $SD= .29$, mean improvement = .86).

Discussion

The results discussed above provide insights into student perceptions regarding their proficiency gains over the course of a semester-long interactive debate class. In what follows, we discuss the reliability of the self-ratings provided by the students before systematically responding to each research question.

Reliability of Self-Assessment

Since the data rely on self-reported assessments by students, it is worth discussing the reliability of the data before turning to a discussion of the research questions based on these data. As noted in the results section, the students' pre- and post-assessments were found to be highly stable, providing support for the use of self-assessment data to answer our research questions.

Research question 1: Did students report improving during the course? The most critical question to establish the success of the course is whether it helped students improve their language skills. The results of this study allow us to answer this question in the affirmative. Overall, students reported greater language gains for their speaking than their writing, with the U.S. students assessing their improvement in writing somewhat higher than that of their Russian counterparts. The results are not surprising, as the course focused primarily on the development of oral proficiency through interactive debates and teletandems.

Students likewise reported making improvements with regard to their ability to perform the functions associated with the Can-Do Statements. At the outset of the course, students on average felt they could perform the specified tasks with extensive preparation; but by the end of the course, students on average reported feeling they were now able to perform them with minimal preparation. This marks a substantial improvement in their perception of preparedness to complete the functions specified in the Can-Do statements. Although this study did not measure learners' actual proficiency ratings, these findings do echo Brown's (2009) study in which students made significant gains (as measured by pre- and post-Oral Proficiency Interviews) following a semester-long course focused on debate. This study, taken with other studies of similar courses (Brown, Talalakina, Yakusheva, & Eggett, 2009; Brown, Bown, & Eggett, 2012) suggest that a one-semester course, designed with proficiency

outcomes in mind, can make a difference in students' abilities or perceived abilities without a significant immersion experience. These findings are particularly encouraging in light of the ceiling effect in traditional foreign language programs noted by Rifkin (2005), who asserts that achieving even Advanced-level proficiency may require some kind of intensive immersion experience.

Research question 2: Did students report improving more on one mode and/or level of Can-Do statements?
Research Question 2 asks whether students were better at functions relating to one mode (Interpersonal or Presentational) or level (Advanced or Superior) more than others, and in turn, whether students were more apt to report improvement for one level, i.e., Advanced or Superior level tasks, or mode, i.e., Interpersonal or Presentational. Although the course was focused primarily on the development of Superior-level proficiency, students from both universities generally reported greater facility with and greater gains on tasks related to Advanced-level proficiency. Although the results were statistically significant, in practical terms, the difference is admittedly not substantial. A higher rating for Advanced-level Can-Do statements, if not substantially higher, is not surprising considering that most students, as assessed by the instructors, fell within the Advanced range of proficiency, i.e., between Intermediate-High and Advanced-Mid) at the outset of the course. Since students were enrolled in the course to try to improve their language skills toward the Superior level, it is not surprising that their self-assessment of the skills related to Advanced-level functions would be higher, and that practice in higher-level Superior functions, would result in improvements not only for the Superior-level tasks, but also the Advanced ones.

Theories of L2 learning suggest that output plays an important role in language acquisition (Swain, 1998). Most foreign language educators would recommend that instructors set tasks for learners that will be within their "Zone of Proximal Development" or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), defined by Van Patten and Benati (2010) as "the distance between a learner's current ability to use tools to mediate his or her environment and the level of potential development" (p. 152). In other words, tasks should be just beyond the learners' ability to perform them without additional help, provided in the form of scaffolded activities or in interactions with more proficient speakers. This study suggests that learners benefit from being pushed toward the next proficiency level (Thompson, 2008); they consolidate their abilities at their current level of proficiency and begin developing skills at the next level.

With regard to mode of communication, students rated themselves better able to perform interpersonal functions than presentational. In both cases, the responses were midway between "could do this with extensive preparation" and "could do this with minimal preparation," with a marginal yet consistent advantage for the Interpersonal statements as found in the Advanced and Superior comparison. The course's focus on conversational interactions, both in the teletandems and in in-class debates, may contribute to this slight preference.

Based on these two findings, we can answer the initial part of the question in the affirmative, that the targeted proficiency level and communication mode did indeed impact students' perceptions of their ability to perform the functions and tasks outlined in the various Can-Do Statements. Students rated themselves more capable of completing Advanced and Interpersonal tasks. Even if the differences were marginal, they were nevertheless consistent.

Did students make more improvements on the Can-Do Statements based on proficiency level and mode?
To answer this research question, we explored whether self-ratings for proficiency level or communication mode changed over time. While it is true that students consistently rated their ability to perform the Advanced Can-Do Statements higher than their ability to perform the Superior Can-Do functions at both the start and end of the course, students overall reported making more progress on the Superior-level tasks than they made on the Advanced Can-Do Statements (see discussion for RQ3 for clarification on this result). This is not surprising considering the targeted learning outcomes of the course and the focus on debate. The communicative functions of debate, namely discussing topics in depth in order to offer supported opinions and make conjectures about possible consequences, are the very functions that define ACTFL's Superior level. Consequently, the explicit focus on supported opinion, in-depth discussion, and conjecture enabled students to improve their abilities in those functions aligning with the Superior-level Can-Do Statements. Once again, these results accord with previous research on the benefits of language courses focused on debate (Brown, 2009; Brown, Talalakina, Yakusheva, & Eggett, 2009) and underscore the benefits of courses carefully aligned with proficiency outcomes

Research question 3: Effect of University. To this point, the discussion has focused on whether students, regardless of the university at which they were enrolled during the course (and therewith also the language they were learning, either English as an L2 or Russian as an L2 at the Russian and American universities respectively), made improvements. But three questions remain, first as to whether both groups viewed their improvements in speaking and writing similarly; second, whether they perceived their abilities in the various functions outlined by the Can-Do Statements in a similar fashion; and last, whether they benefitted similarly from the debate course.

To answer the first aspect of this question regarding reported gains for speaking and writing, recall that the students at both the U.S. and Russian universities responded similarly to the statement "This course helped me make progress in my spoken language." Where the two groups of students differed slightly (though not significantly, p=.055) was in their response to the corresponding statement for written language improvements. The U.S. students' responses were, on average, "agree" while the Russian students' responses were closer to the response "neither agree nor disagree." Nevertheless, it is positive that students at both universities felt they benefited from the course, particularly for speaking despite individual differences between the courses at the two universities.

In spite of the fact that the students in Russia consistently rated themselves more favourably than the American students at both the beginning and end of the course,[1] there was no time x university interaction. What this last finding means is that students at both universities made equivalent language gains overall. This is yet again a positive finding since it demonstrates that despite the differences in instructors and in-class approaches, the course design enabled students to note improvements in their oral language skills (the focus of the Can-Do statements). In short, neither group made more gains overall than the other. Thus, despite the difference in locations, instructors, and even languages, students reported that they benefited similarly from the course design.

That said, the results of this study provide some insights into the unique nature of each group's progress. Students in Russia reported more improvements for the tasks associated with Superior-level Can-Do statements, while the American students tended to report slightly more improvements on the Advanced-level tasks. This finding may be a natural extension of the higher self-ratings the Russian students gave themselves in comparison to their American counterparts. If the Russian students were already slightly more advanced in their proficiency, they may have been more able to benefit from the practice on the Superior-level tasks addressed in the Can-Do statements. On the other hand, the American students may have found that the practice of the Superior-level functions and tasks contributed to the further development of their proficiency with Advanced-level functions. Again, it must be noted that these differences, while statistically significant, are practically quite small.

A similar difference between students at the two universities was found in the improvement for interpersonal vs. presentational Can-Do statements (time x mode of communication x university). While the American students tended to report greater improvements for the Interpersonal Can-Do statements, the Russian students reported more improvements on the presentational Can-Dos. Again, the differences are very small for practical purposes, but demonstrate slightly different trends in the direction of improvement. These slight differences could be interpreted as a reflection of a different classroom focus. The American students did not engage in formal presentations, beyond the in-class debates, whereas the Russian students engaged in formal presentations in addition to the interactive debates. It should be noted, however, that even though the Russian students reported slightly more improvements in their presentational Can-Do communication, their overall self-assessments showed slightly more confidence in their ability to actually perform the Interpersonal tasks than the presentational ones. The American students, on the other hand, reported similar abilities performing the presentational and interactional Can-Do statements at the outset of the course, and then reported slightly more confidence in their abilities to complete the interactional functions by the end of the course.

---

[1] It is not clear why this difference at the beginning and end of the study would exist, although a few suggestions can be provided. First, it may be that the students in Russia were indeed more proficient than those in the United States. Since formal proficiency testing, e.g., an Oral Proficiency Interview, was not completed as part of the study, we cannot confirm this. However, based on the instructors' familiarity with the proficiency levels of both sets of students, this may indeed be the case. This difference may also be based on cultural differences in self-reporting, which have been found elsewhere, particularly comparing Asian and North American students' self-ratings (e.g., Chen, Lee & Stevenson, 1995). In such studies, American students have been found to be more likely to give higher self-ratings than their fellow students from Asia, underscoring a potential role for a subject's culture of origin in how they respond to their abilities. The source of the difference is not relevant here since both groups reported feeling that they had made improvements from their relative starting points.

These results suggest that, despite the Russian students' propensity to rate themselves higher in their language skills than the American students, students at both universities benefited from the debate course in terms of language gains, especially gains in spoken language). A closer look at the three-way interactions revealed that the students in each location tended to make slightly different improvements, e.g., the American students improved slightly more on the Advanced and interactional Can-Do Statements, while the Russian students tended to improve slightly more on the Superior and presentational Can-Dos. However, these different trends, while significant, are not necessarily substantial in size and may simply reflect slight differences in classroom culture and focus (for the mode of communication) and the slight difference in self-reported language abilities. What is promising is that such a course allows for overall similar language gains, despite different target languages and administration of the course at the individual institutions. In other words, one group of students did not benefit at the expense of the other.

Implications for the Classroom

Although this study employed self-assessment rather than objective measures of language gains, the results nevertheless indicate that students' confidence in their language abilities can grow significantly following a one-semester language course. As noted above, learners' perceptions of language gain can play a significant role in the success of a particular program (Badstübner & Ecke, 2009). Learners who believe that a course does not lead to improved language ability will be less invested in that course and less likely to recommend it to others. And conversely, if students feel like a class has benefitted their language skills, they will be more likely to recommend the course to others, and those students may in turn feel like their language skills have improved as well.

Moreover, cross-institutional courses involving students learning the L1 of their counterparts at the other university can lead to improvement for both sets of students, even if both sets of students are not at the same proficiency level. In this study, the American students reported slightly lower proficiency in the functions associated with the Can-Do statements than their Russian counterparts. Nevertheless, both sets of students reported increased language ability at the end of the study. The language gains made by the students in the course likely reflect an approach compatible with Krashen's i+1 hypothesis, which argues that learning occurs along a developmental continuum and, therefore, classroom activities should be just beyond the learner's current stage of development (Krashen, 1988). In this case, the learners had crossed the Advanced-threshold. Making progress required pushing them beyond the functions of the Advanced level into the Superior.

Such an approach, in which students are working just beyond their proficiency level, can also yield results at the students' current level of proficiency. The American group in this study, for instance, reported slightly more progress in the Advanced-level functions than they did in the Superior-level functions. Even though the focus of instruction was not on developing narration and description, performing at the next level, i.e., Superior, helped them to improve in functions at the level below, i.e., Advanced. This suggests the importance of instructional methods and tasks that push learners beyond their comfort level.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is its reliance on self-reported data, rather than objective measures of proficiency. Nevertheless, the self-ratings were shown to be reliable and highly stable. Moreover, previous studies by Brown and colleagues (Brown, 2009; Brown, Talalakina, Yakusheva & Eggett) focusin on debate in the language classroom, have shown that students make gains on such assessment tools as the Oral Proficiency Interview and the Written Proficiency Test. Future studies might examine the accuracy of students' self-assessments by comparing their responses to more objective measures of gain, such as pre- and post-Oral Proficiency Interviews or Written Proficiency Tests, as used by Brown and colleagues.

Moreover, in relying on self-assessment, this study made use of an unorthodox tool for measuring perceived gains. Rather than administering a survey prior to the course and a second survey after the course, we chose to administer a single "then-now" or post + retroflective survey. A more traditional approach would likely have yielded different results. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that a post + retroflective technique may yield more accurate self-assessments of ability prior to the course (Rohs & Langone, 1997; Lam & Bengo, 2003). In fact, Lam and Bengo (2003), following an extensive review of research on the use of post + retroflective

surveys concluded, "More than three decades of research on post + retrospective method has unequivocally supported this approach over the traditional pretest-posttest approach to measuring change" (p. 78). The design of the study also makes it difficult to identify potential confounding variables. For example, data were lacking on the extent of learners' participation in course assignments, including the teletandems, as well as on full demographic details on the students' learning profiles, e.g., length of time studying the L2, time immersed in the L2, etc. Any of these factors may have played a role in their linguistic development and could have provided insights to better interpret the findings.

Future Research

In spite of these limitations, the study does provide insights into the learners' perceptions of the benefits of a course focused on debate for the development of Advanced and Superior-level functions. Future research can incorporate pre- and post-global proficiency ratings or other tests focused on more specific linguistic skills or knowledge, such as vocabulary or grammar.

Audio or video recordings of student teletandems could prove a rich source of data. Scholars could analyze cross-cultural discourse patterns, negotiation of meaning, error correction, or simply trace development of fluency or vocabulary development over the course of a semester. Qualitative data about students' experiences both in the course overall as well as in the teletandems could provide further insights into the benefits and challenges of computer-mediated interaction. This study has focused primarily on linguistic gains, but future studies might also focus on issues related to cultural misunderstandings, negotiation, and development of cultural competence. NCSSFL-ACTFL has developed a set of Can-Do statements related to cultural understanding, which would facilitate such a line of research.

The Can-Do statements in this study were introduced at the end of the course. Current research suggests that Can-Do statements can be useful throughout the course as a way of focusing students' learning and helping them to develop learner autonomy (Lenz, 2004). Future research could examine the effectiveness of introducing Can-Do statements throughout the semester and using them to gauge learning. Scholars can consider how using such self-assessment might improve learners' accuracy in evaluating their own learning. Whereas the Can-Do statements focus on global tasks and functions, learners likely also make progress in more specific language areas, such as their ability to use transition statements, or build cohesive paragraphs and discourse, or incorporate more specific and specialized vocabulary. Students can be asked to self-assess their progress in these areas, as well as in their ability to perform specific tasks. Moreover, recordings of student presentations and interactions, as well as their written work over the course of the semester can provide a wealth of data, allowing researchers to examine growth in more targeted language features.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide promising insights that curriculum design can indeed impact student proficiency gains over the course of a single semester. As the demand for proficient L2 speakers needed to participate in the global economy continues to rise, there is indeed hope for students to improve their language skills towards Advanced and Superior levels of proficiency. A course drawing on debate and argumentation skills can provide critical help for students to increase their confidence and linguistic preparation to move higher up the proficiency scale. The course outlined here involving both in-class debate preparation and weekly teletandem discussions with native speakers of the students' L2 is one such way to provide students with the necessary practice on their own home campuses to facilitate the development of professional-level language competence.

References

Akiyama, Y., & Cunningham, J. D. (2018). Synthesizing the practice of SCMC-based telecollaboration: A scoping review. *Calico Journal, 35*(1), 49-76.

Badstübner, T., & Ecke, P. (2009). Student expectations, motivations, target language use, and perceived learning

progress in a summer study abroad program in Germany. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 42*(1), 41–49.

Bärenfänger, O., & Tschirner, E. (2008). Language educational policy and the language learning quality management: The Common European Framework of Reference. *Foreign Language Annals*, *41*, 81– 101. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2008.tb03280.x

Belz, J. A. (2002). Social dimensions of telecollaborative foreign language study. *Language learning & Technology, 6*(1), 60-81.

Belz, J. A. (2003). Linguistic perspectives on the development of intercultural competence in telecollaboration. *Language learning & Technology, 7*(2), 68-117.

Brookhart, S. M., Andolina, M., Zuza, M., & Furman, R. (2004). Minute math: An action research study of student self-assessment. *Educational studies in Mathematics, 57*(2), 213-227.

Brown, N. A. (2009). Argumentation and debate in foreign language instruction: A case for the traditional classroom facilitating advanced-level language uptake. *The Modern Language Journal, 93*(4), 534-549.

Brown, N. A., Bown, J., & Eggett, D. L. (2009). Making rapid gains in second language writing: A case study of a third-year Russian language course. *Foreign Language Annals, 42*(3), 424-452.

Brown, N. A., Dewey, D. P., & Cox, T. L. (2014). Assessing the validity of can-do statements in retrospective (then-now) self-assessment. *Foreign Language Annals, 47*(2), 261-285.

Brown, N. A., Talalakina, E. V., Yakusheva, I. V., & Eggett, D. L. (2012). Argumentation and debate in the foreign language classroom: Russian and American university students collaborating through new technologies. *Russian Language Journal*, *62*, 141-166.

Brown, T., & Bown, J. (2015). *To advanced proficiency and beyond.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Brown, T., Balykhina, T., Talalakina, E., Bown, J., & Kurilenko, V. (2014). *Mastering Russian through global debate.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Brown, T., Bown, J., & Eggett, D. (2015). Advanced foreign language study through debate. In T. Brown & J. Bown (Eds.), *To advanced proficiency and beyond* (pp. 73-86). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (2013). *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching, and testing.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Cardoso, T., & Matos, F. (2012). Learning foreign languages in the twenty-first century: An innovating teletandem experiment through Skype. In *Media in Education* (pp. 87-95). New York, NY: Springer.

Chen, C., Lee, S. & Stevenson, H. W. (1995). Response style and cross-cultural comparisons of rating scales among East Asian and North American students. *Psychological Science*, *6*(3), 170-175.

Chen, J. J., & Yang, S. C. (2014). Fostering foreign language learning through technology-enhanced intercultural projects. *Language Learning & Technology, 18*(1), 57-75.

Connor, U. (1987). Argumentative patterns in student essays: Cross-cultural differences. In U. Connor & R. Kaplan (Eds.), *Writing across languages: Analysis of L2 text* (pp. 57–71). Reading, MA: AddisonWesley.

Consolo, D. A., & Furtoso, V. B. (2015). Assessing oral proficiency in computer-assisted foreign language learning: A study in the context of teletandem interactions. *DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Lingüística Teórica e Aplicada*, *31*(3), 665-689.

Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *Content and language integrated learning.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Darhower, Mark. 2014. Literary discussions and Advanced-Superior speaking functions in the undergraduate language program. *Hispania, 97*(3), 396-412.

Dickinson, L. (1987). *Self-instruction in language learning.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Donato, R. & Brooks, F.B. (2004). Literary discussions and advanced speaking functions: researching the (dis)connection. *Foreign Language Annals, 37*(2), 183-199.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Fernandes, M. & Fontana, D. (1996). Changes in the control beliefs in Portuguese primary school pupils as a consequence of the employment of self-assessment strategies. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 66,* 301–313.

Furstenberg, G., Levet, S., English, K., & Maillet, K. (2001). Giving a virtual voice to the silent language of culture: The Cultura project. *Language learning & Technology, 5*(1), 55-102.

Gilovich, T., Kerr, M., & Medvec, V. H. (1993). Effect of temporal perspective on subjective confidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*, 552-560. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.64.4.552

Grahn-Saarinen, A.-M. (2003). Self-assessment, reflection and 'Can Do' statements. In A. Hasselgreen (Ed.), *Bergen can-do project* (pp. 57-62). Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe Publishing.

Herzog, M. (2003). Impact of the proficiency scale and the oral proficiency interview on the foreign language program at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. *Foreign Language Annals*, *36*, 566 –

571. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2003.tb02146.x

Lam, T., & Bengo, P. (2003). A comparison of three retrospective self-reporting methods of measuring change in instructional practice. *American Journal of Evaluation, 24,* 65–80.

Leaver, B.L. & Kaplan, M.A. (2004). Task-based instruction in the U.S. Government Slavic language programs. In B. L. Leaver & J. Willis (Eds.), *Task-based instruction in foreign language education: Practices and programs* (pp. 47-66). Washington, D.C.: Georg town University Press.

Leaver, B. L., & Shekhtman, B. (Eds.). (2002). *Developing professional-level language proficiency.* Cambridge. UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lenz, P. (2004). The European language portfolio. In K. Morrow (Ed.) *Insights from the common European framework* (pp. 22-31). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Lewis, T., & O'Dowd, R. (2016). Online intercultural exchange and foreign language learning: A systematic review. In *Online Intercultural Exchange* (pp. 35-80). New York, NY: Routledge.

Little, D. (2006). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Contents, purpose, origin, reception and impact. *Language Teaching, 39*(3), 167-190.

Long, M. H. (2007). *Problems in SLA*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Marques Spatti Cavalari, S., & Aranha, S. (2016). Teletandem: integrating e-learning into the foreign language classroom. Acta Scientiarum. *Language and Culture, 38*(4), 327-336. https://doi.org/10.4025/actascilangcult. v38i4.28139

Martin, C. (2015). Introduction: Past context, present focus, future directions: Shifting focus from intermediate skills in classroom training to advanced/superior and beyond. In T. Brown & J. Bown (Eds.), *To advanced proficiency and beyond* (pp. xiii-xxiv). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Massie, J. (2005). Consideration of context in the CBI course development process. In R. M. Jourdenais & S. E. Springer (Eds.), *Content, tasks and projects in the language classroom: 2004 conference proceedings* (pp. 79–91). Monterey, CA: Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Meara, P. (1994). The year abroad and its effects. *Language Learning Journal, 10*(1), 32-38.

Murphy, D., & Evans-Romaine, K. (Eds.). (2016). *Exploring the US language flagship program: Professional competence in a second language by graduation*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements. (2015). In *ACTFL*. Retrieved from http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/ pdfs/Can-Do_Statements_2015.pdf

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task based language teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Omaggio-Hadley, A., & Terry, R. (2000). *Teaching language in context* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Oscarson, M. (1997). Self-assessment of foreign and second language proficiency. *Encyclopedia of Language and Education, 7,* 175-187.

Pica, T. (2008). Task-based teaching and learning. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics* (pp. 523-538). Malden, MA: Blackwell publishing.

Rohs, F. R., & Langone, C. A. (1997). Increased accuracy in measuring leadership impacts. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 4*(1), 150-158.

Ross, S. (1998). Self-assessment in second language testing: A meta-analysis and analysis of experiential factors. *Language Testing, 15,* 1–20.

Ross, S. (2006). The reliability, validity, and utility of self-assessment. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 11,* 1–13.

Skehan, P. (2003). Task-based instruction. *Language Teaching, 36*(1), 1-14.

Talalakina, E., Brown, T., Bown, J., & Eggington, W. (2014). *Mastering English through global debate*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Telles, J. A. (2015). Learning foreign languages in teletandem: Resources and strategies. *DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Lingüística Teórica e Aplicada, 31*(3), 603-632.

Thompson, C. (2008). Preparing students for writing and talking about literature. *ADFL Bulletin, 40*(1), 20-23.

Tschirner, E. (Ed.). (2012). *Aligning frameworks of reference in language testing: The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the Common European Framework of Reference*. Tübingen, Germany: Stauffenburg Verlag.

van Lier, L. (2005). The Bellman's map: Avoiding the "perfect and absolute blank" in language learning. In R. M. Jourdenais & S. E. Springer (Eds.), C*ontent, tasks and projects in the language classroom: 2004 Conference proceedings* (pp. 13–21). Monterey, CA: Monterey Institute of International Studies.

VanPatten, B., & Benati, A.G. (2010). *Key terms in second language acquisition*. London, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Vinagre, M. (2005). Fostering language learning via email: An English–Spanish exchange. *Computer Assisted*

Language Learning, 18(5), 369-388.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

World-readiness standards for learning languages. (2015). Alexandria, VA: National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project and American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Appendix A

Survey Instrument

1. I could use my language to handle a complicated situation.
2. I could participate in conversations on a wide variety of topics that went beyond my everyday life.
3. I could compare and contrast life in different locations and in different times.
4. I could resolve an unexpected complication that arose in a familiar situation.
5. I could conduct or participate in interviews.
6. I could communicate effectively on a wide variety of past, present, and future events.
7. I could exchange general information on topics outside my fields of interest.
8. I could handle a complicated or unexpected turn of events.
9. I could exchange complex information about academic and professional tasks.
10. I could exchange detailed information on topics within and beyond my fields of interest.
11. I could support my opinions clearly and precisely and construct hypotheses.
12. I could discuss complex information in debates or meetings.
13. I could participate with ease in complex discussions with multiple participants on a wide variety of topics.
14. I could use my language persuasively to advocate a point of view that was not necessarily my own.
15. I could tailor language to a variety of audiences by adapting my speech and register in culturally authentic ways.
16. I could communicate skillfully and succinctly, often using cultural and historical references to say less and mean more.
17. I could make a presentation on events, activities, and topics of particular interest.
18. I could present my point of view and provide reasons to support it.
19. I could deliver short presentations on a number of academic and workplace topics.
20. I could deliver short presentations on social and cultural topics.
21. I could explain issues of public and community interest, including different viewpoints.
22. I could deliver presentations for a specific audience.
23. I could present information about events of public or personal interest.
24. I could convey my ideas and elaborate on a variety of academic topics.
25. I could give presentations with ease and detail on a wide variety of topics related to professional interests.
26. I could present complex information on many concrete topics and related issues.
27. I could present a viewpoint with supporting arguments on a complex issue.
28. I could use appropriate presentational conventions and strategies.
29. I could give a clearly articulated and well-structured presentation on a complex topic or issue.
30. I could adapt the language in my presentation for casual, professional, or general audiences.
31. I could depart from the prepared text of my presentation when appropriate.
32. I could present skillfully and with accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness in a variety of settings.
33. I could tailor my presentation to engage an audience whose attitudes and culture may differ from my own.

Literacy: From the Perspective of Text and Discourse Theory

Danielle S. McNamara
Arizona State University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Danielle S. McNamara, Psychology Department, Arizona State University, PO Box 871104, Tempe, AZ 85287-1104.
E-mail: dsmcnamara1@gmail.com

Rod Roscoe
Arizona State University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Rod Roscoe, Human Systems Engineering, The Polytechnic School, Arizona State University, 7271 E. Sonoran Arroyo Mall, Mesa, AZ 85212.
E-mail: rod.roscoe@asu.edu

Laura Allen
University of New Hampshire

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Laura Allen, Psychology Department, University of New Hampshire, 468 McConnell Hall, 15 Academic Way, Durham, NH 03824.
E-mail: laura.allen@unh.edu

Renu Balyan
Arizona State University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Renu Balyan, Information Technology, The Polytechnic School, Arizona State University, Sutton Hall,6049 S Backus Mall, Mesa, AZ 85212.
E-mail: renu.balyan@asu.edu

Kathryn S. McCarthy
Georgia State University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Kathryn S. McCarthy, Department of Learning Sciences, Georgia State University, College of Education and Human Development, P.O. Box 3978, Atlanta, GA 30302. E-mail: kmccarthy12@gsu.edu

Literacy is a critically important and contemporary issue for educators, scientists, and politicians. Efforts to overcome the challenges associated with illiteracy, and the subsequent development of literate societies, are closely related to those of poverty reduction and sustainable human development. In this paper, the authors examine literacy from the lens of text and discourse theorists who focus on the higher-order *comprehension* processes involved in literacy. Discourse processing models make the assumption that comprehension emerges from the construction of a mental model of the text, which relies on the reader generating inferences to connect ideas within the text and to what the reader already knows. The article provides a broad overview of the theoretical models that drive research on text comprehension and production, as well as how this research shapes literacy instruction and effective interventions. The authors focus on two interventions with proven success in improving deep comprehension and writing, iSTART and the Writing Pal. Increasing literacy across the world call for a greater focus on theory driven strategy interventions to be integrated within classrooms and community at large.

Keywords: literacy, reading, writing, discourse theory, comprehension, strategies, interventions

Literacy has been defined as a "set of instrumental reading, writing and math skills, as the ability to perform various life tasks using these skills, as a set of cultural practices encompassing reading, writing and calculation or as a process of obtaining critical knowledge of and reflecting on the world and one's place within it" (Walter, 1999). Literacy is a critically important and contemporary issue for educators, scientists, and politicians. Efforts to overcome the challenges associated with illiteracy, and the subsequent development of literate societies, are closely related to those of poverty reduction and sustainable human development (Cree, Kay & Steward, 2012). Strong literacy skills are widely recognized as essential for surviving and thriving in modern society: a more literate population empowers nations to participate and compete on a global scale. At the individual level, literacy is considered essential to individuals being 'more empathetic, innovative, achievement-oriented, cosmopolitan, media- and politically-aware, aspiring to schooling, and accepting of technology' (Graff, 2017, 1987; Verhoeven, 1994). At the societal level, 'literacy is said to correlate with economic growth and industrialization, wealth and productivity, political stability and participatory democracy, urbanization, consumption, and contraception' (Graff, 2017, 1987; Verhoeven, 1994). Literacy is a human right; it is also key to achieving many developmental goals, be it improved nutrition and health, increased productivity and poverty reduction, enhanced political participation, empowerment of women, or sensitization to environmental issues. Underlying all of these benefits of literacy is perhaps the most critical aspect of literacy – it provides individuals the opportunity to learn and share information with others (Hanemann, 2015a, b).

The purpose of this paper is to examine literacy from the lens of text and discourse theories. In particular, we seek to first describe the current state of literacy in contemporary society and describe basic perspectives on literacy. We then provide a broad overview of the theoretical models that drive research on text comprehension and production, as well as how this research shapes literacy instruction. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of future directions regarding literacy interventions.

Literacy Levels across the World

Broadly speaking, the majority of the world is literate – only 15% of the total population is estimated to lack sufficient literacy skills to function in society. Indeed, in the 21st century, most regions of the world have reached levels of 85 to 95% literacy rates. In Russia, literacy rates are estimated as high as 99.7%; and in South Africa, approximately 94%; (UNESCO, 2015). Importantly, this high literacy rate is relatively recent. Various sources estimate that only 15% of the world population were able to read and write 200 years ago (Van Leeuwen & van Leeuwen-Li, 2014; van Zanden et al., 2014). The last 50 years have seen a remarkable improvement in literacy, particularly amongst youth (Genlott & Grönlund, 2013). Half a century ago, approximately one quarter of all youth in the world lacked basic literacy skills; by 2016, this number had decreased to only 10% (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, July 2017)[1].

Unfortunately, these estimates suggest that approximately 750 million adults remain functionally illiterate in today's society, with particularly low literacy rates in concentrated populations in the world (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, July 2017)[1]. For example, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa report basic literacy levels of around 60% (van Zanden et al., 2014). Other areas of the world report literacy rates as low as 19 percent (UNESCO, 2015). In addition, many of those who have learned to read and write, do not make active or meaningful use of their literacy skills. There are millions of individuals who are considered "literate" but who do not possess a sufficient mastery of literacy to cope with even the most elementary tasks. There are many more people throughout the world who experience problems because they are not 'functionally' literate in relation to their environment. This may include immigrants who are living in a foreign language country, people with dyslexia, or those with visual impairments who do not have access to affordable reading resources in order to be able to make use of their literacy skills. These individuals can feel handicapped in coping with modern life situations, requiring ever more sophisticated literacy skills.

What is literacy? An important caveat to this discussion of literacy rates relates to the means through which "literacy" is defined. Estimated rates of literacy vary based on the assessments used, as well as individuals' interpretations of these definitions and corresponding assessments. For example, the PIRLS international literacy benchmarks include four achievement levels (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012): *low*: can locate and retrieve information; *intermediate*: can make straightforward references; *high*: can make inferences and interpretations with text-based support; and *advanced*: can integrate ideas and in-formation across texts to provide reasons and explanations. According to these benchmarks, even the highest performing countries

---

[1] http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs45-literacy-rates-continue-rise-generation-to-next-en-2017_0.pdf

achieve scores of only 20% in the "advanced" category and 60% in the "high" category, and many have claimed that even these estimates may be inflated. Thus, despite claims that the majority of the world population might be considered "literate," there remains significant room for improvement in these skills.

Beyond the issues associated with literacy *assessment,* the very term – literacy – is used in various ways in the research literature and in practice. UNESCO defines a literate person to be someone "who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement in everyday life" (UNESCO, 2008). Importantly, the word "literacy" has commonly been associated with basic, everyday reading processes (e.g., word recognition, phonics, and lexical decoding). However, reading is a complex activity that relies on a variety of processes, from recognizing letters and identifying words to processing the meaning of a full sentence and integrating textual information with prior domain knowledge. For example, Luke and Peter's (1997) "Four Literacy Resources model" specifies a set of practices in which children need to participate to become good readers:

a. breaking the code of written texts;
b. participating in understanding and composing meaningful written, visual and spoken texts;
c. using texts functionally; and
d. critically analyzing and transforming texts.

Indeed, effectively using literacy skills requires individuals to use their knowledge of the world and language, necessitating the knowledge and use of written language as a means of communication that goes beyond just breaking the code.

Text and Discourse Theories of Reading

Our objective here is to describe literacy from the perspective of text and discourse theories. Text and discourse researchers focus on the higher-order *comprehension* processes involved in literacy (Graesser, Gernsbacher, & Goldman, 2003; Schober, Britt, & Rapp, 2018). Take, for example, an excerpt from the Wikipedia entry on Quantum Physics:

> In the mathematically rigorous formulation of quantum mechanics [...] the possible states of a quantum mechanical system are symbolized as unit vectors (called state vectors). Formally, these reside in a complex separable Hilbert space – variously called the state space or the associated Hilbert space of the system – that is well defined up to a complex number of norm 1 (the phase factor).

A proficient reader may recognize the individual words or accurately parse the sentence and be able to read the passage aloud. However, these fundamental skills do not guarantee that the reader will have *understood* this passage, or, perhaps more importantly, be able to use or apply this information in a new situation. Unless the reader has sufficient knowledge of the domain and topic, it is virtually impossible to make sense of this text, let alone understand the deeper meaning.

Constructing a Coherent Mental Model during Reading. Discourse processing models make the assumption that comprehension emerges from the construction of a mental model of the text. A mental model consists of a network of interrelated propositions that reflect the explicit information contained within a text (e.g., Kintsch, 1988; 1998). Accordingly, as a text is processed, each sentence sends out a retrieval signal that leads to the activation of semantically related propositions corresponding to prior discourse constituents and relevant prior knowledge (Myers & O'Brien, 1998). The features of sentences that serve as retrieval signals involve nouns, verbs, and derived propositions (Kintsch, 1988) as well as morphological information (e.g., cohesion cues) that signal that any given sentence is related to prior discourse constituents (Graesser & McNamara, 2011). Texts convey implicit situational relations to the prior discourse context (time, space, causality) and structural cues (comparison, descriptive, cause-effect) that also direct the reader to the need to establish relations between the current sentence and the prior context. These features are by no means uniformly represented across a text; as such, activation dynamically waxes and wanes as readers process a text (McNamara & Magliano, 2009a; Myers & O'Brien, 1998). Successful readers are sensitive to the dynamic changes of these features as they process a text. The end result of successful reading is a network of propositions (i.e., ideas) that reflects the relations derived by the reader, and ideally, those relations that were warranted by the intended structure of the texts.

The Construction-Integration Model of Comprehension. Many contemporary discourse comprehension models found their roots in the Construction-Integration model of comprehension (Kintsch, 1998) and its predecessors (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). The Construction-Integration model claims that readers construct multiple levels of understanding including the surface structure, textbase, and situation model levels. The *surface structure* contains the explicit words and sentence structures from the text. If a reader constructs a mental model that is primarily dominated by a surface structure, they will only have a memory for the explicit words in the text. In the *textbase* level of the model, words and syntax in the surface structure are integrated to build a mental model of the text propositions. This level represents the general ideas and concepts contained in the text, including the gist. These generalizations yield a series of propositions that may be only loosely or inaccurately interconnected. It is impossible to include all of the information and relations explicitly within a text; thus, the activation and use of background knowledge is necessary to fill in the gaps and to add structure and stability to the network of concepts.

The third level of representation is referred to as the *situation model*. The situation model is a higher-level representation of text that is related to semantic meaning rather than specific words. This model contains not only the information from the text itself, but also links between these concepts and a reader's prior knowledge. Therefore, to establish a coherent representation of the text, individuals must integrate aspects of their knowledge, such as lexical and domain knowledge, with information explicitly provided in the text.

It is important to note that the representation that emerges after this construction-integration process is not necessarily equally composed of text-based and knowledge-derived information. For instance, it is possible for either the textbase or situation model to dominate the final mental representation. A primary assumption of the C-I model is that deep comprehension requires readers to process texts at multiple levels. A reader's mental representation of a text is more coherent to the extent that inferences are generated to create links between concepts explicitly conveyed in the text (i.e., the textbase) and connections to prior knowledge (i.e., the situation model).

In summary, according the Construction-Integration model of comprehension, reading involves processing the words and sentences in the text, activating related concepts, and generating a situation model, wherein background knowledge and experiences are integrated into the text for a specific purpose (Kintsch, 1998). As such, text comprehension processes are goal-oriented. If the purpose of reading is to remember the sounds of the words or to memorize individual sentences, that objective may be met, but this would not reflect meaningful comprehension. By contrast, consider a reader who is trying to learn from a text. This reader attempts to make connections between ideas in the text, and to what they already know -- the reader is working toward a coherent mental representation of the text (McNamara, 1997). The reader is seeking to achieve deep comprehension.

Generating Inferences is the Key to Comprehension. Coherent and durable mental models emerge through the construction of *inferences* (see McNamara & Magliano, 2009, for a review of comprehension models). Indeed, ssuccessful comprehension *depends* on inference generation (Graesser et al., 1994; Kintsch, 1998; McNamara & Magliano, 2009b). Inferences are necessary in order to integrate information *from* the text *with* prior knowledge and connecting ideas *across* the text. As such, general, world, and topic knowledge are crucial components to comprehension, and literacy. Readers who have more knowledge are more likely to generate inferences that connect new information to what they already know -- inferences form the glue that makes information stick. Readers who know more about the topic are more likely (and able) to generate inferences that connect new information to what they already know. In turn, stronger associations between ideas make them more memorable and comprehensible. Indeed, research indicates that prior knowledge is one of the strongest predictors of comprehension success (Dochy et al., 1999; Shapiro, 2004). Readers with more prior knowledge about the topic and the world in general are able to process information more quickly, remember more information, and ignore irrelevant information (e.g., Alexander, Kulikowich, & Schulze, 1994, Bransford & Johnson, 1972; Chiesi, Spilich, & Voss, 1979; McNamara & Kintsch, 1996; McNamara & McDaniel, 2004).

There are a number of types of inferences involved in comprehension (see O'Brien, Cook, & Lorch, 2015). These inferences can be characterized in two broad classes: bridging and elaborative (Singer, 1988). Bridging inferences involve establishing connections between explicit discourse constituents. Bridging can encompass low-level anaphor resolution or higher-level situational relations, such as causal, motivational, temporal, spatial, logical, and argumentative relations. Elaborative inferences, on the other hand, involve readers drawing upon knowledge from outside the text (Graesser & Clark, 1985; Graesser et al., 1994; McNamara & Magliano,

2009b; Singer, 1988). Elaborative inferences can be generated based on existing generic knowledge of the world (e.g., schemas; Graesser & Nakamura, 1982; O'Brien et al., 1988; Seifert et al., 1985), domain or topic specific knowledge (e.g., McNamara, 2001), or based on extemporaneous problem solving and reasoning about the text content (e.g., Trabasso & Magliano, 1996).

Strategies to Improve Comprehension

Text and discourse theorists have emphasized the importance of strategies that promote inference generation while reading. Inferential processes can be supported by passive, memory-based processes (McKoon & Ratcliff, 1998) or through active, strategic processing (Magliano et al., 1999; McNamara, 2004; McNamara & Magliano, 2009a). One means of *improving* comprehension is by encouraging readers to engage in strategic inferencing. Indeed, many studies have demonstrated the benefits of reading strategy instruction (e.g., Baker, 1996; Baumann, Seifert-Kessell, & Jones, 1992; Bereiter & Bird, 1985; Hansen & Pearson, 1983; Palincsar & Brown, 1984, 1986; Yuill & Oakhill, 1988). Such foundational studies emphasized the importance of strategies such as summarization, question asking, paragraphing, making bridging inferences, and elaboration (Rosenshine & Meister, 1994; Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996; see McCrudden & McNamara, 2017, chapter 4, for a brief review).

Promoting inference generation is key to reading strategy instruction (McNamara, 2007; Snow, 2002; Palincsar & Brown, 1984, 1986). When *paraphrasing*, readers attempt to restate the text in more familiar terms (i.e., putting the text in their own words), and thus they are making connections between the text and familiar terms. *Predicting* occurs when readers attempt to anticipate upcoming text contents though thoughtful guesswork (e.g., expecting a new term to be defined in future sentences). This is most successful for familiar text such as narratives. When *bridging*, readers make inferences to connect current text information to prior text information, whereas e*laborating* involves the use of general knowledge, domain-specific knowledge, or logical reasoning to expand upon given text information. In turn, c*omprehension monitoring* entails readers' self-assessments of their own text understanding. It is the process of being aware of one's own understanding and thus, it generally falls out of using effective reading strategies. Readers need to be at least somewhat aware of their level of understanding to use a strategy. And, the awareness of comprehension gaps ideally leads to the use of repair strategies.

One technique for promoting the generation of inferences is self-explanation. Self-explanation is the process of overtly explaining the deeper meaning of text while reading. Explanations are generally based on information contained in the discourse context and world knowledge. Self-explanation may be spontaneous (Chi, Bassok, Lewis, Reimann, & Glaser, 1989) or in service of a specific goal (Magliano, Trabasso, & Graesser, 1999; McNamara, 2004). Students who spontaneously self-explain understand more from learning materials and construct better mental models of content (Bisra, Liu, Nesbit, Salimi, & Winne, 2018; Magliano et al., 1999; Trabasso & Magliano, 1996; VanLehn, Jones, & Chi, 1992).

Students can be taught to more effectively self-explain by leveraging active comprehension strategies during self-explanation McNamara, 2004; McNamara et al., 2004). Self-Explanation Reading Training (SERT; McNamara, 2004, 2017) is an instructional approach that leverages the benefits of self-explanation to improve students' strategic text processing and ultimately their comprehension. Students are provided with instruction and practice on how to use active reading comprehension strategies in combination with self-explanation while reading difficult expository texts. Few readers self-explain on their own and few self-explain well (Chi et al., 1994). Hence, to enhance this process, SERT combines self-explaining with five of the empirically-validated strategies: comprehension monitoring, paraphrasing, predicting, bridging, and elaborating. Students who use SERT better understand challenging science texts in comparison to students who are merely prompted to self-explain (McNamara, 2004, 2017; McNamara, O'Reilly, Best, & Ozuru, 2006). Indeed, SERT is particularly effective for less skilled readers (Magliano et al., 2005) and readers who possess less relevant prior knowledge (McNamara, 2004, 2017).

SERT has been implemented within the Interactive Strategy Training for Active Reading and Thinking (iSTART), a technology-based support for comprehension literacy. iSTART implements and expands SERT within a game-based, intelligent tutoring system (ITS) framework that includes online instructional tutorials and demonstrations for comprehension monitoring, paraphrasing, predicting, bridging, and elaborating. In addition, iSTART has been recently expanded to include training on fundamental comprehension strategies including summarizing

and question-asking (Johnson et al., 2017; Ruseti et al., 2018a; 2018b). Across a variety of studies, iSTART has been found to facilitate self-explanation quality and reading comprehension for readers from middle school through adulthood and like SERT, is particularly helpful for low-knowledge and less skilled readers (Johnson, Guerrero, Tighe, & McNamara, 2017; Magliano et al., 2005; McCarthy, Likens, Johnson, Guerrero, & McNamara, 2018; McNamara, Levinstein, & Boonthum, 2004; Snow, Jacovina, Jackson, & McNamara, 2016).

An important component of iSTART's efficacy is that it enables multiple forms of strategy practice and feedback. First, in the *coached practice* module, students read a text and type self-explanations for target sentences. These explanations are automatically assessed via natural language processing (NLP) algorithms based on lexical and semantic indices. These algorithms identify the type(s) of strategies included in the students' responses, provide an overall quality score (from "0—Poor" to "3—Great"), and guide formative feedback on revising and improving their self-explanations (Jackson, Boonthum & McNamara, 2015; Jackson & McNamara, 2012; Panaite et al., 2018).

Second, iSTART also incorporates *game-based practice* to increase motivation and engagement (Jackson & McNamara, 2013). Generative games allow students to earn points for writing high-quality self-explanations. Identification games ask students to read example self-explanations and earn points by identifying the demonstrated strategies. Points earned in these games can be "spent" to unlock additional games and customization features (e.g., personal avatars).

More recently, iSTART has been modified to increase personalized feedback. That is, iSTART has become more adaptive. An algorithm has been implemented that selects the difficulty of future texts based on the learner's prior performance. For instance, if a student consistently generates poor-quality self-explanations for a given text, the next assigned text will be easier (Balyan et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017). This adaptivity improves learning outcomes (McCarthy et al., 2018; under review) and increases students' perceptions of learning (Watanabe, McCarthy, & McNamara, 2019), particularly for less-skilled readers.

Text and Discourse Theories of Writing

Writing is also a key component of literacy. Writing is a complex activity that entails nonlinear and iterative processes of idea generation, organization, translation, and refinement (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 2012; McNamara & Allen, 2017; Olive, 2014). Writing also requires consideration of audience knowledge, needs, interests, and objections (e.g., Kellogg, 2008; Magnifico, 2010; McNamara & Allen, 2017). Thus, perhaps unsurprisingly, researchers have documented a strong and multifaceted relationship between students' writing and reading skills (e.g., Allen, Snow, Crossley, Jackson, & McNamara, 2014; Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Graham et al., 2018; Shanahan, 2016). For instance, underlying both skilled reading and writing are fundamentals such as rich vocabulary knowledge, language fluency, and understanding of text structures and genres. In the case of reading, such knowledge enables decoding and comprehension of text. In the case of writing, the same knowledge empowers the organization and production of coherent text.

Compared to reading, there has been a lack of research and theory development on writing. There have been relatively few impactful theories of writing, and these theories have generally built upon each other, rather than approaching the process from a new lens. The most prominent model of writing defines writing as consisting of three distinct processes: planning, translating, and reviewing (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 1996, 2006; Hayes & Flower, 1980). According to this model, planning involves idea generation and organization, as well as the setting of goals. Translation describes the act of translating ideas into written language, whereas the reviewing phase involves the evaluation and revision of the written text. The Flower and Hayes model of writing was the first to emphasize that these various writing phases were not necessarily linear (cf. Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975; Roham, 1965). Rather, writing was argued to be a dynamic activity that involved rapid and continuous shifts amongst the independent phases.

Beyond these three phases, Flower and Hayes emphasized the important role of monitoring during writing, as well as the writer's use of the task environment and long-term memory to produce text content. Later revisions of this model included the additions of working memory, motivation, and affect (Hayes, 1996, 2006). The task environment was further delineated to include the social environment and the physical environment. Later depictions of the model dropped the explicit specification of the three stages (planning, translating, and reviewing), and adopted a stage theory model, placing working memory as the centerpiece of the model.

The construct of working memory was consistent with the Baddeley (1986) working memory model, including phonological memory, a visuospatial sketchpad, and semantic memory, and was assumed to draw upon and be influenced by motivation and affect, cognitive processes, and long-term memory.

Despite its important contribution to the field, this model remains reliant on stage-theory models of cognition, which generally rely on discrete processing components (e.g., Hayes, 1996). The cognitive approach to writing often fails to consider the underlying subskills involved in completing a task and the knowledge required to complete the task. Instead, this cognitive approach tends to focus on constructs such as working memory and self-regulation, and to some extent, problem solving.

Stage theory models that describe processes in terms of the transfer of information from long-term memory to working memory. They do not consider basic concepts accepted in cognitive science such as spreading activation and parallel processing. As such, stage theory models are outdated (MacKay, 1998). In order to progress as a field, writing theorists must consider the complexities of the writing process in terms of the underlying cognitive and social processes (e.g., Newell, Beach, Smith, & Vanderheide, 2011), as well as the parallel interplay between the various factors that influence writing.

Numerous models have been developed describe comprehension at various levels (e.g., Gernsbacher, 1997; Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994; Kintsch, 1998; Myers & O'Brien, 1998; Zwaan, Langston, & Graesser, 1995). Although these models diverge in their specific characteristics, a principle focus of the majority of contemporary models rests on the constructive and active nature of the reading process. Following this perspective, text comprehension relies not only on the prior knowledge of the reader, but importantly, also on the processes needed to capitalize on this knowledge. This critical feature of text comprehension can additionally be applied to the process of text production (Genlott & Grönlund, 2013). Indeed, we have recently argued that the information we have gleaned from years of research on the text comprehension process should be used to inform further research on writing (McNamara & Allen, 2018).

Interventions to Improve Writing

To gain writing proficiency, students must develop an understanding of core writing processes (e.g., idea generation, translation, and refinement) along with learning how to coordinate and integrate these processes (Braaksma, Rijlaarsdam, van den Bergh, & van Hout-Wolters, 2004; Olive, 2014). Educators can support such knowledge and skill acquisition through strategy-based instruction (Graham, Harris, &, Chambers, 2016; Graham & Perin, 2007; Newell et al., 2011). Importantly, students must then hone their understanding and skill with such strategies via mindful, self-regulated practice (Kellogg, 2008; Kellogg & Raulerson, 2009; Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009) guided by meaningful formative feedback (Parr & Timperley, 2010; Roscoe ref on feedback).

Multiple studies have demonstrated the benefits of instruction that emphasizes strategies and self-regulation (e.g., Self-Regulated Strategy Development; Graham & Perin, 2007; Graham et al., 2016; Harris, & Graham, 2016, 2017). Interventions can support writers of varying ages and abilities by communicating the underlying declarative knowledge of writing (e.g., knowledge about genres and goals) and the procedural knowledge to succeed in writing tasks (e.g., methods for composing valid arguments, organizing ideas cohesively, and elaborating). Strategy instruction interventions benefit college students (e.g., Butler & Britt, 2011; MacArthur, Philippakos, & Ianetta, 2015), middle and high school students (e.g., De La Paz & Felton, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007), and elementary school students (e.g., De La Paz & Sherman, 2013; Ferretti, Lewis, & Andrews-Weckerly, 2009), and seem particularly helpful for students with weaker skills or learning disabilities.

With respect to practice, there are multiple approaches available including both essay-based and game-based practice (Roscoe, Allen, & McNamara, 2019). Composing and revising complete essays is the most traditional and common format. Students are typically assigned a writing prompt that asks them to explain a topic, articulate and defend a point of view, or construct a narrative. Students then submit their writing to instructors, peers, or an even automated system for grading and feedback (Dikli & Bleyle, 2014; Parr & Timperley, 2014; Patchan, Charney, & Schunn, 2009; Wingate, 2010). Across iterations of writing and revising, students ideally gain proficiency with deploying, integrating, and refining key writing strategies and skills in an authentic manner. Most automated writing evaluation (AWE) systems, such as *Writing Mentor* (Burstein et al., 2018), *Criterion* (Burstein, Tetrault, & Madnani, 2013), *WriteToLearn* (Foltz, Streeter, Lochbaum, & Landauer, 2013), and *PEG Writing* (Wilson & Czik, 2016; Wilson, Olinghouse, & Andrada, 2014) support this form of practice with

moderate success (e.g., Stevenson & Phakiti, 2014; Wilson & Roscoe, 2019),

The strength of essay-based practice also introduces challenges—students must *enact* and coordinate multiple writing processes (e.g., ideation, translation, and revising) while simultaneously trying to *develop* those abilities. Many novice writers are overwhelmed and disheartened. In response, game-based practice offers another path for writing strategy practice that aims to leverage the fun and enjoyment of digital games (Habgood & Ainsworth, 2011; Jackson & McNamara, 2013; Proske et al., 2014). Although games do not guarantee improved motivation (see Wouters, van Nimwegen, van Oostendorp, & van der Spek, 2013), they nonetheless can leverage learners' intrinsic enjoyment of play to encourage positive attitudes toward learning tasks (Ryan, Rigby, & Przybylski, 2006). Specifically, practice activities (e.g., generating topic sentences or constructing an outline) can be embedded within game features and narratives (e.g., building robots or solving a puzzle) to make them more engaging. Various researchers and educators have successfully incorporated digital games in writing instruction (Colby, 2017), such as motivating writing via mystery-solving narratives (e.g., Barab, Pettyjohn, Gresalfi, Volk, & Solomou, 2012; Dickey, 2011) and world-building tools (e.g., Liao, Chang, & Chan, 2018). Relative to non-game comparisons, students who write and practice with digital games demonstrate improved writing and/or writing motivation.

Overview of Writing Pal

Based on prior research and best practices for writing instruction (e.g., Graham & Perin, 2007), we have developed and tested the Writing Pal (W-Pal), an intelligent tutoring system (ITS) and automated writing evaluation (AWE) system to support adolescent writers (Crossley, Allen, & McNamara, 2016; Roscoe & McNamara, 2013; Roscoe, Allen, Weston, Crossley, & McNamara, 2014). The primary focus of this instructional tool has been argument-based, persuasive writing. A crucial element of W-Pal's effectiveness is that it synthesizes multiple research-based instructional approaches, including multimedia strategy instruction, game-based strategy practice, and essay writing practice with formative feedback.

To introduce core writing strategy knowledge, W-Pal includes a series of multimedia lessons in which animated characters present and demonstrate strategies for planning, drafting, and revising essays. Specifically, W-Pal lessons span eight content modules: *Prewriting*, *Planning*, *Introduction Building*, *Body Building*, *Conclusion Building*, *Paraphrasing*, *Cohesion Building*, and *Revising*. Each module comprises four to five lessons on individual strategies such as "threading" (i.e., a way to build cohesion by linking ideas across sentences) and "freewriting" (i.e., a way to generate ideas before writing). All lessons were developed based on empirical principles of multimedia design, such as spatial and temporal contiguity, pacing, and partial redundancy (e.g., Mayer, 2017; Mayer & Moreno, 2003). Evaluations have shown that students are able to recall and apply the information provided in the lessons (e.g., Roscoe, Allen, & McNamara, 2019; Roscoe, Jacovina, Harry, Russell, & McNamara, 2015; Roscoe, Novak, King, & Patchan, 2018).

The AWE core of W-Pal offers a robust system for students to compose original, prompt-based essays, rapidly receive automated summative and formative feedback, and then iteratively revise and improve their essays. Essays submitted to W-Pal receive a holistic score on a 6-point scale from 1 ("Poor") to 6 ("Great") along with actionable recommendations for improved writing and strategies based on the lessons. For example, essays that offer insufficient and vague argument support (i.e., weak body paragraphs) might receive suggestions for generating ideas and incorporating further fact-based evidence. Similarly, paraphrasing recommendations might suggest strategies for condensing and rewording sentences. Studies of writing and revising with such automated feedback have demonstrated modest yet measurable gains writing quality, and have demonstrated that students incorporate lower-level and superficial edits (e.g., spelling and wording) as well as higher-level and substantive edits (e.g., cohesion and elaboration) (McCarthy, Roscoe, Likens, & McNamara, 2019; Roscoe, Allen, Johnson, & McNamara, 2018). (Roscoe et al., 2019).

W-Pal also includes a suite of educational mini-games that afford deliberate and engaging practice of individual strategies or combinations of strategies. Each module is associated with at least one game and often two or three games—nearly 40 practice games in total. For example, the *Planning* module includes *Mastermind Outline* wherein players practice creating outlines using a drag-and-drop interface, and *Planning Passage* wherein players take a "road trip" to practice planning the flow of their essays. Research on W-Pal games has observed that students can improve both their writing strategy knowledge and their attitudes and self-efficacy toward writing (e.g., Allen et al., 2014; Proske, Roscoe, & McNamara, 2014; Roscoe et al., 2019; Roscoe, Brandon, Snow,

& McNamara, 2014). Whereas practice and feedback in writing essays is helpful for relatively skilled students, less-skilled students tend to gain more from game-based writing practice which can break the task up into more tangible tasks within a motivating context (Roscoe et al., 2019).

Discussion

In this paper, we have discussed comprehension and writing from the perspective of text and discourse theories. One important consideration we have conveyed is that prior knowledge, and the use of knowledge and common sense is key to comprehension. It is important to note, however, that prior knowledge is not always beneficial. Students often possess inaccurate information, or misconceptions (Vosniadou & Brewer, 1992). Misconceptions are resistant to change (Alvermann, & Smith, & Readence, 1985) and can interfere with accurate mental model construction (Feltovich, Coulson, & Spiro, 2001; Kendeou & van den Broek, 2005). Prior knowledge is also not a unidimensional construct. The nature of a reader's prior knowledge, or how that knowledge is assessed can impact the relation between prior knowledge and comprehension performance (Alexander, Kulikowich, & Schulze; 1994; McCarthy et al., 2018).

Our attempt here has been to emphasize that literacy is multidimensional. Literacy entails more than simply decoding words and sentences when reading, and requires more than correct spelling and grammatical sentences when writing (Fugelsang, 1982). Literacy has multiple aspects and consequences, including health (Berkman, Sheridan, Donahue, Halper, & Crotty., 2011; Ratzan & Parker, 2000).

A literate individual engages in complex, higher-order processes of comprehension and sense-making. Literacy involves multiple layers, including words and phrases, as well as the deeper meaning embedded within social and communicative context. Literacy is by definition a social activity: reading and writing are culturally defined social activities. Literacy involves reading and writing, as well as other skills such as the ability to process graphics, numbers, multimedia, and social media.). Tutoring technologies such as iSTART and W-Pal enhance literacy because they are adaptive to the individual, focus on multiple levels of comprehension and writing, and provide automated summative and formative feedback based on theories of text and discourse. However, they are only effective to the extent that they are part of a community of learners, integrated within a social, communicative context, for purposeful, goal-directed activities. Text and discourse inherently represent values and views. We learn reading and writing through social relations, with parents, teachers, friends, media, and so on. As such, literary activities in classrooms and the community are crucial.

Acknowledgements

References

Alexander, P. A., Kulikowich, J. M., & Schulze, S. K. (1994). The influence of topic knowledge, domain knowledge, and interest on the comprehension of scientific exposition. *Learning and Individual Differences, 6*(4), 379-397. https://doi.org/10.1016/1041-6080(94)90001-9

Allen, L. K., Crossley, S. A., Snow, E. L., & McNamara, D. S. (2014). Game-based writing strategy tutoring for second language learners: Game enjoyment as a key to engagement. *Language Learning and Technology*, *18*, 124-150.

Allen, L. K., Snow, E. L., Crossley, S. A., Jackson, G. T., & McNamara, D. S. (2014). Reading comprehension components and their relation to writing. *L'Annee Psychologique*, *114*(4), 663-691. https://doi.org/10.4074/S0003503314004047

Alvermann, D. E., Smith, L. C., & Readence, J. E. (1985). Prior knowledge activation and the comprehension of compatible and incompatible text. *Reading Research Quarterly, 20*(4), 420-436. https://doi.org/10.2307/747852

Baker, L., (1996). Social influences on metacognitive development in reading. In C. Cornoldi & J. Oakhill (Eds.), *Reading comprehension difficulties* (pp. 331-352). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Balyan, R., McCarthy, K. S., & McNamara, D. S. (2018). Comparing Machine Learning Classification Approaches

for Predicting Expository Text Difficulty. In *Proceedings of 31th International Flairs Conference*. (pp. 421-426). Melbourne, FL: AAAI Publications.

Barab, S., Pettyjohn, P., Gresalfi, M., Volk, C., & Solomou, M. (2012). Game-based curriculum and transformational play: Designing to meaningfully positioning person, content, and context. *Computers & Education*, *58*(1), 518-533. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.08.001

Baumann, J. F., Seifert-Kessell, N. & Jones, L. A. (1992). Effect of think-aloud instruction on elementary students' comprehension monitoring abilities. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 24*, 143-172. https://doi.org/10.1080/10862969209547770

Bawden, D. (2008). Origins and concepts of digital literacy. *Digital Literacies: Concepts, Policies and Practices, 30*, 17-32.

Bereiter, C., & Bird, M. (1985). Use of thinking aloud in identification and teaching of reading comprehension strategies. *Cognition and Instruction, 2*, 131-156. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/3233543

Berkman, N. D., Sheridan, S. L., Donahue, K. E., Halpern, D. J., & Crotty, K. (2011). Low health literacy and health outcomes: An updated systematic review. *Annals of Internal Medicine, 155*(2), 97-107. https://doi.org/10.7326/0003-4819-155-2-201107190-00005

Bisra, K., Liu, Q., Nesbit, J. C., Salimi, F., & Winne, P. H. (2018). Inducing self-explanation: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review, 30*, 703–725. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-018-9434-x

Braaksma, M. A. H., Rijlaarsdam, Van den Bergh, H., & van Hout-Wolters, B. H. A. M. (2004). Observational learning and its effects on the orchestration of writing processes. *Cognition and Instruction*, *22*(1), 1-36. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532690Xci2201_1

Burstein, J., Elliot, N., Klebanov, B. B., Madnani, N., Napolitano, D., Schwartz, M., Houghton, P., & Molloy, H. (2018). Writing Mentor™: Writing progress using self-regulated writing support. *Journal of Writing Analytics*, *2*, 285-313.

Burstein, J., Tetreault, J., & Madnani, N. (2013). The E-rater® automated essay scoring system. In M. D. Shermis & J. Burstein (Eds.), *Handbook of automated essay evaluation: Current applications and new directions* (pp. 77-89). New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, J. A., & Britt, M. A. (2011). Investigating instruction for improving revision of argumentative essays. *Written Communication*, *28*(1), 70-96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088310387891

Chi, M. T. H., Bassok, M., Lewis, M. W., Reimann, P., & Glaser, R. (1989). Self-explanations: How students study and use examples in learning to solve problems. *Cognitive Science, 13*, 145-182. https://doi.org/10.1016/0364-0213(89)90002-5

Colby, R. S. (2017). Game-based pedagogy in the writing classroom. *Computers and Composition*, *43*, 55-72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2016.11.002

Cree, A., Kay, A., & Steward, J. (2012). *The economic and social cost of illiteracy: A snapshot of illiteracy in a global context*. Retrieved from http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/321997

Crossley, S. A., Allen, L. K., & McNamara, D. S. (2016). The writing pal: A writing strategy tutor. In S. A. Crossley & D. S. McNamara (Eds.), *Adaptive educational technologies for literacy* (pp. 204-224). New York, NY: Routledge.

Decker, B. C. (1986). Aliteracy: What teachers can do to keep Johnny reading. *Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(6), 55–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/002248718603700609

De La Paz, S., & Felton, M. K. (2010). Reading and writing from multiple source documents in history: Effects of strategy instruction with low to average high school writers. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *35*(3), 174-192. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2010.03.001

De La Paz, S., & Sherman, C. K. (2013). Revising strategy instruction in inclusive settings: Effects for English learners and novice writers. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, *28*(3), 129-141. https://doi.org/10.1111/ldrp.12011

Dickey, M. D. (2011). Murder on Grimm Isle: The impact of game narrative design in an educational game-based learning environment. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *42*(3), 456-469. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2009.01032.x

Dikli, S., & Bleyle, S. (2014). Automated essay scoring feedback second language writers: How does it compare to instructor feedback? *Assessing Writing*, *22*, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2014.03.006

Eshet, Y. (2004). Digital literacy: A Conceptual framework for survival skills in the digital era. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia, 13*(1), 93-106.

Feltovich, P. J., Coulson, R. L., & Spiro, R. J. (2001). Learners'(mis)understanding of important and difficult concepts: A challenge to smart machines in education. In K. D. Forbus & P. J. Feltovich (Eds.), *Smart machines in education* (pp. 349-375). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ferretti, R. P., Lewis, W. E., & Andrews-Weckerly, S. (2009). Do goals affect the structure of students' argumentative writing strategies?. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *101*(3), 577-589. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014702

Fitzgerald, J., & Shanahan, T. (2000). Reading and writing relations and their development. *Educational Psychologist*, *35*(1), 39-50. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3501_5

Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, *32*(4), 365-387. https://doi.org/10.2307/356600

Foltz, P. W., Streeter, L. E., Lochbaum, K. E., & Landauer, T. K. (2013). Implementation and applications of the Intelligent Essay Assessor. In M. D. Shermis & J. Burstein (Eds.), *Handbook of automated essay evaluation: Current applications and new directions* (pp. 68-88). New York, NY: Routledge.

Fugelsang, A. (1982). About understanding: Ideas and observations on cross-cultural communication. Uppsala, Sweden: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

Genlott, A. A., & Grönlund, Å. (2013). Improving literacy skills through learning reading by writing: The iWTR method presented and tested. *Computers & Education, 67*, 98-104. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.03.007

Graff, H. J. (1987). *The legacies of literacy: Continuities and contradictions in western culture and society* (vol. 598). Indiana, IN: Indiana University Press.

Graff, H. J. (2017). Literacy myths, legacies, and lessons: New studies on literacy. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction publishers.

Habgood, M. J., & Ainsworth, S. E. (2011). Motivating children to learn effectively: Exploring the value of intrinsic integration in educational games. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *20*(2), 169-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2010.508029

Hansen, J., & Pearson, P. (1983). An instructional study: Improving the inferential comprehension of good and poor fourth-grade readers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 75*, 821-829. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.75.6.821

Hayes, J. R. (2012). Modeling and remodeling writing. *Written Communication*, *29*(3), 369-388. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088312451260

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Chambers, A. B. (2016). Evidence-based practice and writing instruction. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (2nd ed., pp. 211-226). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Graham, S., Liu, X., Bartlett, B., Ng, C., Harris, K. R., Aitken, A.,... Talukdar, J. (2018). Reading for writing: A meta-analysis of the impact of reading interventions on writing. *Review of Educational Research*, *88*(2), 243-284. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317746927

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *99*(3), 445-476. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.445

Hanemann, U. (2015a). *The evolution and impact of literacy campaigns and programmes, 2000-2014. UIL Research Series: No. 1*. Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Lind, A. (2008). *Literacy for all: Making a difference*. Paris, France: UNESCO-IIEP. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001597/159785e.pdf

Hanemann, U. (2015b). Lifelong literacy: Some trends and issues in conceptualising and operationalising literacy from a lifelong learning perspective. *International Review of Education, 61*(3), 295-326. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-015-9490-0

Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (2016). Self-Regulated strategy development in writing: Policy implications of an evidence-based practice. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *3*(1), 77-84. https://doi.org/10.1177/2372732215624216

Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (2017). Self-Regulated Strategy Development: Theoretical bases, critical instructional elements, and future research. In R. Fidalgo & T. Olive, R. Fidalgo, K. R. Harris, & M. Braaksma (Eds.), *Studies in writing series* (vol. 34: Design principles for teaching effective writing, pp. 119-151). Leiden, Germany: Brill.

Jackson, T. G., Boonthum, C., & McNamara, D. S. (2015). Natural Language Processing and game-based practice in iSTART. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, 26, 189-208. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED577164.pdf

Jackson, G.T., & McNamara, D.S. (2012). Applying NLP metrics to students' self-explanations. In P.M. McCarthy & C. Boonthum-Denecke (Eds.), *Applied natural language processing and content analysis: Identification, investigation, and resolution* (pp. 261-275). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Jackson, G. T., & McNamara, D. S. (2013). Motivation and performance in a game-based intelligent tutoring system. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *105*, 1036-1049. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032580

Johnson, A. M., Guerrero, T. A., Tighe, E. L., & McNamara, D. S. (2017). iSTART-ALL: Confronting adult low literacy with intelligent tutoring for reading comprehension. In B. Boulay, R. Baker & E. Andre (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education* (pp. 125-136). Wuhan, China: Springer.

Johnson, A. M., McCarthy, K. S., Kopp, K., Perret, C. A., & McNamara, D. S. (2017). Adaptive reading and writing instruction in iSTART and W-Pal. In Z. Markov & V. Rus (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 30th Annual Florida Artificial Intelligence Research Society International Conference.* Marco Island, FL: AAAI Press.

Kellogg, R. T. (2008). Training writing skills: A cognitive development perspective. *Journal of Writing Research*, *1*(1), 1-26. https://doi.org/10.17239/jowr-2008.01.01.1

Kellogg, R. T., & Raulerson, B. A. (2007). Improving the writing skills of college students. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, *14*(2), 237-242. https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03194058

Kellogg, R. T., & Whiteford, A. P. (2009). Training advanced writing skills: The case for deliberate practice. *Educational Psychologist*, *44*(4), 250-266. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520903213600

Kendeou, P. A., & Van Den Broek, P. (2005). The effects of readers' misconceptions on comprehension of scientific text. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *97*(2), 235-245. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.97.2.235

Liao, C. C., Chang, W. C., & Chan, T. W. (2018). The effects of participation, performance, and interest in a game-based writing environment. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *34*(3), 211-222. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12233

Luke, A. F., & Peter. (1997). The social practices of reading. In P. F, Sandra Muspratt & Allan Luke (Eds.), Constructing critical literacies (pp. 185–225). New Jersey, NJ: Hampton Press.

MacArthur, C. A., Philippakos, Z. A., & Ianetta, M. (2015). Self-regulated strategy instruction in college developmental writing. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *107*(3), 855-867. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000011

Magliano, J. P., Todaro, S. Millis, K., Wiemer-Hastings, K., Kim, H. J., & McNamara, D. S. (2005). Changes in reading strategies as a function of reading training: A comparison of live and computerized training. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, *32*, 185-208. https://doi.org/10.2190/1LN8-7BQE-8TN0-M91L

Jee, B. D., & Wiley, J. (2007). How goals affect the organization and use of domain knowledge. *Memory & Cognition, 35*, 837–851. https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193459

Kaakinen, J. K., & Hyona, J. (2007). Perspective effects in repeated reading: An eye movement study. *Memory & Cognition, 35*, 1323–1336. https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193604

Kaakinen, J. K., Hyona, J., & Keenan, J. M. (2002). Perspective effects on online text processing. *Discourse Processes, 33,* 159–173. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326950DP3302_03

Kendeou, P., & van den Broek, P. (2007). The effects of prior knowledge and text structure on comprehension processes during reading of scientific texts. *Memory & Cognition, 35*, 1567–1577. https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193491

Kirschner, P. A., Sweller, J., & Clark, R. E. (2006). Why minimal guidance during instruction does not work: An analysis of the failure of constructivist, discovery, problem-based, experiential, and inquiry-based teaching. *Educational Psychologist, 41,* 75–86. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4102_1

Langston, M. C., & Trabasso, T. (1999). Modeling causal integration and availability of information during comprehension of narrative texts. In H. van Oostendorp & S. R. Goldman (Eds.), *The construction of mental representations during reading* (pp. 29–69). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lehman, S., & Schraw, G. (2002). Effects of coherence and relevance on shallow and deep text processing. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94*, 738–750. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.94.4.738

Linderholm, T., & Van den Broek, P. (2002). The effects of reading purpose and working memory capacity on the processing of expository text. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94,* 778–784. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.94.4.778

Lorch, R. F., Jr., & van den Broek, P. (1997). Understanding reading comprehension: Current and future contributions of cognitive science. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 22*, 213–246. https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1997.0931

Magliano, J. P., Trabasso, T., & Graesser, A. C. (1999). Strategic processes during comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 91*, 615–629. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.91.4.615

Magnifico, A. M. (2010). Writing for whom? Cognitive, motivation, and a writer's audience. *Educational Psychologist*, *45*(3), 167-184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2010.493470

Mayer, R. E. (2017). Using multimedia for e-learning. *Journal of Computer-Assisted Learning*, *33*, 403-423.

Mayer, R. E., & Moreno, R. (2013). Nine ways to reduce cognitive load in multimedia learning. *Educational Psychologist*, *38*(1), 43-52. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12197

McCarthy, K. S., Likens, A. D., Johnson, A. M., Guerrero, T. A., & McNamara, D. S. (2018). Metacognitive overload!: Positive and negative effects of metacognitive prompts in an intelligent tutoring system. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education, 28*, 420-438. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40593-018-0164-5

McCarthy, K. S., Roscoe, R. D., Likens, A. D., & McNamara, D. S. (2019). Checking it twice: Does adding spelling and grammar checkers improve essay quality in an automated writing tutor? In S. Isotani et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education* (pp. 270-282). Chicago, IL: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23204-7_23

McKoon, G., & Ratcliff, R. (1998). Memory based language processing: Psycholinguistic research in the 1990s. *Annual Review of Psychology, 49*, 25-42. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.49.1.25

McNamara, D. S., & Allen, L. K. (2017). Toward an integrated perspective of writing as a discourse process. In M. F. Schober, D. N. Rapp, & M. A. Britt (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse processes* (2nd ed., pp. 362-389). New York, NY: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315687384

McNamara, D. S., Levinstein, I. B., & Boonthum, C. (2004). iSTART: Interactive strategy training for active reading and thinking. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers*, *36*(2), 222-233. https://doi.org/10.3758/

bf03195567

McNamara, D. S. & Magliano, J. P. (2009a). Self-explanation and metacognition: The dynamics of reading. In J. D. Hacker, J. Dunlosky, & A. C. Graesser (Eds.), *Handbook of metacognition in education* (pp. 60-81). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

McNamara, D. S. & Magliano, J. P. (2009b). Towards a comprehensive model of comprehension. In B. Ross (Ed.), *The psychology of learning and motivation* (pp. 297-384). New York, NY: Elsevier.

McNamara, D. S., & O'Reilly, T. (2009). Theories of comprehension skill: Knowledge and strategies versus capacity and suppression. In A. M. Columbus (Ed.), *Advances in Psychology research.* Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

McNamara, D. S., O'Reilly, T., Best, R., & Ozuru, Y. (2006). Improving adolescent students' reading comprehension with iSTART. *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 34, 147–171.*

Mikulecky, L. (1978, May). *Aliteracy and a changing view of reading goals*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association (Bouston,Texas).

Mullis, I. V. S., Martin, M. O., Foy, P., & Drucker, K. T. (2012). *PIRLS 2011 International results in reading.* Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College.

Newell, G. E., Beach, R., Smith, J., & VanDerHeide, J. (2011). Teaching and learning argumentative reading and writing: A review of research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *46*(3), 273-304.

Olive, T. (2014). Toward a parallel and cascading model of the writing system: A review of research on writing processes coordination. *Journal of Writing Research*, *6*(2), 173-194. https://doi.org/10.17239/jowr-2014.06.02.4

Palincsar, A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction, 2*, 117-175. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532690xci0102_1

Palincsar, A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1986). Interactive teaching to promote independent learning from text. *Reading Teacher, 39*, 771-777.

Panaite, M., Dascalu, M., Johnson, A., Balyan, R., Dai, J., McNamara, D. S., & Trausan-Matu, S. (2018). Bring it on! Challenges encountered while building a comprehensive tutoring system using ReaderBench. In C. P. Rosé, R. Martínez-Maldonado, H. U. Hoppe, R. Luckin, M. Mavrikis, K. Porayska-Pomsta, B. McLaren, ... & B. D. Boulay (Eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education* (part 1, pp. 409-419). Cham, Switzerland: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93843-1_30

Parr, J. M., & Timperley, H. S. (2010). Feedback to writing assessment for teaching and learning and student progress. *Assessing Writing*, *15*, 68–85.

Patchan, M. M., Charney, D., & Schunn, C. D. (2009). A validation study of students' end comments: Comparing comments by students, a writing instructor, and a content instructor. *Journal of Writing Research*, *1*(2), 124-152.

Proske, A., Roscoe, R. D., & McNamara, D. S. (2014). Game-based practice versus traditional practice in computer-based writing strategy training: Effects on motivation and achievement. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *62*, 481-505. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-014-9349-2

Ratzan S. C. , & Parker R. M. (2000). National library of medicine current bibliographies in medicine: Health literacy. In C.R. Selden, M. Zorn, S. C. Ratzan, et al. (Eds.), Bethesda, M: National Institutes of Health.

Roscoe, R. D., Allen, L. K., Johnson, A. C., & McNamara, D. S. (2018). Automated writing instruction and feedback: Instructional mode, attitudes, and revising. In *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*, *62*(1), 2089-2093. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541931218621471

Roscoe, R. D., Allen, L. K., & McNamara, D. S. (2019). Contrasting writing practice formats in a writing strategy tutoring system. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, *57*(3), 723-754. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633118763429

Roscoe, R. D., Allen, L. K., Weston, J. L., Crossley, S. A,, & McNamara, D. S. (2014). The Writing Pal Intelligent Tutoring System: Usability testing and development. *Computers and Composition, 34*, 39-59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2014.09.002

Roscoe, R. D., Brandon, R., Snow, E. L., & McNamara, D. S. (2014). Game-based writing strategy practice with the Writing Pal. In K. E. Pytash & R. E. Ferdig (Eds.), *Exploring technology for writing and writing instruction* (pp. 1-20). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Roscoe, R. D., Jacovina, M. E., Harry, D., Russell, D. G., & McNamara, D. S. (2015). Partial verbal redundancy in multiple media presentations for writing strategy instruction. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *29*, 669-679. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3149

Roscoe, R. D., & McNamara, D. S. (2013). Writing Pal: feasibility of an intelligent writing strategy tutor in the high school classroom. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *105*, 1010-1025. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032340

Roscoe, R. D., Novak, K., King, A., & Patchan, M. M. (2018). Exploring higher agency roles for learning with educational technology and multimedia. In *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*, *62*(1), 2074-2078. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541931218621468

Roscoe, R. D., Snow, E. L., Allen, L. K., & McNamara, D. S. (2015). Automated detection of essay revising patterns:

Applications for intelligent feedback in a writing tutor. *Technology, Instruction, Cognition, and Learning*, *10*, 59-79.

Roscoe, R. D., Wilson, J., Johnson, A. C., & Mayra, C. R. (2017). Presentation, expectations, and experience: Sources of student perceptions of automated writing evaluation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *70*, 207-221. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.12.076

Rosenshine, B., & Meister, C. (1994). Reciprocal teaching: A review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 64*, 479-530. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543064004479

Rosenshine, B., Meister, C., & Chapman, S. (1996). Teaching students to generate questions: A review of the intervention studies. *Review of Educational Research, 66,* 181-221. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543066002181

Ruseti, S., Dascalu, M., Johnson, A. M., Balyan, R., Kopp, K. J., McNamara, D. S., … & Trausan-Matu, S. (2018a). Predicting question quality using Recurrent Neural Networks. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education* (pp. 491-502). Cham, Switzerland: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93843-1_36

Ruseti, S., Dascalu, M., Johnson, A. M., McNamara, D. S., Balyan, R., McCarthy, K. S., & Trausan-Matu, S. (2018b). Scoring summaries using recurrent neural networks. In R. Nkambou, R. Azevedo, & J. Vassileva (Eds.), *Intelligent Tutoring Systems* (pp. 191-201). Cham, Switzerland: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91464-0_19

Ryan, R. M., Rigby, C. S., & Przybylski, A. (2006). The motivational pull of video games: A self-determination theory approach. *Motivation and Emotion*, *30*(4), 344-360. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-006-9051-8

Shanahan, T. (2016). Relationships between reading and writing development. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (2nd ed., pp. 194-207). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Snow, C. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Snow, E. L., Jacovina, M. E., Jackson, G. T., & McNamara, D. S. (2016). iSTART-2: A reading comprehension and strategy instruction tutor. In D.S. McNamara & S. A. Crossley (Eds.), *Adaptive educational technologies for literacy instruction (pp.104-121)*. Taylor & Francis, Routledge: NY.

Stevenson, M., & Phakiti, A. (2014). The effects of computer-generated feedback on the quality of writing. *Assessing Writing*, *19*, 51-65. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2013.11.007

Street, B. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Trabasso, T., & Magliano, J. P. (1996). Conscious understanding during comprehension. *Discourse Processes, 21*(3), 255-287. https://doi.org/10.1080/01638539609544959

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2008). *International literacy statistics: A review of concepts, methodology, and current data*. Montreal, Canada: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

VanLehn, K., Jones, R. M., & Chi, M. T. H. (1992). A model of the self-explanation effect. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences, 2*, 1-59. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327809jls0201_1

Verhoeven, L. T. (Ed.). (1994). Functional literacy: Theoretical issues and educational implications (vol. 1). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing.

Vosniadou, S. & Brewer, W.F. (1992). Mental Models of the day/night cycle. *Cognitive Science, 18,* 123-183. https://doi.org/10.1016/0364-0213(94)90022-1

Walter, P. (1999). Defining literacy and its consequences in the developing world. I*nternational Journal of Lifelong Education, 18*(1), 31-48.

Watanabe, M., McCarthy, K.S., & McNamara, D. S. (2019). Examining the effects of adaptive task selection on students' motivation in an intelligent tutoring system. In *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Learning Analytics and Knowledge* (pp. 161-62). Phoenix, AZ: SOLAR.

Wilson, J., & Czik, A. (2016). Automated essay evaluation software in English Language Arts classrooms: Effects on teacher feedback student motivation, and writing quality. *Computers and Education*, *100*, 94-109. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.05.004

Wilson, J., Olinghouse, N. G., & Andrada, G. N. (2014). Does automated feedback improve writing quality? *Learning Disabilities— A Contemporary Journal*, *12*(1), 93-118. Retrieved from https://www.learntechlib.org/p/153416/

Wilson, J., & Roscoe, R. D. (2019). Automated writing evaluation and feedback: Multiple metrics of efficacy. Published online at *Journal of Educational Computing Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633119830764

Wingate, U. (2010). The impact of formative feedback on the development of academic writing. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *35*(5), 579-533. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930903512909

Wouters, P., Van Nimwegen, C., Van Oostendorp, H., & Van Der Spek, E. D. (2013). A meta-analysis of the cognitive and motivational effects of serious games. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *105*(2), 249-265. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031311

Yuill, N., & Oakhill, J. (1988). Understanding of anaphoric relations in skilled and less skilled comprehenders. *British Journal of Psychology, 79,* 173-186. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8295.1988.tb02282.x

Leadership Potential of Professional Teacher Associations in Russia: Formation of Middle Leaders

Anatoly V. Merenkov
Ural Federal University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Anatoly V. Merenkov, Department of Applied Sociology, Ural Federal University, 19 Mira str., Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation, 620002. E-mail: anatoly.mer@gmail.com

Natalya L. Antonova
Ural Federal University

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Natalya L. Antonova, Department of Applied Sociology, Ural Federal University, 19 Mira str., Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation, 620002. E-mail: n-tata@mail.ru

Natalia G. Popova
Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Natalia G. Popova, Sector of Theoretical Linguistics and Academic Communications, Department of Foreign Languages, Institute of Philosophy and Law, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 16 Sofia Kovalevskaya str., Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation, 620099. E-mail: ngpopova@list.ru

This research study is aimed at investigating distributed leadership practices in the Russian school system, of which professional teacher associations (PTA) constitute a distinct feature. In particular, we set out to investigate the PTA leadership potential, as well as the role and specific personal characteristics of middle leaders in the Russian school education system. These associations are formed by the school administration on the basis of subject areas, bringing together teachers of maths, history, etc. Teachers join PTAs on a voluntarily basis. The key function of such organisations consists in the implementation of innovative educational approaches and techniques. In order to analyse their leadership potential, we carried out a sociological survey among the employees of high-profile secondary schools (gymnasiums and lyceums) situated in the major Russian city of Ekaterinburg. The research methodology comprised structured interviews with 110 respondents, along with in-depth interviews with 2 school directors, 4 school deputy directors and 6 heads of professional teacher associations. Our results show that the fundamentals and principles of distributed leadership are actively implemented in Ekaterinburg schools. The school administrations encourage the creation of professional teacher associations grouped around subject areas, delegating to these structural units the functions of improving the quality of teaching the respective subjects and disseminating educational innovations, at the same time as fulfilling the requirements of the state and regional education authorities. Such associations are headed by middle leaders, who are nominated by their colleagues and whose candidacy is approved by school seniors, taking into account their professional achievements, experience of leading pedagogical innovations and the presence of the right personal qualities necessary for productive collaborative work. These people perform the role of mediators, operating at the interface between various levels within the school. Although viewed as a school's personnel reserve for the positions of principals and head teachers, our respondents consider themselves to be 'more teachers' or 'innovators in education' than administrators. The development of the leadership qualities of such professionals in the Russian school system is shown to be hindered by a 'glass ceiling' – a certain limit in their career growth. This discouraging factor results in some middle school leaders searching for professional self-realization opportunities outside the school system, in the spheres of business, science or culture that are believed to provide more opportunities for self-advancement.

Keywords: leadership; distributed leadership; middle leadership; school; professional teacher associations; teacher leaders; teachers

Introduction

Today, at a time when school education is experiencing another developmental wave (Townsend 2009), various theoretical and practical aspects of school leadership are attracting much research attention globally (to name a few, Bogotch & Townsend, 2008; Leithwood. 1992; Elmore, 2000; Sun et al., 2017; Parmenter, 2012; Khudriyah, 2017). The accumulated empirical data and developed models have shown that effective leaders indirectly, but powerfully affect both school effectiveness and student achievement. Such leaders generate innovative approaches to education and encourage the self-development of their colleagues. However, the individual-centred notion of leadership is fading, increasingly giving way to a 'post-heroic' view (Gronn, 2002; Conger & Pearse, 2003) on leadership as a distributed phenomenon (Harris, 2003; Harris, 2010; Crawford, 2012).

Distributed leadership is a collective form, implying multiple sources of guidance and direction amalgamated by a common culture, when teachers become experts ready to be involved in school improvement processes. This form is considered to be advantageous both to school and teacher development (Avolio, 2003; Harris, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2010), primarily because it creates favourable conditions for the organisational commitment of teachers, which is known to be strongly related to their effectiveness (Park, 2005; Hulpia & Davos, 2010). It should be mentioned that distributed leadership is seen as an organisational resource, serving school improvement; the core of the process is formed not only by successful school principals, who create conditions for translating innovative ideas into practice (Haiyan et al., 2016; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2018), but also middle leaders – teachers to whom leadership is distributed. In other words, middle leadership can be seen as a manifestation of distributed leadership and should be analysed through its theoretical lenses (Larusdottir & O'Connor, 2017).

Researchers have investigated various aspects of middle leadership in school education. Theoretical research sets out to draw a distinction between overlapping concepts and create a suitably comprehensive model, while more practically-oriented studies are aimed at scrutinising tasks, relationships, motives and organisational scenarios behind real leadership practices (see e.g. Bullock et al., 1988; Wise, 2001; Earley & Bubb, 2004; Bennet et al., 2003). Many of these investigations have revealed, along with the highly positive effects of fostering middle leadership, some potentially negative consequences, such as the incompatibility of roles (administrator and teacher) that middle leaders perform, or their reluctance to supervise and assess the work of their colleagues. Therefore, in order for middle school leadership to fulfil its transformative mission while avoiding the pitfall of becoming another practically unrealizable construct, more empirical evidence is needed. Moreover, the analysis of middle leadership practices in various sociocultural contexts can be a valuable contribution.

In this paper, we set out to investigate the PTA leadership potential, as well as the role and specific personal characteristics of middle leaders in the Russian school education system, which has some unique – and presumably interesting for today's professionals – experience of providing high-quality education (Minina, 2016).

Sociocultural context

In contemporary Russia, the problems of school reform are widely discussed; however, relatively little attention is paid to issues associated with leadership. Thus, a simple search across the Russian Citation Index database using the tag "school leadership" gives very few hits. We consider this to be a serious shortcoming, since the Russian school system is currently experiencing a radical transformation period as a result of both globalising factors and processes following the demise of the previous political system. Teachers who are capable of innovation and who passionately work to transform the educational process can become the drivers of necessary change (Leithwood et al,. 2006; Hall et al., 2012; Teleshaliyev et al., 2019).

In the Russian school system, a search for new, more effective educational approaches is traditionally carried out within so-called "methodical associations" (Rus. *metodicheskye obedinenia*) – hereafter referred to as professional teacher associations (PTAs) that are formed by the school administration around a subject area, e.g. a "PTA of math teachers" and joined by teachers voluntarily[1]. Such associations began to emerge in the late 19th century

---

[1] The formation and activity of PTAs is regulated by article 19 in the RF Ministry Education Act http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_140174/0358c09729e9c3b2eb0d551733d014138730196f/

with the primary mission of exchanging experience between teachers working in the same subject area, which was believed to bolster the overall quality of students' education. A PTA member was encouraged to actively collaborate with colleagues in order to create conditions for all schoolchildren to enjoy equal opportunities of successful development. Municipal government bodies would encourage the creation of PTAs at the level of districts or the whole city with the idea of experience transfer between different schools.

Today, in terms of organisation, the Russian school system involves the following levels. A school director and his/her deputies for educational and upbringing[2] work occupy the highest ranks in the administrative hierarchy. In cases where a school is attended by 700–1000 children, when students of primary, secondary and high schools study together, a deputy director is allocated for each school level. Directors and deputy directors are endowed with administrative functions, including organisation, planning and control of teachers' work in compliance with the requirements of the RF Ministry of Education and other regional and municipal education authorities. At the middle level, the work of teachers is supported by special institutional organisations, PTAs, created to solve complicated educational matters taking into account the specifics of the disciplines they teach. Schools form PTAs when there are several teachers (minimum 3) who teach a certain subject, e.g. history, physics or biology. An average Russian school operates 7–10 PTAs. In primary schools, due to the specifics of working with 7–10-year-old children (implying not only the knowledge component, but also a particular upbringing approach), PTAs unite all primary school teachers irrespective of their subjects. A PTA head is not expected to perform any administrative functions; rather, he/she is mainly responsible for organizing the work of teachers-PTA members in such a way so as to create favourable conditions for students to build a positive attitude to learning and improve their academic performance.

Ten years ago, Russia experienced a major shift in educational policy, with its reform package being similar to the global policy agenda and including raised academic performance standards, standardised quality control and assessment, reduced state budget expenses and increased international competitiveness. Russia's Ministry of Education launched a series of reform initiatives, the most significant of which consisted in implementing new State Educational Standards. According to these documents, Russia's educational ideology, which was previously rooted in centralisation, collectivism and conformity, was now to be informed by new educational neoliberal values of "regional differentiation, student-centred learning, standardisation, institutional accountability, educational equity and quality assurance" (Minina 2016). Taking into account functions delegated to PTAs in the Russian education system, it can be supposed that it is these associations that become the agents of such a radical change. Now they face the challenge of searching for innovative approaches in education and upbringing that would allow a student to develop "third millennium" skills (Townsend, 2009).

In their work, PTAs implement activities of various formats, such as the collective discussion of scientific methodological professional literature (disputes, forums, etc.); presentations by PTA members devoted to various relevant issues; analysis of particular difficult pedagogical cases; lectures by invited specialists on the psychology of various ages and children's behaviour; collaborative practical work of teachers aimed at developing teaching materials, illustrative materials and tests; etc. (Andrunik & Vasenina, 2015). In addition, PTAs play an important role in facilitating social and professional adaptation of young teachers by providing support and expertise (Chernikova, 2008).

Moreover, PTAs bear the responsibility for teachers' development, for making them more flexible, adaptable and professional. Not the least important of these is the role of PTAs in relieving tensions that inevitably arise between the parties to the educational reform process. It should be borne in mind that the work of such associations is inspired by middle leaders, who are elected to this position by their colleagues due to their high achievements in educating children.

Theoretical considerations

When people engage in any kind of joint activity, they inevitably reveal different levels of eagerness, enthusiasm and readiness to contribute to common goals. Following the social process of intragroup role differentiation, the group distinguishes between those who are proactive in formulating common work aims, prompt in performing

---

2 Upbringing (vospitanie) – In post-Soviet contexts, there is a distinction made between educational and upbringing processes and outcomes, with teachers often expected to take on responsibility for the latter, while in Western contexts upbringing is generally thought to be the sole responsibility of parents and guardians

their tasks and setting quality standards, and those who tend to maintain discussions already initiated by active group participants. Such a distribution of roles and functions between individuals engaged in any social group is known to be determined by several factors, which will be discussed below.

It should be noted that people inherently differ in terms of their readiness to engage in particular kinds of work (Balthazard et al., 2012; Arvey et al., 2006). Thus, the propensity to master a particular profession is determined first of all by a person's natural talents. If someone has received an education that allows their natural talents to be fully realised, they are more likely to perform better in this profession compared to others. Secondly, people differ in their "psychological activity" (Vygotsky, 1978) when completing various kinds of work: some are quick and effective, while others achieve their goals by taking a more plodding approach. Thirdly, it is a person's individual characteristics that determine his/her willingness to propose and carry forward his/her own plan for realising the group's goals. This trait frequently points towards this person having the ability to become a successful leader provided the necessary conditions are present.

When seeking approaches to identifying new leaders, practitioners frequently turn to the theory of distributed leadership (Bolden, 2011), which has been extensively used in schools during implementation of new programmes aimed at increasing the quality of education. Educational institutions today are characterised by a complex structure, which cannot be managed by a single person. Distributed leadership implies that various functions and tasks are performed by people having respective skills and personal resources (Schermerhorn, Osborn, Uhl-Bien & Hunt, 2012). Göksoy (2015), in his study on the problem of leadership in educational institutions, showed that the theory of distributed leadership does facilitate a more efficient allocation of responsibilities among a large number of employees. Such an approach, while recognising the role of the principal, shows that leadership becomes collective rather than individual practice (Spillane, 2006). The distributed leadership in school can only be implemented provided careful planning, flexibility and (importantly) the absence of workplace coercion (Collins & Hansen, 2011; Hogg, 2011). In order to form a solid foundation for distributed leadership, professional collaboration between teachers should be focused and disciplined (Jones & Harris, 2013). This encourages a 'collective effectiveness', which allows higher educational results to be achieved (Hargreaves, Boyle & Harris, 2014).

Along with the theory of distributed leadership in school, much attention has been recently drawn to the concept of middle leadership. This is largely because the implementation of distributed leadership has certain practical limitations. Thus, Harris identified barriers to innovations in schools due to teachers' inability to realise their creative potential (Harris, 2009). Middle leadership focuses on revealing teachers potentially capable of becoming leaders (middle leaders). Compared to distributed leadership, this is a bottom-up process, which is seen as a promising driving force in improving the quality of education (Fleming & Amesbury, 2012; Seong & Ho, 2012; Heng & Marsh, 2009; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Hammersley-Fletcher & Strain, 2011)

A possible practical solution is the creation of a two-tier system of identifying potential leaders in educational institutions. At the first stage, the school principal singles out those employees, who not only have had a positive experience of innovations, but also demonstrate leadership personal qualities. These people become heads of teacher associations engaged with a search for optimal educational methods in their subject fields. At the second stage, a collaborative work within such small teams reveals individuals that show higher, compared to others, professional results. In other words, a specific kind – *initiative leadership* – appears, when a teacher becomes a leading subject in the improvement of the professional activity of his/her colleagues. In this paper, we will attempt to show how such a system, with its advantages and limitations, is realised in Russian schools.

The process of formation of leadership qualities implies the influence of both internal and external factors. Any group is characterised by an 'inherent' need for people capable of initiating collective action leading to the accomplishment of common goals by forming their mental representation, distributing responsibilities among the group's members, managing the process of their realisation, etc. This factor is considered to be essential in revealing latent leadership qualities in group participants. In cases where several group members possess such potential, there emerges the possibility of competition for the position of leader. Contemporary theory also emphasises the specifics of the leader's orientation – whether leaders are primarily motivated to achieve public good or derive personal benefits (Maner & Mead, 2010).

Leaders are expected to take verbal and practical actions to persuade other group members that proposed plans

are feasible and will produce the desired results. We believe that among all kinds of persuasion, there are two that an effective leader should master – setting their own example of successful achievements and inspiring others to follow it using all possible means. Hence, the leader should not only demonstrate talents higher than the average level of the group with respect to the work being engaged in, but also the ability to organise and coordinate collective action. Knowledge and skills that underpin such leadership capacity can be formed either by taking leadership courses or gaining practical experience of managing other people. Without these qualities – high professionalism and leadership capacity – a person is highly unlikely to be recognised as leader by the other group members. However, it should be emphasised that professional supremacy alone cannot be a sufficient condition for a person to become a leader: it is essential that other people be ready to reproduce his/her example in their work and behaviour. In such a way, the unique culture of a group is nurtured and transmitted to new group members, creating conditions for the successful realisation of the group's goals. A person remains leader for as long as his/her individuality continues to secure high group achievements.

Materials and Methods

Research design

In order to investigate the PTA leadership potential, as well as the role and specific personal characteristics of middle leaders in the Russian school education system, in 2017-18, we carried out a sociological survey among the teaching and administrative staff of a number of lyceums and gymnasiums situated in a major Russian city of Ekaterinburg.

We singled out the following research questions: 1) to understand why school teachers in Russia today make the decision to participate in a PTA; 2) to elucidate a set of tasks that PTAs aim to solve; 3) to reveal qualities required for a school teacher to become a PTA leader; 4) to investigate positive experience of successful PTA heads.

In this study, we applied mixed research methodology, following the idea of the importance of an optimal balance between quantitative and qualitative sociological instruments (Creswell, 2009). This approach allowed us to answer the formulated research questions, thus giving an improved understanding of the specifics of functioning of PTAs in the system of Russian school education. The basis for the study was the QUAL-quan strategy (Morgan, 2014), which implies the dominant role of qualitative instruments. Quantitative research was used for generalisation of qualitative data and identification of main trends.

Participants

In-depth interviews were carried out with 2 school directors, 4 deputy-directors and 6 PTA heads. The teaching experience of each school director and deputy-director was over 20 years. Among 6 PTA heads, 2 and 4 had the teaching experience of 10–20 and over 20 years, respectively.

Standardised interviews were conducted with 110 teachers working with schoolchildren of various levels (from 1st to 10th form). The gender distribution among the respondents was as follows: 15% men and 85% women. The respondents' age varied from 25 to 70 years. The respondents were also distributed with regard to their professional experience: 64% had worked in the school system for over 10 years, with 13%, 15% and 8% having a teaching experience of 6–10, 2–5 and less than 2 years, respectively. Therefore, our sample was primarily composed of professionals having an extensive intellectual capability that can be applied in continuous professional development.

In terms of subject area, our respondents represented all major kinds of PTAs operating in Russian schools: 15% - English language, 14% – maths, 12% – science, 11% – Russian language and literature, 10% – primary school, 9.5% – information technology, 9% – history and social sciences, 8% – physical education teachers. The rest of the sample were small-sized PTAs, whose members were involved in teaching the second foreign language or history of world arts. A typical PTA included from 4 to 10 teachers.

Instruments

Qualitative study. An in-depth interview guide with school and PTA heads was developed. It included 13 open questions implying a detailed answer, which allowed the respondents to express their opinion independently. The interviews were carried during the respondents' free time in the form of face-to-face meetings in the schools where they worked. The average interview time was 45 minutes. The interview results were decoded, with the respondents' answers to the same questions being grouped together. Such a grouping allowed identification of typical and specific features in the answers, thus facilitating interpretation of the results.

Quantitative study. A standardised interview guide that included 15 questions was developed. This guide was initially tested over the course of a pilot study among 20 teachers. After the pilot study, two guide questions were re-formulated to make them more comprehensible to the respondents. The teachers were questioned in their free time in the schools were they worked. The average time spent on filling in the questionnaire was 20 minutes. The results were processed using specialized software for sociological and marketing information – Vortex 10.

Results and discussion

Our research has revealed the main factors behind the respondents' motivational structure to become a PTA member. For 69% of the respondents, the key motive was the permanent possibility to exchange experience with colleagues teaching a similar subject (hereafter, percent shows the results of quantitative study). According to 64% of the respondents, PTAs allow the professional teacher community to solve acute common problems associated with the need to improve the quality of children's education. Some teachers, however, mentioned an administrative factor: 41% of the respondents believe that teachers should be part of a least one PTA. The latter respondents supported the idea that teachers should have the freedom to move between various PTAs. According to one respondent (social sciences PTA head, teaching experience 12 years): "When our association of social science teachers was joined by a literature teacher, it significantly boosted our work. He showed how a student's interest in learning about human nature can be raised using the arts. This inter-subject collaboration has diversified the methods of our teaching" (hereafter, quotes are given either from open questions included in the questionnaire or from in-depth interviews).

Around 38% of the respondents pointed out that the collaboration within a PTA is frequently a factor encouraging them to implement new teaching strategies and develop new forms of lessons. New ideas arise when teachers attend each other's lessons and subsequently discuss their quality and productivity. "As a PTA, we aim to test various methods of classroom organisation that create an environment conducive for learning. While attending each other's lessons, we focus on individual teaching techniques that may be shared among the PTA members. As a PTA head, I also check whether the methods and techniques used by teachers are in compliance with state educational standards" (natural science PTA head, teaching experience 38 years). Our results show that PTAs hold regular meetings, no less than once a month, with the topical discussion point (mentioned by 9% of the respondents) being the introduction of educational innovations in the teaching and upbringing of children both at school lessons and during extra-curriculum activities.

Our research has revealed a certain controversy between the education directions set by Russia's state education documents[3] (Russia's Federal Standard for Secondary Education 2014) and orientations pursued by our respondents. According to the state documents, education should be primarily aimed at creating favourable conditions for a child to develop such moral qualities as patriotism, respect for Russia's multi-ethnicity, acceptance of traditional social values, motivation for creativity and innovation, fundamentals of lifelong self-learning, propensity for collective work, responsibility for one's family, society and humankind. Conversely, the majority of our respondents are shown to be preoccupied with the development of teaching methods. Only 17% of the respondents, largely primary school teachers, asserted that the main motivation behind their participation in a PTA consists in an opportunity to improve their upbringing approaches: "Bringing up a child is a difficult task. Every teacher has his/her own techniques for maintaining discipline in the classroom and productive collaboration with parents. Unfortunately, there is no single upbringing method applicable to all children. When you teach chemistry or physics, you make children comprehend and memorise the material,

---

[3] Russia's Federal Standard for Secondary Education http://mosmetod.ru/metodicheskoe-prostranstvo/uchebnaya-literatura/normativnye-dokumenty/prikaz-minobrnauki-rossii-ot-6-oktyabrya-2009-g-413.html (accessed 05/04/18)

whereas upbringing implies forming a child's aptitude to follow rules. If there had been reliable pedagogical approaches for achieving this, we would have created a PTA specialising in moral education long before" (gymnasium deputy-director, work experience 22 years).

Table 1 presents aims and objectives that PTAs are expected to achieve (according to the respondents).

Table 1
Aims and objectives set by PTAs (% of number of respondents)

No.	Aims and objectives	%
1	Increasing the quality of subject teaching	74
2	Implementation of innovations developed by PTA members	57
3	Discussions around problems of responding to new normative state documents	56
4	Analysis of new education and pedagogical techniques developed by PTA members	43
5	Consolidation of PTA members' efforts, coordination of their work	31
6	Exchange of professional experience between PTA members and various PTAs	25
7	Collaborative efforts in preparing children for participation in various subject competitions, olympiads and contests	22
8	Support for proactive teachers	19
9	Increasing the quality of children's upbringing	14

Thus, quality is viewed as the major education aim; this agrees with many studies (Daring-Hummond, 2000; Barrett et al., 2006) showing that quality of teaching is a major influence on student achievement. According to a respondent (literature and arts PTA head, teaching experience 10 years): "Our PTA sets many aims and objectives, but the quality of education is certainly the top priority. We want our children to pass the Unified State Exam (*Yediniy gosudarstvenniy ekzamen*, EGE – a series of exams every Russian student passes after graduation from school) and achieve higher results than children in other schools in the city. This is how our professional achievements are judged". As an aside, the results of this study show that, although Russia's new educational agenda asserts a radical break from Soviet era pedagogy in establishing a new system of quality assurance (instead of quality control), in practice, Russian educators still treat education quality almost exclusively as an outcome, rather than a process-oriented phenomenon. These findings are in agreement with a critical study of E. Minina, who showed that "the 'quality revolution' in Russian education has been skin-deep and largely confined to the realm of rhetoric" (Minina, 2006, p.16).

The dissemination of innovations that individual teachers introduce in their practice is regarded as a means of increasing the overall quality of education (Serdyukov, 2017). PTA heads see it as their mission to involve the majority of the teacher community in the process of innovation creation. Technically, this is performed through attending each other's lessons with subsequent analysis of particular educational and pedagogical techniques: "During the analysis of our colleague's lesson, we give him/her feedback by providing practical recommendations with regard to what can be improved. Our task is to allow every PTA member to prove themselves, because every teacher is talented in their own way. There is always something to learn from each other. As a PTA head, I attempt to select those topics for discussion that can enrich other members professionally" (maths and science PTA head, teaching experience 28 years). Such discussions, initiated by PTA heads as middle leaders, help teachers to stand together and understand that their creative ideas are valued and required – this contributes to the effective work of all teachers.

PTA heads are shown to encourage teachers to raise their professional competency not only through participation in a single PTA, but also by gaining experience outside their workplace. The organisation of such learning possibilities is another function of school middle leaders. About 64% of the respondents mentioned a positive effect of experience exchange with teachers working in other schools and 50% – from attending lessons of other subject teachers. Moreover, 47% – and 31% – of the respondents believe that their professional growth is impossible without acquiring a knowledge of the best educational practices of leading Russian – and world – teachers, respectively. "A physics teacher told us that self-evaluation lists are successfully applied in China. I started implementing this approach in my 5th form class and found that the children evaluated themselves much more strictly than teachers would. Children found this work highly encouraging because they felt trusted. Our teachers went further and started asking their students to assess each other's assignments. In doing so,

children learn to take into account their peers' individual characteristics" (natural sciences PTA head, teaching experience 38 years).

Our findings demonstrate that Russian school middle leaders are eager to broaden the horizons of domestic educational practice by using the experience and innovative approaches developed abroad. An advantage of the Internet era is the provision of a global space for pedagogical innovation transfer (Vieluf et al,. 2012), which allows proactive teachers to constantly improve their professional level. PTA heads are shown to play the key role in this process: they are continually searching for information about professional developmental events, e.g. conferences, webinars or learning courses. "Every year we send the members of our PTA to professional conferences in other Russian cities, to Moscow and St. Petersburg universities, because they have already made the most of the Regional Centre for Education Development. On the other hand, teachers from other Russian regions come to our school to attend lessons and participate in discussions organised by local PTAs" (gymnasium director, work experience 45 years).

Every third respondent mentioned that PTAs are important because their work allows teachers to boost their personal commitment to the profession; in particular, a teacher's desire to provide a child with the broadest education possible. The importance of personal commitment was also emphasised by (Muijis & Reinolds, 2001; Park, 2005; Razak et al., 2009). As Park (2005) pointed out, dedicated and highly committed teachers demonstrate a greater responsibility and accountability in work, thus becoming a major factor in quality education.

It is interesting that PTAs in Russian schools are not merely volunteering organisations. Their work can be simultaneously seen as a bottom-up and top-down initiative. On the one hand, PTAs are school structural units, the work of which is controlled by school administrations (as was mentioned above, a PTA head candidacy has to be approved by senior school leaders); on the other, PTAs are based on democratic principles in that they are free to nominate their leaders, apply stimulating or coercive measures to the members, insist on the implementation of certain educational methods, etc. The work of a PTA head is paid according to school tariffs, which become an external motivation to participate and grow within a PTA for all its members. The work of most active participants and significant professional achievements are supported financially (typically by an annual bonus), the decision of which is taken during PTA meetings by general voting. Therefore, the productivity of PTA work is dependent on whether an optimal balance between pressure from above and bottom-up initiatives has been achieved. When the former factor is stronger, then the PTA can become another administrative burden imposed on a teacher and devoid of any inherent meaning and potential. Conversely, too much freedom can result in decreased teaching quality. It seems likely that it is the personality of the PTA head that influences to which side this 'pendulum' will swing.

Let us consider this factor (the leadership qualities of middle leaders), determining the efficiency of PTAs as agents of educational change, in greater detail. About 50% – and 34% – of our respondents believe that the majority – and almost all – teachers participating in the work of PTAs, respectively, are potentially capable of innovative work. This shows that the professional level of the majority of PTA members allows them to become leaders in their work. However, as was mentioned earlier, their professional competency should be accompanied by specific human qualities necessary for the position of leader. Table 2 summarises our respondents' answers with regard to such leadership characteristics.

Among various leadership qualities, our respondents gave top priority to the ability and eagerness to master new things and develop (on their basis) more effective pedagogical approaches that can be further tailored to suit the needs of a particular child. "All children are different, but teachers are expected be able to educate everyone. We keep on searching for new methods as there are no universal solutions. Teachers need to be way ahead of the time and apply the following principle: the older you become, the faster you should run to catch up with the times. There are, however, teachers that are reluctant to learn – I believe they should be dismissed" (gymnasium deputy-director, work experience 37 years). Another distinct leadership quality mentioned by over half of our respondents is the desire for self-realisation, which is believed to be measured by high student achievements. "Our most successful PTA members have students who have won regional and all-country olympiads" (French language PTA head, teaching experience 23 years). When asked how many of their PTA colleagues have leadership capacity, 59% saw this potential in the majority of the PTA members, while 26% believed that only a minority of teachers have the necessary qualities for this position.

Our respondents' opinions regarding how leadership qualities are manifested are summarised in Table 3.

Table 2
Personal qualities characterising the middle leader (% of number of respondents)

No.	Personal quality	%
1	Ability to create and master new things	81
2	Proactivity	70
3	Desire to facilitate the realisation of children's natural talents	68
4	Desire for self-realisation and professional growth	58
5	Respect for tradition and accumulated cultural experience	43
6	Desire to reveal one's own managerial qualities	4
7	Desire to gain recognition among colleagues	3

Table 3
Manifestations of leadership qualities within a PTA (% of number of respondents)

No.	Manifestations	%
1	Continuous preparation of students for participation in subject competitions and olympiads	77
2	Active participation in regular PTA meetings	51
3	Active participation in the implementation of PTA decisions	41
4	Presentations of new innovations to colleagues	37
5	Presentations of own educational developments to colleagues	31
6	Assistance to colleagues in mastering new approaches and skills	26
7	Active participation in the realisation of state requirements	11
8	Active participation in the analysis of educational methods and techniques developed by other PTA members	5

Since student achievements are considered to be the main factor encouraging teachers to undertake innovative behaviour, it is no wonder that this criterion is applied to assess leadership potential. Our results show that those teachers whose students demonstrate high educational achievements, e.g. in subject competitions and olympiads, are perceived as leaders. The more students a teacher has prepared for such events, the higher authority he/she enjoys among colleagues. A teacher in possession of such professional attributes is considered to have the right to put forward suggestions aimed at increasing the professional competencies of his/her colleagues.

The ability to teach not only children, but also adults allows PTA leaders to secure their leadership positions. This is manifested in the assistance provided to other PTA members in tailoring new educational and pedagogical methods to the needs of particular students. According to 51% of our respondents, PTAs consisting of 7-8 members have only 2-3 people with distinct leadership qualities, while 14% believe that PTAs of such a size have only 1-2 potential leaders. Paradoxically, 25% of the respondents working in smaller-sized PTAs (4–6 teachers) stated that all PTA members manifest leadership characteristics.

Our research has revealed the significance of various professional achievements that allow a PTA member to assert a claim to leadership positions within the group, the ranking of which are given in Table 4.

Table 4
Professional achievements necessary to be recognised as leader (% of number of respondents)

No.	Professional achievements	%
1	High student achievements in the subject	83
2	High student achievements in subject competitions and olympiads	78
3	Own victories in professional competitions	44
4	Innovative educational techniques recognised by colleagues	43
5	Participation in teacher conferences	39
6	Scientific publications	30
7	Significant results in terms of upbringing	16

At a certain moment, when a teacher has accumulated a sufficient amount of professional achievements, his/her colleagues or the school administration may propose his/her candidacy to the position of PTA head. According to our respondents, this becomes a significant point in a teacher's career. "Teachers that have an ambition to become a PTA head should have an extensive record of achievements. Mine are gathered in two thick folders, containing documents with the records of my students' achievements and confirmations of regular professional training in various pedagogical directions. The latter include not only training programmes in my subject area, but in teaching gifted children, organisation of project work, certificates of honour for extracurricular work, participation in teacher conferences, etc. Although we never compare our achievements, they are important both for the teacher's career and for the PTA's standing among other PTAs, because we compete with colleagues in other schools" (foreign language PTA head, teaching experience 27 years).

As our research shows, some leaders stand out in a group due to their particular results in a single field, e.g. demonstrating better publication rates. As a rule, such a teacher, though being a PTA member, orients him/ herself towards the dissemination of positive experiences among all teachers in the school, because these achievements are relevant to the work of the school as a whole. "We have a young teacher who is very active in using IT in her teaching practice. She shows promise as a leader through distributing her experience among all teachers" (gymnasium deputy-director, work experience 32 years).

However, it seems that today's leaders are driven by the desire for personal self-realisation rather than for the development of a pedagogical community or educational organisation. "There are teachers who burn the candle at both ends at work, but they are always a tiny minority. I have noticed that these people little by little stop being a team member; rather, they are leader-loners, working only for themselves and looking for some other opportunities outside the school" (gymnasium deputy-director, work experience 38 years). According to one school director, our respondent, the reason may be restricted possibilities for professional growth within the school education system. "The maximal approval that many teachers receive for their work are the certificates of honour issued by district, city, region or Ministry of Education authorities" (gymnasium deputy-director, work experience 38 years).

Our study has revealed the problem of limited perspectives for professional growth that Russian middle school leaders currently experience. In most cases, the maximal professional level that middle leaders can reach is the position of a PTA head. Although this position is supported financially, no other stimulating mechanisms are applied by school administrations in order that middle leadership might become a reason for teachers to stay and progress within the school system. As a result, driven by the desire for self-realisation inherent to people with natural leadership qualities, school middle leaders begin looking for opportunities outside the school system – in business, science or culture. According to our respondent: "Many school middle leaders do not strive to become a district PTA head largely because this work, while being incredibly physically, mentally and emotionally resource demanding, gives very little professional satisfaction. These positions are not seen as a major career progression" (gymnasium deputy-director, work experience 21 years). Moreover, all official positions in the Russian system of education and science imply a significant burden of bureaucratic chores (reports, etc.) and tendency to conformity (Popova et. al, 2017), which also become an additional discouraging factor for middle leaders. "I was put forward to become a head teacher (*zavuch*) in my previous school, but I did not agree. I like working with children and hate writing loads of unnecessary papers. My students have won first prizes in all-Russia competitions – this is much more important to me" (Russian language and literature PTA head, work experience 25 years).

About 20 % believe that middle school leaders cannot progress further than the position of PTA head, because PTA heads rarely become head teachers, school directors or education management department heads. "We frequently see that a person was appointed to the positon of school director without any apparent professional achievements. It seems that the main selection criterion is a person's ability to interact with authorities and conform to the requirements of top education managers" (maths PTA head, work experience 37 years).

Our findings show that the creation of a focused state policy for encouraging and supporting middle leadership in Russian schools is critical; otherwise, such a valuable resource for the future development of the school system as PTAs can be wasted. Further research is needed to reveal the specifics of this phenomenon and elucidate all the obstacles for the formation of efficient middle leaders within the school system.

Conclusion

In the course of our study, we have examined the leadership potential of professional teacher associations (PTAs) operating in the Russian school system. The research findings can be broadly summarised into the following focal points.

1. The fundamentals and principles of both distributed and middle leadership are actively realised in Ekaterinburg schools. School administrations initiate the creation of PTAs grouped around subject areas and delegate to these structural units the functions of improving the quality of teaching the respective subjects and disseminating educational innovations, at the same time as fulfilling the requirements of the state and regional education authorities.
2. Every PTA is headed by a teacher who is put forward to this position by the PTA members, and whose candidacy is approved by the school administration. The middle leader is selected on the basis of both his/her high professional results (student subject and extracurricular achievements, such as prizes in competitions and olympiads) and personal leadership qualities (initiative, organisation and ability to create and master new things). Such a combination of professional achievements and personal qualities commands trust and respect from his/her colleagues, encouraging them to follow the leader in implementing educational innovations.
3. Middle leaders should be viewed as a school's personnel reserve for the positions of senior leaders, i.e. directors and head teachers. However, in today's Russia, middle leaders are rarely appointed to these positions due to a poorly organised career progression mechanism. In addition, middle leaders, operating at the interface between various levels within the school, consider themselves to be 'more teachers' than administrators.
4. The activity of teachers participating in PTAs is determined by their orientation towards innovation and professional assertiveness – potentially leadership qualities. The formation of middle leaders is, however, hindered by existing boundaries within the school system, limiting their career progression. As a result, some teachers, who have the potential to become a middle leader and thus contribute to educational change, seek self-realisation outside the school system in such social spheres as business, science and culture that offer more opportunities for development.

In order for school middle leaders to carry out their potentially transformative role in contemporary education, both by maintaining traditions and keeping abreast of trends and innovations, a focused policy aimed at supporting everyday middle leadership practices is required. Otherwise, middle leadership in schools may remain merely an elegant concept, which in reality camouflages an increasing burden on teachers due to the delegation of responsibilities for completing tasks being passed down through the school hierarchy.

References

Andrunik, A.P., Vasenina, T.I. (2015). Professional teacher associations as a factor in the development of teachers' professional competencies. *Vestnik Prikamskogo Sotsialnogo Instituta, 72*(4), 3–13.

Arvey, R. D., Rotundo, M., Johnson, W., Zhang, Z., & McGue, M. (2006). The determinants of leadership role occupancy: Genetic and personality factors. *Leadership Quarterly, 17*(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.10.009

Avolio, B., Sivasubraminiam, N., Murry, W., Jung, D., & Garger, J. (2003). Assessing shared leadership: Development and preliminary validation of a Team Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. In C. L. Pearce & J. A. Conger (Eds.), *Shared leadership: Reframing the hows and whys of leadership* (pp. 143-172). Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage.

Balthazard, P. A., Waldman, D. A., Thatcher, R. W., & Hannah, S. T. (2012). Differentiating transformational and non-transformational leaders on the basis of neurological imaging. *Leadership Quarterly, 23*, 244-258. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.08.002

Barrett, A., Chawla-Duggan, R., Lowe, J., Nikel, J., & Ukpo, E. (2006). *Review of the 'international' literature on the concept of quality in education*. Bristol, UK: EdQual.

Bennett, N., W. Newton, C. Wise, P. Woods, & Economou, A. (2003). *The role and purpose of middle leaders in schools*. Nottingham, UK: NCSL.

Bogotch, I., & Townsend, T. (2008). What are the essential leadership questions in a rapidly changing world? In

T. Townsend & I. Bogotch (Eds.), *The elusive what and the problematic how: The essential leadership questions for school leaders and educational researchers* (pp. 3–15). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Bryman, A. (2007). Effective leadership in higher education: A literature review. *Studies in Higher Education, 32*(6), 693-710. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701685114

Bullock, A. (1988). *Meeting teachers' management needs*. Ely, UK: Peter Francis.

Conger, J. A., & Pearce, C.L. (2003). A landscape of opportunities. In C. L. Pearce & J. A. Conger (Eds.), *Shared leadership. Reframing the hows and whys of leadership* (pp. 285–303). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chernikova, E.G. (2008). Factors in the social and professional adaptation of young teachers. *Vestnik Cheliabinskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 10*(5), 171-179.

Collins, J., & Hansen, M. (2011). *Great by choice. Uncertainty, chaos and luck - Why some thrive despite them all.* New York, NY: Harper Business Press.

Hogg, M. A. (2011). A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(3), 184-200. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0503_1

Crawford, M. (2012). Solo and distributed leadership: Definitions and dilemmas. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership, 40*(5), 610-620. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143212451175

Creswell, J. (2009). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mix method approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8*(1), 1–50. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v8n1.2000

Earley, P., & Bubb, S. (2004). *Leading and managing continuing professional development*. London, UK: Paul Chapman.

Elmore, R. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, D.C.: The Albert Shanker Institute.

Fleming, P., & Amesbury, M (2012). The art of middle management: A guide to effective subject, year and team leadership. New York, NY: Routledge.

Fletcher-Campbell, F. (2003) Promotion to middle management: Some practitioners' perceptions. *Educational Research 45*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/0013188032000086082

Ganon-Shilon, S., & Schechter, C. (2018). School principals' sense-making of their leadership role during reform implementation. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 22*(3)*,* 279–300. https://doi.org/10.1080/13 603124.2018.1450996

Gronn, P. (2000). Distributed properties: A new architecture for leadership. *Educational Management and Administration, 28*(3), 317–338. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X000283006

Gunter, H., D. Hall, & Bragg, J. (2013). Distributed leadership: A study in knowledge production. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership, 41*(5), 555–580. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213488586

Haiyan, Q., Walker, A., & Xiaowei, Y. (2016). Building and leading a learning culture among teachers. A case study of a Shanghai primary school. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 45*(1), 101–122. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143215623785

Hall, D., H. Gunter, & Bragg, J. (2012). Leadership, new public management and the re-modelling and regulation of teacher identities. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 16*(2), 173–190. https://doi.org/10.108 0/13603124.2012.688875

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R.H. (2010). Leadership for learning: Does collaborative leadership make a difference in student learning?" *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership, 38*(6), 654–678. https://doi. org/10.1177/1741143210379060

Hammersley-Fletcher, L. & Strain, M. (2011) Power, agency and middle leadership in English primary schools. *British Educational Research Journal, 37*(5), 871–884. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2010.506944

Hargreaves, A., Boyle, A., & Harris, A. (2014). *Uplifting leadership: How organizaons, teams, and communies raise performance. New York, NY:* Wiley.

Harris, A. (2003). Distributed leadership in schools: Leading or misleading. *Management in Education*, *16*(5), 10-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/089202060301600504

Harris, A. **(**2009). *Distributed school leadership: Evidence, issues and future directions*. Penrith, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Leaders.

Harris, A. (2010). Distributed leadership: Current evidence and future directions. In Bush, T., Bell, L. & Middlewood, D. (Eds.), *The principles of educational leadership and management*. London, UK: Sage.

Heng, M. A., & Marsh, C. J. (2009). Understanding middle leaders: a closer look at middle leadership in primary schools in Singapore. *Educational Studies, 35*(5), 525–536. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690902883863

Hogg, M. A. (2011). A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *5*(3), 184-200. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0503_1

Hulpia, H., & Devos, G. (2010). How distributed leadership can make a difference in teachers' organizational

commitment? A qualitative study. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*, 565-575. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.08.006

Jones, M., & Harris, A. (2013) Disciplined collaboration: Professional learning with impact. *Professional Development Today, 15(4)*, 13-23

Khudriyah, K. (2017). The effect of leadership style and organizational culture toward teacher motivation of MTs Arrohman Jombang in academic of 2016/2017. *Al-Idaroh: Jurnal Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 1*(2), 1-17. Retrieved from http://jurnal.stituwjombang.ac.id/index.php/al-idaroh/article/view/16

Lárusdóttir, S. H., & O'Connor, E. (2017). Distributed leadership and middle leadership practice in schools: A disconnect? *Irish Educational Studies*, *36*(4), 423–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2017.1333444

Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2006). *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*. Nottingham, UK: National College of School Leadership

Leithwood, K. A. (1992). The move toward transformational leadership. *Educational, 49*(5), 8-12.

Maner, J. K., & Mead, N. L. (2010). The essential tension between leadership and power: When leaders sacrifice group goals for the sake of self-interest. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99*, 482-497. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018559

Minina, E. (2016). Quality revolution' in post-Soviet education in Russia: From control to assurance? *Journal of Education Policy, 32*(2), 176–197. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1250165

Morgan, D. L. (2014). Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: A pragmatic approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Muijs, D., & Reynolds, D. (2001). *Effective teaching: Evidence and practice*. London, UK: Paul Chapman.

Ng Foo Seong, D., & Ho, J. M. (2012). How leadership for ICT reform is distributed within a school. *International Journal of Educational Management, 26*(6), 529–549. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513541211251370

Razak N. A., Darmawan I. G. N., & Keeves, J. P. (2009). Teacher commitment. In L. J. Saha & A. G. Dworkin (Eds.), *International handbook of research on teachers and teaching* (vol. 21, pp. 343-360). Boston, MA: Springer.

Park, I. (2005). Teacher commitment and its effects on student achievement in American high schools. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, *11*, 461–485. https://doi.org/10.1080/13803610500146269

Parmenter, L. (2012). Community and citizenship in post-disaster Japan: The roles of schools and students. *Journal of Social Science Education*, *11*(3), 6-21.

Popova, N., Moiseenko, Ya., & Beavitt, T. (2017). Conformity in modern science: An engine of societal transformation? *Changing societies and personalities, 1*(3), 237-258. https://doi.org/10.15826/cps.2017.1.3.017

Schermerhorn, J. R., Osborn, R. N., Uhl-Bien, M. & Hunt, J. G. (2012). *Organisational behaviour: Experience, grow, contribute*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Inc.

Serdyukov P. (2017). Innovation in education: What works, what doesn't, and what to do about it? *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning, 10*(1), 4-33. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-10-2016-0007

Sun, J., Chen X., & Zhang, S. (2017). A review of research evidence on the antecedents of transformational leadership. *Education Sciences, 7*(1),15. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci7010015

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 36*(1), 3–34.

Teleshaliyev, N., Vranjesevic, J., Celebicic, I., Joshevska, M., Miljevic, G. (2019). Non-positional teacher leadership in the post-socialist context. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership*, *10*(1), 76–89.

Townsend, T. (2009). Third millennium leaders: Thinking and acting both locally and globally. *Leader and Policy in Schools*, *8*, 355-379. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15700760802535278

Vieluf S., et al. (2012). Teaching practices and pedagogical innovation: Evidence from TALIS. Paris, France: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264123540-e

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Oxford, UK: Harvard U Press.

Wise, C. (2001). The monitoring role of the academic middle manager in secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *29*(3), 333–341. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X010293007

The Impact of Cooperative Learning on Developing Speaking Ability and Motivation Toward Learning English

Ehsan Namaziandost

Islamic Azad University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ehsan Namaziandost, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Shahrekord Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord, Iran.
E-mail: e.namazi75@yahoo.com

Vida Shatalebi

Islamic Azad University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Vida Shatalebi, Department of English, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran. E-mail: vi_shatalebi@yahoo.com

Mehdi Nasri

Islamic Azad University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mehdi Nasri, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Shahrekord Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord, Iran.
E-mail: me_nasri@yahoo.com

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of cooperative learning in English language classrooms to enhance Iranian students' speaking skills and motivations. A pre-test–post-test control group design was employed to compare the impact of the cooperative learning approach with that of traditional whole-class instruction on speaking skills and six aspects of learning motivation: intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation. The data of the current study were gathered at multiple points of time before and after the end of the experiment to determine the effectiveness of cooperative learning on the sample's speaking skills and motivations. In practical terms, the sample's speaking skills were first examined through an English oral test prior to and after some cooperative learning instructional activities were provided. Next, a seven-point Likert scale-questionnaire was administered to the sample before and at the end of the course to check students' motivation towards the use of cooperative learning in English classes. The data were analyzed using basic and inferential statistical methods including mean scores, standard deviations, independent and paired sample t-tests, one-way ANCOVA, and effect size. The findings showed remarkable development in the students' speaking skills after the introduction of cooperative learning techniques. Moreover, the findings suggested significant differences in favor of cooperative learning for improving intrinsic motivation, but no differences were found on other aspects of motivation. In light of the findings, the researchers recommend that teachers could benefit from applying CL in English classes, which may in turn develop students' speaking skills and motivation.

Keywords: Cooperative learning; EFL; English speaking skills; intrinsic motivation; integrated regulation; identified regulation; introjected regulation; external regulation; amotivation

Introduction

Foreign language teaching in Iran seems to be quite outdated. Traditional methods like Grammar Translation Method (GTM) continue to be used. Old methods used in teaching English in Iranian schools failed to motivate the students and instigate their involvement in class activities; this is why these methods are structurally based. The grammar-oriented methods that are widely used in the Iranian educational system are not producing the desired results for real communication (Tahmasbi, Hashemifardnia, & Namaziandost, 2019). Accordingly, textbooks are structurally oriented and often not relevant to students' needs; too much emphasis is placed on the learning of grammar and vocabulary. Although successful and fluent communication is the final goal of EFL learners, little effort is made to actually help them learn to speak English as it is spoken by native speakers. Therefore, Iranian learners have lots of problems interacting with their interlocutors in the target language. Many Iranian EFL learners are grammatically proficient and they know an abundance of English words but they are unable to communicate fluently. In addition, after studying English for some years, numerous of EFL learners are not satisfied with their speaking proficiency level and become demotivated gradually (Keshmirshekan, Namaziandost, & Pournorouz, 2019).

English speaking skill is one of the four macro abilities needed to communicate effectively in any language, especially when students do not use their mother tongue. This ability is the concrete use of language and a means by which people interact with others (Namaziandost & Ahmadi, 2019). As indicated by Harmer (2008), language learners utilize every language they understand when they talk. Furthermore, speaking is a significant language teaching ability that allows language learners to interact not only in terms of their perspectives but also in terms of their answers (Richard, 2008; Ur, 2012). This ability is described, according to Soleimani and Khosravi (2018), as a policy method incorporating students in the use of language for the intent of attaining a specific speaking task.

Participating in English conversation courses and concepts of motive in studying a foreign language have been regarded as a significant problem in language teaching for more than four centuries. English oral communication in the academic realm is thought to be essential (Omer & Attamimi, 2014; Pattanapichet & Chinaokul, 2011). Traditional models of foreign language teaching place emphasis on the description of vocabulary, grammar, and other things in writing by educators. Learners could not understand new languages rapidly. Kayi (2006) believes that "language teaching has been evaluated for many years and English language teachers continue to teach language as a reiteration of drills or retention of lectures" (p.1). Traditional techniques of learning used in courses make learners feel tired (Amedu & Gudi, 2017; Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019).

There are four major problems in English teaching classes in Iran and they include: 1. Teacher-centered classes 2. Competition rather than cooperation 3. Unfamiliarity of teachers with cooperative learning mechanisms 4. Students' minimum knowledge of English proficiency. (Bagheri, Dabaghmanesh & Zamanian, 2013).

So, after a few years of learning English, learners are still unable to talk about the climate even though they understand a bunch of English language phrases and rules. A suitable technique that can be regarded as a substitution for traditional speaking training is co-operative teaching. It is used as a replacement for learner's instruction to improve speaking and social communication. (Namaziandost & Ahmadi, 2019; Ning, 2011).

In recent years, the change from a teacher-centered teaching model to a learner-centered model has been one of the biggest modifications in foreign language pedagogy. This change marks a fresh period in which English-speaking training must offer learners an opportunity to speak the language. Co-operative teaching acts as an alternative method for teaching by promoting speech and social interaction (Hernández & Boero, 2018; Russell, 2018). A study of the associated literature disclosed that most of the past research studied the implementation of cooperative learning (CL) in particular and its overall impact on the capacity of the student, rather than exploring the impacts of particular structures on the capacity of the student to generate and comprehend significant texts (Namaziandost, Rahimi Esfahani, Nasri, & Mirshekaran, 2018; Ning, 2011; Ning & Hornby, 2010). In Iran, however, the impact of cooperative learning on teaching English speaking skill has not been investigated. In this study, the researchers compared cooperative learning instruction to traditional instruction to discover the impact of cooperative learning instructions on students' English-speaking ability and motivation.

Traditionally, teacher-centered English courses were more common in Iranian classrooms (Nasri & Biria, 2017) and this technique likely impeded the speaking abilities and behavior of learners. There was inadequate communication and interaction between learners and educators in the school to help English-speaking learners improve, and Iran's labor demands were also rarely met.

Speaking practice in Iranian universities has been revealed to continue to enhance the advancement of learners' speaking in general (Nasri & Biria, 2017; Al-Sohbani, 2013). Speaking in most Iranian classrooms is mainly done by the teachers, who are deemed to be the authority of the school, and learners have no opportunity to exercise their language abilities and find it difficult to express their abilities and thoughts in English (Al-Sohbani, 2013).

The use of cooperative learning in teaching speaking has been the subject of extensive research (Al-Tamimi, & Attamimi, 2014; Bagheri, Dabaghmanesh, Zamanian, 2013; Kandasamy, & Habil, 2018; Nasri & Biria, 2017). A huge number of studies indicated that the utilization of cooperative learning techniques can result in positive attitudes towards cooperative learning and increased speaking skills (Alharby, 2015; Nasri & Biria, 2017; Suhendan & Bengu, 2014). Cooperative learning methods, which vary from traditional learning methods, have a few advantages resulting from social cooperation between students (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Namaziandost, Nasri, & Rahimi Esfahani, 2019). Classroom social interactions, according to Mackey (2007), are effective for overall language progress. It has been seen that learners who interact and speak more usually achieve better progress in oral skills than those who always keep silent (Namaziandost, Hashemifardnia, & Shafiee, 2019).

English speaking skill is one of the most significant abilities to be created and improved in language students, especially in a scholarly setting (Morozova, 2013). Therefore, there is a need to improve the present degree of speaking skill among college learners in Iran. This calls for a quick change to be made. As noted, the impacts of cooperative learning on learners' speaking skills and frames of mind have been frequently shown and affirmed by studies led in L1 and L2 learning situations (e.g. Namaziandost, Nasri, & Rahimi Esfahani, 2019; Ning, 2011; Talebi & Sobhani, 2012; Pattanpichet, 2011; Sühendan & Bengü, 2014). However, studies in this area with EFL students in Iran are rare. Therefore, further investigation to examine whether the positive effect of cooperative learning also holds true for enhancing Iranian students' speaking skills and attitudes still calls for empirical validation. Thus, it is the view of the researchers that Iranian university students can improve their academic performance if they are taught or instructed to become effectual and competent speakers.

Taking all the above into account, there seems to be an immediate necessity to produce a cooperative learning environment in Iranian EFL classrooms to develop students' speaking skills and attitudes, where teachers work as facilitators in the learning process and motivate creativity and cooperation among students. With these research incentives in mind, the researchers formulated the following research objectives and questions.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. Does cooperative learning have any significant effect on developing students' speaking skills?
RQ2. What is the effectiveness of the CL approach for improving students' learning motivation, compared with traditional instruction, in English teaching at a university in Iran?

Significance of the Study

The importance of the study springs out of the fact that CL plays a major role in language learning contexts. Current research seems to validate this view that cooperative learning increases social interactions among students and consequently leads to improving communication skills among them. University teachers will benefit from this study through using the up-to-date teaching methods used in the study, i.e. cooperative learning. English language classrooms should no longer be dominated by the teacher but should be more student-oriented, with the teacher adopting the role of facilitator. By doing so, it adds variety to teaching and learning contexts and makes it fun for the students to improve their speaking skills. Furthermore, there are no studies, to our knowledge, investigating the effects of cooperative learning on improving university students' speaking skills and attitudes in Iran. There is insufficient research, particularly in Iran, to draw any firm conclusions on the centrality of cooperative learning in the teaching and learning process of English.

Theoretical Background

The basic theoretical premises of cooperative learning and speaking performance are presented in this section. In addition, some previous studies that were carried out to examine the effects of cooperative learning on developing students' speaking skills and motivation are reviewed.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is defined as a set of instructional methods through which students are encouraged to work on academic tasks (Namaziandost, Nasri, & Rahimi Esfahani, 2019). It also refers to a teaching technique where students work in groups on a certain activity in order to maximize one another's learning and to achieve certain goals (Nasri & Biria, 2017). In CL, students work in small groups to help one another learn academic content (Amedu & Gudi, 2017). The teaching and learning process using CL techniques is a learner-centered paradigm that has gained popularity as an alternative to the lecture-based paradigm. Much of the current research revolves around the notion that CL has positive effects on various outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). Most studies on the effects of CL have consistently indicated that this method improves students' English oral skills (Pattanpichet, 2011), English reading comprehension (Bolukbas, Keskin, & Polat, 2011), and English writing (Nasri & Biria, 2017).

The role of teachers using the CL method shifts from transmitters of knowledge to mediators of learning (Nasri & Biria, 2017). This role involves facilitating, modeling, and coaching. Teachers adopting this role should maintain a safe, non-threatening, and learner-centered environment. This environment of teaching will help students contribute positively in the cooperative activities assigned to their group (Ning, 2011). For the activities to be genuinely cooperative, each type of activity requires the presence of five basic components of the CL (Namaziandost, Abdi Saray, & Rahimi Esfahani, 2018). Given the centrality of this concept to the current study, the CL basic components are given below.

Basic Components of CL

There are five key components that differentiate CL from simply putting students into groups to learn (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith 2006). The first one is positive interdependence. It refers to the idea that students are required to work together in order to achieve common learning objectives. In this case, students must believe that they are linked and that they either sink or swim in such a way that one cannot succeed if the others do not. Students need each other for support, explanations, and guidance. Without the assistance of the members, the group will not be able to accomplish the ideal goal. The second one is singular responsibility. It infers that each team member is responsible for his/her fair share to the group's prosperity. It is vital that the group knows who needs more help, support, and encouragement while working on a task. It is additionally fundamental that group members know they cannot "hitchhike" on the work of others (Al-Tamimi & Attamimi, 2014). It needs each student in the group to display a sense of personal responsibility to learn and help the rest of the group to learn as well. The third component is promotive interaction. It alludes to the connection of students in order to help them accomplish the task and the group's shared goals. Students need to interact verbally with one another on learning tasks (Tesfamichael, 2017). They are also expected to elucidate things from each other, train others, and provide each other with assistance, support, and encouragement. The fourth component is interpersonal and social skills. It refers to skills such as giving helpful feedback, reaching consensus, communication accurately and unambiguously, and involving every member in the learning process. However, not all students know these skills. They must be taught and practiced these skills before the groups tackle a learning task. Therefore, teachers should carefully and explicitly teach their students the required skills. The teacher is not a person who measures the capacities of the students in terms of the final product, but somebody who acts as a friend, coordinator, director, guide, counselor, and facilitator (Tesfamichael, 2017). Finally, group processing is an important aspect of CL. It requires group individuals to survey their capacities and commitment to the achievement of all tasks. It centers around positive practices and activities rather than on negative ones and includes learners contemplating how they learn. The educator may also elect to spend time explicitly concentrating on improving a skill, for example, speaking. The educator would then be able to screen the various groups during the learning exercises and give feedback on what has been observed.

Speaking Skill

Speaking is the verbal use of language and a medium through which human beings communicate with each other (Lazaraton, 2014; Namaziandost, Abedi, & Nasri, 2019). It is the most important skill that people need to communicate in everyday situations. Generally, speaking is the ability to express something in a spoken language. It is putting ideas into words to make other people grasp the message that is being conveyed. In this study, the term "speaking" is one of the four skills related to language teaching and learning.

At present, English is widely used as an instrumental language for various purposes and enjoys a higher status than in the past (Namaziandost, Abedi, & Nasri, 2019). According to Kandasamy and Habil (2018), English in the world is now associated with advancement in technology, trade, tourism, the internet, science, commerce, politics, and so forth, which has made English the most important language in different aspects of life. As a result, the ability to speak is required in many of the above fields, if not in all of them. However, most Iranian EFL students have difficulties in speaking English. They have troubles with pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension.

Considering the aforementioned problem, EFL teachers should train students to develop their oral communication. According to Brown (2007), oral communication can be maintained by having three components. The first one is fluency, which is the ability to speak spontaneously and eloquently with no unnatural pausing and with the absence of disturbing hesitation markers. It also refers to some aspects like responding coherently within the turns of the conversation, using linking words and phrases, keeping in mind comprehensible pronunciation and adequate intonation without too much hesitation (Mishan, & Timmis, 2015; Namaziandost, Abedi, & Nasri, 2019). The second component is accuracy. It refers to the mastery of phonology elements, grammar, and discourse. It also refers to the linguistic competence that deals with the correction of utterances to obtain efficient communication. According to Thornbury (2005), speaking English accurately means doing so without errors, or with only a few errors in grammar as well as in vocabulary and pronunciation. The third component is pronunciation. It is "the production and perception of the significant sounds of a particular language in order to achieve meaning in the context of language use. This comprises the production and perception of segmental sounds of stressed and unstressed syllables and of the speech melody or intonation" (Metruk, 2018; Shantha, & Mekala, 2017). Without good pronunciation, listeners cannot understand what another person says and this will make the communication process more difficult. Therefore, pronunciation plays a central role in both academic and social fields in the way that students can be able to participate and integrate successfully in their community. In conclusion, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation are three important and complementary components in the development of students' speaking skill.

Given the main components of speaking skill, EFL instructors need to introduce speaking activities. The types of activities that can be used are performance, guided, and creative activities. The choice of these activities depends upon what we want the learners to do. The first activity type is performance activities. They provide students with opportunities to communicate in the target language. Teachers and students at this point should concentrate on the meaning and intelligibility of the utterance, not the grammatical correctness. With practice, grammar errors should disappear. The second is guided activities. They include repetition practice or set sentences prompted by picture or word cues, and aim to improve the accurate use of words, structures, and pronunciation. In guided activities, the focus is usually on accuracy and the teacher makes it clear in the feedback that accuracy is important. Some examples of activities for controlled practices are: Find Someone Who, questionnaires, information gaps, etc. Guided activities include model dialogues that students can change to talk about themselves and to communicate their own needs and ideas, and tasks that the students carry out using language taught beforehand. Finally, creative activities are usually designed to give either creative practice opportunities for predicted language items, or general fluency practice, where the specific language focus is less relevant. Some activities for freer practice are: interaction or information gap, role-playing, simulations, free discussion, games, a jigsaw activity, and problem-solving. These activities are combined with cooperative techniques to motivate students and improve their speaking skill (Hedge, 2008; Kandasamy & Habil, 2018). These types of activities are important in teaching language for communication and help create interactions in the language classroom (Kumaran, 2017; Namaziandost & Rahimi Esfahani, 2018).

In a nutshell, there is a need to investigate the use of CL instruction in teaching speaking in Iranian classrooms. This can be done through carrying out experimental studies to investigate the effect of CL in enhancing students'

speaking skill and motivation. It is very important for students to attain good competence in speaking skills as being a skilled speaker is becoming crucial for expressing one's thoughts inside and outside schools.

Experimental Studies

Many researchers have conducted studies to find out how better to use CL for developing students' speaking skills and attitudes at the tertiary level. Pattanpichet (2011) conducted an experimental study to investigate the effects of using CL to promote students' speaking achievement. Thirty-five undergraduate students participated in the study. The students were enrolled in a required English course at Bangkok University to examine their speaking achievement on an oral English test before and after they had participated in instructional tasks based on the cooperative learning approach. To explore the students' views on the use of the CL, they were asked to complete a student diary after finishing each task, fill in a four-scale rating questionnaire, and join a semi-structured interview at the end of the course. The data were analyzed by frequency, mean, standard deviation, t-test, effect size, and content analysis. The findings reveal the improvement of the students' speaking performance and positive feedback from the students on the use of collaborative learning activities. The study provides suggestions and recommendation for further investigations.

Talebi and Sobhani (2012) conducted a study on the impact of CL on English language learners' speaking proficiency. Experimental design was used with 40 male and female students as a sample enrolled in a speaking course at an IELTS Center in Mashhad, Iran. They were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. The two groups were homogeneous in terms of their oral proficiency before carrying out this study. An oral interview was conducted to collect the data for the study. The control group received instructions in speaking; three sessions per week for one month, while the experimental group was taught speaking skills through CL. The results of the study showed that the performance of the experimental group for the oral interview held at the end of the course outperformed the control group. The mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than the control group.

An experimental study carried out by Ning (2011) to find out the effect of CL on enhancing tertiary students' fluency and communication. It aimed to offer students more opportunities for language production and thus enhance their fluency and effectiveness in communication. The test results showed students' English competence in skills and vocabulary in CL classes was superior to whole-class instruction, particularly in speaking, listening, and reading.

Ning and Hornby (2010) conducted a study to investigate the effects of CL on Chinese EFL learners' competencies in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary. Participants were 100 first-year English learners from a university in the north of China. A pre-test–post-test quasi-experimental design was employed to study the effects of the CL approach on students' language competencies compared to traditional instruction. The findings revealed clear differences in favour of the CL approach in the teaching of listening, speaking, and reading but no differences were found between the two approaches in the areas of writing and vocabulary.

Sühendan and Bengü (2014) investigated ELT students' attitudes towards CL. A questionnaire was given to 166 (F=100, M=66) university students whose ages were between 18-20 and were all studying in different faculties. A questionnaire on the students' attitudes regarding CL was administered. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive analyses. It was shown that 66.9% of the students were on the side of CL in ELT classes whereas 33.1% of them believed that they would have better results if they worked alone and thought working alone was more enjoyable. A focus group was organized and the students mentioned both positive and negative sides of cooperative work. Furthermore, the findings reported that there were differences in gender and attitudes towards CL that benefitted females.

Yang (2005) compared the effectiveness of CL and traditional teaching methods on Taiwanese college students' English oral performance and motivation towards learning. Sixty Taiwanese college students from two intact classes were involved in the study. A quasi-experimental with non-equivalent control group pre-test–post-test design was used. The total experimental period was eight weeks of instruction. The subjects were administered a pre-test and post-test, using the intermediate-level speaking component of the GEPT (General English Proficiency Test) as well as the MIQ (Motivational Intensity Questionnaire) as a pre-test and post-test in the study. One-way ANCOVA was used to analyze the speaking component (intermediate level) of the GEPT scores

and MIQ results. Data collection and analyses explored the effects of CL on the Taiwanese college students in terms of English oral performance and motivation to learn in favor of cooperative learning.

However, the search of the literature did not locate any study evaluating the impact of CL versus traditional teaching on university EFL learners' speaking ability and motivation for learning in Iran.

Methodology

Research design

Since randomization was not feasible, the current study employed quasi-experimental with a non-equivalent control group pre-test–post-test design. Two intact classes were selected through non-random assignment; one as a control group (n=45), and the other one the experimental group (n=45). The independent variable of this study is the CL method proposed for this study versus the traditional method used for teaching speaking. The dependent variables are the students' speaking skill and attitudes. The dependent variables were measured by comparing the students' speaking skills and attitudes in the pre-test with the students' speaking skill and attitudes in the post-test. The experimental group received instruction in speaking skills based on CL and the students of the control group were not exposed to this treatment as they were only exposed to the regular way of teaching followed in the college. Both groups were similar in sharing the same learning materials, schedule, and tests.

Participants

Ninety male EFL learners studying how to teach English as a foreign language (TEFL) at Islamic Azad University participated in this study. The subjects were of similar age, ranging from 20 to 22 years at the time of conducting the study. They were all homogeneous with regard to age, sex, ethnicity, mother tongue, exposure to English, and educational and cultural background. They were divided into two groups, 45 in the control group and 45 in the experimental group. In the experimental group, participants were divided into eight small groups and they were asked to undertake the speaking skill topics cooperatively using the speaking package. The CL techniques used with the intervention group were adapted from the Student Team Achievement-Division (STAD) (Slavin, 2014) and Numbered-Heads-Together (NHT) (Kagan & Kagan 2009). Foursomes were used as home teams, with special consideration given to the heterogeneity of English proficiency within a team and homogeneity between teams. Each home team, for which membership remained constant for the whole semester, chose its own name and each member in a team was assigned a code name, which is essential for implementing NHT. The general organization of sessions took the form of the adapted STAD including three components – class presentation, structured teamwork, and team assessment. Class presentation by the teacher was via whole-class instruction related to reading texts, writing skills, vocabulary, or grammar, or a replay of audiovisual materials if it was in the listening and speaking class. The whole-class instruction was brief compared with that in the traditional teaching group, because many learning materials were set aside to be completed by teamwork. For a team assignment, teammates needed to agree beforehand where and when to meet, how to divide the team task according to individual interests and competence, and what additional learning resources to access.

The structure of NHT was modified to organize the teamwork and assessment processes as follows. First, teammates worked on tasks within a given time limit. Each task was based on textbook learning materials, and might be a five-minute class activity (e.g. brainstorming vegetable names) or a team assignment to be completed within a couple of weeks (e.g. preparing a 10-minute speech on "brain drain in developing countries: reasons and results" based on their knowledge, information from textbooks, and after-class cooperative research). A small amount of Persian was allowed for team discussion but not for presenting work. The teacher was available to provide scaffolding when necessary. Second, one team was randomly selected as a presenting team, and then a particular code name was randomly selected from the team. Third, the student with the selected code name from the team presented his/her home team's work in front of the whole class. Fourth, the student's performance was assessed against the pre-set criteria by peers and the teacher through giving feedback and grades. Fifth, following the same procedures as the second, third and fourth steps, other students were selected to present their home teams' results and report back to the class. The presenters' grades were calculated based

on an average of the grades provided by the teacher, audience teams, and their home team, and were then recorded as their team grade. This team assessment system achieved a good balance between formative and summative assessment through the teacher and peers providing immediate feedback and assigning team grades. In addition, it particularly valued progress and effort by incorporating improvement points into assessment, that is, adjustments were made to previous team grades according to the extent of the improvement made at a particular time.

To sum up, this modified NHT strategy was used in order to have some teams present their work while not knowing in advance which teams would be selected, and to have one student represent his/her team while not knowing in advance who its representative would be. This technique thereby ensured positive interdependence and individual accountability was incorporated into teamwork and assessment, which enabled all the team members to feel motivated and obliged to learn, to help each other and to contribute to the team task, so that everyone was prepared and competent for presentations. In addition, formative assessment and improvement points were integrated into the use of the team grade which particularly recognized team progress, encouraged teams to compete with themselves rather than with others, and thus served as a motivating technique to foster perceived competence, team cooperation, and equal opportunities for success (see Ning (2011) for more details on tertiary EFL teaching using the CL approach).

The control group teacher followed the same regular way of teaching speaking skills adopted in the university. The traditional techniques used with the control group mainly involved teacher-dominated whole-class instruction, which focused on the accuracy of vocabulary and grammar, and the processing of texts lexically and syntactically. Peer interaction, language practice, and communicative fluency were not emphasized because teacher talk took up most of the class sessions. Discussion topics and learning tasks, which were carefully designed to suit students of different language levels within a cooperative team were also modified for use with the control group mostly in the form of direct instruction or occasionally traditional group work.

Traditional group work differed from CL teamwork mainly in four aspects. First, traditional groups were formed by putting several the nearest neighbors together on a random and temporary basis, while home teams with stable membership were used in the CL classroom. Second, traditional group work did not include two key elements of CL, that is, positive interdependence and individual accountability, which are essential for CL teamwork. Third, students in traditional groups worked together but volunteered to report on group work. It was mostly a small number of high-achievers who took the opportunity to speak. Sometimes no students would volunteer, so the teacher had to provide the answer himself. This formed a contrast with cooperative group work where everyone stood a chance of being selected as a team representative to present the results of their teamwork. Fourth, in traditional group work students were assessed individually, with the teacher as the sole assessor, while students in CL teams were assessed as a team, based on the opinion of both the teacher and students. So in the course evaluation, although it was the same for both groups that 70% of the final scores on the course came from the final examination at the end of the semester, the sources of the other 30% were different – it was individual grades on both class performance and assignments for the comparison group, while it was team grades for the intervention group.

All the classes were having the same number of hours of learning speaking skills during the time of the experiment.

Instruments

The study mainly used two research instruments. The first one was a speaking test used as a pre- test and a post-test to measure students' English-speaking performance. The test contains three tasks: talking about picture differences, reading a text aloud, and expressing one's opinion about a particular topic. The scoring rubric for the test provided a measure of the quality of the performance on the basis of five criteria: pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, and interactive communication on a five-rating scale (i.e., 1. Strongly Agree; 2. Agree; 3. Not Sure; 4. Disagree; 5. Strongly Disagree) based on the scales followed at Islamic Azad university in Iran (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011). The validity of a test is an important feature for a research instrument. An instrument is said to have validity if it measures exactly what it is supposed to measure (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). All the items on the speaking test were reviewed by the researchers as self-validation. Then the items were given to three experts to ensure the content validity of the test. The experts

were asked to validate and evaluate the test by completing a checklist for validating the English-speaking test. The results of the experts' evaluation of the test and the scoring rubric showed that all of the criteria used to assess the test on the five-point scale were viewed positively by the experts. The reliability of the speaking test used in this study was estimated by the test-retest method. It involved administering the same test twice to a group of students within the span of a few days (10 days) and calculating a correlation coefficient between the two sets of scores. The assumption was that the test takers would get the same scores on the first and the second administrations of the same test. This statistical method was adopted in order to obtain the reliability of the speaking test. The estimated reliability of the speaking test used in the current study was 0.85 measured through Cronbach's Alpha.

Another essential component to test reliability is that of inter-rater reliability. As it relates to the current study, inter-rater reliability is the degree of agreement between two scorers. If the level of reliability between the two scorers reaches the level of significance, this may indicate that the two scorers are fair in their scoring. In the current study, the correlation coefficients obtained for the two scorers were 0.910 and 0.914, respectively, indicating quite high inter-rater reliability. Therefore, this test is reliable for experimentation and could be considered a valid research tool for measuring the sample's speaking test. A scoring rubric, adopted from the Ministry of Higher Education – Iran (2011), was used along with the scoring sheet for the purpose of grading. The grading of the speaking skills was based upon five criteria: (1) pronunciation (20%), (2) grammatical accuracy (20%), (3) vocabulary (20%), (4) fluency (20%), and (5) interactive communication (20%).

The second instrument is a questionnaire that was used to measure students' motivation towards CL before and after the experiment. The measure of motivation used in this study was the LLOS (Language Learning Orientations Scale). The LLOS was developed by Dr Kimberly Noels (Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 2000) on the basis of self-determination theory. The LLOS consists of 42 items and is intended to measures six factors: intrinsic motivation (10 items), integrated regulation (eight items), identified regulation (six items), introjected regulation (seven items), external regulation (seven items), and amotivation (four items). All the items on the subscales apart from amotivation share the stem "I am learning English …" Example items are "… because it's a great feeling to be able to use English" (intrinsic motivation), "… because it will enable me to better understand English speakers' life and culture" (integrated regulation), "… because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak English" (identified regulation), "… because I would feel ashamed if I couldn't speak to English speakers in English" (introjected regulation), "… because I want to complete an academic requirement" (external regulation), and "I don't know; I cannot come to understand why I am studying English" (amotivation).

A seven-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, ranging from one to seven (respectively representing "does not correspond at all" to "corresponds exactly") for scoring. The LLOS was already available in English. However, some minor changes and adjustments were made to the Persian translation of several items for a clearer understanding, and the researchers have reported these changes to Dr. Noels. The two sets of data, from the pre-test and the post-test, indicated good internal reliability for the LLOS. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the total scale are 0.989 in the pre-test and 0.956 in the post-test. All six subscales had Cronbach's alphas above 0.85.

Data Collection Procedures

Before the experiment started, an oral performance test and attitudinal questionnaire were administered to the students in the control and the experimental groups. After that, the actual experiment began. Students in the control group were taught through the traditional method of teaching speaking skills, while the students in the experimental group were taught using CL. Students in the experimental group were divided into six groups, each consisting of five students. However, the students were able to select the group members to work with on alternate weeks during the study period, i.e. three months. Throughout the group work, each member had to present a topic. Then each group discussed a chosen topic, exchanged ideas, helped each other, and shared knowledge. Each group member was assigned a role and responsibility that must be fulfilled if the group was to function effectively. Those roles were assigned to ensure interdependence. At the end of the study, post-tests of oral performance and students' motivation towards CL were given to the students.

Data analysis

To find out the effect of CL on speaking competence, descriptive statistics including mean scores and standard deviations of the pre-test and post-test were used. Inferential analysis was used to find out if any significant differences were found between the control and experimental groups in both the pre-test and post-test. A normality test was used to determine if a sample or any group of data fits a standard normal distribution. Inferential analysis was used to find out if any significant differences were found between the control group and experimental group in both the pre- and post-tests. However, statistical significance does not tell us the most important thing about the size of the effect. One way to overcome this confusion is to report the effect size, which is simply a way of quantifying the size of the difference between two groups ((Thalheimer & Cook, 2002). It is particularly valuable for quantifying the effectiveness of a particular intervention, relative to some comparison (Coe, 2002). Since the "d" value is not directly provided by SPSS, Pallant (2007) recommends a very useful website that provides a quick and easy way to calculate Cohen's d at http://www.uccs.edu/~faculty/lbecker/. In this study, the effect size was reported using the effect size "d" as proposed by Cohen (1992). The justification for using Cohen's "d" stems from "its burgeoning popularity" among large numbers of published studies (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002, p.2). Additionally, Cohen's "d" has a benchmark by which a researcher can compare the effect size of an experiment to a well-known benchmark (ibid). Guidelines for interpreting the d value vary according to different academic fields and research purposes. According to Cohen (1988), effect sizes of around 0.2 are small, 0.5 moderate, and 0.8 large. However, Slavin (2014) considered effect sizes over 0.25 to be educationally meaningful. Recently, based on a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement in the field of education, Hattie (2009) found 0.4 to be the average effect size for educational interventions, suggesting that an effect size above 0.4 is above average and therefore worth noting when evaluating educational outcomes. Since Hattie's guideline is based on a large number of educational studies, it is considered the most appropriate for this research.

Moreover, the data collected for analysis in this research comprised pre-test and post-test scores on the LLOS in six areas: intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation. The 25th version of SPSS was used to conduct data analysis on the effects of the adapted CL method versus traditional instruction on each of these areas. Since the two groups showed some differences on the pre-test, a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used with pre-test scores as the covariate, post-test scores as the dependent variable, and type of group as the fixed factor. This ANCOVA procedure is able to hold constant any differences in the pre-test scores and evaluates the post-test differences between groups (Pallant 2007).

To sum up, the data in this research were analyzed by means of a range of statistical techniques, which include paired-samples t-tests, effect sizes, and one-way ANCOVAs. It is believed that the combined use of a variety of analysis techniques enables the researcher to have a clearer picture about the phenomenon of interest (Thalheimer, & Cook, 2002). Therefore, it contributes to obtaining more valid and reliable results, and reduces the possibility of biased findings due to the use of a single statistical analysis.

Results

The main results are presented and displayed based on the questions of the study. The data obtained from the pre-/post-test of the oral performances and the motivation were analyzed and interpreted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were used to answer the research questions.

Results for the Normality Test

The *p* values under the *Sig.* column in Table 1 determine whether the distributions were normal or not. A *p* value greater than .05 shows a normal distribution, while a *p* value lower than .05 demonstrates that the distribution has not been normal. Since all the *p* values in Table 1 were larger than .05, it could be concluded that the distributions of scores for the pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire obtained from both groups had been normal. It is thus safe to proceed with parametric tests (i.e. Independent and paired samples t-tests and one-way ANCOVA in this case) and make further comparisons between the participating groups.

Table 1
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (Groups' Pre-tests, Post-tests, and Questionnaire)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	**df**	**Sig.**
Exp. Speaking pre	.14	45	.094
Exp. Speaking post	.27	45	.098
Cont. Speaking pre	.27	45	.112
Cont. Speaking post	.34	45	.090
Exp. Motivation Questionnaire pre	.18	45	.187
Exp. Motivation Questionnaire post	.22	45	.086
Cont. Motivation Questionnaire pre	.21	45	.772
Cont. Motivation Questionnaire post	.17	45	.183

Results for Research Question One

As pointed out above, the first research question of the study was: Does cooperative learning have any significant effect on developing students' speaking skills? The overall average mean score of the experimental group on the pre-test was 59.13 with a standard deviation of 2.94, while that of the control group was 58.46 with a standard deviation of 2.61. As shown in Table 2, the speaking performance mean scores of the experimental group were all similar to the scores of the control group. Relative to each other, both the control and the experimental groups were similar in their speaking skills before carrying out the experiment.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the Experimental and Control Groups in the Pre-test of Speaking Performance

	Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Pre-test	Experimental group	45	59.13	2.94	.43
	Control group	45	58.46	2.61	.39

In order to find out whether this difference between the pre-test scores of the EG and CG learners was statistically significant or not, the following t-test table had to be checked:

Table 3
Independent Samples T-Test of Experimental and Control Groups in the Pre-test

	F	**Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**		**t-test for Equality of Means**				
		Sig.	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error Difference**	
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	.90	.34	1.13	88	.259	.66	.58
	Equal variances not assumed			1.13	86.807	.259	.66	.58

Table 3 demonstrates a lack of any significant statistical difference at the confidence level of $\alpha=0.05$ between the students in the control and experimental groups before the experiment. The p- value .259>0.05 reveals that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the pre-test ($\alpha=0.05$). Thus, it is evident that the two groups had the same level of English-speaking competence before the experiment.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-test of Speaking Performance

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	Experimental group	45	63.48	7.63	1.13
	Control group	45	58.91	2.32	.34

However, the mean score of the experimental group on the post-test was 63.48 with a standard deviation of 7.63 while that of the control group on the post-test was 58.91 with a standard deviation of 2.32. Table 4 presents the speaking competence mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test which were all higher than the scores of the control group. This result provides confirmatory evidence of a noticeable increase in the post-test mean score of speaking skill in favor of the experimental group.

To ensure that the difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post-test were statistically significant, an independent sample t- test was run. Table 5 shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the post-test between the experimental and control groups in of favor of the experimental group with t- value =3.84, p= .000 < 0.05.

Table 5
Independent Samples T-Test of Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-test

	F	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	40.08	.000	3.84	88	.000	4.57	1.18
	Equal variances not assumed			3.84	52.08	.000	4.57	1.18

In order to find out whether the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of learners in each group (i.e., EG and CG) was statistically significant or not, the following *t*-test was run:

Table 6
Results of the Paired-Samples T-Test Comparing Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the EG and CG

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Exp. Post – Exp. Pre	4.35	6.16	.91	4.74	44	.000
Pair 2	Cont. Post – Cont. Pre	.44	1.51	.22	1.96	44	.056

Table 6 revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test (M = 59.13, SD = 2.94) and post-test (M = 63.48, SD = 7.63) scores of the EG learners since the p value under the Sig, (2-tailed) column was smaller than the significance level (i.e. .000 < .05). This indicates that the treatment (Using cooperative learning) was effective as far as the speaking skills of the Iranian EFL learners were concerned. Regarding the control group, which received traditional instruction, no significant difference was found since the Sig, (2-tailed) column was a little higher than the significance level (i.e. .056 .05). Thus, it can be concluded that cooperative learning was more effective than traditional instruction.

To further compare differences between the experimental group and control group and to find out the effect of CL on students' speaking competence, the overall post-test scores of the two groups were compared. The results revealed an effect size of 0.81 which can be interpreted as a large effect of the independent variable (CL) on the dependent variable (speaking skill).

Results for Research Question Two

The second research question of the study was: What is the effectiveness of the CL approach for improving students' learning motivation, compared with traditional instruction, in English teaching at a university in

Iran? The results obtained from the analysis of the scores on the LLOS are summarized in Table 7, which includes mean scores, standard deviations, effect sizes, and p values from paired-samples t-tests within each group and the ANCOVAs, in each of the six aspects of the LLOS.

Table 7
Summary of Results on The LLOS for the Experimental and Control Groups

LLOS (42 items)	Group	Pre/Post	Mean	SD	Sig. t-test	Effect size	Sig. ANCOVA
Intrinsic motivation (10 items)	Exp.	Pre	35.86	8.98	0.00	0.49	0.05
		Post	40.68	10.89			
	Cont.	Pre	35.67	11.02	0.008	0.19	
		Post	37.49	10.26			
Integrated motivation (8 items)	Exp.	Pre	27.98	5.34	0.07	0.21	0.79
		Post	29.36	7.09			
	Cont.	Pre	27.96	9.14	0.07	0.14	
		Post	29.39	8.29			
Identified motivation (6 items)	Exp	Pre	26.56	5.36	0.03	0.18	0.69
		Post	27.59	5.96			
	Cont.	Pre	28.11	5.69	0.29	0.15	
		Post	29.31	5.61			
Introjected motivation (7 items)	Exp.	Pre	23.14	6.02	0.08	0.19	0.89
		Post	24.16	6.94			
	Cont.	Pre	23.21	7.34	0.16	0.17	
		Post	24.39	6.98			
External motivation (7 items)	Exp.	Pre	34.36	6.29	0.42	0.08	0.13
		Post	34.96	6.48			
	Cont.	Pre	30.94	7.09	0.45	-0.07	
		Post	29.86	7.19			
Amotivation (4 items)	Exp.	Pre	24.02	4.18	0.16	0.16	0.71
		Post	24.59	3.06			
	Cont.	Pre	21.96	4.18	0.19	0.24	
		Post	22.88	3.96			

In the area of intrinsic motivation, results of paired-samples t-tests showed that the experimental group [t (44) = 4.36] increased significantly from pre-test to post-test, but the control group [t (44) = 1.91] did not. According to Hattie's (2009) guidelines, the effect size (of 0.49) for the experimental group was above average, but this was not the case for the experimental group. The Sig. ANCOVA=0.05 indicated a significant difference on the post-test between the two groups after adjusting for pre-test scores. In the other five areas of integrated regulation: identified motivation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation, results of ANCOVAs showed no significant difference between the two groups. Although effect sizes for both groups were below the average, results of t-tests indicated that the experimental group [t (44) = 2.10] improved significantly in the area of identified regulation, but the control group [t (44) = 1.06] did not. In the other four areas of integrated regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation, both t-tests and effect sizes showed no significant improvements for both the experimental group and the control group.

To sum up, the overall findings on the LLOS indicated that participants in the intervention group significantly improved their intrinsic motivation and identified regulation from pre-test to post-test, whereas the comparison group did not show significant improvements in any areas on the LLOS. However, according to the results of the ANCOVAs, it was only in the area of intrinsic motivation that the improvements of the two groups differed significantly. These findings were further supported by effect size statistics. The only effect size that was above average occurred with the intervention group in the area of intrinsic motivation.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal positive outcomes both in terms of Iranian EFL students' oral performance and motivation towards the use of CL as a new instructional method in English speaking classrooms in Iran. The findings of the study are discussed based on the two research questions of the study.

The first research question sought to find out whether CL has any effect on improving the speaking skills of the Iranian university EFL students in the sample. The performance of the experimental group after being exposed to CL activities showed a significant difference between the results of the experimental and control groups. The experimental group showed a positive score difference and/or improvement after the CL method was introduced as a teaching technique in speaking skill classrooms; whereas the performance of the control group, which was exposed to the traditional method for learning speaking skills, showed no significant difference between the results of the pre-test and post-tests of speaking skill. This could be attributed to the fact that the traditional teaching method in Iran is teacher-based, in which less opportunity is given to students to practice their speaking skills in classrooms. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ning and Hornby (2010) that showed significant differences in scores between the pre-test and post-tests in favor of the experimental group that was provided with CL treatment in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary. The results proved that CL is essential for maximizing speaking proficiency. Along similar lines, the finding of Johnson and Johnson (2003) supported the claim that CL resulted in higher individual achievement. The findings of this study provide confirmatory evidence in support of the results gained by Talebi and Sobhani (2012), Pattanpichet (2011), Ning (2011), and Yang (2005), which asserted that the CL approach can contribute to the improvement of students' speaking proficiency. A closer look at the data of the current study indicates that CL is highly recommended over the traditional method in teaching English speaking skills at the university level in Iran. The study signifies the possibility of implementing the CL method in Iranian schools and, thus, Iranian EFL learners can increase their communicative ability.

In other words, in a comfortable context such as cooperative learning, the students in the experimental group were able to demonstrate higher oral classroom participation, which is related to their statistically significant gain in language proficiency (Soleimani & Khosravi, 2018).

Similarly, Tuncel (2006), who used supplementary communicative and authentic materials with his subjects, suggested "The addition of a communicative element leads to higher students' achievement in measuring their test scores, and later in their specialist studies" (p.2).

Based on the results of the present study, there was no statistic significant difference between the control group's pre-test and post-test. One can argue that this was expected, since the control group most probably had no opportunities to do communicative activities. Practitioners (Namaziandost & Rahimi Esfahani, 2018; Woods, 2013) argue that traditional methods are untrustworthy and inadequate because they do not help students use the target language as it is used in real-life situations, where they need to communicate effectively with others.

Since studying according to the traditional methods did not help students to cope with the target language in what Zhang, Peng, and Sun (2017) would describe as its normal communicative use, the control group could not improve their speaking skills. In the traditional classroom, much of the students' time is devoted to learning and memorizing language forms.

Based on the results, cooperative learning had a positive effect on the student's speaking skills. The big differences between the experimental group and the control group could be attributed to many reasons; firstly, during the experiment, the group work used for the experimental group provided the students with opportunities to speak for most of the English period. On the other hand, the control group followed the traditional method. Secondly, because of the Kagan's cooperative structures in the experimental group, all of the students were encouraged to speak and tried to be active so they became more confident and more willing to speak; but in the control group, students who studied in the traditional classroom did not have the opportunity to be responsible for their own learning and they were not very active in the class. Finally, such a student-centered teaching method helped improve the student's' oral communicative competence of the target language because it created a friendlier and more supportive learning environment within which students had more opportunities and enjoyed the freedom to practice the target language.

The significant gains of the experimental group on the interaction-based task supported Brown's (2007) and Kagan's (1995) views that cooperative learning was actually a practice that could put the communicative approach into action. Such findings were congruent with Woods's (2013) claim that cooperative learning was considered the best instructional format for enhancing learner's communicative competence. Yu (2004) stated in his research that one of the obstacles that hinders CL in the class is the classroom size; if the classroom size is big, students may get fewer opportunities to practice English.

The second research question sought to determine whether CL could improve students' attitudes more than the conventional method. The major finding on the LLOS is that the experimental group, which was taught using the CL approach, improved on intrinsic motivation more than the comparison group instructed by traditional methods, although the difference was only marginally statistically significant. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups in the other five aspects of motivation. These findings and the possible reasons for them are discussed below.

The finding that the CL approach was superior to traditional instruction in enhancing learners' intrinsic motivation supports the widely accepted view that CL generates higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Jacobs & Goh 2007; Johnson & Johnson 2003; Kagan & Kagan 2009; Soleimani & Khosravi, 2018). Supportive evidence for this was also revealed in some studies (Derwing & Munro, 2013) that indicated that, when compared with traditional teaching, CL was more likely to improve students' positive attitudes towards EFL learning, which may facilitate students' interest and intrinsic motivation to learn. The positive link between CL and intrinsic motivation may be primarily attributed to the ability of CL to facilitate a supportive and non-threatening learning atmosphere where students find it fun and enjoyable to learn and, thus, are intrinsically motivated to achieve goals.

In this research, there are four possible reasons for the finding of increased intrinsic motivation. These are closely associated with the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness. First, students in the CL group had opportunities to use English as a communicative tool when working on team tasks. When students found they could successfully use the English language to complete a task or do something real and meaningful, they may have experienced positive feelings caused by meeting challenges and a high level of satisfaction from the outcomes of their learning. This experience could have satisfied their need for competence and generated a sense of accomplishment, which further stimulated their desire and interest to learn and try out the language. Second, students were allowed more ownership and control over their learning in the CL group, for instance, by choosing their topics, sub-tasks, or ways of completing teamwork, assigning individual accountability to team members, or assessing their learning outcomes through self and peer grading. Empowering students and increasing their autonomy in learning may also have been conducive to the enhancement of intrinsic motivation. Third, intrinsic motivation tends to result from meaningful feedback relevant to the extent to which students competently complete their current tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). In the CL group, meaningful feedback was provided by peers and the teacher immediately after the selected teams had presented their work. Through feedback from others, students should have gotten a clear picture about what their strengths and weaknesses were and how they could improve their work, which could have led to the feeling that their work and effort were valued and recognized by the teacher and their peers. This may have facilitated their intrinsic motivation for setting up new attainable goals and getting engaged in learning tasks. Fourth, it is believed that when students realize that their personal achievement is important and beneficial to peers they feel more positively related to others and, thus, intrinsically motivated to accomplish more (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Law, 2011). In their research, students in the CL classroom were clear that everyone stood a chance of representing their home team and that their success would benefit other teammates. This could have facilitated teammates' enthusiasm for positive interpersonal support and further promoted students' intrinsic motivation to improve and achieve.

In brief, this research suggests that CL may have an important role to play in tertiary English teaching in Iran because of the findings that CL was better than traditional teaching in improving learners' intrinsic motivation. Even though intrinsic motivation is considered a critical factor for enjoyable and successful language learning in the long run, it is particularly hard to attain in the foreign language learning context (Carreira 2011), and typically declines among tertiary foreign language learners (Busser & Walter 2013; Namaziandost & Ahmadi, 2019), this study may be of considerable interest to foreign language teachers who work in tertiary education.

Conclusion

In summary, CL as a student-centered approach improves the speaking skills and motivation among the students in this study. Therefore, teachers in schools, especially teachers who teach English speaking skills need to be aware of the benefits and importance of CL. There are positive changes taking place when teachers change their teaching methods towards a more student-centered approach. Teachers need to master the types of speaking techniques to be used and plan how to implement them with the CL method. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to practice this method regularly and effectively. There is overwhelming evidence corroborating the notion that CL has a positive effect on the formation of positive motivation towards speaking among students. Finally, and on the basis of the evidence provided by this research, it seems quite reasonable to state that CL has many benefits, such as improving speaking skills and motivation. Although, there is no 'perfect methodology', CL is an instructional method that is effective in enhancing the acquisition of English-speaking skills and improving students' motivation.

However, several limitations in this research may affect the validity or generalizability of its results. Considering these limitations, some recommendations include:

1. The number of participants was restricted only to 90 students. So, the findings must be generalized and used with caution. Future studies should include more participants.
2. Only male students were included in this study, therefore; the results may not be generalizable to female students. It is recommended that both genders be considered in future researches.
3. The LLOS is purely a self-report instrument, which provides a picture of respondents' beliefs about themselves and may not provide an accurate reflection of their motivation levels. In other words, they may select responses that are assumed to be more socially acceptable even if they are not actually the truth (Gay, Mills, & Airasian 2009). A recommendation for future research is to employ mixed methods research designs including both quantitative data (e.g. from tests or surveys) and qualitative data (e.g. from interviews with students or teachers) in a single study. This approach to research is considered conducive to understanding research settings both broadly (i.e. from quantitative data) and deeply (i.e. from qualitative data). The in-depth qualitative data obtained from interviews with participants may partly remedy the possible effects of the response set existing in self-report instruments.
4. The foregoing discussion implies that not only does CL improve speaking skills, but can strongly and indirectly enhance students' motivation. The skill that has been investigated in this study was speaking. Hence, future research should also focus on whether the same results will be yielded by investigating the impact of CL on other English skills such as writing and reading.
5. Future research should also replicate the same study in all other disciplines and in urban areas or again in rural areas.
6. Based on the findings of the current study, it is recommended that English teachers should adopt CL as an effective learning method in order to improve students' speaking performance. Finally, in respect of the findings and the other empirical findings, we suggest that CL should be part of the daily instructional methods used in all the teacher training programmes in Iran. It is the responsibility of teachers to be aware of the various learning preferences that students bring to the classroom and to try to take full advantage of them during the daily teaching and learning process.
7. The application of the CL method should be tested at different levels of education, such as elementary, secondary, and higher education.
8. This study only lasted for one term; therefore, prospective researchers should take a longer time to cross validate the results of the current study.

References

Alharby, H. A. (2015). Improving students' English-speaking proficiency in Saudi public schools. *International Journal of Instruction, 8*(1), 105-115.

Al-Sohbani, Y. A. (2013). An exploration of English language teaching pedagogy in secondary Yemeni education: A case study. *International journal of English Language & Translation Studies, 1*(3), 40-55.

Al-Tamimi, N. O. M., & Attamimi, R. A. (2014). Effectiveness of cooperative learning inenhancing speaking

skills and attitudes towards learning English. *International Journal of Linguistics, 6*(4), 27-45. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v6i4.6114

Amedu, O. I., & Gudi, K. C. (2017). Attitude of students towards cooperative learning in some selected secondary schools in Nasarawa state. *Journal of Education and Practice, 8*(10), 29-34.

Bagheri, M. S., Dabaghmanesh, T., & Zamanian, M. (2013). The Effect of cooperative learning approach on Iranian EFL students' achievement among different majors in general English course. *International Journal of Linguistics, 5*(6), 1-11.

Bolukbas, F., Keskin, F., & Polat, M. (2011). The effectiveness of cooperative learning in the reading comprehension skills in Turkish as a foreign language. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 10*(4), 330-335.

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Teaching by principles* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Longman.

Busser, V., & Walter, C. (2013). Foreign language learning motivation in higher education: A longitudinal study of motivational changes and their causes. *The Modern Language Journal, 97*, 435–456. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2013.12004.x

Carreira, J. M. (2011). Relationship between motivation for learning EFL and intrinsic motivation for learning in general among Japanese elementary school students. *System 39*, 90–102.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2013). The development of L2 oral language skills in two L1 groups: A 7-year study. *Language Learning, 63*(2), 163-185. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12000

Gagne, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 26*, 331–362. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.322

Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2009). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications (*9th ed.). London, UK: Pearson Education.

Harmer, J. (2008). How to teach English. Essex, UK: Pearson.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 Meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London, UK: Routledge.

Hedge, T. (2008). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hernández, T., & Boero, P. (2018). Explicit intervention for pragmatic development during short-term study abroad: An examination of learner request production and cognition. *Foreign Language Annals*, *51*(2), 389-410. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12334

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2003). Student motivation in co-operative groups: Social interdependence theory. In R. M. Gillies & A. F. Ashman (Eds.), *Cooperative learning: The social and intellectual outcomes of learning in groups* (pp. 137–176). London. UK: Routledge.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. A. (2006). *Active learning: Cooperation in the college classroom*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.

Kagan, S. (1995). When we talk: Cooperative learning in the elementary ESL classroom. *Elementary Education Newsletter, 17*(2), 1- 6.

Kagan, S., & Kagan, M. (2009). *Kagan cooperative learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing.

Kandasamy, C., & Habil, H. (2018). Exploring cooperative learning method to enhance speaking skills among school students. *LSP International Journal, 5*(2), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v5n2.59

Kayi, H. (2006). Teaching speaking: Activities to promote speaking in a second language. *TESOL, 11*(12), 1-6.

Keshmirshekan, M. H., Namaziandost, E., & Pournorouz, M. (2019). The impacts of creative writing activities on Iranian EFL learners' progress in writing, writing dispositions: Focus on attitude to English course. *International Journal of Educational Research, 3*(9), 12-22.

Kumaran, S. (2017). Benefits and shortcomings of role-play as a speaking activity in English language classrooms. *The English Teacher, 39*(1), 72-93.

Law, Y. (2011). The effects of cooperative learning on enhancing Hong Kong 5th graders' achievement goals, autonomous motivation and reading proficiency. *Journal of Research in Reading, 34*(4), 402-425. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2010.01445.x

Lazaraton, A. (2014). Second language speaking. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. Brinton & M. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed., pp. 106-120). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning.

Leong, M., & Ahmadi, S. M. (2017). An analysis of factors influencing learners' English-speaking skill. *International Journal of Research in English Education, 6*(2) 34-41.

Mackey, A. (2007). *The conversational interaction in second language acquisition*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Metruk, R. (2018). *Researching speaking. Teaching and assessment*. Olomouc, Czech Republic: Palacký University

Olomouc.

Ministry of Higher Education. (2011). *Laws and regulation and rules of higher education and scientific research*. Tehran, Iran: Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mishan, F., & Timmis, I. (2015). *Materials development for TESOL*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Namaziandost, E., & Ahmadi, S. (2019). The assessment of oral proficiency through holistic and analytic techniques of scoring: A comparative study. *Applied Linguistics Research Journal, 3*(2), 70–82. http://doi.org/10.14744/alrj.2019.83792

Namaziandost, E., Abdi Saray, A., & Rahimi Esfahani, F. (2018). The effect of writing practice on improving speaking skill among pre-intermediate EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 8*(1), 1690-1697. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0812.16

Namaziandost, E., Abedi, P., & Nasri, M. (2019). The role of gender in the accuracy and fluency of Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' L2 oral productions. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research, 6*(3), 110-123.

Namaziandost, E., Nasri, M., & Rahimi Esfahani, F. (2019). Pedagogical efficacy of experience-based learning strategies for improving the speaking fluency of upper-intermediate male and female Iranian EFL students. *International Journal of Research in English Education, 4*(2), 29-41.

Namaziandost, E., & Rahimi Esfahani, F., (2018). The impact of writing practices on enhancing productive skills among pre-intermediate EFL learners. *Asean Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 10*(1), 61-80.

Namaziandost, E., Rahimi Esfahani, F., Nasri, M., & Mirshekaran, R. (2018). The effect of gallery walk technique on pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking skill. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly, 8*, 1–15.

Nasri, M., & Biria, R. (2017). Integrating multiple and focused strategies for improving reading comprehension and l2 lexical development of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 6*(1), 311-321. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.6n.1p.311

Nasri, M., Namaziandost, E., & Akbari, S. (2019). Impact of pictorial cues on speaking fluency and accuracy among Iranian pre-intermediate EF learners. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies, 8*(3), 99-109. http://dx.doi.org/10.18488/journal.23.2019.83.99.109

Ning, H. (2011). Adapting cooperative learning in tertiary ELT. *ELT Journal, 65*(1), 60-70. http://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccq021

Ning H., & Hornby, G. (2010). The effectiveness of cooperative learning in teaching English to Chinese tertiary learner. *Effective Education, 2*(2), 99-116. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415532.2010.522792

Noels, K. A., L. G. Pelletier, R. Clement, & R. J. Vallerand. (2000). Why are you learning a second language? Motivational orientations and self-determination theory. *Language Learning, 50*, 57–85. https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00111

Omer, N., & Attamimi, R. (2014). Effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing speaking skills and attitudes towards learning English. *International Journal of Linguistics, 6*(4), 27-42. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v6i4.6114

Pallant, J. (2007). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS version 15* (3rd ed.). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Pattanpichet, F. (2011). The effects of using collaborative learning to enhance students' English-speaking achievement. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning, 8*(11), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.19030/tlc.v8i11.6502

Pattanpichet, F., & Chinaokul, S. (2011). Competencies needs in oral communication in English among Thai undergraduate public relation students: A substantial gap between expectation and reality. *RELC Journal, 42*(2), 187- 202. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688211401253

Richards, J., C. (2008). Teaching listening and speaking. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Russell, V. (2018). Web-based pragmatics resources: Techniques and strategies for teaching L2 Spanish pragmatics to English speakers. In D. Dumitrescu & P. Andueza (Eds.), *L2 Spanish pragmatics: From research to teaching* (Series: Advances in Spanish Language Teaching). New York, NY: Routledge.

Shantha, S., & Mekala, S. (2017). The role of oral communicative tasks (OCT) in developing the spoken proficiency of engineering students. *Advances in Language and Literacy Studies, 8*(2), 161-169. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.8n.2p.161

Slavin, R. E. (2014). Cooperative learning and academic achievement: Why does groupwork work? *Anales de Psicologia, 30*(3), 785-791. https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.30.3.201201

Soleimani, H., & Khosravi, A. (2018). The effect of Kagan's cooperative structures on speaking skill of Iranian EFL learners. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies, 6*(1). 20-31.

Sühendan, E. R., & Bengü, A. A. (2014). The attitudes of students towards cooperative learning in ELT classes. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching, 1*(2), 31-45.

Tahmasbi, S., Hashemifardnia, A., & Namaziandost, E. (2019). Standard English or world Englishes: Issues of ownership and preference**.** *Journal of Teaching English Language Studies, 7*(3), 83-98.

Talebi, F., & Sobhani, A. (2012). The impacts of cooperative learning on oral proficiency. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 3*(3), 75-79. https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2012.v3n3p75

Tesfamichael, W. (2017). Students' attitudes towards cooperative learning in EFL writing class. *Arabic   Language, Literature & Culture, 2*(3), 60-68. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.allc.20170203.12

Thalheimer, W., & Cook, S. (2002). How to calculate effect sizes from published research articles: A simplified methodology. Retrieved from http://work-learning.com/effect_sizes.htm.

Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Harlow, UK: Longman.

Tuncel, E. (2006). An evaluative of the relationship between instructional differences and learning outcomes: A survey-based and experimental study of a more communicative approach to language teaching in a traditional setting. *Dissertation Abstract International, 67*(02), 483 (UMI No. 824132).

Ur, P. (2012). *A course in English language teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Woods, P. (Ed.). (2013). *Contemporary issues in teaching and learning*. London, UK: Routledge.

Yang, A. V. (2005). *Comparison of the effectiveness of cooperative learning and traditional teaching methods on Taiwanese college students' English oral performance and motivation towards learning* IUnpublished Adoctoral dissertation). La Sierra University, Riverside, CA.

Yu, J. (2004). Problems and strategies of teaching English in large college classes. *Journal of Chongqing University of Post and Telecommunication (Social Science), 3*(1), 139-140.

Zhang, H., Peng, W., & Sun, L. (2017). English cooperative learning mode in a rural junior high school in China. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 5*(3), 86-96. https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v5i3.2199

Zughoul, M. R. (2003). Globalization and EFL/ESL pedagogy in the Arab world. *Journal of Language and Learning, 1*(2), 106-140.

The Medium of Instruction Policy in Nepal: Towards Critical Engagement on the Ideological and Pedagogical Debate

Prem Prasad Poudel
The Education University of Hong Kong

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Prem Prasad Poudel, 1/F., Block D4, The Education University of Hong Kong, 10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, N.T. Hong Kong.
E-mail: prempd@s.eduhk.hk

Although there were attempts to develop multilingual and multicultural education in Nepal, changes have remained more discursive than pragmatic at the working level. Problems discussed have remained unsolved. The issues of protection and promotion of the historically residing linguistic diversity have been addressed through the current constitution (Constitution of Nepal-2015) which provides an appropriate legal framework for substantive legal protection for the national indigenous languages as MOIs. However, the successful implementation of this provision is further complicated due to the global political economy, interdependence, and the 'sandwiched' geopolitical status of Nepal. It has been noted that education policymaking is highly centralised and implementation is top-down (Edwards, 2011) in many countries such as Nepal, the current trend of English-medium instruction supported by parents, communities, and the private sector from the bottom up will further weaken the attempts for mother tongue MOI in Nepalese schools. Moreover, the social capitalisation of English from the bottom up will have grave consequences for language policymaking in education, which are obviously dismal but essential nonetheless. Despite the research findings revealing that multilingual education offers the best possibilities for preparing the coming generation to participate in constructing more equitable and democratic societies in the globalised world, the translation of such findings into real-life practice is telescopic. This article emphasises the need for the critical engagement of scholars, educators, investors, and policymakers in order to develop contextually realistic, sustainable, and efficient MOI policymaking that justifies the use of mother tongues, national language, and the global language in an integrated framework sufficient for future generations to compete both locally and globally.

Keywords: medium of instruction policy, Nepal, ideological, pedagogical, multilingual

Introduction

Choice of languages as the MOI has been the most important policy decision in language-in-education policymaking (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004), especially in the non-native English-speaking countries in the world. More importantly, current socio-cultural patterns have been moving towards super-diverse situations (Vertovec, 2019) and have made language policymaking in education further complicated and challenging. Amidst such a situation with the impact of globalisation, the use of English as a medium of instruction (MOI) has been accelerated, and the use of non-dominant languages as MOIs has been paralysed. This trend of language use in education has been critically analysed from socio-political, historical, and economic agendas. In some countries (e.g. in Nepal), MOI policymaking has been much more political than pedagogical. Although language policymaking discourses (e.g., Tollefson, 1991; Phillipson, 1992) have highlighted the educational inequalities and hegemonies sustained by the languages used in education, in the changing landscapes of language use, scholars and political leader are being urged to analyse the Language Policy and Planning (LPP) phenomenon through an interdisciplinary perspective integrating the broader historical, ideological, socio-political, educational, and institutional systems. Within this backdrop, I would begin the MOI policymaking discourse in Nepal with a brief historical overview in the paragraph that follows.

MOI Informed by History

Nepal, a relatively small Himalayan nation, has passed through many historical changes beginning from ancient kingdoms such as the *Kirats, Lichchavis, Mallas*, and *Shah*'s early 19th-century unification, the *Rana* oligarchy, the establishment of democracy, autocratic *Panchayat*, and multiparty democracy, to the current federal democratic republican political system. During the transitions at various epochs of the history, the moves and motives of the rulers have wielded impact and paved ways forward for the development of education in general and the place of language-in-education in particular. The MOI and teaching and learning of national and/or foreign language(s) were one of the issues addressed during the reform processes. Since ancient times, there have been smooth transitions for the adoption of English and Nepali as the MOI in schools. The beginning of formal schooling in 1853 AD/1910 BS (when the first school in Nepal was established at the Durbar premises for the Rana family) marked the use of the English language as the MOI whereas the strong nationalistic sentiment during the *Panchayat* rule shifted into Nepali. These shifts between English and Nepali as the languages of instruction in Nepal have been interpreted in various ways. Some believe that it was a result of monoglossic hegemony, while others argue it as *Khas-Arya* domination and linguistic anarchism in LPP. Basically, the national Nepali language MOI policy in school education was repeatedly criticised as unjust to linguistic diversity and disrespectful to the indigenous linguistic identity in Nepal. Currently, the growing adoption of EMI in public schools has also been viewed as a mark of neoliberal influence.

Therefore, from the historical dimension, it can be concluded that the MOI policy in Nepal has undergone a circular shift from EMI to NMI and back to EMI, while witnessing constantly conflicting ideological debates in regard to languages, schooling, and the role of the indigenous community. In other words, such shifts are historically informed and substantially unplanned, but enacted due to various influences such as privatisation, modernisation, and globalisation, which can be collectively understood as attempts to Westernise the education system of Nepal. I argue, in this article, that MOI policymaking and the practice of language choice in education requires understanding from the emerging contemporary values and contexts of the socio-political transformations that have triggered changes in linguistic landscapes as well as the diversity of the ethnic and demographic constitutions of the Nepalese society at large.

MOI and the Modernisation of Schooling

Never colonised but immensely influenced by the values from the Global South (the Asian, African, Latin American, and Caribbean countries) and the West (countries in Europe and the US), Nepal's schooling has a genetic link with the Western education system, as it was institutionalised by the *Rana Regime* (1846-1950). It seemed that the regime was captivated by the colonial administration of the region, and the role model Western civilisation remained a strong influence during the foundational period of Nepal's education system, and this is still continuing today. The impression about English and the motivation to learn the English language and its associated cultural constructs can be observed in the statement "*Aruka Kura chadideu afna choralai angreji padhau*" (Sharma, 2011, p.39) [turn deaf to what others say, teach English to your son(s)], that Jung Bahadur Rana (the first Rana Prime Minister) made. This symbolises the historically residing "English mania" in Nepal's education system. Moreover, the literature shows that despite efforts to empower and revitalise the indigenous and minority languages as the MOI, English has been superseding such initiatives in the expanding circle countries, such as Nepal (see Giri, 2009) and Hong Kong (see Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). However, the trajectories between the local/national languages as the MOI and EMI are still waiting to be explored through comprehensive research that integrates the values of the changing globalised economy and increasing interdependency among modern societies.

With the emergence of liberal policies in education that allowed private sector investment into education, the Western values were driven by the mushrooming growth of private and boarding schools. This liberalisation of education at large can be understood as attempts to modernise schooling. The adoption of the EMI symbolised the falsity of the Westernisation, modernisation, and standardisation of Nepalese public education because use of a particular language alone would not make the education system modernized. However, in due course, private sector involvement and their business strategy formed social capital (i.e. the "prestige" issue). At this particular juncture, 'quality' was interpreted based on the nature of the MOI and learning resources. For instance, private schools prescribed textbooks published by Western publishers such as Oxford and Cambridge, which were then used as tools for public temptation towards private school education. Perhaps, more implicitly, the

then-academia played a significant role in promoting private schools as social imageries of modern education, quality, and prestige. It can be argued that the promotion of "English-medium" hegemony in the educational spaces since the 1970s and 1980s can also be attributed to the collective roles of then-academia, policymakers, and community stakeholders.

It can be seen that there are values other than just political and pedagogical ones that have driven the widespread adoption of English in schooling from pre-primary to higher education. Largely, such values are socio-political, economic, and cultural, and have been widely supported by the stakeholders as in many other countries such as Cameroon, Hong Kong, Korea, Pakistan, and India. Referring to the case of Pakistan, Manan, et al., (2018) claim that exposure to critical scholarship in relation to the value of bi/multilingual/plurilingual education and linguistic/cultural diversity can contribute significantly to the impact on the theoretical, ideological, and implementational paradigm of LPP, which will ultimately change the current perception towards the status of some languages (such as English and Urdu). Therefore, globally, MOI policymaking is squeezed between the scalar socio-political pressures and equity in learning (educational) agendas, and the case of Nepal is not an exception.

"Sandwiched" MOI Policymaking in Nepal

As mentioned earlier, in order to describe the squeezed status of MOI policymaking and the subsequent practice, I have used the metaphor "sandwich" to describe the phenomenon at hand. The use of a metaphor is not uncommon in LPP research. For instance, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) used the "onion" metaphor and suggested "unpeeling" the onion as the strategic technique to carry out research in LPP. Similarly, the ecological metaphors such as "macro-micro" and "top-down, bottom-up" are also widely used to describe the layered policy processes and analytical approaches. Here, I would use the "sandwich" metaphor in order to describe MOI policymaking and practice in public schools in Nepal, which has been situated between the pressures from top-down (macro ideological) and bottom-up (instrumental). It can also be noticed that within the larger ideological orientations, both pedagogical and socio-political discourses had minimal impact on the MOI policymaking and practices. While policymakers and academia favoured the pedagogical side of the MOI, stating the harmful effects of early EMI on learners' cognitive and linguistic capabilities, parents and employers have demanded EMI for socio-political and economic reasons such as the potential for improving the life chances of the learners. The case of Hong Kong can be taken as an explicit example where the MOI debate had ignored the complex linguistic situation in schools, and the political agenda has dominated the MOI policy agenda (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018). I believe that the "sandwich" metaphor here can effectively describe how MOI policymaking in Nepal has experienced tension between the educational agenda and other hidden social and political agendas, and how it has been sustained through history along with the contradictory dilemmas and pressures from the top-down and bottom-up initiatives.

Additionally, a review of the historical trends of policymaking and the existing literature on MOIs illustrate that equity concerns have been overshadowed by the socio-political and economic ones. This case is similar to what has been reported in some post-colonial countries. Tollefson and Tsui (2004) report "in post-colonial countries, the educational agenda of using the most effective medium for education is often driven by or clouded by the political agendas of nation-building, national identity, and unity" (p.viii). They further report that the choice of the MOI is often a reflection of socio-political and economic forces and struggles for power among different social groups. Due to this, it can be observed that the pursuit of the universalism of human rights has been shadowed and challenged by the discourses that prioritise economic and cultural rights (de Bary, 1998, as cited in Prez-Milans & Tollefson, 2018). It would, therefore, be wise to reconsider the notion of 'whose agenda' (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004) in MOI policymaking in the case for Nepal and investigate it through comprehensive research. The current plurilingual and multiethnic diversity of Nepal further complicates the "fine-tuning" (Kan & Adamson, 2016) of MOI policymaking. The question now is "who wins and who owns the language to be used in education and on what basis?" Fortunately, the matter of ownership is now delegated to the local community and their institutions by the recent amendments to the education acts, which makes it easier for implementation at the discretion of the local policy actors and end-users of the policies. It is again most likely that the MOI agenda will be further squeezed due to globalisation and localisation pressures at the local level as well. In other words, the interplay of the top-down and bottom-up processes that poses the greatest challenges in LPP research (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015) also requires the greater engagement of multiple stakeholders in shaping their agentive roles for further equitable and sustainable language-in-education policymaking in Nepal.

The discussion on the 'sandwiched' nature of MOI policymaking in Nepal leads to two opposite but interdependent dimensions: educational and socio-political. Both of the dimensions have "interdisciplinary agendas" (Creese & Copland, 2017, p. 346) of language-in-education policy and practices as they draw from the historical, sociological, anthropological, economic, and psychological underpinnings of language. The paragraphs that follow illustrate how these dimensions have been utilised in the MOI policy debate.

Politics of MOI Policymaking: The power debate

Language-in-education policymaking has been a globally debated issue for long time. For instance, in Denmark, the shift towards English at universities has been the subject of debate for the past decade (Werther, et al., 2014). In Nepal, this matter has been further complicated primarily due to its unique demographic structure, i.e., multilingual and multiethnic population scattered over various geopolitical spaces. While the demographic variation can be an asset of the state, it can, at the same time, be complication due to the potential power struggles in terms of the linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic identities across the population. There is a widespread belief that "the recognition of language rights for linguistic minority groups and any associated endorsement of public bi/multilingualism is, by its very nature, a grave threat to social and political stability" (May, 2018, p. 236). Some evidence of linguistic division can be taken from the history of Belgium where speakers of French and Flemish separated, Sinhalese and Tamil speakers dividing in Sri Lanka, and similar cases of separatist identity movements have surfaced in Eastern India as well. These political movements in terms of linguistic identity have important implications for the choice of the MOI in schools, as schools are the doors where the languages transfer through generations of speakers in a formal setting.

In multilingual and multiethnic countries, it is likely that situations can be further muddled due to the intersecting relationships among ethnicity, languages, and the associated belief systems. Feng and Adamson (2017) concluded that contextual factors such as ethnolinguistic vitality, history, economy, geopolitics, etc. influence language choice. Because of this complexity, language policymaking in education becomes much more political since the empowerment of one language has to do with the identity and access of the people speaking that language. The educational situations at the contemporary period are getting linguistically and ethnically heterogeneous, and so are the debates continuing primarily due to the inherent difficulty and complexity in the overall demographic set up of multilingual countries, including Nepal.

In Nepal, the National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission (1994) recommended the adoption of the three forms of language-in-education policies: monolingual mother tongue education (in monolingual context), bilingual mother tongue education (in the mother tongue and the language of the nation, in the bilingual contexts), and multilingual mother tongue education as strategic paths for the promotion of languages and the cultures of the people living in Nepal. However, it also identified congruous as well as the incongruous relationships between ethnic groups, castes, and their language practices. Due to accelerating social mobility, the influence of global education systems, foreign employment, and urban migration, the congruity between ethnicity and languages has been gradually troubled as the new generation of the ethnic populations might be practicing their own home languages less than expected. On pragmatic grounds, in some societies, some ethnic populations don't speak their mother tongues, and those who do not belong to an ethnic group speak the language of the major ethnic group(s) of the locality. This has further complicated the relationship among indigeneity, ethnicity, and languages. Some studies (e.g., Thapa & Adamson, 2018) have identified that due to negligence of overall educational development needs, Nepali ethnic minority students have faced inequities in schools, and one of the causes of the pressures was through the MOI, either in English or spoken Cantonese and written Chinese. Therefore, language-in-education policies of the states, among many other policies, have played significant roles in perpetuating inequities in the social sphere. Some others (e.g., Rose, et al., 2019) have reported the "multi-faceted success of EMI" (p.1), as there are many factors that shape the impact of the MOI, and so the collaboration between subject and language specialists in the institutional settings would be very beneficial to students learning both the subject knowledge and the language skills (Jiang, et al., 2016).

Similarly, the politics of postmodernism and globalisation, which promoted hybridity and created blurred social boundaries, has impacted the linguistic diversity of countries around the world. Such political pressures also place demands on competitive education for the production of human resources to fit into the new working environments and contexts. Arguments have also been put forward for the integration of the global and the local through the glocalisation of policies and practices (Choi, 2016). The absence of such attempts results in

the weakening of state roles for the promotion and protection of indigenous languages, and state-languages gradually become extinct. Nepal's case can be one such example, where out of a total of 123 languages, almost sixty percent of them are on the verge of extinction due to language contact, change, and shift (Gautam[1], 2019, *Naya Patrika*, 21 Feb.). Equally, as the global reach of the international economy has exacerbated the fundamental social and cultural homogeneity, multilingual language policies have experienced complexities in their implementation spaces.

Diversity and the Power Struggle

Nepal has experienced disastrous socio-political turmoil since the 1990s, which lasted for more than a decade. Although the main reason for such conflict was political transformations, the concerns for the survival of the ethnic identities and languages of the tribal groups were also part of the reason for the socio-political turmoil (Giri, 2009). During the period of the political turmoil, debates on linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities had surfaced, and were turned into the political agendas in the peaceful settlement processes later. Such ethnolinguistic debates are likely to continue in the future as well due to Nepal's situated linguistic and ethnic diversity. The mother tongue MOI, a dream of a pluralist welfare society, has been a failure due to the centralised promotion of the Nepali language, as well as global motivation and localised support for English. This deliberate promotion of both Nepali and English as languages of instruction in schools has some socio-political interpretations relating to power politics between the languages. For instance, Giri (2009) cites Stiller (1993) claiming that English in Nepal was imported historically for ideological and/political reasons, to use it to strengthen the socio-political superiority of the ruling elites. Ranas, the then-rulers, took this opportunity to teach their children in English in an EMI school in the *Durbar* (i.e., palace) premises. Currently, the linguistic diversity of Nepal itself has been "sandwiched" due to the increasing use of Hindi in the southern territory for communicative purposes, and English in education nationwide.

The socio-political aspects of the policies and practices not only relate to the ideological but also the economic agenda of language learning. The politics of English and the global expansion of EMI (Dearden, 2014) has therefore challenged the educational argument and has pressurised the nations, communities, and individuals to concentrate on global economic competitiveness. Ultimately, the MOI itself has been established as more of a politico-economic force than an educational one. Such an economic force has important implications for the commodification of languages, meaning that those languages that are functional in communication, education, and trade will live on and others will probably become extinct due to their commodity values. This will eventually apply to the majority of the indigenous languages in Nepal, as they have not been able to meet economic goals. In other words, the majority of the indigenous languages in Nepal have been barred due to their economic values, so that their use as an MOI in school contexts is also marginalised.

At the macro policy-level, the simplistic understanding of the MOI as a cheap solution to complex language problems for achieving overly ambitious politico-economic goals (Hamid, Nguyen, & Baldauf, 2013) has taken place, which is again failing to address the problems associated with the language of instruction. This case is further complicated due to inconsistent practices and policies in adopting EMI, NMI (Nepali-medium instruction), and local languages as the MOI. In other words, the pedagogical dimension of the MOI has been superseded by the political and economic agendas, and has seen the inconsistencies in their practices firsthand, as the contexts of MOI implementations are linguistically, socially, and even geopolitically diverse.

The Educational Dimension of the MOI: Equity in learning

MOI policy has been argued from the educational dimension with evidence from research studies that highlight children's better learning achievements if taught in a familiar language compared to those taught in an unfamiliar national or foreign language. In other words, the educational agenda relates to the cognitive capabilities, learning opportunities, and motivation on the part of the learners. This dimension has to do with justice and equality for students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The case of the language of instruction has been widely debated in regard to its benefits for students' learning. Sometimes contextualised findings reported indicate that arguments on benefits and loses are conclusive. For example, Agirdag and Vanlaar (2016) reported that speaking the language of instruction is positively associated with maths and reading achievements.

---

[1] *Gautam, B.L. (2019, 21st February). Loponmukh bhasa jogaune pahal [Attempt to protect endangered languages].* Naya Patrika Daily, p. 6.

Although comprehensive research findings are still lacking in the case of Nepal, scholarly arguments (such as Phyak, 2013) have been made in reference to policy documents, international declarations, and the research findings in some other countries. Despite the findings that urge communities to facilitate teaching and learning in the mother tongue, at least at the primary level, individuals and communities have been accelerating the adoption of EMI as an indicator of internationalisation and human resource development strategy. Despite the evidence suggesting that linguistic diversity has a positive impact on creativity and innovation (Grin, 2015) and scholarly calls for heterogenising the language use in education, the homogenising practices in educational spaces have not halted and are likely to widen further, which will raise equity issues even more than they already have been. The role of schooling, where certain languages are adopted as tools for instruction, is important in the promotion of languages through the formal track (Chiatoh, 2014).

Despite the lack of comprehensive research reporting through the grounded comparative data that visualises the learning, creativity, and cognitive capitals of students who have graduated from private and public schools in Nepal, some scholars claim, mostly based on the their ideological beliefs (individual agency) and with reference to some sponsored research findings (such as the British Council supporting Simpson, 2017; Hayes, 2018, ed.), that early EMI hampers children's cognitive development, socialisation, and content comprehension. Similarly, Poudel (2010) concluded, through his empirical research in the multilingual classroom contexts of higher education on public campuses, that communication, content delivery, and comprehension-related problems were created due to language gaps. His conclusion also implied that the goal of teaching and students' and teachers' motivation do not match, which has caused problems in the successful achievement of learning outcomes. All these research studies have recommended multilingual education that supports mother tongue MOI in early schooling (in the case of primary schools) and the use of frequent shifts in learners' mother tongues in higher education classrooms. Their concerns are more on the equity dimension of learning. Such equity concerns were also raised in Nepal since the recommendation for mother tongue MOI by the National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission in 1994 in Nepal. However, the outcomes are not encouraging.

Equity in learning concerns were agenda items in international declaration and conventions. For instance, UNESCO missions (e.g. Jomtein Conference 1990) and documents have advocated for the establishment of universal and quality primary education for all, attempts through various programmes have not been successful due to intersecting internal and external factors in different countries. To be specific, the concerns for providing equitable opportunities for all through mother tongue MOI have not materialised due to the unchecked growth of English. In the case of Cameroon, Kuchah (2018) mentioned that the policy discourse of social justice and quality education for all does not sufficiently match with learning affordances in state schools. His concern was that due to the socio-economic contexts, social classes, and ineffective state support, parents have to rely on additional learning opportunities outside of schools. In this concern, in many capitalist countries, those who are well-off socially and economically can afford private tutoring outside of the school and take advantage of learning opportunities for their children. This furthers the gap between the rich and the poor and threatens the equity and equality concerns of policy discourse at the national and international level.

Although mother-tongue MOI is favoured over EMI on equity grounds, it has not been implemented. Similarly, research findings in different countries in Asia have been inconclusive regarding the role of mother tongue or English as the MOI. For example, Hamid's (2009) case study in rural schools in Bangladesh concluded "students' English learning and academic outcomes were embedded in their social biographies" (p.viii), which validates the counter-arguments that state that low achievement in schools is not only the influenced by teaching in an unfamiliar language but is also affected by some external social-cultural biographies. By this, Hamid meant that academic achievement or underachievement cannot be fully understood without considering beyond-the-school factors (such as their familial and social worlds, their lived experiences, their desires for better futures, their disadvantages, and the means to pursue their desires). Such a notion implies that research in LPP requires extensive consideration of the personal, institutional, and wider societal factors that contribute to learners' life chances and well-being.

The above discussion implies that although the majority of the discourses on MOI link to equity in learning (e.g. Tollefson, 1991; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004, 2018), it should also be considered in relation to the full-life trajectories of the learners and their language repertoires in the linguistic ecology of their communities, schools, and beyond. Together, proficiency in a dominant language can be instrumental for an individual's personal, national social-political, and international global-economic trajectories. Hence, schools' MOI policy provisions

can impact those trajectories through the formation of linguistic and socio-cultural capital. In welfare societies and their governments, the MOI can have wider implications for their nation-building agendas on one hand and peopling (tailoring based on peoples' demands) their policies on the other. For example, Tollefson and Tsui (2018) reported the case of Malaysia that the government education authorities have fluctuated in their support for English vis-à-vis Malay; while in Hong Kong, most parents supported English MOI, despite evidence that many children benefit from Chinese MOI classes. Recent studies have also reported inconclusive arguments in regard to the benefits and/or interferences of EMI in learning. For instance, Macaro, et al. (2018) concluded "the research evidence to date is insufficient to assert that EMI benefits language learning nor that it is clearly detrimental to content learning" (p. 36). The core debate these days is that not teaching in English also means a 'widening of inequality, and also an incidence of promoting inequity', because those who have proficiency in English were getting more access to opportunities in the national and international job markets. Although the differences in proficiency in English between the graduates from 'teaching in English' and 'teaching of English as a subject' schools are inconclusive, parental preference for educating their children in English has driven the EMI phenomenon (Kuchah, 2016) in many cases.

Conclusion

Therefore, language-in-education policymaking, especially MOI policy, has been contested within the socio-political, economic, educational, and ethnolinguistic agendas and is intertwined with the complex and competing public discourses that play important roles in broader social struggles. It is perhaps due to this that MOI policy and even policymaking can be understood as a complex social practice or a practice of power in all societies. From the review of the literature discussed above, we can conclude that MOI policies should serve for both improving social mobility and helping marginalised groups pursue their interests. Currently, there are shifts away from conventional social hierarchies and equity concerns toward the new forms of patterns and needs, which have contributed to the strengthening of EMI in public schools. The pressure to be proficient in a global language that can open the doors for opportunities is widespread. Educators, private sector investors, and the whole of academia have aggressively promoted EMI to take advantages of globalisation and internationalisation trends, which have come up as quality standards and imageries. EMI has established its superior social image over other national and local/indigenous languages. The consequence is the emergence of hybridity in language practices, which have posed grave challenges for establishing national or local languages as MOIs. Despite nation-states (such as Nepal, Japan, Korea, and China) forming policy directions for the protection of their national ethnolinguistic identity by attempting to promote their languages through multilingual policies, English has been able to penetrate their social fabrics. The global linguistic homogenisation will be an inevitable alternative if other national and local languages cannot meet the economic and socio-political goals of the people. Language policy being a situated and intense socio-cultural process, the current practices are likely to have grave implications for future policymaking and practices in education. For instance, the current Nepali-medium instruction has been sandwiched by the discourses of EMI and other mother tongue-based instructions. Such cases demand critical engagement by the scholars and educators for identifying the structural and procedural constraints that have been instrumental in promoting certain languages as MOI. This engagement of the people can bring together the political and educational agendas of MOI policymaking into critical community policing and can potentially pave a future path for the protection of national linguistic diversity and internationalisation in Nepal's schooling system.

References

Agirdag, O., & Vanlaar, G. (2018). Does more exposure to the language of instruction lead to higher academic achievement? A cross-national examination. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *22*(1), 123-137. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1367006916658711

Chiatoh, B. A. Community language promotion in remote contexts: Case study on Cameroon. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 11*(3), 320-333. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2014.921178.

Choi, T.-H. (2016). Glocalization of English language education: Comparison of three contexts in East Asia. In C. M. Lam & J. H. Park (Eds.), *Sociological and philosophical perspectives on education in the Asia-Pacific*

region (pp. 147-164). Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York: Springer.

Creese, A., & Copland, F. (2016). Linguistic ethnography. In K. King, Y. Lai & S. May (Eds.), *Research methods in language and education* (pp. 1-13). New York, NY: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02329-8_25-1

Dearden, J. (2014). *English as a medium of instruction-a growing global phenomenon:* London, UK: British Council.

Edwards, R. M. (2011). Disconnect and capture of education decentralization reforms in Nepal: Implications for community involvement in schooling. *Globalization, Societies and Education*, *9*(1), 67-84. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2010.513532

Feng, A., & Adamson, B. (2017). Language policies and sociolinguistic domains in the context of minority groups in China. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *39*(2), 169-180. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2017.1340478

Giri, R. A. (2009). The politics of unplanning of languages in Nepal. *Journal of NELTA, 14*(1-2), 32-44.

Grin, F. (2015). The economics of English in Europe. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *Language policy and political economy: English in a global context* (p.119-114). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199363391.003.0006

Hamid, M. O. (2009). *Sociology of language learning: Social biographies and school English achievement in rural Bangladesh* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Queensland, Queensland, Australia.

Hamid, M., Nguyen, H., & Baldauf, J. (2013). Medium of instruction in Asia: Context, processes, and outcomes. *Current Issues in Language Planning, 14*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2013.792130

Hayes, D. (2018). Key issues in English language teaching in Nepal. In D. Hayes (Ed.), *English language teaching in Nepal: Research, reflection and practice* (pp. 1-10). Kathmandu, Nepal: The British Council.

Heller, M. (2018). Socioeconomic junctures, theoretical shifts: A genealogy of language policy and planning research. In J. W. Tollefson & M. Perez-Milans (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of language policy and planning* (pp. 35-50). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Jiang, L., Zhang, L. J., & May, S. (2016). Implementing English-medium instruction (EMI) in China: Teachers' practices and perceptions, and students' learning motivation and needs. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 22*(2), 107-119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1231166

Kan, V., & Adamson, B. (2016). A matrix approach to language policy analysis: The case of Hong Kong. In C.-M. Lam & J. Park (Eds.), *Sociological and philosophical perspectives on education in the Asia-Pacific region* (vol, 29, pp. 111-130*)*. Singapore: Springer.

Kuchah, K. (2016). English-medium instruction in an English-French bilingual setting: Issues of quality and equity in Cameroon. *Comparative Education, 52*(3), 311-327. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2016.1185257

Kuchah, K. (2018). Early English medium instruction in Francophone Cameroon: The injustice of equal opportunity. *System*, 73, 37-47. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.10.001

Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching, 51*(1), 36-76. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000350

Manan, S. A., David, M. K., & Channa, L. A. (2018). Opening ideological and implementational spaces for multilingual/plurilingual policies and practices in education: A snapshot of scholarly activism in Pakistan. *Current Issues in Language Planning, 20*(5),521-543. http://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2018.1543162

May, S. (2018). Language rights and language repression. In J. W. Tollefson & M. Perez-Milans (Eds), *The Oxford handbook of language policy and planning* (pp. 236-256). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Nekvapil, J., & Sherman, T. (2015). An introduction: Language management theory in language policy and planning. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 232, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2014-0039

Perez-Milans, M., & Tollefson, J. W. (2018). Language policy and planning: Directions for future research. In J.W. Tollefson & M. Perez-Milans (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of language policy and planning* (pp. 727-742). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Phillipson, R. (1992). Linguistic imperialism. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Phyak, P. B. (2013). Language ideologies and local languages as the medium-of-instruction policy: A critical ethnography of a multilingual school in Nepal. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, *14*(1), 127-143. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2013.775557.

Poudel, P. P. (2010). Teaching English in multilingual classrooms of Higher Education: The present scenario. *Journal of NELTA*, *15*(1-2), 121-133. https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v15i1-2.4618.

Ricento, T.K., & Hornberger, N. H. (1996). Unpeeling the onion: Language planning and policy and the ELT profession. *TESOL Quarterly*, *30*(3), 401-427.

Rose, H., Curle, S., Aizawa, I., & Thompson, G. (2019). What drives success in English medium taught courses? The interplay between language proficiency, academic skills, and motivation. *Studies in Higher Education*,

1-13. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1590690

Sharma, G. N. (2011). The history of education in Nepal. Kathmandu, Nepal: Makalu Publication.

Simpson, J. (2017). *English language and medium of instruction in basic education in low and middle-income countries: A British council perspective*. London, UK: The British Council.

Thapa, C. B., & Adamson, B. (2018). Ethnicity, langauge-in-education policy and linguistic discrimination: Perspectives of Nepali students in Hong Kong. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 39*(4), 329-340. http://doi.org.10.1080/o14346632.2017.1389947

Tollefson, J. W. (1991). *Planning language, planning inequality: Language policy in the community*. London, UK: Longman.

Tollefson, J. W., & Tsui, A. B. (2004). *Medium of instruction policies: Which agenda? Whose Agenda?* Oxon, UK: Routledge.

Tollefson, J. W., & Tsui, A. B. M. (2018). Medium of instruction policy. In J. W. Tollefson & M. Perez-Milans (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of language policy and planning* (pp.257-279). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Vertovec, S. (2019). Talking around super-diversity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 42*(1), 125-139. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1406128

Watson-Gegeo, K. A., & Bronson, M. C. (2013). The intersections of language socialization and sociolinguistics. In R. Bayley, R. Cameron & C. Lucas (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of language policy and planning* (pp. 1-42). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199744084.013.0006

Werther, C., Denver, L., Jensen, C., & Mees, I. M. (2014). Using English as a medium of instruction at university level in Denmark: The lecturer's perspective. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 35*(5), 443-462. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2013.868901

Teaching Language and Teaching Literature in Virtual Environment by Maria Luisa Carrio-Pastor (eds)., Springer Verlag, Singapore, 2019. XXI+293 pp. ISBN 978-981-13-1358-5 (eBook)

Amare Tesfie Birhan

Bahir Dar Institute of Technology

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Amare Tesfie Birhan, Department of English Language and Literature, Bahir Dar Institute of Technology, P.O.Box 26. Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.
E-mail: amaretesfie@gmail.com

The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language have both experienced great shifts in approaches as a result of technological applications. Technology has widely changes the practice of education in general as well as English language teaching, in particular. It influences students' participation and engagement, the way the lesson is delivered, the modes the language is studied in and outside the classroom, and it also greatly improves the learning process and the relationship between the teacher and the students (Šafranj, 2013; Fuster & Clavel, 2010; Chambers & O'Sullivan, 2004). Technology has positive effects on learners' attitudes, thinking skills, autonomous learning, as well as learner confidence building. Furthermore, information technology has changed the traditional practice of language learning and teaching and provides a new type of literacy (Akyuz & Yavuz, 2015; Chambers & O'Sullivan, 2004). Thus, technology-assisted language learning has become a desired instructional tool in foreign and second language contexts.

The reviewed volume entitled *Teaching Language and Teaching Literature in Virtual Environments* was published in 2019 by Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. It provides a panoramic explanation of the practice and application of technology for teaching English language and literature in a foreign language context. The main objective of this volume is to present the latest teaching experiences related to virtual environments and to identify the key determinants of virtual environments and the different tools used for this purpose (p. xii). It is organized into 15 individual chapters that are grouped into four sections. The contributors consider different second and foreign language learning theoretical frameworks such as usage based learning theory (Chapter, 3), Krashen's learning hypothesis Chapter, 6), and cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Chapter 10).

The first section of the book deals with methodology design for second language teaching/learning in virtual environments and is composed of five chapters. The first chapter of the first section starts with the work of
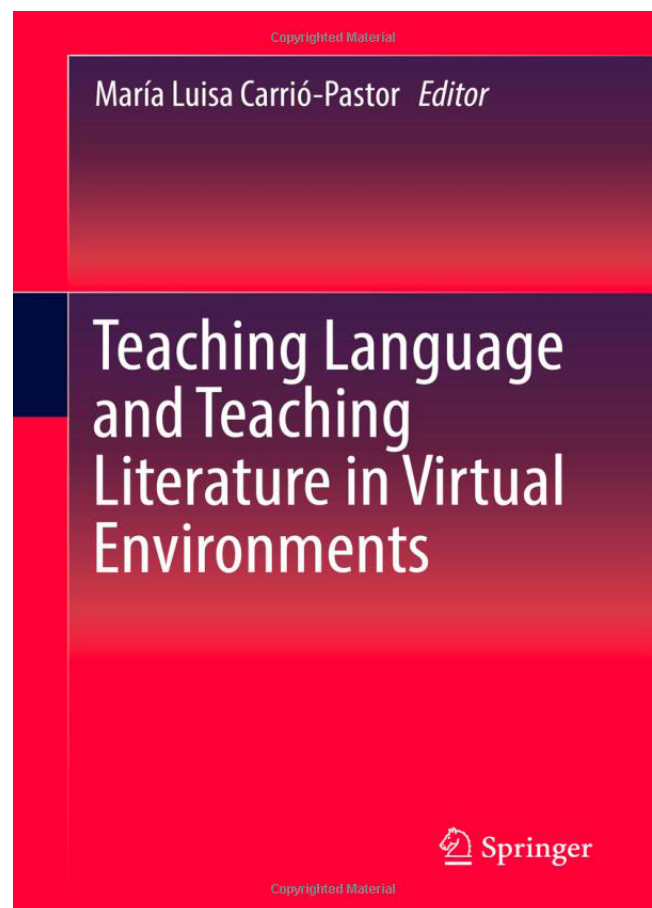
Horn-Cheliz and Sarasa-Cabezuelo. The authors explicate information technologies to teach vocabulary skills. They also introduce a theoretical "parasitic model" to acquire second language vocabulary. Furthermore, they address the main difficulties in learning vocabulary and strategies to overcome the hurdles.

The second chapter of the first section is by Giglio, and it reports how to improve oral production skills in e-learning contexts. In this chapter, the role of activities and tools used to practice oral skills in the foreign language educational context are also presented. Accordingly, distance learning and online foreign language teaching are covered. The third chapter by Lech and Harris is about language learning on the Virtual Wild platform. The authors introduce language learning models such as usage-based learning and constructivist learning theory and their relationship with online learning and learner autonomy. They claim that learners acquire language skills while they participate in usage events. Furthermore, they also explain informal learning and an online approach to informal learning.

The intent of Chapter 4, authored by Scrivner, Madewell, Buckley and Perez is to explore the best practices in applying augmented and virtual reality technologies for second language acquisition. The main purpose of this chapter was to indicate the role of immersive technology in foreign language teaching and learning. The authors of this chapter consider various kinds of immersive technology such as aurasma, thinkLink:web 2.0 and Google Cardboards. They also explain how to design, implement, and evaluate these examples of virtual reality. Chapter 5, by Sama and Wu, dwells upon integrating 'Talk Abroad' into an intermediate foreign language course: building learner autonomy and engagement through video conversations with native speakers. It examines the efficacy and best practices in integrating a video-synchronous, computer-mediated communication tool 'Talk Abroad' into an intermediate foreign language course. The authors reported that by implementing this strategy, students showed increased autonomy in linguistic development and self-regulated learning strategies.

The second section is related to tools for second/foreign language teaching in virtual environments, covering Chapters 6-9. Chapter 6 starts with the study by Milojkovic, Teaching English by Skype: Theoretical and practical considerations from the perspective of Serbian English teachers. In this chapter, the author stated that digital technologies play a crucial role in foreign language teaching and learning. The chapter highlights that Skype is a potential tool for facilitating foreign language learning in a relaxing environment.

Chapter 7 brings Frame Net to the fore as a resource for teaching Spanish as a foreign language. The chapter is authored by Jodar-Sanchez, who elaborates how to teach vocabulary, grammar, and metaphors via Frame Net in foreign language contexts. Chapter 8 by Gomez explains how to use telecollaboration to develop soft skills in higher education foreign language programs, and it suggests that higher education instructors must be aware of new technology to effectively facilitate communication that helps learners become competent in the future jobs. Chapter 9 by Echevarria, addresses a comparative analysis of two online video conferencing initiatives for conversational practice with native speakers. The author describes and comparatively analyzes two online video conferencing initiatives utilized in Spanish courses.

The third section draws readers' attention to specific second language teaching in virtual environments. The first chapter begins with the work of Losey-Leon and Balderas entitled 'Cognitive Approach to Adaptive Testing Implementation in Virtual Maritime English Language Learning Environment Based on a Spaced Repetition System'. They stated that students have shown positive progress in their final test performance as a result of a space repetation system. Next, Ribeiro, Morgado, Gaspar and Regio explain teacher training for content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in higher education through blended learning. The chapter discusses the challenges of planning, preparing, and implementing a blended learning course in teacher training, as well as the results. The next chapter by Penalver looks into Project-Based Learning in a VirtualCclassroom: The case of English for tourism communication. Here, the author states that problem-based learning and technology-mediated instruction is an effective way to enhance students' motivation and foster their thinking skills to progressively move towards the understanding of specific problems.

The fourth section looks into ideas for teaching in virtual environments. In this section, three main issues are discussed. The first is Digital Storytelling in Teacher Training: Development of basic competences, creativity and multimodal literacy by Ibarra-Rius and Ballester-Roca. The second issue is Teaching Poetry through Songs in a Virtual Environment: From students' reluctance to their quiescence by Marias, Penalver and Lopa. The last issue is Reflexion Analysis and Language Practice: From individual critical thinking to collaborative learning using

blogs in a literature class, which is authored by Giralt and Murray. These researchers explore how technology can be a valuable resource for storytelling in teacher education, for teaching poetry, and for individual and critical thinking and collaborative learning.

In general, this volume raises various issues concerning teaching language and literature through technology. In addition, the book introduces different technologies that can be used in foreign language teaching classrooms. The authors consider practical examples, pictures, and details, giving the reader an opportunity to choose appropriate technologies that can be applied in their contexts. The procedures to use the technology and the designs considered by the researchers are very clear. These help the language and literature teachers to fill their skill gaps regarding the use technology in language and literature classrooms. The pictures, graphs, and images in the volume also make the book very interactive and practical for language classrooms.

Hence, the volume urges language teachers to consider technology for their classrooms to enhance students' engagement and to improve language skills. It can be a good resource for foreign language teachers, educators, and researchers who are interested in considering technology for teaching language and literature. In addition, it can also be a valuable resource for scholars with an interest in technology, language, and literature teaching. Finally, although there are other volumes that are helpful for learning to use technology for language teaching and learning, this informative and user-friendly volume is still important.

Despite its importance and positive aspects, the volume lacks intensive arguments and explanations in some chapters. In addition, I observed that some contributors did not clearly show the theoretical framework that was used to design their research. Despite these shortcomings, this worthwhile and practical volume has achieved its purpose and can make practical contributions to teaching language and literature via technology.

References

Akyuz, S., & Yavuz, F. (2015). Digital learning in EFL classrooms. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 197, 766-769. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.176

Chambers, A., & O'Sullivan, I. (2004). Corpus consultation and advanced learners' writing skills in French. *ReCall*, *16*(1), 158-172. https://doi.org/10.1017/S095834400400121

Fuster, M., & Clavel, B. (2010). Corpus linguistics and its applications in higher education. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 23, 51-67.

Šafranj, J. (2013). Using information technology in English language learning procedure: blended learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *83*, 514-521. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.099

Native and Non-Native EFL Teachers Dichotomy: Terminological, Competitiveness and Employment Discrimination

Mersad Dervić

International Burch University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mersad Dervić, International Burch University, Francuske revolucije bb, 71210 Ilidža, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
E-mail: mersad.dervic@ibu.edu.ba

Senad Bećirović

International Burch University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Senad Bećirović, International Burch University, Francuske revolucije bb, 71210 Ilidža, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
E-mail: senad.becirovic@ibu.edu.ba

The application of 'native' and 'non-native' labels to EFL professionals has been influenced by the argument over their discriminatory nature. L1 proponents claim that natives are innate with linguistic competence while non-natives are referred to as second-best. A review of studies investigating the coherence of these terms supported the validity of this phenomenon. However, competing theories emphasise the importance and impact of discriminatory terminology not addressed by natives This paper looks at this debate in some detail and aims to balance the need for accurate descriptive labelling against the damaging effects of pejorative categories. It also discusses teaching and linguistic competence in light of both "native" and "non-native" categories. The discourse focuses on the advantages and disadvantages attributed to the native versus non-native EFL teacher and employment discrimination issues faced by non-native EFL teachers in institutions, job advertisements, and in the administration of institutions themselves today. It was concluded that a more refined approach to describing different types of EFL professionals is required, which does not negatively disadvantage either L1 or L2 teachers of English.

Keywords: Native, Non-Native, EFL, Teachers, Discrimination, Challenges

Introduction

The issue of employment discrimination affecting non-native teachers of the English language in the UK and worldwide is now pertinent and enduring (Clark & Paran, 2007). The number of non-native English speakers, approx. 1.1 billion in the world, far outnumber native English speakers, approx. 400 million (Crystal, 2003). The main drives behind this increase in the numbers of English speakers, and in particular non-native English teachers, are assumed to be globalisation and the expansion of the EU's borders (Clark & Paran, 2007). In their article *Employability of Non-Native-Speaker Teachers of EFL*, Clark & Paran (2007) identified that the non-native status of teachers was a significantly influential criterion in the employability of non-native EFL teachers, as well as asserting that they are unlikely to ever be invited for an interview, even though these teachers are qualified, fluent in English, and experienced.

This article discusses teaching and linguistic competence for both "native" and "non-native" categories. Native teachers are often considered to be "ideal teachers" and "non-natives" their unequal counterparts (Shih & Ying, 2017; Lurda, 2004). Thus, the paper will try to ascertain the background of such ideas, with the aim of clarifying the main issues that have been investigated in previous studies, i.e. why non-native teachers still face a range of

negative experiences and attitudes in the current EFL workplace. This will test how to operationalise the terms native and non-native and identify the differences of opinion relating to the terms as well as examine if there is any consensus concerning the validity of the aforesaid labels.

Furthermore, the discussion focuses on competence issues related to non-native teachers in the EFL teaching profession: the advantages and disadvantages attributed to the native versus non-native EFL teacher and employment discrimination issues faced by non-native EFL teachers in institutions, job advertisements, and in the administration of institutions themselves today. It discusses the unfortunate persistence and impact of such discrimination upon the EFL teaching profession more generally, despite the increasing realisation that both L1 and L2 teachers have differing yet compatible skills to offer their learners. This issue of continued discrimination against non-native teachers is elaborated upon throughout the paper and concludes with recommendations for moving beyond such non-native discrimination within the EFL workplace.

The Concept of a Native Speaker

The first recorded description of what constitutes a native speaker is supplied by Davies (1991), who defined 'nativeness' as "the first language a human being learns to speak in his native language; he is a native speaker of this language" (p. ix). Moreover, the definition is in line with *The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* which defines a native speaker as "a person considered as a speaker of his or her native language" (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985, p. 188) and the *Collins Co-build Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* (2005*)* states that "your native language or tongue is the first language that you learned to speak when you were a child" (p. 950)[1]. Within these definitions, a native language can be described as the language that "a person acquires early in childhood because it is spoken in the family and/or it is the language of the country where he or she lives" (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985, p. 188)[2].

Davies (1991) also supports the previous meaning of 'native', and suggests that a person is a native speaker "of a language by virtue of place or country of birth" (Davies, 1991, p. ix), whereas Pannycook (1994) puts forward the idea that a native speaker is the "idealised person with a complete and possible innate competence in the language" (Pannycook, 1994, p. 175). Philipson (1992) takes a politically opposed position against such definitions which limits nativeness to a place of birth and assumes unrivalled competence of the native. Then, Philipson uses the English language as an example of the consequences of such definitions; he argues it leads to domination and imperialistic tendencies by the native over the non-native (Phillipson, 1992).

Some researchers provided a narrower Anglo-centric definition of the native speaker, defining them as someone who was born in an English-speaking country and has acquired the English language during their childhood in an English-speaking family or environment (Braine, 2010; Cook, 2005; Lee, 2005; Medgyes, 1994). This means that "the individual speaks English as his/her first language, has a native-like command of English and has the capacity to produce a fluent and spontaneous discourse" (Medgyes, 1994, p. 10). Hence, the native speaker is able to use the English language "creatively" and has a "reliable intuition" to distinguish "right from wrong forms" of the English language (Medgyes, 1994, p. 10). However, many scholars claim that the first language acquired by children is irrelevant in contrast to the mature first language, as children develop their system independent of the adult language system. Consequently, second language acquisition studies involve testing the cognitive ability of people who have successfully reached a usable level of the second language and not just how they have learnt it (Dervić & Spahić, 2018; Cook, 2005; Lee, 2005 Medgyes,1994; Davies, 1991).

A more simplistic definition of the terms 'native' and 'non-native' speakers describes the native speaker of a language as someone who speaks the language in question as to their first language and the non-native speaker as an individual who uses the language as a second or foreign tongue (Braine, 2010). Therefore, in order to provide a clear picture of a native speaker, Lee (2005) grouped six characteristics which evidently define a native speaker of a language. He suggests that a native speaker is an individual who:
- acquired the language in early childhood and maintains the use of the language,

- has an intuitive knowledge of the language,
- is able to produce fluent and spontaneous discourse,

---

[1] Collins COUBILD Advanced Learner`s English Dictionary. (2005). Great Britain, Beccles and London: William Clowes Ltd.
[2] Richards, J., Platt, J., & Weber, H. (1985). *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. England, UK: Longman.

- is able to communicate within different social settings (communicatively competent),
- identifies with or is identified by a language community, and
- is freed from a foreign accent (Lee, 2005).

However, from the given definitions, it seems that it is impossible for any second language learner, regardless of their language competency, to become a native speaker; concluding anything learnt in later life cannot be qualified as a native language (Cook, 2005). Hence, the non-native speaker can acquire all previous characteristics save the "childhood acquisition" which indicates that the non-native speaker "does not acquire the target language in early childhood"; and even if that is the case, then they are "bilingual native speakers of both the L1 and the target language" (Davies, 2000, p. 5).

Terminological Preference

The native/non-native dichotomy is "one of the most complex and elusive areas in applied linguistics" (Medgyes, 1994, p. 9). Many scholars argue that such descriptions [native/non-native] are confrontational and offensive in relation to teachers of English language (Braine, 2010; Lazaraton, 2003; Jenkins, 2000; Suarez, 2000; Liu, 1999; Kachur & Nelson, 1996; Rampton, 1990). Braine (2010) believes that the term "native" speaker certainly has positive connotations: it denotes a "birthright, fluency, cultural affinity, and sociolinguistic competence". On the other hand, the term non-native speaker carries the burden of the "minority, of marginalization and stigmatization, with resulting discrimination in terms of employability and professional advancement" (Braine, 2010, p. 9). Similarly, Kachur and Nelson (1996) feel that the terms "native and non-native" conceal attitudinal problems and that "...it is almost unavoidable that anyone [i.e. a potential learner] would select a second-best component" (Kachur & Nelson, 1996, p. 79).

Recent research has suggested that using the label "non-native" speakers serves a political purpose (Liu, 1999, p. 97) or idea of separating people into different groups (Kamhi-Stain, 2004, p. 3). Furthermore, Amin (2004) states that the "native speaker is embedded in a myth" and that "myth-making" of the native speaker is related to discourses concerned with racism and colonialism which often reveal the negative impressions that have been formed about non-native English speakers (Amin, 2004, p. 62). The division native/non-native may generate discrimination which serves no purpose when related to assessing the level of proficiency acquired by the individual teacher (Amin, 2004, p. 74).

Attributes used to characterise the categories of 'native' and 'non-native' speakers can be challenging. On the basis of interviews conducted with teachers whose mother tongue was not English, Liu (1999) found that the majority did not have a problem with the distinction. However, a significant minority felt that it was a complex and even unusable distinction. Thus, Liu concluded a significant number of individuals chose to disregard this dichotomy of native/non-native and expressed concerns about affiliating themselves with either category. The reason why is most likely due to the idea that the labels native/non-native infer that native speakers are more efficient and capable of using and teaching the language than their counterparts.

Jenkins (2000) states that it is "entirely inappropriate and offensive" to use the label "non-native speakers" for individuals "who have learnt English as a second or foreign language" and thus are bilingual and also fully proficient speakers of English. This native/non-native dichotomy may cause "negative perceptions and self-perceptions" of non-native teachers. This can lead to discrimination against those labelled 'non-natives'. Teachers labelled as 'non-native' can be "refused places on EFL teacher training courses" or have their submissions turned down for publications in prestigious international journals. Hence, the "native" and "non-native" labels provide a simplistic view of a complex situation that constitutes an "error in the making" (Jenkins, 2000, p. 9).

Suarez (2000) also comments that the use of native/non-native terminology is in many ways paradoxical: "native" is seen as a strongly positive term, and its negative opposite "non-native", as a result, becomes practically redundant (i.e. no one wishes to have the term perpetuation applied to them). This means that in practice the distinction only exists to generate the positive term "native" and this is what makes the use of such terminology paradoxical or logically problematic (Suarez, 2000, p. 1). An interesting footnote to this debate is provided

by Murti (2002) who notes that in recent history, the term "native" was used within English with a negative connotation, carrying hidden meanings of "uncivilized" or "barbaric" (Murti, 2002, p. 27). It is now commonly used as a positive adjective to describe first language linguistic competence.

Furthermore, using more neutral terms to classify teachers would be less obnoxious and less disrespectful to both groups. Employing phrases such as "L1 English teachers" for those whose mother tongue is English, and "L2 English teachers" for those who have a mother tongue other than English, would be more appropriate and suitable (Suarez, 2000, p. 1; Rampton, 1990, p. 99). In addition, Suarez notes that the prefix "non" used with "native" carries negative connotations, which may help to generate or perpetuate prejudice towards non-native teachers as opposed to L1 English teachers (Suarez, 2000. p. 1).

Therefore, to help prevent negative implications, the following are the new terms proposed by Jenkins (2000) instead of the native/non-native division:

MES – "Monolingual English Speaker", which stands for those L1 speakers who do not speak any other language fluently.
BES – "Bilingual English Speaker", which stands for both categories: L1 speakers who speak another language fluently, and for L2 speakers who speak English fluently.
NBES – "Non-Bilingual English Speaker", which stands for those "L2 speakers whose English may have progressed only to the level at which it serves their particular international communicative purpose" (Jenkins, 2000, p. 11).

The notion that observing native/non-native differences within the process of selecting or categorising teachers may be seen as a "taboo subject", especially within an increasingly politically correct arena, leading to the suppression of useful and important debates. In the arena of "global diversity", these categories become a "badly kept secret" (Suarez, 2000, p. 1); creating an awkward and conflicted situation within the broader professional agenda of ELT, which on the surface states that both parties are equal and can coexist successfully, but underneath cannot honour those principles. One could even go as far as to suggest that elaborating on the debate concerning the details of the native/non-native terminology is a form of procrastination, designed to defer engagement with the thorny and ethically doubtful justifications which underpin the distinctions in the first place.

However, Braine (1999) puts forward more appropriate labels intending to overcome the "identity crisis" that may exist among non-native professionals:
   a.   Second language speaking professionals,
   b.   English teachers speaking other languages,
   c.   Non-native speakers of English in TESOL/TEFL,
   d.   Non-native professionals in TESOL/TEFL,
   e.   Non-native teachers of English,
   f.   Non-native English-speaking professionals,
   g.   Second language teaching professionals,
   h.   Non-native English teachers (Braine, 1999, p. xvii)

Finally, a more sophisticated and respectable term that needs to be applied nowadays was suggested by Rampton a few decades ago: the "language expertise" of both "native" and "non-native" teachers. He believes that by using the term "language expertise", which is built into the structure of "language inherence" and "language affiliation", it will give a clearer picture of teachers both individually and overall. It will provide equal opportunities for all types of teachers and will put forward the similarities between nationality and language ability (Rampton, 1990, p. 100).

Competence and Credibility of Native/Non-Native EFL Teachers

According to Widdowson (1994), native speakers are the "authentic owners" of the English language and are therefore linguistically competent (Widdowson, 1994, p. 387). However, rather than just assuming their 'ownership' of English, in contrast, many language researches have written and discussed the issues relating to native and non-native teachers by considering the problem in a more inductive manner. They have looked at real students' and teachers' perceptions in relation to nativeness using interviews, surveys, and post-graduate

studies, the results of which have also been debated in articles and journals (Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Douglas, 2003; Timmis, 2002; Suarez, 2000; Cook, 1999; Nayar, 1994; Medgyes, 1992; Davies, 1991; Golebiowska, 1985).

When it comes to using English internationally, Smith (1983) postulates that "native speakers need as much help as non-native speakers" and claims that there is "no room for linguistic chauvinism" (Smith, 1983, p. 7). He is suggesting that communicative competence in one linguistic environment, where a form of English is used as a major means of communication, does not necessarily privilege speakers from that environment as heavily as they might imagine when they move into another area where a different form of English is used. A good example of this might be the difficulty many English speakers from the southern part of England would have understanding Glaswegian, or a form of English used for everyday communication across the Indian subcontinent due to the variety of other languages used within the populous (Douglas, 2003). An English speaker from New York or the south of England may be surprised at how difficult they would find it to operate in these other English-speaking contexts. Douglas (2003) suggests that within the wider confines of the English language, the Standard Scottish English maintains a separate identity characterised by the inclusion of Scottish lexis, grammatical syntactic features, and pronunciation (Douglas, 2003). However, Suarez (2000) believes that native speakers are certainly considered more competent than non-native speakers. Thus, the non-native teachers perceive themselves as less competent, and so often feel embarrassed in the presence of native teachers, regardless of their qualifications. In addition, for reasons stated above, "foreign teachers" are less forthcoming when required to speak in public arenas (Suarez, 2000, p. 1). This inevitably means that their needs and views will be either underrepresented or misrepresented.

Timmis (2002), inspired by reading Carter and McCarthy's 1997 study of the nature of spoken English, notes that there are significant differences between the forms of English that are presented in ELT reference materials and the "corpus-attested" norms of everyday speech. Timmis (2002) observes the following:

> The written-based grammars exclude features that widely occur in the conversation of native speakers of the English language, across speakers of different ages, sexes, dialect groups, and social classes, with a frequency that simply cannot be dismissed as an aberration (p. 240).

In addition, Timmis (2002) concludes that he is personally aware of the differences between the English language he teaches and the English language he speaks (Timmis, 2002).

This gap between classroom English and everyday language suggests that the language of EFL classes tends to be more formal and uniform than any real spoken English. This happens out of necessity because there are so many different types of English, dependent upon such factors as cultural region, generation, and class,(Dubravac, Brdarević-Čeljo, & Bećirović, 2018). To be more practical , EFL materials and classes have to use a more standardised version of English. What Timmis (2002) appears to be suggesting is that second-language English speakers understand this formal classroom language well, and therefore, are just as capable of being EFL teachers as native speakers, once they have reached the required standard of English. It may even be the case that this understanding of the more formal language used in classes can give something of an advantage to L2 teachers of English.

Golebiowska (1985) does not agree with the fact that non-native teachers' command of English can be equal to that of native teachers. She suggests that non-native teachers of English are likely to be less competent and thus require language improvement classes at an appropriate level. Hence, the native speaker's command of English is not comparable to the foreigner; for Golebiowska, the native speaker will always have a better command of English (Golebiowska, 1985). Nayar (1994) supports Golebiowska's (1985) view, considering native teachers as speakers who have "linguistic identity". He states that native teachers possess skills of accurate and perfect competence, whereas non-native teachers are considered as "cognitively deficient, language-deprived, error-prone, socio-pragmatically ungraceful and unreliable speakers" (Nayar, 1994, p. 2).

Furthermore, Medgyes (1983) believes that acquiring natives' competence in the language, "recourse to all the nuances of referential, stylistic, and textual appropriateness" is an unreachable goal for any non-native teacher. Moreover, he describes non-native teacher competence thusly:

> His speech is often long-winded as the right phrase will continually elude him, thereby forcing him

into hazy and lengthy definitions. He will invariably avoid the use of phrases about which he is not entirely sure, thus assuming a flat and inexpressive style, particularly when it comes to free oral communication (p. 6).

Consequently, Medgyes (1983) refers to Corder (1973) when he writes: "We do not expect or require foreigners to be able to select the stylistically appropriate language with the same skill and control as the native speaker does. The native speaker finds it "inappropriate" in certain situations for a foreigner to use the same style of language as he would do himself. We can take an example from the usage of "slang". It is not only that the appropriate use of "slang" requires great familiarity with, and sensitivity to, the social life of an individual, unlikely to be acquired by a foreigner, but also that the use of *any* slang features by a foreigner is inappropriate. A foreigner can only use slang appropriately when he is no longer regarded as a foreigner" (Medgyes, 1983, p. 6).

The English language runs along a spectrum starting from zero competence and running up to native competence (Medgyes, 1992). For Medgyes, non-native teaching is progressing along this continuum, utilizing learning strategies, such as a continuing professional development plan and/or their more general life experience. Hence, foreign teachers may use different techniques as they have "learnt-to-use/use-to-learn" English progressively. However, their progress is towards a 'glass ceiling' regarding promotion within their employment (Medgyes, 1992, p. 341).

However, for Medgyes (1992) a further problem facing non-native speakers and making it difficult for them to match native users is that the former are still, and most likely will always be, using a kind of "imitation English". Hence, foreign teachers can never appear quite as authentic or creative "as those whom they have learnt to copy" (Medgyes, 1992, p. 341). However, the author criticises previous research in this field for lacking comparable variables [i.e. age, sex, education, profession, etc.]. Thus, for Medgyes, many details on the significance of the native/non-native distinction remain questionable.

In addition, Medgyes remarks that the "liberal-minded researcher" has tended to ignore the most obvious and relevant criteria for competency: i.e. whether the teacher speaks English as a first, second, or foreign language (Medgyes, 1992, p. 340). However, a successful second language learner can gain a native competence for the language and thus choose a native speaker membership even if the foreigner is outside of his native environment (Davies, 1991, p. 165). In addition, Cook (1999) brings a more liberal perspective to the debate, stating that the teaching of English language should not be focused only on native speakers, as non-native speakers ought to be considered as "successful multi-competent speakers, not failed native speakers" (Cook, 1999, p. 185).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Native/Non-Native EFL Teachers

Shin's article 'Preparing non-native English-speaking ESL teachers' in *Teacher Development, Volume 12, Issue 1,* mentions that the difference between the advantages and disadvantages of native and non-native teachers is a highly complex issue to define and the label of "native/non-native is too simplistic and fails to capture the rich complexities associated with being a user of a language" (Shin, 2008, p. 60). However, despite the many uncertainties surrounding the study of the native/non-native divide, a significantly visible advantage that non-native English language teachers possess is their awareness of the grammar which is built into their understanding of language due to their previous language learning experience (Shih & Ying, 2017; Liu, 1999). However, Medgyes (1983) describes any situation in which "non-native" teachers' feel unsafe in using the language they teach as a contingency towards adopting a "pessimistic or an aggressive attitude". Medgyes characterises this "pessimistic type of teacher" as obsessed with grammar. He suggests that they show less competence in pronunciation and lexical aspects of teaching and often omit dealing with issues of linguistic appropriateness (Medgyes, 1983, p. 2). For Medgyes, "aggressive teachers" are focused on grammar because they feel more confident in that area; this is why they tend to claim that knowing the language can be reduced to the knowledge of its grammar (Medgyes, 1983, p. 3). "Aggressive teachers" will also tend to avoid using "alternative sources to teach pronunciation", such as tape recorders or radio. Medgyes suggests this is because avoiding using authentic pronunciation sources "…allows them conceal their foreign deficiencies such as their accent" (Medgyes, 1983, p. 3). These "aggressive teachers" focus on grammar specifically instead of vocabulary as the English language has over 400,000 words, which cannot be learned and mastered even by native teachers in

its entirety. Furthermore, he states that "non-native" teachers are students of English as much as the students they are teaching, and so being both teacher and student simultaneously may create a state of "schizophrenia" (Medgyes 1983, pp. 2-6). This crisis of identity could limit the ability to teach as it affects the non-native teachers' level of confidence in English.

However, teaching English is about "knowledge, technique, and practice, skills that must be learnt and persevered with to gain success" (Widdowson, 1994, p. 387). This means that all teachers [native and non-native] are "made rather than born" and that the language-learning process, structure, usage, and capacity to explain and analyse language have to be "learnt" (Philipson, 1992, p. 14). In fact, Lee (2000) takes it further and believes that motivation, drive, enthusiasm, knowledge, skills, training, teaching techniques, and personality are the factors that make somebody a good teacher (Lee, 2000).

Thus, non-native teachers should be favoured as teachers of English due to their accomplishment of the stated requirements above, i.e. learning the "complex process" of acquiring English as a foreign language, therefore gaining an accurate and deep understanding of the cultural requirements of their students. Hence, non-native teachers are aware of the differences between the "mother tongue" and "target language", student difficulties, and have a "first-hand" experience of "utilizing" a second or foreign language (Lee, 2000, p. 1). This means that non-native teachers represent examples of people who have become successful second language users. Therefore, the non-native teacher is "living proof" of someone who has been through the same route as the students and has acquired another language successfully. On the contrary, the native teacher can only appreciate their experiences and problems "second hand" (Cook, 2005, p. 57). Philipson (1992) adds that the unqualified and untrained native teacher may display "ignorance" within the structure of the mother tongue (Philipson, 1992, p. 14). Hence, Phillipson (1992) writes that a teacher "is not adequately qualified to teach language merely because it is his mother tongue" (p. 15).

Interestingly, Golebiowska (1985) does not feel that non-native teachers' experience learning English as a second language gives them a significant advantage as language teachers. For Golebiowska (1985), the superior English knowledge of the native speaker outweighs any skills that the non-native speaker might be understood to have from learning English as a second language. Golebiowska (1985) even goes as far as to note that many English teacher training courses provide native teachers with the experience of learning another foreign language (i.e. not English) so that they can acquire some of the awareness of what it means to learn another language. In contrast, Golebiowska (1985) does not feel that this supplies the native teachers with any very valuable skills. Therefore, she almost completely discounts the non-native skills that Philipson (1992) drew our attention to above.

However, we can view the non-native teacher from a more positive perspective and understand them as serving as a practically "imitable model" for the successful language learner (Medgyes, 1992, p. 346). Non-native teachers are good role models for foreign students, presenting themselves as successful English speakers, and so demonstrating English as a second language as an achievable target (Lee, 2000; Davies, 1991). On the contrary, the native speaker teacher who does not know the students' first language is only a "model of something unfamiliar" which students can never achieve. Additionally, the non-native teacher can "speak from personal experience" about the challenges of how second language learning has influenced their life. Finally, the appreciation of other "cultures and their feeling for language" is an advantage that the monolingual native teacher will never acquire and may not appreciate (Cook, 2005, pp. 56-7).

Furthermore, Medgyes (1992) describes non-native teachers as able to teach students general learning strategies and anticipate common difficulties more efficiently. In the case of "teachers who share the mother tongue" of their learners, they are also able to assist students through the translation of lexis and explanation of complex language features in the shared first language. This positive view sees non-native teachers as being able to provide an empathetic approach to their learners' needs and problems. Accordingly, when compared to native teachers, the non-native teacher could be "equal in being successful and effective" (Medgyes, 1992, pp. 346-7).

The native teacher is an authentic transmitter of culture (Bećirović & Podojak, 2018) and the dichotomy of the terms 'native' and 'non-native' is evidently problematic and challenging in second language acquisition and foreign language education (Cook, 2005; Lurda, 2004; Murti, 2002; Thomas, 1999; Medgyes, 1992). However, Murti (2002) challenges the idea that non-native speakers of English will never achieve the equivalent level of

proficiency as native speakers of the English language. Murti comments that:

> …the non-native instructor can teach people from other cultures how to use somebody else's linguistic code in somebody else's cultural context and can bring about social change. Such productive interaction between two cultural communities, mediated by the non-native teacher, sensitizes each of these communities to the other's potential, revealing the infinitely layered nature of diversity (p. 29).

Additionally, he feels that non-native teachers who have experienced serious cultural prejudices in other social situations can help learners view emotionally charged issues from a historical and cultural distance.

Moreover, non-native teachers as "cultural go-betweens" are mediating in the interests of social change by resisting and challenging assumptions and expectations and are aware of the contentious nature of the relationship between two or more cultures (Murti, 2002, p. 29). This distinction between language and culture enrich non-native teachers as they continue learning throughout their life experiences and challenges through their knowledge of where "two cultures and two languages converge and diverge" (Medgyes, 1983, p. 6).

Lurda (2004) moves even further away and states that non-native teachers have the quality of bilingualism. For Lurda, this is an inherent advantage. Non-native teachers have the potential for a wider knowledge linguistically, obtained by using a broader set of learning strategies. Additionally, non-native teachers are able to display expertise relevant for the process of becoming bilingual due to their ability of expressing themselves in different languages. Additionally, it is important to highlight that second language users have "different minds from monolinguals" (Cook, 2005, p. 53). Thus, L2 users have "different language abilities" and different ways of thinking from a monolingual native speaker. The L2 user may be able to function independently across the two languages with a 'mental' ability which the "monolingual native speaker cannot emulate" and compete with under any circumstances (Cook, 2005, p. 53).

In spite of the fact that most non-native teachers have sufficient proficiency to accomplish their duties, Lurda (2004) admits that the non-native teacher does not show as much understanding and awareness of linguistic flexibility as the native speaker does. They tend to adhere rather too rigidly the old, native-speaker dominated, linguistic frameworks: in other words, following British or American rules. Native speakers have the advantage of adapting more rapidly to new rules and language forms in their mother tongue. This is why they tend to be considered the "ideal teachers" (Lurda 2004, p. 319). This is in line with Widdowson (1994) claiming that the native teacher "acquires accuracy and unique English" which makes him/her the guardian of "proper English and pedagogy" (p. 387).

However, as the English language became more advanced and highly developed, Widdowson (1994) postulates that this new and evolving English language should no longer be just the concern of the native speaker. It is the language of technical, scientific, and business communication of a global world. Even so, he still feels that it is an honour and very satisfying to be classified as a native speaker of a worldwide language functioning as international means of communication (Widdowson, 1994).

Finally, Lurda (2004) notes that the role of the English teacher may be starting to change. English language teachers are no longer seen as "ambassadors" of English or British/American culture, but are now ascribed to the progress of the English language globally (Lurda, 2004, p. 319). They are now increasingly becoming identified as mediators between the students' source and the targetlanguage and culture (Rizvić & Bećirović, 2017). Whilst seeing bilingual skills as a non-native advantage in this global world, Lurda does expresses concern that as the number of foreign teachers increases, this may, theoretically, hinder the quality of the English being taught. Thus, native teachers may find that they will be required to gain knowledge of the 'conversions' that take place between 'local' British or American English and the international language standards of a global English (Lurda, 2004). In this sense, native speakers will need to help maintain the quality of English used, but will increasingly need to act as mediators between local and international English. Thus, the dominance of British English will be lost. Hence, within the global English community, native speakers will increasingly be required to learn the conventions of English as an International Language (Lurda, 2004).

Employment Discrimination

There are only a few studies (Shih & Ying, 2017; Clark & Paran, 2007; Pacek, 2005; Medgyes, 1994/2) that have been carried out in the field of discrimination against non-native English teachers both in the UK and internationally. The lack of research regarding discrimination in this field is in view of it possibly having "political and economic consequences, as well as raising questions about the academic integrity of its institutions [TEFL/ TESOL]" (Clark & Paran, 2007, p. 417).

Philipson (1992) raises the "native speaker fallacy" issue by describing a native speaker as the "ideal teacher", which may exclude non-native teachers from EFL teaching positions (Philipson, 1992, p. 185).

According to Braine (1999), it seems that almost all native institutional administrators are trying to prevent the institutions they work for from hiring non-native EFL teachers. It appears to be that ELT is considered as the last field of the native speaker, which must be defended under any circumstances (Braine, 1999). Canagarajah (1999) shares the same view with Braine (1999) and believes that "the native speaker fallacy protects jobs for Centre teachers in their home institutions from the Periphery [non-native]; a protectionist move which also monopolises the ESL teaching jobs in the Periphery" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 82). Canagarajah also claims that Periphery institutions advertisements state, "only native speakers needed", further perpetuating the "native speaker fallacy", and thus native speakers' dominance is also imposed upon in these Periphery societies (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 83). Looking at similar issues, Liu (1999) suggests that the maintenance of the dichotomy between native and non-native teachers influences the recruiting process. Consequently, non-native English teachers are again seen to be less desirable than their native counterparts (Liu, 1999).

Thomas (1999) gives an example from a TESOL Convention she attended where the subject of debate was the hiring of non-native teachers. She came to the conclusion that prejudiced views state that anyone "who is not an NS of English cannot speak the language"; therefore, non-native teachers cannot be hired only because "they do not fit in the profile of the native speaker" (Thomas, 1999, p. 7). The emphasis upon not hiring non-native speakers was based on the notion that L2 students do not wish to be taught by non-native teachers. Thomas is suspicious of this reasoning, as she argues that an "inner circle" exists based on the fallacy of a kind of English: "the right kind", which she claims undermines the competencies and proficiency of non-native teachers (Thomas, 1999, p. 7).

Clark & Paran (2007) state that non-native teachers may "face discrimination" when seeking employment in the UK as employers have a "negative view of a teacher`s non-native status". They believed that qualified, experienced, and legally employable non-native teachers, with the right to work in the UK, may not even be asked to interview just from their non-native status. They found that 70% of UK institutions [private language schools and universities] consider 'native speaker status' to be one of the conditions for recruitment (Clark & Paran, 2007, p. 430).

Braine (1999) argues that "a significant number of native speakers in ELT do not support the employment of NNESs to teach English in ESL contexts and no issue is more concerning than that of discrimination in employment" (Braine, 1999, p. xvi). Additionally, he argues that "only a few NNSs have succeeded in breaking the unwritten rule 'No non-native speakers need to apply', as many program administrators have openly stated a desire not to recruiteNNSs at professional conferences and job interviews" (Braine, 1999, p. xvi). Moreover, he states that the "...most common excuse for this discrimination is that ESL students prefer to be taught by native speakers" (Braine 1999: xvi). Pacek (2005) also points out that those students assume that when studying in an English-speaking country they will be taught the English language by native teachers (Pacek, 2005).

Thomas (1999) confirms that non-native teachers face discrimination in employment from their students as well. Thomas (1999) states that non-native teachers "often find themselves in situations where they have to establish their credibility as teachers of TEFL before they can proceed to be taken seriously as professionals" (Thomas, 1999, p. 5). Furthermore, she points out that her students were disappointed when they heard that she was going to teach them English, as she was non-native English language teacher (Thomas, 1999). Therefore, she concludes that "we usually learn to value what we see valued and undermine what we see undermined" (Thomas, 1999, p. 8). In addition, the employment issues for non-native teachers are only one of the numerous

problems they face, as well as that 'their accents are misunderstood, their qualifications are questioned and that they are marginalized in the profession' (Braine, 1999, p. xiii).

Medgyes (1994/2001) in his book '*The non-native teacher*' refers to the reported issue of employment discrimination in the English Language Teaching Journal, Illes (1991, p. 87). A non-native teacher applied for a teaching position in a language school in London. Even though he was a highly qualified and experienced teacher, his applications were consistently turned down, and he was not even shortlisted. One of the reasons for rejection was the following:

> I am afraid we have to insist that all our teachers are native speakers of English. Our students do not travel half-way around the world only to be taught by a non-native speaker [however good that person's English may be] (Medgyes, 2001, p. 432; Medgyes, 1994, p. 68).

A similar situation was encountered by Braine when he applied for a teaching position at the university where he was doing his MA degree. He stated that his request for that position was turned down instantly while "some native speaking classmates who had no teaching experience were employed" (Braine, 1999, p. 22).

In addition, Medgyes (1994) carried out a similar survey in London and Paris of a group of 'highly sophisticated teachers, teacher trainers, applied linguistics and publishers' (Medgyes, 1994, p. 67). Most of the respondents were native speakers of English from London. He was given 50 responses to questions relating to "what participants recruiting preferences would be towards native and non-native teachers if they were the principal of a commercial ELT school in Britain". He found that no one chose the first option, which was "to recruit only native teachers even without qualification", whilst two-thirds of respondents preferred to hire a native teacher or non-native teacher with qualifications rather than a native teacher without ELT qualification. Only one-third of the respondents claimed that the native or non-native issue would not be a selection criterion. However, he concludes that the fact that no one selected the first option was a reflection of people's public principles. The respondents did not want to be seen as discriminatory against non-native teachers, as this would be seen as ethically inappropriate at a distinguished professional gathering (Medgyes, 1994, pp. 67-8). He adds that this was not the real business hiring practices of ELT schools in London faced with short-term economic decisions to make (Medgyes, 1994). In other words, prejudice was much more likely to be risked when money was involved, and the activity took on a business setting rather than an academic one.

Canagarajah (1999) points out that more than 80% of English language teachers internationally are non-native speakers of English (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 91). Since many of them are presently enrolled in MA or Ph.D. TEFL training programs, and they all have to pay institutions fees, Canagarajah (1999) raises a series of questions such as: "For what purpose are these foreign scholars being trained? Have these institutions considered carefully the employment prospects for the students they train as teachers?" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 83).

In order to provide an answer to the previously mentioned questions, Canagarajah (1999) argues that the institutions are training the students without considering the reality of the life they face after completing their teaching course. This is because the "native speaker fallacy" dominates and still seriously affects their chances of gaining employment. Non-native teachers face a future full of uncertainty in which their professional qualification is rendered useless in many ways, ironically often by the same institutions that taught the student. As a result, these students are at a serious financial disadvantage, and professionally, they are discriminated against and disqualified before they even begin to work. Initially, the process is a money-making machine that entices students with the promise of a better future, and eventually pushes them aside upon completion of the course. This kind of preferential treatment at a professional level stems from the institution's inherent desire to monopolise the English language market for the benefit of native staff (Canagarajah, 1999, pp. 83-4).

Unfortunately, this discriminatory character of many institutes is further evidenced in the advertisements for vacant teaching positions that they post A study by Selvi (2010) analysing the content of advertisements by TEFL institutes on a popular recruitment website found that there is a surprisingly high degree of discriminatory language used in advertisements (Selvi, 2010). Selvi establishes that this discriminatory approach serves to perpetuate the notions of native speakerism, characterized by the belief that native-speaker teachers represent a "Western culture" from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology (Selvi, 2010, p. 172) and this is also critically discussed by Holliday in his 2006 article, "Native-

speakerism" in *ELT Journal* 60/4 (Holliday, 2006, p. 385). An adherence to native-speakerism legitimises the inequality and discriminatory nature of the advertisements. It assumes that the non-native is unequal to the native and the native is the owner and rightful teacher of English (Widdowson, 1994). This is constructed for the preservation of a privileged in-group: the natives (Kramsch, 1997, p. 363). Selvi (2010) found that in 91.2% of 439 job advertisements, nativeness was a criterion which discriminated against the non-native (Selvi, 2010). Additionally, many of the advertisements discriminated against other variants of English, favouring American English in particular. Furthermore, in terms of educational attainment, the study found a preference for qualifications from either American universities or Anglophone countries (Selvi, 2010). Selvi concludes that this is a multifaceted phenomenon that discriminates "on the basis of nativeness as well as the variety of English spoken, location of academic degrees attained, and location of residence or citizenship" (Selvi, 2010, p. 173). Selvi's findings further support the idea that the "native speaker fallacy" raised as an issue by Philipson (Philipson, 1992, p. 185) is still strongly influencing employment decisions within TEFL and that the negative ideas embodied in versions of native-speakerism have not yet been relegated to the past, although Holliday drew attention to the need to review these ideas in 2006 (Holliday, 2006, p. 385).

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can infer that the non-native speaker is able to achieve all the assumed inherent characteristics that native speakers possess, except for the attribute of acquiring the target language in early childhood. Therefore, it is at least theoretically possible that very competent non-native teachers can deal with English in every way a native speaker can, with the exception of not being able to claim English as their first language. This idea of being 'born into' English is often used as a justifying basis for privileging the native-speaking teacher above the non-native teacher, without any further specific grounds for the distinction between the two. As a result, a two-tier categorisation is produced, with 'native' being associated with 'best' and 'non-native' with 'second best'. Yet there are no firm objective grounds for this distinction. No one would wish to choose to be considered as 'second best' (Kachur & Nelson, 1996, p. 79). Therefore, the terminology produced disadvantages for the L2 teacher from the outset.

In light of this problem, many scholars have suggested more simplified and rational terms to replace the use of the native/non-native terminology. Furthermore, it is beneficial for both categories to be regarded as having forms of English expertise. We should also acknowledge that the English language has come to represent economic progress and political neutrality for the generations following WWII; thus, there is now no room for linguistic chauvinism. Therefore, it would be better to understand that both types of teachers can be equally successful and useful in teaching the English language.

However, despite the effort of some individuals in trying to balance out the relationship between native and non-native teachers, it is possible to conclude that discrimination in the employment of non-native teachers is still significantly present within both the UK and the international EFL teaching community. It seems that the notions of the native speaker fallacy, ownership, and native speakerism have contributed to the propaganda aimed at preventing non-native teachers' equality with native teachers. Thus, despite the numerous advantages of non-native teachers, it seems that 'foreign teachers' are still considered far from the concept of 'ideal teachers' of English (i.e. native teacher).

Finally, it is difficult to make predictions for the development of non-native teachers' career trajectories in the UK. The challenges that non-native teachers currently face are difficult to overcome as so many complex sociolinguistic and cultural factors play an important role in defining the non-native teachers' ability to teach the language in general. However, this is certainly the right time, not only for the UK but for the whole world, to add 'linguistic discrimination' to the list of unacceptable discriminatory policies that need to be legislated against, particularly in relation to employment law. All bilingual speakers would agree with the fact that learning a language is not an easy process and that complete mastery of a second language is difficult to achieve. Competent non-native teachers have gone a long way down the road to mastering a very useful and valuable skill. Therefore, they should be recognised as skilled instructors with serious contributions to make to EFL teaching.

It is time for the UK government to get involved and start defending non-native teachers against the intolerance and favouritism that they have encountered within British educational institutions, which can still be perpetuated though the attitudes of administrators and finds its worst expression in discriminatory job advertisements. The implementation of laws designed to act against 'linguistic origin discrimination' would hopefully bring non-native teachers career status in the UK and across the globe to the realistic and rational stage where they have to be treated equally to their native colleagues.

References

Adams, E. (2001). A proposed causal model of vocational teacher stress. Journal of Vocational Education and Training, *53*(2), 223-246. https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820100200153

Amin, N. (1997). Race and the identity of the non-native ESL teacher. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(3), 580-583. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587841

Amin, N. (2004). Nativism, the native speaker construct, and minority immigrant women teachers of English as a second language. In L. D. Kamhi-Stein (Eds.), *Learning and teaching from experience: Perspectives on non-native English-speaking professionals* (pp. 61-80). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9648

Anthias, P. (2002). Student migration from Bangladesh to the UK. In *Refugee, and migratory movements research unit* (pp. 1-51). Dhaka, Bangladesh: University of Dhaka.

Bećirović, S. (2017). The relationship between gender, motivation and achievement in learning English as a foreign language. *European Journal Contemporary Education*, *6*(2), 210-219. https://doi.org/10.13187/ejced.2017.2.210

Bećirović, S., & Podojak, S. (2018). Intercultural development of Bosnian university students through foreign language learning. *European Researcher*, *9*(2), 68-77. https://doi.org/10.13187/er.2018.2.68

Benke, E., & Medgyes, P. (2005). Differences in teaching behaviour between native and non-native speaker teachers: As seen by the learners. In E. Lurda (Eds.), *Non-native language teachers* (pp. 195-215). Boston, MA: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-24565-0_11

Bernat, E. (2008). Towards a pedagogy of empowerment: The case of 'impostor syndrome' among pre-service non-native speaker teachers in TESOL. *English Language Teacher Education and Development*, *11*, 1-8.

Black, T. R. (1999). *Doing quantitative research in the social sciences: An integrated approach to research design, measurement, and statistics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Braine, G. (Ed.). (1999). *Non-native educators in English language teaching*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Braine, G. (2010). *Nonnative speaker English teacher, research, pedagogy, and professional growth*. London, UK: Routledge Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203856710

Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). Interrogating the ''Native Speaker Fallacy'': Non-linguistic roots, non-pedagogical results. In G. Braine (Eds.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 77-92). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315045368

Clark, E. & Paran, A. (2007). The employability of non-native-speaker teachers of EFL: A UK survey. *An International Journal of Education Technology and Applied Linguistics*, *35*(4), 407-430. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2007.05.002

Clouet, R. (2006). Between one`s own culture and the target culture: the language teacher as an intercultural mediator. *Porta Linguarum*, *5*, 53-62.

Cook, V. (1999). Going beyond the native speaker in language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, *33*(2), 185-209. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587717

Cook, V. (2005). Basing teaching on the L2 user. In E. Lurda (Eds.), *Non-native language teachers, perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 47-60). New York, NY: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-24565-0_1

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486999

Davies, A. (1991). *The native speaker in applied linguistics*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263100011761

Davies, A. (2000). What second language learners can tell us about the native speaker: Identifying and describing exceptions. In R.L. Cooper, E. Shohamy & J. Walters (Eds.), *New perspectives and issues in educational language*

policy: A festschrift for Bernard Spolsky (pp. 91-112). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/z.104.08dav

Dervić, M., & Spahić, N. (2018). an evaluation of five key aspects of the language acquisition (LA) – A critical review of Krashen`s theory. *Zbornik radova Islamskog pedagoškog fakulteta u Zenici, 16*(16), 391-408.

Douglas, F.M. (2003). The Scottish corpus of texts and speech: Problems of corpus design. *Literary and Linguistic Computing, 18*(1), 23-37. https://doi.org/10.1093/llc/18.1.23

Dubravac, V., Brdarević-Čeljo, A., & Bećirović, S. (2018). The English of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *World Englishes*, 37, 635– 652. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12347

Dunnett, S., Dubin, F., & Lezberg, A. (1986). English language teaching from an intercultural perspective. In J. Valdes (Eds.), *Culture bound* (pp. 148-161). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Golebiowska, A. (1985). Once a teacher, always a teacher. *ELT Journal*, *39*(4), 274-278. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/39.4.274

Holliday, A. (2006). Key concepts in ELT: Native-speakerism. *ELT Journal*, *60*(4), 385-387. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccl030

Horwitz, E. (1996). Even teachers get the blues: recognizing and alleviating language teachers' feelings of foreign language anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, *29*(3), 365-372. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1996.tb01248.x

Jenkins, J. (2000). *The phonology of English as an international language*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Johnston, B. (1997). Do EFL Teachers Have Careers? *TESOL*, *31*(4), 681-712. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587756

Kachru, B. B., & Nelson, C. L. (1996). *World Englishes.* In S. L. McKay & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language teaching* (pp. 71-102). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511551185.006

Kamhi-Stein, L. D. (Ed.) (2004). *Learning and teaching from experience: Perspectives on non-native English-speaking professionals*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9648

Kramsch, C. (1997). The privilege of the nonnative speaker. *PMLA*, *112*(3), 359–69. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/462945?seq=1

Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra J. M. (2005). *What do students think about the pros and cons of having a native speaker teacher?* In E. Lurda (Ed.), *Non-native language teachers, perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 217-241). New York, NY: Springer. https://doi.org/10.12691/education-5-12-2

Lazaraton, A. (2003). Incidental displays of cultural knowledge in the non-native-English-speaking teacher's classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, *37*(2), 213-245. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588503

Lee, I. (2000). Can a non-native English speaker be a good English teacher? *TESOL Matters*, *10*(1), 1-2.

Lee, J. J. (2005). The native speaker: An achievable model? *Asian EFL Journal*, *7*(2), 52-163.

Liu, J. (1999). From their own perspectives: The impact of non-native ESL professionals on their students. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 159-176). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315045368

Liu, J. (1999). Non-native-English-speaking professionals in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, *33*(1), 85-102. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588192

Lurda, E. (2004). Non-native-speaker teachers and English as an International Language. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *14*(3), 314-323. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2004.00068.x

Marshall, G. (1998). *A dictionary of sociology* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Martin, C. M. H. (1976). The training situation of the non-native EFL teacher in London. *ELT Journal*, 29(30), 101-107. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/xxix.2.101

Medgyes, P. (1983). The Schizophrenic teacher. *ELT Journal*, *37*(1), 2-6. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/37.1.2

Medgyes, P. (1992). Native or non-native: Who is worth more? *ELT Journal*, *46*(4), 340-349. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/46.4.340

Medgyes, P. (1994). *The non-native teacher*. London, UK: Macmillan Publishers. https://doi.org/10.12691/education-5-12-2

Medgyes, P. (2001). When the teacher is a non-native speaker. *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*, *3,* 429-442.

Mousavi, S. E. (2007). Exploring 'teacher stress' in non-native and native teachers of EFL. *ELTED*, *10,* 33-41.

Moussu L., & Lurda E. (2008). Non-native English-speaking English language teachers: History and research. *Language teaching*, *41*(3), 315–348. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005028

Munro, J. M. (2003). A primer on accent discrimination in the Canadian context. *TESL Canada Journal*, *20*(2), 38-51. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v20i2.947

Murti, K. (2002). Whose identity? The nonnative teacher as cultural mediator in the language classroom. *ADFL*

Bulletin, *34*(1), 26-29. https://doi.org/10.1632/adfl.34.1.26

Nayar, P.B. (1994). Whose English is it? *TESL-EJ*, *1*(1). Retrieved from http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume1/ej01/ej01f1/

O'Sullivan, I. R. (2010). The native rules. *Humanising Language Teaching*, *12*(2), 1-5.

Pacek, D. (2005). Personality not nationality: Foreign students` perceptions of a non-native speaker lecturer of English at a British university. In E. Lurda (Eds.), *Non-native language teachers, perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 243-262). New York, NY: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-24565-0_13

Pannycook, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. London, UK: Longman. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315843605

Philipson, R. (1992). ELT: The native speaker`s burden? *ELT Journal*, *46*(1), 12-18. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/46.1.12

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047404500019102

Rampton, M. B. H. (1990). Displacing the 'native speaker': Expertise, affiliation, and inheritance. *ELT Journal*, *44*(2), 97-101. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/44.2.97

Rizvić, E., & Bećirović, S. (2017). Willingness to communicate in English as a foreign language in Bosnian-Herzegovinian EFL Context. *European Researcher*, *8*(3), 224-235. https://doi.org/10.13187/er.2017.3.224

Selvi, A. F. (2010). All teachers are equal, but some teachers are more equal than others: Trend analysis of job advertisements in English language teaching. *WATESOL NNEST Caucus Annual Review*, *1,* 156-181.

Sharpling, G. P. (2002). Learning to teach English for academic purposes: Some current training and development issues. *ELTED*, *6*, 82-94.

Shih Y. T., & Ying L. C. (2017). EFL college students' perceptions toward native and non-native English speaking teachers. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 5(12), 1182-1190. https://doi.org/10.12691/education-5-12-2.

Shin, S. J. (2008). Preparing non-native English-speaking ESL teachers. *An international journal of teachers' professional development*, *12*(1), 57 – 65. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530701827749

Smith, L. E. (1983). English as an international language: No room for linguistic chauvinism. In L. Smith (Eds.), *Readings in English as an international language* (pp. 7-11). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/jelf-2015-0002

Stoler, A.L. (1997). Racial histories and their regimes of truth. *Political Power and Social Theory, 11*, 183-206.

Suarez, J. (2000). 'Native' and 'non-native': Not only a question of terminology. *Humanising Language Teaching*. Retrieved from http://old.hltmag.co.uk/nov00/mart1.htm

Sung, C. C. M. (2010). Native or non-native? Exploring Hong Kong students' perspectives. In *Lancaster University Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics & Language Teaching* (vol. 4, pp. 1-18). Lancaster, UK: Lancaster university.

Tajino, A., & Tajino, Y. (2000). Native and non-native: What they can offer? Lessons from team teaching in Japan. *ELT Journal*, *54*(1), 3-11. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/54.1.3

Thomas, J. (1999). *Voices from the periphery: Non-native teachers and issues of credibility*. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 5-13). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315045368

Timmis, I. (2002). Native-speaker norms and International English: A classroom view. *ELT Journal*, *56*(3), 240-249. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/56.3.240

Ustunluoglu, E. (2007). University students' perceptions of native and non-native teachers, *Teachers and teaching: Theory and practice*, *13*(1), 63 - 79. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600601106096

Walelign, A. (1986). Non-native speakers need not apply. *English Teaching Forum*, *24*(2), 40-41.

Widdowson, H. G. (1994). The ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, *28*(2), 377-389. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587438

Wong, C.Y. (2009). Are native speakers 'good' language instructors? A case study of untrained ESL tutors. *Annual Review of Education, Communication, and Language Sciences, 6*, 122-140.